CHAPTER 1

Theoretical Orientation, Plan of the Book, and Main Findings

THE PUZZLE

The nature and patterns of political assassinations constitute one of the most interesting, challenging, and frustrating enigmatic riddles for social research. The riddle of political assassinations is linked intimately with a few fascinating research questions. For example: What "determines" history, personal actors, or so-called "objective" processes? What is the impact of a political assassination (if any)? If political assassinations do have a signifi-cant impact, in what sense, then, can we understand it? What, exactly, *is* the nature of a political assassination? Under what conditions do political assassinations take place? Can political assassinations be considered characteristic of particular cultures, or are they a product of more universalistic sociological process-es or conditions regardless of particular cultures?

The empirical, analytical, and intellectual puzzle this book addresses is indeed that of political assassinations. This book is based on a research that, deliberately and intentionally, attempt-ed to answer the above questions.

The riddle of political assassinations, however, is not the only, or exclusive, focus of this book. The overwhelming majori-ty of previous works on political assassinations were done by either political scientists, historians or psychiatrists/psycholo-gists.[1] With some very few exceptions (e.g., see Wilkinson 1976; Turk 1983; Wagner-Pacifici 1986), hardly any sociological work was done on political assassinations. Hence, the "sociology," or "criminology," of political assassinations" as well as the method-ological "know how," simply do not exist. Moreover, because prior work focuses on diverse issues associated with political

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assassinations, the lack of a unified, substantial, and method-
ological paradigm is even more pronounced. Furthermore, in a
recent paper, Gurr (1988) points out the problematic state of
academic research into terrorism more generally. While we'll see
later that a clear distinction needs to be made between political
assassination events and terrorism, Gurr's criticism is valid for
both. One goal of this work is to rectify this deficiency and pro-
vide a possible new analytical look at a sociological construction
of political assassinations.

An important question is *what* sociological perspective can
be utilized to provide a meaningful interpretation of political
assassinations? While Wilkinson (1976) was inclined to adopt
Smelser's theory of collective behavior for this purpose, Smelser's
elaborate theory (1962) was not constructed to explain this type
of violent behavior. The fact is that this theory did not become a
major (or minor) tool in explaining political assassinations. First
and foremost, political assassinations constitute a form of violent
and aggressive human behavior. This behavior is focused on tak-
ing somebody else's life against the wish of that somebody, like
what happens in similar forms of behavior: murder, killing,
blood-revenge, executions, and the like. As such, the most natu-
ral field in sociology to address in order to find a theoretical base
for interpreting political assassinations is that of deviance and
the close discipline of criminology. Thus, a unique feature of this
book is its interpretative analytical framework. Political assassi-
nations will be interpreted by using approaches which were
developed in the sociological study of deviance and criminology
and never before applied to political assassinations. This applica-
tion will yield a new definitional approach to political assassina-
tions, as well as a new interpretation of this phenomenon.

Furthermore, recent formulations in the sociology of
deviance have repeatedly pointed out that for this type of sociol-
ogy to develop, it has to interpret its empirical cases within a
dynamic analytical context of morality, power, and history (Ben-
Yehuda 1989, 1990). Another major goal of this work is to
achieve exactly that.

The book aims to solve the puzzle of political assassinations
by an in depth inquiry into the nature, scope, meaning, and
results of political assassinations within what may be considered a

more or less integrated, albeit infinitesimally complex (e.g., see Goldscheider and Zuckerman 1984; Cohen and Mendes-Flohr 1987), cultural matrix. Hence the book focuses on political assassinations by Jews in Palestine-Israel. The nature of the inquiry is social-historical, from a sociology of deviance perspective, and it employs a methodology which relies on both primary and secondary sources.

To have a full, gestalt type of, comprehension of the puzzle of political assassinations requires a broad knowledge in two areas. First, an analytic understanding of what political assassinations *are*, and what is their place *within* the sociology of deviance. Second, an understanding of the cases themselves, as they occurred within the relevant time period is required. In this respect, this is a study in "natural" deviance, that is deviance as it happened within its natural setting.

Choosing this approach requires the researcher to understand, and present in an intelligible manner, the natural setting within which deviance takes place. I shall later provide a fairly thorough documentation of *all* the known cases of political assassinations between the 1890s and the 1980s. These cases are not merely an attempt at historical reconstruction and are of more than "historical" interest. As case studies, these pieces of evidence can, and will, be examined as part of the clarification of the sociology of deviance that enhances our understanding of general social processes. Consequently, I shall present a theoretically rich set of case studies and illustrations that, in addition to serving as the basic documentation of a rare and interesting phenomenon, represents a major basis for understanding more general issues of the sociology of deviance, as well as of political assassinations.

The above two delimiters require a full exposure of both levels—the analytical and complex setting. The structure and content of the book reflect these two concerns: an in-depth inquiry into the nature of political assassinations *and* an emphasis on the sociology of deviance as the appropriate explanatory base of this particular form of human lethal aggression.

Since I take it that the sociology of deviance is a crucial perspective for interpreting political assassinations, I shall present a general analytical discussion of the sociology of deviance in order to establish the general analytic framework and focus our cogni-

tive map on a set of rhetorical devices that will be employed to cope with the empirical and intellectual puzzle of this research.

The type of political assassination that we shall uncover in this research is not the "typical" assassination many of us may have in mind: an irrational assassin who kills an important political figure. This research has uncovered a sociological pattern of political assassinations, which must be conceptualized within a popular system of justice, operated (and justified) typically by a relevant collective group (and not the individual). Vengeance and revenge which are typical reasons for initiating a political assassination in this system (for example, as reactions to suspicions of treason) thus become identified with systemic moral and rational characteristics (and not individual irrational idiosyncrasies).

DEVIANCE

The General Orientation within the Sociology of Deviance

Since its inception, the sociology of deviance[2] (Schur 1979; Goode 1984; Rock 1985; Thio 1988) seems to have suffered from at least two major problems. The *first* is a theoretical chaos (Mills 1943; Piven 1981; Scull 1984; Terry and Steffensmeier 1988:60). The *second* is the fact that the sociology of deviance failed to consider total social structures and fell into a deep (yet interesting) trap of small scale studies about various esoteric, sensational types of deviance (Mills 1943; Scull 1984). Rock (1973a) even claimed that the emphasis in the sociology of deviance on studying these phenomenon has given rise to a radical type of *phenomenalism* which views society as a collection of small units lacking an overall structure. Later, Rock (1974) also claimed that the sociology of deviance had created an artificial contradiction between phenomenalism (emphasizing the need for an accurate and reliable reconstruction of the social world as seen by those living in it) and *essentialism* (searching for the underlying properties of the social order).

In order to try and solve the above problems, the sociological study of deviance must consider total social structures and/or processes by examining deviance as a relative phenomenon and as part of larger social processes of social change and stability.

This examination can be conceptualized within the theoretical context of looking at the myriad of symbolic-moral universes (Berger and Luckmann 1966) which constitute the wider societal cultural mosaic and their boundaries (Ben-Yehuda 1985, 1990). This approach is indeed consistent with the suggestions made by Piven (1981) and Scull (1984) in maintaining that the study of deviance should be reframed (Goffman 1974) within general societal processes, in a dynamic historical and political perspective.

Consequently, the analysis of political assassinations, as a particular form of deviance, will be made within a parallel analysis of power, morality, change, and stability. This is done explicitly in order to push the analysis in the direction of much-needed essentialism.

Hence, we shall next clarify a few theoretical issues which are focused on the problems of deviance, social change and stability, morality and power, and relativity. All these concepts are key terms in the sociological interpretation of political assassinations.

Deviance, Change, and Stability:
A Model of Culture and Symbolic-Moral Universes

Culture consists of all the shared material and nonmaterial objects and artifacts. Culture is eternally "changing more or less, acting as a point of reference for people engaged in interaction" (Becker 1986, p. 19). While culture implies consensus, solidarity and cooperation, dissension and conflict also are implied.

To interpret the concept of political assassinations in a societal and cultural context requires the assumption of a model of culture. Such a model should allow justifiable symbolic and interpretative analysis, while not being too complicated, a pattern originally suggested by Berger and Luckmann's concept of symbolic universes (1966).

An inherent quality of all cultures is that what is regarded as valued behavior changes, hence it becomes relativized—between and within cultures. One way of conceptualizing, and sociologically interpreting, this kaleidoscopic and eternally changing complex was indeed suggested by Berger and Luckmann (1966) and Scott (1972). Their emphasis is on the concept of symbolic universes.

Berger and Luckmann (1966, p. 113) characterize symbolic universes as:

> bodies of theoretical tradition that integrate different provinces of meaning and encompass the institutional order in a symbolic totality...symbolic processes are processes of signification that refer to realities other than those of everyday experience...the symbolic sphere relates to the most comprehensive level of legitimation.

These analysts further suggest the concept of "universe maintenance," claiming that when two, or more, contradicting symbolic universes (i.e., moral sets) meet, a conflict is unavoidable:

> heretical groups posit not only a theoretical threat to the symbolic universe, but a practical one to the institutional order legitimated by the symbolic universe in question (p. 124).

In other words, a specific symbolic universe helps its inhabitants to better understand their reality; to make sense out of what might otherwise seem senseless. A symbolic universe therefore provides its inhabitants with the necessary vocabularies of motives which are utilized by the inhabitants to explain and justify their past and future behavior. The different rhetorical devices used by inhabitants of different symbolic-moral universes would necessarily expose the cultural variance between these groups.[3]

Suggesting nihilation as a viable means to interpret, Berger and Luckmann (1966, p. 132) refer to attempts by inhabitants of one symbolic universe to use their power and legitimacy in order "to liquidate conceptually everything *outside* the same universe." A process of nihilation denies the legitimacy of reality constructions and interpretations, rhetorical devices and vocabularies of motives, which originate in other symbolic universes.

Complex cultures are characterized by the existence of multiple elective centers (Ben-Yehuda 1985, 1990; Cohen, Ben-Yehuda, and Aviad 1986), each enveloped by a specific symbolic-moral universe which demarcates its moral boundaries. These symbolic-moral universes promote alternative value and belief systems and advocate alternative lifestyles. Societal reactions to different behaviors, whether assumed or observed, will either redefine the moral boundaries of these symbolic-moral universes in a rigid way, or help to introduce elements of flexibility and

hence change. The social meaning of deviance in such societies becomes essentially and situationally problematic, both to members of society and to the sociologist (Rock 1973). Criminal law in a complex society, then, becomes increasingly relied upon as a formal mechanism of social control, integrating all those who live within its political jurisdiction (Hills 1980, p. 35). This conceptualization fits very well with the more general theoretical orientation of viewing deviance as a relative phenomenon within the context of societal change and stability. The perceived threat of real, imaginary, or assumed deviance is an important issue for basic boundary-maintaining or boundary-changing functions of deviance.

Viewed in this way, deviance and deviantization become central phenomena when two, or more, symbolic-moral universes meet, compete, negotiate, and clash. Members in each universe are interested not only in its survival but also in showing its moral superiority. Thus, members in different symbolic-moral universes are engaged in generating power and in attempts to widen their basis of legitimacy—that is, members in these symbolic-moral universes are involved in moral, power, and stigma contests (Schur 1980). The ability of members from different symbolic-moral universes to generate and use power, as well as their ability to legitimize their claims, will eventually determine who will be deviantized and criminalized and where and when this will occur. Thus, general consensus and acceptance of moral statements become difficult as the meaning and interpretation of various behaviors becomes problematic. The primary trait of such multi-centered cultures is change, with much effort invested to create feelings of likeness, common cause and cultural heritage.

The notion of deviance which emerges from this conceptualization is focused on an *interpretative analysis*[4] (Geertz 1973; Orcutt 1983, pp. 59–62; Walzer 1987) which implies that *deviance will be treated as a relative label, (or a rhetorical device), which is socially constructed.* A successful, enforceable social construction of deviance depends on the ability of one or more groups to use power to enforce their definition of morality on others. This process involves delineating and emphasizing boundaries between different symbolic-moral universes. In turn this theoretical approach implies that the process of negotiating a

moral meaning of rhetorical devices is continuous and ongoing between those who are defined as deviants and the social environment in which they live and function. Deviance, in this analytical perspective, always results from negotiations about morality *and* the configuration of power relationships.

In recent years a theoretical distinction developed within the sociology of deviance: between the so-called "objective" and "constructionist" views (for more on this see Best 1989, 1990; Goode 1989; Rafter 1990). The objective view is a variant of the positivist approach, quite close to functionalism. It assumes that "deviance" (or, more generally, "social problems") constitute an objective, measurable reality and particularly, that deviance consists of objective conditions and harm. On the other hand, we have the "constructionist" approach (also referred to as "subjective" or "relativist"). This approach maintains that deviance does not present the characteristics of a so-called objective reality and that deviance is the result of social collective definitions of what some organized members of a culture see as a harmful or dangerous condition(s). That is, the nature of what is, and what is not, defined as deviance is not a result of some objective conditions, but rather, is a social construction of different cultures. As Goode puts it: "to the subjectivist, a given condition need not even exist in the objective sense to be defined as a social problem" (1989:328). Both Goode (1989) and Best (1989) agree that there are two variants of the constructionist perspective. There is *strict* constructionism, and there is *contextual* constructionism. As Goode (1989:328–329) points out, the first variant argues that the expert, or scientific evaluation, of deviance as such simply represents one "claim making" activity out of many such activities. This view argues that scientific claims are also socially constructed, as other claims, and can be studied as such. The second variant argues that while deviance and social problems are the results of claim making activities, the so-called objective dimension can be assessed and evaluated by an expert, on the basis of some scientific evidence. Sociologists working from this theoretical perspective typically contrast the objective and the "constructed" versions of reality.

The theoretical view taken in this book is very close to contextual constructionism. While chapter two focuses on claim

making—part 2, chapters 11 and 12 also present the facts that form the basis for constructionism.

Deviance as a Relative Rhetoric

The implication of this theoretical stand is relativistic, and negates the opposite absolutist, or normative and narrower approach which basically takes the existence of deviance as an objective, nonproblematic (and typically measurable) reality.[5] In Thio's terms (1988:21), the perspective presented here is modern, emphasizing relativism, subjectivism, and voluntarism. In simpler terms, this work emphasizes that deviance is a relative phenomenon, that the subjective perspectives of the social actors who are intimate partners to the deviance process is of crucial importance and, finally, that so-called "deviants" are not primarily products of processes over which they had little, or no, control but instead that—to a large extent—the process of becoming deviant is voluntary.

While the constructionist and relative conception of deviance seems almost self evident, especially for modern sociologists of deviance, it has been attacked. Theoretical approaches which typically take the existence of deviance as nonproblematic (e.g., positivism) do not usually adopt the relative position. In 1975, Wellford attributed to the labeling approach (which has been *the* carrier of the relativistic flag in the sociology of deviance) the following stand: "no act is intrinsically criminal...[because]...crime is a form of behavior defined by the powerful to control the powerless" (p. 334; see also Pearce 1976). The concept of deviance which is presented in this book implies that the designation of a particular form of behavior as deviant is the result of a long process of negotiation. This process means that the powerless can resist deviantization. Political assassinations provide a splendid example for how, in fact, the powerless can use a pointed deadly force to try and change the course of history.

There is, perhaps, nothing better than political assassinations to realize how deviance can, indeed, be conceptualized as a socially constructed and relative rhetorical device. What one particular individual, or group, may zealously view as a fully justified political assassination, other individuals, or groups, may view (in no

less zeal) as a simple, cold-blooded, and totally unjustified, murder. In chapter three we shall survey quite a few existing rhetorical devices which are employed, in different cultures, to interpret acts of taking other people's life against their will. "Political assassination" is just one more device, among many.

Deviance and Moral Boundaries

The analytical approach taken in this analysis entails an implicit assumption that deviance, and reactions to it, do not necessarily have to be viewed as "bad" but can be viewed as "good" as well. The definition and evaluation of the results of deviance become relativised and depend, to a large extent, on the point of view, and interests, of the evaluator. In other words, the symbolic-moral universe of the evaluator becomes a crucial variable when it comes to an assessment of the act. The problem of deviance and moral boundaries is one of conceptualization. Is the social construction of deviance, and reactions to it, aimed primarily to stabilize moral boundaries and help induce moral and normative rigidity, or is it aimed primarily to help induce change in moral boundaries and help to create moral and normative flexibility? In a short micro-level question we can re-phrase this dilemma: Is the assassin (deviant) a negative and dangerous *criminal*, or is he/she a *revolutionary* hero? As I have already indicated before (1990), the answer to this question is quite complex and depends on the specific combination of a few variables. This, perhaps, is one of the *most* problematic questions regarding political assassinations, and some bitter arguments focused around it. For example, do we interpret the behavior of the assassins of such figures as Archduke Ferdinand, Trotsky, Sadat, Bernadotte, Kennedy, Aldo Moro, Olaf Palme as political? criminal? insane? religiously fanatic? revolutionary? No less important is *who* is making the interpretation and *why*.

Traditional theories of deviance have either emphasized the "negative" aspect of deviance (that is, its capacity to produce processes which enhance social rigidity), or took it for granted. The view that deviance can be "positive," even in the sense of helping a process of societal change into being and change societal symbolic-moral boundaries as well, not to mention power, is less widespread.[6] This positive side of deviance was illuminated

originally by Durkheim's statements on deviance—that is, that deviance can be "functional" in helping a societal reaction into being in a way which either reaffirms moral boundaries and hence promotes social rigidity, or changes them thereby inducing cultural flexibility. These different viewpoints were further amplified by Erikson's work (1966), as well as by others. Political assassinations can be viewed as a form of negative deviance, however, it may also be viewed as a positive deviance. For example, the murder of a brutal, cruel, corrupt, and stupid tyrant, or as speeding up a necessary and positive revolution.[7]

While many scholars followed the idea of reactions to deviance as attempts to enhance social stability and rigidity (e.g., Erikson 1966; Bergesen 1984), fewer followed the idea of deviance as producing normative change and flexibility. Coser (1962) and Douglas' works are clear exceptions. Coser pointed out that deviance may contribute to what he called "normative flexibility." Douglas, much more explicitly, suggests the term "creative deviance": "Deviance is the mutation that is generally destructive of society, but it is also the only major source of creative adaptations of rules to new life situations" (p. 60). Political assassins, in fact, frequently have in mind the idea of inducing or preventing a process of social and political change by their act.

I have indeed examined previously (1985, 1990) how social constructions of deviance, and societal reactions to it, could be *interpreted* as important and essential ingredients in social processes of change and stability. As we shall see later, the topic of political assassinations includes both aspects of Durkheim's idea in it; that is deviance as a major ingredient in processes of social change and of social stability. This particular topic provides a critical focus for power struggles and for bitter arguments about the moral boundaries of the Jewish community in Palestine (Yishuv) and in Israel. Political assassinations mark the boundaries of the acceptable and unacceptable, of good and bad, of deviance as leading to change or to stability.

Politics and Deviance; Power and Morality

Analyzing political assassinations from a sociological point of view places this study not only within the general area of the

sociology of deviance, but within the particular subarea of politics and deviance. This is so because in that area power and morality play an open and explicit role in determining what would, and what would not, be considered as deviance. Viewing political assassinations as such (and not as "murder" for example), typically involves bitter, and explicit, arguments about morality and power.

The concept of power is essential to the area of politics and deviance because it basically helps us to understand who can deviantize who. The concept of power alone, however, is insufficient. Power must be legitimized, and symbolic-moral universes (or morality) provide that legitimacy. In this perspective, we may view many different centers enveloped by corresponding symbolic-moral universes, which confront, conflict, and negotiate with one another. During the negotiations among symbolic-moral universes power may be generated and moral boundaries compromised. This conceptualization means that it is not always the case that the powerful would necessarily deviantize the powerless. The powerless may persuade inhabitants of other symbolic-moral universes of the "truth" of their cause, and/or be engaged themselves in the generation of power, and negotiate a settlement. Discussing politics and deviance necessitates using the concepts of power and morality in the most explicit way (see Ben-Yehuda 1990).

As I have pointed out elsewhere (1990:62–63): "the area of politics and deviance [can be characterized] as follows: Problematic behavioral acts, which take place at the realm of the seams, where different moral boundaries touch, or from the periphery of a moral universe towards its center and vice versa, and which involve challenges (or abuse) of power and morality would fall into the area of politics and deviance." This area was divided into two separate divisions: political elements in so-called regular deviance (1990:65–71) and political deviance proper (1990:71–94). Generally speaking, the degree to which a particular form of deviance will be regarded as political depends, first of all, on how explicitly and clearly this act challenges the power structure and symbolic order, of a particular symbolic moral universe. Political deviance proper consists of three classes of deviant acts. One class consists of acts done by one person, or a group, in the periphery and which challenge the authority and legitimacy of

those in the center. Such assassinations as those of Robert Kennedy by Sirhan Sirhan on June 5, 1968, Julius Caesar in March of 44 B.C., Martin Luther King by James Earl Ray on April 4, 1968, and Mohandas K. Gandhi on January 30, 1948, exemplify this class. Political assassinations as a tool to change policy was used by the Sicarii (to be discussed in chapter 5), some Bulgarian (particularly during the 1920s, see Ford 1985: 259–261) and prerevolution Russian underground movements (e.g., the *Narodnaya Volya* from 1878 onwards, see Ford 1985:227–230). These acts usually aim at transforming symbolic-moral universes and changing moral boundaries. The second class consists of deviant acts by those in the center who were invested with power and legitimacy and are, supposedly, the guardians of the symbolic-moral universe and its boundaries. Sometimes these guardians may abuse their power and twist and mock their moral obligations, committing despised and harmful acts of deviance. State sponsored terrorism, executions, and assassinations fall into this class. The reign of terror induced by Stalin is an illustration. The third class involves a clash between social actors from two or more different and opposing symbolic-moral universes (or cultures) (1990:256). Genocide will be in this category. As we shall see later in this book, political assassinations and executions can be found in these classes.

The designation of particular behavioral patterns as deviant contains some important, although often implicit, political elements—that is, elements of power and morality. Exposing these elements is not always an easy task. Thus, the very attempt of defining a particular behavioral pattern as deviant is inherently a political act. This attempt is based on using power to impress the view of a specific symbolic-moral universe upon other universes. Applying a process of deviantization does not, however, necessarily mean that the application would be successful and culminate in the actual identification of one person (or group) as deviant because this process can be reversed (e.g., see Ben-Yehuda 1987).

The Natural History of Crime Approach

Faithfulness to one of my original delimiters, that of adhering to an approach which describes and interprets deviance within its

natural setting, necessitated choosing a particular approach: that of the natural history of crime approach.

I deliberately and intentionally will not only give the descriptive information required to understand each of the cases of the political assassinations, but will also adhere—whenever possible—to the natural history of crime approach in each case. In each of the cases I will try to describe the "reasons" given for the assassinations, how the decision to assassinate was made, and what happened later. I also tried to assess the impact of the assassinations. I thus followed the above approach, trying to observe how the pattern of deviant behavior emerged, how and when it flourished, and how the pattern of political assassinations weakened or died.[8] Adhering to this approach would yield a rigorous historical reconstruction of the period under question, focusing on political assassinations, as well as on the relevant political and social events and processes which are required for a better understanding and interpretation of the assassinations.

Cullen argues that it is not sufficient to describe a particular form of deviance. He maintains that it is equally important to try and find out why a *specific* form of deviance was chosen rather than another form (1983). Following Cullen's work, I shall try indeed to answer the question of why were political assassinations "chosen" as a particular form of deviance, and not something else. Partially, this approach would also help us to avoid the problem of falling into the interesting trap of fascinating phenomenalism proper (mentioned earlier), and to consider total social structures. This is so because the problems of functional equivalents and alternative courses of action, are linked to issues which are inherent to social structures (e.g., opportunities and pressures to deviate, as well as questions of social justice).

PLAN OF THE BOOK,
LOGIC AND ORDER OF PRESENTATION

Previous works on political assassination events either focused in detail on one particular case (e.g., the assassination of J. F. Kennedy, Abraham Lincoln, Aldo Moro, etc.), or gave very brief and telegraphic information about many cases from different cul-

tures (e.g., Ford 1985; Heaps 1969; Kirkham, Levy, and Crotty 1970:301–325). Some gave relatively much information about a few cases (e.g., Havens, Leiden, and Schmitt 1970; Hyams 1969). These approaches are often quite confusing and unsatisfactory because they provide a problematic basis for generalizations.

Clearly, one must have enough information to allow justifiable and persuasive generalizations to be made. Since I am committed to the approach that deviance must be presented and interpreted within the broader cultural matrix where it occurred, political assassination events must also be understood and interpreted within the culture in which they have taken place. Lack of a true understanding of the relevant culture, and a reification of the background for the assassination, would limit any meaningful interpretation. For example, even in one of the very few cases in this study where we could attribute an assassination plot to a certified "crazy" person, as in the case of Galili's attempts on Uri Avneri's life in 1974 and 1975 (see case no. 89), the historical and political background became crucial for verifying and understanding the case. It is important, even in this case, to understand who Avneri was, what was the background of Galili as this understanding gives us a much better insight into the motivations of the different actors who participated in this dramatic assassination, and the vocabularies of motives which they used.

In addition, the chronic lack of a good working definition of political assassination events helped to confuse the issue even further. Hence, we started this research project with a very strong theoretical emphasis that gave us the necessary, and indispensable, clear cut and replicable criteria required for the decision about which cases to include in the study.

The above considerations dictated a strategy which emphasized the need to provide short—however accurate, reliable, and dependable—descriptions of the different cases, as well as the *relevant* social context in which they happened. The value of this approach rests with several considerations.

This book is divided into three major parts. The first part consists of three chapters which introduce the reader into the theoretical framework, the definition of political assassinations (in a comparative perspective) and the methodology. The second part presents all the cases we have located of political assassina-

tions and executions. The third part integrates the first and second parts into one analysis. It presents the statistical description of the aggregate cases, and provides a detailed sociological interpretation for the data. In this structure, the major premises of a contextual constructionist perspective are met. While somewhat unusual in structure, the structure of this book is meant to answer all the deficiencies of previous texts that were, and will be, mentioned. I would strongly urge the reader to read the sociological and historical tales in the second part. There is nothing better in terms of acquainting oneself with the historical reality in question than reading this part. Moreover, because of the theoretical approach adopted here, that is a natural history of crime and a grounded theory, reading this part will reconstruct the historical reality in a vivid and detailed manner. It will make reading the third part much more meaningful. However, those wishing to skip reading part 2, are more than welcome to read parts 1 and 3 only.

The book is structured in a way that is meant to highlight the important aspects of an historical-sociological study of political assassinations in one culture.

First, it is meant to expose the reader to the major facts (including references for possible future work), hence providing an important resource for a detailed analysis of cases of political assassination events within one cultural matrix, something which has never been done before in this scope and magnitude. Second, the detailed descriptions would provide a deeper understanding of, and insight into, the nature of the different competing symbolic-moral universes, their clashings, negotiations, and co-existence. As we shall see, victims of assassination plots always marked the boundaries between different symbolic-moral universes. Third, it would provide the reader a strong, fascinating and interesting, entrance into the history of the State of Israel from a very peculiar and unique point of view and vivify the background atmosphere for the different periods, so necessary to understand the cases. Fourth, this background becomes crucial when it comes to reaching conclusions. The information gathered from the different cases enables one to draw much broader sociological conclusions regarding the nature of political assassinations within a particular culture. Finally, the story of political

assassination events has a few dozen of good and fascinating sociological plots which simply need to be told.

Obviously, descriptions of the different cases is limited. The wealth of information about some assassinations (e.g., those of De Hahn, Arlosoroff, Giladi) is such that one could easily write a whole book on each one of them. Other cases are very poorly documented because the relevant information was not available. Thus, the presentation of the different cases is not always balanced in terms of length of presentation and information about the cases themselves. The danger of creating only an encyclopedia for the subject is counter balanced by the theoretical emphasis.

The order of presentation is historical—from the first cases to the most recent ones. I found this type of presentation the easiest to digest, as well as the most comprehensible, fluent, and coherent. An important analytical commitment of this work is to present the natural history of crime, and to view deviance within the natural historical and political context in which it occurred. This commitment requires a chronological order of presentation. Furthermore, and as far as was possible, each case can be read and understood independently of other cases. The "price" of choosing this strategy was that a minimal level of some repetition in a few cases could not be avoided. However, the gain in the creation of independent presentations justifies this strategy.

We shall cover in this survey a period of about one hundred years of renewed Jewish life in Palestine-Israel. The chronologically ordered sequence of presentation is grouped in part 2 of the book and is divided into seven chapters. Chapter 4 gives a brief general historical background. Chapter 5 will give the necessary background of political assassinations in the Tanach (the Hebrew Bible), the Sicarii and in Europe up to 1948. Chapter 6 covers a period which ranges from 1892 until 1918. It includes the period of renewed Jewish settlement in Palestine under Turkish occupation and ends with the British conquest and occupation of the land. Chapter 7 covers a period which ranges from 1919 till 1948, which includes the most important period of the British occupation of Palestine. Chapter 8 covers a period which ranges from 1949 till 1988, which is the period of the establishment, crystallization and consolidation of the State of Israel. Chapters 6, 7, and 8 report on a total of ninety-one cases alto-

gether. To make the ninety-one cases appear in a more condensed way, the reader will find in the Appendix three diagrams which detail in brief *all* the ninety-one cases. The diagrams are useful for a quick search for particular cases. Chapter 9 details the cases we have of state sponsored political executions. Finally, in chapter 10 I shall compare terrorism to political assassinations, I shall review two problematic categories: those that look like political assassinations but are not, and unconfirmed cases. This part of the book will present the empirical base for this study. The actual analysis, descriptive statistics and interpretations, will be provided in part 3. Faithfulness to the *contextual construc-tionism* approach necessitates a presentation of the objective data, the way they were socially constructed, and an integration of the historical data with the sociological interpretation. Part 3 of the book is aimed to achieve this integration.

Researching and writing the different cases demonstrates the validity of the analytical stand which states that it is very diffi-cult to have a good understanding of deviance without under-standing the relevant context in which it took place. Hence in each case we tried, within a limited space, to provide such a con-struction so that the total effect of the cases would be that of a "reliving the past" experience (Zunz 1985). Whenever I could, I went to the actual places where the assassinations took place, especially in Jerusalem, to the point where my colleagues began to refer to my trips in the city as the "assassination tours." Whenever possible, I gave the contemporary name of the street, placed together with the older one.

Many of the assassinations were committed by actors from particular groups, characterized by specified symbolic-moral uni-verses. When the involvement of a group was confined to one case only, I usually described the group within the account of the case itself. However, there were groups which were involved in many cases. Chapter 4 provides a short and general description of these groups. Following the presentation of the different cases in part 2, it becomes possible to extract the position and appara-tus these groups had regarding political assassination. This pre-sentation, which is an extension of the discussion in chapter 4, will appear in part 3 (chapter 12). There, its digestion will become easier.

Choosing the cases was completely guided and dictated by the definition developed for the characterization of political assassination events (chapter 2). All the cases were classified into the four categories presented in chapter 2: (1) "preplanning"; (2) "planning"; (3) "unsuccessful"; (4) "successful."

MAIN RESULTS OF THE STUDY

To make reading of the following chapters more productive, this section details the main findings of this study, so that the reader would be more sensitized to the construction of the cases themselves. The *full* set of findings, and the sociological interpretations will be presented in part 3.

The first cluster of conclusions refers to the pattern of political assassination events as a particular form of killing. These events exhibit a unique pattern: the "typical" political assassination event tends to take place in the morning or the evening of a Monday or a Friday, in the month of March (or May). The frequency of the assassination events was magnified in the years 1939, 1947, and less so in 1944 and 1946. The overwhelmingly preferred weapon was a hand gun (or a bomb). Typically, the event took place in one of the large urban centers. Tel Aviv came first, to be followed by Jerusalem and Haifa. While most British targets were hit in the Jerusalem area, the Jewish targets were hit, typically, in the Tel Aviv area (and much less so in the Haifa area). Chances were that only the specific target was hit. However, the use of a mine/bomb, or explosive envelops, increased the probability that innocent bystanders would be hit. Most victims were not very prominent males, over forty years old with families. Only a very small and insignificant minority of the victims were females, reflecting the fact that females remained overwhelmingly outside the major Jewish-Arab-British conflict before 1948. There were no female victims after 1948.

The second cluster of findings relates to the events and their interpretation. The rhetorical device "political assassination" can in fact be used to describe quite a few cases of this particular form of killing in the cultural matrix of Judaism, in Palestine-Israel. However, the prevalence of political assassinations is not

very high *compared* to some other cultures (e.g., in some South American societies, where one could even find so-called "assassination squads"; or in some Muslim Mediterranean societies).

The majority of known cases do *not* involve a lone fanatic killer, but constitute a premeditated, planned act, committed by a group or by a representative of a group. Thus, the specific pattern of assassinations which emerges from this research is a very interesting one. I chose to call it *collective political assassinations* since most cases involve more than one assassin. While the actual assassin may be only one, in most cases this person is linked very intimately to a *group* which plans the assassination, gives the assassins a much needed moral support, the vocabularies of motives needed to perform the task, as well as shelter and the means needed to execute the plan of assassination. In many cases the victim was warned, sometimes more than once. The fact that most cases involve a group, usually quite secretive, makes it very difficult to fully and thoroughly document the cases.

The assassins typically felt as part of a specific symbolic-moral universe, and the act signified the boundaries not only of that universe but of a larger cultural matrix as well (e.g., see Ben-Yehuda 1985). The rhetorical device called political assassination, as it has existed among Jews in the land of secular miracles, is associated to a similar pattern that had existed in Europe: an assassin who operates as part of, or representing, a larger more or less crystallized symbolic-moral universe.

Two "reasons" for assassinations are salient: (a) revenge and a warning signal; (b) prevention of, or interference in, a process of social or political change represented or proposed by the victim. Moreover, the fact that many cases occurred *after* the potential victim did something, was warned, and that therefore most cases were considered as *revenge* as well as a warning sign implies that there is a "strange" system of "justice" in operation here.

Political assassination, as a particular rhetorical device, is invoked to explain and justify acts that seem like justice to the assassins in situations where they felt that they could not get a fair justice because the opportunities for such justice were felt to be blocked. It is as if an alternative system of justice was put into

operation. Being secret and collective, however, makes it very difficult to fully expose in detail the ways through which this system works.

The dramatic fact which emerges from the study is that after the State of Israel was formally established, the incidence of political assassination events declined very sharply and significantly.

Before 1949, most cases were committed by the three main pre-State underground Jewish groups, with Lehi the most prominent one. However, the overwhelming number of persons assassinated, especially by Lehi, were Jews. This conclusion is quite surprising to say the least. A major challenge to the sociological interpretation will be directed at resolving this puzzle.