

DE GRUYTER
OLDENBOURG

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Yitzhak Sternberg, Olaf Glöckner (Eds.)*

HANDBOOK OF ISRAEL: MAJOR DEBATES

TWO VOLUMES

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Handbook of Israel: Major Debates

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Handbook of Israel: Major Debates

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Volume 1

Part A: Cleavages

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The project "Handbook of Israel: Major Debates" has been generously funded by the Moses Mendelssohn Foundation, Erlangen/Berlin.

ISBN 978-3-11-035160-6

e-ISBN (PDF) 978-3-11-035163-7

e-ISBN (EPUB) 978-3-11-038338-6

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A CIP catalog record for this book has been applied for at the Library of Congress.

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.dnb.de> abrufbar.

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Cover image: thinkstock, alexdndz

Typesetting: bsix information exchange GmbH, Braunschweig

www.degruyter.com

Foreword

Israel is one of the most disputed settings in the world. Its presence in the media is incommensurate with its geographic and demographic size. Any event in the region, any incident within or without, is immediately the focus of attention from the world media. The Israelis themselves are, as a rule, avid consumers of news who debate among themselves the significance of almost every issue reaching the public agenda. The opinions are anything but consensual: the harshest oppositions, denials, and confrontations animate the country's public life, and beyond it, the Jewish world as a whole in tandem with world opinion.

This is the context in which this Handbook is aimed at presenting major issues that divide the academic community with respect to the analysis of Israeli society. It consists of thirteen topics grouped into three parts – “Cleavages,” “The Challenge of Post-Zionism,” and “Israel Outward” – that discuss questions ranging from the nature of Israeli democracy to the role of religion in the state and society. For each topic, we present high-standard contributions from most experienced and renowned scholars working on the various aspects considered. These scholars represent a range of prevailing contradictory views of the issues under consideration. For each topic, several scholars were asked to contribute an essay revealing their perspective.

In this complex task, we are grateful to the members of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Handbook, and of course to De Gruyter Oldenbourg for its encouragement and kind readiness to extend the utmost help all along this long-term undertaking. We wish to thank Diana Rubanenko for her efficient work on translations and language editing and her continuous agreeable and cooperative disposition.

Last but not least, the academic editors of this handbook are immensely grateful to the Editorial Manager, Anne

Weberling, for her dedicated, most efficient and outstanding work on this project.

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General Introduction

A case of interest

In many respects, Israel is a highly complex societal case. To validate this assessment, it suffices to consider the very premises that led to its creation.

Israel is a state that was founded by Jews with the declared intention of creating a homeland for Jews dispersed across the world. In this, Zionists saw themselves as the “vanguard” of the Jewish people and, as such, they defined themselves as firmly anchored in Judaism. Zionism thus fully endorsed the principle of the religion-people unity that has always been of primordial importance in Judaism.¹ For historical Judaism, religious faith circumscribed the contours of the Jewish people and determined its collective uniqueness. “The Jews,” says Saadia Gaon,² “are a people only thanks to their Torah (God’s teachings).” Religious commandments also required allegiance to the Land of Israel as both the past and the destiny of the people. On the other hand, Jewish monotheism represented a universalistic horizon: the Jews saw themselves as carrying the teaching of the universal God. This contradiction of the particularism of the People of God and the universalism of God led to the vision that the Jewish nation’s redemption signifies, by the same token, the redemption of the world. In this, the Jewish people constituted the “Chosen People,” and its observance of divine obligations would redeem humanity: in brief, a superior caste system³ merging language, ideas, and symbols, with given individual practices, behavioral patterns, and institutional features. The term “caste” responds to what Dumont (1977) considers as an entity that sees itself as part of a larger system in which its aspirations have general “transcendental” impacts.

With the advent of the modern era and Jewish emancipation, many Jews began examining the “deep

structures” of Jewish identity in new ways, and questioned the validity of traditional assessments. The first question was whether Jews were still primarily a religious entity – as asserted over centuries – or rather a social and cultural community. A second question inquired about the present-day singularity of the collective. Growing cohorts of Jews now saw in Judaism essentially a culture, a set of symbols, and a historical legacy rather than a religion. A third question concerned the allegiance to the Land of Israel and the definition of any location outside it as *galut*, i.e., exile. Some Jews wondered whether that token is a metaphor for the quest for a genuine and secure home. Out of the numerous approaches to these three issues⁴ – from Enlightenment and Reform to the Bund – Zionism would in time take the lead among a large part of the Jewish world.⁵

Zionism proposed a national solution. From the traditions, it retained the definition of Jewish life outside the land as “exile,” but instead of relying on observance of the religious commandments in the hope that the “Messiah will come,” it called for the resettlement of Jews in the ancient Land of Israel. To a certain extent, Zionism borrowed this association of nationhood and territory from European nationalisms that effectively corresponded to traditional Judaism’s longing for “Return.”⁶ This phrasing of traditional aspirations in a mode of modern nationalism appealed to large circles of Jewish youth in Eastern Europe, who conducted a kind of transformation by translating the traditional codes into a set of new practical exigencies.

Yet, through the very break with traditional Judaism by seeking redemption independent of religious devotion, Zionism remained attached to Judaism’s basic identity exigencies. It offered a secular and political alternative to the religious aspiration of Return, toward the “Promised Land.” In other words, Zionism exited the caste syndrome, but not Judaism. This move, however, was also – and still is – a source of acute polemics: the ultra-Orthodox have not only opposed Zionism, they have also joined it, *de facto*, by constituting what is by now an important component of the population. This segment continues – under new terms and

conditions – to fight on behalf of the status and influence of traditional Judaism among Jews worldwide, and especially in Israel where they found the ideal conditions for flourishing.

In at least one respect, Zionism is at a disadvantage vis-à-vis traditional Judaism. The caste model links the redemption of the Jews to that of the whole world; Zionism aspires to Jewish redemption alone – the “normalization of the Jewish people.” The price is the exposure of Zionism to the criticism of those who see it as a form of “collective assimilation” into the non-Jewish world on the basis of the latter’s principles. The classic Zionist leaders responded by claiming that it was their intention to build an “enlightened society” that would be “a light unto the nations.” That was what “normalization of the Jewish people” was about.⁷ By taking up this challenge, that combined modern secular contents with Jewish inspiration, the Zionists presented an ideological alternative to the view of the Jewish nation as the carrier of the promise of messianic redemption.

One must of course add to those circumstances the impact on culture and identity of the Shoah, a most, if not *the* most dramatic event for the Jewish world experience ever. For any Jew, it meant the destruction of a world.⁸ For Zionists, that event was first interpreted as the outcome of the precarity of the diaspora condition, but because Zionism is inconceivable without world Jewish solidarity, it could not avoid sustaining the memory of the Shoah, and even built the very legitimacy of the Zionist program on that memory, which inevitably became part of the Jewish state’s rituals⁹ as a major marker of the singularity of the Jewish contemporary experience.¹⁰

And yet, ever since the first waves of Zionist immigrants reached the country, new models were developing that dug a divide between Diaspora Jewry and the Jews of Palestine (later Israel) who wished to concretize the making of a “new Jewish nation.” The primary model was the revival of Hebrew as the legitimate national tongue¹¹ and its development into a spoken vernacular. Enjoying the status of the Jews’ biblical language – used as such in every synagogue and at every festive event anywhere in the Jewish world – Hebrew, now also used as a

vernacular, managed to impose itself on every newcomer.¹² Like Hebrew, many other traditional patterns were similarly “modernized” and “secularized,” and given all-Jewish national meanings.¹³ Through all these, Zionism could draw a distinction between the “Jewish people” in general, and the “Jewish nation” in the land.

In the opinion of most Zionist movements – leftist as well as religious and rightist – their implementation would promote a culturally unified nation based on the integration *à la jacobine* of the hundreds of thousands of immigrants, from dozens of different origins, who arrived in the late 1940s and during the 1950s and 1960s.¹⁴ However, the efforts to unify that new population linguistically and culturally contributed both to integration and division: the unifying approaches produced new distinctions. The “unifiers,” indeed, saw their own culture and social models as those deserving of imitation by others intent on integration, i.e., the models elaborated by the “pioneer generation” and their offspring. The latter, more particularly, the “native-born,” deemed themselves the “salt of the earth,” who assumed the bulk of the security burden vis-à-vis the Arab environment, and who shared a self-image of “non-diasporic” Jews liberated from the stereotypes that they themselves attached to Jews outside Israel.

Israeli culture, however, was still to undergo far-reaching transformations over the decades. The collectivistic approach that prevailed before independence and in early statehood gradually left increasing room for statism and eventually, for individualism. Statism means that the concept of “pioneer” was redefined to address anyone who “contributed” to the state in one way or another. Moreover, because Israel was born in war, it awarded a place of honor to the armed forces and the military elite. Mass immigration, that augmented the Jewish population threefold within a decade, also brought in many new groups with perspectives of their own. Last but not least, immigration and wars strengthened the country’s relations with the Jewish world.¹⁵

As a result of all these, “nativeness” inevitably lost much of its appeal, and the more so as the growing number of

Israelis born in the country depreciated the uniqueness of that attribute. Hence, more than a few individuals who had not internalized the *sabra* (nativist) version of Israeli culture (the meaning of which has always remained quite vague), whether they were born in Israel or elsewhere, have shown a tendency to distance themselves from this culture. Moreover, an important circumstance that increased that tendency even more was the rampant “middle-classicization” of Israel that took place as a consequence of the country’s development and modernization.¹⁶

Israel’s voluntary adoption of Western-style modernization – i.e., urbanization, expansion of education, and professionalization – indeed constituted a determinant factor of transformation. Members of the “1948 generation” (those who fought the War of Independence) gradually mutated into bureaucrats, politicians, and businesspeople. The original disdain for languages other than Hebrew was replaced by a strong aspiration to learn English, this epoch’s lingua franca, that became Israel’s second language – if not its first in certain areas of activity. English expressed, among other things, Israel’s intense relations with the outside world while its own language is spoken by one of the smallest national populations on earth. In present-day Israel, English has become no less than a marker of the privileged class.

These developments shed new light on Israel’s relations with the Jewish Diaspora. Zionism, originally, dichotomized the notions of Jewish peoplehood and Israeli nationhood: Jews who live in Israel and for whom Jewishness is a primary national identity receive, through that prism, a special status in the Jewish world where Jews are firstly American, French, or British.¹⁷ Over the years, however, this dichotomization has moderated, as the proportion of Israeli Jews has grown to 40% and more of world Jewry. Israelis, thereby, have ceased to constitute a restricted elite. On the other hand, Zionism also aspired to re-create a nation that fully integrates into its environment – that is, the Middle East; its determination in this respect cannot but weaken its ambition to head the Jewish world outside Israel, that is concentrated in the West.

Thus far, we have not yet addressed the diversity of the immigrants who arrived at different epochs, some from the Muslim world, others from Eastern Europe, and others from the West. Each of them altered the texture of the society and made it different from what it was before. Moreover, over the years, the minority of non-Jews, Muslim and Christian Arabs, as well as the Druze and smaller groups gained a stronger presence in society, and were more and more able to voice their claims and become active actors in the societal scene.

Last but not least, a factor of tremendous significance for Israel's development is of course its continuing state of belligerence with some of its neighbors, and above all, with the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This conflictual condition, that is prolonged by internal dissensions about which attitudes to adopt and articulate in this respect, is also a matter of confrontation among Israelis.

No wonder that this extraordinary complexity, not to speak of many other foci of disagreement, has sparked off harsh debates between researchers who tried their hand at the deciphering of Israeli reality.

A three-dimension structure

This work aspires to set the polemics raging in and around Israel into a framework that orders and clarifies them. Our intention is to respect each approach and grant it all the weight it can obtain through the power of its arguments. With the aim of making the discussions fruitful, we will however group those different attitudes according to their thematic convergences. We can indeed see three major axes of discussions among scholars who study and argue about Israel. One axis concerns cleavages. Revolving around this axis are discussions about the divisions in Israeli society, their contradictions, and the pressures they exert on the societal entity as a whole. The works grouped here contribute a spectrum of answers to the question of the extent to which Israel constitutes a socially and culturally viable entity, in light of the acrimonious disputes it experiences around basic issues,

where ambitious and determined actors confront each other. This group of works constitutes **Part A** of this Handbook, under the title “Cleavages,” and comprises Volume I.

The second axis consists of different and conflicting essays about the various aspects referring to the most burning question on Israel’s agenda – its very legitimacy as a Jewish state – and to the recent increasing criticism, manifested in the academy and elsewhere, toward Israel and Zionism. Here we have very discordant argumentations and our intention is to juxtapose them according to the specific issues these texts deal with. These are presented in Part B, under the title of “The Challenge of Post-Zionism.”

The third axis is by no means of less crucial importance in Israeli society. It deals with the nature of Israel’s relations with the Jewish and non-Jewish outside, as it is analyzed by protagonists of major trends in the academic literature about Israel. This Part C is entitled “Israel Outward.” Part B and Part C form Volume II of this Handbook.

Part A: Cleavages

As shown in the first part of this Handbook, that is focused on the major cleavages in Israeli society, there are various criteria according to which this society can be perceived as divided into different groups and cleavages. Above all, Jewishness itself is by no means monolithic, and one major cleavage consists of the differences among Israeli Jews stemming from interpretations of Judaism. Most often mentioned, in this respect, are the secular (*hiloni*), the traditional (*masorti*), the Orthodox national-religious and the ultra-Orthodox (*haredi*). To be sure, each category is subdivided according to the researchers' understanding. In particular, scholars also speak of the Ashkenazi-Mizrahi ethnic cleavage – that may be related in some way to forms of Jewish cults – as well as of more specific groups according to country and culture of origin. Commentators emphasize that Israel, as an immigrant society, is the meeting-place of Jews from all over the world who brought with them a variety of distinct Jewish and non-Jewish values and traditions. Among the relatively recent groups, one can mention speakers of French, Russian, and Amharic. Moreover, there are also non-Jewish population groups: the Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel, and the non-citizen migrant workers.

However, cleavages can be delineated not only by sociocultural differences but also by criteria such as socioeconomic or class situations, gender, and politicalideological attitudes. In certain cases there is an overlap between cleavages. Some scholars thus evince, for instance, that the socioeconomic cleavage cross-cuts the ethnic one, which, for others, is strongly related to the political right-left division.

Part A of the Handbook highlights scholarly debates concerning seven topics that relate to a variety of major cleavages in Israel.

Topic I focuses on Israeli culture, and addresses the question of how it should be described – in other words, what

are the influences that primarily account for that culture's development. In question form, to what extent is it Jewish, or specifically Israeli? To what extent is it Western and/or Middle-Eastern, and/or global? The answers to these issues draw on an understanding of Israel's sociocultural and ideological landscape, and draw on two fundamental debates. One of them is whether this culture draws primarily from the Jewish premises underlying Israel's creation, or rather from the new elements of language and culture that developed and continue to develop in the country – often antagonistically to “Diaspora Jewishness” – which is what “Israeliness” often stands for. This debate, of course, is rooted in a priori positions, reflected in analysts' understandings of the Israeli reality.

Another debate relating to present-day Israeli cultural references concerns the question of whether they are primarily influenced by, or in fact duplicate, models of modernity originating in the West and, more generally, the major features of contemporary globalization, or are they also significantly marked by aspects of the culture predominant in its immediate environment – i.e., Eastern values and traditions. The critical facet of this debate resides in its significance for the self-definition of cultural identity for an important part of the population – Jews who originated in Middle East countries, and Israeli Arabs who take for granted, at least in terms of culture and language, that they belong to Israel's wide environment.

The essays that address the issues of **Topic I** lead to the concerns of **Topic II** which centers on the relations between state and religion in Israel. This matter is also a major area of disputes and divergences between scholars, as among Israelis in general. It firstly revolves, among Jews, around the divide between the religious and the non-religious, and their respective questionings of the singularity of Jewishness as the foundation for forming a national collective. Among the religious, one finds many individuals – including academics – who aspire to see in the Jewish faith the ultimate justification for Israel's existence and the guide of its practical policies. On the other hand, more than a few ultra-Orthodox adhere to the

traditional conviction that the national project is a betrayal of Jews' work toward Messianic Redemption by means of strict observance of the divine commandments. Among intellectuals of this ilk as well, not only among rabbinical leaders, one finds individuals who subscribe to that belief. On the other hand, academics at a distance from religious trends are often uneasy about rejecting any link of the Jewish collective identity – whatever its formulation – with the Jewish religion. As a result, the question of the status of religion vis-à-vis the state remains a pending issue that has not yet found a form of definitive institutionalization. This is the context where different approaches, often genuinely antagonistic, diverge over the question of state-religion relations and interpret them in contrastive terms.

In the wake of the debates presented up to now, **Topic III** examines, again under the light of different and often contradictory approaches, the kind of multiculturalism that applies to Israel. This country, indeed, constitutes a setting where many origins and different religious or non-religious perspectives rub shoulders with each other: a national minority itself divided into Muslim, Christian, and Druze communities, a deeply divided ultra-Orthodox sector, a national-religious population, a large proportion of people originating from Christian-European countries and another from Muslim countries, an important contingent of immigrants from the Former Soviet Union alongside another from Ethiopia. This diversity represents a tremendous challenge for societal cohesion, a theme discussed and analyzed by researchers from very different perspectives. As a rule, all of them ask – and answer differently – about the extent to which this mosaic reflects a sense of an overall community.

Topic IV continues this debate by focusing more particularly on the sociocultural cleavage, and addressing the issue of (un)fairness among ethnic groups. Scholars ask to what extent the mosaic portrayed above reflects a sense of equality, or perhaps attests to the dominance of some groups over others. This area of problems is much discussed, both within the general public and among researchers. There is, in Israel, a recurring argument on the part of some academics,

associations, and public figures about the “original sin” of the old elites that, whether intentionally or not, encouraged the immigration of groups possessing low human capital in order to recruit lower-status strata. Conversely, other academics and parties argue for the importance of the Zionist ideal as the major motivation driving the country’s immigration policy. Another aspect of this dispute is whether the ethnic socioeconomic gap between Ashkenazi and Mizrahi Jews should be explained mainly by what occurred within Israel – the policies and actions of the dominant group – or by attributes of the immigrants themselves. The contentions of all participants in this debate reveal important aspects of this society’s development.

Not unrelated to that latter debate, **Topic V** deals with the issue of social (in)-justice in Israeli society, from different perspectives. It raises the question of whether Israel is or is not animated by a preoccupation with social justice; this issue is debated harshly by scholars of different orientations. This discussion is intimately linked to perceptions of Israel’s class structure. Some scholars – who are contradicted by others – point out that much of the national economy is controlled by a few powerful corporations and that the percent of households below the poverty line fluctuates between a quarter and a third. On the other hand, “blue-collar” workers are a minority, and a large majority of Israelis belongs to the “non-proletarian” classes. A crucial aspect of this class structure is its partial overlapping with ethnic cleavages – i.e., given populations are statistically overrepresented among the have-nots.

The gender cleavage is another major feature of Israeli society. **Topic VI** presents several contrasting views within Israeli feminism. During the pre-state period, when utopian ideologies played crucial roles in social endeavors, Israel indeed raised the banner of gender equality. But with the institutionalization of the state, the arrival of immigrants from patriarchal societies and, above all, the constant outbreaks of hostilities that occur in the environment, masculine values have largely superseded that original inter-gender egalitarian ethos. Hence, recent decades have seen a recrudescence of academic works focusing on the difficulties and obstacles

barring the way to gender equality. These works, however, are far from uniform, and reflect highly diverse perspectives that focus on different aspects, and also adopt very different tones. In short – a debate in its own right.

Topic VII deals with the question of the Israeli polity's continuity, especially following the 1977 upheaval, and the eventual turnabout and discontinuous developments that brought this society to horizons not originally anticipated. New political-ideological blocs that have formed over the past five-six decades have granted new saliency to elements that were of minor importance in early periods, and this in tandem with the entry into public life of given groups of leaders and militant frameworks. These new evolutions should not necessarily be seen as disrupting longstanding trends, and the very question of the relation of the new to the old is one of the most interesting debates among scholars of the Israeli reality. Moreover, while some defined the crucial change of direction as simultaneous with the Six-Day War of 1967, others cite the 1977 elections that removed from power the long-ruling left-of-center dominant party and installed right-wing parties at the state's helm. The question that scholars debate in this respect is whether or not those new political circumstances represent a genuine break with earlier phases of Israel's development. Several divergent positions engage with this topic here.

Part B: The Challenge of Post-Zionism

Following the 1967 War and the 1977 political upheaval, and their consequences, one can find a growing volume of academic literature – Israeli as well as non-Israeli – that exhibits criticism of Zionism and the State of Israel. As the occupation of the West Bank and the Jewish settlement project there grew ever more permanent and salient, they strengthened the tendency among extensive circles of academics and cultural agents to delegitimize the Zionist project and the country's policies. The debates now being held around the emergence of these contentions have become an issue discussed regularly in both academic publications and the media. Hence, Part B of the Handbook is dedicated to the polemics produced by that growing trend in academy as well as in the educated public, that actually challenge the traditional arguments of the Zionist and mainstream Israel narratives. These polemics cover a wide range of issues, and their participants, from a diversity of angles, are associated to varying degrees with the general post-Zionist perspective.

Topic VIII (the first topic of this section) addresses the question whether Israel is a militaristic society. The number of military confrontations between Israel and its neighboring states and the Palestinians, has made belligerence a definitive aspect of the routine life of the citizenry, and it consists of large-scale wars and dozens of more restricted confrontations. Scholars debate the impact of the ongoing hostilities not only on the role of the military, the security forces, and their commanders in Israeli society, but also its influence on the mind-set of politicians and citizens and its social consequences in all areas of life. One important debate, for instance, concerns how far the military hierarchy and elite have become a decisive factor in the shaping and evolving of society. How far do major Israeli statesmen tend to render various spheres of activity into quasi-military challenges? How far does the general public as a whole follow suit, and is motivated to adopt militaristic values and views? In other words, to what

extent does contemporary Israel illustrate a militaristic state? The texts that explore this issue here justify the various approaches and conclusions suggested by present-day scholars.

Topic IX pursues this debate by tackling the issue of the nature of Israel's political regime. Different approaches to the militarism question impact on the understanding of the nature of the regime. The spectrum of views among scholars ranges from those debating what kind of democracy Israel is (liberal or ethnic) up to those who argue that Israel can be better depicted as an ethnocracy, rather than by the notion of a democratic regime. In contrast to what we find in the general political-science literature that rarely dichotomizes regimes as democratic versus non-democratic ones, in our texts one finds polarized notions of "liberal" versus "non-liberal" democracies, ethnic democracy versus ethnocracy, or community democracy versus multicultural democracy. The questions here are whether Israel is a "genuine" democracy and if not, how should one perceive the political regime it illustrates.

Topic X deals with the related debate of the definitions of Israel and Zionism as exemplifying 19th-century European colonialism or, in a less stigmatizing approach these days, as displaying a colonization pattern. Linked to this discussion, another subject concerns whether or not Israel's occupation of the West Bank and the Jewish settlement in parts of it can be portrayed as colonialism. In other words, will Israel experience the fate of colonial empires in the 20th century or will it develop at the image of numerous present-day countries that were built through immigration and colonization (to the detriment of native populations)? Underlying that debate there is, of course, a conceptual argument over the definition of what colonialism means today, and whether there is or should be any distinction between colonialism and colonization. In either case, it concerns a condition where external factors interfere with local realities; although colonization speaks of interference by settlers that shunt the locals to the periphery, for their own benefit. Colonialism implies interference by domination over the local population and its institutions, for

the benefit of the colonialist power. Both forms by no means respond to universal moral tenets but while colonialism has by now nearly disappeared from the world as the result of the formation of new independent states, colonization has been the origin of new societies created by settlers across the world. This is especially pertinent these days, since one of Israel's most active segments consists of the West Bank settlers who see in their condition both fulfillment of the "pioneering" ideal of Zionism and of the biblical dream of "redeeming the Land."

Notably, in the 1930s and 1940s radical anti-Zionists had already emerged from right-wing Zionism. The "Canaanite" ideology was propagated by intellectuals who believed that the Jews in Palestine should disengage from the Jewish world and even renounce the label of "Jew" in favor of "Hebrew." This perspective has eventually become linked today with left-leaning Zionist and post-Zionist thought. Israel should, accordingly, abandon its definition as a "Jewish state" and become only the state of its citizens. Views such as these are also being expressed by more than a few others originating in the Zionist Left: they form a new revisionist stream, "post-Zionism," in Israeli political thought.

Topic XI addresses the question whether criticism of Israel should be seen as a legitimate political action and approach, or distinguishes itself these days by forms and arguments that render them a kind of antisemitism. We are indeed now witnessing stringent criticism that targets Israel with particular virulence throughout the world, in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Some scholars do not hesitate therefore to indicate a strong connection between this criticism and antisemitism: accordingly, that criticism of Israel eventually leads to a hostile view of Jews in general. Other commentators, who stress the strong ties between criticizing Israel and antisemitism, see the relations the other way round: generalizing from an unfriendly attitude toward Jews to an anti-Israeli position. Both kinds of approaches – and they are only two of many – do identify a link between anti-Israelism and antisemitism, in contrast to those who hold that no necessary connection can be assumed between attitudes to Jews and attitudes to Israel. Moreover, some scholars argue

that indiscriminately linking criticism of Israel and antisemitism leads to stigmatizing any criticism of Israel as antisemitism, and therefore delegitimizing any such criticism.

Part C: Israel Outward

Whereas the previous two parts of the Handbook focus mainly on cleavages and developments within Israeli society, its third and concluding part deals with Israel's relations with its most important and direct surroundings: the Jewish world, and the Palestinians and the Arab world.

Topic XII focuses on the first of these issues, i.e., the relations between Israel and the Jewish Diaspora. It addresses the question of how far, if at all, Israel is central to the Jewish people. That the religious and peoplehood principles are both central elements in the formulation of Jews' singularity – including Israeli Jews' – raises the question of interrelations between Jews worldwide and Israel. Up to now, and possibly today more than ever, we find among Jewish organizations and institutions many factors that crosscut national boundaries and are active in nearly every Jewish population across the world. Both divergent and convergent forces are discernible in those frameworks. A test-case for those forces consists of their attitudes toward Israel and the type of relations most appropriate to describe the entity consisting of Jewish diasporas together with Israel. The different approaches to this question may variously emphasize the diaspora experience as generating values or, on the contrary, the Israeli endeavor as “genuinely Jewish,” or no less likely, the conjunctive development of a variety of interconnected but non-dependent “kinds” of Jewry and Jewishness. How, then, should one define Israel's relationship with the rest of the Jewish world? Does it share all-Jewish goals? Does it have a significant position on world Jewry's agenda or rules, in terms of additional and essential goals? Analysts engage with these questions through perspectives that are often highly divergent, and colored by ideological, religious, or political outlooks. One can also contend at this point that the unprecedented and undisputable historical complexity of Jewish life, due to both external and inner transformations, lead to very different understandings of Israel-Diaspora relations. These

circumstances render very acute the question of where the center of the Jewish world is.

Topic XIII ends this work by turning attention to the prospects of a more peaceful endeavor in this most divided and complex setting. In other words, what kind of programs are put forward and debated by academics studying Israeli reality, with the aim of achieving a consensual conclusion to a most acute protracted conflict – seemingly one of the most protracted in human history? A basic issue concerns, of course, the conflictual condition and its setting. The state of belligerence – with all its cultural, political, social, and economic consequences – relates to the identity premises of both Israel and its major protagonist, the Palestinians. Scholars emphasize that the definition of Israel as a Jewish state in the midst of the Arab-Islamic world in itself constitutes a major obstacle on the way to compromise and reconciliation; on the other hand, the Arab-Islamic arena is itself subject to nationalistic-religious turmoil and views Israel as a manifestation of territorial incursion by the West. In the context of all these, it is unsurprising that in this respect too, scholars arrive at different understandings of the conflict and share different perspectives on the “way out” of the conflict. The main consensus that unifies scholars under this topic is the very necessity of a “way out.”

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This Handbook introduces the reader to a veritable labyrinth of topics and approaches with the hope of obtaining if not a simplification of the polemics and interpretations of Israeli reality, then at least bringing greater clarity to their ramified facets.

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Part A: Cleavages

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Topic I: Israel – West, East, or Global?

Introduction

Israel's culture is a topic arousing discord among analysts and researchers, and the reason is the very heterogeneity of the influences impacting on its evolution. Israel's declared self-definition as the Jewish home explains why Judaism has a strong presence there. And yet extensive layers of its society, certainly among the founding generation, were secular and influenced by the cultures of their countries of origin, the general ideologies that flourished there, and possibly most of all by societal models that spread from the Western hemisphere throughout the world. Also influential were the kinds of experiences immigrants brought with them to Israel, firstly as Jews of whom many had survived the Holocaust, but also as "regular" immigrants who moved to a new environment and confronted the need to adapt to it. Worth remembering too is the impact on patterns of behavior and life values stemming from the actual conditions of life in the country at various periods, including the reality of protracted conflict with neighboring countries. What further compounds the difficulty of overviewing and analyzing Israel's culture are the numerous origins of the population, including its non-Jewish minorities (Muslim and Christian Arabs, Druze and others). These multiple facets of Israel's culture or cultures permit many divergent – even contradictory – analyses and interpretations. The following texts illustrate this discordance.

Zohar Shavit and Yaacov Shavit emphasize the link of Israel's culture to religion but also underline traits – values, life experiences, or artistic orientations – that are typically Israeli. Though the public discourse is multi-faceted, one may still speak of an "Israeli culture." The general picture is a dual one: a picture of pluralism, even of syncretism, and a picture defined by a common denominator. The core is "Jewish-Israeli" and consists of components of Jewishness and Israeli Jewishness, alongside others that are "Israeli" per se. Linking

this core to the religious principle is what enables the concomitant evolution of cultural pluralism.

David Ohana reminds readers of the Zionist project's belief that the Jew in his homeland would be transformed into a Hebrew: geography would change history. For more radical thinkers, the meaning of that rebirth was a return to "Hebraism," not to Judaism. The founding fathers wished to cut the umbilical cord that bound them to Jewish religious tradition. However, changes throughout the 1960s to 1990s have shown "the victory of the Jews over the Israelis." Taken together, symbols like the Akkedah, Nimrod, and Herod have forged Israel's synthesis. Canaanism, Hebraism, or Judaism may each try to drive one of those aspects to the extreme, and exacerbate splits within the common identity.

Uri Ram, from another perspective, assesses that the 1970s and 1980s saw an intensification of the political struggle between Right (Likud) and Left (Labor), that coalesced into mounting tension between Mizrahim and Ashkenazim, and to some extent into the religious-secular rift as well. All this created a sense that the initial common national frame had disintegrated, and that a society torn by sociocultural cleavages set apart by worldviews and lifestyles was taking shape. A plural – or multicultural – interpretation of Israeli culture emerged, and replaced the previous "melting-pot" ideology. Multiculturalization was actually one facet of the Americanization and globalization that Israel has gone through since the 1990s.

Alek D. Epstein underscores that Israel's Jewish population exceeded six million in 2014, and ever since the Jewish state is home to the world's largest Jewish community. Many groups within it remain influenced by their cultures of origin, making the Jewish state an archipelago of communities. To survive, a common culture needs to incorporate symbols and contents from very different traditions. Many examples of constructive dialogue are indicated by the author, who shows how they affect Israel's cultural mosaic and lay the groundwork for an Israeli culture still to come.

Ines Sonder focuses on the question of the modernism of Israeli society by studying the evolution of the modernist architecture that appeared in 1930s Palestine. She grounds her analysis on the works of architects and scholars who have subjected the “Bauhaus-style myth” of Tel Aviv, the so-called “White City,” to a process of deconstruction. She studies the historical sources from which stemmed that image of modern architecture in Palestine to finally question the present-day challenges pertaining to the preservation of the city’s heritage – the boom of real estate prices, huge increases in housing rent, and the loss of social living space.

Alexandra Nocke turns to an altogether different facet of Israel’s culture. She contends that after years of marginalization, the Mediterranean Sea has become an important element in the formation of Israeliness. It is expressed in the recent rediscovery of Tel Aviv as a part of a wider re-evaluation of the important role of “space and place” for Jewish cultural practice. She acknowledges that the parameters that describe Israel’s identity are the subject of heated debate but, in her eyes, the Mediterranean Idea can eventually become an implementable frame of reference, with the potential for bringing Israel and its foes in the region closer to each other. A Mediterranean paradigm would offer Israel prospects for becoming integrated within the Middle East without being cut off from the West.

Hence, Zohar Shavit and Yaacov Shavit see Israel’s culture as firstly fueled by the contemporary endeavor and life circumstances. Israeliness, as they see it, develops as a common envelope for groups of people otherwise distinct from each other by their different original cultures. David Ohana speaks of “the victory of the Jews over the Israelis,” but emphasizes that divergent trends are at work that may bring about far-reaching crises of identity. Uri Ram insists on the dilution of Israeli culture’s uniqueness under the simultaneous impacts of multiculturalization and Americanization. Alek D. Epstein underscores that multiculturalism may occasion dialogues leading to the enrichment of culture. Ines Sonder brings back the discussion about Israeli culture to a perspective on modernity as it developed in Israel under the

pressures of divergent interests. One way out for Israelis from such obsessive preoccupations, however, is, according to Alexandra Nocke, to emphasize the cultural value of their environment, and above all, the countries along the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. It is a resource, as she notes, that Israelis share with their neighbors and perhaps together they can elicit the best from it.

1. Israeli Culture Today: How Jewish? How Israeli?

Zohar Shavit and Yaacov Shavit

This paper was completed in September 2015.

Background

Most cultural examinations of the State of Israel aiming to define that state's identity focus chiefly on the relationship between its "religious" and "secular" strata (often perceived as a relationship between religion and state). The general conclusion of such analyses is that the relationship is not one of two distinct extremes, but that instead "there exists [in the state] a continuum ranging from those 'who are scrupulous about observing the Commandments' to those 'who do not observe the Commandments at all.'"¹⁸ That continuum is determined by a number of elements defining "religiousness" (in the Jewish context) and/or a religious way of life. In contrast, scarce attention is paid to elements that may characterize "secularism"; instead the latter is generally defined in negative terms as the simple absence of religion.¹⁹ This definition, which we maintain is incorrect, originates in the fact that by its very nature "secularism" has no *Shulhan Aruch* (codex of laws); nonetheless we contend that it possesses unique and defining traits.

Moreover, these definitions have dealt principally with "secularism" rather than with "culture as a whole," and have neglected to examine the value-systems or lifestyles of non-religious Israelis – or, on the other hand, the extent to which religious Israeli Jews interact with and participate in "non-religious" culture.

In this essay we argue that it is incorrect to view culture in Israel as simply a continuum between "religiosity" and

“secularism,” or to define a linear scale of religiosity. It is instead necessary to describe and analyze the differences between the cultures of “religious” and “non-religious” Jews and how both cultures are manifested in Jewish society in the State of Israel. In other words, we argue that on the one hand religious Jewish culture comprises more than “*Torah* and *mitzvot*,” while on the other, non-religious Jewish culture extends beyond “secularism.” We thus begin by examining what characterizes these two strata (or, more appropriately, spheres) of Israel’s culture, each of which constitutes a subculture within it – where one may be termed “Israeli-Jewish” and the other “Jewish-Israeli.” We then examine the degree to which each of these spheres is present and involved in the sum total of the culture of the Jewish population of the State of Israel.

The first section of this essay deals with the theoretical aspects of our discussion and endeavors to define the basic concepts it involves; these are often vague concepts laden with various and ever-evolving interpretations. The second section seeks to describe specific differences between the Israeli-Jewish and Jewish-Israeli subcultures and to examine the most notable among them; the final part of the essay deals with the elements of each subculture that may seem to define it, while also emphasizing the many elements the two subcultures share. It is worth recalling, however, that even when certain elements are common to both subcultures, what nevertheless creates two distinct and different spheres is the differing status and function of each element within them, in addition to the existence of elements distinctive to each.

In conclusion we explain why, in our opinion, it is the subculture we call “Israeli-Jewish” that is hegemonic within Israel’s culture as a whole, in contrast perhaps to the prevalent view (or even consensus) that the hegemonic culture is that of the “Jewish-Israeli” sphere.

We must emphasize that this essay deals with neither the political nor the material culture of Israel’s non-Jewish minority. Nor does our interest lie in the question of “cultural essence” – which stems from an essentialist perception – but rather in culture as defined by the sum total of those elements

that characterize a specific community. It is also important to remember that behind any discussion on the history of Jewish culture (or of the various cultures of various groups of Jews) lie questions of continuity, connection to the past, and unity – and that, in the context of the “Jewish state” in particular, one often encounters questions about the connection between culture and the way in which territorial Jewish nationalism is realized within Israel.

What is cultural identity?

“Culture” is a concept both vague and elusive; it occurs in various contexts and bears a multitude of definitions and connotations. There seems little point in tackling this cluster of definitions, which are frequently characterized by obfuscation, ambiguity, and elusiveness. Instead we prefer to search out the “real culture”²⁰ that characterizes a specific community, a search we believe has two objectives: the first, to determine the common denominator and typical traits that delineate and signify the singular nature of a given cultural identity at a given historical period; the other, to describe the multiplicity and cultural stratification that characterize those traits. Contrary to the holistic perception that all components and manifestations of culture stem from a single source (a “collective genius,” say) or from a formative principle (in the Jewish case, “monotheism”) and that they are furthermore bound by mutual affinity,²¹ we maintain that the various manifestations of a specific culture never create an “organismic,” holistic, static system. Instead they create a cultural system that, while clearly distinct from other cultures, is nonetheless multifaceted, nonhomogeneous, and dynamic. For our purpose, “culture” is not an “essence” but rather a defined, shared, and comprehensive system of outlooks concerning the world and humanity; a cluster of values; a corpus of formative texts; a set of codes of behavior; shared symbols and shared perceptions of the past; and more. It is furthermore a system of everyday practices that includes among other things festivals and ceremonies, literary and artistic creation, customs, and lifestyles. All these determine

and shape attitudes to place; perceptions and divisions of time; and systems of social relationships. Such components create a shared culture and cultural tradition in both the collective and the private spheres.

There are few subjects more elusive than the theme of this essay, both in the general theoretical context and particularly in the Israeli context, and it is no accident that it has been the focus of long-running polemical debate and of an extensive body of literature beyond the scope of this essay. The subject is furthermore elusive since concepts such as “Judaism,” “Jewish culture,” and “secularism,” as well as “religious culture” and “national culture,” are equally difficult to pin down. In the modern Jewish context these concepts emerged as the result of the changes – the revolution, even – that took place across the Jewish world in the modern era – changes expressed by, among other things, the emergence within the modern Jewish world of entirely new forms of Judaism as well as of new forms of “Jewish cultures.”²²

This new diversity has only increased within Jewish society in the State of Israel (and previously in the Jewish *Yishuv* in Mandatory Palestine), where different types of “Jewishness” and of cultures belonging to Jews were brought together, perhaps more than anywhere else and at any other time in Jewish history. Moreover, Jews in Israel constitute both a demographic majority and sovereign power; as such they have undertaken not only projects of nation-building and state-building, but also the project of creating a national culture.²³ No longer the culture of a religious (or ethnic) minority existing as a cultural enclave within hegemonic non-Jewish host cultures, Jewish culture in Israel is that of a sovereign majority: the character of Israeli society is determined by Jews, and they are able to define the normative system of their culture and create and operate cultural institutions in accordance with specific ideologies and programs.²⁴ In other words, Jewish-majority society, in both theory and practice, is able to shape the culture in Israel using the tools of cultural planning²⁵ – planning that can not only encourage and direct culture but also supervise it in certain spheres.

The two subcultures

A complete system of Israeli culture can exist only in Israel,²⁶ while in contrast Jewish culture can also exist in the Diaspora. As we have seen, Israeli culture consists of two subcultures, one *Jewish-Israeli* and the other *Israeli-Jewish*.²⁷ Both are the products of their existence in Israel; both can exist only there. Their emergence, development, and shared existence in a single country – one that is both “Holy Land” and “historical homeland” to Jews²⁸ – and in a sovereign Jewish state have given rise to a cultural system with features markedly different from those of other Jewish cultures in both the near and distant pasts. Each subculture is engaged in a struggle for cultural hegemony, and both simultaneously participate in shaping Israel’s culture as a whole. Both subcultures are “Israeli” not only because they exist within the Israeli state, but also because their existence in a position of sovereignty – and in the historic Land of Israel – has determined and continues to determine the circumstances of their development, the form they have taken, and the relationship they share.

The *Israeli-Jewish* subculture first emerged in Jewish Palestine beginning in the 1880s. Until the State of Israel was established, it was known as “Hebrew culture” and “Eretz Yisraeli” culture. It is the continuation of a revolutionary phenomenon in the history of the Jewish people in the modern era.²⁹ The emergence, creation and establishment of this new Jewish cultural system – modern, secular, and Hebrew (though not exclusively Hebrew-language) – was expressed not only in changes within the cultural space and in cultural norms, cultural activities, and lifestyles – but also in the founding of institutions and organizations that had never previously existed in traditional Jewish society or that had even been rejected by it. This new culture adopted components from non-Jewish cultures as well as from traditional Jewish religious culture – principally those components considered appropriate for and necessary to the new culture’s outlook and value system.

Jewish-Israeli culture, on the other hand, is a continuation of the religious Jewish culture that developed beginning in

18th-century Europe in response to processes of acculturation, to modernity, and to the emergence of a non-religious Jewish culture. Nonetheless, it has undergone profound changes in the context of Jewish Palestine and later the State of Israel, among other things as a response and reaction to the territorial dimension of its existence within a sovereign Jewish state in the Holy Land. Another aspect of this evolution has been the internalization, by various spheres of religious Jewish culture, of several components of Israeli-Jewish culture.

As we have seen above, these two subcultures shape, determine, and embody the cultural identity of the State of Israel and of Israeli society. They exist apart from each other and conduct a struggle over their sphere of influence (a struggle that at times takes the form of a *Kulturkampf*, or “culture war”). Yet there are also multiple points of overlap and mutual borrowing as a result of both subcultures’ existence in a reality without precedent in Jewish history since the period of the Second Temple – an existence within the framework of a state governed by Jews and in whose political, societal, and economic life most of their members participate. Within this new reality a “secular,” national Hebrew culture (discussed below) developed and became the foundation of numerous cultural institutions, as did, in parallel, a new religious culture reflected in theological and Halakhic developments, in the ways in which its own social structures became institutional, and in the cultural consumption and lifestyles of its members.³⁰ Neither subculture is homogeneous; both provide a broad umbrella for a range of streams and camps. Within each there exist extremes – conservative or radical groups – that reject totally any affinity whatsoever to the other subculture. Between the two lies a “gray area” of interlinking circles of Israeli-Jews who belong simultaneously, according to their self-definition and/or their ways of life, to both subcultures and who are generally referred to as “traditionalist” (*masorti*) Jews. In this essay we focus on the core of each subculture, as it is impossible within a short space to fully explore the diversity they contain³¹ – though at times that diversity creates significant internal differences within each one.

Nor do we explore ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) society, though its current proportion, by various evaluations, is around 20% of Israel's Jewish population – close to one million people; every tenth Israeli is Haredi – because its culture dissociates itself from and has minimal contact with both the overarching culture in Israel and the Israeli-Jewish and Jewish-Israeli subcultures, though more than once it has experienced internal developments in reaction to developments in the culture in Israel.³²

Cultural ideology, cultural programs, and cultural practices

The past two centuries have seen vigorous debate over the nature of Jewish culture³³ and over whether such a culture indeed exists and what constitutes its most “authentic” and “legitimate” form. The perceptions underlying this debate reflect a pivotal chapter in the intellectual history of the Jewish people, and have produced various models – ideal, utopian, and sometimes also pragmatic – of Jewish culture. Within the tangible reality of the Israeli state, in which Jewish society is stratified and split, and where there exists in effect no single supreme authority that is accepted by all public religious streams and able to rule on questions of *Halakha* – and certainly none capable of determining and imposing cultural practices – the intense philosophical, theological, ideological, and rhetorical discourse on the nature of Jewish culture has grown more pronounced; it has moreover acquired a political dimension, dealing with questions concerning Israel's preferred cultural identity as a “Jewish state.” Much of the debate on these questions is based in theory and doctrine, invoking thinkers and writers who have suggested various *topoi* of “Israeli culture” or “Jewish culture” and various programs aimed at molding it in a given fashion; or, alternatively, invoking individuals' personal, subjective testimonies as to their own understanding of their identity and of the concepts of “Jewish” or “Israeli” culture.³⁴

In this essay, we have chosen not to focus on ideals or ideology, but rather to examine the diverse facets of Jews' cultural experience in Israel, with particular attention to the nature of various cultural practices within each subculture's public and private spheres. In other words, we focus on culture as expressed in practice – in the question of what Jews in Israel, belonging to one subculture or both, “do and do not” within their cultural realm. To put it yet another way, our interest lies in the question of what Jews in Israel do “within religion”³⁵ and what they do “outside” of it.

It is worth emphasizing that Jewish culture since the 19th century has undergone far-reaching changes in everything pertaining to cultural practices, external appearance (including clothing), higher education, entertainment and leisure patterns, consumption of elements of foreign (“non-Jewish”) culture, and more.³⁶ Such changes have not failed to affect traditional Jews and in fact have become an integral and taken-for-granted part of their world, clearly evident in their ways of life. Various surveys and studies undertaken in the past two decades, namely from the end of the 20th century to the start of the 21st, have investigated the number of people who attend synagogues, light Sabbath candles, or adhere strictly to Jewish dietary laws. Yet these surveys have not examined, for example, the frequency of Jews' attendance at theater performances, concerts, or the cinema; consumption of original and translated literature; attending sports events; and so on in a range of activities that had not been part of Jewish culture until the modern era. The fact that such research consistently investigates “religious” activities and ignores “non-religious” ones seems to demonstrate how greatly the latter have been internalized and thus no longer require legitimization – and, no less vital to our theme, how the majority of these “non-religious” activities are furthermore not necessarily perceived as an expression of “secularism.”

Jewish culture, Israeli culture

Without defining “Jewish” and “Israeli” in the context of culture, we cannot answer the question “to what extent is the culture of Jews in the State of Israel Israeli or Jewish?” The terms “culture” and “Jewish culture” (as well as “Jewish identity”) are relatively new in Jewish history.³⁷ They first appeared in the Jewish world in the late 18th century with the emergence of the *Haskala* movement, and their usage gained ground and momentum in the 19th and 20th centuries, during which additional concepts such as “religious Jewish culture,” “modern Jewish culture,” and “Hebrew culture” were born and accepted as a given. These concepts triggered not only theoretical debate but also polemics on practical issues, such as the “*kultura* debate” that raged within the Zionist movement from 1899 to 1902 and arguments over the vision of a Jewish society in Palestine that Theodor Herzl presented in his utopian novel *Altneuland*.³⁸ The internalization and frequent use of these concepts reflect the revolution (or revolutions) that have shaken the Jewish world over the past two centuries³⁹ and have resulted in, among other things, Jews’ significant presence *qua* Jews within non-Jewish cultures; as well as in a desire – and need – to view Judaism not only as a religion but also as a framework that may accommodate many components not included in the term “religion.” In fact, according to this view the identity of “Judaism” was primarily not religious. In other words, this was a matter not simply of “adjusting” or reforming religion, but of broadening Jews’ habitus so that it might also comprise elements typifying Western culture, and of establishing a new Jewish culture. To be more specific: Jewish culture could not have developed in the way that it did over the past two centuries had it remained within the framework of ultra-Orthodox Jewish society. And had ultra-Orthodoxy, or perhaps even Orthodoxy, been the hegemonic power within Israel, neither “Jewish culture,” and certainly not “Hebrew culture,” could have emerged or thrived.

Religiously observant national-Zionist Jews considered this “cultural” definition of Judaism as an attempt to suggest a secular-national-cultural alternative – a “new Judaism,” or “Hebrew culture” – to the religious definition and religious substance of “Judaism” and of “being a Jew.” Religious Jews

considered this attempt a heresy, and maintained that it aimed to separate “religion” from “nationalism” and to replace the traditional Torah-based conception of Judaism (as reflected in the words of Saadia Gaon: “The Jewish nation is a nation only by virtue of its Torah”) with a definition based on ethnicity, history, common destiny, and culture. It was, according to this view, a “Judaism” not committed to a religious interpretation of the canonical authoritative Jewish texts – i.e., Talmudic and Halakhic literature – and equally uncommitted to religious – i.e., rabbinical – authority.

It would be incorrect to maintain that traditional-religious Judaism lacked its own “culture” until the 19th century – that it possessed no unique traditions and customs, or that it did not produce philosophy, literature, and art. At the same time, Jewish tradition prohibited the adoption of certain cultural customs or manners that it considered alien (*tarbut zara*), but it offered no clear guidance in regard to permissible cultural elements which can be adapted by the Jewish society. The late 19th century – an era when national cultures and movements began to emerge and take hold – saw the boundaries of “Jewish culture” expand in response to the challenges posed by “Western culture” and modernization. The adoption and internalization of the concept of “culture” altered the worldview and discourse of various segments of modern religious Jewish society. As a result, a new understanding of “Judaism” began to emerge which saw it as a comprehensive world encompassing both “religion” and “culture” – a world capable of offering a complete alternative to “culture,” not only to secular-Jewish culture but also to Western culture and all its nonreligious components. Modern religious society also began to mine intensively the historical past for manifestations and expressions of a distinctive, autarkic, and all-inclusive “Jewish culture” – for Jewish literature, Jewish science, Jewish music, Jewish painting, etc.⁴⁰ – an endeavor frequently accompanied by efforts to create the components required for such cultural production to develop, as well as by actual cultural creativity.

It is for this reason that we propose to consider the so-called “Jewishness” of culture in Israel not in terms of the

extent to which Jewish religion is part of Israel's culture as a whole, but rather as a question of the extent to which *culture specific to Jews* forms part of it. From a "secular" viewpoint, "Jewish culture" is not identical to, and does not overlap with, "Judaism" in its religious sense; "Judaism" is not just a "religion" in the meaning of belief or praxis but also encompasses a variety of cultural components that are not "religious," and is furthermore able to exist without the presence of "religion." In other words, an "Israeli-Jew" can abandon "religion" yet still self-define as "culturally Jewish" or even as a "secular Jew". His or her cultural identity rests on historical consciousness, a shared historical past, a sense of affiliation, and a cultural repertoire. This is a Judaism that believes itself sovereign to select for itself those components it wishes to appropriate from Jewish tradition – and frequently to imbue them with new content.

It is often acknowledged that there is no agreed-upon and binding definition of what Judaism is, and as such there is equally no definition of religious-Jewish culture – what elements it requires, which it rejects, and what boundaries clearly separate it from other cultures and cannot be crossed.⁴¹ Jewish history abounds with various examples of "Judaism" and of "Jewish" lives that were not characterized only by religion. Repeated attempts in Israel to reach consensus on what fundamentally defines a Jew (and what defines Judaism) have been unsuccessful and remain purely theoretical, and at the same time have sparked profound disaccord within the religious community.⁴² Israel's ultra-Orthodox (*Haredi*), national-Orthodox (*da-ti-leumi*) and "traditional" (*masorti*) Jews are divided over matters of theology and Halakha, as well as over the question of what constitutes a correct or ideal "Jewish" lifestyle and what level of participation and involvement in Israeli culture is permitted and desirable for a religious Jew. At the same time, it is important to observe that neither has non-religious society, with its broad variety of its cultural predilections, ever formed any consensus over what values and qualities should define nonreligious Jewish culture, how tightly bound it should be to "religion" and religious

tradition, and what boundaries demarcate it from other cultures.

The concept of “Israeliness” is also a vague one when compared to the concept of Hebrew culture. For the most part, the creation of “Hebrew culture” has been the outcome of an ideology and explicit program to construct a full, multidimensional culture; “Israeliness,” in contrast, emerged chiefly from socio-cultural trends and processes. “Hebrew culture” was one of the chief and most important products of the Jewish revolution during the 19th and 20th centuries,⁴³ which created the new cultural system by means of a combination of both modern elements and historical elements newly revived. The revival of the Hebrew language is an obvious example: long surviving primarily as a sacred language rarely spoken, Hebrew is today a living national language. The late 19th century saw the widespread use of spoken and written Hebrew in the new Jewish society of Yishuv Palestine and an emergence of new linguistic registers. A large number of newspapers were published in Hebrew, as were periodicals, literature, and textbooks. Theater performances were staged in Hebrew; popular songs were sung in it. Hebrew became a rich, multi-layered literary and spoken language – a new Hebrew, “Israeli Hebrew,” that lent the modern Hebrew culture its name. As is often the case with a *lingua franca*, Hebrew has become the most prominent expression of Israel’s national culture even while it exists alongside other languages, and Hebrew’s hegemony in the State of Israel is seen in its use by ultra-Orthodox Israelis for most of their cross-cultural interactions.

Hebrew culture revived and secularized many elements of culture and updated various others, all in a relatively short timeframe and through intensive effort. We mention only few of these changes here. One was a “return” to the Bible as a primary authoritative text in place of rabbinical literature, which was the central element of rabbinical Judaism. The most important change in attitude to the Bible was an understanding of it as justifying the existence of a nationalist Jewish society territorially bound to the Land of Israel – not a “Holy Land” but rather a “motherland” (*moledet*)⁴⁴ – and it was treated as,

inter alia, both a historical and a literary text. Modern Hebrew literature attained the status of “national literature” and became a constitutive factor in shaping the consciousness and values of Hebrew culture. History was given a major place in the notion of “Hebrewness,” and the history of the Jewish people was held as a unifying factor, as well as a source of continuity and belonging to the Jews who settled in Zion; especially emphasized were the Biblical era and the periods of the First and Second Temples (in particular during the reign of the Hasmoneans). History as knowledge of the past and geography as knowledge of the land were taught in order to create historical continuity and foster a national consciousness of belonging. Hebrew culture continued to celebrate traditional Jewish festivals but imbued many of them with new content, as well as creating new celebrations such as *Tu bi’shvat* and Israel’s Independence Day.⁴⁵ It shaped a new attitude to the Land of Israel as a physical, geographical territory; to its landscapes and natural environment; and to archeological sites from the Jewish historical past. In addition to this movement there also emerged a radical strain of secular “Hebrewness” intent on a total break from tradition; nonetheless the mainstream ideology of Hebrew culture did not support such a break but opted rather to selectively include values and texts that were seen as being handed down through the ages, or that possessed – or could be granted – national significance and symbolism.

It is important to emphasize that the creation of Hebrew culture involved borrowing and adopting not only material and technological aspects of civilization but also cultural institutions and habits of cultural consumption; and moreover to emphasize that culture in Israel is open to rich and varied cultural imports. We distinguish here between the act of adopting a certain cultural component and its actual implementation; there is a difference, for example, between adopting the institution of theater or attending theatrical productions on the one hand, and determining which dramatic pieces should be staged on the other. This distinction raises the question of whether imported cultural components are in fact part of Israeli culture as a whole, and whether “Israeli culture”

can be considered the sum total of all the cultural components that exist and operate within it.

The answer to this question lies in the process of furnishing the new cultural system and the central role that “imported” culture played therein. The modern Hebrew culture that was created, developed and institutionalized in the Jewish Yishuv and later in the State of Israel was a project of conception, construction, and structuring of a complete national culture.⁴⁶ This was an intensive process, at once spontaneous and engineered, that furnished the cultural system with all its central and peripheral components, including a popular culture and a folk culture, and these were frequently generated by agents of culture⁴⁷ rather than spontaneously. Cultural institutions that were considered vital components of “culture” in the West were established in Israel. A major component of “Hebrew culture” was its self-perception as autochthonous and indigenous – that is, a consciousness of and sense of “authentic” connection to the land and its terrain,⁴⁸ as well as the development of a local way of life; the latter included, for example, evenings of community singing held in schools, by youth movements, or for the general public; folk-dancing; and hikes across Israel. Such activities represented what became known, chiefly in retrospect, as “Eretz-Yisraeli (Land of Israel) culture”. Of course, the idea of establishing a homogeneous Hebrew culture according to a preset program was fairly utopian. Nonetheless this project has seen the emergence of a cultural core, comprising cultural values and assets shared by a large part of the Jewish public in the Yishuv and later, in the State of Israel.

In regard to the discussion of tradition in the national context, we prefer to use the term “creation of tradition” over “invention.” Indeed, the creation of Hebrew culture, including Hebrew culture in Jewish Palestine and the State of Israel, was the result of a great surge of creation that included among other things the creation of a new Jewish mythos and ethos, which were integrated into in the new cultural experience.

The process of creation involved not only the construction of new elements, but also the adoption of elements and models

borrowed from different cultural traditions and introduced by new *olim* (immigrants) coming to the Yishuv and Israel. These included, for example, several bourgeois traditions or “soft” religious traditions⁴⁹ such as traditional foods and clothing, specific ceremonies, and components of folk culture (folklore).

Between secularism and culture

“Secularism” is both a worldview and lifestyle⁵⁰ that, in the context of Judaism, offers an alternative to the choice between abandoning one’s Jewish identity and living a religious life. From a historical perspective, it is worth distinguishing between processes of secularization that were central to the trend of integration with non-Jewish cultures (which in the modern era did not demand religious conversion) and those secularization processes that were part of creating a new Jewish cultural system. Most “secular” Jews are those who have distanced themselves from the normative religious way of life as the result of socio-cultural processes. The “average” secular individual is not required to adhere to any philosophical intellectual foundation;⁵¹ he or she is not necessarily an atheist but rather someone who is called less and less to religion, does not observe the Commandments, and does not require religious services or rabbinical authority, as an essential part of his or her cultural world and lifestyle. A secular Israeli who observes the Sabbath, keeps *kosher*, occasionally attends synagogue, and even believes in the revelation on Mount Sinai does so simply because these are components in his or her cultural system, where they possess mainly symbolic value. Such behavior reveals an affinity toward specific religious practices rather than toward religious culture as a whole; overall, non-religious components occupy a far greater part of the culture of the individual “secular Israeli” than religious ones. In the ultra-Orthodox community, in contrast, there is no room for cultural elements not based in religion, which are rejected and denounced *a priori*. Ultra-Orthodox culture finds in “secular culture” of any sort not only shades of heresy but also idolatry. It describes that culture as

devoid of spiritual content, lacking in values and morality, shallow, rootless, and degenerate. In contrast, it refers to itself as “Torah Judaism” – the Judaism of values and vast spiritual wealth, and as such the “true” Judaism.⁵² Secular culture, chiefly in its more radical streams, views ultra-Orthodox Jewish culture as insular, mediaeval, exilic, and narrow-minded – certainly in cultural terms.

Much has been written about the inherent weakening of Israeli secularism, at least with respect to its self-perception. Attesting to this are countless examples of the emergence of groups affiliated with a “new Judaism” characterized by interest in “the Jewish sources texts,” and of a renaissance of non-Orthodox interest in Jewish tradition. We maintain, however, that groups of this kind do not express a yearning to return to “rabbinical Judaism,” but rather offer a new and different reading of “the sources” stemming from a perception of Judaism as an “open and self-renewing culture that draws on sources passed down through the ages”⁵³ – all without relinquishing the hegemonic cultural habitus of the contemporary “secular Israeli.” A far more marginal phenomenon is that of a “return to the sources” – that is, to a reading of rabbinical literature as imbued with humanistic values and existential significance. In any event, however, we must emphasize that such a reading differs dramatically from the way that literature is studied in *yeshivot*, which do not provide the option of studying the Bible or Jewish philosophy in addition to the Talmud.

In fact, Jewish-Israeli culture includes no components of ultra-Orthodox culture apart, perhaps, from components of folk religion, chiefly a growing practice of visiting the graves of the “righteous” and seeking advice, blessing, or healing from *mekubbalim* (kabbalists). The ultra-Orthodox community scrupulously differentiates itself from the framework of the general culture in Israel, as well as from the national-religious culture, in every way possible: it resides in specific and generally separate geographic areas, and its rich spiritual world is restricted to synagogues, *batei midrash*, *yeshivot*, and independently run schools. It has its own – religious – literature, and the boundaries that separate it from the secular

public, as well as from national-religious and traditional Jews, are evident in both public and private life. In contrast, national-religious and traditional-religious Jews participate in almost every aspect of the Israeli experience; secular Israeli culture and national-religious culture are barely separated by any boundaries, whether with respect to dress (apart from a few specific items), residential areas, or participation in cultural practices such as reading for leisure, watching films, attending concerts, and visiting museums. At the same time, however, the priorities of Israel's national-religious culture differ from those of secular Israeli culture, especially in the importance it attributes to Israel's territorial claims. For this reason we consider it a Jewish-Israeli subculture within Israeli culture as a whole.

Culture wars (Kulturkämpfe)

Battles over Israeli culture revolve around three main points. First is the struggle over the character of the public sphere, primarily with respect to preserving the “sanctity of the Sabbath.”⁵⁴ Observing the Sabbath is considered not only a biblical commandment, but also a symbolic asset of vital importance for Judaism and Jewishness, even by many non-observant Jews. The second concerns legislation affecting the norms of the private sphere – primarily on matters of personal status such as marriage and divorce and birth and death. The third point of conflict relates to the autonomy of the ultra-Orthodox educational systems.

In addition, spokespersons for and representatives of religion and religious culture have attempted to intervene in events within non-religious cultural frameworks, chiefly via governmental authority and legislation on matters of everyday life such as, for example, the sale of non-kosher food or the operation of businesses on the Sabbath, as well as through attempts to censor various activities perceived as damaging to the “Jewish nature” of the State of Israel, such as activities that violate the observance of the Sabbath in the public sphere. This struggle not only is waged in Israel between movements,

organizations, and groups within civil society but, as noted, is further evident in political decisions, where the actors involved are political parties representing different cultural values.⁵⁵

Any discussion of culture in Israel cannot be complete without addressing the question of cultural supply and demand – that is, what demand exists for various elements of the cultural supply. This question must be dealt with if we intend to clarify to what extent the overall culture of Jewish society in Israel is “Jewish-Israeli” or “Israeli-Jewish.” We believe that there exists overall a greater demand for components of the Israeli-Jewish subculture than for components of the Jewish-Israeli subculture. In other words, the demand for the sum total of the first subculture is greater and more dominant than for the second. Needless to say, however, it is not our intention to determine which components of the two subcultures are of greater value – if that question can even be answered.

Conclusion

Attempts to describe what is “Israeli” and what is “Jewish” in the culture of Jewish society in Israel usually point to typical behavioral patterns, values, or ways of life; or to literary and artistic works rooted in and reflective of Israeli reality. Public discourse, the research literature, and impressions by “external” observers suggest a variety of values and behavioral patterns (as well as character traits, at times) that seem representative and typical of “Israel’s culture” as a whole. If we try to sum up these opinions and impressions, they range from generalizations and stereotypes at one end to suggestions of concrete characteristics at the other. The general picture obtained is twofold: on the one hand, a picture of cultural pluralism, or even syncretism, and struggles over prestigious cultural assets within Israel’s culture in general; and on the other hand, a common cultural core shared by most parts of Israeli society – language, religious and non-religious holidays and celebrations, customs, historical traditions, a literary corpus in Hebrew, and so on.

It may therefore be concluded that the existence and widespread acceptance of the concept of a broad and comprehensive “Israeli culture” reflects the existence of a shared cultural core. Yet the hegemony specifically of the Israeli-Jewish subculture is what makes possible the pluralism of culture in Israel and the “Israeliness” of Israel, which should not be measured by the extent to which the private and public spheres function according to religious norms.⁵⁶

To sum up, the cultural system in the State of Israel is a broad and comprehensive system unprecedented in Jewish history. Some components of this system are traditional; others have been plucked from Jewish tradition and imbued with new significance and substance, and a great variety of components are entirely new. It is this comprehensive system that constitutes Israel’s culture. But, if we examine the concrete cultural reality of the State of Israel – which components of Jewish culture are created or consumed therein and what constitutes the habitus of the majority of Jews in the public and private spheres – we find that the religious Jewish-Israeli sphere forms only a part of the whole, while it is the Israeli-Jewish sphere that occupies the greater portion.

In contrast to the public and political rhetoric, which depicts the State of Israel as a “Jewish state,” Israel’s culture is, from a cultural point of view, a unique and innovative phenomenon in Jewish history due to the hegemony of the Israeli-Jewish subculture within it.

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2. To What Degree Is Israeli Culture Jewish, and to What Degree Israeli?

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This paper was completed in November 2014.

The founders of the Zionist project believed that the transformation of identity would take place in Zion. From being a subject, the Jew in his homeland would become his own ruler, he would create his authentic personality, the Jew would be transformed into a Hebrew, the child of exile would become a native. Geography would change history, and parallel with this conceptual transformation, a new culture would arise.⁵⁸ The Zionist philosophy of history that emerged presented a synthetic picture of past Jewish history in which it was deemed necessary to return and to reconnect with the initial, sovereign, Hebrew, heroic stage. Hence the emphasis placed on a whole series of symbols and myths rooted in Zion, the place of birth, and on the creation of a new human model, positive, heroic and tied to the land; and hence the obliteration of the concepts and memories that came into being between the end of Jewish independence in 132 CE and the Zionist national rebirth in 1948. Zionism was thus for many people a territorialization of Judaism, but in a deeper sense than merely restoring the Jews to their natural place.⁵⁹ It reflected a radical historical philosophy that sought to change the Jew into an old-new Hebrew. The meaning of the rebirth for the more radical thinkers was a return to Hebraism and not to Judaism, to the physical space and not to God. This involved a paradox: only in the biblical space could the new man come into being; only a return to ancient roots would restore the Jew to modern history. One may ask whether Israeli culture has been true to this Zionist vision.

A discussion of the Jewish culture of the State of Israel, or of the Jewish dimension of Israeli culture, or of the question of whether it is an Israeli culture or a Jewish one, depends on the ideological starting-point, the national perspective and the

historical context in which the matter is approached. If one examines the question from the point of view of the period beginning in 1948, it is clear that the intention of Israeli culture was to be secular.⁶⁰ The first Israelis wished to take a distance from Jewish culture – religious observance with its precepts and traditions, the Jewish exile, and the image of the “old Jew” whether the student of the Mishna and Gemara or the secular Jewish intellectual.

The founding fathers of Hebraism and Israelism wished to cut the umbilical cord that bound them to Jewish religious tradition.⁶¹ The “new Hebrew” of the Hebrew revival at the *fin de siècle* in Eastern and Central Europe, the *halutz* (‘pioneer’) in the Yishuv in Palestine in the first half of the 20th century, and the *sabra* in the initial years of the State of Israel, all wished to create a secular Israeli culture. However, the sociological, ideological and political changes that took place in Israel, particularly from the 1960s to the 1980s – the Six-Day War in 1967 which reconnected the Israelis to the sacred sites in the history of the Jewish people; the fall of the secular left and the rise of the political right in the elections of 1977; the rising power of the Oriental Jews, most of whom were traditional; the strengthening of the religious element, the ultra-Orthodox and the “Shas” party – all these factors, and others, contributed to what has been called “the victory of the Jews over the Israelis.”

Parallel with these developments, it is fascinating to examine the relationship of Israeli culture to the Jewish element within it, with the symbols and heroes it contains.⁶² This genealogy permits us to ask whether the national culture in the State of Israel is an Israeli or a Jewish one. This question will be examined through a focus on three Jewish themes in Israeli culture: the national and secular transformation that took place in the Jewish myth of the sacrifice of Isaac in Israeli poetry and sculpture; the neo-Jewish interpretations of “Nimrod,” the sculpture by Yitzhak Danziger which had been the symbol of the revolt against Jewish tradition and the rise of secular Hebraism; and the change of the negative status of Herod in Jewish history to that of a realistic ruler and a great builder, whose exhibition

extolling his achievements in 2013 attracted more than 800,000 Israeli visitors, 10% of the population of Israel.

The nationalization of the Akkedah

One of the chief Jewish (and universal) themes in Israeli culture is the myth of the sacrifice of Isaac, or *Akkedah*. The story of the sacrifice handed down from father to son is an outstanding Jewish tradition. How has that Jewish tradition been expressed in Israeli poetry and art? The discourse on the Akkedah in the poetry, painting and sculpture produced in Israel has given rise to an abundance of literary interpretations, artistic adaptations and reflections on the Israeli identity. It is a vital discourse touching the very heart of Israeliness.

The collective consciousness that accompanied the rise of the State of Israel embodied the Israelis' view of themselves. Unlike their parents in the exile (and particularly in the Holocaust), they wished no longer to be victims of a fate decided by others, whether a landowner, a sultan or a queen. Israeli culture in its early stages had this self-image of someone independent who was accountable to himself alone. Paradoxically, the renewed Jewish sovereignty was expressed this time by the independent capacity of the Jews to send their children to be sacrificed. It was a national sacrifice. The willingness of the Israelis to sacrifice their children, or themselves, on the altar of the nation reflected the attitude of a young people ready to pay the price for its independence. If the Jews in exile were not responsible for their fate, their descendants in the land of Israel took their fate into their own hands, even if it required the sacrifice of their children. This is undoubtedly a sacrifice, they said, but it is we that do the sacrificing, not the gentiles. As a result, the Akkedah or sacrifice of Isaac was seen in the early stages of Israeli culture as representing a voluntary national act, not a passive Jewish fate.

The Jewish theme of the Akkedah, which is biblical and religious in its origins, has found expression in Israeli poetry and art which is predominantly modern and secular. Ruth

Kartun-Blum, a Hebrew poetry scholar, has concluded from her researches into the treatment of the Akkedah in modern Hebrew poetry that “modern Israeli writers have increasingly rediscovered the ambivalence of Jewish existence and the enormous complexity of Jewish identity. The condition of the Jews may have changed, but not the Jewish condition,”⁶³ and with regard to Israeli art, the cultural critic Gideon Ofrat writes: “The story of the Akkedah in Israeli art is a story in itself. Among us, the Akkedah has become a national symbol representing the tragedy of the fate of the Jewish people in general and the fate of our sons in particular. Very often, the Abrahams are bereaved parents and the Isaacs are the fallen.”⁶⁴

⁴ Ofrat enumerated four stages in the genealogy of the Akkedah in Israeli art. In the 1920s, it was pogroms and acts of terrorism; in the Holocaust and the War of Independence, the figure of the bereaved father Abraham, personification of the suffering people, came to the fore; between the Six-Day War and the Yom Kippur War the ram was seen as representing hope for the future or disappointment that redemption was so long in coming; and in the first war in Lebanon one saw the younger generation’s criticism of their leaders (identified with Abraham), who sent the young people (identified with Isaac), to be sacrificed in the war.

In the period of pioneering and settlement in Eretz Yisrael, the poems about the Akkedah (for example, in the poetry of the Third Aliyah) expressed the collective experience of a shared fate and a mystical sense of the Jewish destiny. The secularization of Hebrew culture first in the Jewish cultural revival at the *fin de siècle* in Europe, and then in the first waves of immigration to Palestine, nationalized the story of the Akkedah and changed the emphasis from a relationship to a God who gave orders to the relationship between history, or the state, and the Israeli citizen, and finally to a person’s relationship to himself.

Natan Alterman, who wrote the poem “On the Boy Abraham” at the height of the Holocaust, related to the Akkedah by describing the boy Abraham looking at his mother and seeing a knife stuck in her heart:

Mummy, mummy,

I won't sleep in bed like other boys,
because I saw you in bed;
Mummy, mummy, you were sleeping – with a knife in your
heart.

Following the slaughter of his parents, the boy Abraham hid in the room under the stairs. In the poem, Alterman replaced the name Isaac with the name of Abraham who foresaw his sacrifice which was the path to redemption. This was a clear reference to the development of the nation from the Holocaust to resurrection, the change from the passive generation slaughtered in exile to one that began to be responsible for its life in Israel.⁶⁵ Haim Gouri, a representative of the “Palmach generation,” the first generation of the State of Israel, “corresponded” with Alterman in his poem “Yerushah” [Inheritance]:

The ram came last of all.
And Abraham did not know that it came
To answer the boy's question –
First of his strength when his day was on the wane.
The old man raised his head
Seeing that it was no dream
And that the angel stood there –
The knife slipped from his hand.
The boy, released from his bonds,
Saw his father's back.
Isaac, as the story goes, was not sacrificed.
He lived for many years,
Saw what pleasure had to offer, until his eyesight dimmed,
But he bequeathed that hour to his offspring.
They are born
With a knife in their hearts.⁶⁶

Isaac, the young fighter, sacrificed himself in the War of Independence, and his father identified himself with the generation of the sons. Likewise, in the poetry of Amir Gilboa, also of that generation, Abraham feels himself to be sacrificed: “It's me who is slaughtered, my son, and my blood is already on the leaves.” The secular national history inherited the Jewish religion, and this was expressed by passing the torch of

the Akkedah from the father to his son in the State of Israel. This was no longer the ultimate test of faith in God as seen by Søren Kierkegaard but a continuing national credo which was a test of belonging to the state and authentic commitment to the country. The test was now in participation in Israel's wars and was not on the metaphorical-Jewish Mount Moriah. This time, the Akkedah did not conclude with a "happy end" but with offering the son as a sacrifice to the national Moloch.

Someone who criticized the Akkedah in 1948 was the writer S. Yizhar, who said in his book *Yemei Ziklag* [Days of Ziklag]: "I hate our father Abraham who went to sacrifice Isaac. What right did he have to do this to Isaac? He should have sacrificed himself! I hate God who sent him to do this sacrifice and closed off all his options and only opened up the way to the Akkedah. I hate God because Isaac was only material for an experiment between Abraham and his God."⁶⁷ After the War of Independence, the subject of the national Akkedah underwent a process of individualization and gained a psychological significance relating to the private person. An example is T. Carmi's poem "Isaac's Fear" which serves as a bridge between the "Palmach generation" and the "generation of the state":

Last night I dreamt that my son did not return.
He came to me and said:
When I was little and you were,
You would not tell me
The story of the binding of Isaac,
To frighten me with the knife, fire, and ram.
But now you've heard her voice.
She whispered, didn't even command –
(her hand full of voices, and she
said to your forehead and to your eyes:)
is it
so?
And already you ran to your hiding-place,
drew out the knife, fire, the ram
And in a flash
your son, your only one.

Last night I dreamt that my son did not return.
I waited for him to come back from school,
and he was late,
And when I told her,
She put her hand upon me,
And I saw all the voices
he had seen.⁶⁸

The commanding God is replaced by a woman who gives orders, a beloved woman who takes the father away from his son. The fear of betrayal, a basic human fear, also becomes Abraham's fear, and that is the main subject of the poem. Here we see a sacrifice of the father and the son by the woman. Here there is also an actualization of the Bible into Israeli daily life, and the poet quite naturally uses materials from Jewish tradition in order to express his private feelings.

Other Israeli poets apart from Alterman, Gouri, Benjamin Galai and Carmi, such as A. Hillel, Yehiel Mar and Tuvia Rubner, continue to adapt the Jewish material of the Akkedah to the contemporary Israeli reality. Tuvia Rubner, in his poem "Voices," stresses the motif of continuity, as if the Akkedah was a prolonged internal process without any mobilizing significance and without any drama. It represents the existentialist phase of a modern secular Israeli trapped in cyclical time, who makes use of the only dialogue that takes place between Abraham and Isaac. Instead of God and Abraham, the heroes of the Jewish myth, Rubner focuses on the relationship of father and son, but this is not a metaphysical father but the actual father, Abraham.

The subject of the sacrifice became a major issue in the plastic arts from the beginning of the 1940s, and this was very much due to the influence of the sculpture of Yitzhak Danziger. Two of his pupils, Mordechai Gumpel and Kosso Elul, have said that their teacher called one of his sculptures "The Sacrifice of Isaac." The scholar Tamar Manor thinks that "the idea of the sacrifice of Isaac also occurred to Danziger in connection with the sacrifice of the fighters that preoccupied him in those years [...]. Danziger chose the sacrifice of the ram as a symbol of the sacrifice of the fallen. The title

‘Sacrifice of Isaac’ reveals a conscious connection between the sacrifice and the Jewish-national myth of sacrifice and redemption.” Examples of paintings of the Akkedah in the period of the War of Independence are Moshe Tamir’s works “Ram” (1949) and “Sacrifice” (1951), in which the ram resembles one of the fighters.

At the same time, secular Israeli culture also contemplated the parallel between the Akkedah and the crucifixion. This parallel was present in the paintings of the ewe-lamb by Menashe Kadishman, in the inclusion of Mary in the painting of the Akkedah by Shmuel Bonnef, in the paintings of the Pietà by Naftali Bezem, in the drawings of Shoshana Heimann and in the “paintings of the mother” by Avraham Ofek. While in the plastic arts there was a tendency to identify the Akkedah with the crucifixion, Hebrew poetry avoided this analogy. The reason for this was perhaps that plastic art was regarded as a “foreign implant,” universalistic and non-Jewish, while poetry was different in being connected with the national language, Hebrew.

In the Six-Day War in 1967 the myth of the Akkedah was again prominent. Shraga Weil of Kibbutz Ha-Ogen, who lost a son, made a series of seven prints of the Akkedah which were personal in nature and non-theological. In the triptych he painted five years later he did not depict the tragic event itself. Yigal Mossinson also lost a son in the war, and in his play *Shimshon* (1968), the father asked, “Why your only son? Why your son whom you love? Aren’t we deceiving ourselves and Isaac whom we bring every day to sacrifice?” In the War of Attrition which took place for three years after 1967, the poet Eli Alon protested: “When Abraham received the order, he knew there would be a miracle [...] but today, what belief do we have?” In the Yom Kippur War in 1973, Shmuel Bonnef painted Abraham clad in armor, and the angel and the ram are absent from the picture. Bonnef related: “After the Yom Kippur War, the idea of a story came to me, in which father Abraham was in battledress on the battlefield and tried to bring healing to the wounded soldiers.” One may recall that according to Jewish tradition, the original Akkedah took place at dusk on Yom Kippur. In connection with this, the Akkedah

paintings by Shmuel Bak, Naftali Bezem and Mordechai Ardon are particularly noteworthy. In the catalogue of the exhibition “Jewish Experience in the Art of the Twentieth Century,” Avram Kampf wrote: “The struggle for existence brought the reality of the ancient myth of the Akkedah to the knowledge of the Jews of our time.”

Yigal Tumarkin is known from his paintings in the 1980s to be an artist particularly critical of the Akkedah. In his opinion, God went from his role of being a redeemer to being a slaughterer. The artist, who maintained that the function of art was to smash idols and destroy myths, was very preoccupied in his works with the Akkedah and the crucifixion. His sculptures, which protested against the empathy for the Akkedah myth of the artists and poets of 1948, represented the anguish of the victim, his rebellion against the Israeli destiny involving endless war. Another well-known slayer of sacred cows is Uri Lifschitz, who made four etchings on the subject of the Akkedah. He summarized his work as follows: “In fact, every one of my paintings is the Akkedah.”

The normality of Israeli daily life replaced memories of the Holocaust and the wars, and the subject of the Akkedah underwent a linguistic transformation through being assimilated into the spoken tongue. Israeli Hebrew gradually began to succeed biblical Hebrew. An example of this is a poem by David Avidan ridiculing the mythology both of the Akkedah and the crucifixion by making the sacred texts into a musical:

David binds the messiah
And delays redemption.
The binding of Isaac
a diversionary action,
early ignition.
The crucifixion,
a dress rehearsal
late ignition.
Musical version.
Jesus super-double.⁶⁹

In his de-mythologization of the Christian interpretation of the Akkedah, Avidan, in his terse way, criticizes the idea of the Akkedah as a prefiguration of the crucifixion. Here the Akkedah is a rehearsal for the crucifixion in the musical, and this time Jesus is a double of Isaac. Likewise, Meir Wieseltier, in his poem, "A Story About Isaac," made a de-mythologization of the Akkedah. They were joined by Avot Yes-hurun: "We have a problem of a Sacrifice of Isaac. For us it comes out as a father has mercy on children. For you it comes out as a father has mercy on himself."

The next stage in the Israelization of the Akkedah was irony and de-mystification, as, for instance, in Yehida Amichai's poem, "The True Hero of the Akkedah":

The true hero of the binding is the ram
Who didn't know about the other people's conspiracy.
He sort of volunteered to die in Isaac's place.
I want to sing a song in his memory.
About the curly fleece and the human eyes.
About the horns that were so quiet in his living head.
And after he was slaughtered, they made shofars out of themselves
To sound the fanfare for their war
Or the fanfare of their coarse rejoicing.
I want to remember the last scene
Like a pretty picture in a tasteful fashion magazine:
The tanned, spoiled youth in his natty clothes
And by his side the angel in a long silk gown
At an official reception
And both of them with empty eyes
Looking at two empty places.
And behind them, in the colorful background, the ram,
Caught in the thicket before the slaughter.
And the thicket is his last friend.
The angel went home.
Isaac went home.
And Abraham and G-d have long since gone.
But the true hero of the binding
Is the ram.⁷⁰

Amichai's intention was to show that the whole thing was a fraud and that the only victim of the Akkedah was the ram, from whose horns shofars were made. As one may recall, at Rosh Hashana the blowing of the shofar is associated with the ram who was sacrificed, a reminder of God's promise and of the people that was sacrificed throughout history as part of the process of redemption. Amichai laughs at the transcendental and brings it down to the level of the everyday, and out of a tradition he makes a conspiracy. In this Bahtinian carnival in which the heroes of the Akkedah play their parts, the only victim is the ram.

The climax of bitter protestation at the sacrifice of the sons in the State of Israel is to be found in Hanoch Levine's poem in his play *Malkat Ha-ambatia* [The Queen of the Bathtub]:

My dear father, when you're standing at my graveside
Old and very solitary
And you see how they inter my body in the dust,
And you stand above me, father,
Don't stand there then so very proud.
And don't raise your head, father,
We're left now flesh against flesh
And now's the time to cry, father.
So let your eyes cry on my eyes,
And don't keep silent for the sake of my honor.
Something more important than honor
Is lying now at your feet, father.
And don't say that you made a sacrifice,
Because the one who made a sacrifice is me,
And don't talk high words any more
Because I'm already lower than low, father.
My dear father, when you're standing at my graveside
Old and very solitary
And you see how they inter my body in the dust,
Just ask my forgiveness, father.⁷¹

The son who demands a stock-taking from his father derides the national rhetoric by asking the father to recognize his responsibility for the death of his son. This scene in which the son speaks to his old and weary father from the depths of the

grave is perhaps the most tragic in the Hebrew poetry about the Akkedah. Another playwright, Avraham Raz, turns the tale of the Akkedah on its head in his play *Israel Shefi's Independence Night* (1969) by showing Isaac sacrificing Abraham.

Following the war in Lebanon in 1982, the artists again dealt with the Akkedah, and the best-known amongst them is Menashe Kadishman. He created a real grave in order to contrast it with a lamb, an innocent victim, which is not so different from a ram. In the exhibition "Catastrophe" given in the Jerusalem Theatre in 1984, he made a painting called "Akkedah" on a canvas four and a half metres long in which a lamb is depicted next to a dog preying on a corpse. A year later, as a reaction to his son's conscription into the army, he exhibited a sculpture entitled "The Sacrifice of Isaac" in the Jewish Museum in New York (it was later moved to the forecourt of the Tel Aviv Museum). This sculpture, constructed of Cor-Ten steel, was in the form of a ram's head, the head of the victimized son, and a wailing woman. The artist Motti Mizrachi reacted to the war by presenting sketches in a work called "The Opera" which he produced together with the composer Arik Shapira. Mizrachi, who created a theatrical display of puppets, spoke with the voice of the sacrificed: "We the sacrificed don't ask, don't hesitate and don't retreat. Our mouths are full of song!"

Parallel with the identification with the myth of the Akkedah both in Israel's wars and in the non-heroic operations carried out by Israel at the beginning of the 20th century, satire continued to undermine the myth as if to demonstrate the vitality and normality of Israeli culture. The Akkedah featured in two television programs: in *Ha-hamisha ha-camerit* in the 1990s and *Ha-yehudim ba'im* in 2014. In the first program, a moment before Abraham intended to knife his son, he heard a commanding voice declaring, "Abraham, lay not thine hand upon the lad." Suddenly, a corpulent man wearing a skullcap appeared on the scene, a well-known Israeli filmstar who specialized in thrillers! In the second program, a one-act play, "The Sacrifice of Isaac" was presented, in which Isaac fails to

take on the persona of God and asks to be treated with respect and to be allowed to go to the Jebusites' parties.

The story of the Akkedah in Israeli art carries on a dialogue with the Bible in which there is also a confrontation with the Israeli political reality. This story, with its three constituents – art, tradition and politics – does not depict a vital myth but a passive view of the world. Israeli culture in its dealings with the Akkedah does not proclaim a happy end. The shofar of redemption fashioned from a ram's horn and blown on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem in 1967 no longer proclaims redemption but the sacrifice of the sons in endless wars.

The genealogy of the myth of the Akkedah in poetry and art follows the stages of the Israeli-Jewish dialectic. Sometimes it is emphasized and sometimes it is suppressed. This dialectic preserves the glowing embers of Jewish culture which contain traditions, images and symbols. Thus, it is not a petrified Judaism that is preserved, but a dynamic and dialogic Judaism that is formed. The biblical words, metaphors and discourse are examined and interpreted in the praxis of Israeli daily life, and in this way Israeli culture reveals its roots in Jewish tradition. A. B. Yehoshua gave a good description of this process: "The Akkedah comes back to us as a basic motif in our society. It constitutes a kind of basic symbol in our culture that will remain with us for thousands of years. That is what is wonderful and frightening about cultural symbols."⁷²

A Jewish Nimrod?

For more than three generations, Yitzhak Danziger's sculptural creation "Nimrod" (1939) has served as a mirror in which the spectrum of Israeli identity is reflected, a kind of Rashomon of the forms and metamorphoses of the Israeli self-consciousness. "Nimrod" became an axis, at one end of which was the attempt to promote the "new Hebrew," the fighter, in the tradition of the Canaanite Zionism exemplified by Avraham Melnikoff's sculpture at Tel Hai in 1936, and at the other end of which was the post-Zionist challenge which

sought to expose the nakedness of the Zionist-Hebrew-Israeli god of the hunt, and to propose the counter-image of a Jewish Nimrod wrapped in a prayer-shawl, a wandering scholar, an anti-hero with respect to the Zionist ethos of heroism.

“Nimrod’s” starting-point was apparently the commissioning of the sculpture by the Hebrew University in Jerusalem for the decoration of the entrance to the Department of Archeology on Mount Scopus.⁷³ The architect Richard Kauffmann’s recommendation of Danziger for this task was rejected on account of the opposition of religious and academic circles. For the religious, the title and form of the sculpture were an expression of the most radical anti-Jewish sentiment. The head of the department, E. L. Sukenik, was also ill-disposed to the idea of a “Canaanite” work as the symbol of a Jewish institution. “Nimrod” did not fit in with Sukenik’s Zionist scheme of creating a “Jewish archeology” by treating the history of the Jews as a Hegelian thrust toward Zionism. The last two thousand years of Jewish history were only a bridge, in his eyes, between the loss of national independence in the first and its renewal in the 20th century.

In the Jewish exegetical tradition, Nimrod has usually been seen as representing the idolatrous polytheistic tendencies of the will-to-power, hubris, and an itemization of the human race strengthening the division into strong and weak – principles opposed to the universalistic message of Jewish monotheism.⁷⁴ Nimrod’s tyranny, like all tyrannies – like that of Pharaoh – was accompanied by a *folie de grandeur* reflected in towers and monuments.⁷⁵ But his greatest sin of all was his obliteration of human equality. The figure of Nimrod has a number of characteristic features: kingship, heroism (he is a hero of the hunt and not of war), rebelliousness, conquest, construction and cruelty. Nimrod is a hero of the hunt in a utopian kingdom whose ruler was not an architect of victories but a hunter of animals proud of his cruel profession. Among all the characters in the Bible, the only ones described as hunters are Nimrod and Esau.⁷⁶

From the first issue of *Alef*, the organ of the “Young Hebrews” movement, which appeared in 1948 with a picture

of “Nimrod” on the cover, to the special issue of the newspaper *Haaretz*, which appeared on the 50th anniversary of the founding of the State and contained the article by Aharon Amir, “In Expectation of the Crystallization of Identity,” which also included a photograph of “Nimrod,” this sculpture has never ceased to symbolize for many people the Canaanite movement and its ideas.⁷⁷ The paradox is that Nimrod, who represents the Canaanite-polytheistic faith, gained this symbolic meaning from a Jewish source: “‘Nimrod’ is perhaps Canaanite in origin, but the accumulated culture and values of the people and the historical-cultural memory which infiltrates our consciousness together with these will not allow us, even if we wanted, to liberate him from his Judaism.”⁷⁸ A well-known talmudic midrash makes a Canaanite symbolization of Nimrod in contrast to Abraham’s belief in the One God.⁷⁹

The dichotomy between the monotheistic Jewish tradition represented by “Abraham” and the heroic and aesthetic spirit of the Hebrew rebirth exemplified by “Nimrod” found expression in the revolt of the *Tze’irim* (young intellectuals) at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. The awakening of the Jewish national consciousness at the end of the 19th century which resulted in the birth of Zionism also changed the attitude of many Jews to the ethos of heroism. The progenitors of the Hebrew rebirth no longer concerned themselves with the intellectual traditions of the rabbis and scholars, Hassidim and kabbalists but were inspired by heroes, brandishers of the sword who cultivated a “muscular Judaism.”

In the exhibition “Routes of Wandering – Nomadism, Voyages and Transitions in Contemporary Israeli Art” given in the Israel Museum in 1992, the curator Sarit Shapira took down the sculpture “Nimrod” from the pedestal where it had stood and placed it on the floor. He was no longer a heroic figure raised above the people but a wanderer, a laborer close to the soil, perishable like the sand from which he was made. The exhibition followed the stations of wandering, migration, nomadism and transition in Israeli culture in accordance with the concepts of thinkers like Deleuze, Guattari, Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig and Edmond Jabès.⁸⁰ The favorable view

of the Jewish vagrant and the myths about the wanderers derives from the critique of Zionism, perceived as an inward-looking ideology with its view of Zion as the sole national home and homeland of the Jewish people.

In an article on the exhibition, one of whose titles was “Nimrod the Jew,” it was said that the sculpture “Nimrod” “was created and viewed as the absolute antithesis of the wandering Jew, of the exilic figure bearing his load of misery.”⁸¹ And now he was presented as a displaced figure who was given a completely opposite significance from that which had been accepted until then in the Israeli view of the Jewish experience. Nomadism, which was idealized by the exhibition, was put forward as the authentic identity of the Jew and the Israeli. Shapira claimed that hunters (and Nimrod, as one may remember, was a “mighty hunter”) lived in a nomadic society, and thus Danziger’s visits to the Bedouin were interpreted as journeys to the early forefathers of the nation. “Nimrod” and “Agrippas Street” in Jerusalem were presented in the exhibition as close to each other despite the confrontation between them seen by Sarah Breitberg-Semel. To the question, “[i]s it not going too far to make the sculpture ‘Nimrod,’ the ultimate in fantasy and the longing for rootedness, the ultimate in the desire to be assimilated into the area, into a reflection of the wandering Jew?”⁸²

The art-critic Smadar Tirosh continued in the Jewish vein initiated by the exhibition “Routes of Wandering.”⁸³ In her article, “The Canaanite Hero Is a Wandering Jew,” she explained that by stressing the motif of temporality as a mood in Israeli art, “the curator has cast light on the experience of vagrancy as a Jewish component of the Israeli identity.” In her comparison of one of the preparatory drawings for “Nimrod,” made in the year the sculpture was created, with the finished sculpture, Tirosh noticed that the sculpture underwent a transformation from the image of a giant with huge limbs, the image of Canaanite *macho* – an image that grew weaker as the sculpture progressed. Her conclusion was: “Despite his declared intention, in the process of creating the biblical father of hunters, the wandering Jew unintentionally sprouted forth!” Tirosh also drew attention to the upside-down bird carved on

Nimrod's thigh and identified a dead hunted bird in certain specific parts of his body: "The image vacillates between the predator and his victim, between the hunter and the hunted." Looking at "Nimrod" from the back, she noticed the disproportional nature of his body which means that he cannot be an image of power. According to her, he has no muscles, his chest is narrow, his back is bent, his look is frightened and anxious, and his whole deportment is far from the posture of a hero. "His distasteful cunning in concealing his weapon and his worried look, together with the pronounced Semitic nose, suggest a Jewish stereotype in a disturbing way."⁸⁴

The year 1988 was a turning-point in the view taken of "Nimrod." In that year, as we mentioned, Breitberg-Semel threw stones at it and declared an intifada against Danziger; Binyamin Tammuz kissed it on rediscovering it in the Israel Museum; Eldad Ziv colored him pink in his poster for the Israel Festival, and that very same year the mural "The Dream and Its Rupture" was inaugurated at the University of Haifa. On the twenty-one meter long western wall, among all the allegorical scenes of the Israeli narrative, Avraham Ofek treated the aspects of knowledge and science.⁸⁵ On the right-hand side was a geometry lesson, and on the left hand side an art lesson in which the lecturer presented an Israeli work, "Nimrod," and a Jewish work, Chagall's "Jew Laying on Phylacteries." Here, Ofek touched on the very heart of the Israeli-Jewish, Nimrodic-Chagallic dialectic. The painter Michael Sgan-Cohen also pointed out this duality when he wrote, "[i]t is interesting that this Canaanite hero has a biblical name, and yet the Canaanite-pagan interpretation is correct. Rashi says that the hero from the Book of Genesis incited people against God. That is to say, the Nimrod of the Sages was a rebel against God."⁸⁶ Gideon Ofrat, in his essay "Nimrod in Phylacteries" gave a good formulation of this dilemma of identity: "Nimrod in phylacteries is a paradox, a soul torn between its contrasting elements: between its Israelism and its Judaism, between setting down roots and wandering."⁸⁷

No doubt Sgan-Cohen had in mind Saul Tchernikovsky's poem "Before a Statue of Apollo" (1899) in which a Jewish

rebel was bound with the straps of phylacteries, or the stabbing of the Torah-scrolls dripping with blood by Berdichevsky's rebellious hero in his novel *Ha'ozev* [The Man Who Leaves].⁸

⁸ The same motif appears in the Jewish legend in which Titus, son of the Emperor Vespasian and destroyer of the Second Temple, entered the Temple and struck the curtain of the Ark with his sword until blood ran out of it. In connection with this juxtaposition of blood, Torah and phylacteries, it is also impossible not to call to mind the figure of the writer Hillel Zeitlin, "the Saint," a Nietzschean Jew wrapped in phylacteries going to his death in Auschwitz, and – to return to Ofek's painting – the two arms of Yosef Haim Brenner, the Jewish author in Palestine, a defiant atheist, wrapped in the leather straps of phylacteries, clasping the wooden beams of scaffolding on which workers are engaged in building the land, and in the background of the painting one sees "Nimrod."

"Nimrod" passed through the entire gamut of identities. At first he was a king and a hunter, two things alien to the spirit of Jewish tradition. Later, in the time of the national revival in the modern era, the "new Hebrew" wished in the Diaspora to be "like all the nations," and in Israel he sought indigenism and a regional identity. And finally (at least at this stage), with the critique of the secular Zionist ethos, there was born Nimrod the post-Zionist, the wandering Jew. And, parallel with this, there was also the option of "Nimrod the crusader" at Kalaat Nimrud. Here we see the dialectic of "the Jew" and "the Hebrew," two fraternal rival identities, in the historical development of one cultural image. When the "Jew" prevails, there is an emergence of the Hebrew-Canaanite opposition, and when the "Hebrew" prevails there is a rebirth of Jewish identity.

The return of Herod

The exhibition "Herod the Great: The King's Final Journey," which took place in the Israel Museum in 2013, stood at the intersection of the museum.⁸⁹ To its left were the conspicuous

illuminated sarcophagi at the entrance to the renovated archeological wing. Opposite, raised up, Yitzhak Danziger's sculpture "Nimrod" indicated the entrance to the Department of Israeli Art. "Nimrod," the most significant work of art created here, and now the logo of the Israel Museum, stood opposite the largest and most impressive archeological exhibition given in the museum since it was founded, which bore the name of Herod. Nimrod and Herod, two men of impressive appearance, were hunters who opposed the Jewish ethos. Rashi said that Nimrod the hunter "captured the minds of men with his mouth and led them to rebel against the Omnipresent";⁹⁰ Josephus Flavius described Herod as "a wonderful huntsman, especially because of his proficiency in riding horses. He was also a warrior against whose bravery no one could stand."⁹¹

In the Jewish tradition, Nimrod was generally seen as representing the idolatrous qualities of violence, brute force and divisiveness, and as Abarbanel said, "he built cities and towns of mighty appearance in order to rule the whole country from them." His architectural imperialism, resembled that of Herod, of whom Josephus wrote that "there was no place in his entire kingdom where Caesar could be honored where he did not place something in his honor."

Another thing that Nimrod and Herod had in common was their non-Jewish origins. Nimrod came from Ethiopia and Herod was of Edomite origin. Although the Edomites were circumcised and regarded themselves as Jews in all respects after three generations, as we learn from John Curran's article on Herod and Augustus, the fastidious considered them only half-Jews. Nimrod was the first man in the Bible to have a kingdom named after him, and as such was viewed as a rebel against the King of Kings; and Herod, who ruled Judea by the grace of the Romans, liked to see himself as "king of the Jews," perhaps because of his insecure feelings about his origins. Both figures are associated with despotism, conquest, building and cruelty, but the great difference between them was the very negative image Nimrod was given by the sages as the builder of the tower of Babel, whereas Herod was also remembered as the builder of the magnificent Temple: "He

who did not see the Temple never saw a beautiful building in his life.”⁹²

It was undoubtedly a brave decision on the part of the management of the Israel Museum to devote a special exhibition entirely to Herod, a cruel ruler who liquidated the Hasmoneans and murdered his wife and three children. It was the first time such an exhibition had ever been given. Perhaps the ultra-Orthodox took no notice of the Nimrod-Herod analogy because they were still under the euphoria of the great exhibition given by the Israel Museum in their honor.

The Herod exhibition was not just one more museum event. It was a real landmark in the Israelis' complex relationship to a controversial legacy, a historiographical turning-point in the attitude to Herod, and a cultural event of the greatest importance with political consequences with regard to the Palestinians and Israel's image in the world. The catalogue reflected the awareness of the organizers of the exhibition who were conscious of its tremendous importance. The catalogue showed some of the archeological finds in the Herodian sites, especially the Herodion (the only site to which Herod gave his name) and Jericho. The visitors saw the royal throne-room in the winter palace in Jericho, the royal reception-chamber in the theater at the Herodion, and – the jewel in the crown – Herod's burial-chamber, almost completely restored, which ends the route of the exhibition. The splendid tomb in the Herodion was of course the final stop of Herod's last journey in 4 CE (he reigned from 37 BCE) which began in Jericho, 40 kilometers away – a journey which is the connecting thread of the exhibition and the catalogue.

Josephus Flavius's books *Jewish Antiquities* and *The Jewish War Against the Romans* are the most important historical sources for our knowledge of Herod. Josephus, who mentioned the *Annals of the House of Herod* (of which nothing remains) only once, relied chiefly on Herod's court historian Nicolaus of Damascus. Josephus wrote that Nicolaus “was loud in his praise for the king's glorious deeds, and was even eager to defend the things that were discreditable.” In addition to Josephus, Herod was given a bad name in Jewish tradition, where he appears as “Herod the Wicked,” the “slave of Rome”

and the “foreign ruler,” and in Christian tradition, where he is the Antichrist who ordered all the babes in Bethlehem in 4 BCE to be murdered for fear that one of them might turn out to be the Messiah. The representation of Herod as a second pharaoh in the New Testament was of course intended to represent Jesus as a second Moses.

Modern Jewish historiography, especially that of Hirsch Heinrich Graetz, Joseph Klausner and Gedalia Allon,⁹³ which was influenced by their national, religious or Zionist outlooks, fixed the negative image of Herod for generations. Avraham Shalit, author of *King Herod, the Man and His Deeds*, who also at first had a negative attitude to Herod, as is shown in a letter to Klausner in which he called Herod a “reptile,” changed his mind and was the first to express a different historiographical opinion based on a broad geo-political perspective. Shalit’s reassessment of Herod’s policies toward Rome led him to the conclusion that if the leaders of the nation had continued to display the political realism of Herod, the fall of the Second Temple might have been averted.⁹⁴

Critical reactions to Shalit were not slow in coming. Z. Zeitlin saw Herod as a cruel and vengeful monarch who murdered for the pleasure of it. Gideon Kressel found him guilty of an “abominable Macchiavellianism,” and Yitzhak Baer described his rule as filled with murder and prostitution.⁹⁵

5 Lastly, the book *A Persecuted Persecutor*⁹⁶ by the historian Arie Kasher and the psychologist Eliezer Witztum examined Herod from a psychological point of view. They were critical of the title *Herod, King of Israel* proposed by Shalit and swung the pendulum back to the ideas of Graetz and Klausner. Herod, in their opinion, suffered from a “paranoic dislocation of personality” which affected his actions.

Daniel Schwartz, one of the major historians of the Second Temple period, was critical of the terrible public relations that Herod has received for two thousand years, reinforced by the Babylonian Talmud where he is depicted as a traitor to his people, and also by the third part of *The Jewish War against the Romans*, based on preconceived ideas lacking historical perspective.⁹⁷ The Herodian paradox lies in the contradiction

between the divine requirement of sovereignty represented by Herod's construction of the Temple and his rule by the grace of the Romans. In honoring Caesarea together with Jerusalem, Herod, in effect, was asking his Jewish subjects to separate religion and state. His political instincts proved themselves when his successors failed to preserve Jewish independence.

Schwartz joined the school of the "new historians" of the Herodian period. These stress the impressive building activity, prosperity and peace in Herod's kingdom, and play down the court politics which have given him such a bad name. The "new historians" started to judge Herod by his political achievements, his long, stable period of rule and the equilibrium he achieved in the Judeo-Roman political space. The historian John Curran declared that Augustus saw Herod as a kindred spirit in his sense of mission and in his desire to leave an imprint. Unlike earlier scholars for whom Herod was a bloodthirsty dictator, the "new historians" revealed the countenance of a shrewd politician and a great builder who, like Augustus, succeeded in meeting the challenge of his time – to represent the revolution that was taking place in the historical process. In relation to the new historiography, one can add the view that Herod created a special model of Mediterranean political culture.⁹⁸

Archeology and nationalism came into the world closely allied, and the "new discourse" on Herod in Israel is one more proof of the continuous affinity between them. Shaul Goldstein, head of the Nature and Parks Authority and former chairman of the regional council of Gush Etzion, in conjunction with the head staff officer of archeology in Judea and Samaria and others, began a debate about their proposal of restoring Herod's tomb in the Herodion. In the proposal, which one of the participants called "Disneyland," it was planned to raise the height of the original tomb by 25 meters. The hearing was attended by senior archeologists, preservation experts, museum curators, planners, designers, representatives of tourism and guides. Parallels were drawn with the restoration of ancient sites in North Africa and Europe, and it was said that it would be possible to disassemble the construction if necessary. The advantages were enumerated, such as making

the Herodion a tourist attraction, the materialization of a classic structure, and creating a magnet for investments and for the preservation and development of the area. The disadvantages were also mentioned, but none of the participants pointed out that it was a site located in an occupied area according to international law. When one of those present expressed the opinion that the tomb might be “a phallus of the settlements,” the organizers objected that this was not a political discussion.⁹⁹

A silencing of this sort was not possible in the international press which was united in its criticism of the museum’s decision to bring archeological items from Jericho and the Herodion to the exhibition in Jerusalem. The London *Guardian* attacked Israel for breaking the international agreement forbidding the transfer of antiquities from occupied territories. According to the Palestinians, the Israeli archeologists provided justification for Israel’s control of the territories. They said that the tomb and the palace in Jericho were “an integral part of the Palestinian cultural legacy.”¹⁰⁰ The directors of the museum committed themselves to restoring the items to their sites at the end of the exhibition. The *New York Times* quoted the words of Yonatan Mizrahi, founder of the “Emek Shaveh” organization, that “this is an attempt to create a narrative claiming that these sites, whatever the political outcome may be, are part of the Israeli identity.” Five hundred other such reports came in following the exhibition and the special issues of Israeli journals devoted solely to Herod.¹⁰¹

The Zionist archeological urge to find an affinity between the biblical past and the new Israel gained encouragement from David Ben-Gurion, who said that “[i]n the general field of Jewish studies, Jewish archeology will take its rightful place, for all its findings bring our past into the present and confirm our historical continuity in the country.”¹⁰² Biblical archeology in Israel, which has focused on excavations in Jerusalem, Nablus, Beit El, Beit Shean and Lachish, has sought to create a justification for Zionism by throwing a bridge between heroic ancient history and modern territorial nationalism. This is also the underlying motivation of Ehud

Netzer's project of excavating the "City of David," the restoration of the tunnels by the Western Wall, and the "new discourse" about Herod. The common factor between them is the attempt to assert an Israeli ideological claim to the whole land of Israel, a claim that would pave the way to its actualization.

In this way, archeology becomes ideology;¹⁰³ moreover, it becomes myth. In order for the Herodian myth to preserve its vitality, it must, like all myths, exemplify an "inner dialectic" in a plastic form: it must strengthen certain elements that are required and repress those that do not have the necessary function. The "new discourse" on Herod which plays down his alien and bloodthirsty sides (which were previously condemned in Jewish historiography) and stresses the image of the monarch-as-builder suits the present political reality in Israel. Creating a favorable view of him by glorifying his architectural projects facilitates his return to a central position in the life of the historical land of Israel. The Herodian myth is a "narrative philosophy," to use Schelling's expression. The common discourse on the myth of Herod, like that on Nimrod, is one more proof of the claim that myth cannot be dismissed out of hand but one must insist on its vitality and attempt to determine its place in the formation of the Israeli culture.

Conclusions

The three cases discussed here – the Akkedah, Nimrod and Herod – are a proof of the Jewish-Israeli dialectic as a cultural synthesis that is able to preserve the vitality of every part of it. Each case is a dialogic structure by means of which, generation after generation, Israeli Jews have spoken to each other about their identity, their beliefs, and about the central question that lies at the heart of every national culture – i.e., where have they come from and where are they going?

The Israeli culture is a product of the Jewish-Israeli dialectic. The Israeli identity is characterized at any given moment by its stress on some element in the cultural synthesis, or its repression of it. This dynamic identity was well

described by the poet Haim Gouri when he said that Canaanism, Hebraism or Judaism, by driving one aspect to an extreme, exacerbated the split in the Israeli identity: There was great charm in the Israeli cultural challenge, said Gouri, “but I knew that the rejection of any connection or any affinity between the Jew and the Hebrew would be self-defeating. It would totally efface any possible explanation for our being here, and would also destroy lofty cultural values that we have seen as our possession.”¹⁰⁴

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3. Hebrew Culture in Israel: Between Europe, the Middle East, and America

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This paper was completed in September 2015.

Introduction

The Hebrew culture in Israel has been shaped in the spirit of the Zionist ideology of the national renewal of the Jewish people and of its territorial ingathering in Eretz Yisrael-Palestine. The destruction of European Jewry in the Holocaust, on the one hand, and the process of nation-building in Eretz Yisrael-Palestine, including especially the hostile encounter with the Palestinian Arabs, on the other hand, had decisively impacted this culture as well.¹⁰⁵ This article is dedicated to the influence of three wide, but distinct, cultural zones on Hebrew culture in its different periods: European, Middle-Eastern and American. By “culture” we refer both to “high” and “low” cultural representations, as well as both to articulated and spontaneous ones.¹⁰⁶

Europe and Europeaness

The dominant influence upon Hebrew culture, already from its inception and for a long duration, has been that of Europe. The obvious reason is that most Jewish immigrants to Palestine in the formative phase of Hebrew culture, until 1948, were of European descent. This is why in order to follow the shaping of Israeli Europeaness, one should follow the Jewish waves of immigration from Europe. The first wave of 25,000 Jewish immigrant-settlers in Palestine (First *Aliyah*; in the plural *Aliyot*), in 1882–1903, established what was called the “new

community” (*HaYishuv HaHadash*), to distinguish them from the “old community” (*HaYishuv HaYashan*) of Sephardic (“Spanish”) Jews who lived in Palestine before that. The immigrants came mainly from Russia and Eastern Europe and were Zionists by persuasion. They erected more than 20 new agricultural settlements (*moshavot*) and also settled in the cities of Jaffa, Jerusalem and Haifa. The moshavot were the first sites where a new Hebrew culture was formed.¹⁰⁷ In addition to the Russian culture, two other prevailing European influences were the French and the German.¹⁰⁸

The influence of the French culture was facilitated by the administration of Baron de Rothschild in the moshavot, as well as by the educational activities of the Alliance Israélite Universelle organization. Visitors in the moshavot were impressed by the French libraries and piano playing in the farmer houses. The influence of the German culture was facilitated by the educational activities of the Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden organization. This association initiated the establishment of a high-school and a technical research institute at Haifa (later the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology). In 1913 a “Languages War” broke out between the Hilfsverein and the Hebrew teachers associations over the language of teaching in these institutions. The eventual victory of the Hebrew entrenched its status as the common national language, and up to the 1950s guardians of the Hebrew language would deter the public use of “foreign” languages, such as Yiddish and Arabic.¹⁰⁹ In any event, the occupation of Palestine by Britain in 1917 brought to an end the era of French and German influences upon Hebrew culture. It also brought to a final end that status of the Sephardic elite of the “old community.”¹¹⁰ Britain had huge influence in shaping Israeli political, governmental and judicial cultures, as well as architectural culture. Despite its East-European bent, the Hebrew Yishuv established a parliamentary political system (Arab influence on the culture of the Yishuv is discussed in the next sub-chapter).¹¹¹

With the arrival to Palestine of two additional waves of Jewish immigrants – the second wave (Second Aliyah) from

1904 to 1914 and the third wave (Third Aliyah) from 1917 to 1923, the influence of East European culture was strengthened. These immigrant-settlers ushered in Palestine a new type of political culture, which in the 1930s would substitute that of middle-class Zionism, and would become hegemonic – the Hebrew socialist culture. It consisted of the same type of mass political movements and centralized political organizations as was common of East-Europe of the time. Their ideology was two-pronged – nationalist and socialist – and contemporary historiography is divided over the measure of integration of these two ideals.¹¹² In the first decade of the 20th century first workers' parties were established (the Young Worker and the Workers of Zion); in 1919 they amalgamated in the Union of Labor Party (*Achdut HaAvoda*) and in 1930 formed the Party of Workers of Eretz Yisrael (*Mapai*) – the dominant political force in the country until the 1970s. Not less substantially, new forms of communal settlement were formed: the *kibbutz* and the *moshav* (the latter is semi-communal), and the Histadrut Hebrew Federation of Labor was established, in 1920, as a roof-organization of political, economic, social and cultural branches. In the workers' settlements, as well as in the new towns, a new Hebrew culture was developed, the ideal centerpieces of it were the brazen “New Hebrew” person (mainly masculine), communal pioneering, economic productivity and self-defense. These ideals, as already mentioned, were closely tied to parallel socialist and romantic ideas influential at the time in Eastern Europe and Russia.¹¹³ In Palestine the Workers Movement created a whole new sub-culture, which included its own educational institutions, youth movements, newspapers, literature and poetry, country tours, holidays and ceremonies, popular music and dances, and a “Hebrew-Israeli” model of life-style, all of which found manifestation in the figure of the indigenous generation of “Hebrews” born in Palestine – known as the *Tsabar* (so called after the cactus fruit, thorny outside and sweet within).¹¹⁴

In the pre-state era three more waves of Jewish immigrants arrived in Palestine, and had a variety of cultural impacts: an immigration of Jews from Yemen (which will be discussed in

the next sub-chapter); and the Fourth and Fifth Aliyot. The Fourth Aliyah (1924–1928) consisted of 60,000 Jews who immigrated under national and economic duress in Poland. It comprised mainly lower-middle-class persons, who settled in the cities, and engaged in petit commerce, handicrafts and brokerage.¹¹⁵ The Fifth Aliyah (1929–1939) was of 300,000 European Jews, about 60,000 of them escaped from Nazi Germany. A significant component of people in it was highly educated and owned some financial means. They contributed to the emergence of urban bourgeois culture, private industry and the free professions in the Jewish community.¹¹⁶

The pioneering ideal projected by the agricultural communes was acclaimed, but in actuality an emerging urban culture took precedence. In 1936 half of the waged employees, and third of the members of the Histadrut, lived in Tel Aviv.¹¹⁷ The township of Tel Aviv was established in 1909 by Jewish bourgeoisie who planned to live in a garden-suburb. In the 1920s and 1930s it became the urban center of Palestine and was perceived as a piece of enlightened Europe implanted in a backward Asian ground.¹¹⁸ The majority of its dwellers – 85% in 1925 and 78% in 1938 – were of European descent.¹¹⁹ One testimony of the European image of Tel Aviv is its built environment, which was conspicuously European during its “eclectic style” of the 1920s, and even more explicitly so in the 1930s, when the modernist architecture (Bauhaus style) prevailed.¹²⁰

Two versions of European culture clashed in Tel Aviv – the socialist and the bourgeois, yet they mostly had in common a “modern” European sensitivity. The city soon became the creative center of the Israeli “high” culture, and hosted theaters, orchestras, music bands, an opera, dance groups, publishing houses, museums, public libraries, newspapers and magazines, cinemas, restaurants, cafes, and even a casino, all offering “a European cultural basket.”¹²¹ In the fine arts, contemporary European modernist styles were followed since the 1920s, especially French and German, such as post-Impressionism, Expressionism or Cubism, and all these were blended with a romantic view of the country. Already in 1930

an exhibition was displayed in the Tel Aviv Museum with the title “The Beginning of Modernism in Eretz Yisrael 1920–1930.” In 1948 leading artists (Zaretsky, Steimatski, Streichman) formed the “New Horizons” group (*Ofakim Hadashim*) to advance the abstract expressive modernist style. Others created in a realist socialist vein.¹²² Israeli art has continued to create ever since within the orbit of modernist (and later post-modernist) Western art, which since the 1960s includes also America.¹²³

Tel Aviv was imagined from the beginning as a “white city.” This is due to the sands it was erected on and to the color of its fabricated buildings. But “whiteness” also connotes Europeaness, newness and progress. The city was contrasted in this regard with Jerusalem, a city on a hill, build from cut-off mountain stones, and symbolizing history and tradition.¹²⁴

But there were neighborhoods which were dubbed the “black city” in Tel Aviv.¹²⁵ Already in the pre-state times there emerged a gap between the center and northern neighborhoods, populated by the well-to-do European bourgeoisie and by high status workers, and the eastern and southern neighborhoods, populated by impoverished immigrants from Eastern Europe and from Arab countries.¹²⁶ In later days the city would be divided along this line, between “North” and “South.” The municipality tried to impose on peddlers and markets what was considered a Western hygiene, but citizens kept complaining about the “Eastern” and “Asiatic” nature of the commerce in some quarters. All in all then, the dominant Hebrew culture of the prestate community, as exemplified by the case of Tel Aviv, aspired to be modern and European and turned its back upon all manifestations of the “East.”

A special case was that of another “East”: Russia and the Soviet Union. There were two reasons for the impact of Russian culture on the Jewish community: first, Russia was the place of origin of many among the first to third waves of immigrants; second, after the October Revolution the Soviet Union became the ideological Mecca of socialists all over the world, Palestine included. Therefore much of popular and high

culture up to the 1930s was Russian translated into the Hebrew language (popular songs, literature, etc.). Yet by the 1930s a special ideology of Hebrew socialism was articulated, which took distance from the communist revolutionary stance. The new “Socialist Constructivism” maintained that the role of the Jewish working class was not to appropriate capital – but rather to create it.¹²⁷ The Jewish socialists thus relinquished communist culture, and its influence was restricted to small Jewish-Arab communist circles and to the minor *Mapam* Party and its kibbutz movement, which adulated Stalin until the famous 21st conference of the Soviet Communist Party, where he was denounced. Russian cultural influence was to return only in the 1990s, and by then in a totally new guise. This time it has been the outcome of a large wave of immigrants to Israel from the Former Soviet Union – 1.2 million people, who amount to one fifth of the whole Jewish population in Israel. The size of this immigration, the fact that it was conceived as mostly “European,” and the high educational and professional standards of it, enabled it to form its own Russianspeaking cultural enclave in Israel, concomitantly with its ongoing “Israelization,” especially of the second generation.¹²⁸

Orient and Orientalism

The world constructed by the Jewish immigrants in Palestine was, as we saw, a European implant in the Middle East, and consciously so. Benjamin Ze’ev Herzl, the founder of the Zionist movement, envisaged the future Jewish state as a central European bourgeois society. The Zionist movement was in the main an affair of European Jewry. When they considered moving “eastwards,” to Palestine, they fathomed the “Orient,” not necessarily with actual Arabs or Jews from Arab countries.

Orientalism, as is well known, combines an attraction to the Orient’s assumed exotic nature, with revulsion from its supposed backwardness. Orientalization is in fact a method of cultural denigration of the “other,” and Aziza Khazzoom argues that in modern Jewish history there is a “great chain” of

Orientalizations: European Jews were Orientalized by the European Christians; East European Jews were Orientalized by Central and West-European ones; European Jews in Palestine Orientalized the Jews from Arab countries; and together they Orientalized the Arabs.¹²⁹ With that, and given the said ambivalence, the Arab Orient was also perceived by young European Jews rebelling against their bourgeois parents, as a link toward their own journey to an authentic ancestral past. Ben-Gurion and Ben Zvi maintained that the Arabs in Palestine are most probably descendants of the original Hebrew nation. Members of *HaShomer* (‘the Guardian’), the first Hebrew defense company (1909– 1920), imitated Arab dress and horse riding as a display of the valor of the “New Hebrew.”

Orientalist enchantment inspired the founders of the first school of art in Palestine, Bezalel, in 1906. These artists (Schatz, Raban, Lillian) fused Renaissance, Classicism and Art-Deco motifs in their depictions of Palestine, together with Biblical themes. During the 1930s and 1940s sculptors (Danziger, Tamuz, Shemi), fused modern artistic modes with those of the ancient cultures of the region: Assyrian, Egyptian, and Greek, and produced an agenda for a “Canaanite” non-Jewish Hebrew culture.¹³⁰ The sculpture “Nimrod” of Danziger is still today a topic for reverence and controversy.¹³

¹ But such stylistic self-Orientalizations had diminished since the 1930s, following the deterioration of Hebrew-Arab relationships.

Yet it was Jews from Arab and Muslim countries who made an imprint on Israeli culture since the mid-20th century. They would be called later *Mizrahim* (literally, ‘from the East’) and the veteran Europeans would be called *Ashkenazim* (after the medieval appellation of Germany). A problematic encounter between the Hebrew community and Jews from Yemen occurred already in the pre-state era, and it serves as a prism to the future emergence of the intra-Jewish “ethnic problem.” In 1881–1882 some 2,500 Jews from Yemen immigrated to Palestine, and in fact arrived there before the First Aliyah (but were not accredited as “first” in the dominant historical narrative). In 1911 the Labor Movement sent a

messenger (Yavnieli) to Yemen, to promote more immigrants to come. This initiative aimed to cast these “natural workers” to the labor market to compete with cheap Arab labor. On the eve of the War of 1914 some 5,000 Yemenite Jews lived in the community, and suffered exclusion and discrimination. Most of them lived in poverty on the margins of Jewish towns. Those of them who worked in agricultural settlements and aimed to settle there – as was conventional for workers of European descent– were rejected and forced to leave (as famously happened in the moshava Kinneret in 1930¹³²).

Such intra-Jewish ethnic encounter repeated itself on much larger scale in the state era. The state was established in 1948. In the first two years its Jewish population doubled due to the arrival of 600,000 immigrants, and in its first ten years the state absorbed an immigration of one million Jews, about half of them from Middle Eastern and North African states (the majority from Morocco and Iraq, about 350,000 and 130,000 respectively). This “Mass Immigration” (*HaAliyah HaHamonit*), as it was called (derogatory referring to quantities rather than qualities, according to later critics), was initiated by the state, which regarded the Jews of Arab countries as its main demographic reserve, after the Holocaust of European Jewry. Despite the official ideology of the state of the “ingathering of exiles” and of a national “melting pot,” the immigration from Arab countries propelled fears of a loss of cultural hegemony by the veterans, and it met with stereotypes of backwardness and primitiveness. The *Edot HaMizrah*, as the Jews from Arab countries were labeled (literally, ‘Oriental communities’), were portrayed in history textbooks only dismally and negatively.¹³³ The dispersion of the Mizrahi immigrants to far-away settlements and “development towns” determined their continuous spatial and socioeconomic peripherality in Israeli society.¹³⁴ A certain number of them, like many Jews from Iraq, managed to remain in the center of the country and enjoyed a somewhat better mobility.¹³⁵

The policy toward the immigrants from Arab countries was articulated in terms of the modernization theory. They were expected to “de-socialize” their backward, traditional identity and “re-socialize” into the modern Israeli culture.

Since the 1970s critical approaches developed toward this dominant view.¹³⁶ One school of thought was Marxist, and suggested that the gap between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim was not a result of the latter's "cultural lag," but a result of a division of labor that took place in Israel, where the Ashkenazim upgraded themselves to a managerial and professional class, while placing the Mizrahim in the menial cheap positions in the new class structure.¹³⁷ Another school that emerged in the 1990s brought back in culture, but this time from a post-colonial perspective. Hebrew culture was perceived by it as an oppressive colonial culture that aimed to de-Arabize the culture and identity of the Mizrahim. Ella Shohat thus defined the Mizrahim as the "other victims of Zionism" (the primary victims being the Palestinians).¹³⁸ The radical "New Mizrahim" of the 1990s argued that the remedy is to reconstruct Jewish-Arab identity, which they considered not necessarily as "essentially Arab," but as constructed in Israel by a common experience of cultural marginalization and social deprivation.¹³⁹

As a result of "the gap" that wide opened between the "First Israel" (veteran, Ashkenazi) and the "Second Israel" (new immigrants, Mizrahim) – as the common vocabulary of the time had it – a long line of protest events took place, from innumerable protests in the transitional camps (*maabarot*) during the 1950s, to mass clashes with the police in the Wadi Salib neighborhood in Haifa in 1959, to the Black Panthers Movement of 1971–1973; the Tents Movements in the 1970s; the massive protest-vote for the *Likud* Party until effecting a regime change in 1977; the creation of the *Tami* Party in 1981, and the *Shas* Party in 1984 (to become the third great party); the creation of the Mizrahi Democratic Rainbow (*HaKeshet HaMizrahit*) by intellectuals in 1996, and much more.¹⁴⁰

These social and political affairs were accompanied by developments in the cultural field. One illustration is in the musical scene. Arab music to which the immigrants from different Arab counties were accustomed was banned and absent from the Israeli public sphere between the 1950s and 1970s, being identified as the "music of the enemy." It

endured only in private and religious circles outside of the public eye. From these circles emerged in the 1970s music that merged Arab, Mediterranean, Israeli and Western pop genres. Since this music was not recognized by the media and record companies, a tape-recording “cottage industry” emerged that manufactured “music cassettes” that were massively sold in central bus stations and other popular crowded places.¹⁴¹ The struggle for recognition of Mizrahi music as a branch of Israeli music (by Avihu Medina, Shlomo Bar, Boas Sharabi and others) was won in the 1980s, and by the 1990s the status of old “Eretz Yisrael music” and Mizrahi music swop places, when the latter ascended to unprecedented heights of popularity (Zehava Ben, Sarit Haddad, Eyal Golan, Rita and others). A special role in this history of popular music was played by the southern township of Sderot, which became a hothouse of Mizrahi pop-rock Israeli music (made popular by groups like Teapacks, and its star Kobi Oz, Knesiyat Hasekhel, Sfata'im and more).

Another illustration to the transformation of Mizrahi culture from the margins to the center is the film industry. This industry evolved in the 1960s in two tracks: a “serious” track of soul searching by Ashkenazi young bohemians, who followed the French “new wave” cinema; and a “light” entertainment track, of what became known as “Bourikas movies” (called upon the Turkish oily pastry). These latter movies dealt with stories of inter-ethnic relations, and did so in the most stereotyped and ridiculous manner possible.¹⁴² Such stereotyping of ethnicities continued in Israeli cinema for quite long, until a new generation of Mizrahi film directors emerged in the 1990s, and by this time this refers also to television creators, who produced quality films, that represent in a nuanced manner their own life experience – now looking from their present Tel Aviv life on their past experience in the peripheral towns.¹⁴³ Authors and poets of Mizrahi descent also struggled for a long time to become part of the Israeli canon, rather than being enclosed in an “ethnic” niche. By the 2000s this struggle was patently won, when prose and poetry by Mizrahi authors, as well as works by Mizrahi artists, have become both popular and respected (Balas, Michael, Amir,

Matalon, Adaf, Mishani, Biton, Bahar¹⁴⁴). Another kind of “invented culture” that is suggested as an alternative to the “European” Ashkenazi unilateral domination is the “Mediterranean identity.” Yet critics maintain that this agenda is one more attempt to circumvent the Arabic dimension of Mizrahi culture.¹⁴⁵

The reaction of Mizrahim to the plight they experienced in Israel may be divided into two types: an “integrative” reaction – the demand to be better and more equally integrated in Israeli society and culture; and a “radical” reaction – the demand to refurbish the dominant culture itself into Jewish-Arab culture, which will transform also the terms of national rivalry that defined so far Arab-Israeli relations. Yet the histories of the cultural fields we examined above lead toward a conclusion that these two types are not entirely contradicting: radicalism instigates certain kinds of formerly repressed expressions, and as those succeed in penetrating Israeli culture, they both transform it and are transformed by it. To the taste of some, by integrating into the national mode, these expressions lose the Mizrahi-Arabic authenticity and critical edge.¹⁴⁶

America and Americanization

The 1970s and 1980s saw an intensification of the political struggle between Right (Likud) and Left (Labor), which coalesced with mounting tensions between Mizrahim and Ashkenazim, and also coalesced partially with the religious-secular rift. All this created a sense of decomposition of the initial common national frame and the emergence of a society torn by social cleavages among various sectors, or “tribes,” separated by their world view and lifestyle.¹⁴⁷ Consequently, a plural – or multi-cultural – interpretation of Israeli culture emerged, and substituted the “melting pot” ideology of previous decades. This perception was even magnified in the 1990s, with the arrival of new waves of Jewish immigrants to Israel – the Russian wave, which was mentioned above, and the small wave from Ethiopia.¹⁴⁸ The new multicultural

sensibility was illustrated, for instance, in the television series *Tekuma*, which was displayed in 1998 by the public channel, in celebration of the 50th Independence Day. The series gave expression to narratives other than that of the mainstream, and expressed the perspectives of Arabs, Mizrahim and religious Jews. The openness of the series to “new groups” was especially clear in comparison with a parallel series that was displayed in 1981, with the telling name *The Pillar of Fire*, in which one narrator presented the hegemonic national (and Ashkenazi) perspective of Israeli history. Yet, in reality marginalization and discrimination persist.

The multi-culturalization of Israel was one facet of the substantial process of Americanization and globalization that Israel underwent in the 1990s, in the economic and cultural spheres. At this time “America,” rather than Europe, came to represent in Israeli culture the “West.” American evangelical travelers appeared in the “Holy Land” already since the 1830s and an American embassy opened in Palestine in 1842. Yet the political interest of America in the region was awakened around the Great War and the discovery of oil reservoirs and more so after WWII, when Britain and France withdrew from the region. The Zionist movement moved its orientation from Europe to the USA during WWII. The plan to establish a Jewish state was proclaimed in the New York Biltmore Hotel in 1942. But Israel was discovered to be a strategic asset to America only after the Israeli-Arab War of 1967. This signaled also a turning point in the attitude of American Jews toward Israel. And so the political, economic and cultural impact of the United States in Israel is ever growing since the 1970s.

By the 1980s and more so by the 1990s the process of Americanization was evident. Yet earlier step-signs may be noticed already from the 1950s, and especially in Tel Aviv. In 1957 a department of business management was opened at the Hebrew University, under direct American influence,¹⁴⁹ in the 1950s Dizengoff Street in Tel Aviv became a “window shopping” street; in 1958 the first supermarket was opened, in Ben Yehuda Street; in 1964 the first skyscraper was erected in Herzl Street by an American entrepreneur; in 1965 the first Hilton Hotel opened, in Hayarkon Street; in 1968 television

broadcasting started, and in the same year a Coca Cola plant was opened. In 1977 the first shopping mall was opened in Dizengoff Street; from the late 1960s popular music in Israel adopted the rock-style; the young in Israel adopted the jeans wear; and Israeli artists discovered New York. In 1967 an exhibition was displayed in Tel Aviv about “The Americanization of Israeli Art” (curated by Gideon Ofrat).

During the 1980s and 1990s the process of Americanization reached a new zenith. This was associated with the sweeping economic neo-liberalization of the economy (which started with the Emergency Stabilization Plan of 1985) and with the incoming flows of global culture, especially as they are transmitted through commercial advertisement, television programs and little later personal computers and the internet network. More than 85% of Israeli households own television, more than 78% own a computer, and more than 70% own internet connectivity.¹⁵⁰

Americanization is not only a matter of American symbols and commodities, but it rather involves a whole transformation of the social structure and its dynamics. It includes the adoption of neo-liberal economic policies, American managerial patterns, American consumer lifestyle and post-modern tastes. The transition was from a European style “social capitalism” toward an American style “hyper capitalism.” The new economy is based on privatization of public assets and corporations, financial and commercial liberalization, de-collectivization of labor relations, contraction of welfare services, de-progressivization of taxation, and budget strictures in the spirit of the “Washington Consensus.” In conjunction with this, Israel’s economy became “post-industrial,” i.e., focused on innovation in the field of advanced technological communication and on the financial market.

The outcome of this turn was twofold: unprecedented economic growth, on the one hand, and growth of unprecedented income gaps, on the other hand. With yearly domestic income per capita of close to \$29,000 (in Purchase Power Parity terms), which is 84% of the average figure of OECD countries, and 62% of the American figure, Israel

became an affiliate of the rich world. In a ranking of world states by domestic product per capita, Israel is located in the 24th place. In a ranking of states by the quality of “human development,” Israel is located even higher – at the 15th place. The other side of the coin was the steep rise in inequality. By common measures of inequality Israel is ranked today only second to the US in the rich world. The upper decile appropriates more than 41% of the national income, and the three upper deciles together appropriate close to 68% of it.¹⁵¹

Israeli culture was quick to adjust itself to the post-modern ethos that accompanies late capitalism. In 1989 Tel Aviv adopted the image of a “non-stop city” and it became considered as a “global city,” center of commerce, services, and entertainment. From a major Israeli city it became Israel’s hub of international business and finance. In the eyes of its planners it was no longer thought of as an “Odessa in the Middle East,” but rather as “New York” of the region. The skyline of the city changed accordingly, and today it displays tens of iron and glass towers.¹⁵²

In fact all walks of life in contemporary Israel are stamped by Americanization – starting with the Skyhawk fighters of the Israeli Air Force, passing through Israeli electoral politics, and up to Israeli competitive sport. A research on the Americanization of Israeli marketing and consumption found that “two flags are flying over Israeli society: one is the national flag [...] and the other is the American flag [...]. In the 1990s, while the Israeli flag still retains its original role, the consumption factor is expressed in the American flag.”¹⁵³

This Americanization is concurrent with the cosmopolitan, liberal (and in part post-Zionist) ethos that took root in Israeli middle-class culture since the 1980s.¹⁵⁴ One expression of it was the so called “constitutional revolution” and the “activist orientation” of the Supreme Court of Justice, which made individual human rights a pillar of the constitutional system (with the notable exception of the occupied territories).¹⁵⁵ All this met with antagonism from some sectors in Israeli society – the national-religious sector, the Ashkenazi Orthodox sector and the traditional Mizrahi sector. Many in these sectors

reacted with a cultural backlash, usually expressed in fundamentalist religious terms, even though they too participated willy-nilly in the material aspects of Americanization. From this point of view, the rapprochement by Yitzhak Rabin's government with the Palestinian Liberation Organization, and its apparent readiness to negotiate "peace for territories," was conceived as a betrayal of Jewish values for cosmopolitan values, and was responded to with rage and violence, up to the assassination of Rabin in 1995.¹⁵⁶

With the above mentioned exceptions, Americanization did not meet in Israel with the kind of public hostility familiar from other regions of the world. The wide public in Israel feels great attachment to America and its culture. For many Israelis "it is only natural to fly the American flag alongside the Israeli (mainly on Independence Day), to speak Hebrew spiced with English words or refer to the American Dollar as to a local currency."¹⁵⁷

Conclusion

To conclude this interim report, when we consider the Hebrew culture as it was formed in Palestine and Israel since the late 19th century and up to now, there is no question that it is heavily imprinted by its European origins and formative aspirations. Europe includes in this case mainly Russia, Eastern Europe, Central Europe, Germany and Britain, and in a secondary place France. The attitude to Europe was however ambivalent throughout. As Shavit and Reinharz put it, the admiration was to Europe as the cradle of modern culture; the repulsion was from Europe as the source of antisemitism, pogroms, and finally the Holocaust. The admiration propelled Jews to try to integrate in Europe; the repulsion made them reject Europe – but not Europeaness.¹⁵⁸

As for the influence of the Middle-Eastern/Jewish-Arab culture on the Hebrew culture, it seems that beyond peripheral lower-class enclaves, a new inclusive Mizrahi-Ashkenazi culture transpires in Israel's middle class. A shadow is cast however on such a harmonious conclusion by the persistence

of substantial gaps between Mizrahi and Ashkenazi educational, professional and income attainment, as well as by the continuous unequal allocation of funds to Mizrahi culture.¹

⁵⁹ Yet, public opinion polls show that more than 70% of Israeli Jews – Ashkenazim and Mizrahim alike – feel close to “the West” culturally, much more than to the surrounding Arabic world.¹⁶⁰

In the second decade of the 2000s Hebrew culture and values resemble in many ways those of the “West,” and especially those of the US. A most noticeable exception, though, is the country’s political culture, in which there is a manifest role to Jewish traditionalism and to ethnic nationalism.

All in all, it turns out that Hebrew-Israeli culture is to a great extent of European origins; it is intermingled to some extent with Middle Eastern or Arab culture – but not really integrated in it; and, as of recently, it tends to emulate “America,” though without shedding its uniquely excessive version of Jewish ethno-nationalism.

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4. Israeli Culture(s) Today: Globalized Archipelago of Isolated Communities

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This paper was completed in July 2015.

Writing a history of the Israeli culture is not an easy task at all: quite paradoxically, the *Israeli culture* is much older than the Israeli state. In May 2006, the State of Israel celebrated its 58th anniversary of independence, while the Bezalel Academy of Art marked its centennial.¹⁶¹ Some of the most popular Israel theaters, among them the world-famous Habima, as well as Beit-Lessin created their first productions in Palestine under the British Mandate, when the Jewish statehood was still a dream to come true. Institutions of higher education, as well as publishing houses and teachers' unions were established during the pre-state period, as well. Eminent writers, such as Hayim Nahman Bialik (1873–1934) and Rachel Bluwstein (1890–1931), as well as artists like Reuven Rubin (1893–1974) and Nachum Gutman (1898–1980), made Eretz Yisrael their home long before it gained political sovereignty. For the Israeli culture, the year 1948 is, of course, a date of tremendous importance, but it is certainly not its starting point. Therefore, a scholar who would like to analyze various trends in the Israeli culture and its interaction both with the local society and other nations, has to make some uneasy decisions regarding the issues related to chronology of the events in question.

The political history of Israel is usually split into three or even four parts. The first one is the pre-state period before 1948; the second one is often called “the period of Labor Party hegemony” and lasted from 1948 to 1977; the third one was a period of competition between almost equal right and left blocks from 1977 to 2001; and the fourth one that began after the collapse of the Oslo process and the triumph of Ariel Sharon in the general elections in February 2001, could probably be described as a step toward a right-center

consensus in the Israeli politics, when Labor – the previously leading Israeli party – almost lost its political relevance, being unable to resist a new hegemony of right-wing nationalists. On the contrary, scholars dealing with the Israeli military history and the Arab-Israeli conflict perceive wars as milestones, describing periods before the Suez War, Six-Day War, Yom Kippur War, First Lebanon War, etc., so that it looks like the nation in uniform has had relatively short couple-of-year periods between the battles. The *cultural history* of Israel does not provide any specific dates that could be helpful in creating some sort of chronology.

Trends in Israeli literature and theater did not follow the trends in Israeli popular music, which is, as it happens almost everywhere, the most widespread cultural phenomena within the country. The Ashkenazi prevalence in Israeli so-called high culture, especially in literature and theater, was contradictory to those trends that had predominated in the Israeli popular music since 1970s, taking into account that a great majority of the most popular Israeli singers were of oriental background. Chronologically speaking, the history of Israeli theater should be presented in a different way than the history of Israeli popular music, and neither of them coincides with the history of Israeli visual arts.

Another problem is that while Israeli science and technology was developing uninterruptedly, only some of the most important Israeli art institutions did manage to survive. The only Israeli opera house founded in Palestine in 1923 faced permanent financial problems and closed its doors in 1982. For a couple of years, there was no opera house in Israel at all, until a completely new framework was established in 1985 under the name of the New Israeli Opera, which is now flourishing in Tel Aviv. It is totally impossible to suppose that either the Hebrew University of Jerusalem or the Technological University of Haifa, both established in the early 1920s, could be closed for several years, but what was completely unthinkable in science and education, became the sad reality for one of the country's leading cultural institutions. During the years of Israeli independence several theaters, among them the famous Ohel Theater, were shut down, while

new more or less successful cultural initiatives surfaced. The Ohel Theater was founded in 1925 by Moshe Halevi as a workers' theater dedicated to socialist issues on the one hand and, perhaps no less importantly, also to biblical themes – now under the new light of the Israeli sun, performed in the very Land of the Bible, linking the once glorious past with hopes for a no less glorious future.¹⁶² The Ohel Theater closed in 1969.

A dichotomy between globalization and localization constitutes another problem regarding the Israeli culture. Due to the fact that during most of Israeli history immigrants have dominated in its population, cultural codes and traditions of their home countries have always played a huge role in Israel's own culture. Both Israeli theater and opera trace their roots back to Moscow, for they made their way to Palestine thanks to small groups of enthusiasts.¹⁶³ On the other hand, Israeli painters' and sculptors' artistic styles were shaped by French art during the pre-state period and by the American art after World War II – not because most Israeli painters and sculptors were of French and American origin, but because these countries have had an unparalleled impact on world art. However, a vast majority of the Israeli population is much more attached to the popular oriental-style music performed in Hebrew by Israeli-born singers, whose ancestors arrived from Morocco, Libya, Syria, Iraq, Iran and other Middle Eastern countries. The concept of “Mediterraneanism” (Hebr., *Yam Tikhoniut*) as a model for identity formation, that offers alternative views of locality, culture, and history,¹⁶⁴ has been less popular and less influential. As noted by Motti Regev and Edwin Seroussi,

[f]rom an early stage, the dominant cultural practices among Zionist settlers in Palestine were aimed at inventing a locally specific, native Jewish culture, different from traditional Jewish culture. [...] Initially, in the pre-state period – and the first ten to fifteen years of statehood – this logic resulted in the successful invention and public imposition of a dominant cultural package known as ‘Hebrew culture’ (*tarbut ivrit*). In subsequent years, Hebrewism was challenged by emerging variants of Israeliness. Most prominent of these were what we call ‘globalized Israeliness,’ which embodied a mixture of Hebrewism and the effects of the globalization of culture, and the variant known in Israeli public culture as ‘oriental Israeliness’ (*Israeliyut mizrahit* or *mizrahiyut*), in which Israelis of oriental origin – that is, originally from Arab and Muslim countries – insisted on the Israeliness of their specific cultural

hybrid. Additional variants such as ‘Religious Israeliness’ and one that can awkwardly be termed ‘Palestinian Israeliness’ (or ‘Israeli Palestinianess’) also emerged as self-proclaimed contenders for the definition of Israeliness. The existence of these variants as different entities was expressed in various fields of cultural production in both ‘popular’ and ‘high’ art forms.¹⁶⁵

The situation looks even much more complicated, taking into account that hundreds of thousands of immigrants who arrived to Israel from the United States, Argentina, various regions of the Former Soviet Union and other countries, brought to Israel their own cultural legacies and preferences, and that these legacies could be preserved relatively easily due to technological innovations, associated with globalization trends. One could probably say that the Israeli society has no single cultural center of its own, being instead *an archipelago of communities* with their own cultural preferences, influenced by trends in their cultures of origin.

The other sides of Israel

There exist at least four large groups within the Israeli population that do not use Hebrew as the main language of communication, and have their own isolated cultures.

The first group includes Orthodox Jews who have little in common with the Israeli secular literature and culture. There is no room for writers who are acknowledged as the leading figures of the Hebrew literature, such as Amos Oz, A. B. Yehoshua, Meir Shalev and David Grossman, on what is called “the Jewish bookshelf” of the ultra-religious community. In addition, this community itself is far from being homogenous, as it includes those who use Yiddish as their main language of communication, alongside Hebrew speakers, Ashkenazi Jews alongside Oriental ones (it is worth mentioning that they have independent religious authorities and different chief rabbis), most of them do not have television sets in their homes, and never visit either opera or ballet performances. The Israeli Orthodox Jews, especially – though not exclusively – of Ashkenazi origin, are significantly influenced by trends, that occur in similar communities in the United States, where some of the leading Hassidic rabbis live

on a permanent basis. These rabbis' books and articles, as well as American Hassidic music are widespread among ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel.

The second group includes more than a million and a half citizens of Israel whose native language is Arabic. Alongside Arabs, this group includes both Muslims and Christians, as well as Bedouins and Druze. The informal civil status of these subgroups is quite different: for example, unlike Arabs, all Druze and Bedouin men are conscripted to the Israel Defense Forces, including its most elite combatant units. However, all of them use Arabic as their main language, both in their families and communities. Some of them have better proficiency in Hebrew than others, but virtually no one reads Hebrew fiction or visits drama performances in Israel's main language. There exist some cultural meeting points between Jews and Arabs in Israel, and a bilingual theater in Jaffa is probably the most emblematic example. However, Israeli Arabs share their language with hundreds of millions of people who live in more than twenty Arab countries, from Morocco in the West to Iraq in the East. Politically, almost all these countries have no relations with Israel, but their singers and writers gather audiences in Jaffa and Nazareth, just like in Cairo and Damascus. Arab citizens of Israel find themselves in a situation of double periphery: Israeli Jewish society questions their loyalty to an ethos of a "Jewish democratic state," which is an essential concept of the Israeli state- and society-building, while Arabs outside Israel condemn Israeli Arabs as collaborationists who disengage from the all-Arab struggle against Zionism. Aliens both to "their" state and "their" people, Israeli Arabs developed a culture of their own, which is partly similar to that of the rest of Palestinians – that is probably quite natural, since both groups come from the same people divided by the outcome of the 1948 War, though their civil status is completely different (Palestinian Arabs from the West Bank and Gaza never obtained Israeli citizenship). Though there exist separate Palestinian-Israeli literature¹⁶⁶ and culture, neither Israeli nor Palestinian Arabs have a cultural center of their own within the borders of Israel/Palestine, as they are influenced by trends in Arab

culture developed in Middle Eastern cities located far from the Holy Land.

It is noteworthy that in 2009 the film *Ajami*, shot completely in Arabic (its plot is set in the eponymous Arab neighborhood in Jaffa), directed by Scandar Copti (a Palestinian, born and raised in Jaffa) and Yaron Shani (a Jewish Israeli), won the Israeli Best Film Prize, as well as the First Prize of the Jerusalem Film Festival. Unfortunately, examples of such Jewish-Arab cultural cooperation in Israel are still relatively rare.

The third group includes ex-Soviet and post-Soviet immigrants, whose number is usually estimated at one million, though actually it is much lower (it should be noted that over the last 25 years since the beginning of the current wave of immigration from the Soviet Union to Israel, more than 100,000 people passed away and another 100,000–150,000 people left Israel and settled in other countries or returned to Russia or Ukraine). Members of this group are usually faithful enthusiasts of Russian language (no matter whether they arrived from Russia or any other country of the Former Soviet Union). As a result, they have established a highly branched network of cultural institutions that started out almost completely in Russian and later slowly drifted toward Hebrew-Russian bilingualism. The Gesher Theater, opened in 1991 by Yevgeny Aryeh from the Moscow Mayakovsky Theater, is without a doubt the most famous,¹⁶⁷ but not the only example. Immigrant writers who continued to write in Russian even 20–25 years after their immigration to Israel, created several self-standing unions, and a number of literary journals, such as *Zerkalo* [Mirror], edited by Irina Vrubel-Golubkina, and the *Jerusalem Journal*, edited by Igor Byalsky, are probably the best-known ones, though not the only examples. Immigrant artists and sculptors do not use language in their everyday work, but nevertheless, they established their own union with a rich exhibition program, as well. Besides Gesher, there exist a number of theater companies founded by ex-Soviet immigrants; it is worth mentioning that only those who switched over to Hebrew, managed to survive, like, for instance, the Micro Theater, established by Irina Gorelik from

Saratov. A number of classic music festivals have been run by ex-Soviet immigrants, though this fact is not publicly acknowledged, such as the Jerusalem Passover Music Festival (most of its concerts take place on Saturdays in churches). It is noteworthy that a vast majority of Russian-speaking Israelis do keep in touch with contemporary Russian culture, both by subscribing to Russian cable networks and by attending performances by Russian theaters, singers and musicians, who visit Israel as often as, for example, Russian cities like Kazan and Novosibirsk. A huge number of Russian-speaking Israelis have at least studied basic Hebrew, but only the young generation uses Hebrew as its first language of interfamily communication. Youngsters are also the only ones who read Hebrew fiction, while their parents and grandparents do their best to support Russian bookshops all over Israel.

Undoubtedly, Israel is a mere periphery on the map of the so-called “Russian world,” but several Israeli Russian writers are considered to be among the most important figures in contemporary Russian culture, like Dina Rubina, Igor Guberman, and Grigory Kanovitch. Their books, including the latest ones, are published annually by the most prestigious publishing houses of Moscow and Saint Petersburg. From a socioeconomic point of view, as well as in terms of citizenship, ex-Soviet immigrants constitute an integral part of the Israeli society, succeeding to delegate some of its leaders to the country’s highest political elite (Chairman of the Parliament Yuli Edelstein and the former Minister of Foreign Affairs Avigdor Liberman are both ex-Soviet immigrants, to name a few). However, when it comes to a debate on the Israeli culture, ex-Soviets make up a separate group which stands out not only by its linguistic capital, but also in its tastes and preferences. Israeli society’s tolerant attitude toward cultural diversity creates a fertile ground for preserving this relatively isolated cultural field in the foreseeable future. Though this group is undoubtedly marked by a combination of unique features, it is less separate from the Israeli Hebrew culture than ultra-Orthodox Jews and Israeli Arabs: when the Jerusalem Theater wants to attract Russian-speaking audience to new Habima or Beit Lessin performances, it is enough just to add Russian subtitles on an electronic screen. Unfortunately,

neither Yiddish nor Arabic subtitles will draw more spectators to the show.

The fourth group could hardly, if at all, be characterized as unified. It includes immigrants who arrived to Israel from various countries of the globe, and whose native language is English, French, Spanish, Amharic or Tigrinic. The number of immigrants from the United States, South Africa, France, Argentina, and Ethiopia, is much lower than that of the immigrants from the Former Soviet Union, but they make up over 300,000 people combined. Ethiopian-born immigrants and their children who were born in Israel differ from the others, first of all in being unable – and unwilling – to return to their country of origin, whereas about one quarter of immigrants from the Western countries leave Israel after a couple of years.

All the abovementioned subgroups have established stable communities that successfully develop their own subcultures in their native languages within the Israeli public space. It is worth mentioning, that books by some of the most important Israeli writers were translated into English and French (as well as into Russian), so one can easily read novels by S. Y. Agnon (1888–1970) and Amos Oz without mastering Hebrew. However, Hebrew is still unquestionably necessary to be connected to the contemporary Israeli culture. Let us call things by their right name: 65 years after the State of Israel gained its political independence, almost half of Israeli citizens are almost completely disconnected from their contemporary high culture, namely from its prose and poetry, drama, theater, and cinema.

Since Achad Haam (1856–1927), the founding fathers of Zionism have privileged the importance of converting Israel to the spiritual center of the Jewish peoplehood, and this program has been criticized as too minimalistic, in comparison to the statist goals of political Zionism. It seems that this perception was false: in fact, it was much easier to establish an independent state, than to transform this state into the people's spiritual home.

An integral part of an international art scene

In general, it is truly hard for any cultural production to gain recognition abroad. Israel could be proud that in 1966 S. Y. Agnon received the Nobel Prize award for literature, Amos Oz received the Goethe Prize in Germany in 2005 and A. B. Yehoshua won the Prix Médicis, a prestigious French literary award, in 2012. Paintings created by Samuel Bak have been included in numerous albums and exhibitions of surrealist and analytical art worldwide. His personal exhibitions took place in Düsseldorf, Chicago, Philadelphia, Vilnius and elsewhere, and his memoir *Painted in Words* has been published in four languages. Leading Israeli orchestras, such as the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Jerusalem Symphony and others, have been invited to perform in the most prestigious concert halls all over the globe and have recorded hundreds of CDs in collaboration with probably all of the most important conductors and soloists of the two latest generations. Brilliant Israeli musicians Gary Bertini (1927–2005), Daniel Barenboim, Eliahu Inbal, Yoel Levi, Daniel Oren, Asher Fisch, Dan Ettinger, Gil Shohat, Ilan Volkov and others have served as chief conductors of various orchestras all over the world.

On three occasions (in 1978, 1979 and 1998), Israeli singers Izhar Cohen, Gali Atari and Dana International won the Eurovision Song Contest – the last victory was especially important, taking into account that for the first time in history the winner was transgender, and the State of Israel, often criticized for being too religious, delegated Dana International (born as Yaron Cohen) as its representative. In the year 1988 Ofra Haza's (1957–2000) hit *Im Nin'alu*, based on a poem by 17th-century Yemenite Rabbi Shalom Shanazi, topped the charts in West Germany for nine weeks, becoming the most popular single in various other countries, as well, and selling more than three million copies worldwide.

In 2006, the film director Eytan Fox, son of a conservative rabbi from the United States, received the Washington Jewish

Film Festival's Decade Award for his films, almost all of them are dedicated to love between two men, and without a doubt these films have significantly contributed to the promotion of equality of homosexuals within the Israeli society.¹⁶⁸ One of his films, *Walk on Water* was nominated for the César Award in France and was selected to open the Berlin Film Festival. Decades ago, in 1964 *Sallah Shabati*, written and directed by Ephraim Kishon (1924–2005), won the Golden Globe Award as the best foreign film for the first time in the Israeli film history. Eight years later another Kishon film, *The Policeman Azoulay*, won the Golden Globe Award for the second time, alongside prizes at Barcelona and Monte Carlo film festivals. *The Gatekeepers*, a documentary film by the director Dror Moreh, that tells a story of the Israeli home security service, won the National Society of Film Critics Award for best non-fiction film. The movie *Beaufort* (2007) by Joseph Cedar based on Ron Leshem's eponymous novel, won the second prize at the Berlin International Film Festival. A year later, another film *Waltz with Bashir*, also dedicated to the first Israeli-Lebanon War, won the Golden Globe Award for best foreign language film and the César Award for best foreign film, among other accolades.

The Kibbutz Dance Company is widely renowned as one of the leading contemporary dance companies in the world, and its artistic director Rami Beer, born in a small kibbutz Gaaton close to the Lebanon border, has been invited to create original works for distinguished ballet theaters in Germany, Switzerland, Poland, Denmark, the Czech Republic and other countries.

If someone was afraid that Israeli culture would be too provincial, since almost all the leaders of the Jewish State had arrived from small towns in the Pale of Settlement, and geographically, Israel lies far from the world's key cultural centers – those and other similar fears did not come to pass. Dozens of music, dance, film and other festivals, ten repertoire theaters, a highly acclaimed opera, magnificent museums that showcase such masterpieces as Magritte's *Castle of the Pyrenees* and Chagall's *Loneliness*, to name a few, several ballet companies etc., have proven Israel to be an important

country that is deeply involved into international cultural discourse and significantly enriches it.

Connecting the islands

According to the Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, in 2014 the Israeli Jewish population rose over 6 millions for the first time in modern history, and therefore became higher than the number of Jews in the USA. For the very first time in the modern national history, the Jewish state is home to the largest Jewish community in the world. During more than a century since the beginning of the Zionist movement, it was the most sought-after goal, and now it has been reached. Still, most Jews live outside Israel, but the number of Jews in Israel is higher than in any other single state. The current task is therefore to create a cultural space that all the Israeli Jews will feel connected to. From a cultural perspective, differences between the so-called "first" (descendants of Jews who arrived from Eastern and Central Europe before World War II and the Holocaust), "second" (Jews who arrived predominately from Arab and Muslim countries during the first ten years of the Israeli statehood and their descendants), and "third" (Israeli Arabs) Israel are more striking than in the socioeconomic and political fields. It seems that in the recent years, socioeconomic and political integration of relatively new immigrants from the English-, French-, Spanish-, and Russian-speaking countries into the "first" Israel has indeed moved forward, but these groups of the Israeli population are still disengaged from its culture. All these groups are influenced by cultures of their own countries of origin, so one could conclude that globalization trends have a different impact on various sectors of the Israeli population.

From a cultural perspective, the Jewish state is *an archipelago of isolated communities*, and each of them is connected to different centers of influence, located far from Israel. The "melting pot" model was abandoned to a general benefit, but in order to prevent a dissolution of Israel, something else beside the common enemy is needed, and it is

hardly possible to think of a better “glue” for the society, than a common culture. But in order to survive and thrive, this common culture needs to incorporate various important elements (not just ethnographic curiosities) of cultural traditions, as well as innovations preserved and developed by each of the communities, represented in Israel’s public space.

Mutually enriching dialogue between community cultures does really take place in Israel, and it would be enough to name just a few examples.

It has become a common point among the literary critics that one of the most famous Israeli-born playwrights, Yosef Bar Yosef, was heavily influenced by Anton Tchekhov – not surprisingly, his plays, translated into Russian, have been staged and successfully performed in dozens of Russian theaters.

One could also remember Arkadi Duchin, who was born in Belarus and arrived to Israel at the age of 15 in 1978 and translated songs by a famous Russian underground bard Vladimir Vysotsky into Hebrew which gained great popularity with various groups of Israeli society, and not only with the Russian-speaking community. During the 1990s five albums were released by the rock band that called itself “Natasha’s Friends” – this Russian name could be only partly explained by the team members’ origin, taking into account that one of its founders, Micha Shitrit, was born in Nahariya to a Jewish Moroccan family.

Dudu Fisher, who starred in world-famous musicals like *Les Misérables* and *The Phantom of the Opera* in London and New York, is best known in Israel as a performer of Hassidic and Yiddish songs. In May 2009 Dudu Fisher sang, along with Holonborn David D’Or (whose father arrived to Israel from Libya) and the Arab Jewish Girls Choir in the home of the Israeli President Shimon Peres during Pope Benedict XVI’s visit to Israel.

In a number of works some of the leading Israeli composers reflected upon Jewish communities’ traditional legacy. Many works recast the ethnic music of Israel’s various oriental and Hassidic communities and into polyphonic

instrumental or choral works. From the repertoire created in a pre-state period the ones that come to mind are Joachim Stutschevsky's (1891–1982) *Four Jewish Dances* (1929), Alexander Boskovich's (1907–1964) *The Golden Chain Suite*, on Eastern European folklore (1934), *Semitic Suite for Piano Four-Hands*, after oriental Jewish folklore (1945), to name a few. This tradition was followed later by Ram Da-Oz in his *Rhapsody on a Yemenite Jewish Song* (1971), Yehezkel Braun (1922–2014) in his *Zemirot* (1980), Joseph Dorfman (1940–2006) in his *Keyzmeriana* (1983), Max Stern in his *Piyutasia, Sephardic Fantasy for Flute, Violin or Clarinet and Piano* (1991) and *Biblical Landscapes for Orchestra on Sephardic piyutim* (1999), and others.¹⁶⁹ Noam Sheriff's *Mechaye Hamethim* [Revival of the Dead], which was premiered in Amsterdam by the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra (IPO) in 1987, is based on the Jewish East-European traditional music as well as on the ancient oriental Jewish themes of the Samaritans. *Sephardic Passion*, which was premiered in Toledo, Spain, by the IPO and Plácido Domingo in 1992, is based on the music of the Sephardic Jewry.

Many of Moshe Castel's (1909–1991) paintings depicted the lives of Sephardic Jews in the Holy Land, revealing the influence of Persian miniatures. From the 1950s on, Castel created relief paintings inspired by the "ancient predecessors of Hebrew civilization." In 1948, he visited the ruins of an ancient synagogue in Korazin, an ancient Jewish town in the Galilee. Inspired by the basalt blocks he saw there, engraved with images and ornaments, he began to use ground basalt, which he molded into shapes, as his basic material. The technique utilized ground basalt rock mixed with sand and glue, infused with the rich colors that became his trademark. The works were embellished with archaic forms derived from ancient script, symbolism and mythological signs from Hebrew and Sumerian culture. He combined elements of abstract European art with Eastern motifs.¹⁷⁰

Achinoam Nini who was born in Bat-Yam to a Yemeni-Jewish family and spent her childhood and teenage years in New York, represented Israel at the Eurovision Song Contest in 2009 jointly with the Israeli Arab singer Mira Awad (whose

father was born in Rameh village in Galilee, though her mother is a Bulgarian Christian), performing the song *There Must Be Another Way* that features lyrics both in Hebrew and Arabic. Two singers prepared a joint program both for Jewish and Arab audience. Sarit Hadad who was born as Sarah Khudadatov in the town of Afula in a large traditional Jewish mountain family and who still does not perform on Shabbat and Jewish holidays, being faithful to the traditions of Judaism, has become the most popular oriental female singer in Israel, performing, besides Hebrew, in a large variety of languages, including French, English, Arabic, Georgian, Circassian, Bulgarian, Turkish, and Greek. Another spectacular example is “The Idan Raichel Project,” initiated by a Kfar-Saba-born singer and keyboardist Idan Raichel, who creates and performs Ethiopian-style music compositions and enjoys a great success both on Israeli and international scene. Several years ago, the Beer-Sheva Theater received the First Prize of the Israeli Theater Performance Award in 2010 for its production of *Piaf*, which was performed in Hebrew and featured songs in French sung by Herzliya-born Yonit Tobi.

The world-famous ballet star Nina Timofeeva (1935–2014) from the Moscow Bolshoi Theater established, after her immigration to Israel in 1991, together with her daughter Nadya a dancing school, aimed at promoting classical ballet among the Israeli public. Valery Panov, who was one of the leading dancers of the Mariinsky Ballet in Saint Petersburg during the 1960s, has established in 1993 a ballet theater in Ashdod, then a small town that had never hosted any cultural activities before. Today both Nadya Timofeeva and Valery Panov give lessons to dozens of young people whose families are not necessarily of ex-Soviet origin.

These and many other examples of constructive dialogue, that enrich the spiritual mosaic of Israel, create a fertile ground for a development of an Israeli culture in the coming decades.

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5. Bauhaus Architecture in Israel: De-Constructing a Modernist Vernacular and the Myth of Tel Aviv’s “White City”

Ines Sonder

This paper was completed in August 2015.

Since the 1980s, a transition has taken place in Israeli architectural historiography, the consequence of which gave rise to the canonization of the Modernist architecture, which emerged in the Jewish *Yishuv*¹⁷¹ in Palestine in the 1930s, as “Bauhaus vernacular.” The narratives and myths accompanying this process led to the historicization of Tel Aviv’s “White City” as an authentic “national achievement.” It culminated in 2003, when the “White City of Tel-Aviv – the Modern Movement” was inscribed to the UNESCO World Heritage List. Nevertheless, architects and scholars subjected the “Bauhaus myth” to a process of deconstruction primarily to reveal the political dimension of Israeli architecture. The purpose of this article is threefold. Firstly, to recall the historical sources from which our visual image of the emergence of modern architecture in Palestine in the 1930s evolved. Secondly, to elucidate the construction of the “Bauhaus vernacular” and the canonization of Tel Aviv’s “White City” within academic debates, and finally to consider the present day challenges on the preservation of its cultural heritage.

Modern architecture in Palestine in the 1930s

Our visual image of the “architectural revolution” in Palestine in the 1930s originated primarily from three historical sources: the “Building Number” of the *Palestine & Middle East Economic Magazine* (1933), the first Hebrew architectural

magazine *Habinjan Bamisrah Hakarov* [Construction in the Near East] (1934–1937) and its successor *Habinyan: A Magazine of Architecture & Town Planning* (1937–1938); and “Architecture en Palestine,” a special issue of the French magazine *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui* that was published on the occasion of the 1937 World Fair in Paris by Sam Barkai and Julius Posener. The majority of the published photographs in these issues were taken by Yitzhak Kalter, who specialized in architectural photography and whose images became icons of the modern architectural period in Palestine.

In 1933, at the beginning of the Fifth Aliyah,¹⁷² the *Palestine & Middle East Economic Magazine* published a special issue that presented the recent developments in the country’s building sector. One of the contributors was Jacob Shiffman, the Tel Aviv Municipal Engineer, who expressed his astonishment about the building activities as “one of the most interesting phenomena in the country”:

Of recent years however, the style of buildings has undergone a marked change for the better and although it is too early to speak of a Palestinian architecture, it is clear that the new builder is freeing himself from the fetters of hampering and alien tradition. The modern tendencies manifest in Central European buildings appeal to the Palestine architect of today and greatly influence his choice of style.¹⁷³

A list of 24 architects whose works were illustrated in the issue includes, amongst others, Genia Averbouch, Benjamin Chaikin, Shlomo Ginzburg, Zoltan Harmat, Philip Hütt, Richard Kauffmann, Dov Kuczinski, Josef Neufeld, Carl Rubin, Zeev Rechter and Arie Sharon. They became important contributors to the modern architectural tendencies in the Yishuv in the 1930s and onwards. Most of them had recently returned or immigrated to Palestine after acquiring architectural education and apprenticeship in Europe, particularly in Germany. In 1932, they joined together in the architectural association *Chug* (Circle), initiated by Arie Sharon, a graduate of the Bauhaus school in Dessau, Joseph Neufeld who worked in Erich Mendelsohn’s office in Berlin, and Zeev Rechter who arrived from Paris having been strongly influenced by Le Corbusier. In the 1930s the *Chug* became the vanguard of institutionalizing modern architecture in Tel Aviv and beyond. Its members were mostly supporters of the

socialist Labor Zionism and affiliated with the leftist mainstream of the Yishuv.

Arieh Sharon in particular later recalled how “shocked” he was after his return to Palestine in 1932 at seeing the provincial and eclectic architecture of Tel Aviv with its “mixture of street elevations, decorated with various different balconies and alcoves in the poor style of Eastern Europe.” According to him, the time was ripe for “architectural revolt”: “Thousands of Jewish immigrants to Palestine from Hitler’s Germany, including many intellectuals, had already been imbued in Europe with new progressive ideas in art and architecture. The economic situation of Israel improved, new kibbutzim were founded, public buildings, cooperative housing estates and private apartment houses were erected at ever increasing speed. The impact of the new architectural circle was felt immediately.”¹⁷⁴

At the end of 1934, the *Chug* launched its own magazine *Habinjan Bamisrah Hakarov* that still remains the main source for the 1930s debates on modernism in building design, urban and rural planning, technological advances in constructional engineering, and architectural competitions. After ten issues, in summer 1937 the magazine came out with an expanded format and under the modified title *Habinyan. A Magazine of Architecture & Town Planning*. Amongst the editors were Julius Posener, who had recently worked for *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui* in Paris and who would later become a well-known German architectural historian. Three issues were published under his auspices, each dedicated to a specific topic: “Co-operative Dwelling Houses” (August 1937) with an editorial by Arieh Sharon, “Villas & Gardens” (November 1937) and “Village Buildings” (August 1938), both with editorials by Julius Posener. It is interesting to note that two issues of *Habinyan* were sent to Le Corbusier’s in Paris whose response was partially published in the second 1937 issue.¹⁷⁵ Arieh Sharon later wrote about his influence, especially on the *Chug* members: “The main achievement of our group was to introduce Corbu’s pilotis (pillars) into – or rather under – Tel Aviv’s dull townscape.”¹⁷⁶

The first edifice to be built on pilotis was the House Engel on Rothschild Boulevard in 1934 by Zeev Rechter, which was quickly adopted by many other architects. The photograph of the building reached a wider audience through the special issue of *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, "Architecture en Palestine," published on the occasion of the 1937 World Fair in Paris by Sam Barkai and Julius Posener.¹⁷⁷ Amongst the architects whose works were illustrated in the issue were many *Chug* members, but also other immigrant German architects such as Werner Wittkower, who worked in Bruno Taut's office in Berlin, expressionist architect Harry Rosenthal, and also the works of four women – Genia Averbouch, Lotte Cohn, Gertud Krolik, and Elsa Gidoni.

The modernist buildings shown in the historical issues demonstrate the broad range of modern vocabulary within the new "Palestinian architecture" that became widespread in Tel Aviv and all over the Yishuv within a couple of years. Typical characteristics were: cubic or semi-circular building structures – often raised on pilotis with gardens extending beneath the houses, different types of balconies (e.g., elongated, curved, cantilevered), horizontal ribbon windows, semi-circular bay windows, curved corners, accessible flat roofs, latticed pergolas, brise-soleils, cantilevered slabs above windows, accentuated tower staircases or stairwells with glazed walls. Most of the buildings were constructed with reinforced concrete, the restrained facades were mostly whitewashed and sometimes had glass-brick facades.¹⁷⁸

All these features of the modern vocabulary derived from a variety of sources, particularly from the avant-garde movements that emerged in Central Europe after the First World War, including Dutch De Stijl, Functionalism, *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity), Expressionism, Cubism, Russian Constructivism, and Italian Futurism. Though, the most influential factors were Le Corbusier's "Five Points of a New Architecture" (1926),¹⁷⁹ Erich Mendelsohn's "dynamic" architecture which he developed in the 1920s in Germany,¹⁸⁰ and the Bauhaus school under its directors Walter Gropius, Hannes Meyer and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe – their personal

idiosyncrasies and individual style preferences notwithstanding.

The architectural innovations developed by those leading avant-garde architects (with the exception of Mayer) were presented at the 1932 *Modern Architecture – International Exhibition* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, curated by Henry Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, and in the book *The International Style: Architecture since 1922*. Since then it has come to summarize the trends of the Modern Movement of the early 20th century under the umbrella term “International Style.” Decades later, in 1984, the exhibition *White City. International Style Architecture in Israel: A Portrait of an Era* was held at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, curated by architectural historian Michael Levin. This landmark exhibition also introduced the term for the Modern Movement in Israeli architectural history.

Constructing a “Bauhaus vernacular”

In his introduction to the *White City* exhibition’s catalogue, Levin firstly indicates: “The International Style, which first began to influence architecture in the early twenties, was crystallized by several leading architects around 1930 and subsequently disseminated throughout the world under various names. [...] In Israel, the style is generally called ‘Bauhaus.’ Yet the Bauhaus was not actually a style, but rather an institution in the vanguard of the International Style.”¹⁸¹

It seems neither easy nor consistent to explain why the term “Bauhaus architecture” became such a strong influence in Israel, since there were many other sources of inspiration. One reason might be found in the person of Arie Sharon, the *Chug* founding member, who was appointed head of Israel’s first national planning office in 1948, and was awarded the Israeli Prize for Architecture in 1962. In his memoirs, *Kibbutz + Bauhaus: An Architect’s Way in a New Land* (1976), he related his former place of architectural education to his own practice in Palestine and in Israel.

Sharon was one of nine former Bauhaus students of the architectural department in Dessau that came from or later immigrated to Palestine.¹⁸² Compared to the approximately 470 Jewish architects practising during the British Mandate period, the *Bauhäusler* were only a tiny group.¹⁸³ Therefore, it was estimated that the “cultural mystique” attached to the Bauhaus school has been projected “erroneously” and “unwittingly” onto all the Modernist architecture of the pre-statehood period.¹⁸⁴

Apart from that, with regard to the fact that the great majority of Jewish architects in Palestine were trained in Europe, particularly in Germany, other scholars argued that the architecture of the late 1930s “bore an unmistakable debt to the German avant-garde. It is not surprising, therefore, that the architecture of the period has been called ‘Bauhaus architecture.’”¹⁸⁵ This appellation might primarily describe the “architectural ethos” of the time, which could be found in the *Weissenhofsiedlung*,¹⁸⁶ and the socially conscious models of Gropius, Bruno Taut or Ernst May.

However, the emergence and quick dissemination of modern architecture in the 1930s in Palestine has led scholars to describe this phenomenon as “modern vernacular” or even “Bauhaus vernacular.”¹⁸⁷ In his article “Bauhaus Architecture in the Land of Israel” Gilbert Herbert examined the question: “Is the concept of a modern, architect-designed vernacular a contradiction in terms?”

In architectural terms it is understood that “vernacular” and “modern” are usually regarded as opposites in the same way as natural versus artificial or intuitive versus rational. Vernacular architecture is, in a narrower sense, a native, anonymous, spontaneous architecture, indigenous to a specific time or place, neither imported nor copied from elsewhere. It is commonly called “architecture without architects”; in other words: architecture designed by architects is usually not considered to be vernacular.

According to Herbert, a synoptic view of scholarly publications that documented the influx of the modern

architecture in Palestine from the 1930s onwards reveals a consensus about architecture and a striking consistency in architectural style and character:

It is this consistency, this consensus, which leads us to term the architecture of the period ‘vernacular.’ It is an architecture found all over Eretz Israel, in its towns, its villages, and its communal settlements, but it is concentrated particularly in those areas of rapid urban growth where there were a minimum of traditional constraints, and which were ethnically homogeneous. Consequently, while the development of a modern vernacular was more limited in history-laden Jerusalem or ethnically-mixed down-town Haifa, it found fertile ground in the all-Jewish neighbourhoods of Haifa (on Mount Carmel and around Haifa Bay) or in the modern Jewish town of Tel-Aviv.¹⁸⁸

Since the beginning of the Zionist Movement, planners and architects had been searching for a specific national style, a Hebrew style. Berlin architect Alexander Baerwald was the main figure in the attempt to reinvent such a style by creating a link between the ancient Oriental Jewish history and innovative (German) technologies, as can be seen, amongst others, in his Technion building in Haifa. However, his efforts to create a “national Jewish style” had no decisive effect on the future architectural development in the Yishuv. In respect of the “evolution of national style,” architect Eugene Ratner wrote as early as 1933:

Will a significant and authentic national style eventually be evolved from the modern style now in general use for building in Palestine? Experience, not limited to Palestine alone, has shown that conscious efforts towards a national style have little prospects of success. In no nation’s history is there any example of the creation of a style by an act of will or by the inspiration of a single genius. [...] Whether or not the new style now prevalent in Palestine building will last, gaining certain national characteristics as time passes, is not a question to be answered by the architect alone. The future of Palestine architecture rests on sympathetic cooperation and understanding between the architect and the public.¹⁸⁹

In fact, at the end of the 1930s, the “new style in Palestine building” was commonly adopted by architects and the public in the Yishuv. Although it was an imported architectural style primarily from Central Europe, albeit adapted to the climatic conditions of the place, an architecture produced by émigré architects for émigré clients with a similar socio-cultural background, Herbert argued: “This population of immigrants did not import an alien architectural style, but rather transported what was fast becoming for them a native style, as part of their cultural baggage. This was a transplantation of

architecture, to be transformed, in an accelerated process of acclimatisation, into an accepted language of building in their old-new-land.”¹⁹⁰

The concept of a “Bauhaus vernacular,” however, became popular in Israeli architectural debates, especially in the narrative of the “White City” of Tel Aviv.¹⁹¹ Nevertheless, its canonization as the first expression of a “national style” in the historiography of Israeli architecture also provoked criticism, in particular from the New Historians camp. Daniel Bertrand Monk countered the specific Israeli exploitation of the Western “Bauhaus myth” as a symbolic justification of the Israeli expulsion policy after 1948, and an ideological instrument of an “aesthetic occupation.”¹⁹² Architect Sharon Rotbard, a vocal opponent of a “Bauhaus vernacular” politicized as an emblem of a “modern” Zionist spirit, stated with respect to the political dimension of Israeli architecture that the first expression of a local vernacular is not “Bauhaus architecture” but instead *Homa u-Migdal* (Wall and Tower), a newly invented type of settlement created after the 1936 Arab riots with all its political and ideological implications.¹⁹³

Canonization of Tel Aviv’s “White City”

During its more than 100 years of existence, Tel Aviv has undergone many attempts to construct a narrative of its urban history.¹⁹⁴ Told and written by its citizens, investigated and documented by authors, scholars, and photographers, this process has been accompanied by inventing the city’s “sense of place” through myths of origin and its own narrative alongside the history of the city itself.¹⁹⁵ One of the myths of Tel Aviv’s foundation is “the city built on the sand” and its creation *ex nihilo*, that can be seen in the legendary “land lottery” photograph by Abraham Soskin, known as Tel Aviv’s founding meeting in the dunes in 1909.¹⁹⁶ Many recent studies deal with the various myths of Tel Aviv.¹⁹⁷ This essay focuses only on the “White City” myth and its gradual emergence in public opinion, both in Israel and abroad.

Firstly, it is important to recall that the term “White City” associated with Tel Aviv was not invented in the 1930s when the white cubes of the modernist buildings were erected along the seashore of the Mediterranean, but many years before the arrival of the International Style in Palestine. The reference to “white” as a characteristic color or image of the city had already appeared in the early literature of Tel Aviv before the First World War,¹⁹⁸ and became popular in the next decades, especially through the poets Nathan Altermann, Leah Goldberg, and songwriter Naomi Shemer. The Israeli author and researcher of Tel Aviv, Shlomo Shva, also made his contribution to the image of the “White City” rising from the sands, when he wrote: “Tel Aviv was a city of houses that were built in a day on the sand dunes; a white city on a white background. It was said about the city, that we wanted it to be a dream, and as such it remains in our eyes nowadays.”¹⁹⁹

In his study on the mythography of Tel Aviv, Maoz Azaryahu pointed out the term “White City” as referring to three related aspects:

One is the visual image of the city, many of whose buildings were painted white. In this visual capacity, the image entered the discourse of the city in the 1910s and persisted, transcending the mere visual appearance. The second refers to the architecture of the International Style, commonly known as Bauhaus, which predominated in the 1930s and 1940s. The third denotes the current phase of the mythic Tel Aviv, which followed the ‘rediscovery’ of this architectural style in the 1980s and its officially promoted cultivation in terms of heritage in the 1990s that culminated in pronouncing the White City of Tel Aviv a world heritage site.²⁰⁰

It seems noteworthy that the Modernist ensemble of Tel Aviv’s “Bauhaus architecture” built in the 1930s on a district based on the “Geddes Plan”²⁰¹ had not yet been explicitly celebrated in the first decades after the foundation of Israel. Publications and art work produced for the 50th anniversary of Tel Aviv in 1959, for example, revived a more nostalgic memory of Tel Aviv’s early days.²⁰² At that time little of the city was considered worth preserving. The Tel Aviv of the 1960s showed crumbling buildings; the “White City” was grey and peeling.

However, since the beginning of the 1980s, one can note an increasing interest in research on Israeli architectural

history by scholars and architects. In 1980, for example, an exhibition in Berlin investigated the influence of pupils of the Bauhaus and other German architectural schools on Israeli architecture and town planning.²⁰³ Amongst the exhibition's advisers, Julius Posener and Arie Sharon were both prominent. Two years later, Amiram Harlap issued *New Israeli Architecture* (1982) in which he initially gave a short overview of the "Palestinian Period" and described the 1930s as the "Fourth phase" of the architectural development: "Most of the buildings of that period reflected the Bauhaus philosophy as accepted by a spartan and puritan society."²⁰⁴ However, hitherto, there was no reference to the term "White City" in terms of architectural heritage.

The decisive turning point came with the *White City* exhibition in 1984 on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of Tel Aviv's founding, curated by Michael Levin. It was a groundbreaking critical survey on the International Style architecture in Israel with its local particularities in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Haifa. By using the expression from Nathan Alterman's description of Tel Aviv, the exhibition marked the key moment in the "rediscovery" of Tel Aviv's "White City" Modernist ensemble.²⁰⁵

In 1988, the sculptor Dani Karavan gave artistic gesture to the "White City" by presenting *Kikar Levana*, the *White Square*, a large sculpture made of white concrete, southeast of Tel Aviv: "This white square which is located in a park overlooking the city of Tel-Aviv, is an homage to the people who built the city of Tel-Aviv, also called the White City."²⁰⁶ Since then, both Karavan and Levin have become prominent promoters of bringing the modern heritage of Tel Aviv into the public agenda in Israel and worldwide.

An important contribution in calling attention to Tel Aviv's dilapidated Modernist ensemble was made by a German-Israeli joint venture. Initiated by German photographer Irmel Kamp-Bandau, the publication *Tel Aviv Neues Bauen 1930–1939* was launched in 1993, accompanied by an English edition the following year.²⁰⁷ The photographs were taken between 1988 and 1990 through a systematic tour of the city

and later presented in an exhibition that has since toured many cities. The catalogue was the first photographic reference that showed the condition of the “White City’s” buildings at the end of the 1980s.

A major step toward the canonization of Tel Aviv’s Modernist heritage was the *World Conference on the International Style in Architecture*, held in Tel Aviv in May 1994, organized by the UNESCO and the Municipality of Tel Aviv-Yafo. Shimon Peres, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in October of the same year, along with Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin “for their efforts to create peace in the Middle East,” addressed the conference’s opening ceremony saying that the involvement of UNESCO symbolized “a decisive turn in Israeli history.” The “modesty and restrained architecture of the Bauhaus style” represented an authentic Israeli “national achievement,” and the renewed interest in its principles might serve as “a new age of openness in a land of sun.”²⁰⁸

The conference, which involved seventeen exhibitions including a revival of the 1984 *White City* show, attracted over 2,000 participants from all over the world, and it is striking how it profoundly influenced the city’s self-awareness and its own self-image. The *Jewish Monthly* quoted:

During the week [of the conference], many Tel Aviv residents were surprised to see tour groups gawking at their homes as guides pointed to architectural treasures that lay beneath the decades of neglect and unsightly additions. There were lectures, slideshows and discussions, and even a fashion show featuring models clad in cardboard Bauhaus buildings. A local newspaper ran a splashy photo spread of black-and-white clothing based on 50-year-old original fashion designs from the Bauhaus school. And an impressive exhibit of photographs of the country’s Bauhaus buildings taken in the 1930 helped remind the Israeli public that preserving the architectural heritage of a few decades ago might be as important as preserving Hellenic and Crusader ruins.²⁰⁹

The Bauhaus Center Tel Aviv, established in 2000, is the largest commercial marketer of the “White City” image in Israel and hosts temporary exhibitions and provides guided tours through the city.²¹⁰ Among its numerous publications, the *Revival of the Bauhaus in Tel Aviv: Renovation of the*

International Style in the White City (2003) was a relevant document in the preservation campaign.²¹¹

Finally, all efforts in canonizing the “Bauhaus architecture” culminated in the year 2003 when “White City of Tel-Aviv – the Modern Movement” was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The leading figure in this process and the preservation campaign was Nitza Szmuk, then the municipal conservation architect (1990–2003). As early as 1994 she published *Houses from the Sands. International Style Architecture in Tel Aviv, 1931–1948* in Hebrew, followed by the French-English edition *Dwelling on the Dunes. Tel Aviv. Modern Movement and Bauhaus Ideals* in 2004.²¹² The same year she curated the *Tel Aviv’s Modern Movement* exhibition which was held in the Helena Rubinstein Pavilion for Contemporary Art in Tel Aviv that has since toured many cities worldwide.²¹³

Dani Karavan, one of the main spokespeople for the “White City,” prefaced Szmuk’s book, which could be read as the manifesto of the “White City” myth:

And here, on the sand dunes, alongside the small eclectic buildings, alongside the Orientalism and the heavy layers of history – the stark, the white forms took shape against the blue backdrop of sea and sky. Here, this style, the International Style, the Bauhaus Style, looks perfectly adapted to its new setting, as if born here, in Tel Aviv, a city in the making. It is as if this style tells the story of the people who wanted to build a new society here – pure, simple, frugal – the antithesis of ostentation and extravagance.²¹⁴

Deconstructing the “White City” myth of Tel Aviv

The image of the “White City” that is regarded, on the one hand, as “the white dream of a new life”²¹⁵ or the “architecture of the hope”²¹⁶ by its promoters, underwent a serious revision by its critics on the other side, particularly those related to the Israeli New Historians whose objection was to a merely formalist treatment of the Modernist architecture itself that ignored the political and ideological context. In 2005, Sharon Rotbard, an opponent of the selective historicization of the

“White City,” attracted attention with his book *White City, Black City*.²¹⁷ His deconstruction of Tel Aviv’s “White City” narrative and its “Bauhaus legend” was and is as explosive as it is controversial. Israeli historian and journalist Tom Segev wrote in *Haaretz*: “Rotbard here slaughters an especially sacred cow: Tel Avivness.”²¹⁸ Other scholars regarded the book a “discerning exploration of the poetics of injustice.”²¹⁹ In his essay “White City, Black City. Architecture and war in Tel Aviv and Jaffa,” published in the *Bauhaus* magazine in 2011, concerning the narrative of the “White City” he stated:

[...] the most interesting part of the story of Tel Aviv is, without a doubt, those chapters that did not make it into the story of the *White City*. One of the results of this campaign was that the story of the *White City* and the history of this rather short-lived moment in the 1930s became the most elaborate chapter in the city’s history, thus replacing the history of Tel Aviv with an architectural history of Tel Aviv, leaving out of its story the places beyond the perimeter of the *White City* and the crucial moments before, during and after the 1930s. This Pandora’s box known as Tel Aviv holds not only the story of the *White City*, a narrative of building and creation, but also the story of war, obliteration, destruction and suppression. And just as the historical and cultural construction of Tel Aviv was allied with its physical construction, so the voids of the story of Tel Aviv are allied with the physical erasure of sites and landscapes from its geography.²²⁰

Like other scholars,²²¹ Rotbard argued that Tel Aviv’s story cannot be told without Jaffa, its Arab-Palestinian counterpart. Tel Aviv’s foundation myth based on a *tabula rasa* ideology depicted the city as “modern” and disentangled it ethnically from Palestine and historically from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The *White City*’s conquest of the symbolical and historical space of the city is the story of Tel Aviv’s war against Jaffa. [...] This war has always been conducted on both military and municipal fronts and has used the whole palette of measures from ‘restoration’ through ‘preservation’ to ‘demolition.’ This war also took place through songs and shows that naturalise the political deed [...], even by means of mobilising the international architectural history in order to receive the ‘Bauhaus’ validation of Tel Aviv’s ‘white’ and clean history. But it is important to note that in order to establish itself as a modern, ordered, normal, clean ‘white’ city, Tel Aviv had to shape Jaffa as a counter-image of itself, as a dirty, criminal, devastated and ‘black’ city.²²²

Another critic is architect and architectural historian Zvi Efrat, who also dealt with the construction of a “white modernism” that became part of the Israel folk tradition in his essay “Bauhaus Buildings without Bauhaus.” He criticized therein

the tendency to “whitewash” one period that dismissed another in the context of Zionist architectural history, and the “tautological blur” of alternating terms and definitions which create a “profound homology” between Zionism and modernism.²²³

Philipp Oswalt, former director of the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation and editor of the *Bauhaus* magazine – who initiated the exhibition *Kibbutz and Bauhaus* at the Bauhaus Dessau in 2011, curated by a German-Israeli team²²⁴ – wrote in the magazine’s editorial: “Tel Aviv is more closely associated with the Bauhaus name than any other city outside Germany. But this myth does not stand up to historical inspection.”²²⁵

Conclusion – 21st century challenges

The narrative of the “White City” with its “Bauhaus architecture” is full of contradictions, caught between myth and counter-myth, and its reality at the beginning of the 21st century. Ten years after the inscription of the “White City” in the World Cultural Heritage list, UNESCO is threatening to withdraw the status. Only about half of approximately 4,000 buildings of the Modernist ensemble in the International Style are designated protected monuments. Each of the buildings is unique, but in general they aged rapidly due to the poor building materials used in the 1930s. Sea salt has eroded the outer walls of buildings, and the facades look far less impressive, and many buildings are dangerously unstable in this earthquake-threatened region. The conservationists are facing a great challenge, but Tel Aviv’s municipality lacks the money to renovate the buildings with public funds. Moreover, a building conservation law allowed investors to add floors and apartments to the privately owned properties if they renovated the lower parts of the building in keeping with prescribed professional standards. About 800 of the protected buildings have already been renovated in this way, but conservationists in both Israel and abroad have expressed their reservations toward this approach.

Furthermore, some investors argue strongly against the World Heritage status, which became obvious during an Open Discussion on the margins of the international conference “Greening the White City,” held on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the UNESCO inscription in Tel Aviv in 2013.²²

⁶ In the presence of occupants, architects, conservationists, landlords, and experts from Germany, one investor – also speaking on behalf of many others – shouted “Why do we need UNESCO? That only means restrictions that have nothing to do with our reality.” The Elbe Valley of Dresden has also been removed from the UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the city has not suffered from this decision, he argued.²²⁷

The “White City’s” cultural heritage is presenting Tel Aviv with new challenges: the blind spots of the Bauhaus boom are exploding real estate prices, huge increases in rent, and a loss of social living space. Social protests in the summer of 2011 in Tel Aviv showed how topical the ideas propagated by the Bauhaus school still remain – that architecture should answer “the needs of the people, not the needs of luxury” as Hannes Meyer, the second Bauhaus director, postulated in his slogan “Volksbedarf statt Luxusbedarf.” This is also a part of the cultural heritage of Tel Aviv’s “White City” which should be kept in mind, especially by those responsible for its further development and preservation in the 21st century.

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6. Yam Tikhoniut: Mediterraneanism as a Model for Identity Formation in between

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This paper was completed in October 2014. An earlier version of this article was presented as a conference paper at the WOCMES (World Congress of Middle Eastern Studies) in Barcelona (2010) and appeared in the framework of the monograph *The Place of the Mediterranean in Modern Israeli Identity*, as well as Barry Rubin's *The Middle East. A Guide to Politics, Economics, Society, and Culture*.

This is dedicated to Michael Feige z"l (1958–2016), dear friend, mentor and innovative scholar, murdered in a terrorist attack. He was a true inspiration and helped me see the Israeli Place from unusual perspectives.

Prologue: Tel Aviv

Looking at Tel Aviv, the icon of Israeli *Yam Tikhoniut*²²⁸ exemplifies today's relevance of the concept discussed in this article: when Tel Aviv was founded at the shores of the Mediterranean, it was not established as a coastal city and reached the shoreline only gradually. Over the decades, a certain ambiguity toward the sea remained omnipresent: on the one hand the Mediterranean was perceived as an alien and threatening body of water, on the other hand as a gateway and passageway, as most Jewish immigration to pre-state Israel took place via its waters. After turning its back to the sea for many years, today, a rediscovery of the sea is taking place, as the extension of the promenade from north Tel Aviv to Herzliya, or the massive gentrification processes at the formerly dilapidated harbor grounds in north Tel Aviv demonstrate. The city's beaches play an especially important role in the manifestation of Tel Aviv's image as a secular place for outdoor and leisure time activities.

The harbor was a gateway to a new life. Immigrants left their native lands behind and were about to arrive in an

unfamiliar place, one that was supposed to become their new home. *Sha'ar Zion*, 'the gate to Zion,' was the official name given to the main entrance of the port in Tel Aviv, which became the desired destination of each journey across the Mediterranean. Today, the old Tel Aviv port holds attractive new boardwalks and paved paths run along the seaside. Trendy seafood restaurants occupy formerly dilapidated warehouses, offering seating next to the old port basin. Also the harbor of Jaffa today hosts art galleries, exhibition grounds and restaurants, while at the same time it continues to function as a gathering point for Jaffa's fisher men. This is but one manifestation of a new openness toward the sea in Israeli daily life.

Israeli identity

After centuries of Diasporic existence, the State of Israel was established in 1948, thus enabling Jews to return to and settle their "ancient Jewish homeland." Upon the arrival of immigrants to *Eretz Yisrael*,²²⁹ the discrepancy between imagined place – the idealized heavenly Jerusalem – and the actual place – the realities in the land of Israel – surfaced, resulting in numerous rifts within an already heterogeneous society. As a consequence, public discourse over the past decades has repeatedly dealt with the questions of collective identity and belonging, as well as with the search for a shared Israeli culture among a population comprising a wide diversity of immigrants.

Since the 1980s and 1990s, the State of Israel has undergone extensive changes that have had significant effects in the political, demographical, cultural, and economic domains. Many aspects of Israeli identity are being deconstructed and reconsidered. The idealized Zionist image of one single Israeli culture and identity is being replaced by the perception of Israel as a pluralistic and, as some have put it, even multicultural society. The influence of the founding generation and pioneer elite is slowly fading, and new currents are undermining the core values of Zionism, values that had

functioned as social glue for many decades. These shifts have resulted in a deconstruction of the hegemonic, secular, Zionist national identity, and the emerging Israeli identity is confronted with increasing individualization and privatization in all sectors of daily life.

The issues of Israeli identity, the continuous heterogenization of society, and the so-called *kulturkampf* being waged among the different ethnic and ideological groups have been subject to increased debates in sociological and anthropological research in recent years.²³⁰ The reason for the increased discussion over Israeli identity in the 1990s has also been subject to in-depth analysis and various academic explanations. It has been suggested that due to the aging of the state's founding elite and an increasing of individualization and privatization of all sectors of daily life, an increased move toward diversification has also been occurring. In addition, the signing of the *Israel-PLO Declarations of Principles* (DOP) in September 1993 marked a watershed in Israeli political policies and the subsequent peace process intensified the debate over what constitutes Israeliness. After an extreme right-wing Jewish settler assassinated Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995, Israeli soul-searching, which had already been catalyzed in the course of the peace talks with the PLO, developed into a full-fledged identity crisis. A period of ritualized mourning followed the assassination, reflecting the shock over the disrupted social consensus, and this in turn led to a period during which the Israeli self-image was profoundly questioned.

Mediterraneanism as a model for identity formation

Within this discussion the evolving phenomenon of Yam Tikhoniut is referred to with increasing frequency in academic and public discourse on new definitions of identity. It centers around the longing to find a "natural" place in order that Israel be accommodated in the region, both culturally and politically. As an abstraction the idea of Yam Tikhoniut suggests the

reconsideration of the role of place and space in the Israeli context and – as a viable cultural framework – it offers promising future directions involving inner-Israeli conciliation and, on the long run, regional coexistence.

In the following, I will focus on the constitutive role of Mediterranean space and place in the construction of Israeliness, i.e., a specific Israeli identity. In this case, Israeliness refers to a common denominator and a reference point that can validly be applied to all the culturally heterogeneous groups within Israeli society. The subject of Israeli identity continues to attract significant public attention and is a highly-charged subject of both academic and public debates. The question of the content of Israeliness is an ongoing, contested issue in Israeli discourse. While some deny the existence of an essential Israeli cultural identity, others proclaim that Israelis are in the midst of an Israeli cultural renaissance.

Despite the harsh realities and the current political deadlock in the peace process between Israelis and Palestinians, the Mediterranean Idea reminds us that the Mediterranean region in the past has been a source of dialogue between East and West and over the decades created a historical model of shared culture and intellectual exchange.²³¹ This is an important historical experience and forms the base for the contemporary discussion on Israel's place in the region and its location within the geo-cultural space of the Mediterranean. In this context the notion of the *longue durée*, a term coined by French historian Fernand Braudel, had a deep impact on the discussion around the notion of Yam Tikhoniut, which can increasingly be found in Israeli public discourse dating from the early 1980s. However, at that time the appearance of the Mediterranean discourse was sporadic and not yet accompanied by a broader public discussion in the media and the academy. This situation had noticeably changed by the mid-1990s, which can partly be explained by developments related to the Barcelona Process and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Program. It was a time when Israelis and Arabs sat together in regional forums discussing environmental issues and common problems. The discourse on

Yam Tikhoniut reached its peak with the advancing peace process in the Middle East and whilst the first steps of a Euro-Mediterranean policy were implemented. Empirical evidence shows that openness toward, and curiosity about the Arab world reached an all-time high, especially among young Israelis, during the period when the peace process was raising expectations for a better future. A popular slogan from the late 1990s that embodied this shift is *Hummus be-Damesek*, referring to a longing for open borders and the possibility of travelling to Damascus in order to eat Hummus.²³²

The popularity of Yam Tikhoniut

The field of Yam Tikhoniut is just as complex and tangled as the inextricably interwoven and interdependent religious, social, cultural, psychological, and political aspects of Israeli and Jewish history. At first sight it appears as a jungle of different interacting and opposing powers whose flux produces an Israeli self-image that is also in constant motion. A plunge into the depths of Yam Tikhoniut, attempts to differentiate the terms, motivations, and aims involved in the discussion make the notion no less confusing. Yam Tikhoniut is multileveled and has diverse historical predecessors.

As early as the early 1990s, it became apparent that the questions concerning the influence of Mediterraneanism on Israeli identity were being met with great interest by academics from a range of disciplines and was being hotly debated in the media. The notion of Mediterraneanism had raised expectations among those who wanted to end Israel's claustrophobic existence, to open up and evaluate its location within the geo-cultural space. As the journalist Zvi Bar'el noted in Israel's leading daily newspaper *Haaretz* in November 2001: "The Mediterranean Sea ceased to be a place into which Jews could be thrown, and turned into a 'basin' around which one discussed common regional problems."²³³ This longing to find a place, and eventually acceptance in a region that is dominated by Arab society and culture, is one of the driving forces behind the discourse under exploration here.

However, the optimistic Barcelona Process, with the objective of bringing the people of the different shores of the Mediterranean closer together, experienced major drawbacks with the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada (2000), the Second Lebanon War (2006), the wars in Gaza (2009 and 2014) and the overall changes in a post 9/11 world. Today, in view of the continuous harsh political confrontations, this desire to integrate into the region has faded and felt totally out of reach. Moreover, the inner-Israeli dialogue and the discussion whether or not Israel is a Mediterranean *society-in-the-making*, which was in full bloom during the peace talks of the mid-1990s, addressing questions of belonging, civil society, and identity, has been overshadowed by security issues, the wars in Gaza, the conflict with Iran and the inner-Israeli discussion on social justice. Today, the perception of the Mediterranean ranges from the depiction of the Mediterranean as a sea of cooperation to a sea of confrontation. The consequent collapse of the peace process as a severe factor of destabilization made the often promoted emergence of a Mediterranean identity as a vehicle for region building seem unattainable, and hopes for peace in the region (or illusions as many argue today) evaporated. Notwithstanding this bleak scenario, I argue that it is premature to judge the Mediterranean Idea only in the context of the developments in day-to-day politics.

One of the most important advocates of Yam Tikhoniut in Israel, the historian David Ohana, stresses Israel's vital interest in the Mediterranean Idea and points out what it eventually has to offer. He expects an interplay of neighborhood, openness, and self-assertion that would ideally contribute to the formation of a cultural identity, and – on the long run – to peace and stability in the region. In his newest book on the Mediterranean Identity, which beautifully comprises the different positions he has developed over the years, he points out:

Because the Middle East is perceived as a political rather than a cultural milieu, and because political dialogue is much more effective when preceded by cultural and sociological discourse, Israelis need to look for partners – and, if they do not exist, to create them among social and cultural actors and institutions, in order to conduct this cultural discourse. This is one of the classic roles of civil society: to promote collaboration among institutions and

As elucidated, in the last decade the political realities left little space for the discourse on the Mediterranean Option. However, during this time its appeal for the arts, academia and culture did not fully disappear – on the contrary: in specific fields the discourse on Mediterraneanism has actually been revived over the past several years, as evident in a series of more recent Israeli “Mediterranean projects” like the translation of Mediterranean authors into Hebrew, academic conferences dealing with the Mediterranean theme or artistic projects (mostly architecture and music) that give evidence to the mode of fusing different cultural traditions and embracing the Mediterranean topos. The Succot supplement 2007 of the Israeli daily *Haaretz* with the title “Ha-yam shelanu: me Atlit ad Gibraltar. Mabat al ha-yam ha-Tikhon haiom” [Our Sea: From Atlit to Gibraltar. A View of the Mediterranean Today], serves as an example of this trend. This supplement, printed only in the newspaper’s Hebrew version, contains a potpourri of articles that are all somehow linked to the sea, but are not necessarily limited to the Israeli Mediterranean. Also, the academic discussion on whether Yam Tikhoniut is real, artificial, desirable or even dangerous is pursued and revived by critical contributions like the one by Gil Z. Hochberg (in 2011) who sees in this concept a mere charade: “In the name of cultural pluralism, Mediterraneanism seeks to become a new authoritative standard for evaluating Israeli culture and identity, and this, most significantly, in direct opposition to anything Middle Eastern. [...] [It is an] ideology paraded as ‘non-ideological.’”²³⁵

The ongoing debate shows that the Mediterranean has been a viable cultural framework for some, as well as a cultural utopia for others, and one in which Israeli society continues to work to position itself. The inner-Israeli discussion on Yam Tikhoniut is often linked to an open conflict over the meaning of *Israeliness*, of a specific Israeli identity. In this context the Mediterranean Option is referred to time and again in various ways. Analyses of the public debate and the content of interviews I conducted since the mid-1990s²³⁶ demonstrate

that the increasing use of the term in numerous fields in the public sphere are indicative of a growing awareness of the region and sense among the Israeli public as to the conception of the Israeli place. My research showed that the discourse moved beyond the boundaries of academia, then entered real life activities and started to shape daily life as well as cultural practices. Yam Tikhoniut already became an integral part of Israeliness and everyday life in Israel confirms many aspects of its existence. I argue that Israel, on the long run, can eventually promote a cultural dialogue that will involve the eastern and the southern shores of the Mediterranean. On the long run the soothing Mediterranean Option seeks to replace Israel's isolated position in the region with a model of economic, political, and cultural integration. Historian and Israel Prize laureate Irad Malkin aptly explains the future significance of this concept: "I expect that the Mediterranean Idea will surface again, but without its ideological need to resurrect (and invent) the past. It will re-emerge as a result of mundane realities such as lifestyles and cultural contacts. [...] I expect that Israel's 'Mediterraneaness' will be conceptualized from the reality of cultural and economical contacts with Mediterranean countries. Concept will emerge out of reality."²³⁷

It is vital, therefore, to look at the present and future prospects that an emerging Mediterranean identity, one comprising shared values and common interests, might hold. With this, I am referring not only to external political efforts, such as the launching of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) in 1995, which promoted a region building approach and sought to integrate Israel into a larger Mediterranean framework. Scholars criticized this effort, arguing that it was an attempt to engineer a shared identity and actively alter the domestic identity formation processes in Israel.²³⁸ By focusing on the inner-Israeli discourses in this analysis, it becomes evident that even before the recent deterioration of the political situation, the discussion of Israel's cultural orientation already had a long-standing connection with the Mediterranean Option, and references to it were already present in various Israeli narratives.

The potential of Yam Tikhoniut

But what is Yam Tikhoniut? Within these complex transformations the increasing use of the term Mediterraneanism as a model for identity formation and the description of Mediterranean characteristics for various aspects of everyday and cultural life in Israel can be found in the media, in cultural and everyday social practices, and as a part of public debates. This new term became firmly established in Israel's public debate and Mediterraneanism has become self-evident in Israel. The content of this notion is multifaceted: on the one hand, it is characterized by a nostalgic approach to the Mediterranean, drawing upon a repertoire from the past. During field research for my study it was intriguing to observe that the past was being restructured, conjured up, idealized, and glorified time and again, either to legitimize the current Mediterranean discourse or as an antithesis to the present discussion. Yet on the other hand, Yam Tikhoniut is the subject of a dynamic and high-profile discussion in present-day Israel. Israeli writer Amos Oz commented in 1990: "You could say we're becoming more and more of a Mediterranean society, like the Sicilians, loud, slightly vulgar."²³⁹ In 1995, the writer Abraham B. Yehoshua, in looking at developments that could reinvigorate the discussion on Israeli identity, attributed great significance to the idea of Yam Tikhoniut within the discourse of identity formation:

It is the role of intellectuals and artists to aim their special efforts toward understanding the Mizrahi codes, and not to hurry in giving them up. We are neither Mizrahim nor Ma'arawim [Westerners, AN], but Yam Tikhoni'im [Mediterraneans, AN], but it is necessary to give this Yam Tikhoniut a meaning in a period where distances shorten. There is still a perception of regional identity, if not for the sake of merchandise and tourism, than at least for the sake of roots and identity.²⁴⁰

Historian Yaacov Shavit finds this Mediterranean reference, "in belles lettres, in cinematic and theatrical reviews, in descriptions of landscapes and character or human behavior, or even in reference to culinary menus."²⁴¹ This often mentioned Yam Tikhoniut is still in its formative period, still fuzzy at the edges, and of hybrid structure. It becomes apparent that Yam

Tikhoniut is yet another characteristic of a period of redefinition of ideological and cultural orientations as well as a manifestation of the evolution of realities. That it does not exclude other ideologies and concepts makes it especially appealing for a society that has dealt with ethnic and religious divisions since its inception. The exceptional potential of Yam Tikhoniut lies within its power to join existing models of identity without either threatening their legitimacy or replacing them. Experiences stemming from the homogenizing ideals of Zionism, including the “New Jew” and the melting pot ideology, demonstrated that the continuous promotion of static blueprints and infrastructures in order to create a model society are likely to lead to further division and polarization rather than to integration and harmony.

The oscillatory meaning of Yam Tikhoniut becomes apparent when we look at inconsistent responses to the concept: an old *Yekke* (immigrant from Germany), for example, who is still culturally attached to the “old world,” feels threatened by the growing dominance of “everything Mediterranean” within Israel’s culture; a political activist of Mizrahi origin may see in this discussion only another Eurocentric endeavor to marginalize his ethnic background; a businessperson noted that it pays off to launch products with Mediterranean names or associations, while others see in the Mediterranean concept a way to escape the harsh reality of the Middle East.

Indeed, the conciliatory Mediterranean Option was referred to with increasing frequency in academic discourse on new definitions of identity. The hope is that this concept will help put an end to the lengthy conflict between Mizrahim and Ashkenazim and put a name to that which has been created *jointly* by all sections of the population over the past half-century. The aim is to defuse the constant polarization between Western cultural heritage and oriental context by introducing a third model, one in which diverse positions converge and existing individual identities expand. For author Yehoshua, Yam Tikhoniut has become a kind of magic formula with the power to reconcile all cultural differences. Paralleling the textual arguments that promote Yam Tikhoniut is a physical

orientation toward the Mediterranean as well: Irad Malkin describes a “Mediterranean Paradox” in analyzing the demography of present day Israel. In ancient times, Jewish settlements were founded in the *hinterland* by those who came from the desert in the east and settled in the mountains, whereas contemporary Israeliness and the “return to Zion” came from the west, through the Mediterranean Sea, and developed along the coastal areas. Today, the active settlement of the mountains and the *hinterland* (Judea and Samaria) is a pattern that is mainly pushed by the far right.²⁴² As can be observed in contemporary Israel, the majority of the population lives along the congested coastal strip, a fact that might be read as a clear – even physical – orientation toward a Mediterranean future.

Regional approach

Referencing the Mediterranean as a means to construct a common culture and identity is not a phenomenon unique to contemporary Israel. The reference to “Mediterranean culture” and the allusion to “everything Mediterranean” can be found throughout the region, especially in the countries bordering the sea’s northern shores. Historically, the Mediterranean was once a point of reference as well as a projection screen – writers and artists alike indulged in the yearning for the land of the lemon tree and the landscape in which it grew. Even today, looking at the Mediterranean from the North, the sea is often romanticized and idealized. In the last decades, however, the significance of the Mediterranean has changed considerably and several levels of meaning have been added to it: the global representation of Mediterraneanism in the marketing industry is a given in today’s world, and it has become a promotional tool for product sales. Mediterranean products and “Mediterranean cuisine,” which serve as stand-ins for the exotic and the unusual, have also benefitted from the general “ethnic turn” that has occurred throughout the Western world. On the political level, the Mediterranean took on a whole new meaning with the emergence of the Mediterranean paradigm and the consequent integration of a Mediterranean dimension

into EU regional policies, for example the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

The meaning of Mediterranean culture, inside and outside of Israel, diverges, depending on the context in which it is perceived. In the European countries bordering the Mediterranean, unlike the Arab ones, the sea is seen as a unifying force that embraces neighboring nations like Italy, France, Spain, and Greece. These countries share a certain pride in being linked closely to the Mediterranean basin, the cradle of great civilizations, and the home of ancient cultures. They not only share a common past, but also bear other resemblances to each other: Italy and Greece, for example, are situated in close proximity, thus sharing similar climates and soils and hence growing similar crops and cooking and eating similar dishes. A popular Italian saying, *una faccia una razza* (one face, one race), which is used to describe the closeness between Greek and Italian people, is but one manifestation of this perception. Nicolas Sarkozy's call for a "Mediterranean Union," which was established as the "Union for the Mediterranean" in July 2008, is also based on the assumption that common traits unite the Mediterranean countries, which in the long run – if further developed – could lead to a supranational, Mediterranean entity.

Even if Mediterranean culture is perceived as some sort of a common ground in the countries of the northern Mediterranean, the importance the idea of Yam Tikhoniut for inner-Israeli issues is of particular relevance. In Israel the discussion of Mediterranean culture and Mediterraneanism is closely intertwined with Israel's present and future, and therefore, the Yam Tikhoniut discourse is of vital – even existential – significance for Israel. It is embedded in discussions concerning national culture, collective identity, and regional affiliation, the intentions of which are to locate Israel's position within a broader Mediterranean framework. It was exactly this special relevance of the Mediterranean for the Israeli consciousness that Gilbert Herbert discussed in this very apt commentary:

Here the view of the sea is much more complex. Jews in Israel certainly share a worldview of the sea as a source of pleasure, whether active, passive, or

social. But for Israelis the sea has added dimensions. In a land restricted in area, narrow (less than ten miles between Netanya and Tulkarem), hemmed in, and predominantly arid, the sea has a psychological value beyond measure. It is an unspoiled natural resource, akin to the wilderness, a breaching of claustrophobic boundaries, a widening of the horizon. It is no accident that the majority of Israelis have settled on the coastal plain, nor that proximity to the sea, whether physical or visual, has considerable real-estate value. In addition, the sea, ever since the reclamation of the Haifa foreshore in the 1930s, has also been regarded as a potential source of additional land, with artificial islands featuring in many visionary architectural projects. One such project is an offshore international airport, currently under consideration, recently advocated by then-Vice-Premier Shimon Peres in a conference on 'The Sea as an Economic Resource,' as compensation for the abandonment of the West Bank, a political policy of which he has been a long-time proponent.²⁴³

Herbert further pointed out that the orientation to the sea has a stark political impact, and he quotes Israeli President Shimon Peres (then Israeli deputy premier) from a conference sponsored by the Ruppin Academic Center in April 2007: instead of investing in the territories “we must invest in the sea, and stretch our western border in that direction by building artificial islands.” Here, Peres uses the sea as a specific alternative solution for addressing the issues of peace making policies. In fact, proposals and fantasy planning for artificial offshore islands have a long history and have, since the founding of Tel Aviv, inspired writers and artists, as well as architects and politicians. The goals of redeeming land from the sea were to expand Israeli territory westwards, and to build a safe haven for Jews, one devoid of constant threats and the complex chains of past and present.²⁴⁴ These examples demonstrate that the Mediterranean Idea also offers a political vision, adding a new dimension to the prevailing fatigue, bitterness, and disenchantment with politics that can generally be found in contemporary Israel.

Longing to find a place

First and foremost, the sea was once an important passageway to Israel. Most of the immigrants to pre-state Israel reached Eretz Yisrael by ship via the Mediterranean, yet within the Zionist narrative it was not the Mediterranean that was considered significant, but the act of crossing the sea in order to reach the longed for territory. After the Second World War,

the sea remained the passageway of escape from the “continent of murder” for Holocaust survivors, from persecution into freedom.

I argue that the perception of the Mediterranean in Israel underwent a massive transformation throughout the decades: today, after years of marginalization, the sea is more and more becoming an important element in the formation of Israeliness. On a larger scale and looking into the spatial dimension of Jewish history I would even argue that recent rediscovery of Tel Aviv and its history – especially striking here is the appraisal of the Bauhaus legacy which has so long been neglected – form a part of a wider re-evaluation of the important role and function of “space and place” for Jewish cultural practice.

The question “where is Israel located?” is still at the center of discussion about the concept of Israeliness. For centuries, Israel existed not at the shores of the Mediterranean, but in Vilna, Toledo, Odessa, Berlin, Chernowitz, or Babylon, and most of all in the hearts of the Jewish people. The longing “eastwards” for “heavenly Jerusalem” was incorporated into Jewish tradition, prayers, and literature for over 3,000 years. The dream of “returning to Zion,” the far-away ancient homeland between the desert and the sea, was a spiritual longing. With the rise of Zionism at the end of the 19th century, and the international political movement promulgating the return of the Jewish people to their homeland, a new era began. Zionist ideologues dreamed of putting an end to the state of physical and spiritual alienation of the Diaspora by establishing an exemplary society that would be a light to other nations. The Zionist vision of establishing Israel as an “old-new-homeland” on the shores of the Mediterranean brought the Mediterranean back into the center of Jewish consciousness.

Israel continues to be shaped by the multiplicity of cultures of those who have come to reside within its boundaries. The two poles within Israeli culture – to merge into the East and become part of it on the one hand, while simultaneously remaining distinct from it on the other – are still at the center of discussions about the concept of Israeliness. The emerging

culture in Eretz Yisrael and Israel was and still is driven by the urge to express a new locality without being completely cut off from the Western European cultural repertoire.

Makom is the term central to the discussion of a specific Israeli place. In Hebrew, the word *makom* means ‘place’ and its significance is twofold: on one hand *makom* refers to the concrete physical place, and on the other hand it is equivalent with God’s name, and therefore refers to a metaphysical place. After two thousand years of exile and yearning for Zion, the Zionist project gave life to an actual Jewish entity in the “old-new-homeland.” Zionist ideology propagated the process of normalization as an ideal for the future Jewish state, and linked this desired state of normality to the concrete land. Since gaining statehood, the metaphysical concept of place, which was valid for two millennia, has been confronted with the actual geographical place, the Israeli state, and Israel as a country has thus been on a nonstop search for a social model that works. The gaps resulting from the discrepancy between these two perceptions of the Israeli place are reflected in creative expressions on diverse levels.

The parameters that describe Israel’s national, cultural, and religious identity continue to be the subject of heated debate: Israel is a part of Europe; its histories and cultures are deeply interwoven with those of central and eastern regions of the continent. But, modern Israel is – geographically speaking – located in Asia. Thus it incorporates elements from both Orient and Occident. Since the 1990s, the post-Zionists’ demythologizing view of history has made Israelis painfully aware that attempts to force the creation of a common culture based on the idea of a homogenizing melting pot have failed. Questions of belonging to Orient or Occident, to Europe or the Levant, form the focus of debate in Israel, where the diverse concepts of society are in constant collision.

Outlook

Essential questions are still not sufficiently answered, and the debate over who Israelis are and what they want to be is in full

swing. In the seventh decade of Israel's existence conflicting intellectual currents give evidence to the deep schism within Israeli society over the question of the meaning and future of Zionism. The question, if the above-mentioned Mediterranean Idea can eventually become an implementable frame of reference, with the potential to actually bring the alienated sides closer together, remains open. The Mediterranean paradigm suggests that life in the Mediterranean region – between East and West – offers many chances for Israel to become integrated within the Middle East without being cut off from the West. The challenge is to take the emerging Mediterranean identity of Israeli culture and society as a point of departure. Especially in these days of violent confrontation, while the Israeli-Arab conflict remains unresolved, the Mediterranean track is a realistic path for Israel to follow in order to move closer to the Middle East, and could eventually be a vehicle for Israel's acceptance in the region.

I argue that a situation like the one described by Malkin above, already became reality: as a motor for regional stabilization and eventually cooperation the large natural gas fields found in December 2012 in the Eastern Mediterranean, off the shores of Israel and Cyprus, have to be mentioned here briefly. Especially in the light of the increasing border conflict between Egypt and Israel and attacks on the gas pipelines carrying gas from Egypt to Israel, this discovery has enormous political, geopolitical and economic consequences. International conferences already discussed the implications of this discovery,²⁴⁵ as its exploration and development poses challenges in terms of international investment, infrastructure, environmental issues as well as political relations. Without international investments these resources cannot be developed, and regional stability is a basic requirement for investments. Thus, by developing common interests and coping with mutual challenges the natural gas resources and the implications for their development are another factor that has the potential to strengthen regional cooperation in the Mediterranean.

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Topic II: A Theocracy?

Introduction

This section deals with the secular-religious cleavage and focuses on a major issue of dispute among Israeli Jews: the relations between state and religion in Israeli society. The principle of the religion-people unity has always been a primary code in Judaism, and Zionism's affinity with traditional Jewish values was notable. Israel's Declaration of Independence defines the country as a democracy that bestows equality and liberty on all, irrespective of religion, origin, sex, or race. The same declaration, however, also defines Israel as a Jewish state, i.e., the patrimony of Jews worldwide, implying an ineradicable link between Jewish peoplehood and Jewish religion.²⁴⁶ Since most Israeli Jews – like most Jews everywhere – are not religious, the definitions of Judaism and Jewishness are endlessly debated in the Israeli public arena. The debates revolve mainly around the role that religion should play in defining the singularity of the collective and the state, and disagreements between disputants – representatives of the dominant secular culture and of various religious groups – often escalate into political crises. In Israel indeed, such debates impact directly on politically-significant legal stipulations regarding procedures of naturalization, the role and modes, formally recognized, of conversion to Judaism, and institutional support for immigrants. This strong connection and non-separation between religion and state brings certain observers to ask whether Israel resembles, in some aspects, a theocracy. The following texts give four analyses of the problematics, from four different viewpoints.

Dov Halbertal represents an ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) view favoring the non-separation between religion and state. He points to the fact that there is no secular party that raises the banner of separating religion and state. In their innermost hearts, Israeli Jews understand that there is no such thing as a Jew without Judaism, there is no Jewish people without Torah

and mitzvot (religious commandments), and there is no Jewish state without the values of Jewish laws. Neither the state nor the land are sacred as such. The value is only instrumental: they make it possible to run a life organized by mitzvot. The hypothesis of separating state and religion encounters an unsurmountable difficulty: one cannot cope with what has become enrooted historically in Judaism and Jewishness for thousands of years. Religion and state are intertwined in terms of human emotions and consciousness.

Nissim Leon explores the Sephardic brand of ultra-Orthodoxy by focusing on Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, the spiritual leader of the Shas movement, who aspires to a fortified island of Jewish existence. For him, the Jewish state is an entity with inherently positive religious significance, whose existence is both miraculous and fragile. Its endurance depends on its patronage by rabbinical scholars. Haredi society's affinity with Jewish nationalism entails the maintenance and embodiment of a religious lifestyle. Hence, this kind of ultra-Orthodoxy supports a strong connection between religion and state. This form of Haredism aspires to an inclusive view sensitive to the setting in which it operates, with its different components of identity and the complex communal mosaic.

Shalom Ratzabi focuses on leading rabbis who tackle the theological significance of Zionism. One model turns Zionist ideology into messianism, and the other elaborates on the distinctiveness of religion and Zionism. Rabbi Uziel, like Rabbi Kook, sets the state within the framework of the messianic idea, but while the latter speaks in terms of Kabbala messianism, the former formulates his approach on a rational ground. Both models relate to the secular aspect of society, but Rabbi Kook illustrates a paternalistic tendency denying the authenticity of Zionist secularism and contending that the state represents but a step on the way to redemption. For Rabbi Uziel, in contrast, the secularism of the state is genuine and as such should be considered a reality. Rabbi Uziel hence maintains, from a religious point of view, that the state is secular and there is a certain divide between religion and state.

Avi Sagi focuses on the same issue of religion and state by evincing the approach of the national-religious. He assesses

that hardly any other society in the Western world is as troubled as Israel by the question of its identity. One may say that Jews are people for whom their Judaism is a problem. The question of Jewish identity and Jewish nationality emerges here as central. We are witnessing a retreat of the civil liberal aspect in favor of national and Jewish identity aspects. The stress on Jewish nationality parallels attempts to impose religious norms beyond the status quo arrangements. At the same time though, one observes a new moderate discourse on religion and state issues, in the search for greater correspondence between liberal democratic aspects and the halakhic ethos. The penetration of civil norms into the religious discourse has paralleled the growing involvement of religious Jews at all levels of Israeli society.

Mordechai Kremnitzer and Amir Fuchs, in contrast to the previously discussed views, argue for a much stronger separation between religion and state. They present the legal background establishing the relationship between state and religion in Israel. They discuss a few recent issues that Israel faces in this respect and analyze some of the intersections between state and religion, and possible consequences of the non-separation between religion and state: the issue of extreme religious education; the problem of chauvinism and racism; and the support by some Members of Parliament for a new Basic Law intended to render Israel more Jewish and less democratic. They emphasize that the connection between religion and state creates severe problems of restricting liberty and limiting secular people's freedom from religion. That connection, they suggest, aggravates the racist-nationalistic trends that Israel is recently facing from within. A clearer separation between religion and state could help to stop these trends and ease the shaping of a more inclusive and cohesive civil society.

In brief, these texts are far from exhausting the nuances discernible among analysts regarding religion-state relations in Israel. When grouped together, though, they clearly illustrate the gaps dividing and opposing the scholarly literature in this respect. Dov Halbertal offers a Haredi perspective favoring the non-separation between religion and state. Nissim Leon

depicts the view of Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, the spiritual leader of Mizrahi ultra-Orthodoxy, who supported a strong connection between religion and state. However, as shown in Shalom Ratzabi's chapter, the Mizrahi ultra-Orthodox Rabbi Uziel acknowledges that the state is secular and hence that there is a certain divide between religion and state. Avi Sagi argues that the religious identity component is gaining strength, in tandem with the penetration of civil norms into the religious discourse. Mordechai Kremnitzer and Amir Fuchs contend that the failure to separate religion from state has harmful consequences for Israeli society, and hence they favor a much stronger separation between the two.

7. Religion and State, One and the Same

Dov Halbertal

This paper was completed in November 2014.

In Israel, the question whether religion should be separated from the state descends deep to the Jewish people's very roots and existential significance.

“Jewish nation” in religious theology

The *Haredi* (ultra-Orthodox) define the sole meaning of a Jewish nation as its existence as a religious nation which upholds the Torah. According to that perception, *Ma'amad Har Sinai* – the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai – was a constitutive event, and it created a people without a country. A people that undertook toward God that it would adhere to the Torah and the *mitzvot* (commandments). The Land of Israel was the land promised to the nation's fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, well before Mount Sinai. It is not, however, a land or state which creates a people. A fortiori, if the Jewish people would not uphold the *mitzvot*, the land would not tolerate them and exile would be the result. The Land of Israel is the holy land, that enables the *mitzvot* to be fully upheld, spiritual transcendence inspired by the divine presence (the *Shekhina*), and a land where there is direct and unmediated supervision by the God of Israel.

But even Moses – who Maimonides named as the greatest of prophets – the leader and founder of the nation, did not enter the Land of Israel, since with all its holiness, the Land of Israel is no more than instrumental, not a value in itself. It is the place where it is most possible to uphold the Torah and *mitzvot*, and allows the Jewish people to fulfill its destiny completely. Yet throughout its long and harsh 2,000 years of exile, the Jewish people never ceased to exist. Moreover, the major part of its religious work – the Babylonian Talmud, the

codex that sums up the oral law for centuries of study and research – was created in the Diaspora. Even the Torah itself was not given in Israel, but on Mount Sinai, in the wilderness, emblematic of transcendence without territorial boundaries.

From the Haredi perspective, this is how the Jewish people is distinguished from all other peoples. The argument between the Haredi world and secular Zionism is a profound and unbridgeable one. Zionism holds that a Jewish people with a Jewish identity can exist without its Torah, contingent on the existence of a Jewish state. Zionism's constitutive event is not Mount Sinai, but the declaration of statehood.

In the theological realm, the Haredim contend that there is no significance to a Jewish state that does not carry out the mitzvot. A state of that kind reflects blasphemy and greater heresy than any state of any other nation, since it defies God. It is, in fact, the state of Godless Hebrews.

“State” as an entity devoid of inherent value

Among the Haredim, there are several perspectives regarding the Israeli state. There is an extremist minority which views it as “Satan's work” and a revolt against the covenant that the Jewish people swore allegiance to and requires that it does not push the end, nor rebel against the Gentile nations. It is a perspective that rules out any collaboration with the state, seeks its political downfall, and maintains that any Jewish entity of statehood before the Messiah's coming is an act of rebellion. And so even if the state was subjugated to Jewish law, it would still be the work of Satan. The central stream in ultra-Orthodox Judaism, however, views the state as a historical fact without any inherent ideological baggage. In that approach, one must address the state as a done deed, the same attitude that an ultra-Orthodox Jew outside Israel has toward the Gentiles who govern them. The State of Israel means, in ultra-Orthodox reasoning, living in a Diaspora among Jews. At the same time, there is no certainty that the state will continue to exist, and so one must not identify in it any element of redemption or signs of *athalta degeula* (the

Beginning of Redemption). Nor is there any inherent promise that, God forbid, a new Holocaust will not erupt. The state is not a guarantee for anything.

In any event, every effort must be made that ensures survival; the state's resources should be used to nurture the ultra-Orthodox stream and to preserve the yeshiva world. Acknowledgement of the state is *de facto*, not *de jure*. The ultra-Orthodox world encloses itself within the state, in a kind of Noah's ark that protects it from the secular deluge.

The religion-state relationship in the religious ideal

At this point, the question of separating religion and state becomes a pragmatic, not ideological one, since, as noted, in the Haredi outlook there is no Jewish state without the Jewish religion. Religion and the state are one and the same. The state imbibes all its significance, destiny, and its right to exist from religion, not vice versa. Without the Jewish religion, there is no Jewish state. The state is simply an instrument, not a value, which enables religious Jewish existence, and if the state renders that impossible, the Haredim will abandon the country.

Concerning the Jewish values which shaped the laws of the ideal state, and the manner in which it comports itself in the political space, there is the binding principle of tradition. Judaism is based on tradition; on the passing-down of the Torah from one generation to the next – Moses received it at Mount Sinai, and passed it down to Joshua, who passed it on to the Sages, and so on, throughout the generations. Those who determine the world of Halakha and shape Jewish leadership in each generation, according to that generation's specific needs, are the *gdolei hador* – the great ones of that generation. Only they mold the Halakha. Halakha is shaped and interpretation is performed by the great ones of the generation, and their ruling on political and public questions is final. The great ones of the previous generation passed down to them the path to leadership and the tradition.

The Haredi population is similarly distinguished from their Religious-Zionist counterparts. Those great ones were not chosen in political primaries, or by their formal roles. They are not elected, but win their positions through the people's intuition. They are the sages of Halakha, excelling in God-fearing and *tohar midot* (moral integrity).

Religion and state relationships in secular Israel

How then should we cope with the given situation, in which there is a secular state, and a broad secular population that seeks to sever themselves, at one level or another, from the values of religion, and instead to instill Western cultural values – humanism, liberalism, feminism, and universalism? The state's laws – which are in any event not grounded on Jewish laws but on the Ottoman and British codices of laws – are becoming ever more secular and remove any “Jewish” content from the “Jewish and democratic state.”

The humanist position places the individual at the center of the universe and experience, in a world devoid of God, with the sole commitment for mankind's aspirations and desires being the individual's well-being. It is a position in polar and absolute contrast to Judaism, which sees God at the center of the universe, which is mankind's commitment to God. No dialogue or ideological interpretation is thus possible between ultra-Orthodoxy and secularism, only – at the most – a pragmatic compromise. In these circumstances, one could have expected that the Haredim will be those to request separation religion and state. Several reasons underlie this. Firstly, the links between state and religion force ultra-Orthodox Judaism into compromises that are antithetical to the religious conscience; for example, on the question of defining “who is a Jew” under the Law of Return, and concerning other laws, too. Secular Israelis seek to acknowledge as Jews not only those born to a Jewish mother, but also people who underwent the conversion process through the Reform movement. For the Haredim, a Reform conversion is not worth

the paper it is printed on, yet the state recognizes the liberal conversions performed in the Israeli army for Gentile soldiers serving in it, while the *gdolei hador* consider their conversion meaningless, and inherently risking the assimilation of non-Jews into the Jewish nation.

There are recurring attempts to make secular studies part of Haredi education, since it is partially budgeted by the state, attempts made possible only by the political bonds between religion and the state, and this in turn enables and requires budgeting of religious studies. The Haredim object energetically to those core studies, which they view as threatening Haredi life. The opinion of the *gdolei hador* is that Haredi pupils should pursue only religious studies, in an atmosphere of holiness. Any openness toward secular studies and foreign values is considered detrimental to the *mitzvah* of studying Torah, and endangering the religious and spiritual development of young boys.

The connection between religion and the state leads to a paradoxical situation in religious terms, where Haredi Knesset members share national responsibility with MKs many of whom care little about marriage with non-Jews or even view it positively as part of the liberal ethos. From the Haredi perspective, this could lead to the annihilation of the nation.

And indeed, in the USA a “cold Holocaust,” as one may define it, is unfolding: assimilation there has reached 70% among all American non-Haredi Jews. The day may come when peace prevails in the State of Israel, and there will be nothing to prevent assimilation levels from reaching, Heaven forbid, the same extent. Nothing in secular cultural values can prevent it. It will also be an inevitable consequence of secular education, because to argue that we are a chosen people is equivalent to racism. Because asserting that a Jew may not marry a Gentile woman is just as racist. Because universal pluralism demands recognition of the absolute equality of every people and religious faith.

The same goes for the laws that seek to recognize same-sex marriage, or marriage between those whom Jewish Halakha has defined as *psulei hitun* (people forbidden by

Halakha to marry). The connection between religion and state sometimes calls for certain compromises on these and many other matters, such as bylaws allowing shops to open on the Shabbat. It would be much simpler if religion and state were separated, and each segment of the population could live their own cultural and spiritual lives as they wished. In that case, the Haredi world would permit the marriage only of those who can be married under Jewish law, and conversions would be conducted only through the strict Haredi conversion process. Secular people could convert and marry as they wished, and all these in the spirit of “live and let live”. Two peoples in one state.

Secondly, there is a sense of religious coercion among secular Israelis which repels many of them from coming closer to Halakhic Judaism. The repulsion, paradoxically, is not caused by Judaism’s values, but by religion’s politicization – an inevitable necessity in the present situation of tying together religion and state. Particularly when we take into account the affinity to liberalism that is more and more common among young people who are strongly influenced by the global media and the world’s transformation into a global village. Detaching religion from the state would generate greater empathy to religion. This would appear to be another interest of the Haredim for motivating separation.

Three years ago, I published an op-ed in this spirit in the *Haaretz* newspaper, captioned “Israel Must Separate Religion from Politics,”²⁴⁷ an article that attracted many responses. It appeared in a secular newspaper (*Haaretz*), that targets the secular public. I retract what I wrote there, for the reasons I specify below. I wrote then that as an ultra-Orthodox man, I can’t help but write that it’s time for a radical change in Israel.

My opinion as expressed in this article emphasized that just as the military occupation of Palestinian territories corrupts – as even its supporters will admit – so does politics corrupt religion. The mix of politics and religion has created a cycle of moral turpitude and inter-Jewish hatred. The religious establishment corrupts the fabric of the state and vice-versa.

I wrote then that the only possible solution, for the benefits of religion and the state, is to adopt the First Amendment to the US Constitution and separate church from state.

The secular public should not finance yeshiva students nor the high birth rate among the ultra-Orthodox. There is nothing more infuriating to secular Israelis than to be required to support financially the ultra-Orthodox population. The ultra-Orthodox oppose the values of a secular society – Zionism, creativity, army conscription, sexual equality and more. However, they have no qualms about demanding and receiving money from this society, thereby intensifying public animosity toward them. I added:

Let's be honest with ourselves. There is no reason the secular public should finance those who show contempt for its values. The solution I propose will benefit religion more than the state. I don't want to be part of a society that uses coercion. I don't want to be part of a society in which there is incitement to racism, and I don't want to be part of an ungrateful religious society.

Distorted thought processes are not part of Jewish Halakha. They originate in distorted interpretations that primarily result from the repugnant connections made between politics, the establishment and religion. American Jews would not dare block streets and harm policemen because a shopping mall was open on Shabbat. In the United States, rabbis would never dream of issuing a manifesto prohibiting Jews from renting apartments to Gentiles.

The time has come to say 'enough': enough to the religious parties; enough to their disgraceful self-centered preoccupation with budgets, as they ignore the rest of the country and the world; enough to the moral and aesthetic corruption of religion; enough to forcing laws down the throat of a public that does not believe in them.

To paraphrase Martin Luther King Jr., I, too, have a dream: I have a dream that politics will be separated from religion; I have a dream that a secular child will study the Jewish sources out of love and not out of fear of the results reflected in the display window of the religious establishment; I have a dream of belonging to a moderate Haredi religious society with broad horizons, whose slogan is 'Live and let live.'

Sometimes it seems the Haredim are motivated by a sense of victimization. This is what defines them and their right to exist, as though topping the agenda of President Barack Obama and the Supreme Court was the question of how to eradicate religious Judaism. Is it any wonder that antisemitism and Jew-hatred are flourishing? What would we ourselves think of a condescending religious sect, focused on itself that considers itself a light onto others but sows controversy and isolation?

Every person, Jew or Gentile, must be allowed to live according to his beliefs, with equal rights, out of genuine recognition of the human rights given to all those created in the image of God. One thing is clear: there is no worse combination than religion and politics.²⁴⁸

Haredi objections to separating religion and state

Following the publication of the article, I was invited to lecture in front of a variety of publics, mainly students and soldiers. In these meetings as well as in my appearances in different media broadcasts, I could observe an amazing phenomenon: among both fellow Haredim and most secular interlocutors, the overwhelming majority rejected categorically the idea of separating state and religion.

The reasons for Haredi objections and secular objections differ totally, though to some degree they are two sides of the same coin. The Haredi claim is that, though they sense no tangible ideological threat that could result from cutting ties with the state, still that severance might have a dual practical impact: first, on budgeting Haredi religious institutions and Haredi religious services. In a situation of separation between state and religion, obtaining funding would become far more difficult. Cutting state budgets would adversely affect their ability to develop the Haredi population. To our belief, the state – as a Jewish state – must budget the yeshivot and the other Jewish religious services, because this is the meaning of the state's existence as well as its very justification and right to exist. There is no political justification for founding a state based on secularism. Only religious tradition, according to which God promised the Land of Israel to his people, justifies the existence of the State of Israel, without seeing as unjustified the expulsion of another people which had settled there. Moreover, it is not to ignore that the Haredi population pays numerous, direct and indirect taxes. In the same vein, foreign aid, chiefly deriving from the United States, targets the whole Israeli population, and certainly also the major part of the Jewish Haredi population. As noted, there is also to assume that the secular Jewish state is committed to endorse the real Jewish obligation which consists of Halakha and Torah studies. In this sense, the more politics enable the transfer of greater funds for these religious exigencies – that is, the genuine Jewish identity – the more will both state and religion benefit.

Second, and no less important, is the sense of responsibility toward the secular population notwithstanding Israel's sins, according to Halakha. Even if Jews converted, according to Halakha they are considered Jews, and even in its secular condition, they are committed to the Jewish law. From this Halakhic position, ultra-Orthodoxy sees itself as responsible for the spiritual religious existence of secular Jews and for their closeness to tradition. Thus for example, the political struggle against various laws that distance secular Israelis from the values of Halakha, such as the law stipulating that public transport does not run on Shabbat, and that the state will not desecrate the Sabbath publicly. Or that today, the weekly day of rest is Shabbat, the holiest day in Judaism; and of course, the struggle over personal laws – marriage, divorce, adoption and conversion – whose goal among others is to prevent assimilation liable to destroy the Jewish nation, as well as the various conflicts over *kashrut* in both cities and local authorities, and at the national level.

These struggles will lose their relevance in a situation where religion and state are separated, and in any event the results will be the complete detachment of the Haredim from their secular counterparts and the de facto existence of two peoples in one country. It will not even permit marriage between the two population segments, and certainly no dialogue whatsoever.

But the most surprising reaction to my article came from secular Israelis. Many of them are interested in the continuing connection of the state with religion, at diverse levels. A question that I was constantly asked, after I presented the aspects that would result from a separation between religion and state, and in fact almost the first question was: “If religion and state are separated, what will happen to us, the secular Israelis? You're abandoning us. We want Judaism. We're not interested in assimilation. What will happen to our children? They will grow up with public transport on Shabbat and with the legitimacy of marriage with non-Jews, perhaps even without *Brit Milah*; what will remain of us as Jews?” From a deep Jewish rooted sense, at the socio-psychological level and even the spiritual aspect that links them to Judaism, many of

them took issue with the idea of separation. More than a few politicians also remarked that in any case there are various options for getting along practically with Halakha, such as prohibiting the sale of *hametz* at Pessach – which can be circumvented by purchasing hametz from Arabs. Even if there is no public transport on Saturday, people can travel by private car; wedding ceremonies performed in Cyprus, when it concerns *psulei hitun*, are recognized in Israel and thus circumvent the prohibition of marriage. The actual friction is not that considerable, and against it stands the loss of the sense of belonging – which is much more substantial.

When secular Israelis travel overseas, beyond the sphere of political-religious coercion, their affinity to Judaism increases enormously. They enter a synagogue with longing, with misty eyes. In Kathmandu they participate in public *Seder* ceremonies, with excitement and identification. They do their best to comply with the mitzvah of lighting Hanukkah candles even if they felt alienated from the ceremony back in Israel.

Summary

The definitive proof of secular people's unwillingness, fuelled by emotion and awareness, to separate religion and state is the fact that they might easily be able to do so through the political sphere. The secular people are the only coalition that forms the government, without any Haredim at all – an almost unprecedented situation politically. Nevertheless there is no secular party which raises the banner of separating religion and state, or perhaps does so only as lip service, thus proving that the secular public is not interested in that separation. In their innermost hearts, they understand that there is no such thing as a Jew without Jewish religion and there is no Jewish people without Torah and mitzvot, and there is no Jewish state without the values of Jewish laws.

If they were truly interested in that separation, they are capable of rapidly legislating a Basic Law containing one sentence stipulating that religion and state are separate in the Israeli state. The Haredim would not lose their minds

objecting to it, because as I have mentioned, the connection between religion and the secular state is not all that simple for them, not ideologically and not in the sense of fully preserving Judaism. In today's political reality where a liberal approach prevails, the state, alone among all others, forces conscription on Haredi youth, defining Torah studies as a criminal offence. This state strives to permit same-sex marriage, to recognize Reform conversion, to allow an alternative kashrut system, to let women to pray at the Western Wall wrapped in *tefillin*, to open shops on the Shabbat, to permit public transport, to desecrate the Shabbat publicly, to convert en masse non-Jewish soldiers serving in the IDF. No wonder that more and more voices are also heard in the Haredi public calling for a separation between religion and state.

And despite all this, there is little discussion of this at the political level; the deeply-rooted dispute lies mainly in the ideological realm. The secular Jews themselves feel that the Jewish state needs a strong upholding of Judaism's values in order to preserve its Jewish character. And as such, with the Haredi theological perception, separating religion and state is impossible: a Jewish state is viable only inasmuch as it is part of the religious fabric and helps to uphold full Jewish lives. And the Jewish people are only a nation by means of its Torah – not by means of its state. When Maimonides (in *Hilkhot Melakhim* 12:5) describes the Messianic period, he draws an earthly portrait whose main thrust is that “[...] the world shall be filled with the knowledge of God.” Maimonides is talking about the ultimate annulling of politics when that time arrives, because politics and political structures are necessary instruments only for maintaining a full Jewish life. But when the Messiah comes, there will be no more wars, world peace will reign, economic ability will deepen, and knowledge spread. And the state structure will no longer be necessary.

In comparison with that Haredi stance, many secular people believe it possible theoretically that a non-Halakhic Jewish state can exist. In the practical sphere, there is no separation between state and religion, because though the secular position is possible – and may even occur in the near future – it will still be hard to cope with what has become

enrooted historically and Jewishly for thousands of years. Religion and state are still intertwined, at the very least in terms of human emotions and consciousness.

8. The Haredi-Secular Debate and the Shas Approach

Nissim Leon

This paper was completed in November 2014.

Haredi society in Israel comprises three main streams, which together encompass a vast system of groups and sub-groups: there are the Hassidim, of Ashkenazi (Eastern or Central European) origin; the so-called “Lithuanians” (Jews of Ashkenazi origin who oppose the Hassidic religious approach); and the “Haredi-Mizrahi” component: Jews of Middle Eastern or North African origin, some affiliated with “Lithuanian” institutions and society, while others have different social environment. What connects this family of identities is their attachment and commitment to the Haredi ideology and way of life as it has developed in Israel, in the form of the “scholar society.”²⁴⁹

Despite its isolationist image, Haredism is in fact a “nationalist” ideology – i.e., one that perceives itself as bearing a message relevant to – and fulfilling a role within – national life as a whole. There are actually two “nationalist” approaches among Haredi circles. One views seclusion in closed religious communities as the assumption of responsibility to preserve the unique Haredi way of life; its adherents regard themselves as an island of authentic Jewish culture in a sea of error, heresy, and temptation.²⁵⁰ This approach has two different versions: a radical-separationist sector, which distances itself from any contact with the outside world; and the pragmatic-instrumentalist sector, which is willing to cooperate with the more general nationalist ideology that is not Haredi. The other nationalist Haredi approach actively seeks contact with the broader Jewish public in Israel, out of a desire to take the initiative in repairing the religious reality and restoring the crown of tradition. The first approach (in its non-radical version) describes the outlook of the veteran Haredi Agudat Israel movement in its various incarnations; the

second describes the outlook of the Shas movement and the Haredi-Mizrahi sector more generally, under the leadership of Rabbi Ovadia Yosef (1920–2013).

This article will examine one of the conceptual and practical elements of the “nationalist” approach associated with the Haredi-Mizrahi sector and its leader over several decades – Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, popularly known as “Rav Ovadia.” Our focus will be Rav Ovadia’s criticism of the isolationist Haredi approach and his proposal of an alternative, inclusive approach that assumes responsibility for the “other” – Jews both in Israel and in the Diaspora who might not be religiously observant, but are nevertheless an integral part of the Jewish nation. Rav Ovadia advanced a form of active Haredi nationalism that sought to use its yeshiva-educated religious elite as a bridge for connecting with the non-Haredi public, out of a sense of responsibility for its spiritual welfare. This approach, which essentially envisioned religious instruction extending beyond the walls of the study hall and connecting with broader Jewish society, found expression in Rav Ovadia’s clear and concise halakhic works, his straightforward style of sermonizing, and his willingness to immerse himself in political life as the leader of the Shas party.

The essence of Rav Ovadia’s activist philosophy was formulated in a book entitled *Iggeret le-Ben Torah* [Letter to a Torah Scholar], edited by Rabbi Yitzhak Yosef, Rav Ovadia’s son and the present Sephardi Chief Rabbi of Israel. Rabbi Yitzhak Yosef has been largely responsible for the dissemination of his father’s halakhic and ideological approach amongst Sephardi Jewry in Israel and abroad, through the publication of the *Yalkut Yosef* halakhic series that presents his father’s rulings in a concise manner and in different languages, with his own addenda and comments here and there. *Letter to a Torah Scholar* is essentially an ideological work that sets forth the activist conceptual (rather than ethnic) religious foundation underlying Rav Ovadia’s halakhic oeuvre. We seek here to demonstrate the connection between this foundation and the nationalist Haredi-Mizrahi approach.

The article consists of four chapters. The first will present the Haredi ideology of seclusion which features prominently in the molding of the Lithuanian-style “scholar society” (as Menachem Friedman refers to it).²⁵¹ The second and third chapters will present the *Letter to a Torah Scholar*, which I regard as a literary representation of Rabbi Ovadia’s “nationalist” view. The fourth chapter will examine various aspects of the background to Rav Ovadia’s position. The final chapter will consider the significance of Rav Ovadia’s political decision to take the helm of the Shas party.

The Haredi-secular debate and the question of the Jewish people

One of the most deeply-felt schisms amongst Jewish society in Israel divides the Haredi and secular sectors.²⁵² This conflict has historical as well as ideological roots, and assumes ongoing, overt social and political expressions. The conflict began with the reservations harbored by some Orthodox Jewish circles in Eastern and Central Europe toward modernization and its various manifestations, among them the Enlightenment and the Zionist movement. It grew with the development of an isolationist view in relation to a Jewish world increasingly varied in its modern lifestyle – *inter alia* owing to the fear that contact with it would lead to a breakdown of traditional frameworks and cause irreparable harm to traditional education. The clear expressions of this approach are the closed, insular Orthodox and Haredi communities that developed, along with separate political organizations. In Israel, there are separate Haredi neighborhoods and even whole cities; an autonomous Haredi educational system; and a political strategy of measured cooperation with the Zionist state.

The isolationist Haredi approach is sharply critical of those who do not follow a Haredi lifestyle. At the same time it may – and does, in the instance we shall be discussing – give rise to an ideology of religio-national responsibility, which stems from precisely the same aspiration that mandates isolationism.

To this view, the aim of seclusion for Haredi society is to avoid the challenges and temptations posed by the outside environment, in order to maintain a proper religious lifestyle and focus on the obligation of Torah study. However, this does not mean turning a collective back on broader Jewish society. The insularity and intensive focus on study are undertaken specifically out of responsibility for Jewish society at large. According to this view, Torah scholars at Haredi *yeshivot* (religious academies) are a sort of island of genuine Jewish existence. Since the traditional sources teach that the world is built on Torah study and exists by virtue of Torah scholars, the existence of Haredi society as a religious scholar society is critical for the survival of the Jewish people in general, and for the Jews of the Holy Land in particular. Thus, the isolationist model is aimed at preserving and protecting Torah study from any possible disturbance relating to changing historical circumstances.

From this perspective, a member of the Haredi scholar society does not necessarily view himself as part of a minority representing a certain sociological and cultural model of Jewish life; rather, he belongs to a minority that represents a social model that is faithful to a religious truth which, owing to political processes, finds itself in the opposition, but will eventually be accepted universally as the truth. Haredi society must therefore preserve its lifestyle because of its loyal commitment to the past and responsibility for the future of the Jewish people. This sort of approach involves living in the shadow of responsibility toward the “other” – the responsibility of Haredi society toward other Jews, outside of their own society, rather than responsibility of society in general toward the Haredi minority.

Lest there be any misunderstanding around this point, the “responsibility” we refer to here is not of the sort proposed by Lévinas, which seeks to understand the other and thereby to protect that which makes him special. Haredi responsibility toward the secular “other” is closer to a form of custodianship, since according to the Haredi worldview secular Jews are mired in a state of profound religious weakness whose historical and sociological sources are not their fault. Thus,

inter alia, secular Jews are relegated to the religious category of *tinok she-nishba* (literally, ‘an infant taken captive’) – i.e., people kidnapped by circumstances from their true destiny as observant Jews, and placed in a society which is unfamiliar with the “proper” Jewish lifestyle. Therefore, Haredi society seeks to view itself as a “reserve” for what it considers proper, genuine Jewish identity. The role of the state is to protect this reserve and keep away any temptation that might threaten its way of life.

This explains, for example, the negative view of army enlistment traditionally held amongst Haredi society. Some might view this as an anti-nationalist position adopted in the struggle against an institution whose values are diametrically opposed to those which Haredi society seeks to nurture. The army is also perceived as a body that has no religious oversight. Joining the army may lead to a collapse of the traditional way of life. In any event, enlistment is viewed as a threat to the role and destiny of Haredi society as a reserve for proper Jewish observance and as the State of Israel’s certificate of spiritual insurance. This is how the popular “Lithuanian” Rabbi Mordechai Neugroschel explains it:

It is not true that yeshiva students do not participate in the war effort. One would be mistaken if he were to think that they do not make a contribution that is equal in value to the contribution of the most important soldiers in protecting the nation living in Israel, and in successes on the battlefield. Torah study is an integral, essential part of both the defensive and offensive system of the Jewish army. A corps of young men sitting and studying during war time [...] is the most secret and essential weapon of a Jewish army [...] Torah scholars are confident that ‘Torah protects and saves,’ and that by studying Torah they are protecting the land as well as those protecting it.²⁵³

However, we may ask: is national responsibility for the other dependent on the scholar closing himself off within the bounds of the scholar society out of responsibility for Torah study exclusively? Alongside the view presented above we find a different position that seeks not only to preserve the “authentic” religious lifestyle, but also to turn it into a source for religious activism. This approach is set forth clearly in a work entitled *Letter to a Torah Scholar*, which summarizes the position of Rav Ovadia, the late leader of the Shas party, in this regard.

Rav Ovadia and the *Letter to a Torah Scholar*

Rabbi Ovadia Yosef was one of the primary molders of the Haredi-Mizrahi stream. He earned his reputation as a leading halakhic authority by virtue of his all-encompassing halakhic and ideological literary oeuvre, by means of which he sought to establish a unifying, universal system of halakhic practice that would overcome the diverse traditions, customs, and halakhic approaches that preserve and perpetuate boundaries between different ethnic Jewish sectors in the modern State of Israel.

Rav Ovadia was born in Baghdad in 1920. As a child he moved with his family to Jerusalem, which was under the British Mandate. His religious education began at the Haredi Talmud Torah Bnei Tzion in Jerusalem, and continued at the Porat Yosef yeshiva, which had been founded by rabbis from Baghdad and Aleppo, in the Old City. Over the years Rav Ovadia served in several communal rabbinic as well as halakhic-judicial positions, including: Deputy Chief Rabbi of Cairo; a judge in the Petach Tikva religious court; Sephardi Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv-Jaffa; and Rishon Le-Tzion (Sephardi Chief Rabbi of Israel). When his decade-long tenure in this last position was brought to an end by politics and the stipulations of a new law, he faced two possible paths: further religious research and in-depth study, or political public activity on the other. Rav Ovadia decided to combine these, by joining the initiative to establish a Haredi-Mizrahi political party – Shas. He served as the party's unchallenged spiritual leader from its establishment in the summer of 1983 until his death in October 2013.

As noted, Rav Ovadia's early fame was earned through his halakhic oeuvre, but also through his activist rabbinic approach. His biography reflects the transformation of the rabbinic scene amongst Mizrahi Jewry. While the majority of the older generation of Mizrahi rabbis in Israel had studied mostly in their countries of origin, as part of a small group of religious scholars, the younger rabbis received their religious education at Haredi yeshiva institutions in Israel. Over the course of the years, Rav Ovadia became aware of the

increasing distance and deepening chasm between the students of Haredi yeshivot and the non-Haredi general public. This awareness was reflected in his position on the role of Haredi society and its responsibility toward the Jewish people.

Rav Ovadia's activist rabbinic position was reworked and condensed into the *Letter to a Torah Scholar* published by his son, Rabbi Yitzhak Yosef, in 1999. The booklet was disseminated in *kollels* (yeshiva frameworks for married students), yes-hivot, and study halls affiliated with the Haredi-Mizrahi stream. It offers a collection of excerpts from Rav Ovadia's sermons and introductions to his books, all focusing on the role of the Torah scholar. It was not originally directed to all religious Jews, but rather to those whose religious study was their full-time occupation: yeshiva students, teachers, and scholars. The target population for the first edition was clearly defined and symbolically emphasized by printing the book in a "Rashi" font – a form of writing that characterizes a high-level religious study environment. This was meant to indicate that the contents were directed at those who were accustomed to reading Rashi script, and proficient in the study techniques and commentaries associated with the Talmudic text. This was a book of guidance meant for Torah scholars and addressing directly the question of their social and national responsibility.

The demand to “bring merit to the masses”

The publication of the *Letter to a Torah Scholar* was part of the struggle waged by Rav Ovadia (and his sons) for the heart of the Haredi-Mizrahi scholar society which, to his view, was too far inclined toward the insular world of the Lithuanian yeshivot and distanced itself from responsibility for the *teshuva* ('repentance') movement (the movement encouraging secular Jews to learn more about their religious heritage and increase their level of religious observance and practice). The essence of the booklet is Rav Ovadia's criticism of the isolationist model of the Haredi yeshiva world. Yeshiva students who accept his authority are instructed instead to go out and benefit the masses:

In addition, by studying well the laws that are applicable at this time, he will be able to teach the people the way of God, and to bring merit to the masses. Our Sages taught in the Gemara [...] ‘They sit down at your feet, receiving of your words [...]’ – this refers to the sages, who take the trouble to rove about for the sake of the words of Torah.²⁵⁴

The concept of “bringing merit to the masses” is a fundamental one in Rav Ovadia’s religious philosophy. Its origin is to be found in two statements that appear in the well-known tractate of Mishna Avot [Ethics of the Fathers], which sets down principles of Jewish faith, practice, and tradition. One of these statements, found in chapter 5, reads as follows: “Whoever brings merit to the masses will not come to any sin, but whoever leads the masses astray will not be given the opportunity to repent for all the wrong he commits. Moses was himself meritorious and also brought merit to the masses, so the merit of the masses is attributed to him [...].”²⁵⁵

How does one “bring merit to the masses”? The answer appears at the end of the Talmudic tractate of Makkot, which quotes the famous words of a certain sage, which are echoed at the conclusion of many a Torah lecture delivered in public: “Rabbi Hanania son of Akashia said: The Holy One, blessed be He, sought to add merit to Israel – therefore He gave them much Torah (‘teaching’) and commandments, as it is written, ‘The Lord was pleased, for the sake of His righteousness, to magnify Torah and make it glorious.’”²⁵⁶

The masses increase their merit through the commandments. Observance of the commandments is a sort of “currency” whose value is calculated and redeemed in the World to come, but it would seem that the sages of the Mishna and the Talmud understood its value for this world, too. These sages, whose historical context sees them grappling with the challenges of the dispersion of the Jewish community following the destruction of the Temple, recognize the social value – not only the “spiritual” or “Divine” value – of observance of the commandments. They view it as a political tool that strengthens the social bond that connects Jews to each other. Communal observance of the commandments is an important foundation for preservation of the communal core. Study of the commandments means immersion in that which connects Jews together.

Rav Ovadia translates the concept of mutual responsibility embodied in the idea of “bringing merit to the masses” into an ethical imperative addressed to those who occupy themselves with “Torah and the commandments” in the modern age: yeshiva students, rabbis, halakhic authorities. These he refers to as *bnei Torah* (literally, ‘sons of Torah’) – those for whom Torah study is a way of life. Rav Ovadia uses the expression “bringing merit to the masses” in a critical way: he bemoans the sociological distance that has arisen in modern times between the Torah scholar and the broader Jewish public. It is clear that to his view, not only the public has drifted far from a religious way of life, but the spiritual leadership – the *bnei Torah* – have drifted away from the public. They have forgotten their purpose – involvement in the community, and have consequently neglected the guarantee of its existence: religious instruction.

In calling to “bring merit to the masses,” Rav Ovadia demands of the Torah scholar to go out and disseminate Torah among the masses, to share with them the knowledge that he possesses, as an inseparable part of the view of Torah knowledge – in all its forms – as a living entity that is part of the molding of life and existence. To Rav Ovadia’s view, what stands at the center of a life of religious scholarship is not the study experience itself, but rather its transformation into a tool for instructing the public; a tool by means of which a rabbi can be involved in the life of the community to which he addresses himself:

A sacred obligation rests upon every student, and especially one whom the blessed God has graced with teaching ability [...] to deliver lessons on halakha to the masses and to teach them the way of God in the everyday laws, such as the laws of reciting the Shema and the prayers; the laws of Shabbat and forbidden foods, the laws of family purity, and the laws of the festivals.²⁵⁷

Rav Ovadia is not criticizing the physical seclusion – i.e., the existence of the Haredi “enclave.” It would seem that he recognizes the need for a secluded social space within which professional Torah scholars can receive proper training and sharpen their scholarly skills. However, here too their study should assume a practical orientation:

The main emphasis for married scholars should be on the areas of *Orah Haim* and *Yoreh De’a* that are practically applicable in our times, so that they should

know how to fulfill the commandments properly and to avoid stumbling in prohibitions of either biblical or rabbinic origin [...]. People who study only *'pilpul'* (Talmudic argumentation) while setting aside the laws [that are its subject], will die without acquiring the wisdom to study *Shulhan Arukh* (code of Jewish law).²⁵⁸

Rav Ovadia recommends that mature scholars – the cadre that is supposed to produce the rabbinic elite – should distance themselves from purely theoretical knowledge, of the sort that centers around a conceptual world that is relevant only to those engaged in this study. Instead, they should concentrate on studies with practical religious significance, so that they can provide guidance to laymen and instruct them, thereby increasing the ranks of observant Jews.

To this view, religious study frameworks large and small that aim to convey Torah knowledge to the wider public, are a fundamental factor in restoring and rehabilitating the overarching Jewish social unity. Without practical study, without the aim of teaching the people Torah in an effective way, the scholar society will turn into a scholar ghetto cut off from the reality that is the reason for them sitting and studying Torah in the first place: responsibility for the Jewish people at large. They will be cut off not only from the addressees of Halakha – observant and traditional Jews, everyday people, the religious proletariat with whom Rav Ovadia sought unmediated contact – but also, and no less importantly, from their own destiny as Torah scholars:

Even the most righteous individual, who achieves the greatest spiritual perfection, and is close to the level of the angels in his traits and exemplary habits, and in his powerful, pure exertion in performing Divine service, will still not achieve the same merits as one who teaches and guides people to the good and straight path, causing sinners to mend their ways and repent and returning them to their holy source.²⁵⁹

Seemingly, Rav Ovadia's criticism is directed mainly toward the "Lithuanian" Ashkenazi yeshivot, which were highly influential in creating and upholding the seclusion model favored by the scholar society, as well as in the nurturing of religious scholars of Mizrahi ethnic origin within the framework of the Lithuanian yeshiva world, or under its auspices, after the Second World War. This is evidenced in the notable fact that most of the sources that Rav Ovadia cites in support of his criticism are in fact taken from "Lithuanian"

Ashkenazi Haredi rabbinic discourse. We may assume that citations from the teachings of such eminent authorities as Tzvi Pesah Frank (1873–1960), Avraham Yishayahu Karelitz (the “Chazon Ish,” 1878–1953), and Yisrael Yaakov Kanievsky (the “Steipler,” 1899–1985), were intended to impress Lithuanian scholars and yeshiva students. However, this critical view and call to “bring merit to the masses” was not ethnic criticism aimed at a different ethnic system; rather, it was the criticism of a Haredi leader of Mizrahi origin aimed at a system molded by the strong Haredi scholar society’s separatist influence with its emphasis on fortifying its boundaries and building its world of Torah knowledge inwardly. Rav Ovadia proposed an approach that challenged the ethnic boundaries of Haredi society by presenting a new perspective on an ideological question which differentiated between an insular Haredi “scholar society” and an open “teaching society.”

A clear illustration of the fact that this argument crosses ethnic boundaries is offered in the view of one of the rabbis who was closest to Rav Ovadia, while at the same time one of his strongest ideological opponents – Rabbi Ben-Tzion Abba Shaul (1924–1998), a Haredi rabbi of Mizrahi origin and the head of the Sephardi Yeshivat Porat Yosef.²⁶⁰ Abba Shaul was one of the most prominent spiritual leaders of the Haredi-Mizrahi stream, and like Rav Ovadia, he did not submit to Ashkenazi-Haredi society in matters of Sephardi custom and approach to Halakha. Unlike Rav Ovadia, however, his approach was an insular, inward-looking one. To his view, a Torah scholar must remain within the confines of the yeshiva world and avoid outside contacts and influences as far as possible:

He should also work on himself and accustom himself never to leave the yeshiva in the middle of a study session, for he would thereby miss much (study). Would a person who owned a store full of wines, and who had non-Jews in his store, agree to leave his store in order to go and buy something, or for some other reason, knowing that all the wine in the store would then be rendered by law unfit for use?²⁶¹

Rabbi Abba Shaul strove for the greatest possible separation between the yeshiva and its students, on one hand, and the environment outside of this bubble, on the other. He regarded

the yeshiva as the stronghold of Jewish survival. Leaving its confines meant a slippery slope into a morass of dissolution and disintegration – first for Torah scholars, and very soon afterwards for Judaism as a whole. As noted, Rav Ovadia rejected this approach. For him, it was specifically on the basis of the Haredi view of the yeshiva world as a glowing ember of authentic Jewish existence that it should become the hive of rabbinic elite that was involved in broader communal life, turning itself into the living core of the Jewish people.

Background to Rav Ovadia's activist approach

What is the source for Rav Ovadia's approach? We might point to two possible background motivations: one is the crisis of the religious community and the need to rehabilitate the connection between rabbinic leadership and the public. Rav Ovadia attached great importance to the responsibility of rabbinic leadership in educating the public in Jewish law. The research literature focusing on Rav Ovadia reveals a Haredi halakhic authority endowed with the capacity for in-depth, lengthy, detailed halakhic study along with the ability to present the halakhic rulings that emerge in clear language.²⁶² One way of doing this was by means of a lean, concise, somewhat binary and simple style of writing that presented – to scholars and laymen alike – the conclusions of his study of the subject at hand. This style characterizes much of Rav Ovadia's halakhic oeuvre. Another strategy involved using the broadest possible public platforms – including religious journals, halakhic feuilletons, weekly newsletters distributed among synagogues before each Sabbath, and satellite media. Against this backdrop we might explain that the *Letter to a Torah Scholar* serves as a sort of methodological handbook explaining to the halakhic scholar, yeshiva student, or community rabbi the importance of his role in the ongoing education toward a halakhic lifestyle. This vision is closely bound up with the difference in social composition of the Haredi-Mizrahi community as compared to its Ashkenazi counterpart. While the Haredi-Ashkenazi community is essentially homogenous, the community encountered on a

daily basis by Rav Ovadia and other Haredi-Mizrahi rabbis is made up of a diverse religious and ethnic group – not all Haredi, not even necessarily all observant, and not all representing a single ethnic identity. It is a fluid religious community, meaning that the study of Halakha, the framework of a regular lesson, the unmediated contact with a rabbi, may serve as a source of communal stability and social definition. All this depends not only on the community, but also – and even more so, to Rav Ovadia's view – on the rabbinic leadership. According to this view, the crisis in which the religious community finds itself stems not only from weakness on the part of the public, but also from weakness on the part of the rabbinate – and this weakness grows with Haredi insulation and the glorification of distance and severance as an ideology. It is in response to this tendency that the *Letter to a Torah Scholar* was disseminated, as ideological fuel for a counter-tendency.

Attention should also be paid to two other aspects of background that may contribute to a more rounded picture. One pertains to a perennial question of principle in our modern world, but one which also relates to the yeshiva and its scholar society: the question of the intellectual and his public or communal involvement. It is difficult to ignore the similarity between the question of the ultimate purpose of a Torah scholar (rabbi, yeshiva student) and the parallel question concerning the intellectual, in the conditions of a modern society and the nation-state. At first glance, these two prototypes would seem to have nothing at all in common. On one hand, we have someone who is bound up in the world of a conservative, devout society whose horizons are limited to the Talmudic text and its commentaries. On the other hand, we have someone living in what he perceives to be an open society; someone whose breadth of knowledge and ethos of critical thinking serve as the yardstick by which he acquires a prominent place in modern society. However, even the most cursory examination of these minimalist definitions shows that there is some similarity between them. Both are producers of culture and knowledge; both occupy status and possess the authority to define reality and its boundaries. Both are caught in the dilemma entailed in friction with modern mass culture.

The intellectual tends to insulate himself within the ivory tower of academia, in the city or university town, and to look upon himself as assuming responsibility for civilization and culture. The Torah scholar, for his part, insulates himself in the yeshiva world, far from temptation, preserving tradition. Both are exposed to demands for social responsibility in the face of the challenges of modern society. According to this understanding, the relevance of Rav Ovadia's approach to the role of the Torah scholar extends beyond the question of the dissemination of Jewish tradition. It should also perhaps be studied in the context of the intellectual enterprise in which Rav Ovadia and other scholars are involved. It represents the criticism arising from within the university, or from within the yeshiva, calling for social responsibility on the part of the producers of knowledge, for the reality surrounding them. It would not be an exaggeration to state that in between the lines of the *Letter to a Torah Scholar* we detect a thesis whose essence is a condemnation of the Haredi scholar society "intellectuals" for their "betrayal" of society, with their deliberate avoidance of involvement in and influence on the social order.

Another context that should be considered is the challenge posed to Rav Ovadia, as well as other Haredi leaders over the course of the 20th century, with the rise of modern Jewish nationalism and its embodiment in the form of the State of Israel. I propose that the position maintained by the Haredi mainstream in Israel – i.e., those belonging to parties that participate in Israel's parliamentary system – be regarded not as an anti-nationalist, but rather as counter-nationalist. This will presently be explained.

The relations between religion and the modern nation-state have been discussed extensively in academic research. Two main approaches may be discerned: one tends to describe these relations as a dichotomy – religion vs. nationalism. The other tries to identify a continuity and similarity between them, and does not rule out the possibility that nationalism, like religion, is a political system of sacred social partnership. The concept of "counter-nationalism" that is proposed here attempts to bridge the two positions. It indicates the possibility of an

ideological position that is essentially critical toward modern nationalism, but which also includes an imitation of, or adaptation to, the structure of the discourse, organization, and aims of the hegemonic nationalist ideology. “Counter-nationalism” means an acceptance in principle of the hegemonic national principle as an organizing historical element, while at the same time presenting an alternative cultural and political model. As such it is confrontational toward nationalism, but is willing to operate under the auspices of the hegemonic national model as a comprehensive political model that assumes responsibility for society in general – what Ben-Gurion referred to as a *mamlakhti* (‘nation-wide’ or ‘nationalist’) approach.

It was a similar counter-nationalist vision that catalyzed the appearance of Agudat Israel on the stage of Jewish history and guided its complex relations with the Zionist movement.²⁶

³ Over the years, this vision seems to have been eroded. One reason is the focus on the project of physical and ideological rehabilitation of the Haredi communities decimated in the Holocaust.²⁶⁴ Another reason, which has become increasingly apparent in recent years, is the attempt on the part of the Haredi rabbinical leadership to renew the ideological and practical conflict with Zionism and the State of Israel, as a reaction to the tide of Haredi support for Israeli nationalism during the 1950s and 60s.²⁶⁵ However, the long-standing routine dealings with the Israeli nation-state have been transformed over time into unvoiced but unmistakable ideological or theological change. Abandonment of the principle of seclusion in favor of advancing sectorial and utilitarian interests led to a differentiated adaptation to the ideology of the Israeli nation-state. All of this took place on the practical level; there is still no organized Haredi ideology that views national partnership with the State of Israel as a positive nationalist value. The foundations for such an approach are to be found in the halakhic approach of Rav Ovadia, which becomes – to borrow the terminology of Benjamin Brown – an indeliberate theology.

Thus far, the foundations of the counter-nationalist vision presented by Rav Ovadia could be viewed through the

conventional understanding of his rulings as seeking to create, through halakhic tools, a melting pot that responds to the proliferation of Jewish ethnic groups in Israel. This represents a philosophical parallel to the Zionist aspirations of a melting pot.²⁶⁶ However, whereas in the case of secular Zionism the state institutions play a major role in advancing this agenda, in the Haredi-Mizrahi case a similar function is fulfilled by the study of religious texts. In view of the *Letter to a Torah Scholar*, we might add to this interpretation the obligation of rabbinic involvement. This approach is not cut off from the legacy of the state institution to which Rav Ovadia attached himself, and which he regarded throughout his rabbinic career as one of its highlights: the position of Rishon le-Zion, the Sephardi Chief Rabbi of Israel. It may be that Rav Ovadia rose to this position out of commitment to a conservative Haredi approach. However, it is clear that the position molded him as a rabbinic figure possessed of a consciousness that may certainly be viewed as nationalist – i.e., a consciousness that by definition of his role he was involved in and required to address issues pertaining to the Israeli population as a whole.

Discussion and conclusion: from rabbinic activism to national Haredism

As noted, one of the prominent characteristics ascribed to Haredi society is its nurturing of a closed, secluded approach, striving to maintain an island of faith and Torah study within a sea of secularism, heresy, and historical schism in Jewish identity; a core group that assumes responsibility for Jewish identity by a sort of remote control. An alternative approach was proposed by Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, the spiritual leader of the Shas movement. Rav Ovadia sought to turn Haredi society from a fortified, isolated island of Jewish existence, preserving the integrity of Jewish tradition on behalf of the Israeli public, into the melting pot of religious elite that uses its enclave as a sort of base for leadership of Israeli society. In other words, he sought the transformation of scholarly elite into teaching elite.

According to Rav Ovadia, the Jewish state is an entity with inherently positive significance for Torah scholars. Its existence is a miracle – but as such it also represents a fragile reality. Its longevity depends on its patronage of Torah scholars – in accordance with Haredi norms, of course – and therefore responsibility for the national collective and its political framework entails responsibility for the maintenance of organized Torah study, in Haredi frameworks, with commitment to the development of a halakhic way of life. Conversely, the responsibility of Haredi society to Jewish nationalism entails the maintenance and embodiment of a religious lifestyle – not at a distance, but rather with rapprochement and influence.

In the past I have referred to this approach as “soft Haredism.”²⁶⁷ This concept refers to ability to imagine the presentation of desirable Haredi behavior not as the opposite or rejection of the secular lifestyle, but rather as a different point on a continuum that is reformulated through symbolic means. The underlying assumption here is that the challenges of real life are a source of religious weakness that does not allow for a whole and perfect religiosity, but rather only a fragmented one. Attention should be paid to the fact that the assumption here is one of weakness, rather than heresy, within a reality that is not irreversible but rather is open to change. This form of Haredism rejects from the outset the binary logic that seeks to cleanse the camp of any non-religious elements. Instead, it aspires to a broader, more inclusive view that is sensitive to the seam in which it operates, with its different components of identity and the complex communal mosaic.

In contrast to the Ashkenazi-Haredi ideology, which starts off with an emphasis on seclusion and distance from the majority society, the “soft,” nationalist Mizrahi version of Haredism seeks to emphasize the connections between the sectors, out of what might be viewed as responsibility for the other – for those who are not observant of the commandments; those who refer to themselves as “secular.” This sort of approach assumes that such a connection might be facilitated by affecting the necessary spiritual and religious repair of the majority society. This is not something that can be

accomplished in a day; it requires measured, thoughtful steps over time, and with involvement in the molding of the public's spiritual world. This position, propagated by Shas, offers the possibility of shifting from a defensive religious model to an influential, assertive, nationalist one. This view seeks to transcend the sectorial boundaries of Haredi society and to lead a spiritual revolution. This new national vision is dependent on a movement between the Haredi-Mizrahi attachment to the ideology and discourse of Ashkenazi Haredism, and dealing with the social and political barriers with which the Haredi-Mizrahi camp is forced to content within the Haredi scholar society.

A tangible expression of Rav Ovadia's position was his decision to head the Shas party. His decision was not merely an aggressive reaction to the limitation of his tenure as Chief Rabbi. It was also the realization of a principled approach: a departure from the distant or functional rabbinic role to one of political leader for all intents and purposes, engaged in give-and-take with the public and not put off by conflict or the prospect of expressing open criticism. Shas became a tool in Rav Ovadia's rabbinic activism project: it was the means for establishing a network of religious schools (*Ma'ayan ha-Hinukh ha-Torani*); a means for extending religious lectures to the public; a means for setting up traditional Mizrahi communities under Haredi leadership outside of Haredi enclaves.

Some might view Rav Ovadia's political activity as a fundamentally sectorial matter – the realization of the vision of establishing a Haredi-Mizrahi scholar society whose political home would be the Shas party. However, as we have seen, Rav Ovadia was not of the view that the Haredi-Mizrahi scholar society should imitate the parochial Lithuanian model. He did not believe it proper to pursue a closed, secluded society, conducting itself out of commitment to a vision of educational fortification, serving the aim of religious survival vis-à-vis a world that is hostile to that society and its values. His aim was to turn the scholar society from a distant, superior elite refraining from involvement in national life, to an active,

involved elite seeking involvement in society in order to repair it and perhaps even lead it.

Thus, Shas – led by Rav Ovadia – found itself over the years facing strong opposition to its version of both Haredism and nationalism. Israel’s middle class – secular and religious alike – had trouble viewing the model proposed by Shas as any real contribution to Israeli nationalism. They viewed it as no more than a cover for a fundamentally sectorial Haredi ideology. On the other hand, the Haredi scholar society – Ashkenazi and Mizrahi alike – viewed the nationalist Shas perspective as no more than a cover for a Mizrahi religious style that was distinctive at the outset, not really part of the Haredi world, and therefore not really equipped or worthy to lead it. The result was that the secular-Haredi divide remained two-dimensional, with Shas attempting over the years to shore up its weak position both within Haredi society and within society at large. It would seem that this trend will continue, and even be exacerbated, in the wake of Rav Ovadia’s passing in October 2013.

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9. The Secular State in Rabbinic Thought

Shalom Ratzabi

This paper was completed in March 2015.

Introduction

It is a known fact that the forerunners of the Zionist idea, Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer and Rabbi Yehuda Alkalai, were inspired by the messianic yearnings which emerged after the Emancipation. At the time, the people who immigrated to the Holy Land came either from Eastern Europe or from the Orthodox Jewish world in general, such as the followers of the Hatam Sofer, who came from Central Europe.

Since they were practicing Jews, the only problem that arose in the days of the heralds of Zionism until the activities of the Hibbat Zion movement in the 1880s, was first and foremost a theological problem linked to the *Shalosh Hashvu'ot*.²⁶⁸ The supporters of the Zionist dream were faced with the question of the legitimacy of settling in Eretz Yisrael as a stage in the messianic process based on the midrash and a theological interpretation, both of which are beyond our scope.

This was not the case with Hibbat Zion and political Zionism or the establishment of the State of Israel. Two main problems arose as a result of Zionism as a political ideology and as a movement within the Jewish people – one halakhic and the other theological. The first problem involved cooperation with secular people. The theological problem, which was known at the outset of the Zionist endeavor as the problem of *Shalosh Hashvu'ot*, not only remained but took on a new appearance and was even exacerbated. After all, if Zionism is a stage in the messianic process, as claimed by its heralds, how can one explain the fact that with the rise of Zionism and, even more so, with the establishment of the State

of Israel – which many saw as the “beginning of the rise of our Geula” – secularism continued to develop. Moreover, religious Zionist thinkers had to account for the strange fact that undisciplined people and even heretics headed the messianic avant-garde.

Rabbi Kook’s approach

The solution to the theological problem was manifested in the form of two models. The first, suggested by Rabbi Yitzhak Yosef Reines, called for a total rejection of any direct link between Zionism and messianism. According to this view, Zionism is only a political and social movement which strives to deal with the existential distress of the Jewish people. As such, it has nothing to do with messianism or the messianic idea.

This solution, however, could not satisfy religious sensitivities, particularly following the establishment of the State of Israel. After all, Zionism and, at a later stage, the state itself, led to the fulfillment of clear messianic assignments, such as settling in the land, the ingathering of the nations, the cessation of the captivity of the kingdoms. Accordingly, the solution which was adopted by the majority of the Religious Zionist camp following the Six-Day War was based on the philosophy of Abraham Yitzhak Hacoen Kook.

Rabbi Kook’s philosophy was based first and foremost on the Kabbala. Within this philosophical framework, messianic redemption is not an external occurrence only; it cannot be viewed as an event that can be defined in human and rational terms – for example, the cessation of the captivity of the kingdoms, the ingathering of the nations. On the contrary, its framework is the divine in its entirety and it should therefore be understood in terms of cosmic redemption, which refers to the fulfillment of the divine unity and the annulment of opposites, characteristic of a defective reality.

Looking at Jewish history as a process of redemption automatically implies the emergence of the Zionist movement, as well as of the settlement of Eretz Yisrael, followed by the

declaration of the State of Israel; these are not the fruit of rational historical conditions, but a reflection of the internal divine work, of which historical reality is only a reflection. In other words, the political sovereignty, the ingathering of the exiles, the settling in the land, and, finally, the declaration of the State of Israel can neither be grasped nor evaluated in terms of stages within a rational historical process or as being part of a political-historical event, in the spirit of Maimonides's messianic approach.

Redemption, as a cosmic event, is constructed within divinity, which embraces and includes the entire universe; it should therefore be viewed as part of an ongoing process that revolves around the fulfillment of the divine unity. In relation to the events taking place at the time and, more specifically, to the Zionist enterprise in Eretz Yisrael, Rabbi Kook wrote that redemption was an ongoing enterprise, from Egypt until the future redemption, carried out by God.²⁶⁹

We are faced with an uncontrollable process, i.e., the fulfillment of divine unity, which is an intrinsic component of existence. On the basis of this meta-approach, Rabbi Kook unequivocally claimed that the nature of the upcoming redemption, whose first signs he believed were being felt, lay in the internality of the Jewish people.²⁷⁰

The main points are as follows: The messianic process, of which the Zionist enterprise – the crux of it being Jewish sovereignty or statehood – represents a significant stage, cannot be grasped or understood with the help of the cognitive skills used to understand a purely human historical process; the messianic arena is divinity itself. Therefore, concrete history can only be interpreted and evaluated in light of the purposes of this divine being. The reasons and, therefore, the purpose of history, in general, and of Jewish history, in particular, transcend history. When evaluating reality as an outcome of his redemptive approach, Rabbi Kook and his followers use transcendental proportions, originating from the real arena, i.e., from the divine worlds. It is against this background that Kook's uncompromising striving toward

understanding the processes and purposes of the divine idea should be understood.

The meaning of this messianic approach also hints at Rabbi Kook's attitude toward and understanding of the secular process taking place within the Jewish people and, in later years, at his followers' attitude toward the State of Israel. In the formative years of Zionism, and all the more so in the first decades of the 20th century, when he served as Rabbi of Tel Aviv and of the moshavot, the most serious question he was faced with was how to understand the phenomenon of secularism that was taking place, according to his philosophy, precisely at this most important stage in the process of redemption, which they were witnessing. Another serious issue he had to deal with was the fact that the leaders and pioneers of this process of redemption, i.e., the Second Aliyah pioneers, were for the most part undisciplined from the perspective of the Halakha, while some were genuine heretics.

In dealing with this problematic question, Rabbi Kook referred to the idea of the authentic uniqueness of Israel, a uniqueness linked to its special religious ability,²⁷¹ to the idea of spiritual elevation, or the evolution of history in the spirit of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's evolution of history.²⁷²

One of the basic principles of Hegelian philosophy is its view of history as a process of dialectic spreading of the divine idea, through the process of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. "The cunning of divine reason," which is active in this historical process, often takes on shapes that are contrary to the intentions of people functioning within the historical framework. God uses people, so to speak, in order to fulfill his intentions. Although people act within history, be it from personal, humanistic, or national motives, in the final analysis, their actions are in line with the completion of the overall idea whose main focus is to fulfill the rational idea within the world and as part of history. The historical process is designed and determined by a power located beyond history, according to which history and the actions of the individuals acting within it should be evaluated and judged.²⁷³ The external appearance

and the intentions of those acting within history are not what determine its trends and significance.

In order to understand the real history and not only superficial occurrences, the invisible force which causes it to move, i.e., the purposes of the divine idea should be revealed. It is only by basing our sense of reality on this notion that it will correspond to the real process of history. When evaluating and judging human activity as part of a general historical process the crucial factor is not human intentions, “[b]ut,” as put forth by Aviezer Ravitzky, “the overall historical outcome of their activities.”²⁷⁴

Rabbi Kook also firmly believed in Rabbi Yehuda Halevi’s view of the authentic uniqueness of *Am Yisrael* (the Jewish People),²⁷⁵ namely that man’s attachment to God is not acquired, but is part of all human beings.²⁷⁶ These things, true for all men, are all the more true in the case of the Jewish people. According to Rabbi Kook, the nature of the Jewish soul is different from that of other nations. Whereas in each “people and language,” the internal point – i.e., the central gravity of the desire to preserve what is in existence and creating, is the “corporeal life” only; in Israel, this internal point does not refer to the physical realm itself, but to the thirst for knowing and feeling God, which represents the purpose of its superiority and of its purity. Moreover, he claimed unequivocally that, “[t]his recognition is unique to Israel, is part of the nation’s nature, and is revealed by way of an internal consciousness, even to the masses.”²⁷⁷

The affinity between Am Yisrael and its God is therefore an integral part of its being. As such, it does not depend on any historical experience nor, naturally, can it be annulled. According to this unique approach, Am Yisrael was chosen to serve as a tool in the process of the godly idea, which is part of it. This idea, which is part of Am Yisrael, is also the one that directs the process of human history.²⁷⁸ Rabbi Kook further claims that the uniqueness of Am Yisrael is eternal and cannot be annulled even with the coming of the Messiah. For example, he believed that “humanity deserves” to be

united into “one family,” in which all conflicts and negative behaviors that stem from the separation into nations and countries would cease. However, even then, he predicted that all the nations would be as one, with the most valued people, a “kingdom of priests and a holy people,” ruling over all.²⁷⁹ It is within this context that, according to Rabbi Kook, one should also grasp the internal essence of Judaism, as well as its internal purposes, which cannot be altered.²⁸⁰

Rabbi Kook also clearly stated that the identity and essence of the Jewish people, as ethnicity and nation, are intertwined, as are those of the Jewish individual, and that they can neither be altered nor replaced.²⁸¹ On the basis of these ideas,²⁸² he was also able to interpret secularism, as well as to evaluate the endeavor of the Second Aliyah pioneers as part of the messianic process. He wrote: “What they want, they themselves do not know [...] the divine Spirit dwells in their plans, in spite of themselves.”²⁸³

The Zionist enterprise is therefore neither a national nor a secular socialist enterprise, as the enthusiastic pioneers believed, but rather an awakening of the nation to return to its land, to its essence, to its spirit.²⁸⁴ In a similar vein, he clarified elsewhere that the “chutzpah” that characterized “walking in the footsteps of the Messiah” did not equal the common chutzpah and anarchy, but the limited light spread “to mend the dishes.”²⁸⁵ This “chutzpah” is constructed through the cunning of reason within the process of redemption, and should be seen as a precondition for the fulfillment of the process of *tikkun*. Moreover, based on the Kabbala, which distinguishes between three degrees of the soul – soul, spirit, and essence – the Talmud says: “In the footsteps of the Messiah, the chutzpah will retreat.”²⁸⁶

Regarding the Second Aliyah pioneers, Rabbi Kook claimed that when walking in the footsteps of the Messiah, when even the worst Jews are working toward the Return to Zion and settling in the Land, they are full of “Israel’s uniqueness.” Accordingly, in relation to the activity of the soul, which represents the vital principal, the pioneers working

toward building Eretz Yisrael equal the most Orthodox Jews who are not working toward the re-establishment of the nation and of the land.²⁸⁷ At the same time, Rabbi Kook was to add, referring to a more spiritual level: “But the spirit is far more civilized among the G-d fearing people and those who keep the Torah and the mitzvot, although their self-awareness and the awakening of the strength geared toward acting in favor of the entire people of Israel, is not powerful among them.”²⁸⁸

The status of the secular pioneers and, even more so, the significance of their work cannot be interpreted in rational and halakhic terms only. From a purely halakhic point of view, they are considered heretics. However, Rabbi Kook believed that in spite of the halakhic view, they were simply tools in the hands of a divine wisdom, which was using them without their knowledge. As such, the pioneers should be judged according to their contribution toward the fulfillment of the messianic idea, rather than on their intentions.

Undoubtedly, this approach had a clear paternalistic tone, to which the pioneers themselves would have objected.²⁸⁹ Rabbi Kook thought that critical historical measurements were not appropriate for evaluating and judging reality, but rather the knowledge of a hidden divine trend.²⁹⁰ On this basis, he was able to suggest that secular heresy was a transient situation.²⁹¹ This approach had far-reaching effects, which his followers were to express. The main effects were that the state became both a goal and a tool within a process, which could not be interpreted in rational terms. This found concrete expression in Gush Emunim’s policy, and in the position adopted by a large part of the Religious Zionist camp during the Lebanon War,²⁹² the gist of which is clear.

Within this approach, the state became a goal in itself and turned into a value – ultimately, a religious value. Since messianic redemption is the religious goal – the individual’s religious wholeness is apprehended in these terms – the state then becomes the key of redemption and, as a divine instrument, it has value. However, it seems that religious consciousness was not always at ease within this philosophical framework. From the perspective of religious consciousness,

only God can be of absolute value, or something serving as a religious and divine purpose, at least if it stems from religious motives. However, it is clear that the State of Israel, as Yeshayahu Leibowitz emphasized, did not emerge as a result of religious instincts, and was in fact intended to fulfill the most earthly social goals, rather than religious values and needs. On the other hand, Jewish religious consciousness was not always able to come to terms with an approach which, like the Zionist model suggested by Rabbi Reines, not only rejects any possible link between the messianic idea and that of a state, but also deprives the state of any possible religious significance.

The emergence of the state enabled the fulfillment of several messianic goals, such as the ingathering of the nations and Jewish sovereignty. Moreover, religious consciousness tends to grant religious meaning to reality, all the more so when the events are taking place as part of the history of the Jewish people, whose experience revolves around the notion of covenant – which is fulfilled within the historical arena. It is clear, therefore, that religious consciousness was faced with the important question of how to grant the state religious meaning, while avoiding turning it into an absolute value, an object of idolatry, capable of standing by itself.

Rabbi Uziel's approach

Rabbis and other religious thinkers, including the Rishon LeZion Rabbi Ben-Zion Meir Hai Uziel, Professor Yeshayahu Leibowitz, and Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, dealt with this reality, directly or indirectly. I focus on the main points of the thought of Rabbi Soloveitchik and of Rabbi Uziel. Although they aimed at bringing religious meaning to the state while neutralizing irrational messianic trends, their premises were totally different. While, to a certain extent, Rabbi Soloveitchik pursued the national discourse of Rabbi Reines, who cut the bond between Zionism and statehood, Rabbi Uziel strived to understand and interpret the reality of the state on the basis of

the messianic idea, within the framework of the rational thinking of Maimonides.

One of the salient features of Maimonides's writings is its theocentric tendency – God is not only the reason for the existence of the world; He is also its purpose.²⁹³ From a religious point of view, as Leibowitz clarified so brilliantly, everything is geared toward the divine, rather than “toward the world or man, for whom G-d is the divine.”²⁹⁴ In his early work – a commentary on the Mishna – Maimonides shifted the supreme divine purpose to the *Olam Haba*, where the soul will know God forever and love Him for eternity.²⁹⁵

There is a clear logic behind these things: if the purpose was man's reward, this would mean that it was man, rather than God, who determined the purpose. It is against this background that Maimonides's approach to the *Olam Haba* should be understood. The *Olam Haba*, which is the only superior religious purpose, cannot be a world in which souls enjoy some type of external reward. It should rather be thought of as a place where man's soul will emerge from its ignorance.²⁹⁶ The *Olam Haba* is not some kind of external situation, but rather a situation toward which man leads his soul by acquiring certain concepts and devoting himself to them. From that perspective it is the direct continuation of the process of the completion of the soul, which started in this world.²⁹⁷ Within this framework, Maimonides emphasized that the rewards promised to those devoted to God are not of a material nature; all the promises of reward, including the coming of the Messiah are only stages and means toward achieving the superior religious purpose.²⁹⁸

Maimonides described the coming of the Messiah within the historical and natural framework of the world as it is.²⁹⁹ For example, he writes that he will be ruling over man – i.e., he will be mortal. In the same vein, he describes the eternal life promised at the coming of the Messiah in highly rational terms, as an outcome of the natural conditions that will prevail, i.e., in the absence of worries and concerns, rather than as some form of miracle. Moreover, the sustained presence of the Kingdom of the Messiah across time is also

described in highly rational terms: it is normal that this Kingdom will last for thousands of years, as was already foretold by the *hakhamim*, who claimed that the honorable people who will gather will remain together.

The shifting of the supreme religious purpose to the *Olam Haba*, in the special sense which Maimonides grants it, and the incorporation of the Coming of the Messiah within the framework of history and of the world as it is, as a stage and as a tool, also characterizes Maimonides's discussion of the Messiah in the *Mishne Torah*. He was asked to relate to them on two occasions, in the *Hilkhot Tshuva* and in the *Hilkhot Melakhim*.³⁰⁰ In the *Hilkhot Tshuva*, Maimonides focused on the supreme purpose, its definition and on the ways to reach it. The aim was naturally to speed up man's return to religion. He therefore does not discuss the Messiah himself. He focused his questions on the link between the *Yemot Hamashiach* and the *Olam Haba*, where the religious purpose will be achieved.

In the spirit of the approach, according to which "the reward for the mitzvah is in the mitzvah itself," Maimonides defines this link as one between a means and a purpose. Material and political success promised to Am Yisrael during the *Yemot Hamashiach* will serve as a tool for the individual's religious ascent; therefore, these promises should in no way be considered as a purpose in themselves.³⁰¹ Moreover, as indicated by Hartman, since Maimonides's discussion in the *Hilkhot Tshuva* is geared toward "showing that the value of the Messiah is that of a tool, Maimonides emphasizes his role as a teacher."³⁰²

In the same vein, Maimonides clarified in the *Hilkhot Mashiach* and in the *Hilkhot Melakhim*³⁰³ that the uniqueness of the *Yemot Hamashiach* lies in the establishment of a social and political environment that will generate the conditions necessary for the individual to fulfill his religious mission, i.e., reaching his Creator "according to each man's strength,"³⁰⁴ since in the *Yemot Hamashiach* all the obstacles preventing man from carrying out the mitzvot will be removed (such as illnesses).³⁰⁵

On this basis, the Yemot Hamashiach will be characterized by the cessation of the captivity of the kingdoms, on the one hand, and by the fulfillment of the rule of the Torah, on the other. In the Yemot Hamashiach, we should not expect a “New Torah,” just as we should not link Yemot Hamashiach to any type of eschatological event.³⁰⁶ Yemot Hamashiach can be condensed to the fact that upon their advent, Israel will be given a concrete, historical opportunity to fulfill the Torah.³⁰⁷ Moreover, commandments and laws that were carried out in the days of the First and Second Temples will also be fulfilled – such as the building of six shelter cities, which the people of Israel had not succeeded to build in the past.³⁰⁸ As Twersky, the greatest Maimonides scholar of our time, notes, “[t]he days of the Messiah are a fulfillment and a peak, rather than a downfall or the end of a historical process.”³⁰⁹ As such, they will first be a sign of the victory of the father of faith, Abraham, “and the entire world will only concern itself with knowing G-d.”³¹⁰

Similarly to Maimonides, Rabbi Uziel also distinguishes between the purpose of the nation and that of the individual, i.e., between promises of reward relating to the individual and those relating to the nation.³¹¹ He linked all the goals promised to Am Yisrael, such as Yemot Hamashiach, to the nation. Regarding the promises for individuals, he clarified that since we are talking about a mental, spiritual, and highly complex reward, the Torah does not relate to it directly, in order to avoid any misunderstanding.³¹²

According to him, the Torah of God is the truth and would not have included the promise of spiritual goals and rewards which man is unable to reach.³¹³ In order to avoid any mistake, when dealing with the reward to the individual – which is purely spiritual as it involves the elevation of man, both physically and spiritually³¹⁴ – the Torah chose to avoid mentioning it. When we relate to the reward of the individual, one cannot separate the reward from the deed itself. Like Maimonides, Rabbi Uziel characterized the supreme religious purpose as religious perfection, whose ultimate expression is the soul’s allegiance to God. Therefore, it was clear to him that

the good reward and the bad reward depended upon God's miracle. However, this miracle is built in the structure of the nature of the world so that the bad reward or the good reward does not change the regular order of the world.³¹⁵

Referring to Maimonides, Rabbi Uziel explains that when a person does a mitzvah, he immediately becomes fully human and differentiated from the animals, and his soul will go on to live in the Olam Haba.³¹⁶ In a similar vein and relying, once again, on Maimonides, Rabbi Uziel determines unequivocally that the reward "has nothing to do with and is totally independent from any material pleasure [...] or from any richness or heroism, health or joy"; it is of a spiritual nature and involves the intellectual and moral level of the person. The reward for the mitzvah is the mitzvah itself, and therefore no distinction can be drawn between the act and the reward by determining some type of link between them.³¹⁷ Therefore, he defines the relation between them as between both sides of a coin or, to use the same metaphor, the reward does not refer to a separate payment, but is linked like the flame to the ember, to the mitzvah itself.³¹⁸

In accordance with this line of thought, after rejecting Maimonides's critique, which was based upon identifying the Olam Haba with the soul's full allegiance to God,³¹⁹ Rabbi Uziel clarified that it is not wisdom alone that grants perfection and man's final success in the Olam Haba, but actions and views which bring man closer to the knowledge of God. This has been referred to by the Rabbis as the brilliance of the divine spirit, since man's true joy is found in being strengthened by divine knowledge, and by enjoying God's light.³²⁰

These ideas are essentially based on Maimonides's words on the Mishna's interpretation of Masekhet Sanhedrin.³²¹ Their immediate meaning is that while Rabbi Uziel viewed the purpose of the individual as achieving religious perfection, he viewed Yemot Hamashiach as the nation's supreme reward in the spirit of Maimonides, i.e., as a historical reality, which is not essentially different from the historical stages that led to it. The uniqueness of the Yemot Hamashiach will find its

expression in the fact that at that moment, Jewish sovereignty will be fulfilled and the nations will be gathered³²² and the Halakha will become the normative way and will guide life in all its aspects.³²³ Accordingly, Rabbi Uziel viewed the promises included in the Yemot Hamashiach – such as the change in the nature of creation,³²⁴ eternal life, sustained Jewish sovereignty, and world peace – as allegories. However, he did not adopt the view of Maimonides according to which they should be understood in rational terms, rather than as a change in the order of the world. In other words, these promises are nothing but the most natural outcome of the natural conditions that will prevail during the Yemot Hamashiach, following the moral and religious perfection achieved by man.³²⁵

Rabbi Uziel had no need for a mystical interpretation that reaches down to the divine foundations of the world. Moreover, in light of his philosophical contemplation, which was first and foremost influenced by Maimonides, he could not have adopted such a view particularly since, in opposition to Rabbi Kook, he did not view the uniqueness of Am Yisrael as ontological, but rather as linked to a life of Torah and mitzvot. He therefore had to deal with the question of the secularization of the Jewish people and of the secular nature of the state, on the basis of his rational approach, according to which the weight of the messianic idea lies in the promise of the creation of a social and political climate that will help the individual achieve religious perfection.

In his first words on the subject of the secularism of the state, he makes no attempt at explaining or justifying it on the basis of values or measurements originating beyond history. While making no attempt at annulling or reducing the level and the effects of the State's secularism, he writes that such visions are indeed disturbing but that fortunately, if one looks at Jewish history, they were always passing events.³²⁶ Within this context, Rabbi Uziel delineates various periods in Jewish history during which there was some level of Jewish sovereignty, and which were characterized by some degree of important moral disintegration. Instead of turning to the

internal trends of history, he turns to history while pointing, in broad terms, to the political situation generated by the establishment of the State of Israel. Thus, we face an analysis and an evaluation which are based on concrete historical and social conditions, without looking for any hidden divine reality.

Among the various historical periods Rabbi Uziel analyzes, he devotes much attention to the Second Temple period, and particularly to the days of the Hasmoneans and of Herod's kingdom, which he views as periods of Jewish sovereignty characterized by a drop in religious and moral behavior. The only thing left for him to do following this comparative analysis is to accept a definition of reality as being "of a messianic nature," while expressing the hope that, just as in each of these periods "Israel withstood the test of heroism and emerged from it refined as silver and pure as gold," it will also succeed in withstanding this test.³²⁷

We should note that according to this view, the purpose of man's religious work is to bring together his cognitive and practical skills, in order to spread the light of the Torah. At the same time, when Rabbi Uziel provides the details of how to achieve this purpose, he unveils a slightly new attitude. It turns out that this purpose, i.e., the spreading of the divine light, is not only the purpose of the individual alone, nor can it be reduced to recognition of the divine. This purpose is also a task that falls upon each family, upon society and upon Am Yisrael as a whole. From that perspective, spreading "the light of G-d" is imposed upon the individual as the basic component of the family, of society and of the people.³²⁸

We are therefore faced with a purposeful approach to history and to the world, whose main point revolves around spreading the light of God enfolded within the Torah, from the individual to the nation, and from the nation to the entire world. On this basis, Rabbi Uziel designed a unique historical-philosophical model, according to which history, in general, and Jewish history, in particular, represents a process involving the notion of a social, political, and religious life, which corresponds to the "knowledge of the divine," as it is

embodied in the Torah. The beginning of history, whose only purpose was the fulfillment of this notion, includes the appearance of Abraham, founder of the monotheistic faith and father of the Israeli nation, continues with the Revelation at Sinai, and ends with Yemot Hamashiach.³²⁹

The meaning of the above is that the Halakha, which includes all the dimensions of life, is what defines the status of Judaism and the purpose of the Jewish people.³³⁰ He therefore reduces the goals of redemption to two main areas – the ingathering of the nations and everything that derives from it, and the *Tikkun Olam*.³³¹ He goes further and concludes his discussion by claiming that the ultimate goal of the Diaspora was to lead to total redemption, after which there would be no more Diaspora.³³²

Within this historical-philosophical framework, Abraham symbolizes both the beginning of Am Yisrael and of the recognition of the divine. However, since the individual's work cannot encompass the entire scope of human life, Abraham ordered his people to come to Canaan, and to found a holy family, i.e., a family through which the divine light would be able to cover larger grounds. However, this did not suffice: spreading the divine knowledge called for a larger collective unit. The “training” was delivered to this unit during the Revelation at Sinai, where Am Yisrael took upon itself to spread, as a people, the divine light as it unveils itself in the Torah. The Torah therefore focuses on this national-ethnic unit and is geared toward organizing the life of Am Yisrael. Life lived along the principles of the Torah is the only life that can turn Am Yisrael into a unique people.

Rabbi Uziel writes about the uniqueness of Am Yisrael, in his own special way. Contrary to other religions which renounce dealing with entire areas of life, such as policy and economy, Judaism proposes the “way of G-d,” which encompasses religious life and ritual, ethics, as well as civics. It is only this total way of life which, by following the divine path, shapes all aspects of life into one single unit which, in his view, turns Am Yisrael into a unique people. When he speaks of “Israel's nationhood,” he characterizes it on the basis

of the idea of God's way, which Am Yisrael has to fulfill, since this special notion determines the existence of Am Yisrael as a separate entity.³³³

We can thus draw a number of far-reaching conclusions. First, that Judaism is essentially a way of life shaped by a specific law; it is not the fruit of man's understanding. Moreover, since the aim of the Revelation at Sinai was the handing over of the divine law, the Torah does not have the same status as the Law of Am Yisrael, i. e., the Halakha, and can only be annulled the same way it was given, i.e., through revelation. It is clear that its special point of interest is the Law of the Torah, rather than some intellectual or mystical achievement. The believing perception which is based on the inner religious ingredient began with Abraham, father of the faith, and its object is the individual striving to achieve supreme religious perfection.³³⁴ Another outcome of these insights is that since the Torah was given to Am Yisrael alone, it is not intended for the other nations of the world. Thus, Judaism as a way of life, which is essentially about fulfilling the divine Law, is binding for the Jewish people only.

The uniqueness of the Jewish people: two views

When shaping his messianic vision, Rabbi Uziel was mainly inspired by Maimonides's rational philosophy; in a similar way, in his view, the uniqueness of Am Yisrael lies in its acceptance of the yoke of Torah and mitzvot and in the adoption of a way of life subordinate to divine Law only. Two models or trends can be identified in traditional Jewish philosophy from the Middle Ages to this day, in relation to the uniqueness of the Jewish people. According to the first view, personified by Rabbi Yehuda Halevi, both the Jewish individual and the Jewish people have a unique status from an ontological point of view; according to the second view, of a rational nature, whose key representative is Maimonides, the unique status of the Jewish individual and of Am Yisrael is

linked to the certificate of Judaism, i.e., in the acceptance of Torah and mitzvot.

The opening premise of Rabbi Yehuda Halevi's approach is the assumption regarding the superiority of religious consciousness – its ultimate stage being prophecy – over intellectual consciousness. Religious consciousness, according to this approach, is not only a discursive consciousness; in order to be achieved, it requires special religious strength, about which Rabbi Yehuda Halevi expounded at length.³³⁵ Rabbi Halevi's main intention in giving a detailed description of religious strength was first and foremost to establish the unique status of Am Yisrael, which stands beyond the limits of nature. This religious strength, whose most striking symbol is prophecy, is a feature of Am Yisrael only, and is independent of all discursive intellectual understanding. Although its seeds were already planted in the first man, it was not transferred onto succeeding generations but was transmitted to a chosen person in each generation, until it reached all of Jacob's descendents. Since then, claims Rabbi Yehuda Halevi, this strength has been an integral part of Am Yisrael, although it varies in intensity and clarity, and it is what turns the Jewish people into "the most prized object of humanity."³³⁶ Clearly, this approach goes hand in hand with a view of Eretz Yisrael and its religious uniqueness, which Rabbi Yehuda Halevi details in a clear and concise way.³³⁷

Two things emerge from the above: Firstly, unlike other nations, Am Yisrael is a people of God as a result of its religious strength, of which prophecy is the ultimate expression. Secondly, Eretz Yisrael is the only place where prophecy occurred, and where it is likely to take place once again.

This approach, which attributes to Am Yisrael an inherited religious strength, entails a highly separatist element, and widens the gap between Israel and other nations.³³⁸

Maimonides's theory of prophecy is totally different, and so are his views of the uniqueness of Am Yisrael and of Eretz Yisrael. Maimonides also linked prophecy to the Land of God. However, while Rabbi Yehuda Halevi considered prophecy to

be an unmediated act on the part of God, Maimonides believed that although it is a divine act, it can only be fulfilled through reason.³³⁹ Maimonides believed that the intellectual aspect of the process is the same within the prophet and within the philosopher, since the truth they reach is one and the same.³⁴⁰ The prophet is also a philosopher. Moreover, Maimonides claims that spiritual perfection, which equals intellectual perfection, is the purpose of the essence of man. Intellectual consciousness is, therefore, what grants man the joy of showing direct allegiance to God. In turn, the final purpose of the immortality of the soul is dependent on this consciousness. The immortality of the soul is linked to the immortality of the knowing spirit.³⁴¹ As a result, Maimonides does not speak of Eretz Yisrael and Am Yisrael as opposite entities.³⁴² As for the end of prophecy, Maimonides interprets it as an outcome of Am Yisrael's negative social and political situation rather than as a result of it being in exile.

In contrast to Rabbis Halevi and Kook, Rabbi Uziel did not view the uniqueness of Am Yisrael or of Eretz Yisrael as an ontological fact, empirically constructed within them. Am Yisrael is unique only because it has adopted the divine way. He also interprets Am Yisrael's special religious status as being linked to a life shaped by the halakhic norms of Torah and mitzvot, whereas its unique position among the nations he accounts for in terms of cultural inheritance. For example, while relating to prophecy as a unique feature of Am Yisrael, he writes that it is not some special spiritual inheritance or some deeply ingrained religious strength that enabled Am Yisrael to take on Torah and mitzvot, or Moshe, "the master of the prophets," but the mitzvot, "which the father of the nation bequeathed his sons."³⁴³ In a similar vein, he interprets the verse, "[...] that they may keep the way of the Lord,"³⁴⁴ by claiming that keeping the way of the Lord is what renders Am Yisrael so precious and what separates it from other nations.³⁴⁵ In relation to his interpretation of this highly important verse, Rabbi Uziel explains that when things refer to the choice of Am Yisrael, "[n]ow therefore, if ye will hearken unto My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be Mine own treasure from among all peoples [...] and ye shall be unto

Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.”³⁴⁶ Only the full acceptance of the mitzvot with all one’s heart grants Jews unique characteristics that are not found in other nations, and they are what turns all Am Yisrael into a unique people, into a kingdom of high priests and a holy people.³⁴⁷

This approach is not new in Rabbi Uziel’s philosophy. When dealing with Achad Haam’s term of “national ego,” he rejected this term and others, such as “the will of the nation” and “the nation’s passion to live,” which are based on organic nationalist approaches. Rabbi Uziel identifies the uniqueness of Am Yisrael as stemming from the fact that it stands before God as a lonely people and holding a book, which is neither a literary or a scientific book, nor a collection of ancient rules and laws compiled by kings and various authors, but a unique book, a doctrine of life with all its problems, until the end of all generations.³⁴⁸ He also clarifies that this book, “this Torah of life” does not only deal with Halakha and justice, but also with gratuitous actions, just as it does not only deal with ethics, which concerns itself with the individual, but with “national morals.” However, Rabbi Uziel claims that beyond this special feature, the uniqueness of the “Book of Life” lies in the fact that it is not satisfied with justice, as reflected by the Law and by the Halakha; its basic call is for sanctifying life in all its aspects. According to the rule, sanctify yourself even in the things which are being allowed.³⁴⁹

Am Yisrael’s uniqueness does not lie in some genetic feature inherited by individuals or by Am Yisrael, nor does it lie in some transcendental metaphysical feature that would be an a priori part of the definition and of the uniqueness of the Jewish people, which as a collective, is not a “unique people,” nor is it imbued with any special feature. These terms can only be applied to individuals.³⁵⁰ Only individuals with noble attributes, who join a collective unit, form a “special people.”

The uniqueness of the Jewish people, whether it is chosen or not will be determined by the individuals, living a life of Torah and mitzvot. It is therefore not surprising that Rabbi Uziel defines the uniqueness of Judaism as involving both learning and action.³⁵¹ This is why, as part of his historical

philosophical approach, during the Revelation at Sinai, the process of spreading the divine light underwent a radical change.

The main arena for the spreading of the divine light is not the framework of the individual's life, but the broad framework of the people. From then on, divine knowledge must find its expression within the broad contexts of the collective life. It is against this background that one should understand the triangular bond between Eretz Yisrael, Am Yisrael and Torat Yisrael. As part of the large endeavor whereby Am Yisrael entered into the covenant at Mount Sinai, the body becomes the land upon which the people must establish its religious, social, and national life.

In relation to the question as to why the Torah was not given to Am Yisrael in Eretz Yisrael, although it was clearly prophesized that this is where it should take place, Rabbi Uziel explains that taking on Torah and mitzvot is a precondition for entering Eretz Yisrael, just as the latter does not accept uncircumcised Jews, it does not accept those who do not study and follow the precepts of the Torah.³⁵²

Rabbi Uziel summarizes the process of the covenant between Am Yisrael and God as being initiated by Abraham. As for the circumcision, it is a collective sign that the descendents of Abraham believe in a total divine unity. This covenant, he claims, was only completed through the departure from Egypt and during the Revelation at Sinai, thanks to which Am Yisrael entered the chosen land which God bequeathed to the fathers of the nation and to their descendents, forever.³⁵³

It was only then that the tribes formed a people following the divine Law, worthy of inheriting the Land of Israel. The logic is clear: it is only when a territory will be reached, where Am Yisrael will be able to fulfill all the areas of life responsibly, that it will be possible to impose on it the obligation to be "a nation of High Priests and a Holy seed." The theological role of Eretz Yisrael derives from the above: life, according to the precepts of the divine Torah, which includes the individual, society, and the kingdom, and which

serves as a model for and sends a message to mankind as a whole, can only be fulfilled within the broad framework of a sovereign people living in its land. Rabbi Uziel, in another context, states that just as man's most spiritual actions call for a physical act as a prerequisite, the fulfillment of Am Yisrael's vocation as "light of God" can only come about on a specific piece of land.

If we know that God is the one who handed down the Torah, i.e., that he is the legislator, there is no place for the commonly accepted separation between state and religion. According to this approach, the people are faced with one option only – to design laws, based on the Halakha, which represent its own and unique political constitution. Moreover, this approach also implies that state and religion should be identical, as the state is where religion is realized. Therefore, the only tool Rabbi Uziel recommends we use when examining and evaluating political reality, is the Halakha. The contents of the Revelation at Sinai were not, according to this view, an illustration of the faith or of a metaphysical, mystical, or other theoretical truth, but a constitution which the people were committed to fulfill, as part of the covenant.

We may draw a number of conclusions, which are highly important in our discussion. Rabbi Uziel does not have a mystic approach to past events, nor does he believe in some structured trend within history. He examines and judges them in halakhic, moral, human, and rational terms only. Therefore, the reality which emerged as a result of the establishment of the State of Israel, i.e., Jewish sovereignty, and the ingathering of the nations could very well be the start of redemption. However, this can only be the case if Judaism succeeds in dealing with the trials that are imposed upon it as a result of the State's secularism.

There is no attempt by Rabbi Uziel to soften reality. There is even less of an attempt to escape from hardships that are part of reality, by turning to some divine roots of reality, or to some hidden trends. On the contrary, the only standard which Rabbi Uziel believed in was of a halakhic and logical nature – reality with all its hardships. He believed that only a halakhic and logic-moral examination could help determine the nature

of a given reality. The fulfillment of some messianic goal or other cannot suffice to determine whether we are faced with a messianic reality. Reality will not be called Yemot Hamashiach on the basis of history's internal trends or of the divine idea; the nature of reality will only be determined based on historical measurements, such as political, social, and religious achievements, in other words, based on the fulfillment of the messianic goals, such as the ingathering of the nations, the cessation of the captivity of the kingdoms, the re-establishment of biblical law, and the rebuilding of the Temple, all of which will be taking place while the rest of the world follows its course.

Conclusions

In the formative years of Zionism, religious Zionist thinkers developed two key models – Rabbi Reines' model and Rabbi Kook's model of redemption, both of which attempted to tackle the theological topic of the link between Zionism and traditional messianic thought. These models were based either on the separation between Zionism and messianism and on the former being detached from any religious meaning, or on the turning of Zionist ideology into messianic theology, by way of a dialectical analysis.

However, since the early days of Zionism, Jewish religious consciousness found it hard to fully accept these models. This difficulty stemmed, on the one hand, from the inability of religious consciousness to accept any reality, all the more so when dealing with the Zionist enterprise and the State of Israel, devoid of any religious significance; on the other hand, it was difficult for religious consciousness to come to terms with the implications that were likely to emerge from the incorporation of Zionism within a non-rational messianic framework.

As a direct or indirect result of these difficulties, other intellectual models were developed, which attempted to grant religious meaning to Zionism and to the Jewish State, without turning them into non-rational religious entities. Rabbi Uziel's

model follows this approach: like Rabbi Kook and his followers, he also places the state and interprets its development within the framework of the messianic idea. However, while Rabbi Kook speaks in terms of the messianic approach of the Kabbala, thereby expropriating the discussion, particularly when dealing with the Jewish State and the realm of the transcendental, Rabbi Uziel, for his part, formulated his messianic approach on the rational philosophy of Maimonides. As a result, the state is not attributed some absolute value – after all, no messianic state is a value in itself, but is seen as a means for the individual to reach religious fulfillment. Therefore, the test for the state will be whether it meets the halakhic and moral standards, which represent the only framework within which reality takes place.

Both models also clearly relate to the secular aspect of society. On the one hand, we have the paternalistic tendency, found in Rabbi Kook's philosophy, to deny secularism any authentic aspect, and to avoid the moral issue of the use of force by the state. According to this approach, secularism and the immorality of the state are not a question to be discussed, but an appearance, which is part of the process of redemption. For Rabbi Uziel, however, secularism and the morality of the state are authentic phenomena which should not be brushed aside by way of some dialectic discussion or other. On the contrary, in the end, these two phenomena will determine the religious significance of the state.

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10. Religion and State in Israel

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This paper was completed in June 2015.

Batya Stein translated this article. I am grateful for her significant contribution to the final version and for her exceptional professional competence throughout the long-standing partnership between us.

State, theocracy, and Halakha

Since the beginning of the Zionist enterprise at the turn of the 19th century, religion and state have been in a volatile and tense relationship. A relatively broad corpus of legal, historical, and cultural writings has dealt with various aspects of this tension, and my intent here is to shift the focus to its underlying reasons: why has this relationship remained as an open question that so frequently stirs up the public discourse? I examine this issue through a critical philosophical perspective of the public discourse dealing with it and, more particularly, of its participants' experiences and modes of expression. Even a cursory glance reveals this as a stormy exchange frequently accompanied by a sense of unease, despair, catastrophe, and radical dichotomies, as if every concern of Jewish existence hinged on the religion and state relationship.³⁵⁴ The dramatic attitude toward this question is unique to Israel, making the meaning of this discourse especially intriguing.

Ostensibly, this discourse is strained and confrontational because it reflects two contradictory views on the nature of the regime or, more precisely, two contradictory views of sovereignty. Religion, it is claimed, makes God the sovereign, whereas the civilian approach rests on a presumption of human sovereignty. The confrontation, then, is between theocracy and democracy. But this view is inaccurate. Biblical and post-biblical traditions do include elements that could substantiate a theocracy,³⁵⁵ but Jewish tradition in general and the halakhic

one in particular have rejected this view outright. God is not the sovereign, even of Halakha. Halakhists viewed Halakha as exclusively a human endeavor that does not recognize God's authority to intervene in halakhic legislation or in the halakhic discourse, which they reserved solely for the rabbis.³⁵⁶ Even Spinoza who, following his interpretation of biblical and post-biblical texts assumed that theocracy is the only legitimate form of government in Judaism could not but add the sentence: "However, this state of things existed rather in theory than in practice."³⁵⁷

In this light, a presumption that contradicts the Jewish ethos as formulated in rabbinic literature and as it unfolded in autonomous Jewish communities throughout history, all of which rejected theocracy outright, seems implausible. Only a rash reading of normative Jewish history could lead to such conclusions. The analysis of Israel's public discourse also shows that the issue of sovereignty – democracy or theocracy – never arises. Even the staunchest supporters of imposing religion on the state do not invoke a theocratic principle, nor do their opponents ascribe this view to them.

The claim about divine sovereignty, then, probably rests on a claim about the sovereignty of Halakha. According to this argument, Halakha must be the only constitutive foundation of social norms and will not recognize any other normative source as compelling. Ruth Gavison formulated this contradiction as follows:

A state of Halakha and a democracy collide head-on. [...] A democracy is a regime that grants individuals positive freedom to participate in decisions concerning their destiny. [...] In a state of Halakha, the decisions are in the hands of God, mediated by human institutions. [...] Even if the thesis that halakhic arrangements are democratic is correct, the fundamental incompatibility remains because the source of the obligation is the halakhic determination, not the political justification of the idea of participation in decisions about one's destiny.³⁵⁸

But the "state of Halakha" postulated here is a modern concept invented by ideologues or theoreticians and is halakhically meaningless. Historically, due to the lack of sovereignty at the time of its evolution, Halakha did not develop public and administrative law or the foundations of constitutional law and centered instead on personal law, as is prominently evident in

the Code of Maimonides. Maimonides deals with various aspects of sovereignty, but his focus is on “laws of kings and their wars” rather than on the normative structure of a state and its institutions. On the eve of Israel’s establishment, therefore, the rabbinic leadership could not offer a halakhic foundation for the state in the making since Halakha cannot provide the basis for building a state subject solely to halakhic norms. In the present context, then, I do not relate to the “state of Halakha” that Gavison mentions because this notion is alien to historical halakhic tradition, even though it does occasionally feature in the public religious discourse. In truth, it cannot be part of this discourse, which recognizes the validity of human arrangements and even of human sovereignty.

Gavison’s two basic assumptions, however, are significant in this context. The first is the assumption about the totality of Halakha, which precludes any other source of norms and values. The second is a toned down version of the theocracy thesis considered above. According to Gavison, Halakha indirectly conveys God’s sovereignty because the rabbis derive their authority from God. Discussing the source from which Halakha’s bearers derive their authority exceeds the scope of this paper and I will only note that Gavison’s stance fails to take the halakhists’ consciousness into account. In the halakhists’ perception, their authority follows only from their knowledge of Halakha, not from God. The source of their authority, then, is epistemic rather than deontological. Their claim rests on their knowledge and on its recognition by a republic of observant Jews and their status is in no way that of irrefutable experts.³⁵⁹

Gavison’s first assumption about the totality of Halakha requires a more complex analysis because Halakha is indeed total, in the sense that it applies to all areas of private and public life. The conclusion she seeks to draw, however, is mistaken. Gavison concludes that Halakha is the only constitutive element of the normative system and leaves no room for any other sovereignty or authority. Membership in the halakhic community thus precludes the option of

membership in any other community, including the democratic one.

But this view of Halakha does not reflect the consciousness of those committed to it and, at most, is an imagined perception projected onto them. Gavison's conclusion is thus flawed on at least two counts. First, it fails to detect the ambiguity in the term Halakha within halakhic tradition itself. In the extensional denotation of this term, Halakha is the set of norms binding on Jews, regardless of the obligation's source. In its intentional denotation, Halakha is the set of norms derived from the "internal" halakhic system according to normative standard rules – interpretation and inference from compelling sources.

According to this analysis, some obligations might be part of Halakha in the extensional sense – that is, compelling on Jews – but not in the intentional sense, since their source is extra-halakhic. They could reflect autonomous rational discretion, social arrangements, or the norms of a legitimate authority. This complex issue is beyond the scope of the present discussion, and I will present two examples that reflect this halakhic consciousness and relate to the standing of the rational autonomous element. R. Yosef Engel (Poland, 1858–1920) grapples with the question of whether a man might be exempt from punishment for murder by claiming he did not know that the Torah forbids it. Engel rejects this claim outright and his argument is relevant here:

Because murder is a rational prohibition, and from this rational prohibition he knows that killing a human is wrong. The rational prohibition is therefore as important as the Torah prohibition. [...] He cannot be saved by claiming, 'I did not know that killing a person is forbidden' [...] and he is viewed as a premeditated killer simply because he must have known the rational prohibition.³⁶⁰

Engel could have argued one can hardly assume people are unaware of the halakhic prohibition on murder, but he went further and claimed that rational knowledge of this prohibition is sufficient for a person to be considered a premeditated murderer according to the Torah as well. Halakha, then, includes not only God's commands but also autonomous rational prohibitions.

Another example is the distinction that R. Moses Israel Hazzan (Turkey, 1808 – Lebanon, 1863) draws between two kinds of halakhic norms: “the political laws of the Torah” and “the divine laws.”³⁶¹ This distinction between the political legal system and the strictly religious system has many expressions in the history of Halakha but Hazzan places it within a systematic theoretical context.³⁶² He explains the nature of the distinction and writes: “About the former [the legal-political layer], it is written ‘justice, only justice will you pursue,’ and the balance of justice is merely our common sense or, as you would say, legal discretion.”³⁶³ Hazzan understands the meaning of his determination and does not hesitate to state, “their cause is their purpose,”³⁶⁴ meaning that the only reason for enacting these norms is their socio-political purpose. This approach enables him to state that judges may deviate from the concrete laws in order to attain the desired end:

And the reason [for the permit to deviate from Halakha] is that, regarding matters between individuals, except for life and death issues, we have only been commanded ‘justice, only justice will you pursue.’ That is, we must pursue justice as it appears before us and not laws that may be inappropriate to the matter at hand. We have not been commanded to do that.³⁶⁵

These examples are but a drop in the ocean of Halakha and successfully convey the halakhic ethos.³⁶⁶ This ethos is significant in the analysis of the Israeli discourse on religion and state because, if we assume that advocates of applying religious norms in Israeli politics back this ethos, we must also assume that their view need not convey a wish to establish a theocracy or the rule of Halakha as an indirect manifestation of divine sovereignty.

Religion and identity in the Israeli discourse

This analysis is corroborated by the Israeli discourse on religion and state, which is often a stormy confrontation centering on a given piece of legislation and usually confined to a specific normative context. Establishing a theocracy or the rule of Halakha is not presented as an aim by supporters of the

rule of religion nor, usually, by their opponents, and the discourse tends to deal with the norms themselves.

The discourse could lead to the conclusion that the tension in the religion and state relationship is tied to the status of human rights, be they personal or other rights. The tension, according to this approach, arises because many consider that Jewish religion, through its excessive interference, violates the personal freedoms ensured to individuals in a liberal democratic state. For their part, observant Jews claim that some of these personal rights violate the Torah and should therefore be limited because they threaten religion, which is the basis of Jewish existence. A tension therefore emerges between a liberal discourse of rights and a discourse of identity – or, more precisely, Israel’s Jewish identity and its Jewish national character – that places religion at the center.

But this explanation, however tempting, is not entirely satisfactory. Is the tension indeed between rights and religion? Are liberal supporters driven solely by the question of rights? Must the tension between liberalism and religion indeed be so harsh and profound? And is the claim about the critical role of the Torah for Jewish existence indeed necessary for religious individuals who place faith at the center of their lives? Indeed, if their struggle is dictated by their belief that religion is the foundation of Jewish existence, why is it confined only to specific norms? Why does the religious public not struggle to impose halakhic law in Israel as vigorously as it struggles against civil marriage? The analysis of the discourse, then, misses something when it fails to focus on the norms at the center of the confrontation and on what singles them out from all others.

My central claim is that the tension in the religion and state discourse follows from an entirely different question: the meaning of Jewish identity in the post-religious era and in a secular liberal framework. Living in a post-religious era means that we derive the constitutive foundations of our life from our values as free individuals, sovereign to shape their lives. In the pre-modern era, personal identity and the practices organizing people’s lives derived from the cultural-social surroundings. In the modern, post-traditional era, which also gave rise to the

autonomous subject, the attachment to culture and tradition became contingent on the subjects themselves. This claim applies to the religious person as well, since the basis of religious life is the subject's faith rather than God and a constitutive theophany. The believer too, then, has a choice between various lifestyles – all are possibilities of self-realization and all have equal status as existential alternatives. The recognition that various alternatives are available for shaping the life of the individual and of society is a distinct novelty of the post-religious era, which also grants religious life a different status.

The meaning of Jewish identity is therefore a fundamental issue for individuals living in a “Jewish and democratic” state, be they religious or secular. As free creatures, they understand that Jewish identity and its public standing is their concern and that they are the only ones responsible for it. Secular and religious approaches thus come into confrontation. Secular views assume that Jewish identity conveys the structuring of Jewish identity in the terms that they, as free creatures, understand it. There is no “Judaism” as a meta-historical and metaphysical manifestation. Judaism is a cultural historical phenomenon reflecting the Jews’ ongoing dialogue between past and present, that is, between the socio-cultural legacy and the free stance of individuals in the present relating to this legacy as open before them. Ultimately, individuals in the present are the only ones responsible for the modes of expression and representation of Jewish existence and identity. They are not its docile subjects. This approach, first postulated in the writings of Achad Haam,³⁶⁷ appears in various theoretical formulations emphasizing that every identity, including Jewish identity, is an open project giving rise to different narratives that do not reflect a metaphysical Jewish essence.³⁶⁸ In this conception, Jewish religion is merely one of the important creations of the Jewish people but, in a secular context, it does not have the monopolistic standing of a truth to be endorsed unconditionally.

Contrary to this view, large sections of the religious or even the traditional public hold that Jewish identity is manifest solely in Jewish religion – a system that shapes an entire way

of life that includes an ethos, myths, and practices. Jewish identity is thus the full and complete realization of the halakhic endeavor. Many who support imposing religious norms in politics view these institutional arrangements as vital for the preservation of Jewish identity, which would vanish without religion. The confrontation over the standing of religion is thus a confrontation about the nature of Jewish identity. Is this identity created by those living today? Or is it a primordial foundation that precedes the historical-cultural-social features of Israel's contemporary politics?

Given the diametrical opposition between these two views, confrontation is inevitable. In the sovereign era, however, this confrontation cannot become a fullscale *Kulturkampf* and is manifest mainly in the struggle over the symbols of identity, which are embodied in specific norms perceived as expressions of its essence. The painful discourse in Israeli society thus relates to fundamental human questions: marriage and divorce, the principles determining entry into Jewish society, that is, the question of conversion, the standing of the Sabbath, and so forth. All touch on fundamental issues on the one hand, and on the standing of religious tradition on the other.

This struggle is limited, as noted, for both conceptual and pragmatic reasons. In pragmatic terms, an all-out struggle over identity symbols could be harmful. Israel is a multicultural state, at least de facto, given that several cultures coexist in one sovereign framework.³⁶⁹ These cultures are profoundly different and some of them do not even share, in Wittgenstein's terms, a family resemblance. Consider, for instance, the relationship between Israel's Palestinian and Jewish citizens. These two groups represent entirely different cultures, with a different ethos and different practices, memory, and orientation. Often the distinction between the Jewish and Palestinian "large groups" hides the differences within the Jewish group itself that, as noted, are profound. What one Jewish community sees as having religious meaning has only cultural meaning for the other. This difference is crucial since, as claimed above, it epitomizes a fundamental difference in the perception of the subject as either faced with

a wide spectrum of options or as heir to a legacy that must be realized and offers limited possibilities of change.

Given that the social balance of power does not enable a heroic decision favoring only one side, the discourse clearly leans toward compromise, as epitomized in the “status quo” arrangement that determined the status of religion when Israel was established. This arrangement sought to capture the state of affairs prevalent at the time and enabled each side to maximize its values in a complex reality. Even if this arrangement has partially been eroded by now, it still sets the borders of the discourse in the multicultural society that is Israel. Among those devising this arrangement, these borders conveyed the understanding that too far a deviation in favor of one of the parties could lead to the collapse of Israel’s Jewish society. The victory of one side invites the uncompromising struggle of the other, so that every victory of one party is a potential opening for its future defeat in another struggle. This cultural phenomenon is even stronger in light of Israel’s political reality, where no side can claim a definitive advantage. The struggle has therefore been channeled to pragmatic realms allowing plausible results, meaning compromises that can be said to be equally harmful to the identity core of all the parties involved.

Democracy, liberalism, and Judaism

Beyond the pragmatic aspect, however, there is also a conceptual one, related to Israel’s character as a secular, democratic, and liberal state. The Declaration of Independence states: “The State of Israel [...] will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture [...] and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.” These terse statements reflect the founders’ acquiescence to the UN decision of November 29, 1947. This decision, which was the basis for the establishment of two states, compelled both of them to issue a manifesto showing commitment to the

UN Declaration of Human Rights. The State of Israel met the challenge and committed itself to the civil rights included in the UN Declaration and to the Declaration as a whole. Israel's Declaration of Independence is thus meant to express its basic ethos and, although it lacks constitutional status, is the basis of its legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens and of the world: it complies with the UN's and the world's conditions for recognition and is a commitment to all of Israel's future citizens.

Two conceptual conclusions follow from the determinations in the Declaration of Independence cited above. First, the State of Israel is *formally* a secular state. The basic principle of its existence as a state is anchored in the decision of a civil body – the UN. Furthermore, as a state among others, Israel acknowledges that the UN, meaning the countries of the world, validate its existence as a state. The State of Israel is not a theocracy, not only because God (or Jewish religion) is not its actual ruler but, above all, because its constitutive principle – the readiness of the civilian community to establish a state and its recognition by the countries of the world – is secular. The State of Israel is also a territorial state, meaning that its sovereignty applies to all the citizens living within its borders, “irrespective of religion, race or sex.” In the context of this sovereignty, the State of Israel commits itself to act according to values and norms that are basically secular: the system of values and norms anchored in the UN Declaration of Human Rights, not in the Torah.

The second conclusion is that, *normatively*, Israel is essentially a liberal state, since it places at its center the values of freedom and equality. Every one of its citizens can make demands on it to guarantee freedom of religion, of conscience, of language and culture, and to ensure equality. Freedom and equality are not gifts that the State of Israel charitably grants but a yoke imposed on it. Hence, it cannot place any conditions on the implementation of these norms and values, given the sharp and unequivocal formulations of the Declaration of Independence that unambiguously proclaim Israel to be not merely a democracy but a liberal democracy.

The “umbrella of citizenship” means that all members of the civilian community are recognized as equal. There is no hierarchy of citizenship, no household members vs. strangers, and no hierarchy between citizens, between Jews of different kinds and not even between Jews and non-Jews or between men and women. Civilian equality means the dismissal of any distinctions based on religion, race, and gender. The Jewish character of the state or its being a national state cannot rest on the breaching of its secular and liberal foundation. The democratic-liberal character of the state precedes its specific characteristics as a Jewish state and as a national state. The State of Israel can be a democratic and Jewish state, but its Judaism rests upon its democratic liberal character and cannot contradict it. Judaism, then, is Israel’s second floor rather than its foundation.³⁷⁰

The primacy of the civilian over the identity component also ensures the freedom that is required for the realization of personal identities – the rights discourse provides the foundation for the identity discourse. Jeremy Waldron articulated these insights when he showed that rights, rather than creating social life, offer a framework for its emergence.³

⁷¹ Waldron rightfully argues that the power of the rights framework lies precisely in its detachment from the immediate social context because this detachment universally guarantees that basic human existence is protected regardless of social changes.³⁷² In the context of the present discussion – without the civil foundation of rights, the existence of Israel as a national state and as a Jewish state cannot be assured. The civil discourse provides the stable framework for the realization of Jewish dreams, and prevents the unbridled rise of trends that deny the diversity of Jewish existence. Whoever wishes to protect Israel as a Jewish state must protect the primacy of the framework that justifies this possibility. Israel will be a Jewish state and the state of the Jewish people only if it firmly insists on its civilian underpinnings.

Although these determinations seem to mix together descriptive and prescriptive aspects, is and ought, that is not the case. The partners to the public discourse on religion and state explicitly or implicitly assume these understandings.

Religion and state conflicts relate to specific questions – marriage and divorce, the status of rabbinic courts, and so forth – and hardly ever challenge the state’s formal democratic foundations.

This civil framework enables people with different identities and clashing world views to live together. Israel, however, is not only the state of the Jews and is also perceived as a Jewish state. Already in the Declaration of Independence, it is defined as “a Jewish state in Eretz Yisrael.” This formulation was granted legal status in two Basic Laws enacted in the early 1990s: Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty, and Basic Law: Freedom of Occupation. These laws explicitly state that their purpose is to anchor the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. The democratic component, as noted, provides the necessary foundation for the development of various forms of Jewish identity. But if the precedence of the term “Jewish” in the above definition carries any significance, it could represent the onset of a trend seeking to strengthen the primacy of Israel’s specific Jewish character.

Identity, nationality, and identification

What is the nature of this Judaism? Is it Jewish religion? Jewish culture, or even Jewish cultures? Is there a common element to the Jewish cultural spectrum? These and other questions touch on the hard core of Jewish nationality: is it only religious or, at least at the very basis of its expression within a state, entirely detached from religion, which is only one of its products? So long as this discussion is conducted in the context of a public discourse, it may remain as a serious open conflict, but as soon as it slides into the legal system and into the symbols of the state, a clear-cut decision becomes imperative. Identity issues now become central and assume new meaning. The discourse on Jewish identity has ceased to be merely socio-cultural and now entails direct implications for the shaping of the state and its institutions, and vice-versa – legislation on matters of Judaism entails direct implications

for Jewish identity. The deep discourse in Israeli society on the meaning of Jewish identity and Jewish nationality is constricted within legal bounds and becomes a discourse about religion and state. The legal or normative language of the discourse is thus only a medium for a more basic, incisive question – the meaning of Jewish nationality and Jewish identity, which cannot be considered in the context of a normative discourse without challenging the shared foundations of existence and the principles that enable it.

One cannot ignore that the discourse on religion and state is the bearer of a more primary discourse, as is evident in more than one controversy. The first is the ongoing dispute about marriage in Israel. From a liberal viewpoint, freedom of religion includes freedom from religion and, consequently, the liberation of the institution of marriage from religion's clasp. And yet, even prior to the establishment of Israel, personal status had been subordinate to the religious authorities as already stated in the Palestine Order-In-Council 1922–1947. On matters of personal status, every citizen was defined as belonging to a "religious community" and this determination, fixating the membership of all Jews, became part of Israeli law without any further deliberation.

Though seemingly no more than a legal procedural decision, this determination did away with any possible legal basis for setting up an alternative legal system concerning personal status that is not mediated by religion. Defenders of religion view this decision as imperative given that, in the absence of religious supervision of marriage and divorce, serious problems could arise concerning membership in the Jewish people. Mixed marriages would then become possible, which religious Jews view as harmful to the core of Jewish identity. The halakhic approach sets rigid criteria for determining who belongs to the Jewish people. Children of a couple where the woman is not Jewish are not Jews, and a couple where the man is not Jewish is not recognized as halakhically married. The religious claim is that breaching the rules of halakhic marriage precludes membership in the Jewish people, which is determined by objective halakhic criteria. Hence, even individuals who develop a consciousness of

membership that includes participation in the memory, the ethos, and the practices of the Jewish people, will not necessarily be considered Jewish. A necessary precondition of membership is the preservation of primal ethnic continuity: descent from a Jewish mother or conversion according to Halakha.

Personal status, then, is not merely a normative question of concern to the authorized body in charge of personal status. The answer to this question is also an answer to the question about the meaning of Jewish identity and Jewish nationality. Supporters of rabbinic control of the marriage institution seek to preserve the religious view of Jewish identity while their opponents offer an alternative: Jewish identity and Jewish nationality are not necessarily contingent on endorsement of the objective halakhic stance. Quite the contrary: Jewish identity is founded on subjective, autonomous consciousness and on actual participation in Jewish life. Hence, it needs not be mediated by state institutions and certainly not by representatives of the religious establishment.

One classic expression of the fact that religion and state relationships are a platform for identity issues is the ongoing controversy on conversion.³⁷³ My concern here is the conceptual aspect of conversion. Conversion is the process whereby the stranger – the non-Jew – joins the Jewish people, and the requirements from the convert stipulated by the halakhic system can therefore be assumed to reflect the core of Jewish existence according to those committed to Halakha. Mainstream halakhic tradition viewed the conversion ritual as a process of rebirth into the Jewish ethnos. Hence, the constitutive elements of the conversion ritual are circumcision and immersion for men and immersion for women. Even though the ritual does include a duty to inform converts that they are obliged to comply with Halakha, this notification was not interpreted as requiring their commitment to observe the Torah and the commandments but as providing information on the consequences of their joining the Jewish people.³⁷⁴ A process began toward the end of the 19th century, however, which gained momentum in later years and turned the commitment to observance into the gist of the conversion

ritual.³⁷⁵ The meaning of this controversy touches on the nature of Jewish identity and Jewish belongingness: is it genealogical and physical or is it anchored in the Torah and the commandments as the constitutive foundation of Jewish existence? Two main halakhic alternatives, then, are now available for understanding the meaning of the halakhic conversion ritual, and hence of Jewish identity: one emphasizes the physical dimension of conversion, conveying entry into the Jewish ethnos, and the other emphasizes the commitment to observance.

The new trend in the perception of conversion percolated to the rabbinic courts as well, leading to tighter supervision of the converts and to the creation of one central mechanism for performing conversions – the Chief Rabbinate. Non-Orthodox movements were denied any authority for shaping ways of entering Judaism. This denial applies even more strongly to the secular public: the mechanism charged with supervising entry into the Jewish people was entrusted to Orthodox institutions that, ipso facto, were authorized to set a rigid definition of Jewish identity – Judaism is identified with Jewish religion.

The Orthodox long-standing dominance of the entry mechanism into the Jewish collective has increasingly limited the options of the secular public, or of those who do not recognize the authority of rabbinic Orthodoxy, to give public and symbolic expression to their Jewish identity. True, all citizens can shape their Jewish identity as they wish but, in the legal-normative realm, there is room for only one notion of Jewish identity. As a result, the legal and the public realms are no longer in harmony. The legal realm identifies membership in the Jewish community and Jewish nationality on the basis of halakhic norms, while the public realm makes room for different views of Jewish identity, including non-religious ones.

The distinction between identity and identification should perhaps be clarified here.³⁷⁶ Identity is a personal matter, an ongoing project of individuals and societies shaping their lives. By contrast, identification is an act performed by others:

a state or a society marks individuals and groups and identifies them in a particular way for certain purposes. In light of this distinction, the controversy on conversion obviously focuses on identification rather than on identity. The Law of Conversion determines who the state views as Jews and not necessarily the character of their Judaism. Judaism as an identity project remains open and is a concern of individuals, not of the establishment. But this schematic analysis blurs the nature of the social discourse in Israel. The controversy on Jewish identification is an attempt to undermine the legitimacy of various Jewish identities. Ultimately, the ongoing dispute on the Law on Conversion and on the powers of the rabbinic courts conveys a struggle for control and exclusion: control over Jewish identification, which is meant to exclude non-religious modes of identity.

Hardly any other society in the Western world is as troubled as Israel by the question of its identity. It is almost tempting to say that Jews are people for whom their Judaism is a problem. If viewed as an almost neurotic concern, the deflection to the political-legal arena could almost serve as a form of therapy – the rules and principles typical of this setting can temper the passionate controversies on Jewish identity and the meaning of Jewish existence, placing them within a discourse that is seemingly rational. Indeed, the frequent focusing of the religion and state discourse on specific normative questions hinders the discourse on Jewish identity and on the meaning of Jewish nationality.

And yet, it is unmistakable that, in recent years, the political as well as the public discourse have gradually been released from the fetters of liberal democratic citizenship. What began as a seemingly naive formulation characterizing Israel as a Jewish and democratic state is gradually emerging as the first step in a larger process. This process involves pushing aside the classic discourse dealing with religion and state matters, which had played a restraining role vis-à-vis repressed Jewish nationalism. The question of Jewish identity and Jewish nationality now emerges as central. We are thus witnessing a retreat of the civil liberal aspect in favor of national and Jewish identity aspects; hence, for example, the

recurrent parliamentary initiatives seeking to determine the primacy of Israel's national character. In the 19th Knesset (2013–2014), several bills were submitted in an attempt to enact a new Basic Law: The National State of the Jewish People. MK Ze'ev Elkin submitted the most radical proposal stating, "the State of Israel is the national home of the Jewish people, where it realizes its self-definition" (Article 1a), and "the right to realize its national self-definition in the State of Israel is unique to the Jewish people" (Article 1b). The extremism of this position is evident in Article 1c, which determines: "The terms of this Basic Law or of any other legislation will be interpreted in light of the determinations of this law." Jewish nationality thus emerges as the primary foundation meant to override any other law, including Basic Laws that ensure equality and freedom. Although this bill never went through any legislative stages and probably never will, it does point to a dramatic rise in the national discourse at the expense of the previous discourse, which had focused on state and religion matters.

Ostensibly, this release of the element that had prompted the religion and state discourse in the first place could have been expected to intensify the tension on these questions. The stress on Jewish nationality would then be paralleled by attempts to impose religious norms beyond the status quo arrangements. And yet, the opposite is actually true. A new and more moderate discourse on religion and state issues has emerged. Within the religious-Zionist community, new voices, more open and daring, search for greater correspondence between liberal democratic aspects and the halakhic ethos.

These voices resonate in particular in the mainstream of the National Home, a right-wing religious Zionist party partly reflecting the Orthodox national tradition that has now become part of Zionism. Members of this party have been involved in several curbing moves. First, they dismantled the Chief Rabbinate's monopoly on conversion and led a move to sanction conversions performed by city rabbis, giving converts more options. Second, they enabled couples to choose where they wish to marry, whereas previous regulations had compelled them to marry in their places of residence. This

choice is not merely a formality and implies that they can select not only a location but also a rabbi, which is significant because some rabbis are more flexible regarding the relevant halakhic norms and their implementation. The National Home, which turns to a non-religious “national” public as well, has a distinct interest in presenting a positive image of Jewish religion to its consumers and this change has led to an increasing readiness to compromise in other realms as manifest, for example, in their openness to religious feminist trends. Beyond this specific political party, however, a process is clearly evident within religious Zionism involving a re-endorsement of pluralism, an acceptance of other Jewish approaches, and an increasing openness on questions of rights. At the radical extreme of this spectrum of views is the “Torah ve-Avodah” movement, which has made the combination of religious liberalism, social justice, and religious feminism part of the legitimate religious Zionist discourse.

The religious discourse in the Orthodox public has also changed, shifting more toward a discourse of rights than a discourse of identity. Many members of this group are presently more concerned with challenges to their rights to realize their culture than with imposing religiosity on the State of Israel. The penetration of civil norms into the Orthodox discourse has paralleled the growing involvement of Orthodox Jews at all levels of Israeli society – the army, the labor market, and the academic world. The moderation of the religion and state discourse thus parallels the rise of the national element that had been repressed in the classic version of this discourse, though these might be contemporary developments that are not necessarily in a causal relationship. The rise of the repressed nationalist element and the certainty that Israeli society is not determined to negate a halakhic objectivistic Jewish identity may provide a suitable opening for a more moderate discourse on religion and state in Israel. Only the future will tell whether the rise of the nationality discourse will curb or strengthen the religion and state discourse, given that religion is still the most readily available element for the realization of a distinct Jewish nationalism.

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11. The Non-Separation of Religion and State in Israel: Does It Support the Racism and Nationalism Wave?

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This paper was completed in December 2014.

In this paper some of the problems emerging from the wedding between state and religion in Israel will be discussed. In a short introduction the legal background establishing the relationship between state and religion in Israel will be presented. We will then discuss a few recent issues that Israel faces in this area. Some of the crossroads between state and religion: the issue of extreme religious education; the problem of chauvinism and racism in Israel as a possible consequence of the non-separation between religion and state; a new Basic Law bill that is on the Knesset table designated to make Israel more Jewish and less democratic.

There is no doubt that the connection between religion and state creates severe problems of restricting liberty and limiting the freedom from religion of secular people.³⁷⁷ Our argument, however suggests that the connection aggravates the racist-nationalistic trends that Israel is facing, especially recently. Separating more clearly between religion and state could help to stop these trends. It will ease the shaping of a more inclusive and cohesive civil society.

A Jewish and democratic state: introduction

Israel is defined as “a Jewish and democratic state.” This passage addresses the Jewish character of the state, as defined by Israeli law. It must be stressed that the term “Jewish” can be interpreted two ways: *national*, which emphasizes on the Jewish people as a nation and as a culture. The other

interpretation is *religious*. According to this notion, a Jewish state means a state that abides to religious Jewish laws and applies them. In this second sense, the non-separation means that there is a constant struggle over the Jewish content of the state, and according to this view, the aim is to turn Israel into a state governed by Jewish-religious law. It should be stressed that almost all the coalitions in Israel included a strong religious component – the Zionist-religious party, the ultra-Orthodox parties, or both. These parties often hold the “key” to forming a coalition and have tremendous power of tilting the balance between the right wing and the left wing.

This dual meaning is the basis of major controversies in Israel, and in part causes confusion when concerning the issue of religion and state separation. People, who claim that there should be such a separation, interpret the “Jewishness” of the state as being exhausted by the national aspect, like any other nation-state. The ones who claim that the “Jewishness” contains also some religious content advocate non-separation or less separation. The problem is that in Judaism religion and nationality are intertwined; for example the entrance to the Jewish nation is through the Jewish religion. It is therefore not easy, as we will see, to distinguish between the religious and national aspects of various phenomena.

The November 29, 1947 United Nations resolution that led to the establishment of the State of Israel called for setting up a state that would constitute “a national home for the Jewish people.” Similarly, Israel’s Declaration of Independence declares: “The catastrophe which recently befell the Jewish people – the massacre of millions of Jews in Europe – was another clear demonstration of the urgency of solving the problem of its homelessness by re-establishing in *Eretz Yisrael* the Jewish state, which would open the gates of the homeland wide to every Jew and confer upon the Jewish people the status of a fully privileged member of the community of nations.”³⁷⁸

The State of Israel embodies numerous characteristics and symbols that designate it as Jewish state in the national meaning. Its name, *Israel*, is of an overtly Jewish biblical character. The national day of rest is Saturday, the Jewish

Sabbath. Most national holidays are Jewish holidays that emphasize the national rebirth of the Jewish people. It is clear that Sabbath and other holidays have also a symbolic religious meaning. The Sabbath law forbids employing of Jews in Sabbath³⁷⁹ (people of other religions have a right to their own day of rest but it is not forbidden to employ them, accordingly) except for specific fields that the minister of labor decided that are critical for the public: security, essential economic positions and certain essential services. The state's memorial days exclusively symbolize the heritage and history of the Jewish people.³⁸⁰ The national flag includes a Star of David and stripes of the color of Jewish ritual fringes. The national anthem opens with the words "[a]s long as in the heart, within, a Jewish soul still yearns [...]"³⁸¹ Hebrew is the country's chief official language.³⁸²

Israel's Basic Laws and other key legislation secure its character as a Jewish and democratic state. Two Basic Laws, Freedom of Occupation and Human Dignity and Liberty, declare that their purpose is "to establish [...] the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state."³⁸³

The Law of Return accords all Jews and their children and grandchildren³⁸⁴ the right to immigrate to Israel and obtain citizenship. Non-Jews must undergo a longer and more complicated process of naturalization.

A Basic Law denies political parties that negate the existence of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state the right to participate in elections.³⁸⁵ A movement that does so, will not be registered as a political party. The Speaker of the Knesset is not permitted to approve any proposed law that negates the state as the state of the Jewish people and the immunity granted to Members of Knesset (hereinafter: MKs) does not apply to acts or expressions that do so. Furthermore, several laws establish the status of the Jewish Agency for Israel and the Jewish National Fund, expressing the importance of the state's connection with Diaspora Jewry.

In the religious sense of the Jewishness of the state, the 1980 Foundations of Law Act establishes a legal principle,

according to which a lacuna in Israeli legislation may be addressed, when there is no answer in Israeli common law or by analogy, according to the principles of the Jewish heritage – which is a broader concept than Jewish law.³⁸⁶

The most important field that is governed by religious law is the law regarding marriage and divorce. The law that establishes the status of a person is according to his religion. Religious officials have exclusive authority regarding marriage ceremonies, divorce and other personal status matters, that are adjudged in religious courts only (for Jews in rabbinic courts, Muslims in Shari'a courts, etc.), as differentiated from civil courts; in such cases, the applicable law is religious law (Torah, Shari'a, etc.), as differentiated from civil law. Issues that are related to the divorce (child custody, property division) are under parallel authority of civil courts. It means that Israel residents must marry according to their religious laws, and only marry *within* their religious community – it is impossible to hold an inter-religious marriage in Israel.³⁸⁷ The consequences are an extreme violation of freedom: there are people who cannot marry because religious law disqualifies them from marriage. Women can be held “hostages” for years, because their husbands refuse to divorce them. People who are not religious are forced to marry in a religious ceremony and are subjected to religious law in an area of life that is part of their personhood.

Another famous example is special laws that forbid importing non-kosher meat to Israel and limit the growth of non-kosher kettle, mainly pigs. After such law was pronounced unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, because it contradicted the Basic Law: Freedom of Occupation,³⁸⁸ the Knesset amended the Basic Law with a provision allowing the Knesset to override the Basic Law. After that a special overriding law was enacted, and the Supreme Court had to uphold it as constitutional.³⁸⁹ However, the override clause was never used again, to date. Public institutions must use kosher food. The army, for example, has strict rules that forbid non-kosher food to be served in army kitchens.

Having said that, the civil courts in Israel have softened, as much as they could, the civil implications of these religious aspects: Israeli case law recognizes marriage that is performed abroad, and this recognition constitutes a solution for many couples who cannot or will not marry according to religious laws. In addition, the court acknowledged in a broad manner, the rights of common-law couples – another “escape” from the religious marriage. The courts also did their best to create ways to minimize the civil outcomes of religious law – for example minimizing, to some extent, the discrimination against women in divorce religious laws, especially in property issues.

The Israeli courts developed the right to freedom of religion and worship on one hand and the right to freedom from religion on the other hand for secular people as being derived from the right to human dignity. In cases involving administrative decisions balancing religious feelings and freedom of speech, or freedom of movement, the court, in most of the instances, did not favor the religious feelings, and protected the universal value of freedom. On the other hand, the very fact that the court acknowledged that religious feelings could justify in principle infringements on basic rights creates a problem. It puts basic rights in a shaky position, under risk that they will be infringed because of religious feelings.

A famous example was the *Horev* case.³⁹⁰ Bar-Ilan Street, a major Jerusalem street located in an ultra-Orthodox neighborhood was closed, by the order of the traffic controller and the minister of transportation, to vehicles for a number of hours on the Sabbath and Jewish holidays. Bar-Ilan Street was closed in order to enable the local predominantly ultra-Orthodox residents to walk back and forth from synagogue in a quiet and free setting. It must be stressed that the traffic did not block the way to the synagogue, and the issue was merely hurting religious feelings. However, since the street is heavily used by Jerusalem drivers, its closure inconvenienced drivers, who were forced to take detours. As President Aharon Barack presented the case:

This debate is not limited to the matter of freedom of movement on Bar-Ilan Street on Friday evenings and on the Sabbath. It is, in essence, a difficult debate involving the relationship between religion and state in Israel, which pierces through to Israel's very character as a Jewish or a democratic state. It is a bitter debate about the character of Jerusalem, which has found its way to the Court's doorstep.³⁹¹

The majority of the court ruled against the order because the right to freedom of movement of the secular people who lived in the neighborhood overcame the interest of religious feelings. It was stated that the order would stand if the local secular residents were allowed to travel by cars at all times. However, a few months after the decision, a more moderate solution was obtained, one that closed the road to very specific short times of worships on Sabbath and holidays, while local residents were permitted to travel despite the closure.³⁹²

Another aspect of the non-separation between religion and state in Israel is the fact that the whole religious establishment in Israel is funded by state budget. That includes building places of worship and salaries for rabbis, priests and kaddis, etc. Religion is a service that Israel provides, from the taxpayer's money. The government is involved in electing and appointing the chief rabbis and religious judges. The local politicians are involved in electing city rabbis and officials. They all perform duties according to Israeli law.

Another important point is that Israel is funding religious education. In some education systems the budget is entirely governmental and in some the governmental funding is only partial. The state pays even for extreme religious education, with very minimal to non-at-all supervision of the content of the education by the state. The percentage of students learning in religious schools is growing due to demographic trends. If we look at first grade students only, more than 50% study in religious or ultra-Orthodox schools. In Jerusalem, only one out of eight pupils is secular.³⁹³ This issue will be elaborated in the second chapter.

A "Jewish state" in the national sense is a state committed to democratic values, the first and most important is equality of its citizens. It should not serve as a means of granting extra rights to Jews or of practicing racial discrimination.³⁹⁴ Israel's

Supreme Court, especially after the new Basic Laws of 1992 that gave way to judicial review of Knesset laws, has an important role in preserving Israel's democracy. The desire to maintain Israel's democratic character and – at the same time – its Jewish character as a nation-state of the Jewish people gives rise to a variety of conflicts and tensions. There are strong forces in Israel that wish to change the current balance in Israel. This issue will be elaborated in the third chapter.

New trends of enhancing religious education

Ultra-Orthodox education

A recent verdict of the High Court of Justice (hereinafter: HCJ) reveals the extent of the state commitment to fund ultra-Orthodox education without ensuring a core curriculum. The new case, 3752/10 *Rubinstein v. The Ministry of Education*, deals with a petition to strike down a Knesset law that was passed in 2010. The “Special Cultural Education Institutions Law” (“the Law”) granted small special schools for ultra-Orthodox Jews funding from the government even though they do not fulfill the minimal education plan (the “core” plan) that the government demands from regular education institutions.

The core plan consists of educational materials that are essential for providing the student with basic tools to deal with the modern world, and for acquaintance with the core values of the society at large he is part of. The core plan provides the child with what is needed for self-sustainment and for social minimal integration.

Before that law, institutions that did not teach the core plan could not, legally, be funded. There were some institutions that exercised 75% of the “core” plan and similarly were funded 75% of the regular budget.

Nevertheless, the political power of ultra-Orthodox parties led the Israeli government to grant a full exempt to some schools from the core education plan. In a prior petition to the High Court, the HCJ forced the ministry of education to abort the funding directed to private schools that did not teach the

core plan, and defined such transfer of funds as a “deviation of power.”³⁹⁵ The court demanded that the state shall start supervising and enforcing its own law. In a following case³⁹⁶ the court criticized the state for not fulfilling its orders and for still not enforcing the obligation to teach the core plan in order to be funded by the state.

After that, still in light of the political power of the ultra-Orthodox parties in Israel, the new law was enacted, granting to some private schools (regarding the last three years of school) a complete exempt from the duty to teach the core plan, and still receive a 55% state funding.

The majority (seven justices led by president Gruniss) rejected the petition and upheld the law. Some of the justices from the majority criticized the law, questioning its wisdom, even if they did not rule it unconstitutional. In the comparative law part, the justices pointed to two major models: first, a model in which the state is funding the education and thus has supervision powers over the contents; second, a model in which the education is totally privately funded and thus the state has no “say” over the contents. No model resembled the Israeli case of state funding along with complete exempt from supervision over the contents.

This example shows that the Israeli legislator is ready to fund schools that refuse to educate the most basic core values of the state, especially democratic values, and to prepare them as functioning citizens. The fact that it is taken for granted that Israel is funding religious schools, even the ones who do teach the democratic core plan, indicates the non-separation of religion and state.

Even though the former government (2013–2015) did not include ultra-Orthodox MKs (the first in more than a decade) the new law was not changed, even though the minister of education was Rabbi Shai Piron, a member of Yesh Atid party that was elected on a secular-civic agenda. This, in turn, shows that there was not enough political will, even in that government, to confront the ultra-Orthodox schools. The verdict of the court, it seems, was accepted by the politicians and the Israeli public as not surprising, even though some of

the ultra-Orthodox politicians seemed surprised, since they claim that the HCJ is never in their favor. The power of the ultra-Orthodox is a factor even when they are not part of the coalition of the day, because of their potential as partners in a coalition of tomorrow.

It is not surprising that in a society that does not insist on a core of civic education in all schools, the outcomes are the expected fruits of this neglect. Studies show that although antidemocratic and racist views are not at all exclusive to the religious sector in Israel, the views in this sector are definitely more to the national-racist side than in the secular sector. Moreover, more and more extreme acts of racism are documented in this sector. The most horrific event was the vicious murder of Mohammed Abu-Khdeir from Jerusalem during the summer of 2013, by three ultra-Orthodox young men. Of course this incident is an extreme case that does not represent the average position, but extreme cases do take place without a “proper” climate – some degree of what is conceived as support stemming from the surroundings and the leadership. We shall discuss this matter more deeply in the next chapter.

Other trends

In addition, there are several disturbing trends that will be mentioned briefly. First, the secular schools in Israel are also undergoing a process of becoming more Jewish-minded.³⁹⁷ Because in Judaism the line between national education and religious education is not clear, it can always be claimed that religious contents serve national education. It is therefore impossible to protect secular students from religious sophisticated indoctrination. In recent years, there is a growing focus on Jewish and “traditional” education, even from the ages of kindergarten.

In addition, an “administration for Jewish identity”³⁹⁸ was established just in 2013, funded by the state. This administration symbolizes our whole point: it is shaped by religious people and headed by a rabbi (Rontski) but its goals are “national”: inculcating Jewish values and knowledge about

Judaism. This administration is supposed to reshape secular people to become more Jewish more religious and as well, more nationalistic, at the expense of the taxpayer.

Another example of these processes is the debate about the IDF. An order before battle, that was issued in the summer of 2014 operation “Protective Edge” by a religious colonel included language of prayer, defining the “ Hamas” terrorists as the enemies of God, “who dare to curse, blaspheme and scorn the God of Israel.”³⁹⁹ These expressions are just an example of a process the IDF is undergoing of becoming more religious.⁴⁰⁰

The new wave of nationalistic legislation and racist hatred

In recent years, Israel is experiencing a major wave of nationalistic legislation in the Knesset. The 18th Knesset (2009–2013) marked an intensive wave of nationalistic legislation that was aimed, in part, against the Arab minority in Israel.⁴⁰¹ A few of the bills passed and were approved as laws, but the wave of legislation made a strong impact on the Israeli society. In this chapter we shall analyze briefly some of these bills and laws. Additionally, we will present a very important bill, the Basic Law: Israel – The Nation-State of the Jewish People, which is pending in the present Knesset, threatening to shift fundamentally the balance between Israel as a democracy and as a Jewish state.

In addition, the Israeli society is also experiencing a wave of racial hatred. Some of it is directly connected to religion: attacks on mosques, churches, etc. Some of it, like we experienced in the summer of 2014 during operation “Protective Edge,” is just pure racism, sometimes including violence and sometimes involving gross hate speech. In this chapter we will describe this phenomenon and claim that there is a strong connection between religion, nationalism, and racism.

The wave of nationalist “anti-Arab” legislation

In the last three Knesset terms, a series of bills that are targeted against Israeli Arabs were presented to the Knesset. The first cluster of bills demanded a “loyalty oath” to the “Jewish and democratic state” from Israeli citizens in several crossroads of their lives: not only naturalization, but also acceptance to the civil service, getting a driver’s license or a passport, etc. One proposal even targets artistic expression in the form of a proposal that “no movie shall receive financial support unless its creators, producers, stage managers, actors, and other participants sign a declaration of loyalty to the State of Israel, its symbols, and its Jewish and democratic values.”⁴⁰

² These bills obviously try to push non-Jews to the wall and “prove” their lack of loyalty to Israel, by forcing them to take an oath of loyalty to the “Jewish state” which they find unacceptable because they conceive the Jewishness of the state as a source of discrimination against them.

Another example is the “Nakba Law.” *Nakba* is the Arabic word for “catastrophe” and the Palestinians use it to mark the day of the establishment of Israel, in memory of their disaster in 1948. The law allows the minister of finance to impose a fine on public institutions if they spend money on events that commemorate the Nakba. This bill limits freedom of speech and aims to “erase” the historic narrative of the Israeli Arabs. The original bill included a criminal offence,⁴⁰³ but in the legislation process it was changed to an administrative law. In any case, it contains a collective punishment toward citizens that the country is obliged to provide with services, such as school children, who will be deprived of funds because the school principal spent money on commemorating the Nakba.⁴⁰

⁴

Another important law relates to the admission committees in small villages. This law permits admission committees in small villages with less than 400 families that are located in the Galilee and the Negev to reject candidates requesting to purchase a house in the village, on a number of grounds. These include “unsuitability to the social-cultural fabric” of the village. This clause directly contradicts the bill’s own prohibition against discrimination. As understood by the

chairman of the Knesset Constitution, Law and Justice Committee, the purpose of this law, in fact, is to prevent “non-Zionist elements” – i.e., the majority of Israeli Arabs, who are not called for military service – from moving into small villages. This law violates human dignity and the right to equality of minorities in a profound way.⁴⁰⁵

All these examples show that under the so-called aim of “protecting the Jewish state” or “promoting the Jewish nature” of Israel, what is actually promoted are anti-Arab laws that are based, mainly, on a nationalistic sentiment, not devoid of racism. The support of religious parties to these bills was almost automatic, although secular MKs had their share in passing them too, especially from Yisrael Beiteinu and Likud.

A bill of critical importance that was suggested in the 18th Knesset and is still pending in the present one as well, is the proposed Basic Law: Israel – The Nation-State of the Jewish People.⁴⁰⁶ This Basic Law, if enacted, would be revolutionary to Israel’s constitutional law. It would change the very essence of the state, by shifting the balance and making Israel more Jewish and less democratic. The bill would bestow an elevated and entrenched constitutional status upon Israel’s identity as a Jewish state without according the same status to its democratic identity. The bill’s vague mention that the country “has a democratic regime” (Article 2) is reducing democracy to its procedural aspect and demonstrates precisely the opposite of a commitment to a substantive democracy: equality in human worth, human rights, including equality of all residents, rights of minorities, separation of powers, rule of law. The proposed bill does not include fundamental rights that are not guaranteed explicitly in our current constitutional regime (there is no mention of equality, freedom of expression, freedom of religion, social rights, or due process rights). The result is that human rights in general (except for freedom of employment) remain subject to the whim of a parliamentary majority (the Basic Law: Human Freedom and Dignity is not entrenched by a special required majority). The delicate balance between Jewish and democratic tilts toward nationalistic particularism that is not appropriately balanced by universal and civic principles. The role of the Supreme Court

and its obligation to defend human rights is not entrenched by a special majority.

The bill utterly ignores the existence of a large national minority in Israel – the Arab minority. What should an Arab citizen think when he reads this text, which aspires to be a basic building block, or even the cornerstone, of a constitution? He will read that Israel is the national home of the Jewish people, that is, the home of every Jew in the world – but not the home of the Arab citizens who live in the country. He will read Article 8, which refers to the Jewish heritage and defines its cultivation in Israel and the Diaspora as one of the state’s missions and duties. By contrast, as an Arab he is entitled to preserve his culture and heritage only as an individual (Article 9) – as if that were possible. The bill fails to mention the right to take action in order to preserve one’s culture in conjunction with others, even though that is a principle of international law to which Israel is obligated.

The bill also seeks to reinforce the influence of Jewish religious law in two ways. First, Article 14(a) stipulates that “Jewish religious law will serve as a source of inspiration for legislators and judges in Israel.” It goes without saying that there are areas in which Israeli law does indeed draw on such inspiration, but there are other domains (such as criminal law) in which Jewish law has no impact on Israeli legislation – and rightly so. This kind of inspiration may have a negative impact on the status of women as equal to men. Why generalize and call for such “inspiration” in every field? Moreover, are non-Jewish legislators and judges, too, expected to “draw inspiration” from Jewish law?

Secondly, Article 14(a) changes, a little bit, the status quo established by the Foundations of Jurisprudence Law (see the **first chapter**).⁴⁰⁷

To conclude this part, Israel is experiencing a serious wave of nationalistic, anti-Arab legislation. Some of it passed like the Nakba law or the law for admission committees in small villages. Some did not pass but the problematic Basic Law is still pending and threatening the democratic nature of Israel.

The wave of hatred and racism

In the past decade, and in recent years in particular, there is a growing feeling of racial hatred in Israel, and erosion of democratic values. This can be shown in polls that demonstrate that people have less respect to values such as equality and human rights.⁴⁰⁸ Racist speech has become very frequent, especially in the social networks. People are not shy anymore about expressing explicit racist speech toward Arabs and also toward people who are seen as “Arab-accessories” like the Jewish left. This hatred reached a peak in the summer of 2014 during operation “Protective Edge” in the Gaza Strip.⁴⁰⁹ Hate crimes against mosques and churches became more frequent, and the peak was a vicious murder of an Arab youngster from Jerusalem, committed out of revenge and hatred.⁴¹⁰ Another phenomenon which takes place in the last years is the formation of new NGOs such as Lehava acting against “assimilation” (Jews who marry non-Jews) that chase and offend inter-religious couples.⁴¹¹ These racists enjoy tax-free donations, and are invited to Knesset hearings about “assimilation.” These NGOs get more and more approval and support in social networks, as they spread hatred against non-Jews, especially against Arabs. They too, use mixed nationalistic and religious language and messages: “protecting the Jewish people” or “protecting the Jewish nature of the state.”

Discussion and conclusions

Our argument in this paper relates to the connection between religion, nationalism, chauvinism, and even racism. We claim that on top of the “usual” infringements on rights, the non-separation contains an additional, hidden, and dangerous problem. We do not argue that there is a straight line between religion, nationalism and racism. Religion has many forms and there are ways to reconcile religion with democracy and equality. Judaism is a source of the noblest humanistic values, such as human dignity and equality of all residents, as well as of hideous ideas of supremacy toward non-Jews and problematic attitudes toward homosexuals and women.

Unfortunately, a substantive part of the representatives of the Orthodox Jews, represent the latter approach more dominantly.

There is strong evidence (in Israel) pointing to a statistical correlation between religiousness, religious education, nationalism and racism. The following diagram represents the results of the 2014 Democracy Index. The numbers show the percentage of people who responded to the question: “I think it is proper, that Israel, as a Jewish state, should fund Jewish cities and villages, more than it should fund Arab cities and villages.”⁴¹²

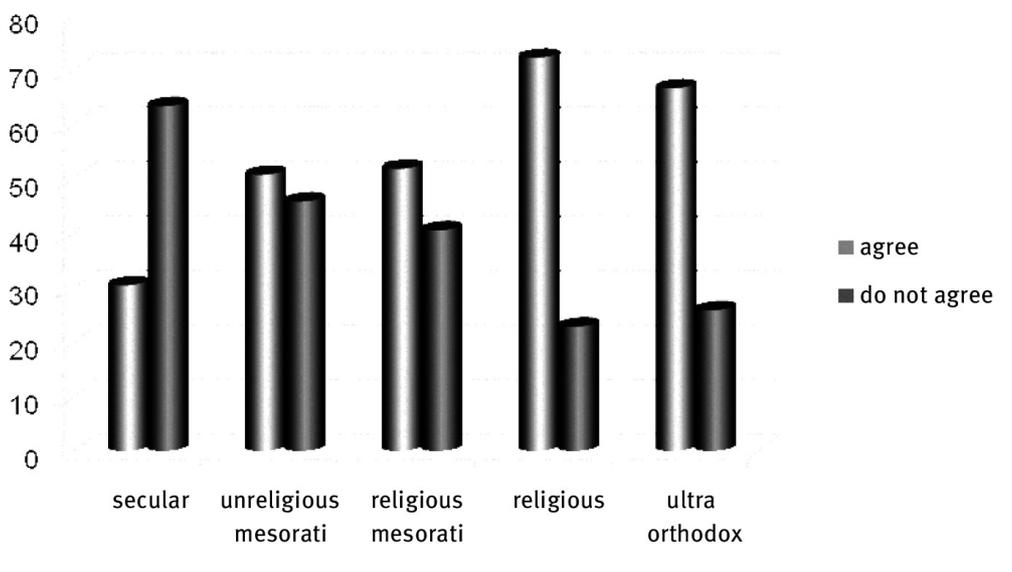


Fig. 1: 2014 Democracy Index. Percentage of people who responded to the question “I think it is proper, that Israel, as a Jewish state, should fund Jewish cities and villages, more than it should fund Arab cities and villages.”

The next diagram shows the percentage of people who agreed that in Israel, Jewish citizens should have more rights than non-Jewish citizens:⁴¹³

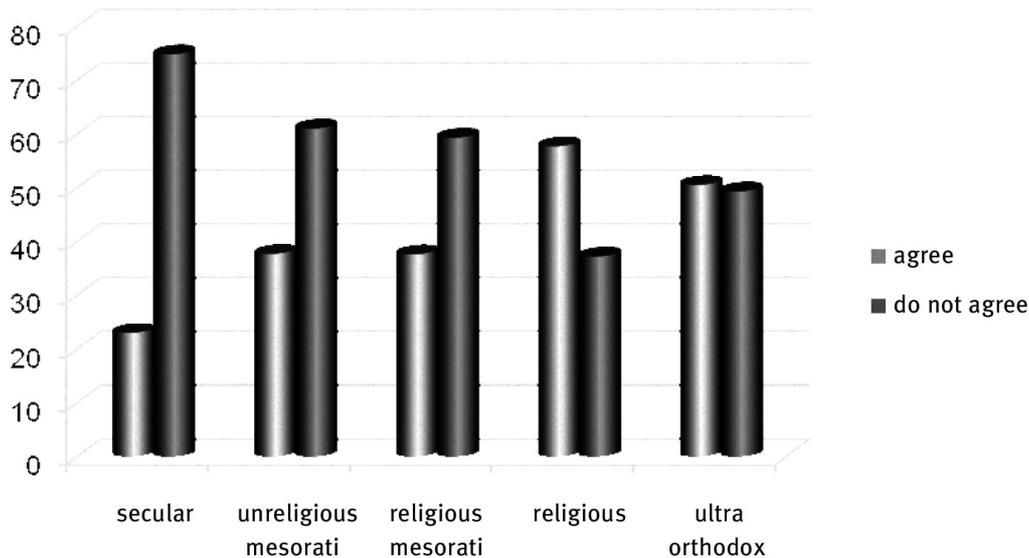


Fig. 2: 2014 Democracy Index. Percentage of people who agreed that in Israel, Jewish citizens should have more rights than non-Jewish citizens.

We can clearly see the connection between religiosity and chauvinistic, almost racist perceptions. It is also interesting to see that the ultra-Orthodox respondents are a little less supportive to these trends. This is not surprising – the ultra-Orthodox sector has less nationalistic views than the Zionist religious sector. Nonetheless, the religiosity of the ultra-Orthodox sector is enough to show extreme views as seen in the Index. The explanation has to be the education and the views that are nurtured within religious communities, about Jewish supremacy and the meaning of the Jewish state as a state “for Jews,” a state that prefers Jews and discriminates in their favor. The connection between the non-separation of religion and state, and this racist-nationalistic trend is clear: Israel is funding, because of the non-separation, religious, and even extreme religious education. The number of children learning in these sectarian schools is growing. The students in these systems are those expressing the very troubling views.

Moreover, because of the mixture between “Jewishness” as a nation and as a religion, each of them feeds the other and enhances its impact. It is very hard to distinguish between national and religious “Jewishness.” Israel is funding with tax payers money for the “Jewish identity administration.” It recognizes Lehava and other organizations for tax donations. The outcome is racist activities and views promoted by the state.

The concept of a nation-state can be reconciled with democratic principles and values. It seems that when the national component is coupled with a religious component, the pressure on democracy reaches a danger zone. It is therefore required, that a clear line of separation will be drawn between state and religion. Such a line is needed in order to fend off chauvinism and racism.

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Topic III: One People? One Nation?

Introduction

This section addresses the question whether the enormous heterogeneity of Israeli society, manifested by the existence of numerous groups, Jewish and non-Jewish, is challenging societal cohesion. It inquires about the extent to which convergence or divergence on those actors' part is discernible. Israel has long represented the case of a nationalism, articulated by a powerful dominant culture, that successfully crystallized and reshaped a large part of the Jewish people, formerly dispersed and highly heterogeneous. That enterprise was marked by the emergence of internal cleavages stemming from different value-systems, in the context of powerful globalizing processes and large-scale immigration, and the evincing of sharp confrontations of interests. However, the deep connections between Jewish nationalism and Judaism imbue the dynamics of those confrontations and the numerous parties that, in one way or another and under very diverse titles, contest each other's exigencies. From that perspective, the following section offers analyses of selected aspects of given – major – groups and cleavages within Israeli society, and grants the opportunity of observing particularly acute debates by researchers who apply different approaches.

Larissa Remennick delves into the evolution in Israel of the immigrants from the Former Soviet Union who started arriving in the late 1980s and have ever since comprised one of the country's largest origin-groups. At least for the lifetime of the first and 1.5 generations of Russian-speaking Israelis, she contends, they will continue to constitute a distinct entity. Their key features include secular and materialistic worldviews, and a drive for social mobility and economic success, mainly via higher education. They are also characterized by a pragmatic and critical view of politics and society. The size of the community, its family ties, high levels of human capital, and its connectedness with the global Jewish

Russian-speaking diaspora ensure their sustainability at least for some time to come. In brief, in order to fully feel a part of the society, they still need to adapt some of their primary attributes to patterns of behavior prevalent in Israeli society.

Majid Al-Haj elaborates on one such requirement, namely, the understanding of the situation in which Arabs are participants. It is Majid Al-Haj's conviction that the attitudes of Russian-speaking immigrants toward the Arab minority are deeply affected by anti-Arab feelings found in the environment. In addition, the greater their exposure to the hawkish attitudes of many veteran Israeli Jews, the stronger their disparaging attitudes toward Arabs. Other factors that should be taken into consideration consist of the immigrants' own political culture that they brought with them from the Soviet Union, and the impact of social stratification in the country. The lower the immigrants' socioeconomic status, the stronger their perception of Arabs as constituting an "economic threat."

Menachem Friedman depicts another group in Israeli society, namely the ultra-Orthodox sector, and more particularly the population of the "society-of-scholars" in the *yeshivot* and *kollelim*. Their leaders oppose modernity and take issue with the Zionist project. The learners themselves number thousands of men who engage in Torah and religious learning on a full-time basis, with no other occupation. A cardinal change occurred over the years following the opening of post-yeshiva institutions – the *kollelim* – that enrol married young adults. As a consequence, the age of marriage dropped dramatically and founding large families became a primary goal for this Haredi generation. This tendency, coupled with the lack of professional skills and experience, created an impoverished community dependent on society at large, i.e., the Israeli taxpayers. For all parties involved, that community's way of life represents a heavy social and economic burden.

Eva Etzioni-Halevy emphasizes that Jewish-Israeli society is deeply divided between religious and secular Jews, though the gap between the two groups is not widening. Some mechanisms enhance the division between the camps, while

others work for mutual integration. Recently there has been no clear trend either way. The picture is complex and contains multiple shades of religiosity and secularity. The deep division between the religious and the secular derives from notions and contents of Jewish identity, and it entails a cultural cleavage. Processes and mechanisms, she says, are highly dynamic and in continuous flux, which leads to relative stability.

We see in these texts that – when considered as a whole – ethno-cultural singularity which forms the very texture of today's Israeli multiculturalism, does not exist or develop without tensions and conflicts. The dynamic of the various cleavages of this society implies both convergences and divergences, and the researchers evince how far the cases they study represent a specific problematic for the setting as a whole, and for other cases in particular.

In this section only a few cases are discussed, under given lights; other cases that also constitute a substantial part of Israeli society, are discussed under the topic of ethnic (in)equality.

12. Russian-Speaking Israelis in the Ethno-Social Tapestry of Israel

Larissa Remennick

This paper was completed in May 2014.

The Great Comeback of Russian Jews during the 1990s

It is no secret that Jewish émigrés from the Russian Empire were among the major figures of the Zionist movement and the founders of the State of Israel. The key political and cultural actors of the young Israeli state hailed from the Russian, Polish and Yiddish speaking lands of Eastern Europe.⁴¹⁴ Street names of most Israeli cities reflect the role of Russian Jewry in Israeli history: I counted at least 25 such names, original or Hebraised (e.g., Arlosoroff, Achad Haam, Bialik, Agnon, Ben-Gurion, Ben-Yehuda, Borokhov, Bugrashov, Dizengoff, Katznelson, Rutenberg, Tabenkin, Trumpeldor, Sokolov, Ussishkin, Jabotinsky) that appear on the street signs in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa, and most other cities. The legacies of Russian/ Soviet socialism in Israel's economy and political mechanisms were tangible up until the Great Upheaval (*ha-Mahapach*) of the late 1970s, when Likud-headed coalition came to power, resetting a political agenda. Likewise, the initial decades of the Jewish State bore a clear imprint of both high and popular Russian culture: ex-Moscow *Habima* theatre was the country's single professional troupe; Hebrew radio broadcasted popular Russian melodies with Hebrew lyrics; most school and home libraries featured originals and translations of Pushkin, Tolstoy and Chekhov, along with Yiddish classics Sholem Aleichem and M. M. Sphorim. The Russian-Soviet legacies in Israeli modus vivendi gradually faded away reflecting demographic changes (the departure of the founders' generation along with the growing

share of Mizrahi Jews) and the neo-liberal turn in politics and economy. However, when the first mass Aliyah of Soviet Jews became possible in the early 1970s, they were greeted by the veterans as lost brethren, familiar rather than foreign. Some 170,000 of Soviet *Olim* (new immigrants) of this early wave had been rapidly absorbed by the Hebrew mainstream.⁴¹⁵

After 1980, Aliyah dried up to a trickle, only to be resumed as an avalanche in the wake of Gorbachev's political reforms, the deterioration and eventual demise of the Former Soviet Union (FSU). In the late 1980s and early 1990s, over one million Soviet Jews have moved to Israel, while about 700,000 emigrated to the West, mostly USA, Canada, and Germany. This seminal exodus has had three major outcomes: it significantly fortified the Jewish communities of destination countries, accelerated demographic decline of the remaining ex-Soviet Jewry, and spearheaded the formation (or rather the major expansion) of the global Russian-Jewish diaspora. While in the Western countries Former Soviet immigrants comprised a small minority, their mass influx to Israel increased its Jewish population by almost 20%.⁴¹⁶

The Israeli "context of reception" has changed dramatically between the 1970s and the 1990s. The neo-liberal economic reforms along with the nascent globalization have drastically changed the structure of opportunity for the new immigrants. The policy of direct absorption⁴¹⁷ and skyrocketing housing costs compelled many newcomers to settle in Israel's geographic and social periphery with more limited employment and educational choices. The deterioration of traditional industries and the expansion of temporary and precarious employment schemes affected these newcomers more than veteran Israelis. Welfare safety net during retraining and job search as well as child support and single parent benefits have shrunk consistently since the mid-1990s. All this and sheer surplus of educated migrant professionals in the small Israeli economy meant that those who were older, unable to retrain, and had not mastered Hebrew had to downgrade to any manual and service jobs they could find. As a result, only about one-third of skilled Russian immigrants found employment in line with their education and

pre-migration work experience, while the rest toiled in semi-skilled or manual labor force. Although Russian Israelis have the highest employment rates among all population sectors, their income and living standards reflect this occupational structure, frozen since the mid-1990 at about 35% below the national average for the Jews.⁴¹⁸

Ethnic and social diversity of ex-Soviet Jews

Reflecting state atheism and gradual destruction of Jewish religious and community life in the USSR since the 1930s, Soviet Jews were officially redefined as an ethnic minority. By the end of WWII, they have completed the process of secularization and assimilation to the urban middle class. Between 50% and 70% of them received post-secondary education and had professional or white-collar occupations, standing out as the most advanced ethnic group in the USSR. The signs of old Jewish habitus – the holidays, food, and Yiddish lore – were traceable only in the families with grandparents coming from provincial Jewish towns.⁴¹⁹ However, two lines of social stratification still cut across Soviet Jewry, shaping Jewish identities and the extent of assimilation to the Russian/ Soviet mainstream.

One line separated the Jews of the major metropolitan centers, including Moscow, Leningrad/ St. Petersburg, Kiev, Minsk, and other major cities, and those residing in smaller, peripheral towns of the Slavic and Baltic republics. Although all of them historically descend from Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazi Jews of the Russian Empire, their post-revolutionary fortunes led to multiple divisions between those whose ancestors moved to the larger cities and gained higher education, and those remaining behind in the former towns of the Pale. The former entered the ranks of the Soviet intelligentsia, while the latter more often belonged to the lower-rank technical, trade and service occupations. The small-town Jews of the western USSR have disproportionately perished during Nazi occupation, while their assimilated counterparts – professionals and skilled workers from the

major cities – had survived the war in greater numbers thanks to organized evacuations of industries and organizations to the outlying Soviet lands.⁴²⁰ The selective extermination of the *Yiddishkeit* during the war accelerated the weakening of the Jewish memory and traditions among the post-war generations.

Another division is ethnic: between Ashkenazi Jews of the Slavic and Baltic lands, comprising about 85% of the total, and small non-European Jewish groups settled across Central Asia, in Georgia, Azerbaijan, and the North Caucasus. Thus, the Eastern and Southern Jews (who historically hail from Mesopotamia and Persia) form part of the ex-Soviet social and geographic periphery, making residential and ethnic divisions overlap significantly. The “provincial Jews” have lower rates of intermarriage with non-Jews, speak Jewish languages, and across the Soviet period maintained Jewish communal networks, including clandestine synagogues, kosher butcheries and other facets of Jewish lifestyle.⁴²¹ The Jews of Central Asia and the Caucasus also maintained a more patriarchal family structure, with lower rates of women’s employment and higher numbers of children. In contrast to the assimilated, educated and urbanized Jews of the Slavic republics, fewer Jews in the Soviet periphery (especially those of non-European origin) attained university degrees and professional careers. More often, they made their living in local trade and crafts, and during post-Soviet transition many became successful businessmen.⁴²²

In Israel, these pre-migration lines of stratification continued to shape the choices and opportunities of the newcomers. Olim from the Caucasus and Central Asia often moved to smaller peripheral towns that resembled their former environs in the FSU: many joined relatives who had settled there in the 1970s; others were drawn by cheaper land and housing, while being less concerned about employment opportunities and school quality. Thus ethnic residential enclaves of ex-Soviet Mizrahim have emerged: e.g., of Georgian Jews in Ashdod and Holon, Jews of the Caucasus and Uzbekistan in Or Yehuda, Sderot, Ashkelon and Kiryat Malachi. Given their stronger ties with the Jewish tradition

and propensity for trade and small business, these Olim quickly learned Hebrew and fairly smoothly joined the ranks of local Mizrahi Jews in their neighborhoods, markets and synagogues. Most continued to earn a living in trade and small business, maintained strong family and community ties, and followed Jewish traditions at home, creatively mixing their homeland and Israeli customs.

Secular and assimilated Ashkenazi Jews from the major Soviet cities typically had a harder time adjusting to Israeli customs and lifestyle, which many of them resented as overly religious, parochial, and incompatible with modernity. At the outset, many were resentful of intense intervention of religion in government and citizen's lives.⁴²³ Reflecting their common occupational downgrading and low income, few of them could afford living in prestigious towns and neighborhoods of Central Israel and merge with local Ashkenazi Jews. Most have settled in poorer areas or suburbs of the major cities (Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Gush Dan, Haifa) opting for smaller apartments but wider occupational opportunities and better schools. Others opted for larger and cheaper homes in Israel's northern and southern periphery and settled down for semi-skilled jobs (or long commuting). By and large, just around one third succeeded in their professional careers, established ties with their native social peers, and could therefore climb the ladder leading to Israeli middle class. Yet, most of them retain their distinct cultural tastes and prefer the company of their co-ethnics in the personal domains of leisure, family and friends.

Another line of internal stratification running across the ex-Soviet community has to do with Jewish or Slavic ethnicity. As elsewhere, marriage to members of the dominant majority reflected ongoing assimilation of the Jews under Soviet regime. Despite social antisemitism, the marriages between Jews and non-Jews had been widespread and socially acceptable in the USSR/FSU since the 1920s, and continued to increase during the post-Soviet period. In the younger cohorts of Russian/ Soviet Jews, over 60% have non-Jewish spouses, with exogamy being more common among Jewish men. Thus, in 1979, 51% of married Jewish men and only 33% of the

women had spouses from another ethnic group; by 2002, the share of non-Jewish spouses among Jewish men and women has reached 72% and 53%, respectively.⁴²⁴ Reflecting these demographic trends, about half of all post-1990 immigrant families include non-Jewish or partly Jewish members.

Recent research on the experiences of non-Jewish immigrants in the Jewish state suggests that, despite their limited civic rights in the domain of personal law (especially marriage to Jews), these newcomers largely accept the de-facto majority-minority relations in Israel.⁴²⁵ Even those who resent the symbolic dominance of Jewishness in the public sphere (usually practicing Christians, a minority among all non-Jews) admit that, on the pragmatic level, they have benefitted from migration and do not plan returning to the FSU.⁴²⁶ They compare their current living standards to those of their co-ethnics in the poorer ex-Soviet states (where they typically come from) and feel content with their improved wellbeing in the new country. Hence, they are grateful to the Jewish state for having access to most economic and social rights, appreciate the opportunities granted to their children, and seldom complain of discrimination or exclusion. Only a small minority, typically women planning marriage to native men or mothers of small children, undergo a long and demanding procedure of Orthodox conversion for further “nationalization” and improving the official status of their children.⁴²⁷ Socialized in the polity where the privileged status of titular nations vs. ethnic minorities was inherent in most state policies, most non-Jewish immigrants did not come to Israel expecting full equality with the national majority and seldom engage in social activism challenging the status quo. Instead, they bypass the religious establishment – by getting married abroad (with subsequent civic registration in Israel) and opening cemeteries for non-Jewish (secular) burial. In contrast, the Jewish immigrants as members of the hegemonic majority endowed with the sense of entitlement often adjust their frame of reference, comparing their work situation, income and living standards to those of veteran Israelis and often feeling disadvantaged if not cheated of their “birth right.”⁴²⁸

Russian cultural and linguistic continuity

Ever since the major post-revolution exodus of the early 20th century, Russian and Soviet émigrés are known for their affinity to their native language and culture and form a thriving global diaspora. Despite mastering host country languages and instrumental integration in local institutions, the first-generation Russians abroad typically stick to their native habitus (language, domestic customs, leisure habits, etc.) and try to transfer these to the children. Even the most educated and successful of them typically opt for the bicultural mode of social insertion rather than a head-on assimilation. They often construe Russian culture (both in its high and everyday expressions) as superior to the cultures of their adopted countries. This universal observation is fully applicable to Russian/ Soviet Jews in their new domiciles: Israel, the US, Germany, and other countries of mass immigration.⁴²⁹ Members of the Russian Jewish intelligentsia are deeply attached to their language and cultural heritage, because they were both ardent consumers and the key creators of the 20th century Russian culture as writers, poets, actors, stage and film directors, etc.⁴³⁰

Knowing little about Israel before migration and imagining it as a “regular Western country in the Middle East,” most educated Soviet Jews coming from large metropolitan areas found Israel shockingly Levantine, parochial, and “uncultured.”⁴³¹ Due to the pressures of economic survival, many could not learn Hebrew well enough to consume the mainstream Israeli mass media and high culture. After spending more than 20 years in Israel, many Russian Olim, especially older ones, cannot name in surveys high-profile Hebrew cultural icons (actors, writers, TV anchors, etc.), while being fully updated on the Russian “Who is Who” and cultural fashions they watch on cable TV or read about online. Although over time most Olim consume less Russian and more Israeli-based media content, many still prefer to consume it in their mother tongue via Israeli-Russian TV and radio channels or internet sites.⁴³²

The perceptions of Israeli culture by Russian Olim reflect their precarious location in the local social stratification system. Working in manual and service jobs and living in poorer areas, most ex-Soviets come in touch mainly with the working-class Israelis of Mizrahi origin. Their lifestyle and behavior (e.g., large family gatherings on weekends and holidays in shared public spaces, playing loud Mizrahi music in cars and parks) are perceived by Russian Israelis as “rude, pushy, inconsiderate of others, and at times just wild” (to cite a typical interviewee). Construing Israel’s mass culture as inferior, while lacking access to its high culture due to their limited Hebrew and thin wallets, Russian Olim created their own cultural and media microcosm, including news media and publishing outlets, libraries, theatres and clubs, and later on a large domain of Israeli Russian internet. The extent of Russian cultural continuity among first generation immigrants is a function of their age at arrival (with the older migrants largely consigned to the co-ethnic cultural bubble), gender (women being more prone to acculturation than men), occupational status (professionals learn Hebrew faster and converge with their Israeli social peers), and residential milieu (native or co-ethnic).⁴³³ Yet, contrary to the early expectations, multiple members of the 1.5 generation of Russian Israelis also manifest clear bicultural preferences (more on this below).

Immigrant family and intergenerational ties

Many Russian families count three generations, who migrated together or in chain and often reside in close proximity or in the same household. Many such families (about 20%) consist of a single mother with child(ren) and her own parent(s). Some mothers divorced before migration, while others experienced marital crisis in Israel, reflecting the initial pressures of resettlement.⁴³⁴ Whether it is a couple or a single parent in the middle of the “family sandwich,” it was usually typified by dense intergenerational ties and hands-on help.⁴³⁵ The older generation did their best to assist their children in domestic tasks and childcare, enabling them to invest time and effort in

learning Hebrew, occupational re-adjustment, and other challenges of integration. Although uprooting and resettlement in old age took a heavy toll on these migrants, many of them were driven by the mission of helping their young, while others discovered new purpose in life via civic activism and/or reconnecting with their Jewish roots.⁴³⁶ Serving as the main carers and educators for their grandchildren (before they started school), the grandparents thus became key agents of Russian linguistic and cultural continuity for the young. In exchange, the younger adults helped their (grand)parents to get around in Israeli society and mediated their contacts with Hebrew speakers. Generational relations came under stress when the elderly got increasingly frail and dependent, requiring more aid in medical visits and daily tasks, claiming more time and effort from the young (and still struggling) adults.⁴³⁷ Relatively few Russian families can afford live-in caregivers or place their elders even in public senior homes (co-payment is required from children), so the burden of home-based eldercare often falls on the middle-generation women.⁴³⁸

The integration journeys of Russian Israelis underscore an interesting gender dynamic. While ex-Soviet men and women immigrated with similarly high levels of human capital, in Israel female professionals experienced a deeper occupational downgrading than men. Fewer women could regain their former occupations, especially in engineering and technical domains considered masculine in Israel, and had to land pink-collar and service jobs in banking, insurance, sales, tourism, eldercare, etc. One survey in the early 2000s showed that about 35% of men but only 18% of women with academic degrees managed to continue their original (or similar) careers upon migration. In dual-career families, the wives often ascribed primacy to their husbands' careers (getting licensed, starting a job as a volunteer, etc.) and became primary breadwinners by taking any available jobs. Having lost crucial time at the outset, many of them could never get back to their own occupational track and remained in the semi-skilled or manual workforce. Yet, despite having jobs with high burnout and low pay (in nursing, retail, etc.), women are often more

satisfied with their work lives than are their male partners with ostensibly better jobs and work conditions. Across their migration saga, women manifested greater flexibility, faster learning, and willingness to do whatever it takes to support their families in the new situation. Women typically speak more fluent Hebrew; they acquired greater number of new contacts and friends (also among the natives) and often served as their families' social agents at Israeli institutions. Men were more frustrated by their misfortunes (e.g., in job search) and tended to dwell on their past in search of identity and self-esteem; they were also more critical of Israeli society and less often sought new friendships or venues for self-realization. Eventually, men were more successful in their instrumental and economic adaptation (measured by occupational status and income), while women were better at their Israeli acculturation in its social and symbolic dimensions.⁴³⁹

Young adults of Russian origin

The 1.5 generation of Russian Israelis (who migrated as older children or adolescents) are by definition split in their identity and cultural orientations between the two components of their socialization. The extent of their "Israelization" is determined by the age at arrival, their school trajectory and integration into local peer culture, as well as the amount of resources and support their parents could offer them during initial adaptation.⁴⁴⁰ Smaller children in Russian families were often left in care of their grandparents, while teenagers typically had to fend for themselves, both at school and in the streets. The parents (often just the mother) were struggling to regain their own foothold in the new country – learn Hebrew, make a living, solve multiple domestic and bureaucratic problems they tackled as newcomers. Many adults worked long hours in several part-time or shift jobs and came home only to sleep. Even when they had time and intent to help their children struggling at school, they had few tools at their disposal not knowing the language of instruction and unfamiliar with the new curriculum. When their children suffered of teachers' neglect or peer bullying, the parents could hardly intervene,

lacking both free time and social skills for handling these situations in the new context. The school-based studies conducted during the 1990s⁴⁴¹ pointed to multiple problems of integration. When they comprised a sizeable minority in class, Russian kids formed their own bubbles and tried to negotiate their status vis-à-vis Sabras. Teachers dealing with the large numbers of students with zero or weak Hebrew, and no extra help with larger classes, were often overwhelmed and helpless. As a result, many immigrant students fell behind academic targets (especially in Hebrew-based disciplines like the Bible, Jewish history, literature, etc.), failed the tests, missed classes, and eventually dropped out. Only 50–60% of Russian students completed high school with full matriculation necessary for further academic studies.⁴⁴²

By the time they were drafted to the IDF, most Russian Olim have already achieved certain Hebrew proficiency, but their different mental makeup and lingering mistrust of the military (based on their parents' Soviet experience) often made their mandatory service difficult.⁴⁴³ The role of the IDF as a crucible of integration and future opportunities for young Israelis was realized for some 'Russians' (usually those with higher matriculation scores and useful high school majors) who served in combat, intelligence and other elite units, but not for many others. Those who had not excelled at school typically served in maintenance or technical jobs, such as drivers and cooks, with few valuable skills or social ties applicable in the subsequent civic life. Looking back at their years in the military, many young Olim recounted them as a waste of time that could be invested into vocational training and helping their struggling parents. Fewer Russians than Sabras asserted that their military friendships lasted after demobilization and continued to serve them in their educational, occupational and other goals, i.e., turned into their social capital.⁴⁴⁴

The trajectories of these young immigrants underscore path dependency principle: all the previous stages of their Israeli socialization (high school and military service) predicted the opportunities and outcomes at the next stage – academic education and labor market entry. Roughly one-third

of all 1.5ers faced two major barriers to academic degrees: poor high school/SAT results and high tuition. Let me remind that the plurality of their parents had post-secondary degrees but working-class incomes in Israel. Some young Olim with higher academic motivation managed to complete their matriculation studies in the army, but still had to summon funds to study for SAT and pay three years of academic tuition, since their parents could be of little financial help.⁴⁴⁵ Many students continued to work (part- or full-time) in undergraduate school to support themselves, which compromised both their knowledge and grades and barred them from future graduate studies. The academic majors pursued by Russian students typically reflect their families' pragmatic, survival-oriented agenda whereby labor market potential shapes their educational choices. Academically stronger students usually opt for STEM/ICT⁴⁴⁶ occupations (just like most of their parents did in the FSU), medicine, law or economics, while those with modest academic record go into nursing, therapy and paramedical occupations, ICT support, and other technical occupations with an earning potential. Just a trickle of these students turn to the majors in humanities, social sciences, and other liberal arts.

By now, most 1.5ers who migrated during the 1990s have already completed their education and got some occupational foothold. Over 75% have technical, vocational or academic degrees and are currently employed, however many have not realized their potential or found jobs commensurate with their skills. Small and saturated Israeli labor market is hard to navigate for young adults of migrant background, many of whom still have an accent and are visibly different from their native peers.⁴⁴⁷ Although they are endowed with a richer local social capital than their parents, it is still insufficient to land lucrative jobs and promotions they may deserve. Young migrants' social networks are much thinner than those of Sabras (sic. the above-said irrelevance of ex-army ties for many Russians); their self-presentation style (e.g., in job interviews and wage negotiations) is low-key and realistic; their parents cannot help them by using their own connections so critical for building initial careers in the small and closely

knit Israeli society. As a result, many 1.5ers with academic degrees, particularly in more competitive and creative niches, feel frustrated and may search for better employment opportunities abroad, be it the FSU or the West. Despite inevitable native tongue attrition, many of them still have a decent working knowledge of Russian and dwell on their transnational ties with co-ethnic peers in the FSU and in the West as a resource for expanding their opportunities on the global education and job market.⁴⁴⁸

Relations with other segments of Israeli society

Israeli Jewish society is built of three generations of immigrants (on top of a small Sabra core); their places of origin still demarcate clear lines of ethnic stratification. As was already mentioned, most ex-Soviet Jews belong to the Ashkenazi side of the ethnic map (descending from *Yiddishkeit* of Eastern Europe), while some 15–20% belong to the Mizrahi side, coming from Central Asia and the Caucasus. Risking an over-generalization, I would argue that ex-Soviet Mizrahi Jews, endowed with poorer human capital but stronger Jewish identity in traditional sense, feel more content with their social locations in Israeli society than do their Ashkenazi counterparts – secular, educated but unable to reach economic and social parity with veteran Israelis.

Arguably, ex-Soviet Mizrahim have joined their own ilk among veteran Middle Eastern Jews more smoothly than did European Russian Jews vis-à-vis Israeli Ashkenazim, their alleged ethno-cultural peers. The disappointment many Ashkenazi Olim feel reflects mainly their misguided expectations of “Israel as a Western country,” often unrealized professional ambitions, and apparent indifference of most veterans to their human and cultural capital.⁴⁴⁹ While Mizrahi Olim feel at home in smaller towns, workshops, markets, synagogues and hearty family gatherings that typify local *modus vivendi*, for many ex-Soviets hailing from large cities, small families and secular-universal cultural interests the

Israeli habitus seems too traditional, self-centered, and parochial. These immigrants (often having ethnically-mixed families) were increasingly prone to leave Israel, seeking more comfortable social milieu, occupational mobility and personal security elsewhere. About 10% (100,000) left for good, while an estimated 5–7% live transnationally, working, studying and having homes both in Israel and another country.⁴⁵⁰

Some ex-Soviets who moved to Israel chose the path of strengthening their tenuous Jewish identity, either on the intellectual or spiritual track.⁴⁵¹ The former sought “rational knowledge” in Jewish history, culture and philosophy, while the latter populated Kabbala classes, conversion ulpan, Reform Judaism groups, and even Orthodox yeshivot. Other ex-Soviets, still skeptical about religion, fortified their Israeli identity by adopting the narrative of secular Jewish nationalism: they resent territorial compromise with Palestinians and are proud of the military service of their children. A large majority of Russian Israelis expresses belonging to the Jewish traditions by celebrating the High Holidays (Rosh Hashana, Passover, Chanukah), as well as Israeli civic holidays (Independence Day, the Fallen Soldiers and the Holocaust Memorial Days) on par with all Israeli Jews. Although they reinvent these traditions, mixing elements of Jewish, Israeli and Russian customs and typically not keeping kosher, most underscore these practices as an achievement in their narratives of adjustment to Israel.⁴⁵²

Coming from a society combining an official doctrine of equality with clear ethnic hierarchy, Russian Jews rapidly grasped the nature of Israeli ethnic relations, while trying to improve their own place on the ladder of status and prestige. Their debut in Israeli politics was via creating *Yisrael Bealayah*, followed by a few other political parties “with a Russian accent” that were well represented in the Knesset and government between 1996 and 2006.⁴⁵³ Later on, politicians of Russian origin have merged with the major national parties; the only surviving “Russian” party *Yisrael Beiteinu* poses as a regular Zionist party with the national (rather than sectarian) agenda. Like their elected representatives, most Russian voters are now dispersed between the major political camps and vote

for larger national parties, mainly of the secular-Zionist right-wing. Imagining Israel's ethnic structure of today, one can roughly place Ashkenazi "Russians" below Sabras and veteran immigrants from Europe and America but above most Mizrahim, and certainly much above Ethiopian Jews and Arab Israelis. This hierarchy roughly parallels the ethnic distribution of occupational categories, incomes, and residential areas, i.e., the main indicators of socioeconomic status.⁴⁵⁴

An interesting dynamic has emerged in the process of interaction between ex-Soviet Olim and local Mizrahi residents in the peripheral towns of Israel's North and South. Their initial encounter occurred on the background of tough competition for scarce housing and jobs, in which working class Mizrahim had an advantage as locals while many "Russians" had higher levels of formal education. Many Mizrahi workers felt threatened by the influx of the newcomers on their turf, particularly when the traditional industries that employed them (plastics, textiles, garments, etc.) started crumbling during the 1990s. Rubbing elbows as neighbors and coworkers exposed stark differences in the everyday customs of ex-Soviet and Mizrahi Jews, leading to further antagonism and mutual negative stereotypes. Ex-Soviet women, used to independence and parity with their male partners, were particularly resentful of the patriarchal, condescending or outright macho style of relating to women among working-class Mizrahi men.⁴⁵⁵

However, years of close contact gradually bred convergence between Russian and Mizrahi everyday cultures in towns like Ashkelon, Afula, Sderot, Karmiel, Maalot, and others. The 1.5 and second generations of Russian Olim, who went to the same schools and military units as their Mizrahi peers, came to appreciate each other's better qualities, stroke friendships and even married. The latter phenomenon – young couples featuring a Mizrahi man and a "Russian" woman (and more rarely a reverse combination) – became rather common in these towns. A few local ethnographies have looked into the dynamic of Russian-Mizrahi family⁴⁵⁶ and other social interactions, suggesting that many young Russians (mainly men) adopt some features of Mizrahi habitus, because they

reaffirm their local masculinity and help them merge with their social milieu as insiders. On the more metropolitan, educated end of the spectrum, Russian students and young professionals have also merged with their native peers – bearers of different accents, parental origins and skin tones.⁴⁵⁷

The interactions of Russian Jews with Ethiopian Olim and Israeli Arabs are rather scant and superficial, typically limited to the blue-collar workplace (if at all extant). These segments of Israeli population seldom co-reside in the same neighborhoods or study in the same schools, so the basis for mutual acquaintance is rather thin. Anecdotal evidence and a few local ethnographies⁴⁵⁸ suggest that adult “Russians” sustained high levels of prejudice against these categories of Israeli *others*, but in the younger generations socialized in Israel these attitudes may be shifting toward greater inclusion, as was the case with Mizrahim. The fact that many college-educated Arabs (and some Ethiopians) join middle-class occupations like pharmacology, social work, nursing and medicine means that their encounter with Russian co-workers will be denser and may challenge mutual prejudice lowering barriers to interethnic friendships.

Conclusion: Russian Israelis as an ethno-cultural entity

Up until the end of the 20th century, Russian-speaking Jewry comprised one of the larger branches of the Diaspora, and over the last 30 years of intense emigration it became the major source of demographic growth of Israeli, North American and European Jewries. Reflecting a complex historic dynamic of Jewish-Gentile relations in the Russian Empire and subsequently the Soviet Union, Russian-speaking Jewry is endowed with a unique set of properties defining it as a special ethno-cultural entity.⁴⁵⁹ The key features of its collective portrait include deeply secular and materialistic worldview; the drive for social mobility and economic success, mainly on the path of higher education and professional accomplishments; pragmatic and critical view of politics and

society in which they live; and high adaptability to the dominant cultural milieu along with keeping their own core values. These traits continue to shape the adjustment strategies of Russian Jews as immigrants in Israel and in the West.

In the specific Israeli context of the 1990s, whereby ex-Soviet immigrants were set on the path of “direct absorption” in a small and struggling society swept by immigrants, these qualities enabled their survival and getting initial foothold. Twenty plus years down the road, most middle-aged Russian Israelis have mastered Hebrew (to the levels matching their needs) and are rather well integrated in the workplaces and neighborhoods. Most energetic and upwardly-mobile of them have made a deep imprint on all Israeli institutions: they are prominent among the leading scientists, physicians, hi-tech engineers and developers, musicians, artists and athletes who represent Israel abroad. On the other end of the spectrum, Russian-speakers are still over-represented among the lower tiers of the workforce, toiling for low wages in manufacturing and services.

Regardless of their socioeconomic locations, these immigrants and many of their children, young adults of the 1.5 generation, keep strong attachments to their language and culture of origin.⁴⁶⁰ Over time, fewer of them are interested in the events occurring in Russia-FSU itself and shift to the locally produced Russian-language media and cultural produce with Israeli content and flavor. Many of them have relatives and friends scattered across the globe; their drive for maintaining these transnational ties is fortified by the opportunities of “time and space compressing technologies” of air travel, cell phones and internet. The very size of Israel’s Russian-speaking community, its strong family ties and high human capital, as well as its openness to the global Russian diaspora, will probably ensure sustainability of its unique habitus in a foreseeable future.

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13. Immigration and Conflict in a Deeply Divided Society: The Encounter between Russian Immigrants and the Indigenous Palestinian Minority in Israel

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This paper was completed in October 2014.

Theoretical framework

Countries throughout the globe are facing the major question of how to deal with migration and its implications for society, ethnic diversity and development.⁴⁶¹ One of the central implications of migration has to do with the creation and/ or perpetuation of ethnic conflicts. As Richmond indicates, “population movements can arise from conflicting situations in sending areas and can generate conflict in receiving societies, particularly where different ethnic and racial groups are involved.”⁴⁶² This is especially true in deeply divided societies, where ethnicity is used as both an identity and as a tool for social and political mobilization.⁴⁶³ In such situations, it is not only that “ethnic boundaries” are maintained, but they are also “manipulated.”⁴⁶⁴

There are a number of approaches toward the causes of conflicts in general, and ethnic conflict with immigrants in particular. One of the well-known models in this field is the “integrated threat theory” of Stephan and Stephan.⁴⁶⁵ This theory relates to the factors behind the conflict between the local group (which is called by Stephan and Stephan the “in group”), and the new group (which is called the “out group”). According to this theory, there are four types of threat causing prejudice and conflict: realistic threats, symbolic threats,

intergroup anxiety, and negative stereotypes. Realistic threats include threats to the political and economic power of the in group, and to the physical or the material well-being of the in group; symbolic threats involve perceived group differences in morals, values, standards, beliefs and attitudes. These threats arise, in part, because the in group believes in the rightness of its value system. Intergroup anxiety also serves as a major factor for conflicts. This occurs when people feel personally threatened in intergroup interactions because they are concerned about negative outcomes to the self.⁴⁶⁶ Out group negative stereotypes was also mentioned as a central factor for intergroup conflict. These stereotypes embody threats to the in group because of the fear for negative consequences.⁴⁶⁷

Most scholars of immigration argue that ethnic conflict between immigrants and locals stems mainly from ethnic competition over scarce resources. Banton (1998), one of the leading scholars of “rational choice theory,” argues that conflict arises as a result of the attempt of individuals to maximize their net advantage through rational calculation. The various arguments of the mobilization theories agree that large migration flows increase levels of ethnic competition and ethnic collective action,⁴⁶⁸ that usually results in ethnic conflict. In addition to competition over resources, ethnic conflict may also arise over cultural and ideological contradictions. In his book *Immigration and Ethnic Conflict*, Richmond emphasizes that ethnic conflict “may arise out of competition for scarce resources, the differential distribution of power within society, fundamental opposition of basic value systems and inherent contradictions in the values held and the institutions serving them. Such conflict may coexist with countervailing forces promoting greater order and stability [...]”⁴⁶⁹

The role of the state in ethnic stratification and conflict has received increasing attention over time.⁴⁷⁰ In his book, *Ethnic Groups and the State*, Paul Brass analyzes the role of modern states in ethnic formation and ethnic conflict. He emphasizes that the state is both a resource and a tool for the distribution of resources between different ethnic, religious and other

social groups. All modern states have a “legitimizing ideology” or “political formula” that provides a minimum basis of popular support for its action. Such legitimizing ideology might exclude ethnic groups that do not fit or do not comply with this ideology. This ideology might also pose a threat to traditional controllers of symbols and values in society.⁴⁷¹ The impact of the state on internal social, economic and political issues is becoming even more relevant in the wake of the shift of its functions and powers from external sovereignty into internal-domestic control.⁴⁷² As noted by Anthony Smith “in the name of its national character and the welfare of its citizenry [...], the national state is becoming much more centralized, coordinated and powerful.”⁴⁷³ This is especially true in countries heavily based on immigration, where demographic patterns reflect ideology, politics and group conflict.⁴⁷⁴ The legitimization – and in many cases the support and encouragement – that the state provides for ethnicity as a basis of mobilization enhances ethnic identities and perpetuates ethnic divisions.⁴⁷⁵

Two issues have barely received attention by scholars of immigration and ethnic conflict. First, the relationship between immigration, multiculturalism, and civil culture in the host society. In this sense, it is of major importance to explore not only the impact of the host society on the cultural orientation of immigrants, but also the influence of immigrants on the structure and the political culture of the receiving society. Second, the issue of the impact of newcomers on the indigenous groups in an ethno-national state that developed a strong “exclusionary system.” The question that presents itself here is what type of relationship exists when the newcomers (which are supposed to be the “out group”) belong to the national consensus, while the indigenous group (which is supposed to be the “in group”) is placed behind the borders of legitimacy.⁴⁷⁶

The Israeli case

Israel may be ideal for the study of migration and ethnic conflict, since it is a nation-state heavily based on immigration and continuously preoccupied by the absorption of immigrants. But unlike most countries receiving contemporary immigration, the immigration system in Israel is strictly nationalistic. The “Law of Return,” which is the central immigration law in Israel, is carefully designed for Jews. It gives exclusive right for every Jew to immigrate to Israel and to automatically become an Israeli citizen. *Aliyah* (immigration) and *Kibbutz Galuyot* (ingathering of exiles) have been central concepts in the Zionist movement, and for which there is a Jewish national consensus.⁴⁷⁷

However, Israel is a deeply divided society. Ethnicity is a basic social and cultural feature of Israel’s fabric.⁴⁷⁸ The ethnic dimension within the Jewish population in Israel is prominent and is reflected in cultural, socioeconomic, and political differences between two main groups – *Mizrahim* (of African-Asian origin) and *Ashkenazim* (of European-American origin).⁴⁷⁹ However, the Jewish-Zionist character of Israel and the continuing Israel-Arab conflict have made the Jewish-Arab division the most salient and most problematic.⁴⁸⁰ The Arab citizens in Israel are considered a “sizable minority,” since they constitute about 20% of the Israeli population.⁴⁸¹ The two groups differ in nationality, religion, language, national aspirations, social lifestyles, and many cultural components. The very definition of Israel as a Jewish state has deeply affected its structure, priorities, and borders of legitimacy. Not only are Arabs situated outside the Jewish-national consensus in Israel, they are also outside the legitimate borders of the Israeli political culture.⁴⁸²

The mass influx of the 1990s immigrants added to this complex structure. Between 1989 and 2012, nearly one million immigrants from the Former Soviet Union (FSU) arrived in Israel, changing the social, demographic and cultural structure of Israeli society. Together with Russian immigrants who arrived in the 1970s (approximately 200,000), immigrants from the FSU constitute nearly 16% of Israel’s general population and 21% of its Jewish population.⁴⁸³ These

immigrants form the largest single group in Israel according to country of origin.⁴⁸⁴

Against this review, several questions arise. What has been the impact of Russian immigrants on the political culture of Israel? What have been and are the attitudes of these immigrants toward the indigenous Palestinian minority in Israel over time? Are they expected to expand the borders of legitimacy of Israeli society toward an all-encompassing character or, rather, to reinforce the exclusion system, which is based on ethno-national affiliation?

An attempt is made here to answer these questions by analyzing two nationwide representative surveys, which were conducted with a 10-year interval between. The more recent survey was conducted in 2010, 20 years after the arrival of the first wave of immigrants in the 1990s (hereafter, the second survey or the 2010 survey). The study population was defined as all immigrants from the FSU to Israel since 1989, aged 18 and above. A representative sample of 605 respondents was selected, using a stratified sample. Data were collected via telephone interviews. The maximal sampling error was $\pm 4.0\%$.

Throughout my analysis data are compared with an earlier survey, which was conducted in 1999, 10 years after the arrival of the first wave of these immigrants (hereafter, the first survey or the 1999 survey). This survey was based on 707 adult immigrants (18 years and above) who arrived in Israel between January 1990 and July 1999. The same structured questionnaire was used in both surveys, except for minor changes in the second survey. Two identical versions of the questionnaire were presented to respondents in both Hebrew and Russian, and they could choose to fill in either version.⁴⁸⁵

In addition, the attitudes of immigrants in the 2010 are compared to the veteran-Israeli population. For this purpose, a separate survey conducted parallel to and simultaneously with the above survey examined the views of Israel's general adult population (aged 18 and above) excluding 1990s immigrants from the FSU. A representative sample of 500 was interviewed. The sample was selected using stratified sampling, with strata defined by the following criteria:⁴⁸⁶

- Community of residence (geographical region and type of community of residence as classified by Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics)
- Gender
- Age

I examine relationships of Russian immigrants with the Arab minority at three levels: firstly, the attitudes regarding the character of Israel; secondly, social distance that these immigrants manifest toward Arabs as compared with other groups in Israeli society; thirdly, the attitudes of these immigrants toward Arabs.

Character of Israel

We found that the 1990s immigrants from the FSU in Israel are overwhelmingly secular. This is reflected in a series of questions that explored their attitudes toward religion and religiosity. Responding to a general question regarding religiosity, 72% of these immigrants defined themselves as “secular” in the 2010 survey (as compared to 73.6% in the 1999 survey). Moreover, most FSU immigrants support secularization of the state. A majority is opposed to the religious-Jewish character of Israel, believing that “religious laws” should be reduced or eliminated. The 2010 survey shows that 20 years after the arrival of Russian immigrants they continue to display a secular orientation in most areas of life, in a way that diverges from and challenges the extant legal relations between religion and state in Israel: 89% of the respondents (93% in the earlier survey) either agreed or strongly agreed that Israeli law should permit civil marriage and divorce, 73% either agreed or strongly agreed that it is important to maintain separation between state and religion in Israel (not asked in the earlier survey) while 63% (69% in the earlier survey) believed it should permit the sale of non-kosher products.

However, the immigrants' support for the secularization of Israel is not based on an all-encompassing civil perception; it

is restricted mainly to the internal Jewish-Jewish discourse. This is manifested in their responses to the following question: Which of the following descriptions suits the State of Israel, in your opinion: A state of the Jewish people or a state for all its citizens, regardless of religion and national origin? In the 1999 survey, FSU immigrant respondents were almost equally divided over this question, with a slight majority supporting the Jewish character of Israel – 51% versus 49%. In the 2010 survey, a slight majority of immigrants (52%) thought Israel should be a “state for all its citizens.”

In any event, these findings show that FSU immigrants adhere to the basic consensus among the Jewish majority in Israel regarding the ethnocentric political culture of the state, which leaves Arabs outside its legitimate borders, and favor a culture based on an exclusive, Jewish/non-Jewish dichotomy. That is to say, the unifying factor for most immigrants is not the Jewish character of the state, concomitant with the Orthodox perception of Judaism, but a Jewish state with a secular ethnonational meaning of Judaism. At the same time, such a character is clearly “non-Arab” in the sense that it places Arabs on the outside while including other groups, even the non-Jews among them, within the legitimate borders of Israel’s political culture.⁴⁸⁷

Immigrants’ attitudes toward the indigenous Arab minority

Immigrants’ views concerning Israel’s Arab citizens were generally more hawkish than those of veteran Jews. When studying the relations between immigrants from the FSU and Israel’s Arab citizens, we must distinguish, however, between two main levels of attitudes: attitudes toward the Arab citizens’ general status as individuals and as a group; and views regarding personal-social relationships with Arabs.

At the first level, immigrants were divided regarding the civil rights of Arabs with a slight dominance for those supporting equal rights. According to the 2010 survey, 48% of immigrant respondents (compared with 54% of veteran Israeli

Jews) stated that Israeli Arabs should enjoy equal rights in all areas of life, while 40% stated that Arabs should not enjoy equal rights. At the same time, most immigrants are hostile to Arabs as a national-collective group. This was reflected in the fact that 55% of immigrant respondents (compared to 41% of veteran Israeli Jews) claimed that action should be taken to reduce the number of Arabs living in Israel (a euphemism for transfer). Israel's Arab citizens were largely perceived as a hostile minority posing security risks: 66% of the immigrant respondents (compared with 59% of veteran Israeli Jews) believed that Israel's Arab citizens posed risks to national security. Most were therefore in favor of excluding them from national decision-making procedures. Only 34% of immigrant respondents believed that Israel's Arab citizens should be allowed to participate in national-political decisions that have to do with territorial concessions and on the demarcation of Israel's permanent borders.

As far as *personal relationships* are concerned, two decades after arriving in Israel, the vast majority of these immigrants are not personally acquainted and have formed no enduring personal relationships with Arabs. Only 7% of the immigrant respondents (compared to 13% of veteran Jews) reported having two or more Arab friends, and only 5% reported frequently visiting Arab homes. However, 52% (compared with 55% of veteran Israeli Jews) reported willingness to host Arabs in their homes; but 44% reported feeling uneasy (somewhat uneasy, uneasy, or very uneasy) around Arabs.

How do the FSU immigrants place themselves in the Israeli social fabric two decades after the start of the 1990s wave? Have they already crystallized their orientation toward the complex national, ethnic and religious divisions that mark Israeli society? To examine these points, the survey asked a series of questions about the immigrants' willingness to have social relationships with major sectors of Israeli society: secular Jews, religious Jews, Ashkenazim (Jews of European or American origin), Sephardim (Jews of Asian and North African origin), Arabs, and immigrants from Ethiopia. We specifically asked respondents whether they would be willing

to accept members of these groups as neighbors, their children's friends, their children's spouses, and their superiors at work.

The immigrants' location within Israel's social fabric has remained stable over time. In the earlier survey (1999), the respondents' ranking of groups by social distance (from the nearest to the most distant) was as follows: secular Ashkenazi Jews; Sephardic Jews; ultra-Orthodox Jews; Ethiopian Jews; and Arabs. That is, the respondents perceived themselves as closest to secular Ashkenazi Jews and most distant from Arabs, with Ethiopians ranked very close to the latter group, and Sephardic Jews ranked midscale. In the 2010 survey (20 years after the immigrants' arrival), the immigrants' social distance rankings have remained unchanged for the most part, though their social map has become more complex. The ranking in the 2010 survey, from the closest to the most distant group, was as follows: secular Ashkenazi Jews; Sephardic Jews; ultra-Orthodox Jews and Ethiopian Jews (almost equal distance); and Muslim Arabs and foreign workers (almost equal distance; we did not ask about foreign workers in the first survey).

The attitudes of immigrants toward Sephardic and Ethiopian Jews are affected by the perception of these groups as religious and Oriental, while Ashkenazim are perceived as secular and Western-oriented. Therefore, the relative rejection of the former results mainly from the cultural orientation of the immigrants, which sees Oriental culture as inferior and backward. This might explain why FSU immigrants from Asian republics feel closer to Sephardim and Ethiopians than do those originating from European republics.⁴⁸⁸ My discussion, however, concentrates on the attitudes regarding Arabs, since, as indicated earlier, the Jewish-Arab rift is the deepest and most salient. Furthermore, it is important to see whether immigrants, like most of the veteran Jewish majority, place Arabs outside the legitimate borders in all spheres; or if their social distance from Arabs is manifested only in intimate relationships involving strong commitment, such as friendship and marriage.

What are the factors behind the rejection of the indigenous Arab minority by Russian immigrants? Is the competition for resources a significant factor in this regard, as typically shown in immigrant receiving societies? What is the impact of the national-ideological factors? What has been the impact of Israeli society on the immigrants' attitudes as reflected in the length of stay in Israel? Does the cultural factor play any significant role?

In order to answer these questions I analyzed the attitudes of immigrants toward Arabs at two levels: the individual level (as reflected in the social distance) and the attitudes at the group-collective level (as reflected by the views toward the status and rights of Arabs). The independent variables included the following: demographic variables – age, gender, length of residence in Israel, and region of residence in Israel; religious affiliation of immigrants (Jewish/non-Jewish according to *Halakha* [Jewish religious law]); socioeconomic variables – education, income; political orientation – voting in the Knesset, attitudes toward territorial compromise; and perception of extent of threat by Arabs – economic threat and demographic threat.⁴⁸⁹ The results of my analysis are summarized in **Table 1**.

Tab. 1: Correlations (1. Cramer's V or 2. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient; *p<0.05 **p<0.01)

	Readiness to receive Arabs at home	Readiness to have Arabs as neighbors	Acquaintance with Arabs	Attitude toward giving Arabs full rights	Arabs are security risk	The number of Arabs should be reduced	Attitude toward the character of Israel ¹
Religion ¹	0.050	0.082	0.048	0.036	0.064	0.135**	0.196**
Age ²	0.086*	0.028	0.198*	0.114**	0.064	0.117**	0.098
Gender ¹	0.095	-0.114*	0.167**	0.076	0.060	0.094	0.056
Education ²	-0.090*	-0.086*	-0.019	-0.081	-0.049	0.090*	-0.085
Length of residence in Israel ²	0.034	0.103*	0.053	0.028	0.123**	0.189**	0.218**
Income ²	-0.078	-0.079	-0.245**	-0.018	0.021	0.093*	0.106
Voting ¹	0.134*	0.070	0.159**	0.075	0.059	0.069	0.063

	Readiness to receive Arabs at home	Readiness to have Arabs as neighbors	Acquaintance with Arabs	Attitude toward giving Arabs full rights	Arabs are security risk	The number of Arabs should be reduced	Attitude toward the character of Israel ¹
Territorial compromise in the West Bank ²	0.105*	0.005	0.063	0.142**	0.005	0.026	0.018
Territorial compromise in the Golan ²	0.030	0.010	0.015	0.090*	0.003	0.040	0.031
Perceived percentage of Arabs ²	0.042	0.055	0.024	0.065	0.043	0.071	0.061
Arabs take jobs ²	0.194**	0.104*	0.088*	0.149**	0.057	0.124**	0.154**
Region of residence	0.086	0.073	0.147**	0.064	-0.130**	0.093	0.068

As **Table 1** shows, there are a number of variables which determine the social distance of immigrants from Arabs. As far as the immigrants' characteristics are concerned, there is a significant difference among immigrants according to age, gender, religious affiliation, education and income. The older generation among these immigrants is much more anti-Arab than the young generation. The older the immigrant the more he/she maintains a social distance from Arabs, supports the Jewish character of Israel and denies the right of Arabs to be equal citizens. The impact of gender is less significant and is mainly obvious in terms of social distance; while men have more social contact with Arabs, they are less ready than women to have Arabs as neighbors. Variables associated with socioeconomic status (education and income) have a significant impact. The lower the education and income, the stronger the anti-Arab attitudes at both the individual-social level and the collective-group level.

When analyzing ethnic identity and orientation among Russian immigrants, the fact that a large number are not Jewish according to Halakha⁴⁹⁰ should be considered. The 2010 survey responses showed that 26% of the respondents were not Jewish according to Halakha (or could not prove that they were) or were married to a non-Jew. My analysis shows that as a whole, non-Jewish immigrants are more tolerant

toward Arabs than Jewish immigrants. However, the only significant difference has to do with the attitudes toward collective rights of Arabs; Jewish immigrants support more the Jewish character of Israel, and thus think that the number of Arabs should be reduced.

The impact of Israeli society on the attitudes of immigrants toward Arabs is obvious in the significant relationship between length of residence in Israel and views regarding Arabs. However, this seems to be stronger in terms of attitudes, not in actual behavior. While there was no significant difference between new and old-timer immigrants regarding the acquaintance with Arabs, the longer immigrants live in Israel the stronger their anti-Arab attitudes at both the individual and collective levels. The impact of the region of residence is complex. While immigrants in mixed towns with Arabs report more social contact with the latter, they significantly tend to perceive Arabs as a “security risk.”

There is a significant relationship between political attitudes and behavior of immigrants and their attitudes toward Arabs. The more hardliner the immigrants are concerning territorial compromise with the Palestinians in the West Bank, the more anti-Arab attitudes and the more social distance they manifest toward them. The same direction of relationship exists concerning the attitudes regarding territorial compromise in the Golan Heights, although less significant than that regarding the Palestinians. There is a significant difference in the attitudes of immigrants regarding Arabs according to voting patterns of the former. Immigrants who vote for Russian parties (which are more hardliner than veteran Israeli parties⁴⁹¹), manifest a greater social distance toward Arabs than voters of veteran parties and more negative attitudes toward the status of Arabs as a group.

The sense of threat posed by Arabs has also a significant effect. However, most significant is the “economic threat” and the “security threat.” The more immigrants perceive Arabs as a threat in these issues, the more anti-Arab attitudes they have toward them and the more the social distance between immigrants and Arabs. At the same time, immigrants tend to evaluate the number of Arabs in Israel in a way which is close

to reality. Thus, immigrants perceive Arabs as a minority and do not perceive them as a “demographic danger.” However, relationships between these two levels of attitudes seem to be two-way relationships.

Conclusions

In my analysis I examined two major issues that are usually overlooked as far as the impact of immigration on ethnic conflict in the receiving societies is concerned: first, the influence of immigrants on the structure and the political culture of the receiving society; and second, the dynamic impact of immigrants on the status of the indigenous minority in a deeply divided ethno-national state.

My analysis shows that Russian immigrants have strengthened the basic consensus among the Jewish majority in Israel regarding the ethnocentric political culture of the state, which leaves the indigenous Palestinian-Arab minority outside its legitimate borders, and favors a culture based on an exclusive, Jewish/non-Jewish dichotomy. As far as the attitudes of immigrants toward Arabs are concerned, two decades after their arrival in Israel, immigrants have shaped their “social map,” whereby they placed themselves closest to secular Ashkenazi Jews and furthest from Arabs. The latter are placed in a similar position vis-à-vis foreign workers when it comes to social relationships and readiness to have ongoing social contact at the individual level. At the group-collective level, the indigenous Arab minority is perceived as a natural candidate for discrimination, and the immigrants’ perception of Arabs as a security risk and a hostile minority just strengthens their anti-Arab attitudes.

The attitudes of immigrants toward the indigenous Arab minority are affected by three sets of factors. The first set of factors has to do with the socialization of immigrants within Israeli society. The impact of Israeli society on the attitudes of immigrants is reflected in the fact that the longer the duration of immigrants in Israel, the more anti-Arab attitudes they have. In this sense, it seems that the Russian immigrants discovered

very soon that the rejection and even hatred of Arabs is the “ticket” to access the national consensus in Israel. Interestingly enough, the findings show that longer residence in Israel does not increase the social contact with Arabs. This is increased through the living in the mixed towns, mainly in the northern part of Israel. At the same time, the findings show that social contact does not guarantee positive perception of Arabs. On the contrary, those immigrants who live in mixed towns with Arabs tend to see them more as a security risk. The perception of Arabs as a hostile minority is reinforced under the continuing national conflict with the Palestinians and Arabs, to which the indigenous Arab minority belongs. Therefore, the findings show that the more hawkish attitudes immigrants have toward territorial compromise, the stronger their anti-Arab stand. Also, the Israeli impact is manifested by the fact that Jewish immigrants are more radical in their views and behavior toward Arabs than non-Jewish immigrants. In this sense, Jewish immigrants more than non-Jewish immigrants have more commitment toward the Jewish character of Israel at the expense of its civic character and, accordingly, they press more for denying the citizenship rights of Arabs and their inclusion within Israeli society.

The second set of factors has to do with the political culture of immigrants themselves, which is affected by the former socialization of these immigrants in the Former Soviet Union. This is reflected in the fact that the older generation among immigrants has stronger anti-Arab attitudes, feels a greater social distance from them, and more strongly supports their exclusion as a group. Also, voters of Russian-ethnic parties more strongly reject the Arabs on both the individual and group levels.

The third set of factors, which is less significant than the first two, yet still important, is connected with the stratification element. The lower the socioeconomic status among immigrants, the more they perceive Arabs as an “economic threat” and the stronger their anti-Arab attitudes. In other words, immigrants with higher education and income and those who do not perceive Arabs as “taking jobs from Israelis” are more tolerant toward Arabs and have less anti-Arab views.

However, the socioeconomic factor is less significant since the Arab citizens are not perceived by immigrants as a competitive group in the labor market. Only 20% thought that “Arabs take jobs from Israelis.” Indeed, studies show that while Russian immigrants are mainly located in the middle and upper-middle classes, Arabs are primarily located at the margins of the Israeli economy and mainly employed in lower status jobs.⁴⁹²

As far as the theoretical aspect is concerned, this study shows that the understanding of the relationships between immigration and ethnic conflict necessitates understanding not only the attitudes of the local society toward immigrants, but also the attitudes of immigrants toward the various groups in the local society. This is especially important in a deeply divided society, where the national consensus and collective identity of the state are determined through ethno-national factors. In this case, immigrants who are affiliated with the local majority, very soon internalize the national political culture. On the one hand, they reinforce the existing exclusionary system in order to maximize their benefits and join the consensus. On the other hand, immigrants might strive toward the expansion of the existing social and cultural structure, in order to secure their position in the receiving society, while reinforcing the ethno-national character of its borders of legitimacy. As a result, immigration may reinforce ethnic conflict in the receiving society and manipulate its “tribal character” for its own needs and interest. In this regard, immigrants do not only maintain their ethnic boundaries but they manipulate these boundaries to penetrate the existing borders of legitimacy, thus further marginalizing the already excluded indigenous minority. In deeply divided ethno-national societies, the mission of immigrants vis-à-vis the indigenous minority is facilitated and continuously supported by the state. This is especially true when the state creates a “legitimizing ideology” that allows immigrants automatic access to it, and at the same time excludes ethnic groups that do not comply with this ideology.⁴⁹³ We may conclude that in ethno-national states, duration in the country may lose its significance as a factor in the stratification system. It is replaced by ethnic affiliation and the compliance with the

legitimizing ideology of the state. Such a situation forms a barrier for the creation of an all-encompassing common culture and further deepens the conflict and the existing rifts.

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Appendix

Table A: Description of Variables

Dependent Variables

1. Readiness to receive Arabs at home: 1. Absolutely ready >>>>> 7. Not ready at all.
2. Readiness to have Arabs as neighbors: 1. Absolutely ready >>>>> 7. Not ready at all.
3. Acquaintance with Arabs: 1. Many; 2. One-two; 3. Only formal; Not at all.
4. Attitude toward giving Arabs full rights: 1. Absolutely agree >>>> 5. Do not agree at all.
5. Arabs are security risk: 1. Do not agree >>>>>> 7. Absolutely agree.
6. The number of Arabs should be reduced: 1. Do not agree >>>>>> 7. Absolutely agree.
7. Attitude toward the character of Israel: 0. A state of all its citizens; 1. Jewish state.

Independent Variables

1. Religious affiliation: 0. Non-Jewish; 1. Jewish.
2. Age: 1. 18–24 years; 2. 25–34 years; 3. 35–44 years; 4. 45–54 years; 5. 55+.
3. Gender: 0. Female; 1. Male.
4. Education: 1. secondary; 2. post-secondary; 3. higher.
5. Length of residence in Israel: in years (range from 1 to 21).
6. Income: 1. Much less than average >>>> 5. Much more than average.
7. Voting: 0. Israeli parties; 1. Russian parties.
8. Attitudes toward territorial compromise in the West Bank: 1. Give up all the territories >>>>>>>> 4. Do not give anything.
9. Attitudes toward territorial compromise in the Golan: 1. Give up all the territories >>>>>>>> 4. Do not give anything.

10. Region of residence: 1. Center; 2. North; 3. South; 4. Mixed.
11. Perceived percentage of Arabs: 1. Between 0–5%; 2. 6–10%; 3. 11–20%; 4. 21–30%; 5. More than 30%.
12. Arabs take jobs: 1. Do not agree at all >>>>>> 7. Absolutely agree.

Note: The direction/ extent of anti-Arab attitudes is from Low >>>>>> High (which is positively correlated with the potentiality of conflict).

14. “About Miracles”: The Flourishing of the “Torah World” of Yeshivot and Kollelim in Israel

Menachem Friedman

This paper originally appeared in *Yeshivot and Midrashot*, edited by Immanuel Etkes, 431–442 (Jerusalem: The Shazar Center and the Dinur Center, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2006), in Hebrew.

Leaving the world of Torah

When I was a young student at a Tel Aviv yeshiva high-school in the early 1950s, from time to time a guest would appear during the *seuda shlishit* (the third meal eaten on the Shabbat) at dusk towards the Shabbat’s end. He was a yeshiva *bochur* (youth) from a “great” yeshiva, who would sing a melody of heart-wrenching sweetness, which I still recall. And even though I have forgotten most of its words (that were sung, of course, in yeshiva-style Yiddish), I still remember the chorus perfectly (“when the world will be full of yeshivot, with many centers, and some local branches, they’ll study Torah endlessly [...] oh Master of the Universe, when will that be?”).

Originating in Novardok Yeshiva⁴⁹⁴ and dating to the late 19th or early 20th century, the lyrics express an almost Messianic hope for the future, against the backdrop of the bleak reality of Eastern European yeshiva youth at that time and later, between the two world wars. The modernization and secularization processes attendant on economic and technological changes that strongly impacted on daily life, undermined the affinity of many Jews, particularly the younger ones, to religion and tradition. Brutal antisemitism by the Russian rulers, and the pogroms which triggered waves of mass emigration to Western nations and renewed Jewish settlement in Eretz Yisrael, also contributed to the increasing scattering⁴⁹⁵ of Jews away from the traditional way of life.

Radical solutions in the form of the various Zionist and Socialist movements attracted idealistic Jewish youth. More than the abandonment of religion and tradition, the objective reality was seared into the consciousness of the great rabbis and guided their vision of the world around them. Thus, for example, Rabbi Yisrael Meir HaKohen (the Chafetz Chaim, 1839–1933), wrote:

And even the father of sons – how can he be sure they will be great in the study of the Torah and behave according to God’s commands? We have seen, for our great sins, that some grown sons are leaving the path of Torah for diverse reasons and do not heed their fathers’ advice to keep to the path of G-d. Therefore, though every man must strive with all his might to teach his sons as children to keep to that path [...] in any event, the wise man with eyes in his head should not rely solely on his sons, for they could (heaven forefend) become broken reeds.⁴⁹⁶

At yeshivot like that of Volozhin, *Haskala* was seen as the gravest threat to religion and tradition and general studies were thus banned from the study framework.

In that crisis-ridden reality, the solution that those yeshivot offered was not in most cases suitable for the young generation which had been raised in families seeking to preserve the religious-traditional way of life. The great rabbis and yeshiva heads, like many conservative leaders, saw in modernity an expression of hedonism of that world (“materialism”) which was hard to reconcile with the ideal of devotion of the “authentic” yeshiva students, who “sacrificed” themselves in the “tent of Torah.” Many of those rabbis objected to emigration to the Zionist Eretz Yisrael and to the Western nations, where an atmosphere of “purpose”⁴⁹⁷ and materialism prevailed.

If there were prospects for conserving the essence of the Jewish people and the yeshiva as a place “where the eternal soul of the Jewish nation has been forged”⁴⁹⁸ it was paradoxically in Eastern Europe which, though damaged by modernity and secularization, still had islands of religious idealism and devotion to “wholly sacred” Torah studies.

And yet, the hope of the Novardok melody, “a world full of yeshivot” did not become reality in Eastern Europe, whose *batei midrash* and great yeshivot, with their *Gdolei Hatorah*,

were almost completely annihilated in the Holocaust. It was rather to concretize in the West: in the United States, the symbol of material hedonism, and even more so in the Zionist State of Israel. Of all places, the Zionist state is where a society arose that is a “center almost without hinterland, a *hevrat lomdim* (society-of-scholars)”⁴⁹⁹ – a society of yeshiva students and graduates, with hardly any *baalei batim*. For many in the Haredi public who had witnessed the “scattered” faithful, it was a new and unclear reality. Rabbi Shalom Noach Berezovsky, the Admor of Slonim and a member of the Council of Torah Sages of Agudat Israel, wrote:

And the question of the *avrechei kollelim* whose Torah was their craft is also one of the amazing events of this generation, that is hard to understand with common sense, how it happened suddenly, with the help of G-d, that such a revolutionary and powerful event occurred over the past ten to fifteen years when most *avrechim* (yeshiva students) remained in the tents of Torah and that was their choice in life. A man who was born and lived in this generation cannot easily evaluate this wonder. But a man who also knew the previous generations stands amazed before the vision of wonders forming before our eyes [...] it's hard to describe the situation that prevailed in the Land of Israel at the time that we emigrated there in 1935. What a generation deprived of Torah it was. The benches of the yeshivot were empty. The only people who engaged in studying Torah were the elderly, and some *avrechim* whose Torah was their craft – though they were very few. And in terms of the general atmosphere as well, what a scandal they caused, those for whom Torah was their craft, and in what conditions they had to live, forced to make do with the bread of affliction and water of adversity. The words of the Torah were fulfilled only by those who simply sacrificed themselves for it. And hardest to bear was the terrible question: is it the future, heaven forefend, that the Torah would be forgotten by the Jewish people? And here Hashem, may His name be blessed, caused a change, a revolution. Once again the tribe of Levi was revived, those who took on the burden of Torah without which the Jewish people cannot exist. Many thousands of *avrechim* are engaging in our holy Torah and suffering over it, and it is their sole craft. Even their living conditions, with the help of Hashem, may He be blessed, have changed. Torah Jews are now living in a dignified way similar to their peers even if their lives are a little more difficult. There is no doubt that these are the lights lit by the Holy One, blessed be He, for the generation orphaned by the Holocaust. It is impossible to explain this by any other natural phenomenon, and we see in it the hand of the Almighty.⁵⁰⁰

For Rabbi Berezovsky, as it was for many of his fellow rabbis, the new situation was completely unforeseen. In a discussion on the conclusions of the Peel Commission,⁵⁰¹ at the Third Convention of Agudat Israel held in Marienbad in 1937, Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman – one of the most admired sages of the Torah in the yeshiva world – claimed that the government in

the Jewish-Zionist state would probably resemble that of *Yevseksiya*, it might well persecute the Haredim and keep them from Torah studies: many shared his opinion.⁵⁰² But not only were their fears not borne out – the absolute opposite happened. Keen-eyed Haredi observers already noticed the first signs of a change in the early 1950s. In 1952, an article was published in *Hamodia la'yeladim*, the children's weekly of Agudat Israel's newspaper in Israel, titled "Israeli-born youth are streaming to yeshivot." Among others, the article noted:

Who gave birth to them, here in the motherland which is being built, intoxicated with building? [...] We still remember the days, only ten years ago, when Torah teachers at yeshivot feared that the yeshivot in our holy country would only function by 'importing students' from outside, from the centers of Torah in the diaspora [...], rabbis [...] feared that the free thinkers might establish in our holy country a materialist Gentile-oriented atmosphere of 'the work ritual,' and that the native-born of the new Yishuv would never know the taste of Torah [...] the graduate yeshivot [ישיבות גדולות] from now on are constantly growing, with their foundations composed of those native-born who were sometimes called *sabras*. So many miracles and wonders are unfolding before our eyes every day.⁵⁰³

There was certainly some exaggeration in this description of young men streaming to the yeshivot. Perhaps the author's enthusiasm stemmed from the feeling that an unforeseen change was beginning in the yeshiva world. At the same time, the newspaper of Neturei Karta portrayed a different situation:

The Haredi Jews [...] are not meticulous about their sons becoming Torah learners [...] when the boy starts to talk, they begin seeking a purpose for him. Either a lawyer or an engineer or a trader or a craftsman [...] because the prestige of the Torah has declined and it comes as no surprise that when parents seek bridegrooms for their daughters they no longer trouble to ask the yeshivot for a young man who studies Torah.⁵⁰⁴

The emergence and flourishing of the society-of-scholars in Israel

By the second half of the 1950s, the picture was growing clearer. Until then, students of Talmudei Torah of Agudat Israel had completed eight years of study, after which most of them entered the job market. Now however, they were pursuing further studies at the undergraduate yeshivot

[ישיבות קטנות] Many continued studying at higher yeshivot, and it was becoming more and more customary for young women graduates of Beit Yaakov seminars⁵⁰⁵ to wed a young yeshiva man who had continued his studies in a *kollel*.⁵⁰⁶ It was not the parents who looked for a bridegroom who planned to study at a kollel, but the girls themselves who insisted on it, sometimes against their parents' objections.

There is no doubt that a significant social-religious change was getting underway. Moshe Schenfeld (1907–1975), considered the ideologist of the new *Harediut*,⁵⁰⁷ distinguished signs of the change in the mid-1950s. Until that time Schenfeld had articulated pessimistic statements regarding the future of Haredi Jews in Eretz Yisrael. Most graduates of Haredi schools, he wrote close in time to the end of the Second World War, “collapse[d] spiritually” on confronting the secular reality.⁵⁰⁸ In 1950, he attacked the Religious Zionists' stance and recommended closing the ranks of Haredi society against the secular Israeli society. “Any bridge that passes over the abyss separating the loyal Jewish camp and the secular camp,” he wrote, “endangers the remaining handful of those who adhere to the Torah. It will be used as a one-way road towards the secular camp.”⁵⁰⁹ By 1954, his tone had changed: he sensed the sociocultural crisis in Israeli society as well as the feeling of security slowly permeating the ranks of the Haredim:

Anyone who looks with clear eyes sees a phenomenon that diverges from the customary: sons who are becoming more than their fathers [...] the loyal young man in our days is seeking wholeness, and he finds it within the holy yeshivot, in conversations with the supervisors and in the way of life of Gdolei Hatorah who follow collaboration [...] and this is the source of the ‘tragedies’ occurring in many homes – the parents feel that their sons studying at yeshivot and their daughters at Beit Yaakov seminars are rebelling against them, and are demanding more wholeness, more closeness, more consistency in deeds and *hashkafa* (world-view) [...] loyal young people are completely liberated from the false charms that they once followed blindly. They believe that the crown of the Torah is above everything [...] today there are once more like centuries ago – girls who choose to marry husbands for whom the Torah is their craft, and they themselves gladly assume the burden of livelihood. In the grossly materialist circumstances, this can be deemed a miracle.⁵¹⁰

Schenfeld's words are illuminating and evidence the changes in the religious awareness of many Haredi youngsters toward

what is termed religious extremism. The source of that socio-religious process was apparently the atmosphere prevailing in the yeshivot where the young people studied, and where they underwent the yeshiva heads' indoctrination. The yeshivot, most of which were boarding-schools – or in the sociological term “total institutions”⁵¹¹ – assumed the nuclear family's role and shaped the profile of the Haredi youngsters, though not always in accordance with the parents' wishes.⁵¹² A similar process occurred in the socialization of young Haredi women at Beit Yaakov seminars. As noted, it was not the parents who sought a Torah student bridegroom for their daughters, or a kollel student for whom Torah was his craft, but the daughters, influenced by their teachers and rabbis, who wanted that sort of bridegroom, sometimes in the face of objections from their parents, concerned about the young family's economic future. This was confirmed by other sources and from interviews I held with teachers and principals of Beit Yaakov seminars. Among those who strongly contributed to the phenomenon's development was Rabbi Yosef Avraham Wolf; during the relevant period he had headed the Beit Yaakov seminar in Bnei Brak. Wolf and his colleagues encouraged the idea of a partnership between husband and wife in observing the mitzvah of Talmud Torah and the “compensation” they would receive in the world to come for upholding that important mitzvah, that resembled the partnership between Issachar and Zebulon – the student and his breadwinner.⁵¹³

A similar socio-religious phenomenon occurred in modern religious society. During the same period, high-school yeshivot became the preferred option for secondary schools; later developments were the ulpanot for girls and the *yeshivot hesder*, all of which markedly changed the profile of National-Religious society.⁵¹⁴ All the same, those important events occurred in tandem with the almost revolutionary socioeconomic changes that unfolded in Israeli society after statehood, and in Jewish society in the Diaspora after the Second World War.

From the previous description, readers can get the impression that the essence of the revolution in Haredi society was the fact that young graduates of Talmudei Torah continued

their studies at both, undergraduate and graduate yeshivot, but that is not the case. Though that change was a prerequisite for a society of Torah students to develop, the cardinal change was the formation of post-yeshiva institutions – the *kollelim* – that catered to married yeshiva graduates. As a secondary institution for married yeshiva graduates, the kollel had already existed in Eastern Europe,⁵¹⁵ but only a few yeshiva graduates actually continued studying there after they married. In contrast, in Israel and Western countries, the kollel became an integral aspect of the Haredi socialization process. In a short time from the start of the process, the kollel became institutionalized; almost all yeshiva students continued pursuing their studies there, and no formal restriction was set regarding how many years they could study in its framework. That is the principal significance of the concept “society-of-scholars” – a society where almost all the men study at yeshivot and kollelim for the major portion of their lives. The reason why the kollel was not institutionalized in the world of Eastern European yeshivot is obvious: in the economic crisis that Jewish society underwent in Eastern Europe in the second half of the 19th century, resources were lacking to maintain the few yeshivot. Throughout the average yeshiva student’s studies, he was constantly concerned about finding a livelihood and supporting his family after he married (“What would be the purpose of his studies?”). It was only in rare cases, if his parents had the means, or his father-in-law was willing to finance his studies, that a yeshiva student could continue studying after he married. And because of the Jewish economy’s instability, in many cases those students had to find a stable income.

The society-of-scholars revolution was thus made possible, following the socioeconomic changes in the Western world in general, and in Israel – the Jewish people’s state – more particularly. There is no need, I believe, to list here the economic changes that happened in the Western world after the Second World War, and I briefly note only the principal ones. A priori, against the backdrop of modernization and the Industrial Revolution, the Western economy (for my purpose, that of Western Europe and the USA) is rich in comparison

with Eastern Europe's. At the end of the Second World War, the Western economy developed rapidly, reflected among others in economic mobility and a strong rise in the standard of living of the middle class. In tandem with the economic changes, and as an inseparable part of them, the Western welfare state flourished, but saw itself committed to the individual's well-being and to providing the young with a good modern-technological education. These changes impacted crucially on the Jewish world, which after the Holocaust concentrated almost completely in Western Europe and the USA, where the Jewish worlds grew more affluent than ever before. The State of Israel, established as a Jewish social democratic welfare state, relied in economic terms, among others, on solidarity from Western Jews, who felt guilt following the Holocaust. Substantial Jewish funds were transferred both to the new state and also to individuals and education and welfare institutions. Jews who were not necessarily Haredim also donated generously to establish yeshivot and kollelim, and this out of a commitment to preserve the memory of the traditional religious Jewish world annihilated in the Holocaust.

Israel's development as a welfare state made it possible for the burgeoning Israeli middle class to channel resources to their children's high-school and university education. The network of high schools and universities grew significantly in the first years following statehood. Israel's needs in the spheres of education, modern technology, and public administration, created tremendous demand for graduates of high schools and universities, and encouraged growth in their numbers. Those developments equally affected the Haredi-religious middle class, whose members could now provide their children with education beyond primary education. However, the Haredim, recalling the trauma of the abandoning of religion and tradition in Eastern Europe, sent their sons to yeshivot and their daughters to Beit Yaakov seminars. Most of them did not realize that in doing so, they were laying down the foundation for the flourishing of a society-of-scholars; they could not foresee that their daughters would do what their own mothers had not done, and in fact could not have done. And indeed what ultimately instigated the change which led to the

society-of-scholars' creation, was the economic independence of Beit Yaakov seminar graduates who could now choose to marry a yeshiva boy who planned to study Torah at a kollel.

With the legislation of the Compulsory Education Law in 1949, Haredi education institutions became for the first time part of a government-funded schooling system, and they were defined as the “fourth education stream” (in 1953, they were renamed “the independent education network”). During the British Mandate, the vast majority of Haredi education institutions were privately owned, perhaps receiving at the most limited support from Agudat Israel worldwide. The recognition of those institutions as entitled to funding from the Education Ministry had far-reaching consequences, particularly with the massive immigration that required the whole education system to be enlarged. Although the fourth stream/ independent education network was the smallest stream and at least initially suffered discrimination in terms of budgets and buildings, when compared with the prevailing situation during the Yishuv years, it underwent a genuine revolution.⁵¹⁶ It was close to impossible to meet the demand for teachers, both male and female. Every graduate of a Beit Yaakov seminar found a teaching position with relative ease, and the position came with a regular salary and social benefits – something previously unknown. Women teachers no longer depended financially on their parents. With the influence of *Gdolei Hatorah* (the most revered rabbis of the generation) such as Rabbi Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz and educators like Yosef Avraham Wolf, young women posed their parents a significant religious challenge by seeking marriage to a Torah-learning husband, that would build a partnership in observing the mitzvah of studying Torah. Very few parents, if any indeed wanted to, could withstand that challenge. The improving standards of living, the social services, the major injection of capital to the state (particularly reparations from Germany) and the large-scale state housing projects allowed parents to help their children buy a home. Donors in the Diaspora sent the yeshivot substantial amounts that helped them grant scholarships to kollel students, and the scholarship funds and the wife's salary for her work in a Beit Yaakov school meant

that a young family could live with dignity. Schenfeld well-described the new atmosphere within the young Haredi generation and hinted at its economic background. He wrote about “tragedies” that families encountered when parents demanded that the sons acquire a profession to provide the basis for a livelihood, and the parents’ anger when their daughters were willing to marry a man with no economic foundation.⁵¹⁷ Rabbi Berezovsky, who for years headed the Beit Avraham yeshiva (the Slonim yeshiva), also identified the economic component of the “miracle”: young Torah scholars who were now living comfortable lives, relative to their peers.⁵¹⁸

New challenges

And in this context, one must recall that yeshiva boys and avrechim at the kollelim did not serve in the army as long as Torah was their craft; that is, as long as they did not engage in another form of work while studying at a yeshiva or kollel.⁵¹⁹ An undisturbed process of socialization of male Haredim, at least until their mid-30s, thus took root and flourished in Haredi society. Marriage is part of the socialization process and to a great extent is conditional for its success. The social changes that occurred following that development are far-reaching, and I note here the most important of them:

(a) *Marriage at a younger age*: Yeshiva men in Eastern Europe tended to marry in their mid-20s or later, since they had to prepare an economic basis for their new family. The *alte bochur* (the ‘old student’ – in the sense of a still single mature student) was a common phenomenon in Lithuanian yeshivot. But when marriage is not the end of the socialization process and there is no need to immediately earn a living after marrying, there is no point in postponing it. Furthermore, women students at the Beit Yaakov seminaries are qualified as teachers by age 18 or 19, and can then marry.⁵²⁰

(b) *Larger families*: Lowering the age of marriage led to an increase in the birthrate. Advanced social and medical

services, and the refusal of rabbis and yeshiva heads to address birth control also contributed greatly to the process.⁵²¹

(c) *The lack of general and professional education*: As the Haredi society-of-scholars grew, the gap in higher education between Haredi and non-Haredi society widened concomitantly. The fundamental Haredi worldview categorically rules out general and professional education. The widening of the socialization process in the society-of-scholars framework of necessity increased the gaps in general education between those raised and educated in the state education system, and those raised and educated in the society-of-scholars. With the development of science and technology in contemporary society, the gaps have further widened. For the Haredi leadership those changes had an important, positive function – they almost completely prevented the abandonment of the Haredi lifestyle. For the first time, Haredi society managed to almost totally halt the drift away from it, and many members of Haredi society believe it to be equivalent to any price Haredi society must “pay” for its being a society-of-scholars.

In fact though, the flourishing of the society-of-scholars has exerted a heavy toll, on both Israeli society and on the Haredim. The high fertility rate (an average of 7.7 children per family), the lack of general and professional education, and the very late entry into the job-market created an impoverished society.⁵²² Furthermore, against all the principles of the Haredi society’s founding fathers, the society-of-scholars became economically dependent on Israeli society, via direct and indirect resources from Israeli taxpayers. At first the Haredi political parties viewed participation in Israeli politics as an instrument to protect themselves from the secular parties and their secularizing trends, but by the 1970s the Haredi parties had become an instrument to ensure the economic existence of the society-of-scholars.⁵²³

Today it is clear to rabbis and yeshiva heads that the continuing development of the society-of-scholars could endanger the huge achievements; Haredi demographic growth⁵
²⁴ could become an increasingly heavy burden on Haredi

families, on one hand, and on the state's social budgets, on the other. The crisis of the modern welfare state, whose results are visible in vital spheres like social services and health, makes it hard for the political system to allocate to the society-of-scholars the ever-increasing resources it needs. The crisis in the society-of-scholars has in fact already started. Many people, including rabbis and yeshiva heads, have now grasped that Haredi society cannot continue existing in its present structure. Some Haredi entrepreneurs have started establishing frameworks providing professional training for avrechim.⁵²⁵ Clearly, Haredi society is changing again. But the question is whether the changes will match both the rapid growth rate of Haredi society, and the political and economic pressures that impact on its budgeting.

By any criterion, the society-of-scholars is an amazing achievement. The paradox is that it could never develop in the traditional Jewish society in Eastern Europe. The society-of-scholars can exist and flourish only in certain political conditions and within the framework of an affluent Western and technological society – in contradiction to the beliefs of the founding fathers of Eastern Europe's Haredi society. But here too the existence of that unique society has its limits, and costs. For if the world is full of yeshivot, Master of the Universe, how can we live with it?

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15. The Divided People Revisited

Eva Etzioni-Halevy

This paper was completed in January 2015.

I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Ephraim Yaar and to Prof. Tamar Hermann of the Tami Steinmetz Peace Research Center, for adding some questions on Israeli and Jewish identity to two of their surveys – one in 1996 and one in 2014 – at my request, and furnishing me with the results of those surveys, as detailed below. I am also deeply grateful to Prof. Rina Shapira and to Dr. Zvi Halevy for their most valuable comments.

Introduction

The Jewish part of Israeli society (comprising about 80% of its population) is deeply divided between religious and non-religious – or secular – Jews, the gap between them is widening and the common denominator is diminishing or phasing out. This was the thesis I presented and supported with data some fifteen years ago, in my book *The Divided People*.⁵²⁶

Since then several years have passed, and it may be asked whether, in the light of new developments in Israeli society, this thesis is still valid. In this article I argue that the first part of the thesis is still valid: the division between the two camps is still deep and highly significant. On the other hand, the evidence no longer supports the second part of the thesis, namely that the gap between the sectors is widening and the common denominator is thinning.

Also, I argue that there are some mechanisms that enhance the division between the camps, while others work for mutual integration. Both have been strengthening over the years, thus balancing each other, and creating a situation in which recently there has been no clear trend either way. We perceive what may be termed the paradox of stabilizing dynamics: paradoxically, dynamic, changing mechanisms create a stable

balance in the cleavage between the secular and the religious Jews in Israel.

The size of the camps

Before exploring the significance of the cleavage between the secular and the religious, and the balancing mechanisms, it is of interest to establish the relative size of the camps: whether one clearly outweighs the other, and whether the relative size of the camps has changed in recent years.

There are various methods of empirically establishing Jewish religiosity. But the one that seems reliable, has been chosen in various surveys and makes the results of different surveys most easily comparable, is the subjective one. By this method, respondents are requested to define their own religiosity vs. secularity.

In a survey on a representative sample of Israeli Jews conducted by this method in 1996, it was found that 15% of the respondents defined themselves as *Haredi* (that is, ultra-Orthodox) or religious, 33% defined themselves as traditionalist and 52% as secular.⁵²⁷

Has the relative size of the camps been changing since then? This question has been tackled on the basis of three surveys, in 1991, 1990 and 2009, on representative samples of Jews in Israel.⁵²⁸ In this research project it was found that between the years 1991 and 1999, there was a certain decline in religious adherence – apparently due to a large wave of immigration from the Former Soviet Union. But from 1999 to 2009 there was a return to the former, 1991, level of religiosity – apparently because the new immigrants were integrated into Israeli society.

Thus, in 2009, 22% of the respondents defined themselves as Haredi or religious, 32% defined themselves as traditionalist and 46% as secular.⁵²⁹

Also, in a survey of a representative sample of Israeli Jews conducted in 2014, 20.6% defined themselves as Haredi or

religious, 34.3% defined themselves as (various types) of traditionalist and 45% as secular.⁵³⁰

The results of the last two surveys are surprisingly similar. In comparison to previous survey conducted in 1991, they show that in recent years the religious camp has not significantly decreased and has even slightly increased. During the same time frame the secular camp has not increased and may have slightly decreased.

How can this be explained? There is a longstanding trend of secularization – of people whose parents are or were religious, or who themselves were religious, becoming secular. There is also some movement in the opposite direction: of secular Jews choosing the path of “return” to religion (in the case of youngsters, frequently to the chagrin of their parents).

The number of those choosing the path of secularization is much larger than the number of those choosing the path of return.⁵³¹ But given that fertility is a religious commandment, this is made up for by the much higher birthrate among the religious.

So the overall result is that the religious camp is not disproportionately depleted, and the secular camp has not been growing at the expense of the religious camp.

What can also be seen, is that the size of the non-religious camp clearly outweighs that of the religious one. On the other hand, contrary to what is sometimes argued, at present, the secular camp does not comprise a majority of Israeli Jews.

The significance of the division

As noted before, my thesis is that the division between religious and secular Jews in Israel is highly significant. I do not argue that it is the only significant division in Jewish Israeli society, but certainly it is one of the most significant ones.

Also, the thesis does not refer to a “culture-war” between the camps. Rather it has to do with a “culture-cleavage,”

including a cleavage in identity, resulting in a society with a large degree of estrangement between its secular and its religious parts.

Shortage of space makes it impossible to analyze all relevant aspects of the topic. For instance, the secular-religious division is closely related to political conflict between them. In addition, the said division is partly overlapping with the division between the political left and right, and with socioeconomic background and Middle Eastern vs. Ashkenazi origin. These topics have been analyzed in detail elsewhere and by other analysts,⁵³² but could not be tackled in this paper, which is devoted solely to the division between the religious and the secular, and to the estrangement between them, as well as to the mechanisms that moderate this estrangement.

This estrangement finds expression in a growing separation between the camps in a whole variety of areas of life, including residence, weddings vs. cohabitation, lifestyles, leisure-time activities including informal social relations, language, education, and – most importantly – collective identity, as described below:

Separation in residential areas: Apart from the Haredim, who have long been living in their own separate towns or neighborhoods, mostly, religious and non-religious Jews still live in common residential areas. But in recent years, religious settlements and residential areas have been springing up and flourishing all over the country. So residential separation is continuously making inroads into the areas in which the secular and religious live together.

Partly this has to do with the fact that the religious are more apt to settle in the territories captured from the Arabs in the 1967 War, although there are some nonreligious settlements there as well. However, the separation in residential areas between the religious and the secular is becoming widespread within the old borders of the country, the “Green Line,” as well. Also, by this very fact, because more and more religious people leave the secular areas in favor of the religious ones, the secular areas are becoming more secular. Further, on both sides of the fence, this is not

merely a geographic division. Rather, the separate neighborhoods and settlements become increasingly diverging communal and cultural entities.

Separation in educational systems: The secular, the religious and the Haredim, each have their own educational system. There are several sub-divisions within each system, but broadly we may characterize the systems as follows:

The secular educational system is state-run. It puts almost exclusive emphasis on secular studies, including only a limited amount of (greatly diluted) Jewish/religious content.

The religious educational system is also state-run, and it combines various extents of religious studies with secular studies.

The Haredi educational system is generally autonomous. Some of its parts, but not all, are subsidized by the state. It puts almost exclusive emphasis on religious studies.

This in itself is an expression of a deep cultural cleavage between the camps, and it fosters this rift even further.

Separation in informal social relations: Since the religious and the secular have separate educational systems and many of them live in separate residential areas, apart from the army and work place, there are few common venues where they are likely to meet. Since, because of dietary laws, the religious tend not to eat in secular homes, this means that informal social relations and friendship groups are frequently separate as well.

Separation in leisure-time activities: The secular tend to spend much of their leisure-time at entertainment venues such as cinemas, concerts and the theater. The non-Haredi religious take part in such activities as well, though to a lesser extent, while the Haredim participate in few such activities, and only where these are imbued with religious content.

The non-religious spend time with their families and also in friendship circles, but the religious and the Haredim are more family-oriented in their leisure-time activities. As they also have larger families, they spend much of their leisure-time

at family events connected to life rituals: circumcisions, *Bar-Mitzvahs*, wedding related festivities, and comforting the bereaved.

Divided by one language: A common language is one of the most cohesive symbols that bind a collective, while different languages are of the most central forces that set collectives apart. Although the religious and the secular in Israel speak the same (Hebrew) language, and this is a strong unifying force for all Jews in Israel, nevertheless, it is enfeebled by the beginnings of bifurcation into a religious and a secular parlance. Here are two of many examples:

Before the weekend, religious people wish each other “a peaceful Sabbath.” Secular people are apt to say “Have a nice weekend.” When talking about future plans, the religious say “with the help of the Almighty.” The secular may say, “if all goes well.” Both speak Hebrew, but they allude to different symbolic contexts.

Weddings vs. cohabitation: By Israeli law, the Rabbinat is in charge of all weddings between Jews, and these are conducted by way of a religious ceremony. All religious couples are indeed married through such a ceremony under the auspices of the Rabbinat. On the other hand, many secular couples circumvent the law by opting for civil ceremonies, which are not provided for by law, but are retroactively recognized by the State of Israel.

Many couples choose a civil marriage, because they are barred from marriage by Jewish religious law – for instance when one of the partners is not Jewish. But there are some couples that have no impediment to being married in a religious ceremony under the auspices of the Rabbinat. Yet they prefer not to do so, because they wish to eschew what they consider an unpleasant encounter with this authority (see below).

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, in 2012, only 4% of couples where both partners were Jewish – and who were eligible to be married by the Rabbinat – chose to be married abroad, and have their marriages recognized retroactively in Israel.

But there are other ways of circumventing the Rabbinate. For instance, civil wedding ceremonies can be held at some foreign embassies, and in this case, too, the marriage is then recognized as legal in Israel. And many secular couples opt to live together without rabbinical blessing, without any religious or civil ceremony, at least until they decide to bring children into the world.

Differences in appearance: The Haredim, the religious and the secular also differ in their appearance. Haredi men frequently grow beards, wear a black garb and black head coverings, hats or *yarmulkas*. Religious men wear knitted yarmulkas, while traditional and secular men as a rule wear no head coverings. Haredi men wear religiously prescribed fringes (*tzitziot*) outside their garments, religious men wear such fringes either outside or inside their garments and the traditionalist and secular wear no fringes at all.

Haredi married women wear wigs or tight head coverings. Some religious women wear head coverings or hats, and some wear no head covering, as is also the custom of traditionalist and secular women.

Haredi and religious women tend not to wear trousers, and many, especially young ones, wear long skirts. On the other hand traditionalist and especially secular women tend to wear trousers or short skirts, and many of the young ones tend to wear tight and revealing tops.

Accordingly, the people of those categories are easily distinguishable from each other by their apparel. Over recent years, the apparel of religious women has become more modest and that of secular women has become more revealing. So they are more easily distinguishable from each other than they used to be in the past.

All in all, these divisions and separations (as well as others that because of shortage in space have not been dealt with) entail a social cleavage, as well as a split in lifestyles and culture between the camps. But no less, and perhaps even more important, is the split in Jewish identity between them.

The division then and now – Jewish identity

This brings us to the heart of the matter. A people (or other collective) is usually held together by a common identity; that is by a shared sense of belonging to the collective. Jews in Israel are, in principle, held together not by one, but by two partly overlapping collective identities: Israeli identity and Jewish identity.

If so, is common Jewish identity in fact necessary as a collective bond for Jewish Israeli society today? Could not commonality be based on Israeli identity, just as French commonality is based on French identity, and so on? And, indeed, Israeli identity has been quite strong among the Jewish public in Israel: in a survey conducted in 1996,⁵³³ a representative sample of Israeli Jews were asked about the strength or otherwise of their feeling of being Israeli. “Israeliness” was not predefined, rather, respondents were asked about their feelings concerning their being Israeli, as they themselves defined it. It turned out that around four fifths of the Jewish public considered themselves as having a very strong sense of being Israeli.

However, it turns out that Israeli identity as a unifying factor between the religious and non-religious Jews is problematic, because according to a variety of research projects, the Haredim and religious consider themselves first and foremost as Jews, while the secular consider themselves in the first place as Israelis.⁵³⁴

Therefore, Jewish identity still counts as an important potential unifying factor in this society. At the same time, there are also problems attached to Jewish identity.

Surveys show that most Jews in Israel have long had a very strong sense of Jewish identity. This is shown for instance by the previously mentioned survey conducted in 1996.⁵³⁵ In this survey, on the same representative sample of Israeli Jews, respondents were asked about the strength or otherwise of their feeling of being Jewish. “Jewishness” was not predefined, rather, respondents were asked about their feelings concerning Jewishness as they themselves defined it. It turned

out that some three quarters of the Jewish public considered itself as having a very strong Jewish feeling.

But the data showed that there was a difference between religious and non-religious: 95% of the Haredim and the religious expressed a very strong feeling of being Jewish. By contrast, only two thirds of the secular report having such a very strong feeling of being Jewish.

Also, there was an important dividing line within the secular camp itself, between the first and second generation secular. Of those who were first generation secular, 90% harbored a very strong sense of being Jewish. By comparison, among those who were second or third generation secular, only less than two thirds harbored a very strong sense of being Jewish.

This means that the secular who grew up in a religious home still experienced a sense of Jewishness almost as strong as the religious, while those secular who grew up in a secular home, experienced a much weaker sense of Jewishness.

Since, as noted, there is a longstanding trend of secularization – of people whose parents are or were religious becoming secular – on the basis of these data, I concluded at the time that among the secular, Jewish identity is diminishing from generation to generation. Since among the religious Jewish identity remains exceedingly strong, in my previously mentioned book, I proposed the thesis that the rift between the religious and the secular in their collective identity is growing over time and from generation to generation.

Recently, however, a somewhat more complex picture has emerged. In a new survey on a representative sample of Israeli Jews conducted in 2014,⁵³⁶ some stability but also some changes since the previous survey can be discerned.

It now emerges that in the time span between the two surveys, overall Jewish identity has not decreased, and has even slightly increased: in the new survey, 79.3% declared themselves to have a very strong feeling of being Jewish.

In this recent survey, the question respondents were asked about their religiosity vs. secularity has slightly changed, so

that there are now five degrees of religiosity versus secularity: Haredi, religious, traditional-religious, traditional-not so religious and secular.

Even so, it is clear that the cleavage in Jewish identity has remained the same: among those with all degrees of religiosity and even including the traditional-not so religious, it is significantly stronger (93.4%) than among the secular (62.5%).

However, in this survey, most of the secular (78.5%) were second generation secular. That is to say that their parents, too, were secular. Hence, the number of people in the sample who were first generation secular was too small to make a significant comparison of the strength of their Jewish identity vis-à-vis that of the second generation secular. Hence, on the basis of this survey, there is no possibility of duplicating the finding from the previous survey that second generation secular have a much weaker sense of Jewish identity than the first generation secular.

Unlike in the previous survey, in the recent survey most of the secular were second generation secular. Nonetheless, Jewish identity among the secular was still almost as strong as it was shown to be in the first survey. Hence it may be concluded that, contrary to what I argued before, the cleavage between the religious and the secular in Jewish identity is not significantly decreasing over time, and from one generation to the next.

Why is this so? I argue that this is the end result of contradictory dynamic processes or mechanisms in society. These are mechanisms of separation between the religious and the secular on the one hand, and mechanisms of integration between them on the other hand, which counteract each other.

Mechanisms of separation

Judaism with a sour face: A large part of the religious establishment, perhaps unintentionally but effectively, alienates non-religious Jews from Judaism. It does so by

adopting religious rigidity and sometimes extremism, which is unacceptable to the secular and to a large part of Jewish society in Israel, in general.

One major component of this establishment is the Chief Rabbinate and its various affiliates that hold jurisdiction over most aspects of Jewish life, including marriage between Jews, divorce, conversions to Judaism and burials. This institution has long been meticulous as far as Jewish law is concerned. In recent years, moreover, it has come increasingly under Haredi control, and thus has become even more religiously extreme.

This makes the path to marriage for non-religious couples difficult, and turns the encounter with the Rabbinate into a less than edifying experience. For instance, for reasons having to do with Jewish religious law, the Rabbinate demands that brides reveal to a woman official the date of their last menstruation, which is considered by many secular as a repulsive prying into the most intimate details of their private lives.

In this manner, as seen before, the Rabbinate drives quite a few of them to seek alternative ways of getting married, or even to eschew marriage, a way of life not acceptable to the religious.

Increasing religious extremism among the Haredim and the religious: Not only the Rabbinate, but a large part of the present-day Haredi and religious camps and their leaderships are much more rigorous in their religious adherence than was the case in previous generations. Certainly, this does not hold true for all of them, but it holds true for a majority among them.

Looking at the Haredi community (today some 10% of Israeli Jews), it can be seen that it is divided into a whole variety of sub-groups, some more religiously extremist or lenient than others. For instance, there are growing groups of Haredi people where (rather than the men engaging in the prescribed full-time religious studies) either the men or the women or both go out to work, frequently outside their own neighborhoods. In this manner they, to some degree, become part and parcel of general Israeli society.

At the same time, the mainstream of this camp insists on a more rigid separation between men and women, than it did in the past. For instance, while for many years the Haredim used the regular public transport, where men and women intermingle, for some years now, in the bus-lines used predominantly by the Haredim, a separation between men and women has been introduced: men sit in front, women in the back.

Looking at the religious, also known as the National Religious (today some 10.5% of Israeli Jews), this camp, too, is divided into various sub-camps.

One of these is that of the *National Haredim* or *Hardalim* (estimated to comprise some 32% of the religious). This group, which came into being in the 1990s, is the strictest among the religious. In terms of religious adherence it is close to the Haredi bent, but unlike the latter it affirms a strong commitment to Zionism and nationalism.

It puts major emphasis on (full-time) religious studies, and opts for an economically modest way of life, making do with bare necessities and shunning luxuries. In their outer appearance its men may be recognized by the fact that they wear knitted head-coverings and fringes outside their garments.

Over the years, they have become even stricter than they were before in religious adherence and they increasingly tend to enclose themselves in separate communities. They have a separate youth movement called *Ezra*.⁵³⁷

Next come the *Mainstream Religious* (estimated to comprise some 35% of the religious camp). The people in this category maintain a strict religious adherence – though not as strict as the Haredim – combined with a modern way of life. Its men may be recognized by knitted head-coverings, and they wear their fringes either outside or inside their garments. Its youth movement is the *Bnei Akiva*.⁵³⁸

In recent years, many in this group have become more closely integrated with Israeli society at large. For instance, many put great emphasis on their army service and a growing

proportion of the higher army echelons are staffed by the religious.

Nonetheless, most people in this category have become more strictly religious. For instance, in the state run religious educational system, designed for the religious, there is increasing religious extremism. This finds expression in the contents of the educational curriculum and also in greater separation between boys and girls.

While in the Haredi educational system there has long been a complete separation between boys and girls, in this educational system boys and girls have long studied together. Now, however, there is an increasing segregation between the genders in this educational system as well. Thus, in a survey conducted in 2012⁵³⁹ on 75 elementary schools in this system, it was found that 23 of them were moving over to gender segregation. And since then, the trend of separation even at such an early age, has continued.

This raises some controversy among religious parents, as some of them oppose this trend. Thus, the State Comptroller Report of 2012 tells of numerous complaints of parents over extremism in the religious educational system in both content and gender separation.

The same holds also for the national religious youth movement, the Bnei Akiva. Its publications from the years around the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 I have perused, show – black on white – that it used to stage mixed boy-girl folk dancing as a matter of course. Today this would be unthinkable: dancing is separate, so that boys and girls never touch each other.

One explanation for this growing extremism is the fact that some 40 years ago, when the religious set up their own religious colleges, they could not find a sufficient number of adequately qualified teachers of their own ranks. This made it necessary for them to appoint a large number of Haredi teachers to these positions, and these imbued their students with their own more stringently religious bent. When these students then became teachers, they transmitted the same spirit to their own students.⁵⁴⁰

Another possible explanation is the anxiety the religious and the Haredim share vis-à-vis the torrent of secularization. Not for nothing have the Haredim assumed this name, which, literally translated into English means ‘the anxious.’ And while the other religious have not adopted this name, they, too, are anxious. Their common anxiety revolves around the fact that secular life, which makes it easier to “have a good time,” may seduce their youngsters, and frequently this is in fact the case. And whereas self-confidence breeds flexibility, anxiety breeds rigidity.

These are only a few examples of the intensifying strictness in the religious camp. And growing extremism of the religious, leads to greater alienation between the religious and the secular.

Mechanisms of integration

As against these mechanisms and processes of separation, there are counteracting mechanisms of convergence and integration. A major one of these is the development of groups that are in-between the strictly religious camp and the strictly secular one.

The in-between groups: One of these is known as *The New Religious* (estimated to comprise some 8% of the religious). This is a category of religious people that has developed since the 1980s, whose members are more autonomous than the strictly religious in defining the rules of religious adherence by which they live. They maintain close contact with the secular world, and tend to adopt career and leisure-time activities that are similar to those of the secular. The youth movements to which they send their children are the more moderate branches of the Bnei Akiva and the Religious Scouts.⁵⁴¹

Another such group is that commonly referred to as *The Religious Light* (which, together with the next category, is estimated to comprise some 25% of the religious camp). As a distinct group of people, this category has only come into existence in recent years, but since then it has caught much

attention. Its members are mostly Ashkenazim, and those among them who are of Middle Eastern origin, tend to adopt an Ashkenazi lifestyle. People in this category make an effort to adhere to most religious precepts, but find various ways to lighten the burden and thereby make life easier.

The people in this category are generally more concerned with immediate gratification than the more strictly religious. Their lifestyle is close to that of the secular but they try to imbue it with some religious meaning. Their youth movements, too, are the more moderate branches of the Bnei Akiva and the Religious Scouts.

In addition there are the *Previously Religious*, or *Datlashim*. These are people who were religious and crossed the boundaries to the secular world, but without leaving religion and the religious camp altogether. Sometimes they continue to fulfill some religious precepts and to maintain social interaction with the religious. They have no specific youth movement.⁵⁴²

Outside the strictly religious camp, we find another in-between group: the *Traditionalists*. These have long been a somewhat distinct group in Israeli society. They can be recognized by the fact that they fulfill only part of the religious precepts, and do not necessarily do so in the religiously prescribed manner. In a recent survey they were divided into two categories: those who tend to be more religious and those who tend to be less so, and together they have been found to comprise 34.3% of the Jewish population.⁵⁴³

The traditionalist bent is widespread in particular among Jews from Middle Eastern Origin and they tend to maintain various customs they brought with them from their countries of origin.⁵⁴⁴

There are more groups and shades of religiosity, for instance various Hassidic groups, as well as Conservative and Reform congregations, which shortage of space makes it impossible to deal with. But the general principle is clear: the emergence of less adamantly religious groups in the religious camp, and the in-between groups, tend to moderate the schism

between the religious and the secular. And so do the in-between groups within the secular camp.

For instance, there is a new trend in Tel Aviv, whereby young secular people embrace Judaism, not in the sense of becoming religious, but rather in the sense of touching base with their Jewishness, while remaining secular.

As part of this trend it has become fashionable for secular youngsters to frequent religious services in synagogues on the Sabbath, where they also participate in Sabbath meals and meet other young people for social interaction. They do so alongside their regular religiously forbidden activities, such as driving and swimming in the sea.

These young people are being accepted with open arms by the religious people conducting those religious services and frequenting the same synagogues. It is difficult to estimate the number of secular youngsters engaging in these activities, or their durability, but it is interesting that they are there at all.⁵⁴⁵

In addition, in the secular camp there are those who, while adhering to their secularity, still keep a few religious customs (such as participating in a Passover meal and lighting Hanukkah candles) not as religious precepts but as expressions of tradition and collective solidarity.

Here, too, the existence of a group that is moderate in its secularity, works for greater integration between the religious and the secular camps.

And only at the very edge of the spectrum are those who are adamant in their secularity and keep no religious customs at all, or even oppose the keeping of such customs.

Transitions: As noted before, there are widespread transitions from the religious to the secular and (to a lesser extent) from the secular to the religious camps. This works for some connection between the two camps, because it means that many secular people who were previously religious, such as the above mentioned Datlashim, carry with them the cultural baggage of religion into the secular world, even though they no longer believe in it. And conversely many newly religious, are still familiar with the secular culture they

have left, which makes for a degree of common discourse between members of the two camps.

Religious groups embracing the secular: Among the processes and mechanisms that work for the integration between the secular and the religious camps, there are recently arisen groups and organizations of religious people, which have set themselves the goal of bringing the secular closer to Judaism. They do so by counteracting the main religious establishment that features Judaism with a sour face, in that they themselves display Judaism with a smiling face, and accept the secular as they are, without trying to make them “return” to religion.

One of these is *Tzohar* (literally, ‘window’),⁵⁴⁶ a group of rabbis and religious volunteers established some 20 years ago, strict in their religious adherence, but friendly to the secular. Their design is to open a window to Judaism for the secular and emphasize religious tolerance. According to their own testimony, they have 200 rabbis and over 1,000 volunteers, and have conducted 85,000 marriages. They also conduct religious services for a mix of religious and secular Jews on the High Holidays, a project that is apparently quite successful, although it is difficult to gauge how many people participate in these services.

Another such organization is *Esh Tel Aviv* (literally, ‘Fire Tel Aviv’), which invites secular people to experience a taste of Judaism and the Jewish religion, without trying to convince them to become religious. At their venues they organize Sabbath and Holiday meals, as well as lectures and dialogues between the religious and non-religious.

Bridge-building organizations: There are also other organizations, which have set themselves the goal of building bridges between the religious and the secular and fostering their common Jewish identity. One such organization is *Hillel*, a foundation that fosters Jewish life as well as leadership on university and college campuses in various countries, including Israel. In Israel it organizes various activities designed to strengthen the Jewish identity of students of various backgrounds. According to its own testimony, in Israel

it is active on eight campuses and some 20,000 students a year take part in its activities.

Another such organization is *Gesher* (literally, ‘bridge’). This organization has been working for over 40 years to break down the barriers and build a bridge between secular, religious and Haredi Jews, and foster commitment to Jewish identity. It does so by organizing dialogues between people of various camps, supporting mixed secular-religious communities and holding leadership courses that also aim to strengthen Jewish identity.

Yet another such organization is *Tzav Pius* (literally, ‘an order for reconciliation’). It works to develop a society in which Jews of differing perceptions along the secular-Orthodox spectrum share a strong commitment to Jewish and democratic values, and a strong sense of common solidarity.

It identifies its key strength in bringing together youngsters diversely situated on the religious-secular spectrum, both in formal and informal educational frameworks: via joint religious-secular schools and kindergartens, which offer an important alternative to the divisive public school system that separates children based on religious affiliation; summer-camps for teenagers and other educational projects.

Non-religious embracing Judaic studies: There are various venues designed for the study of Judaism by the non-religious. In these venues, people who are not religious can take courses, or attend lectures and discussions on Judaic texts and values, where these are normally imbued with a variety of novel, original interpretations.

One of these is *Alma*, a center for Hebrew culture in Tel Aviv. Founded in 1996, it organizes various courses and informal venues for studying the Bible, the Talmud and other Judaic texts, supplying non-traditional interpretations to the classical texts.

Another one of these is *Binah* (literally, ‘understanding’), also established in 1996 by intellectuals in kibbutzim and outside, with the aim of connecting secular Israeli society to its Jewish cultural roots. It has established a secular college for

Jewish studies, offers courses and engages in other educational activities designed for this purpose.

Similarly, there are other colleges, centers or venues, which promote Judaic studies (with various types of interpretations of Judaism as both a cultural and a spiritual entity) primarily for the non-religious, such as the Oranim College and the Ellul College in Jerusalem.

In addition there are other such foundations and also a multiplicity of smaller venues and groups that engage in a variety of Jewish studies, discussions and dialogues on Judaism.

This phenomenon has come into being some 20–30 years ago, and since then has been flourishing. Hence it may be concluded that it is not a negligible, passing episode, but a significant development in Israeli society.⁵⁴⁷

All these venues, however, are frequented mostly by the highly educated, and it is not clear what proportion of the general public participates or is affected by them. Also, it is not clear to what extent the strictly religious accept such bridging organizations that supply novel, secular interpretations to Judaism. Many of them may even feel that they distort Judaism, thus turning the bridging enterprise into a one-sided endeavor.

Conclusion

As noted before, shortage of space makes it impossible to analyze all aspects of the topic. Even so, the picture that emerges is rather complex: with all the multiple shades of religiosity and secularity and the in-between shades (not all of which have been listed here) it would almost seem that there are more categories than there are Jews in Israel.

What emerges from all this is, on the one hand, a deep division between the religious and the secular in a whole variety of areas including most prominently a gap in Jewish identity. This entails a cleavage in culture, or a divergence in

what philosopher Jürgen Habermas has referred to as life-worlds, between the camps.

On the other hand, we witness a variety of processes and mechanisms of both separation and integration between the camps, both of which seem to have gained strength in recent years. These processes and mechanisms are in continuous flux and highly dynamic, but, paradoxically, they lead to relative stability. They all counteract and balance each other, and the end result is that in recent years there has been no clear change in the cleavage between the religious and secular in general, and in the split between them in Jewish identity, in particular.

Thus, separation and integration, change and stability, intermingle. The Haredi, the religious and the secular, as well as all the in-between groups somehow live, if not *with* each other at least *alongside* each other, without one being able to overpower or marginalize the other.

This, at least, is the situation today, but, needless to say, it may have changed in a few years' time.

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Topic IV: Ethnic (In)Equality

Introduction

Some of the groups that comprise the multiculturalism of Israeli society assert their presence more by emphasizing their relative deprivation vis-à-vis the stronger components of the setting, and cite discrimination more virulently. Some emphasize that power and dependence relations account for the different conditions of groups in this society. Others speak of differential opportunities offered to different groups. Still others speak of “distributive justice,” that is, of inequality that is justified by differential contributions to the public good. Furthermore, while some would underline the widening of the social gaps and forms of exploitation of the weaker by the stronger, a number of analysts focus on diminishing distances. In this general context, one of the most disputed issues is the relation between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim in Israeli society. The following texts offer several analyses that reach divergent conclusions.

Shlomo Swirski looks at the circumstances under which the major ethnic and national groups were brought together. The Ashkenazi descendants of the Pale of Settlement Jews who opted for the Zionist project were successful in bringing their project to fruition. Ever since, they have occupied most of the top positions and form the “center,” leaving behind Mizrahi communities and the Palestinian sector (the “periphery”). When numerous immigrants arrived in the 1990s from the Former Soviet Union, the well-educated young joined the ranks of the “aristocracy of labor” while most of the others went into low-wage jobs. Within a few years, many government corporations were privatized. A small layer of grand capitalists emerged – including a few Mizrahim. At the other end of the income scale, the share of families below the poverty line – including most Mizrahim – almost doubled, due to worsening conditions and to cuts in welfare expenditures and allowances.

Alex Weingrod focuses on the “ethnic devil,” i.e., the feared eruption of ethnic-based hostility between Ashkenazi and Mizrahi Jews. Over recent decades, that conflict has moderated and ethnic expressions have been revised. The larger question is the long-term condition of ethnic associations and ethnic identities. The sensitivities expressed by members of the third generation recall the notion of “symbolic ethnicity” – associated with upwardly mobile members of the second and third generation. Greater mobility and the high rate of inter-ethnic marriages are encouraging reformulations of the meanings of being “Ashkenazi” or “Mizrahi.”

Ze’ev Shavit and Ephraim Yuchtman-Yaar recall that a most salient societal division in Israel is assumed to be the Ashkenazim versus Mizrahim cleavage. Due to their earlier arrival in the country, the Ashkenazi group had the privilege of molding the new society according to their vision, that reflected a Western concept of nation-state. A Western orientation, on both the right and the left, is still visible today. While Ashkenazi dominance has been increasingly challenged and eroded, research shows that the vast majority of Israeli Jews adhere to that Western orientation. Moreover, the Mizrahim, who represent the assumedly discriminated culture, are notably the group for whom the Western/ Eastern distinction is least relevant.

Rebeca Raijman and Anastasia Gorodzeisky point to labor migrants and non-Jewish *olim* as excluded groups in Israeli society, especially when those groups are compared with Jewish olim. For the Jewish majority, access to rights depends more on ethno-national origin and less on citizenship. Labor migrants are in the most vulnerable position, and while Jewish citizens are willing to benefit from cheap labor they are reluctant to grant them equal rights as workers. The data show discriminatory attitudes toward non-Jewish olim, despite their possession of full formal citizenship. Data also show that the level of objection to granting political rights to out-groups (labor migrants and non-Jewish olim) is higher among majority members who sense a threat from those out-groups, than among those who do not feel such a threat.

In brief, the first three chapters represent contrasting views on relations between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim in Israeli society. Shlomo Swirski addresses the dominant position of the Ashkenazi descendants of the Pale of Settlement who have, assumedly, consciously rejected others to the “periphery,” causing many of them to sink to the bottom of the income scale. Alex Weingrod takes a contradictory stand: he notes the diminishing levels of ethnic hostility between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim in the context of considerable mobility, frequent intermarriage, and the reducing of ethnic identification to symbolic expressions. Ze’ev Shavit and Ephraim Yuchtman-Yaar, in a similar vein, emphasize that the cleavage between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim is losing significance due to the strong reference by all groups to Western cultural models. In the fourth chapter, Rebeca Raijman and Anastasia Gorodzeisky discuss another aspect of ethnic inequality in Israel. They focus on labor migrants and non-Jewish olim as excluded groups. They assess that Jewish citizens are willing to benefit from cheap labor, but without granting those workers access to rights.

16. Inequality in Israel: In the End, Israel Produced Its Own 1%

Shlomo Swirski

This paper was completed in March 2015.

Introduction

Toward the end of Yuri Slezkine's brilliant book *The Jewish Century*, in which he follows the three main paths taken at the turn of the 19th century by the Jews of the Pale of Settlement⁵⁴⁸ – emigrating to America, joining the Zionist project, and joining the Soviet project – Slezkine suggests that one century later, at the turn of the 20th century, the great majority of the descendants of those Jews would agree that those who chose to go to America had been the wisest.⁵⁴⁹

I beg to disagree. Not about the fate of those who chose the Soviet project, whose collapse in the late 1980s led to the emigration of most of the Jewish population of Russia and the other ex-Soviet republics. Rather, about the presumed clear advantage enjoyed by those who chose America over those who chose the Zionist project. True, American Jewry is probably the most successful Jewish diaspora community ever, in terms of its integration into the wider society, its cultural and religious freedom, and its relatively high standard of living. For most of the 20th century, American Jews have been the “rich American uncle” of many Jews – as well as of many non-Jews – around the world. Furthermore, American Jews have learned to use their privileged position to exercise significant political clout, which allowed them, among other things, to both defend and eventually extricate Jews from the ex-Soviet republics and to secure US support for Israel.

But the descendants of the Pale of Settlement Jews who opted for the Zionist project – at the time a tiny minority

compared to those who chose the other two paths – have done quite well themselves. First and foremost, they were successful in bringing their project to fruition in the form of a sovereign state – a feat that few believed possible. That state has become a regional military and economic power, enjoying a geo-strategic alliance with the United States. Within that state, the descendants of those Pale of Settlement Jews stand firmly at the helm and occupy most of the top political, military, economic, cultural and scientific positions. As such, many of them now enjoy a standard of living that brings them close to their rich cousins in the US.

So which of the two streams of Pale of Settlement Jews was the wisest? That depends on what kind of value one attaches to the fact of a collectivity “possessing” a state – an asset not measured in social and economic statistics. On an individual or family level, where statistics abound, it is probably true that most US Jews enjoy a higher standard of living than most of their Israeli cousins; in this sense, their forebearers may have been the wisest. Yet like their American cousins, the Israeli descendants of Pale of Settlement Jews are better off than most of their countrymen.

But who are their countrymen – those other Israelis? Mainly two groups that joined – if that is the proper term – the Zionist project under conditions of war, deportation and evacuation, conditions that have much to do with present-day inequality: Mizrahi Jews⁵⁵⁰ and Palestinian citizens of Israel. The descendants of the Pale of Settlement Zionists are part of the Ashkenazi⁵⁵¹ ethnic group.

A first quick glimpse at the privileged position of the Ashkenazi Jews can be gained from income statistics: in 2013, second generation Ashkenazi wage earners (Israelis whose father had come from Europe or America) earned about 33% above the average wage; second generation Mizrahi Jews earned about 10% above the average wage, while Palestinian Israelis earned 33% below the average wage.⁵⁵²

The Yishuv period

Pale of Settlement Jews were the majority of the troops that marched behind Theodor Herzl's flag. They were undergoing pauperization and proletarianization. They were also experiencing marginalization in the midst of rising nationalism amongst the various ethnic groups sharing with them space under the Russian Empire. Nationalism – Jewish – seemed to some like the key to a better future. The only peculiarity was that it could not be accomplished in Europe, where Jews, though they had been part of Europe for more than a millennium, could claim no space of their own.

Zionism began as a Diaspora-centered movement, but once settlement in Palestine commenced, securing the Zionist *Yishuv*'s⁵⁵³ survival and success became as important as saving Jews in the Diaspora. Furthermore, diasporic Zionist activity was rather restricted for much of the period leading up to 1948, first because of World War I, then due to the closing of the gates for the Jews of the Soviet Union, then because of World War II. The result was that for most of the pre-1948 period, the *Yishuv* was left to its own devices and proceeded to develop political, military and economic structures that were appropriately called “a state in the making.” When Jewish immigrants began arriving *en masse* in independent Israel after 1948, they were coming not to a diffuse and open-ended entity that had been waiting for their arrival before embarking on the historical project of shaping a Jewish state and society, but rather to a polity with a well seasoned political class that was in firm control of capital flows, of land and infrastructures, of school and health services, and of a regular army.

How does capital develop? Not necessarily through the making of money. The country was bereft of natural resources. The economy was one of subsistence farming where most of the land was owned by several hundred Palestinian families. The major innovation of the 19th century was the cultivation of citrus for export. The Zionist arrivals from the impoverished Pale of Settlement brought no capital with them. Many of the cooperative and communal structures they created, like the *kibbutz*, arose out of the greater likelihood of being the recipients of diasporic Zionist funds as collectives

rather than as individuals, as much as out of socialist and egalitarian ideology. The wealthy European Jews did not come. In fact, they never would, contrary to Herzl's belief that once poor Jews had laid the infrastructures, rich Jews would follow.⁵⁵⁴ When wealthy Jews did finally make their appearance, they did so as a local, rather than imported product.

The British, who took over from the Ottomans after WWI, invested mainly in imperial infrastructures – roads, railways, ports, an airport, telephone and telegraph lines. These projects created a labor market in which Zionists and Palestinians contended over jobs. The main Zionist economic endeavors were farming and construction. Industry made its first major strides during WWII, supplying Allied troops. The Jewish standard of living was higher than that of most Palestinians, but far from Western standards. The help of the rich uncle in America was in high demand.

The roots of future Ashkenazi ascendancy are to be found not in the economy of Israel's pre-state period but in the development of a strong political structure. First and foremost, as already mentioned, the formation of a "state in the making" headed by a highly effective political class. Capital is not just the fruit of production: it is also the fruit of appropriation, as noted by Shmuel Bichler and Jonathan Nitzan, following Thorstein Veblen.⁵⁵⁵ Appropriation refers primarily to what one capitalist does to another, but not just: the Zionist political class accumulated political and economic capital by controlling the inflow of Zionist funds as well as the allocation of purchased land, of labor and of services.

The political class of the Yishuv also created cultural capital that was destined to play an important role in determining individual and communal opportunities after 1948. The Yishuv in particular and the Zionist movement in general saw themselves as part of European-Christian civilization; Arab and Muslim civilization, of which Mizrahi Jews were an organic part, were seen as pre- or non-modern and alien. The Zionist Yishuv adopted Hebrew over possible alternatives, most obviously Yiddish, the language of the Pale

of Settlement Jews, but also Arabic, the language spoken by Palestinians and by most Jews from Arab countries. The curriculum of the Yishuv's schools reflected all those choices: languages (Hebrew, and English as the foreign language, rather than Arabic or French, spoken by many North African Jews); literature (Hebrew and European); and history (Europocentric).

Last but certainly not least of the forms of non-money capital was the creation by the Yishuv of a military apparatus. Given the centrality of the conflict in every facet of Zionist life,⁵⁵⁶ military command gave and still gives title to political command as well as to command of collective resources. The generation that fought in 1948, for example, produced many national leaders, best known among them former Chief of Staff Moshe Dayan and former Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin.⁵⁵⁷

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The pre-1948 Palestinians – who circa WWI had embarked on their own national project – accumulated less capital, both economic and non-economic, than the Zionists.⁵⁵⁸ Their political and military institutions were slow in coalescing; in fact, in both areas the Palestinians depended heavily on the neighboring Arab states as well as on the British Mandate authorities.

How is a proletariat formed? One way is by a people losing their land in a war. Palestinian capital consisted mainly of land – and that is exactly what they lost in 1948. Israel gained 78% of the land of British Palestine while retaining only about 15% of the Palestinian people. After the war the Israeli state further confiscated about half the land remaining in the hands of that 15%.

The Palestinians who became citizens of Israel lost not only land but also their social, political and economic leadership, most of which found refuge in neighboring Arab countries. Nor could they lay claim to economic opportunities open in the new State of Israel, as for almost two decades after 1948 they were officially branded as suspicious aliens and were submitted to military administration. Bereft of land, leadership and full citizenship, the only avenue of subsistence

open to them was as “hired hands,” the proverbial proletarian whose only possession is his physical labor power. Hardly a mutually beneficial meeting between employers and employees in the neutral arena of the free market, as economists would have it. As Karl Polanyi has phrased it, the achievement of a free market, and we can add, “free labor,” requires rather heavy intervention on the part of the state.⁵⁵⁹ Instead, what we have here is a clear case of what historian Sven Beckert has recently aptly termed “war capitalism.”⁵⁶⁰

How is a proletariat formed? Another way is by a community running for safety and in the process becoming dependent on others.

For the Jews in Arab and Moslem countries – in 1948, some 800,000 out of a post-Holocaust world Jewry of about 11.5 million – Zion, as Amiel Alcalay pointed out, was part of a topography and civilizational space in which they “lived and traveled [...] from one end to the other, a world in which the Holy Land was just another stop on a familiar and well-traveled route.”⁵⁶¹ These Jews, unlike their coreligionists in Eastern Europe, who had traditionally been “a nation apart” from their surroundings, shared a “native space” with their neighbors. In Iraq, the Jewish community – one of the largest – had been natives of the land for more than two millennia, anteceding Islam. Interviewed by a Zionist newspaper in 1909, one of their grandees, Yekhezkel Sasoon, described them as “totally Arab in their comportment, their customs, their speech and their language.”⁵⁶² To paraphrase historian Moshe Zimmermann, if Pale of Settlement Jews were 90% Jewish and only 10% Russian or Polish, Arab Jews were 90% Arab and only 10% Jewish.⁵⁶³ To them, as to all Jews, Zion was a central feature of collective remembrance and of the holy books, but an exodus of Jews from all Islamic lands and a re-gathering in what was at the turn of the 20th century the Ottoman district of South Syria was not perceived as an immediate, practical collective need. Neither was mass emigration to Western countries.

The Arab Jews benefitted from the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the intrusion of the British and French Empires, as

one of several minorities whose support was elicited by the new rulers. In Algeria, the French endowed local Jews with French citizenship. In Iraq, prominent Jewish businessmen established commercial networks ranging throughout the British Empire. For the urban business and educated strata, if there was a new Zion it was often London and Paris rather than the one sought by Pale of Settlement Zionists.

Zionism, for its part, showed little interest in Arab Jews. Two developments were to change that: first, the Jewish Holocaust in Europe, which destroyed the traditional sources of Zionist recruits: “[Israel],” declared David Ben-Gurion in 1948, “lacks Jews [...] and as long as that lack is not fulfilled [...] there is no assurance for the survival of the state.”⁵⁶⁴ The second was the Zionist-Palestinian conflict that aroused suspicions toward the local Jewish communities in Arab countries. The conflict culminated in the war of 1948, which made life for some Jewish communities in the Arab world highly precarious. Arab Jews became an enemy within. David Ben-Gurion put it bluntly: the Arab Jewish community “is the only Jewish community in the world that may be a victim of Zionism.”⁵⁶⁵ Now Zion became an immediately practical need. The new State of Israel launched a campaign to move Jews from around the Middle East and North Africa to Israel. Zionism turned overnight from victimizer to savior of Arab Jewish communities.

Within a few years’ time, a virtual mass evacuation took place – mostly to Israel. Most Jews took little with them; many had little to take to begin with. The rich, very much like the European Jewish rich, did not come; they opted for France or England. Jewish existence in Arab countries came to an end.⁵⁶

⁶ Israel became the largest concentration of Jews from Arab lands. Within Israel, they soon became a majority amongst Israeli Jews.

The mass evacuation was accompanied by a virtual collapse of communal structures. Arab Jews were now almost totally dependent on Israel. It was Israel that conducted negotiations, direct or indirect, with the governments involved and commanded the logistics of evacuation,⁵⁶⁷ often

challenging the established communal authorities, whose vision of the future did not necessarily include mass immigration to Palestine.⁵⁶⁸

Most Arab Jews arrived in Israel as emergency evacuees, shorn of their material possessions and of their centuries-old communal organizations. Tragically, they found themselves in a position analogous to that of the Palestinian refugees, even though they had not been driven out of their homes by force of arms. Tragically too, the new state took advantage of their coming in order to establish possession of lands and villages recently abandoned by Palestinian refugees. Much like the Palestinians, they too became actors in a drama of war capitalism, only on the other side – as new immigrants given former Palestinian lands to cultivate and former Palestinian houses to live in.

State-led developmentalism

How does accumulation begin? One way is by appropriating new capital assets. As we saw, the 650,000-strong veteran Yishuv of 1948 did not possess much economic capital. But now, military triumph and statehood had brought with them two new capital assets: land and labor. The new lands were those conquered in 1948. The new laborers included both the 150,000 remaining Palestinians and the mass of Jewish immigrants who arrived in the first decade of statehood: about one million, more than half from Arab countries, less than half from post-Holocaust Europe. But then there was also a flow of financial aid to the new state: contributions from Jewish communities abroad, US government loans, and German Holocaust reparations. To be sure, the country was far from rich and the uncle in the US was still very much needed – in fact, that uncle constituted one more advantage many Ashkenazi veterans enjoyed over their new countrymen, Arab Jews and Palestinians.

Armed with these new capital assets, the Israeli state entered what today would be called its “developmentalist” stage. The first developmental target was expansion and

empowerment of the state apparatus itself: many of the veteran Ashkenazim now became civil servants, teachers, policemen, commanders, and judges. Many others benefitted from state contracts. Sociologists Rosenfeld and Carmi labeled them all a “state-made middle-class.”⁵⁶⁹

The two major tasks of the newly empowered state were, first, to establish control over land, and second, to house the immigrants. Holocaust survivors, the first to arrive, were often accommodated in the center of the country, a fact which would soon turn into a relative advantage. *Mizrahim*⁵⁷⁰ were more often settled in outlying areas. One outstanding example is that of the some 25 hastily set up so-called “development towns.” Erected in outlying areas with the purpose of establishing a claim to national proprietorship and lacking proper economic infrastructures, they suffered long years of crippling unemployment. They were “rescued” by a state-led project of rapid industrialization that began in the late 1950s. The new factories were mostly low-skill, low-wage textile or food processing plants. Residence in a “development town” and low-wage employment in low-tech textile or food industries became a central part of the Mizrahi narrative.

There are two other parts to the Mizrahi narrative. One is what I like to call “welfarization”: long periods of unemployment, low wages, and a large number of unemployables gave rise to a high rate of poverty. Discontent led to frequent “bread and jobs” demonstrations. The government’s standard response was to offer yet more low-wage, low-skill jobs – but not necessarily better pay. Over time it developed a welfare apparatus: first the degrading “dole,” then children’s allowances,⁵⁷¹ then income maintenance. Children’s allowances were at one point officially defined as aimed at bringing the family of workers earning a minimum wage above the level of the “dole.”⁵⁷² Throughout, welfare was tainted as a handout to Mizrahim: income maintenance, for example, was instituted by Prime Minister Menachem Begin as a show of gratitude to Mizrahi voters who deserted Labor and voted for him in 1977.

The last but not least part of the Mizrahi narrative is educational tracking. By the late 1950s, there were plenty of signs of widespread scholastic failure among Mizrahi children. Few were making it into high school and even fewer into university. Failure was hardly surprising in view of the fact that most were studying in hastily put together schools, with a high percentage of unqualified teachers, a new and unfamiliar curriculum, and a new language. Fearing electoral backlash, but convinced that scholastic failure reflected lower intellectual capabilities, political and educational leaders introduced remedies long applied to proletariats in Western countries, foremost among them high school vocational tracks. In addition, special curricula were developed for “pupils in need of special nurture,” overtly defined as “the son or daughter of a father who is a Jew of African or Asian origin who had a low level of schooling and a large family.”⁵⁷³ The road to hell is paved with good intentions: *ta‘un tipuach*, the Hebrew word for such a pupil, ended up stigmatizing generations of Mizrahi pupils as having lower intellectual capacities. Schools would play an important role in the reproduction of the ethnic division of labor.

How is a poor proletariat formed? One way is by being kept below the horizon of the developmental state. The Palestinian minority benefitted only from the crumbs of Israel’s state developmentalism. Secluded within their villages under military government, needing permits to exit their own pale of settlement, with many of their lands confiscated, they became dependent on agricultural and industrial employment in Jewish localities. They were systematically excluded from government economic development plans.⁵⁷⁴ State employment was restricted to a bare minimum, mainly in such services as teaching. They had to wait until 1959 to be even admitted to the *Histadrut*, the federation of labor unions. Needless to say, service in the military, a major employer, was not a possibility. Welfare was slow in coming, and then it was rigged in favor of Mizrahim: when in 1970 the government decided to raise children’s allowances, in consideration of Mizrahim who fought in the 1967 War but did not share in the

subsequent prosperity, it conditioned receipt of the increments on service in the Israel Defense Forces.⁵⁷⁵

State-led developmentalism was highly successful, in conventional economic terms. From the mid-1950s until 1973, with the exception of a sharp recession in the mid-1960s, Israel experienced continuous and rapid economic growth.⁵⁷⁶ The large investments – mostly by the state – in agriculture, construction, and industry greatly strengthened the fledgling corporate structure, in those years mostly state- or Histadrut-owned. Growth helped expand the managerial class, mostly veteran Ashkenazim. In 1975, 32.4% of all employed Ashkenazim were to be found in the category of managerial, academic and professional workers, compared to 11.8% of employed Mizrahim and 9.3% of employed Palestinians. In contrast, only 25.5% of all employed Ashkenazim, but 42.1% of employed Mizrahim and 55.3% of employed Palestinians were categorized as skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers.⁵⁷⁷

Today, Mizrahi cooperative farms and still largely Mizrahi development towns, together with Palestinian Israeli villages, are routinely lumped together under the euphemistic concept “periphery.” Periphery, of course, is a concept that circumvents much more meaningful – but politically troubling – issues such as class, ethnos and nation. “Periphery” is non-controversial, as it places the emphasis on a technicality: distance from the “center.”

Economists even have a technical solution for such a technicality: rapid transport out of the periphery and into the center. But alas, the fact that one can reach the geographical center on a fast train does not necessarily make one part of the political-economic center.

After 1967

Things should have been different. After all, the period we have been discussing, extending roughly until the 1967 War, was the one many refer to as the “socialist” chapter in Israel’s

history: the party in power was “The Party of the Workers of Eretz Yisrael”; most workers belonged to the powerful Histadrut; and the collectivist kibbutzim were at the forefront of picture-card Israel, the equivalent of today’s hi-tech start-ups.

But if, as some argue,⁵⁷⁸ socialism still stood a real chance of implementation after 1948, it soon lost it. The Labor party was a nation-and-state builder as much as it was a force for socialism. For the Palestinians, Labor was the enemy of 1948 and the agency behind the military government imposed on them afterwards. For Mizrahim, Labor was the party in charge at the time of their peripheralization and proletarianization. The socialist Histadrut took years to unionize the Palestinians. In the eyes of the Mizrahim, it was not just a labor union but also an employer. Furthermore, as both a labor union and an employer it often stood shoulder to shoulder with the government when low paid Mizrahim protested in what both institutions labeled “wildcat strikes.” The kibbutzim, closed communities, did not cater to candidates “not trained in European socialist values”; they certainly were not open to Palestinians.

When the social critics of present-day Israeli neo-liberalism speak nostalgically about the past, what they have in mind is not necessarily state-led socialism or kibbutz-like collectivism but rather Israeli state developmentalism: that is, state rather than market control of capital flows; the “public option” in such areas as housing and pensions; a commitment to full employment; free public education; public health care that is mainly state-supported.

State-led development was not universalistic and certainly not egalitarian; rather, it was tracked and exclusionary. Yet, the hegemonic agent was a collective one, and that fact carried with it the hope of gradually achieving a more universal and inclusive development. That situation would gradually change following the Six-Day War.

How does state-led developmentalism come to an end? One way is by a great military victory that changes a nation’s agenda. The Six-Day War was a major political-economic

turning point. Victory proved Israel to be a major regional player. Following the war, the Israeli leadership decided to maintain that status, with the help of the United States. The result was a turn from nation building to regional power building.

Contrary to 1948 and 1956, after 1967, the defense budget was not cut back to peace time size and would remain high for years. Massive military infrastructures were built. The armed forces were expanded, as Israel at first held on to all the conquered territories. Most importantly, from the point of view of this paper, in the aftermath of the war, Israel embarked on a massive expansion of its weapons industries, a project that catapulted it for the first time into the world economic scene.

The weapons industries combined Israel's military expertise with its Western-class network of universities and research institutes to gain a relative advantage in the global market. It is of course impossible to guess in retrospect which way the Israeli economy could have gone after 1967, but it is clear that, lacking oil or gas, the weapons industry offered it a good way out of typical Middle Eastern economies. If up to 1967 exports comprised mainly agricultural produce and polished diamonds, after 1967 industrial exports exceeded both, and by the 1970s, military industrial products constituted a quarter of Israel's exports. This was accomplished with extensive state funding, siphoned mostly into publicly owned enterprises. But arms production also became a central element in the growth of some of Israel's large private business groups. The Israeli business elite entered the global scene. Executives who ran what were in Israeli terms giant enterprises, former generals who moved from prestigious military careers into cutting arms deals with foreign heads of state, bankers who performed complex international transactions, researchers who took part in state of the art military projects – all of these, and more, represented the new turn of the Israeli economy.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the consequent crisis in international weapons markets, accompanied by deep budgetary cuts introduced in the late 1980s, caused the Israeli

military industrial complex first to contract then to become partially privatized.

Many former state employees now took advantage of their technological expertise to embark upon private hi-tech ventures, in what economist Moshe Yustman called “a clear case of public assets being made available for commercial use by individuals without anything being given in return.”⁵⁷⁹ Hi-tech, mostly security-related soft- and hardware, would soon come to color Israel as a whole as a *Start-Up Nation*.⁵⁸⁰ As accurate a description of Israel, I should add, as a *Kibbutz Nation* would have been back in the 1940s and 1950s; in fact, hi-tech industries and services employ only about 10% of the Israeli work force. Most are Ashkenazi graduates of universities and of prestigious military intelligence units. Average hi-tech wages are triple the median wage and double the average wage: a veritable aristocracy of labor. Moreover, hundreds of hi-tech entrepreneurs became millionaires by selling their companies to big multinational corporations.

The descendants of Pale of Settlement Jews who opted for Zionism were now doing very well, thank you. Packages from the rich uncle in America became a distant memory. (Though to be sure, Israel as a country still highly cherishes the annual \$3 billion military aid package from Uncle Sam, which frees the government of the necessity of basing the full defense budget on local taxes – on hi-tech workers, among others).

High defense expenditures would remain a constant feature of Israel’s fiscal policy: the present rate of about 6% to 7% of GDP is much higher than that of most Western countries. Many Israelis, of course, benefit from these outlays, among them Mizrahim who were able to join the middle class by serving in security and defense agencies as career soldiers, policemen, prison guards, members of border patrols, and the like. Yet high defense outlays act as a constant hindrance to investment in social services and in educational upgrading; in other words, in the very services that could enable more Israelis to join the flourishing hi-tech industries. The power-building project came at a high cost to the still incomplete developmentalist nation-building project.

The 1967 victory did not bode well for the largely Mizrahi development towns. First, the new military-industrial complex, which was centered mainly in and around Tel Aviv, by-passed and left behind Israel's first, low-tech industrial revolution, which was centered in the development towns. More importantly, the development towns were by-passed and left behind by the Jewish settlements in the Palestinian territories, the single largest post-1967 governmental civilian project. While development towns were built as typical post-WWII working-class neighborhoods, the settlements were built to the standards of the middle classes in the 1970s – single-story houses surrounded by green areas dotted with spacious public structures. Generous government funding allowed for high-standard education and health services. Geographical proximity to Israel's central cities gave them entry to the best job markets, in contrast to the situation of the “peripheral” development towns. While the settlers, at first mainly the descendants of religious Ashkenazi Zionists, managed to position themselves as contenders for the Zionist throne, acting in unison as a powerful political lobby, the mostly Mizrahi leaders of the widely spread development towns, perceived as representatives of the poor and the weak, never managed to lay claim to the role of formulators of the national agenda.

Increasing inequality

How is inequality increased? One way is by removing the bottom from under the feet of the local workers by encouraging an unending flow of cheap, unorganized and unprotected foreign laborers.

In the wake of the 1967 War, Israel allowed Palestinian laborers from the newly occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip to work in Israel, as part of a policy of “enlightened occupation.” The door, once opened, would remain open for an unending stream of non-Israeli workers. The main effect would be to weaken the bargaining power of their Israeli counterparts. The Palestinian laborers and most of the foreign workers who came

in their wake were employed in low-skill jobs in agriculture and construction, which by the 1980s and 1990s were no longer leading growth industries. Salaries were high by Palestinian standards but low by Israeli standards. These workers received no protection from the Histadrut and hardly any from the Israeli state. Their jobs were totally insecure, as the government could shut the doors at any time. This is exactly what it did during the First Palestinian Intifada. But when Israel curtailed the entry of Palestinians, farmers and building contractors pressured the government to allow their replacement by migrant workers from around the world. Soon Thais were working the fields of collective and cooperative farms, Rumanians were working on construction sites, and Filipino women were tending to elderly Israelis.

In the early 1990s, a large wave of Jewish immigrants arrived, a demographic gift from heaven for Israeli Jews: most – close to a million – from the former republics of the Soviet Union; a minority of about 100,000 from Ethiopia. Many of the former, especially the young and the well-educated, joined the ranks of the “aristocracy of labor”; most of the others went into low-wage jobs, such as standing guard at the entrance to public buildings – a job “created” by the Palestinian uprisings.

The constant influx of cheap labor gave rise to a new kind of employer, the manpower agency, always ready to provide large contingents of equally unqualified and low-cost laborers, for whatever menial job is in the offing.

How does inequality become entrenched? One way is by de-unionization of the labor force. The Histadrut, which should have risen up in protest against the influx of unorganized workers, gradually lost its grip on the job market. At the lower end of the labor scale, Palestinian and other non-Israeli workers were too fluid a group to organize. At the high end, the hi-tech industries were run on the American practice of non-union shops, with workers hired on individual contract. Union membership declined, from around 80% in the 1980s to 25% at the time of writing. Unions remain effective in only a small number of areas – mainly the civil service and the remaining government corporations.

Not only that, the Histadrut, once a major employer and credit provider, also lost most of its economic clout, when the government forced it in 1994 to separate from Israel's largest Health Maintenance Organization (HMO), up to then its largest source of income, as HMO membership fees were passed on to the Histadrut. It also lost its pension funds, whose money, once used to finance Histadrut enterprises, among others, is now controlled by private insurance companies and serves to finance Israel's private corporations.

How does capital grow? One way is by public assets being appropriated by private entrepreneurs – with generous help from the state.

In 1985, the Israeli government, faced with galloping inflation caused, among other things, by expansive military outlays, gave up the remaining pretensions to state-led developmentalism and opted for a Reaganite/Thatcherite macro-economic model. That model called for reduction of the state apparatus and of its budget, for placing economic growth at the top of the national agenda, and for handing over responsibility for producing that growth to the business elite.

Within a few years, many government and Histadrut corporations, which had grown and prospered thanks to historical infusions of public funds and of “national” labor, were privatized, among them parts of the military industrial complex. Private investors and corporations were now able to grow to world-class dimensions. Over the next two decades, a relatively small number of family-owned business pyramids surfaced: according to a recent government report, 31 business groups control 2,500 Israeli companies.⁵⁸¹ The state, though no longer the proprietor, gave these business groups a generous start, acting as what sociologist Michael Shalev has called a welfare state for business – cheap and ample credit, low taxes, inexpensive and unorganized labor, lax regulation.

A small layer of grand capitalists emerged – including a few Mizrahim – for the first time since the start of the Zionist project in Palestine. We will recall that the rich among European Jews did not join the Zionists in Palestine. Neither

did the rich among the Jews of Arab lands. Today's rich Israelis are thus entirely home-made.

One decade after 1985, Merrill Lynch began including Israel in its international list of millionaires and billionaires. The Boston Consulting Group and UBS followed suit. According to UBS, in 2013 Israel could boast 385 multi-millionaires that held between them US\$75 billion, the equivalent of 10% of all financial assets in the country.⁵⁸²

In turn, the new business elite created a highly remunerated managerial class. In 2012, the average cost of the CEOs of the top 100 corporations traded on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange was 42 times the average wage and 87 times the minimum wage of Israelis that year.⁵⁸³ Add to this the hi-tech millionaires, and you have an Israeli top 1%.

At the other end of the income scale, the proportion of families living below the poverty line almost doubled – from around a high in itself of 10% in the mid-1980s to a very high 20% in the span of two decades following 1985, due to both the worsening conditions in the labor market and to cuts in social security and assistance allowances.

When does inequality become a major political issue? When the middle class senses that it is losing out. The rise of the 1% has impacted the middle and upper middle classes. Like in most Western societies, the Israeli middle class had been the main benefactor of state-led developmentalism through state employment and state services. Now they were facing a gradual distortion of those services, caused by the infusion of private money into public services. The 1% uses its riches to ensure its children the best education, through out of pocket parental additions to public schools; to further ensure its children higher education in private high-tuition colleges; to ensure itself the best medical facilities and timely treatment through extra out of pocket payments to public doctors and institutions; to purchase high-end apartments in several dozen high-rise buildings in and around Tel Aviv. The middle class, raised in an era in which “everybody” (meaning mostly Ashkenazi residents of “good” neighborhoods in and around the big cities) had access to decent public schools, high-quality

medical care, and affordable housing, now find themselves having to pay more and more in order to catch up to the standards set by the 1%. This is what economist Joseph Stiglitz called “behavioral trickle down” – the feeling that you must join a race you cannot win. Winning is quite impossible, given the wide gaps: upper middle-class Israelis – say, hi-tech workers who earn twice the average wage, can hardly compete with corporate CEOs or hi-tech millionaires. Thus in the summer of 2011, half a million mostly Ashkenazi Tel Avivians, many of them fourth generation Pale of Settlement Zionists, took to the streets, under the banner of “We Want Social Justice.”

That does not necessarily mean, of course, that their great-great grandparents had made the second best choice, if for nothing else than the fact that some of the great-great grandchildren of Pale of Settlement immigrants to the United States were probably themselves in the streets around New York’s Wall Street, protesting against the concentration of capital in the hands of the American 1%. After all, as Piketty has shown, concentration of capital and power in the hands of a few is common to many countries. So is the diminishing capacity of the middle class to maintain its position across generations.

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17. What Has Become of the Ethnic Devil? Reflections on the Current State of Israeli Ethnicity

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This paper was completed in April 2015.

In Memory of Michael Feige

The scholars, researchers and media analysts who study Israeli society are well-acquainted with the “ethnic devil,” the *shed ha‘adati* as it is known in Hebrew. The term has been in popular use for generations, referring to the feared sudden eruption of ethnic-based hostility between Ashkenazi and Mizrahi Jews. The imagery is that of a devil locked inside a bottle – yet always ready to break out and inflame the relationships between members of these two large ethnic blocs. Incidents of ethnic slurs, prejudice and discrimination, as well as widely shared feelings of injustice, are at the root of these tensions. Israel’s periodic election campaigns often provide the moment for the mischievous devil’s appearance, and political candidates are admonished not to “let the ethnic devil out of the bottle.”

In the past, this devil forcefully broke out when tensions boiled over into ethnic conflict and occasional violence: the Wadi Salib riots in 1959, the Israeli Black Panthers street demonstrations in 1971, and the case of “the missing Yemenite children” that still ignites controversy, are among the best known incidents attesting to its explosive power.⁵⁸⁴ No less important, there have been countless smaller-scale episodes during which ethnic prejudice has led to inter-personal and inter-group anger and conflict, and these incidents continue in the present. Nonetheless, while it is difficult to measure or quantify the extent and severity of ethnic tensions, it appears as if major or volatile conflicts have diminished during the past several decades, and that, overall, both the relationships between the major ethnic groups and the meanings attributed

to the term “ethnicity” have undergone significant changes.⁵⁸⁵ This process is the main topic of this chapter: How might we explain the increasingly lower levels of outward conflict between these groups, and how should their current relationships be characterized?

Before continuing, it is necessary to briefly explain what is meant by the terms “ethnic” and “ethnicity.” As used here, ethnic groups emerge in the contexts of immigration, and refer to persons from the same country or region who share purportedly common cultural features and group interests. Although they may be relatively large-sized, ethnic groups are minority groups, and in the course of their new lives ethnics interact with members of the dominant or “normative” host society. Ethnicity – *adatiyut*, in Hebrew – refers to the patterns and shades of behavior and thought that emerge as immigrants and ethnics confront and seek to navigate their way within their new society. Ethnic expressions, or ethnic cultures, frequently shift and change from one time to another, and from one context to the next – ethnicity is “a sometimes thing” that is shaped and constructed as new opportunities, interests and passions emerge in everyday life. Conflict, change, discrimination, assimilation, acculturation – these are among the processes that depict the history of ethnic groups, as, over time, some disappear, in other instances they merge and create new collective identities, and still in others, older patterns are reinterpreted and persist.⁵⁸⁶

In the lexicon of Israeli code words the “ethnic problem” is intuitively understood to refer to the relationships between “Ashkenazim” and “Mizrahim” – to persons and groups whose origins are European or Europe-derived (such as North America or South Africa), in contrast to those whose family roots stem from countries in the Middle East and North Africa. This has been a major Israeli social division, and while recent immigration waves have brought more than a million newcomers from Russia and other Former Soviet countries, “ethnicity” continues to be mainly associated with the sometimes problematic links between these two large population clusters.⁵⁸⁷

Into the melting pot: ethnicity in the 1950s and 1960s

The past is a fabled “foreign land,” a raw, unruly domain ever open to contested interpretations and explanations. Depicting ethnic group relations in Israel during the 1950s and 1960s is a case in point. This formative period has been presented in a flood of scholarly books and articles, films and TV documentaries, as well as poetry, fiction, and personal memoirs. Portrayals of the period vary between (among others) viewing it as a heroic moment of national devotion and brilliant state-craft; deeply anguished early decades during which immigrants suffered from the control of paternalistic state bureaucracies; a colonialist project by means of which Ashkenazi hegemony was insured; or, in a more neutral fashion, a process described as “the absorption of immigrants.”⁵⁸⁸ The version presented below does not seek to combine these perspectives, but instead selectively links together key features and elements characterizing this early and often stormy period.

Throughout the pre-state years (from about 1890 to 1948) Jews of Middle Eastern origin were a small minority situated on the social-political peripheries, while the European-origin Ashkenazim were the central dominant majority group.⁵⁸⁹ The mass migrations following Israel’s establishment changed this balance decisively: the immigrants then pouring into the country included survivors of Nazi concentration camps as well as those from different European locales, together with very large numbers from Yemen, Iraq, Iran, Morocco, Tunisia, and other countries of the Middle East. Each immigrant group brought with it strikingly different histories, expectations and cultural traditions. The fact that they all (or nearly all) were “Jews” rapidly faded into the background of raw, often strained everyday experience, and they soon became known to one another, and to themselves, as “Iraqis” and “Poles,” “Yemenites” and “Rumanians,” or, to recall the angry ethnic slurs of the 1950s, “Morocco *sakin*” and “*vus-vusim*,” “dangerous Moroccans” and “arrogant Yiddishspeakers.” (A common saying of that time was: “In Morocco I was a ‘Jew,’

but here in Israel I am a ‘Moroccan’!). In short, based upon their particular country of origin, they quickly became “ethnics” as they forged their own distinctive cultural markers and group organization. Immigrants from the same country typically settled, or were settled, near to one another, maintained or revived older traditions, and often supported their own leaders, spokesmen and, at times, their own separate political parties. Only later, in the 1980s and 1990s, did the different country-of-origin groups come to be jointly identified under the broader ethnic labels of “Ashkenazim” and “Mizrahim.”⁵⁹⁰

One central dimension of the immigrants’ experience was the powerful pressures aimed at them to abandon their accepted traditions and behavioral patterns and transform themselves into “Israelis.” Cultural assimilation is a common aspect of many immigration situations, and yet the 1950s pressures to change were undoubtedly exceptionally insistent.⁵

⁹¹ The reigning national ideology was termed *mizug hagalyot* (literally, the ‘fusion of exiles’), and while presumably extending to all immigrant groups its prime objective was to transform immigrants from the Middle Eastern countries so that they would conform with the cultural values and outlooks of the hegemonic Ashkenazi veteran population. This was a major state-directed project, and the army, school system, and many among the veteran population were enlisted in a powerful cultural crusade. As expected, in many cases the pressures to change produced individual, family and generational crises and breakdowns – while in other instances the newcomers rapidly mastered Hebrew, were attracted to the new lifestyles and possibilities, and learned how to navigate successfully within their new society.

A second key dimension of this early period was the growing income inequality between immigrant and veteran Israelis, and even more decisively, between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim. Not only was the population growing in size and complexity, a system of ethnic stratification was also emerging and becoming increasingly evident.

The extent of ethnic group inequalities was made apparent in a mid-1950s study measuring income differentials. Dividing their study sample into “European-origin” and “Asian-African” immigrants and veterans, the researchers found that not only were the European-origin incomes higher than those from “Asian-African,” the European immigrants’ incomes were already substantially higher than those of the Asian-African veterans!⁵⁹² In other words: in the then mass immigration setting, incomes were determined more by ethnic membership than by length of time spent in the country.⁵⁹³ These striking inequality figures lead to a lengthy series of demographic studies tracing the “ethnic gap” (*par ha‘adati*, in Hebrew) between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim. Indeed, the gnawing question of ethnic social stratification became a major public issue, and measuring, comparing and explaining ethnic inequality continues to be an Israeli preoccupation.

The periodic Israeli national census provides plentiful data to measure the size and shape of the “ethnic gap.” More specifically, since the early 1960s the Central Bureau of Statistics has collected data on topics such as occupation, income, type and years of education, family size, inter-group marriage, residence, and a great deal more, according to a family’s country of origin, and it also merges these into more inclusive categories – originally “Europe-America” and “Asia-Africa,” and later, as new category terms were adopted, between “Ashkenazim” and “Mizrahim.” Recently, as categorization became more complex due to inter-ethnic marriages among the second- and third-generation Israeli-born, the census generally lists ethnic membership according to the place of birth of the respondents’ father. What do these studies reveal regarding ethnic stratification in the mid-20th century?

First, the census and other demographic studies throw into relief the deep, persisting structure of ethnic group inequality: measuring income, occupation, homeownership, wealth, years of education, or practically any other relevant indicator, Ashkenazi Jews rank higher than Mizrahim. Second, even though these “gaps” persist and some may have increased over time, the income-occupation-education levels of all groups

have also risen substantially. In other words: while the ethnic inequality pattern is deeply ingrained, the income, education and living standards of all groups have also risen significantly. Third, these trends need to be understood within the overall context of recent major structural changes: namely, both globalization and the ideological shift from a socialist-oriented economy during the 1950s to 1970s to the later regime based upon market economics have produced vastly increased socioeconomic inequality. In its early decades Israeli society was characterized by a high degree of income equality, but since the mid-1980s the differences between the Israeli super-rich, rich, middle-income, and poor have grown enormously.⁵⁹

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A third important feature of this period was the near monopoly of power concentrated in the hands of Ashkenazi-origin political leaders, government administrators, and army and other state-related personnel. With the structures of power firmly controlled by Ashkenazim, the rapidly growing Mizrahi immigrant population frequently felt themselves to be disenfranchised outsiders held back by ethnic prejudice and discrimination. “Ethnic lists,” composed of leaders and activists from a particular country, sometimes won seats in local elections, but exclusively Mizrahi political parties consistently failed to gain widespread support in national elections.⁵⁹⁵ Recognizing ethnicity’s attractive power, the major political parties placed selected Mizrahi candidates high on their election list, and some became government ministers (usually in minor ministries) or were appointed to fill high-level administrative posts. Nonetheless, the large and often volatile Mizrahi minority perceived itself to be the “second Israel,” lacking the power required to move upward and ahead in their new society. The “ethnic devil” found fertile ground in these conditions, and ethnic-oriented protests, confrontations and demonstrations were a repeated feature of this period.

Out of the melting pot: ethnicity and social class reconfigured

Ethnicity is a labile, rapidly-changing social force, and during the period between the mid-1970s and the early 2000s, its components and expressions saw certain continuities together with many distinctive changes. As in the previous section, the depiction that follows is selective, focusing upon a selected series of complex, broadly interconnected developments.

Narrowing the ethnic gaps

Ethnic-based inequalities witnessed both changes and continuities in the period between the mid-1970s and the early 2000s. Among the more salient changes: Mizrahi family size grew smaller and became practically identical in size with Ashkenazi families; a rapidly growing number of Mizrahi women completed secondary school and BA-level education and entered the work force (Table 1, Appendix); and while differences in educational attainment remained, in the second Israel-born generation the ethnic “educational gaps” were narrowed. The quality of their schooling may have differed, but significant numbers from both ethnic blocs finished secondary school and continued on to college or university⁵⁹⁶ (Table 1, Appendix).

However, throughout most of this period ethnic-based income inequality persisted and may even have grown wider. Just as in previous decades, the average incomes of all Israelis continued to grow, but first- and second-generation Ashkenazim recorded incomes considerably higher than their Mizrahi peers. Comparing the earnings of Ashkenazi women with Mizrahi women and men underscores the inequality pattern: while women’s incomes were consistently lower than men’s, in 2001 the income of Ashkenazi women were nearly twice those of Mizrahi women and approached (90%) that of Mizrahi men (Table 1, Appendix).⁵⁹⁷

Research has shown that income in modern industrial societies is closely related to level of education.⁵⁹⁸ Why then did the earnings gaps persist at the same time as the educational gaps narrowed?

In their continuing studies of ethnic stratification, the sociologists Yinon Cohen and Yitzhak Haberfeld argue that prejudice and discrimination against Mizrahim serve only as a partial explanation.⁵⁹⁹ Instead, their analysis follows the ancient wisdom that no matter what else transpires, “the rich always get richer.” Or, translated into sociological parlance, changes in the Israeli “earnings structure” gave the better placed Ashkenazim a head-start in locating and entering the higher-level, higher-income occupational positions. Their wistful conclusion depicts the structural ironies: “The improvements in human capital made by Mizrahim, Arabs, and women (relative to Ashkenazi men), can be viewed as swimming upstream the inequality river. Alas, it is possible that in the past 26 years the inequality river has been faster than the swimmers.”⁶⁰⁰ Ashkenazi-origin males and females had higher levels of advanced education which, in turn, presumably gave them an advantage in the new technologically sophisticated global economy. Hence, while the earnings-education levels of both ethnic groups progressed upward, income inequalities persisted throughout much of this period.

Is this same trajectory continuing? Recent research indicates that the educational gaps continue to narrow. Comparing the educational levels of second- and third-generation Ashkenazi- and Mizrahi-origin youngsters, Friedlander found diminishing differences over time: whereas in the second generation the percentages of males with academic and professional training are 37% and 14%, in the third generation Ashkenazi males remain at 37% while Mizrahi males climb to 32%.⁶⁰¹

The inequalities in income are especially significant. Has the ethnic income stratification structure remained constant in the 21st century, six decades after the 1950s mass immigration? Fortunately, a recent study by the economist Momi Dahan presents current information on this key issue.⁶⁰²

Basing his research upon large-scale samples of census data, Dahan compared the family incomes of first- and second-generation Ashkenazim and Mizrahim in the period between

the mid-1990s and 2011. Mixed-marriage families were not included – as we will shortly see in greater detail, cross-ethnic marriages have become common in the second and third Israel-born generations, and for various reasons Dahan did not include them in this study.⁶⁰³ His data show that while family income inequality was nearly 40% in the 1990s, it narrows to 27% in 2011. These differences are still substantial, but the trend indicates a considerable narrowing of the ethnic income gap. Dahan attributes this to the advanced educational levels attained by Mizrahim, and particularly to the increased incomes and educational levels of Mizrahi women. In addition, and no less important, comparing the family income levels of Mizrahim with other sectors of the Israeli population shows that they have moved out of the lowest income deciles and into the higher income ranks.⁶⁰⁴ Thus, although ethnic income gaps persist they have narrowed over time, and significant proportions of Mizrahim have moved upward into middle-class and upper middle-class income groups.

Ethnicity and social class

These and other studies underscore the shifting salience of ethnicity in the second and third Israeli generations. Inequality has not disappeared, but it may no longer be tightly bound with country-of-origin ethnicity. In fact, ethnicity may no longer be the “mesmerizing issue” it once was, and instead factors such as occupation, income, level of education and place of residence have grown increasingly important. Putting it differently: over time social class membership has become a major driving social force. This has been the historical trend in other immigrant-created societies such as the United States, Australia and Canada, and there is good reason to suppose that Israeli society is moving in the same direction.⁶⁰⁵

In a series of publications Meir Yaish has argued for the greatly increased importance of social class.⁶⁰⁶ Yaish’s topic is social stratification and mobility, and his research is based upon a labor force survey carried out in 1974 and repeated in 1991. The population is composed of all Israeli men who are

classified into three broad-based ethnic and national groups – Ashkenazi Jews, Mizrahi Jews, and Israeli Arabs. Occupation and work-status are the principal variables being measured, and the entire population is divided into seven class groups ranging in prestige and income from high to low. The “service class” is placed at the top, “petty bourgeoisie” and “skilled manual worker” are in the middle, and “unskilled farm worker” at the bottom. The research question is clear: how are members of the three ethnic-national groups distributed across the seven class positions, and how, if at all, have the relationships between ethnic-national membership and social class changed over time?

Although the proportions differ, the research shows that members of all three groups can be found in each of the seven class positions. For example, in the 1991 survey, 20% of Ashkenazim, 6% of Mizrahim and 4% of Arabs were in the top “service class”; 32% of Ashkenazi, 35% of Mizrahim and 25% of Arabs, were classed in the middle group of “petty bourgeoisie”; and 17% of Ashkenazim, 26% of Mizrahim, and 21% of Arabs are in the lower ranked “manual workers.”⁶⁰⁷

Ashkenazim clearly dominate the top-ranked “service class,” while there also is considerable overlap of *all groups* as one moves down the occupation-prestige scale. The extent of overlap is a critical finding – members of all three groups are spread (unevenly) across the entire stratification system.⁶⁰⁸ Moreover, comparing the 1974 results with the data collected in 1991 shows that all three groups have experienced upward mobility. Members of each group took part in the massive inter-generational move from “petty bourgeoisie” upward to “service” and “routine non-manual” classes, and many also shifted from “unskilled” to the “manual worker” class categories. Yaish’s conclusion is careful but unambiguous: “The differences between the three sub-populations are less pronounced in 1991 than in 1974. This suggests that the class distribution of Israeli sub-populations has become more similar over time [...]. Ethnicity and nationality may have a declining effect on the allocation of Israeli men into their respective class positions.”⁶⁰⁹

If we compare these conclusions with the findings regarding ethnic group differences, it becomes clear that they represent two sides of the same coin. That is, Dahan's findings regarding Mizrahi upward mobility conforms with Yaish's analysis of overlapping social class memberships. In the third Israeli-born generation the education "gaps" between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim have substantially narrowed, just as rising rates of inter-ethnic marriage also dissolve the standard ethnic classifications; and, when seen through the prism of social class, upward mobility leads to a stratification system in which Ashkenazim and Mizrahim are represented at all levels, from "service class" to "unskilled manual worker," and Ashkenazim continue to be over-represented at the top occupational ranks.

Social class compresses occupation, income, education, and probably place of residence too, and consequently this formulation can provide a more realistic image of present-day social positions and possibilities. Members of all ethnic groups are engaged in the same or similar occupations, have similar incomes, have had common socialization experience in schools and the army, and share many of the same leisure time and recreational activities. Their everyday behavior is a composite of these and other features, and their ethnic background is not necessarily the most salient factor.

The growing importance of social class does not mean that ethnicity's powers of attraction (and division) have ended. Measures of inequality are one thing, and perceptions are another – the former are based upon dispassionate analysis, the latter, direct and emotional, are in the eye of the beholder. Tensions may flare precisely during moments when ethnic mobility is rising – inequalities are relative matters for some, decisive for others. In addition, continuing inequalities also spur and mobilize ethnic based political parties and movements. Ethnic politics may sometimes pry open loose previously closed mobility paths, but they also delight in ethnic grievances and consequently seek to exploit difference.

Mixed marriages and their results

Inter-ethnic marriage has long been thought to be *the* solution to the “ethnic problem” – as growing numbers of Ashkenazim and Mizrahim marry one another, country-of-origin will have less importance and take on different social or symbolic meanings. This may well be the case, as is suggested by Barbara Okun’s studies of the changing relationships between ethnicity, education and marriage.⁶¹⁰

Ethnicity continues to be a significant factor in the choice of partner, but, as Okun’s research makes clear, there has also been a “very large and significant increase in ethnic intermarriage” between Mizrahim and Ashkenazim.⁶¹¹ Intermarriage rates have not only been increasing (in the mid-2000s they account for 28% of all marriages), their composition also has changed: in the past, they were mainly between Ashkenazi males and the relatively small number of well-educated Mizrahi females (so-called “exchange unions”), but with the increase in the educational levels of all groups, the level of education (“educational homogamy”) rather than ethnic origin has become a major factor in the choice of partner. The criteria for choice, in other words, are “formed by common experiences in educational institutions, rather than processes of socialization in parental homes.”⁶¹² Moreover, marriages within a specific country-of-origin group have diminished, while they have increased within the emerging “ethnic blocs” of Ashkenazim and Mizrahim. For example, there are fewer marriages among Israel-born youngsters of Yemenite origin, while marriages between Israeli-born “Yemenites” and “Tunisians” or “Iraqis” have increased. These inclusive ethnic categories have also gained new significance, pointing to the continuing “salient role of ethnic identity in marriage patterns in Israel, albeit in a new, emerging form.”⁶¹³

The current high rate of ethnic intermarriage represents a major social development. It is not only that more than a quarter of all marriages are across ethnic lines, these marriages also bring the parents, siblings and other relatives of both spouses into regular contact. Family is a major focus of Israeli social relationships – extended families regularly gather on holiday celebrations, birthdays and other family events, school

and army graduations, as well as on many other occasions – and cross-ethnic marriages promote a vast multiplication of contacts between persons who were formerly distant from one another. This widening and “personalizing” of social relationships may be the most important consequence of inter-ethnic marriage.⁶¹⁴

A multicultural Israel?

The victorious 1967 Six-Day War produced a mood of national euphoria and supposed social unity – and yet, the 1970s and early 1980s were also a period of heightened ethnic tensions. The prime example was the dramatic emergence of the Israeli Black Panthers in 1971. Residentially based in a neglected Jerusalem neighborhood, this small band of mainly second-generation Moroccan youngsters loudly protested against Ashkenazi prejudice and their own exclusion from mainstream Israeli life.⁶¹⁵ Ethnic based political agitation continued, and in the 1977 national elections many Mizrahim switched their support from the Labor party to the Likud. Menachem Begin, leader of the nationalist Likud, symbolized the outsider struggling against the establishment, and again in the 1981 elections Begin, the quintessential Polish gentleman, was morphed into a “Mizrahi” in a successful re-election contest in which the ethnic tones were powerful.

It was during this same period that “ethnic festivals” literally burst upon the scene. The Moroccan *Mimouna* celebration was the original and most successful, and it became the template for the growing number of similar events. Celebrated at the end of the springtime Passover festival, in Morocco the holiday’s main motifs included night-time family visits during which blessings were exchanged and specially-prepared foods were eaten, followed the next day by outings to the countryside where young boys and girls could meet, and ritualized visits (“symbolic reversals”) by local Muslims who were ceremonially greeted by their Jewish hosts.⁶¹⁶ *Mimouna* was a pleasant, relaxed occasion – and although the festival was left behind when most Jews emigrated from Morocco, in

1968 a handful of activists invited their fellow Moroccans to join them in the first Israeli Mimouna celebration.

The gathering was held in a Jerusalem park close to the Knesset, and by midday a large crowd of Moroccan families had arrived to picnic, visit one another and listen to speeches about “their contribution to Israeli life.” Encouraged by this initial success, Mimouna became a yearly event celebrated in Moroccan population centers across the country. Jerusalem was the major site, and large crowds gathered to be greeted by the prime minister, the army chief of staff and politicians from various political parties; performers sang a mixture of Israeli tunes and traditional Moroccan melodies, and youngsters performed the “folkloristic dances” of the various *eidot*, the Mizrahi ethnic groups.

Mimouna was successfully crafted into a celebration of being Moroccan in Israel, and its positive acceptance signaled the society’s changing tone and shape. Formerly, “being ethnic” had been criticized and derided, and Mizrahi immigrants and their children were pressured to “become Israelis,” meaning to refashion themselves into “Ashkenazim.” Paradoxically, by publically presenting themselves as “Moroccans,” the Mimouna celebration transformed the crowds into “Israelis,” and it thereby gave significant voice to the newer ideology of “cultural pluralism” that had begun to take root. Cultural or ethnic differences began to be acceptable and praiseworthy, and soon thereafter other ethnic groups – notably the Kurds, Persians and Ethiopians – organized their own separate Israeli ethnic celebrations. Mimouna was the cultural spearhead and catalyst, and during the 1970s and 1980s it nudged the society into accepting new, more diverse forms of behavior.

As the pressures for (Ashkenazi) conformity relaxed, a rich series of other “pluralistic” activities were initiated. “Heritage studies” depicting the cultural treasures of Middle Eastern Jews were added to the public school curriculum, and attractive new ethnic museums and study centers were built (the best example is the elegant “Babylonian Heritage Center” established by Iraqi Jews in Or Yehudah). Lecture series devoted to the history and literature of immigrant-ethnic

groups were organized, older immigrants wrote autobiographies depicting their previous life in Basra or Haleb, and leading Israeli authors such as Sami Michaeli and Amos Oz published bestsellers about their family origins in Baghdad and Odessa, respectively. The diaspora past was thereby normalized, humanized, undoubtedly romanticized: everyone came from somewhere, and in this new atmosphere ethnic pride became acceptable.

“Heritage tours” that transported immigrants and their children back to the countries from which they had previously fled also became popular. Visiting Morocco was the classic tour, and the tiny remnant community of Moroccan Jews became hosts to thousands of Moroccan Israelis (and others) who returned in order to “discover their roots.”⁶¹⁷ Not without its ironies, this bustle of Mizrahi celebrations triggered responses from second- and third-generation Israeli Ashkenazim who also set out to find “their heritage.” Yiddish language studies, plays and performances in Yiddish found a growing audience, and “heritage trips” were organized that took families back to towns in Ukraine or Poland where their ancestors had fled from, and where many others perished.⁶¹⁸ Hence, in these and other ways the immigrant-ethnic past began to be prized and recovered (if not reinvented). As the similarities between them grew, an Israeli version of “cultural pluralism” took root as both Mizrahim and Ashkenazim invested greater interest and energies in discovering and exhibiting their histories.

Pluralism did not mean equal, or near-equal, space and weight for both – the Israeli cultural scene is overwhelmingly directed toward Euro-American and global cultural productions – yet within this dominant cultural framework, Mizrahi performances were accepted and considered legitimate.⁶¹⁹

Ethnic politics

Ethnic politics refer to the support that immigrants and ethnics give to politicians and political parties drawn from their own

particular group. This is a form of “identity politics” – political organization and support given to candidates based upon their origin, gender, sexual preference, or other personal or personality feature. Often a successful way to gain electoral support, identity politics has also been criticized for dividing the electorate on an overly-narrow basis, as well as drawing attention away from the supposedly “real” issues facing the public.⁶²⁰

Ethnicity has long been an important motif in Israeli political life. This is especially the case at the local level, where elections often were based around specific ethnic groups and their leaders, including immigrants from both Europe and the Middle East.⁶²¹ National-level politics is controlled by the major political parties – Labor, Likud, General Zionists, the religious parties – all of whom were dominated by Ashkenazi Jews. What were derisively called “ethnic lists,” typically featuring Middle Eastern Jews, also competed during Knesset elections, but they consistently failed to win support. Nonetheless, recognizing ethnicity’s electoral attraction the major parties also assembled “a balanced list” that included candidates from the *eidot mizrah* (who usually were assigned to secondary posts). This arrangement worked successfully for decades – ethnicity was discredited as the sole claim for political support, and, in turn, the major parties paraded their own “ethnic candidates” some of whom subsequently attained prominent positions. In this way the Knesset became more “ethnically integrated” as over time it included substantial numbers of Mizrahim as well as Ashkenazim.

This system prevailed until the mid-1980s, when political ethnicity took a different form. The initial step in this direction was the formation of *Shas*, an outspokenly ethnic Mizrahi political party that successfully entered the national political arena and became an electoral force. *Shas*’s electoral success later provoked the formation of an old-new political party called *Shinui*, which also mobilized ethnic sentiments, but this time among Ashkenazi voters. And, in addition, the huge Russian immigration of the 1990s brought more than a million new immigrants, and several ethnic Russian political parties

vied for their support. Thus while the relevance of ethnicity in everyday life might be waning, ethnic politics thrived during this period.

Shas is the Hebrew acronym for “Sephardic Torah Guardians,” and, like so much else about the party’s meteoric rise, the name brilliantly expresses the party’s integral links between “ethnicity” (“Sephardic”) and ultra-Orthodox religion (“Torah Guardians”). Shas was born out of the widespread feelings of discrimination and disappointment experienced by many first- and second-generation Mizrahim, together with the dedication, activism and political skills of the party’s leadership. The party won a surprising measure of support in the 1984 Jerusalem municipal elections, and soon thereafter repeated its success in the Knesset elections. Their appeal was to Mizrahi voters, and in contrast to earlier attempts it found a receptive audience – the mix of religious fundamentalism and “ethnic pride,” delivered with zest and self-confidence, was an immediate resounding success.⁶²²

The party’s strong religious message was clear. The leadership core and young activists were devout ultra-Orthodox Jews, and in Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, the former Sephardic Chief Rabbi, they found a powerful leader with a distinguished rabbinic reputation who was prepared to guide his followers in a broad range of political and social issues. In Sabbath sermons as well as organized mass proselytizing gatherings, the story was told of how they had come to Israel as pure, traditional Jewish believers, and how the Ashkenazi rulers had led them into a sinful, secular way of life that was devoid of true meaning, and exploited them economically and politically. They had been pure, and through *tshuva* (‘repentance’) they would not only rebuild their own personal lives but also “resurrect the glory” of their community.⁶²³

As its electoral strength grew – from four Knesset members in 1984 to eight in 1988, and then, remarkably, to seventeen in 1992 – Shas not only became Israel’s third largest political party, it also gained control of important government ministries. This gave them access to substantial resources, and they proved adept at using the state-budgets to develop their

own party-led string of educational and social-religious institutions. This patronage system was a continuing asset – electoral success moved them into positions of power, and they effectively used control over resources to maintain the support of second- and third-generation Mizrahi followers.

Why did Shas succeed while the earlier Mizrahi parties failed? First, although the party's leaders and activists were initially unknown, there was no doubt that they were “authentic Israelis” rooted in the country and well-informed about the experiences and hopes of their Mizrahi supporters. It soon developed that they had leadership skills and were able to energize cadres of activists who skillfully mobilized additional support. Second, their dual message that coupled “return to true religion” *and* “ethnic glory” found a receptive audience – not only did it speak directly to the Mizrahi resentment against Ashkenazi discrimination, it also linked ethnic grievances with rigorous religious practice. This rhetoric differed from earlier attempts that emphasized ethnic discontent, and it proved to be a winning combination. Third, their core of activists and effective patronage system proved successful in delivering electoral victories. In these and other ways Shas became an established part of the Israeli political landscape.⁶²⁴

If one segment of the population could organize around an ethnic collective identity, then others might do the same. Consequently, a party whose platform was meant to appeal to Ashkenazi voters took shape in the early 2000s, and it too had the dimensions of an ethnic political party.

The party was called *Shinui*, meaning ‘change,’ and it evolved (and later dissolved) following a lengthy and complex history. The historic roots of the party go back to the 1930s and the Liberal Party whose membership was mainly composed of middle-class European immigrants. In the mid-1970s some of the inheritors of this political tradition cobbled together a new party called the Democratic Movement for Change, or *Dash*, and it was successful in the 1977 elections that saw the demise of Labor and the emergence of the Likud as a major political party. Dash later split into various small groups, and it too disappeared from the political scene. However, some segments of this party, plus new groups, came

together in the 1999 election in Shinui, and the party later gained substantial support in the 2003 election when it became part of the government coalition. The party's major spokesman was "Tommy" Lapid, a popular newspaper columnist and TV personality, and it was mainly under his leadership that Shinui adopted its Ashkenazi ethnic coloring.

As party leader and government minister Lapid posed as a European secularist who stood in the breach in opposition to religious coercion, and in particular to the ethnic messages trumpeted by Shas. Shinui also attacked the Ashkenazi ultra-religious parties, but it saved its choicest barbs for Shas. Shinui presented itself as a bastion of European (read Ashkenazi) rationalism and liberalism in a fateful contest against the antidemocratic clerics and the irrational Mizrahi followers of wonder-working rabbis. These pronouncements found a receptive audience – not only did the party more than double its strength in the 2003 elections, their support was overwhelmingly drawn from Ashkenazi voters. Just as Shas mixed ultra-Orthodox religion with ethnic pride, Shinui joined "European centeredness" with an emphasis upon "free markets" and Israel's continued military strength. Shinui's platform, in short, was a mixture of class and ethnic features, and while the party later faded away, for a time it appeared as a counter-weight to Mizrahi fundamentalism.

The 1990s also saw the formation of new Russian-speaking political parties. This was not surprising: the mass immigration from Russia and other formerly Soviet countries was the largest and most compact of Israel's many immigration waves, and in the course of a single decade it increased the population by almost 16%. The huge influx of immigrants, most of whom spoke the same language and shared many cultural features, had an immediate impact upon the Israeli political system.

Immigrants who receive Israeli citizenship are almost immediately entitled to vote, and during the 1992 national elections the Russian newcomers already amounted to about 8% of eligible voters. Two specifically Russian political parties were then on the ballot, but most Russian-Israeli voters voted for the major established parties. This pattern changed

dramatically in the 1996 and subsequent elections. Several new Russian political parties were formed, and one of these, called *Yisrael Bealayah*, won seven seats in the 1996 Knesset. The party's television ads were in the Russian language, so that there was little doubt that it meant to appeal specifically to Russian Israelis. In the next election (1999) the party won six seats, and a second party called *Yisrael Beiteinu*, led by Avigdor Liberman, a veteran Russian political figure, also elected four Knesset members. *Yisrael Bealayah*'s support later diminished, and Liberman, whose party had a strongly nationalist program, redesigned his following to include non-Russian candidates and successfully gained wider support.

To sum up, throughout this period ethnicity was alive and well in Israeli politics. The major parties sought to include Ashkenazim and Mizrahim in leading positions, and smaller ethnic-oriented political parties also became established fixtures in the changing political landscape. In the third Israel-born generation there no longer is a single uniform model of "being Israeli," and consequently political parties such as Shas could claim to be authentically Israeli. Political struggles between Israeli parties are fierce and frequently personalized, but they are no longer about who can legitimately enter the political arena.⁶²⁵ Other, deeper divisions exist – notably between Israeli Jews and Israeli Palestinians, and between secular and ultra-Orthodox Jews – and the rapidly changing ethnic political divide no longer appears so threatening.⁶²⁶

Ethnicity today

What is the present state of ethnic group relationships? What are the meanings attached to "ethnicity" in the third, Israeli-born generation? And how fares the "ethnic devil" in the early decades of the 21st century?

Numerous changes have taken place in the ethnic-situated activities described in the previous sections. To cite several examples: the springtime Mimouna festivity continues to be an authorized Israeli holiday, but its contents and staging have again been refashioned. The loud, exuberant outdoor picnic-

gatherings have been downplayed (the major celebration in a Jerusalem park has disappeared entirely), and instead more fashionable night-time soirees where families mingle with invited guests and “celebrities” are emphasized. In this revised version Mimouna is less Moroccan folklore, more Israeli-styled middle-class consumerism. Turning to ethnic politics, following Rabbi Ovadia Yosef’s death, Shas split into two warring factions (each claiming to be the Rabbi’s true successor), and their fierce battles have divided the previously united Sephardi religious elite and produced new alliances. The Russian electorate has also been changing: the main Russian-oriented political party appears to be losing support as younger Russian Israeli voters gravitate toward the major political parties.⁶²⁷

Changes such as these are to be expected – ethnic expressions become revised as new circumstances and interests emerge – and other examples could be cited. The larger question, however, is the long-term status of ethnic associations and ethnic identities. The sensibilities expressed by members of the third generation are particularly interesting. For example, the American historian Marcus Lee Hansen long ago conjectured that while second-generation ethnics sought to become assimilated, their third-generation children might search for their ancestral roots and construct new forms of ethnic identification. Accepted and secure as “Americans,” seemingly part of the Great Middle Class, third-generation Swedish Americans could design and exhibit their own version of “Swedishness.”⁶²⁸ Are processes such as these relevant to third-generation Mizrahim and Ashkenazim?

Herbert Gans’ concept of “symbolic ethnicity” continues to provide a useful perspective on these issues.⁶²⁹ His analysis is based upon the US immigration experience – there is no reference to immigration and ethnicity in other places – and yet the concept certainly has wider applicability. Gans argues that among some third-generation descendents of European immigrants to America (Italians, Irish, Jews), assimilation and upward-social mobility lessens their active connection with early-established ethnic associations and also leads them to revise their “ethnic identity.” Instead, a variety of selected

symbols are utilized as a means of identifying themselves with a refashioned ethnic past. “Symbolic ethnicity” is particularly associated with upwardly-mobile members of the second- and third-generation who have moved out from their original ethnic enclaves and into mixed residential areas and practice new occupations: in other words, it is linked with entry into the middle classes. Symbols of identification might include ethnic food and drink, particular music styles, speech phrases and telling jokes in “old country dialects,” taking part in religious observance, and designing new collective historical memorials (Gans’ example is the Holocaust among American Jews). These and other forms of ethnic identification are thin, minimal requirements, easily adopted and just as easily shed, and they differ from the strong overlapping primary group attachments and intensive organizational activities that characterized the earlier immigrant generations. Finally, since symbolic ethnicity has minimal costs, Gans imagines that it may continue into the fourth and even later generations. Persons identify themselves and interact with others in myriad ways – as neighbors, sports fans, sharing a common religion or the same profession – and ethnic heritage is another potential form of identification.

Does “symbolic ethnicity” accurately depict the understandings and experience of third-generation Israelis? America in the 1980s obviously is hugely different from Israel in 2015 – and yet, it is arguable that for some proportion of third-generation Israelis their ethnic attachments have become primarily symbolic. Upward social mobility, the narrowing of the proverbial “ethnic gaps,” and above all, the consistently high rate of ethnic intermarriage, combine to reformulate the meanings given to being “Ashkenazi” or “Mizrahi.”

The overall contexts are, to say the least, mixed and complex, and ethnic identifications vary among different segments of the Israeli population. For example, ethnic boundaries continue to be sharp and meaningful among some ultra-Orthodox, or Haredi, religious groups, for whom Ashkenazi prejudice continues to actively discriminate against Mizrahim. At the neighborhood level local synagogues often follow different prayer traditions and their memberships also

generally follow along ethnic lines.⁶³⁰ On the other hand, their own ethnic identification is for many persons more limited, selective and expressed through symbolic formats. Food traditions are one example – certain foods and food styles are stereotypically associated with being Mizrahi or Ashkenazi. Melodies and music styles also have a symbolic meaning – “Mizrahi music” has long been a category of musical presentation that evokes ethnic attachment, and performers and styles of music at weddings and other celebrations (for example, women’s *henna* gatherings prior to marriage) have a similarly symbolic meaning.⁶³¹ Styles of speech and the use of particular word forms may be yet another format in which symbols are used to demonstrate one’s ethnic identity.

Moreover, “symbolic ethnicity” also presumes that an ethnic attachment is only one of a number of identities that can be held and expressed differentially. Individuals have multiple identities, and there is no reason to suppose that “ethnic descent” or “ethnic association” has primacy over all others. To be a “biker,” a “Tel Avivian,” a “hi-tech worker” or a “West Bank settler” are all social designations equally or perhaps even more meaningful than “Ashkenazi” and “Mizrahi.”

At the same time, however, it is important to add that not all ethnic attachments are merely “symbolic” – indeed, for some third-generation Israelis their ethnic membership is critically important. This is especially the case among networks and groups of Mizrahim who are engaged in advancing Mizrahi political agendas and cultural sensibilities. Prominently including younger poets, novelists and artists, as well as lawyers and university professors, they have sought to represent the political concerns and interests of their fellow Mizrahim, and also to retrieve and design viable formats of Mizrahi cultural expression.⁶³² The Mizrahi Rainbow Alliance (*Keshet Ha’ Mizrahit*, in Hebrew) is a leading political action group, and Keshet activists have acted as spokespersons for Mizrahi concerns as well as supporting disenfranchised Mizrahim in their struggles against government policies. Other groups continue to protest against past and present incidents of state-level discrimination (for example, third-generation Yemenite-origin activists seeking to revive the topic of the

missing Yemenite children). Moreover, in addition to political activism some poets, artists and intellectuals have sought ways to recapture Mizrahi cultural heritage in an Israeli society that is strongly European or “Western” oriented. The use of Arabic language or Judeo-Arabic dialects that were part of the cultural repertoire of the immigrant generation have largely disappeared, and there is an interest in making these and other expressive features more meaningful. In brief, while “symbolic ethnicity” may accurately depict the narrowed meanings of ethnicity for many Israelis, others are actively engaged in designing new enhanced formats of ethnic cultural expression.

How then fares the “ethnic devil”? Still encased within a bottle, still threatening to break out? Or, perhaps, there no longer is a bottle nor a devil, as ethnic identities become blurred and other identifications become more prominent.

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Appendix

Tab. 1: Israeli-Born Salaried Workers

	1975	1982	1992	2001
Ashkenazi men				
Earnings (NIS)	2450	4102	6653	10006
Years schooling	13.7	13.8	14.6	14.7
B.A.+	.35	.34	.43	.42
Mizrahi men				
Earnings (NIS)	1689	2168	4166	6526
Years schooling	10.3	10.7	11.9	12.8
B.A.+	.09	.09	.11	.19
	1975	1982	1992	2001
Ashkenazi women				
Earnings (NIS)	1304	2215	3111	5839
Years schooling	13.5	13.8	14.5	14.9
B.A.+	.25	.29	.38	.47
Mizrahi women				
Earnings (NIS)	1283	1967	2499	3376
Years schooling	10.9	11.9	12.6	13.3
B.A.+	.05	.08	.12	.23

18. On the Cultural Distinction between East and West among Israeli Jews

Ze'ev Shavit and Ephraim Yuchtman-Yaar

This paper was completed in April 2015.

We are grateful to Yasmin Alkalay for her statistical assistance.

Introduction

One of the most salient divisions that have emerged within Israeli society since the early years of the state concerns the two major Jewish ethnic groups, commonly known as *Ashkenazim* and *Mizrahim*. The former generally refers to Jews who immigrated to Israel from European and other Western countries, while the latter pertains to Jews whose origin was in Arab and other Muslim countries in the Middle East and North Africa. In addition to origin, the two groups differed in terms of their time of arrival, with the Ashkenazim comprising the vast majority of the immigrants during the pre-state era, while the large-scale Mizrahi immigration occurred following Israel's Declaration of Independence in 1948.⁶³³ Due to their earlier arrival, the Ashkenazi group had the privilege of molding the new Jewish society according to the vision of the Ashkenazi leaders, who are regarded as the founding fathers of modern-day Israel. This vision essentially reflected the Western concept of the nation-state, with its inherent political, economic and cultural heritage.

This historical background, combined with the ongoing Israeli-Arab conflict and the negative image of "the Orient" among the Ashkenazi immigrants, largely explains the unmistakable Western orientation that has been maintained consistently in Israel over the years by its political leadership on the right and the left.⁶³⁴ As earlier studies conducted in

1995 and 2010 have shown,⁶³⁵ this orientation was supported by a majority of the Jewish population – a majority that increased between these two points in time. Interestingly, these studies reveal that even Israeli Jews of Middle Eastern or North African origin (*Mizrahim*), who could have been expected to have stronger sentiments toward the Orient due to their shared language and culture with their countries of origin, are mostly interested in having Israel integrated culturally (as well as politically and economically), into Europe-America rather than into the Middle East. For example, just 24% of the Mizrahim interviewed in 1995 preferred cultural integration with the Middle East, while 56% preferred integration with Europe-America. The respective figures for 2010 were 19% and 64%.⁶³⁶

These results are noteworthy, given that in the discourse over the ethnic division between the Ashkenazi and Mizrahi groups, the cultural sphere plays a pivotal role. Thus, Israeli media, printed and electronic alike, stress the call voiced by various Mizrahi groups and individuals for the full legitimacy of the Eastern culture in Israel as a necessary step toward a genuine multicultural society, while some Ashkenazi spokespersons occasionally speak on behalf of the Western orientation's dominance.⁶³⁷

Moreover, this discussion goes hand in hand with a broader tendency in the research literature to use terms such as “sectorial society,” “claim to hegemony,” “cultural boundaries,” or “multiculturalism,” when addressing issues such as social structure, identity and cultural politics in Israel.⁶³⁸ The cultural space of Israeli society described in this literature is often portrayed in terms such as “fragmentation,” “plurality,” and even “competition” and “struggle.” This cultural space is described as encompassing various social groups – some of which are defined in terms of ethnic identity – who offer their members cultural alternatives and cultural boundaries.⁶³⁹ Alongside these groups, there are voices in the public (as well as the academic) ethnic discourse who speak on behalf of marginalized groups within Israeli society, proposing that these alternatives be embraced by the entire

society. This discourse calls for a new interpretation of the meaning of “Israeliness” and of the use of this interpretation for redefining cultural capital and cultural canons. Put in broader perspective, the main goal of these voices, which have emerged in reaction to long years of Ashkenazi dominance and discrimination, is to equalize the structure of power relations between the privileged Ashkenazim and the under-privileged groups (Mizrahi and other) in Israeli society.⁶⁴⁰ At present, it appears that although the era of Ashkenazi dominance has not ended, it has been increasingly challenged and eroded.

Even so, it is worth noting that the ongoing academic and ideological debate over the place of Western and Eastern cultures in Israeli society has given little attention to the meaning of these cultures for the Israeli-Jewish public and to its perceptions of the attributes that differentiate between them. In other words, we are largely uninformed about the attitudes of this public toward the ethnic discourse and its relevance at the individual and societal levels. As noted earlier, Hermann and Yuchtman-Yaar’s studies were indeed interested in the preferences of the Israeli-Jewish public when asked whether Israel should be integrated culturally (as well as politically and economically) into the Middle East or into Europe-America. Even so, these studies were not concerned with the meaning of the two cultures and their attributes in the eyes of this public.

Based on this background, our main purpose in this essay is to fill in this lacuna in two complementary ways. First, we will examine the relevance of the distinction between Eastern and Western cultures for the Israeli-Jewish population at the societal and individual levels. Second, we will explore the attributes of the two cultures, as seen by this public.

Research design

In accordance with the goals outlined above, we designed a questionnaire comprising closed-ended and open-ended questions addressed individually to a representative sample

(N=329) of the adult (18 years and over) Jewish population in Israel.

The closed-ended questions, which preceded the open-ended ones, included two items that were formulated as follows: 1. “The media has been talking recently about Eastern and Western cultures. In your opinion, is the distinction between Eastern and Western cultures relevant in contemporary Israeli society?” 2. “Is the distinction between Eastern culture and Western culture relevant to you personally?” With regard to both questions, the respondents were asked to indicate their answers on a scale ranging from 1 (not at all relevant) to 4 (very relevant). Following their answers, they were asked to explain them in their own words.

In the open-ended questions, respondents were asked to describe, consecutively, their perceptions of the meaning of Eastern and Western cultures. The answers provided by the respondents were usually detailed, including more than one characteristic. They were recorded verbatim, and then reduced into four categorical levels according to degrees of generalization. The highest (4th) level consisted of eight sub-categories, each representing a distinct cultural domain. These domains were used as the main basis for the quantitative analysis of the data, as will be described below. The four-level categorical structure for the analysis of the open-ended questions was developed as a field-grounded one. In other words, the answers were manually analyzed and classified using content analysis techniques and then generalized in four steps, in order to obtain a workable structure of categories.

Findings from the close-ended questions

The closed-ended questions show that Israeli Jews are essentially equally divided between those who believe and those who do not believe that the distinction between Eastern and Western cultures is relevant for contemporary Israeli society. Specifically, about 48% believe that the distinction is either very relevant (10%) or somewhat relevant (38%), while 49% opine that it is not at all relevant (23%) or of little

relevance (26%). The remaining (3%) did not answer or did not know.

Regarding the question of the relevance of the distinction between Eastern and Western cultures at the personal level, the tendency to perceive this distinction as irrelevant is much more pronounced, with 23% indicating that it is either very relevant (6%) or somewhat relevant (17%), versus a total of 71% for whom this distinction is not at all relevant (46%) or of little relevance (25%). The rest (7%) did not answer or did not know.

Taken together, these findings do not seem to be self-evident and therefore deserve close attention. In the context of this study, it would be particularly interesting to find out to what extent the relevance of the distinction between Eastern and Western cultures is related to the ethnic background of the respondents. Following the practice of the Israeli Bureau of Statistics, the respondents were divided into four geo-cultural groups, according to the country of origin of each respondent's father, as follows: second-generation Israelis, Former Soviet Union (Russian-speaking), Asia/Africa (Mizrahim), and Europe/ America (Ashkenazim). However, in order to simplify the presentation of the findings, the four possible answers for each of the two questions, as described above, were reduced to two categories: relevant vs. not relevant, with the results shown in [Table 1](#).

Tab. 1: Relevance of the distinction between Eastern and Western cultures at public and personal levels (N=296*)

	Public level	Personal level
Israelis		
Relevant	38%	21%
Not relevant	62%	75%
Total	100%	100%

	Public level	Personal level
Russians		
Relevant	57%	45%
Not relevant	43%	55%
Total	100%	100%
Mizrahim		
Relevant	53%	12%
Not relevant	47%	88%
Total	100%	100%
Ashkenazim		
Relevant	50%	19%
Not relevant	50%	81%
Total	100%	100%

* The original number was 329; those who did not answer or did not know were removed from the table.

** Percentages rounded to whole numbers.

Looking first at the figures concerning the relevance of the East/West culture distinction at the public level, the most salient finding is the difference between the second-generation Israelis, among whom a minority (38%) perceive this distinction as relevant, and the other three groups, for whom the relevance of this distinction is 50% (Ashkenazim), 53% (Mizrahim) and 57% (Russian-speaking).

Turning to the personal level, the findings reveal a somewhat different pattern in two major respects: First, in each of the four groups, those for whom the East/ West culture distinction is relevant represent the minority. Second, the size of this minority in the Russian-speaking group (45%) is considerably larger than in the other groups, which have relatively small differences between them. Perhaps unexpectedly, the smallest minority (12%) is found among the Mizrahim, followed by the Ashkenazim (19%) and second-generation Israelis (21%).

In order to further explore these data, we cross-tabulated the findings pertaining to the relevance of the East/ West culture distinction at the public and personal levels. This procedure yields four categories of responses, as follows: 1. Relevant at both the public and personal levels; 2. Relevant at neither level; 3. Relevant at the public but not at the personal level; 4. Relevant at the personal but not at the public level.

These categories, along with their frequency distributions, are presented in [Table 2](#).

Tab. 2: Cross-tabulation between the relevance and irrelevance of the Eastern/Western cultural distinction at the public and personal levels (N=296*)

Public level	Personal level	%
Relevant	Relevant	22%
Relevant	Not relevant	26%
Not relevant	Relevant	2%
Not relevant	Not relevant	50%
Total		100%

* The original number was 329; those who did not answer or did not know were removed from the table.

** Percentages rounded to whole numbers.

As evinced by [Table 2](#), for 50% of the respondents the East/West culture distinction is not relevant at either the public or the personal levels, while only 22% expressed the opposite pattern (relevant at both levels). As for the two “inconsistent” patterns, for 26% the distinction is only relevant at the public level, while for just 2% it is relevant only at the personal level. These last two figures suggest that when the distinction is not relevant at the public level, the likelihood that it will be relevant at the personal level is very small indeed. On the other hand, the irrelevance of the distinction at the personal level does not preclude the possibility that it would be regarded as relevant at the public level.

The results presented in [Table 2](#) can also be read with a focus on the relevance of the distinction between Eastern/Western cultures at the societal vs. the personal levels. Thus, when we combine the two left upper cells of [Table 2](#), we find that the respondents were almost equally divided between those who believe that this distinction is relevant at the public level (48%) and those who hold the opposite opinion (52%). However, the cells representing the responses concerning the personal level reveal that for the large majority (76%), the East/West culture distinction is not relevant.

The next step in the empirical analysis examines the above results according to their connection to the four ethnic groups, as shown in [Table 3](#).

Tab. 3: Cross-tabulation between the relevance and irrelevance of the Eastern/Western cultural distinction at the public/personal levels by ethnic origin (N=296*)

Public level/ Personal level	Israelis	Russians	Mizrahim	Ashkenazim
Relevant/ Relevant	16%	39%	10%	21%
Not relevant/ Not relevant	62%	39%	49%	49%
Not relevant/ Relevant	3%	6%	2%	0%

Public level/ Personal level	Israelis	Russians	Mizrahim	Ashkenazim
Relevant/ Not relevant	19%	17%	39%	30%
Total	100%	101%	100%	100%

* The original number was 329; those who did not answer or did not know were removed from the table.

** Percentages rounded to whole numbers.

The figures presented in **Table 3** appear to be somewhat complex but are also quite revealing. Starting with the first category, the table shows that by far the highest percentage (39%) is obtained for the Russian-speaking group, while the lowest (10%) applies to the Mizrahi group. In other words, nearly four out of ten among the Russian-speaking respondents regard the cultural distinction between East and West as relevant at both the personal and public levels, whereas within the Mizrahi group the corresponding ratio is one out of ten. Note also that the two groups in the middle are much closer to the Mizrahi group, with comparable percentages of 16% and 21% for the second-generation Israelis and the Ashkenazi group, respectively.

Looking at the second category, the second-generation Israelis stand out as the only group in which the majority (62%) rejects the relevance of the East/West culture distinction at both levels. On the other end of the spectrum, the rate of non-relevance within the Russian-speaking group is again the lowest (39%), while the Ashkenazi and Mizrahi groups fall in between, with identical percentages of 49% each.

In the third category, it is immediately evident that this category represents only a very few respondents within each of the four ethnic groups, with figures ranging from zero among

the Ashkenazi group, 2% among the Mizrahim, 3% among the second-generation Israelis and 6% among the Russian-speaking. In other words, there are very few respondents for whom the distinction between the Eastern/Western cultures is not relevant at the public level yet relevant at the personal level. At the same time, it is difficult to ignore the observation that the size of the minority in the Russian-speaking group, however small, is clearly larger than in the other groups.

Finally, the fourth category shows that in all four groups, those for whom the East/West culture distinction is relevant at the public level but not at the personal level, represent significant minorities, though varying in size. The smallest minorities were among the Russian-speakers (17%) and the second-generation Israelis (19%), followed by the Ashkenazim (30%) and the Mizrahim (39%).

As in [Table 2](#), this table too can be read differently, focusing on the significance of the Eastern/Western distinction as a social vs. personal issue in Israeli society from the viewpoints of the four ethnic groups. Thus a large majority among second-generation Israelis *does not* see this distinction as being relevant either personally for themselves (81%), or for the Israeli public as a whole (65%). The comparable distribution within the Mizrahi group is similar though less balanced, with 88% of the respondents in this group saying that the East/West distinction is irrelevant for them personally, compared with 51% who believe that this distinction is irrelevant at the public level. Within the Ashkenazi group, we find that the pattern of responses is virtually identical to that in the Mizrahi group, with 79% saying that the distinction is irrelevant personally, compared with 49% who believe that it is irrelevant at the public level. The most balanced distributions are found in the Russian-speaking group, with 56% saying that the distinction is irrelevant personally and 45% believing that it is irrelevant for the Israeli public as a whole.

The overall picture that emerges from the findings presented in [Table 3](#) can be summarized by the following observations:

1. The distinction between Eastern and Western cultures, as frequently voiced in the Israeli media, is apparently of little or no relevance for essentially half of the Israeli-Jewish public. This conclusion applies to the perceived relevance of this distinction regarding contemporary Israeli society as well as to its relevance at the personal level. On the other hand, the contrasting opinion, voiced by those for whom the distinction between the two cultures is relevant at both the public and personal levels, accounts for slightly more than one fifth (22%) of the respondents. The remaining two groups are sharply divided between those for whom the distinction is relevant only at the public level (26%), and a tiny minority of just 2%, for whom it is relevant only at the personal level.

2. The Russian-speaking group differs considerably from all the other ethnic groups in terms of the sizeable percentage (39%) for whom the distinction between the Eastern and Western cultures is relevant at both the personal and public levels. The most disparate group in these categories is represented by the Mizrahi group, in which the comparable percentage is just 10%, followed by the second-generation Israelis (16%), and the Ashkenazim (21%).

3. The second-generation Israelis represent the group with by far the highest percentage among whom the Eastern/Western culture distinction is *not* relevant at both levels (62%). The opposite in this case is represented by Russian-speaking group (39%), followed by the Mizrahim and Ashkenazim, both with identical figures of 49%.

4. Considering the two “inconsistent” patterns (e.g., those for whom the distinction is relevant at the public level but not at the personal level, and vice-a-versa), we have already noted that the first of these patterns is numerically negligible in all four ethnic groups, with minor differences (0–5.6%) between them. In contrast, quite a sizeable percentage in these groups, for whom the Eastern/ Western culture distinction is personally not relevant, recognizes the significance of this distinction among the public at large.

As noted earlier, after answering the closed-ended questions, the respondents were asked to explain the reasons

behind their responses. As can be seen below, these comments make a useful contribution to our understanding of the attitudes toward the distinction between the Eastern and Western cultures.

Beginning with the respondents who believe that this distinction is relevant, most of them made the observation that the East and the West represent different cultures, but they did not indicate that one of them is more privileged than the other. In other words, they made no references to the status of the two cultures in Israeli society. Typical examples of this kind of response-items were “different cultures”; “differences between East and West”; “dissimilar worldviews and cultural socialization”; “different cultures, with each having its own advantages and disadvantages”; “disparate worldviews, lifestyle, customs, and behaviors”; “different mentalities”; “there are those who love Eastern music and vice-a-versa”; “differences between customs, ceremonies, and education”; “immigrant society – cultural diversity.” In two cases, the relevance of the Eastern/Western culture distinction was attributed to the “ongoing discourse on the subject” and to “political and academic interests.” The ethnic origin of the respondents who provided this type of responses is quite diverse, though the proportion in the Russian-speaking group is higher than in the other groups.

A smaller, though still highly significant number of respondents referred explicitly or implicitly to various aspects of inequality and discrimination, with the Mizrahim usually perceived as the deprived or underprivileged group, as indicated by the following verbatim examples: “the Ashkenazim comprise the majority in the high classes”; “the dominant culture is Ashkenazi”; “they want Europe but behave like Mizrahim, like in the Arab culture”; “unequal chances of upward mobility”; “different cultural socialization”; “there are still educational, economic, and class gaps.” The percentage of Mizrahim who provided this last response is significantly higher than in the other three ethnic groups. In a couple of extreme cases, the Mizrahi culture is explicitly stigmatized as being “primitive” or “barbarian,” and in a few other cases the Mizrahim are described as “feeling a

sense of discrimination.” As might be expected, the percentage of Mizrahim in this group, is significantly higher than in the other three ethnic groups.

Turning to the category of respondents who regard this distinction as *not relevant*, almost all of them argue, in one way or another, that Israel is a multicultural or culturally mixed society, having no dominant ethnic culture, as can be clearly seen from the following quotations: “mixture of cultures, equality of opportunities, depending on the individual”; “cultural diversity customary in an immigrant society”; “the culture is Israeli”; “all are influenced by progress and globalization of culture”; “differences do exist, but they are not hierarchical”; “melting-pot, everything is blended.” Quite a few responses, while recognizing the existence of cultural differences based on ethnicity in the past, maintain that this distinction is anachronistic, and point to the growing number of interethnic Jewish marriages as an important integrative factor, particularly in the younger generation. The ethnic origin of the respondents in this category is widely dispersed across all groups, although its percentage is somewhat higher among second-generation Israelis.

In addition, there were a few respondents who referred to the socioeconomic dimension of the distinction between the Eastern and Western cultures. However, these respondents tended to belittle the importance of ethnic inequality and discrimination, arguing that opportunities are up to individual initiatives. As stated by one of them, “ethnic origin does not make a difference – it is up to the individual person.” This type of response was not associated with any specific ethnic group.

Findings from the open-ended questions

In the preceding discussion we presented data on the relevance of the distinction between the Eastern and Western cultures at the societal and personal levels, as perceived by our respondents as a whole, and by the major ethnic groups that

comprise the respondents. That discussion, however, provided no information on the meaning of the terms “Eastern” and “Western” cultures in the eyes of these people. In other words, what are the most salient characteristics according to which these two cultures are perceived by the Israeli-Jewish public? In order to address this issue we turn to the findings elicited by the above-mentioned open-ended questions.

These findings were analyzed in two stages: First, we reduced the variety of specific characteristics attributed to the Eastern and Western cultures into more general categories. However, since the responses to the open-ended questions were numerous relative to the number of respondents, and varied considerably in terms of detail, we decided to categorize the response items according to four levels of generality. The findings presented below pertain to only the eight most generalized categories. These categories were still meaningful, and the number of items in them was large enough to facilitate a relatively detailed analysis, as follows:

Lifestyle: This category pertains to customs, traditions, appearance, habits and ways of life such as religiosity and use of language and of technology.

Art and artistic production: This category includes everything that is identified with the artistic aspect of culture and its consumption – music, literature, theatre, and dance.

Behavioral characteristics: Various aspects of modes of behavior in private and in public life.

Values, worldviews, and ways of thinking: This category pertains to mental constructs that represent the ways people view their own lives and life in general.

Popular vs. elitist: Another category that relates to behavior but was found to be unique enough to be differentiated.

Culinary culture: A category that describes distinct types of cuisine.

Geo-cultural and ethnic identification: This category relates to answers that associate Western/Eastern culture with

specific geo-cultural locations or with ethnic groups.

Stratification indicators: This category relates Western/Eastern culture to stratification characteristics such as education or socioeconomic status.

In addition to these categories, we also made use of the more detailed categories illustratively, in order to exemplify more specifically the meanings of the more general categories. In the next stage, we compared the percentage distributions of the eight most generalized categories in the Eastern and Western cultures as obtained in the sample as a whole, as well as according to the percentage distributions of these categories within each of the four ethnic groups. As a preliminary comment, it should be noted that the number of response items relating to the perception of the Eastern culture was somewhat higher than the corresponding percentage for the Western culture (about 55% and 45%, respectively). This gap may suggest that the Jewish-Israeli public is more perceptive to the Eastern than to the Western culture.

Attributes of Western culture

Lifestyle: The most salient category in the perception of Western culture, accounting for about 23% of the response items is elicited by the question “What is ‘Western culture’ in your eyes.” Broken-down by ethnic origin, it appears that with the exception of second-generation Israelis, who referred to lifestyle in just 16% of their response items, in all other ethnic groups the percentages ranged from 22% to 26%. Generally speaking, the lifestyle associated with Western culture is characterized mainly by the following attributes or their equivalents: secular, lacking religious tradition and customs; formalistic attributes such as meticulous, planned, orderly and highly disciplined; individualistic and protective of their personal space; “good” or strict socialization; small and loosely-tied familial units; various types of leisure practices and modes of cultural consumption, (especially reading and attending classical music concerts); language style (e.g.,

proper use of language), speaking Yiddish; elegant and fashionable attire.

Arts and artistic production: This category contained about 21% of the response items – almost as high as the percentage of the previous category. However, the extent to which arts and artistic production were referred to by the four ethnic groups varied considerably. It appeared, for example, in 27% of the response items of the Mizrahim, in 20% and 19% of the Russians-speaking and second-generation Israelis, respectively, and was mentioned by just 13% of the Ashkenazim. The most common art form characterizing Western culture pertained to styles or types of music, such as classical music and opera (some respondents even mentioned specific composers such as Beethoven or Mozart), Western music and Hebrew or Israeli music. Other, much less common artistic attributes associated with Western culture were theatre, literature, dance, and plastic arts.

Behavioral characteristics: This category, third in the descending order of prevalence in the responses, appeared in only 13% of the total response items. The frequency distribution of this category across the four ethnic groups is even more balanced than in the two previous ones, ranging between 10% to 15%. As an attribute of Western culture, this category consists mainly of behavioral characteristics that can be classified into two related main sub-categories (apart from a few others, which could not be put together as a meaningful category of their own): personal attributes (e.g., emotional restraint, calmness, gentleness and good temper), and inter-personal or social/civic attributes (e.g., politeness, restrained conduct and consideration of the other).

Geo-cultural and ethnic identification: Similar to behavioral characteristics, this category accounts for 12% of the total response items. Furthermore, its percentage distribution across the four ethnic groups is also quite similar, ranging from 16% among the second-generation Israelis through 13%, 11%, and 10% among the Mizrahim, the Russian-speaking, and the Ashkenazim, respectively. Naturally, Western culture was associated geo-culturally with the West, Europe, America, and specific countries in those

continents, such as the US and England. Ethnically, Western culture was identified mostly with the Ashkenazim who reside in the above mentioned parts of the world, or originated from them. An interesting characteristic, though not mentioned very frequently, was based on the geographic location of those living in Israel, such as the northern neighborhoods of Tel Aviv and the geographic center of the country, namely locations which are regarded conventionally as predominantly Ashkenazi. This characteristic concerns also the socioeconomic facet of Israeli geo-ethnic structure. Overall, very few respondents identified Western culture with ethnicity or with ethnic groups.

Values, worldviews, and ways of thinking: This category was referred to in 10% of the total response items. Respondents of Ashkenazi origin characterized Western culture by these attributes most frequently (13%), followed by second-generation Israelis (10%), Russian-speakers (8%), and Mizrahim (7%). The most common characteristics associated with this category were liberal values, open-mindedness, and democratic worldviews. It should be noted that leftist worldviews, which are often mentioned in the public discourse in connection with Ashkenazim, was mentioned only once as a characteristic of Western culture. Another common characteristic mentioned concerning Western culture was regard for education, achievement and excellence. These characteristics were sometimes associated with upward social mobility. Similar, though less frequently mentioned characteristics of Western values and ways of thinking were rationality, modernity and orientation toward progress. Finally, there were two respondents (both of whom were Mizrahim) who characterized Western values in negative terms – racism and lack of any values.

Popular vs. elitist: This category, which accounted for only 8% of the response items concerning Western culture, involved mainly characteristics directly or indirectly associated with elitism. Broken-down by ethnic origin, the three more veteran groups – the Ashkenazim, second-generation Israelis and Mizrahim – referred to elitism as a characteristic of Western culture in about the same frequency,

with respective percentages of 11%, 10% and 8%. Perhaps not surprisingly, the corresponding percentage among the Russian-speaking respondents was just 4%. The most common elitist characteristics used in reference to Western culture were coldness, distancing, alienation, patronizing and arrogance.

Culinary culture: Only 7% of all the response items related to culinary culture as an attribute of Western culture. The large majority of these items referred to “food” or “dishes,” without further specification. We may assume that these terms indicate that Western culture is characterized by distinct types of food or “dishes.” A few respondents referred to stuffed fish (*gefilte fish*, a traditional Eastern-European Jewish dish) as a specific dish associated with Western culture, or to “Ashkenazi food” in general. In a few other instances, Western culture was characterized by terms such as “bland food,” or “non-spicy food.” The percentages of the mention of this attribute within the four ethnic groups were quite similar, ranging between 6% and 8%.

Stratification indicators: This attribute was the least frequently mentioned in connection with Western culture, appearing in only 5% of the response items and with equal frequencies in all the four ethnic groups. Almost all the response items referring to Western culture were associated with “education” in general, or more specifically, with higher education.

Attributes of Eastern culture

Lifestyle: As in the case of Western culture, this is the most frequently mentioned characteristic (21%) attributed to Eastern culture. The ethnic group with the highest percentage of members who tended to perceive this culture in terms of various aspects of lifestyle was the Ashkenazim (about 25%), followed by the Mizrahim (21%), second-generation Israelis (19%), and the Russian-speaking group (18%). The subcategories of lifestyle characterizing Eastern culture were the same as in Western culture, except for the lack of reference to leisure practices. The most common lifestyle characteristic

attributed to the Eastern culture was customs and traditions. Most answers did not go beyond these general references. However, unlike the characterization of Western culture, two particular ceremonies were mentioned with regard to the Eastern culture – the *Mimouna* holiday (celebrated by Jews of Moroccan origin) and the *Henna* ceremony. Large, close-knit families are also a prevalent characteristic attributed to lifestyle in the Eastern culture – unlike the small and loosely-knit families characterizing the Western culture. In addition, Eastern culture was characterized by our respondents as having stronger inclination to maintain religious tradition (again, in contrast to the secular lifestyle characterizing Western culture). Other contrasting characteristics of Eastern culture were the informality of daily conduct (often referred as “openness”), and “togetherness” – an attribute which stands in contrast to the tendency to protect the personal space, characterizing Western culture. Other characteristics (language style, attire and socialization) were also mentioned, but not specified.

Arts and artistic production: This category accounts for about 20% of the response items – nearly the same percentage as for the lifestyle attribute – and exactly the same percentage as was obtained in regard to the characterization of Western culture. Viewed according to the ethnic origin of the respondents, the Mizrahim referred to this attribute more than the other groups (24%), followed by the second-generation Israelis (21%), the Russian-speaking group (19%), and the Ashkenazim (17%). The most salient characteristic associated with the art production in the Eastern culture is music – much more than the reference to this characteristic in Western culture. Literature was mentioned too, but only by a few respondents; other characteristics such as plastic arts and dance appear even fewer times, while theatre does not appear at all. As a prominent characteristic of Eastern culture, music was mentioned mainly with no other details. However, some respondents associated it with Oriental music (*Musica Mizrahit*), which is a popular musical genre in Israel, or with Mediterranean music, which is another, slightly different genre.⁶⁴¹ Others associated Eastern culture with Arab or Arab-

like music. The most detailed response associated music in Eastern culture with features such as sadness and a plaintive style of singing, the use of trills and ululations, and shallow lyrics. Only two respondents (one Israeli and one Mizrahi) mentioned the characteristic Mizrahi liturgical songs (*Piyyutim*).

Behavioral characteristics: As in the perception of Western culture, this category accounts for about 15% of the response items related to Eastern culture. However, its percentage distribution across the four ethnic groups was quite different: about 26% of the response items in the Russian-speaking group referred to such characteristics, while the frequency of this attribute among second-generation Israelis, Mizrahim and Ashkenazim was much smaller – about 12%, 11% and 10% respectively. As in the case of Western culture, behavioral characteristics fall into two main categories: personal behavior and social/civic behavior. Though most of the items referred to the former, the references with respect to the latter were not negligible. The characteristics related to personal behavior ranged from expressivity (such as merriment, dramatization and emotionality)⁶⁴² and vulgarity (e.g., impoliteness, loudness, bad temper, rudeness and violence). The references to social and civic behavior were almost always associated with negative connotations, such as ethnic seclusion and hatred of the (ethnically) other, insensitivity and belligerence.

Popular vs. elitist: The references to this category account for about 14% of the total response items (compared to only 8% for the corresponding references to Western culture). Even more significant is the observation that most of the characteristics associated with Eastern culture in this category were related to the concept of popular culture, while very few related to elitism. The results obtained for the four ethnic groups indicate that the percentages of the response items among the second-generation Israelis and Ashkenazim (each about 18%), who used the attribute of popular behavior as a characteristic of Eastern culture, were much higher than in the other two groups – 12% in the Russian-speaking group and just over 8% in the Mizrahi group. As noted, Eastern culture

was associated almost exclusively with popular culture characteristics, the most prominent of which were warmth, generosity and hospitality (especially prevalent among Mizrahi and Israeli respondents); another characteristic that was frequently mentioned was fondness of parties (known in Hebrew as *Haflot*). Eastern culture was also characterized as colorful and authentic. Some of the respondents, mostly the Mizrahim, characterized this culture as folk culture and as folkloristic. It should be noted that none of the respondents characterized Western culture in this way.

Culinary culture: This attribute was referred to in relation to Eastern culture in about 13% of the response items – a much higher percentage than was obtained concerning this attribute with respect to Western culture. The frequencies of the mention of this attribute across the four ethnic groups were quite similar, ranging from 15% among the second-generation Israelis and the Ashkenazim, to 13% and 11% among the Mizrahim and the Russian-speaking, respectively. An examination of the nature of the response items reveals that, as in the case of Western culture, most of respondents referred to general characteristics associated with culinary culture, such as “food” or “dishes.” The few more specific items indicated that Eastern culture is known for its tastier and spicier food. Specific types of food were mentioned in only a very few responses.

Geo-cultural and ethnic identification: About 8% of the response items associated this attribute with Eastern culture. In terms of ethnic origin, this attribute was mentioned in 10% of the total response items among the Mizrahim, followed by the second-generation Israelis (9%), the Russian-speakers (6%), and the Ashkenazim (5%). The prevalent geo-cultural characteristic of Eastern culture is based either on the identity of certain groups of countries, such as Arab countries, Islamic countries, and Middle Eastern countries, or on the identity of specific individual countries, such as Morocco, Egypt, Iraq and Yemen. Few answers referred to the broad category of Asian-African countries, echoing the term which has been used by the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics since the 1950s, and adopted in academic research. As to ethnic-based

identifications, there were relatively few references to Mizrahim, *Eidot HaMizrah* (Mizrahi ethnic groups), and *Sephardim*.⁶⁴³ Two interesting, though quite rare references were made to “people of dark skin” and “residents of development towns,” the former reflecting the racial dimension of Jewish ethnic division, and the latter reflecting the prevalent location of the Mizrahim in peripheral towns, commonly known for their high rates of poverty, unemployment, low levels of occupational status, and limited chances of upward social mobility. Eastern culture is characterized here as the opposite of Western culture with respect to the socioeconomic facet of Israeli society.

Values, worldviews, and ways of thinking: This attribute was mentioned in relation to Eastern culture in about 7% of the total response items. The percentage of Mizrahim referring to this attribute (10%) was slightly higher than in the other ethnic groups (6%–7%). The specific characteristics associated with this attribute were mostly eclectic, with the exception of “collective consciousness of discrimination and deprivation,” which was mentioned slightly more often. Other common characteristics were liberal values, open-mindedness, and democratic orientation.

Stratification characteristics: As in the case of Western culture, this attribute was also hardly mentioned in relation to Eastern culture, accounting for slightly over 1% of the total response items, even less than its percentage with respect to Western culture (5%), and with no significant differences among the four ethnic groups. The few items that were mentioned in regard to this attribute as characteristics of Eastern culture referred to low education, low-status occupations, and location in the periphery.

Discussion

Given the salience of the ethnic discourse in Israeli-Jewish society, which challenges the discriminating attitude toward Eastern culture by the dominant Western-oriented Ashkenazi elite, it could have been expected that a significant number of

Israeli Jews would consider the distinction between Western and Eastern cultures as highly or at least moderately relevant at the public and personal levels. Our results are quite intriguing since they portray a somewhat different picture than the one emerging from the major theme of this discourse. Thus, considering the sample as a whole, we found that about half of the respondents hold the view that the above-mentioned distinction is not relevant in the public sphere, and that for the large majority (over 75%) it is not relevant in the personal sphere. Furthermore, the findings reveal that of the four ethnic groups, the Mizrahim, who represent the discriminated culture in this discourse, stand out as the group for whom the Western/Eastern distinction is least relevant on the personal level (12%), while only about half of them perceive this distinction as relevant at the public level – the same percentage found among the Ashkenazim.

Two related questions arise from these results. First, how can we explain the contradiction between the salience of the Eastern/ Western culture distinction in the public discourse, and the indifference to this distinction by about half of the respondents? Second, how can we explain the finding according to which almost all of the Mizrahim did not perceive this distinction as relevant at the personal level, while the share of Mizrahi participants in the public discourse, who call for equal status of the Eastern culture in Israeli society, is quite prominent?

These questions deserve a more thorough investigation than was conducted in this study. Based on previous research, the following are some ideas that relate to both questions. Kimmerling⁶⁴⁴ and Al-Haj and Ben-Eliezer,⁶⁴⁵ for example, focused on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its implication on the centrality of national security in Israel's political culture, as well as on the hostility toward and disrespect for Arabs and Arab culture. These factors have had a significant effect in de-emphasizing the Ashkenazi-Mizrahi ethnic conflict in Israeli society. Indeed, various scholars of Israeli society, such as Yochanan Peres, Sammy Smooha, Baruch Kimmerling and others, referred to this argument in two ways. One is the allegation that the ruling Israeli elite has always

used the theme of national security in order to soften Mizrahi discontent. The second line of argument is expressed in the claim that the Mizrahim made efforts to dissociate themselves from their Arab heritage by becoming “Israelis,” thus being part of the cozy circle of Israeli-Jewish solidarity.⁶⁴⁶ Accordingly, the commitment to national solidarity in a society preoccupied with existential conflict has the effect of suppressing the involvement with the problem of Eastern/Western culture distinction among Israeli Jews in general, and among the Mizrahim in particular.

Another argument, first raised by Peres,⁶⁴⁷ and later on by other authors in different versions, was that the Mizrahim made efforts to dissociate themselves from their Arab heritage by becoming “Israelis,” thus being part of the cozy circle of Israeli-Jewish solidarity. Yaar and Shavit⁶⁴⁸ put this argument in a broader context, suggesting that minority groups in general, such as various Christian minorities in the Arab world, attempt to improve their status in society by nurturing a common collective identity that puts them on equal footing with the majority. Still another line of reasoning suggests that due to the relative success of the “melting pot” project,⁶⁴⁹ the majority of Israeli Jews believe that the inequality between Mizrahim and Ashkenazim is gradually fading and is likely to disappear within a few generations.⁶⁵⁰ According to some critical scholars, this belief is essentially the product of “false consciousness.”

The second issue we wish to address concerns the meaning of “culture,” as perceived by our respondents. Specifically, we call attention to the observation that both the Western and Eastern cultures are conceived in broader terms than those discussed in the sociological and anthropological concept of culture. Thus, characteristics such as creative production of art and intellectual-related product, values, worldviews, lifestyles and cuisine, which are discussed in the academic perception of culture, account for about 60% of the response items, while the remaining 40% are related to characteristics that refer to people’s behavior, their ethnic and geocultural identification, and their socioeconomic position – all of which are not

typically represented in the conceptual discussion of culture. In other words, these findings suggest that the concept of Eastern/ Western culture among our respondents is broader and more varied than this concept in the academic community.

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19. We and the Others: Majority Attitudes toward Non-Jews in Israel

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This paper was completed in March 2015.

Immigration has become a major challenge to most Western countries for economic, political, and moral reasons. In most immigrant-receiving societies an intense debate is raging over issues of justice and fairness in immigrants' entitlement to social goods. Disagreements as to what is just and fair are common in diverse societies in light of the fact that the dominant groups are likely to view immigrants as out-group populations and as competitors for scarce socioeconomic resources.⁶⁵¹ Foreigners are often regarded by citizens as a potential threat to economic success, national identity and the social order, and are likely to become a target for hostility, prejudice and discrimination.⁶⁵²

The literature suggests that the relative position of an immigrant group in a society is greatly influenced by both public attitudes and government policies. Although the two factors are interdependent, both form the context of reception, which in turn affects the nature and character of ethnic relations in society.⁶⁵³ Therefore, public attitudes toward immigrants are a key factor in the creation and reproduction of patterns of ethnic inequality and general inter-group tension. First, public opinion toward immigrants transmits signals to them as to whether they are wanted or feared. Second, public sentiments may be contagious, spread to others and be accepted as fact, thereby influencing government policies.⁶⁵⁴ Thus, the question about what nation-states owe to immigrants has become one of the major debates in countries with large-scale immigration in general and in Israeli society in particular.

In this chapter, we examine attitudes of Jewish respondents toward labor migrants in Israel, a group of non-Jewish immigrants that started arriving in Israel in the early 1990s, when Israel began the massive recruitment of foreign workers. In this undertaking, we rely on a more comprehensive comparative analysis, which includes, in addition to majority group attitudes toward labor migrants, also majority group attitudes toward ethnic (Jewish) immigrants and non-ethnic (non-Jewish) immigrants, both arriving under the provisions of the Law of Return and acquiring Israeli citizenship upon arrival. By this means, we aim to disentangle the interwoven roles played by the ethno-national origin and citizenship status of the out-group populations in the majority group's willingness to allocate social and political rights to them. Our findings shed light on the perception of different degrees of membership and the relative position assigned to different groups within the regime of incorporation of Israeli society.

Theoretical discussion and social context

Israel as a de facto immigration country

International migration has become one of the most important features of modern Western countries in general, and of Israeli society in particular. Israel is a society of immigrants and their offspring, where at the end of 2012, 27% of the Jewish majority was foreign-born.⁶⁵⁵ Migration flows had an impact on the size of the Jewish population, and they shaped the social, cultural, political and economic structure of the society. The character and composition of immigration flows and immigration policies are a key factor for understanding patterns of social and ethnic stratification in Israeli society.⁶⁵⁶

The beginning of the 1990s marked a turning point in the migration history of Israel for two reasons. First, the massive waves of immigrants entering the country throughout the 1990s were reminiscent in their intensity and suddenness of the large and formative immigration waves of the 1950s. They involved three main groups: (a) a mass exodus from the Former Soviet Union (FSU); (b) Ethiopian Jews (many of

them brought to Israel through two special operations); (c) massive overseas labor migration.⁶⁵⁷ Second, the ethnic composition of immigrants shifted from its predominantly Jewish component to an increasing number of non-Jewish immigrants, who for the first time began arriving in sizable numbers. By 2012, the number of non-Jewish migrants is estimated at approximately 580,000 people. Paradoxically, over 60% of them arrived under the provisions of the Law of Return (1970 amendment) (primarily entrants from the FSU and Ethiopia)⁶⁵⁸ and 40% entered the country as temporary labor migrants through active recruitment (by employers and manpower agencies) and as undocumented workers⁶⁵⁹ or asylum seekers.⁶⁶⁰

Appendix **Table 1** displays the distribution of the population in Israel by citizenship status, origin, and migration status in 2012. The data show that of the total population of Israel (citizens and non-citizens), Jews comprise only 73%, Arabs 20%, non-Jewish non-Arab citizens (immigrants arriving under the provisions of the Law of Return) 4%, and labor migrants and asylum seekers 3%. Thus, Israel now provides a particularly illuminating setting to examine the ways the majority population perceives the presence of non-ethnic immigrants in the society. That is because non-Jews are considered a threat not only to the social and ethnic composition of the nation, but also to the Jewish character of the state. As recent public debates on reforming the citizenship and immigration laws indicate, these new patterns of immigration are likely to leave their imprint on Israel's regime of incorporation and society. Next we provide a brief overview of non-Jewish migration flows to Israel: labor migrants and non-Jews arriving under the provisions of the Law of Return.

Labor migration in Israel

In the early 1990s Israel enacted a managed migration scheme for low-skilled foreign workers to replace Palestinian commuters from the occupied territories mainly in the construction and agriculture sectors. From 1993 the proportion of foreign workers in the Israeli labor market grew constantly and rapidly, exceeding the highest number of Palestinian

commuters ever reached previously.⁶⁶¹ By 2011 labor migrants comprised 9% of the total labor force, ranking Israel among the industrialized economies that rely most heavily on foreign labor.⁶⁶²

The bulk of legally recruited migrant workers are concentrated in three main sectors: construction (workers mainly from China, Bulgaria and the Former Soviet Union), agriculture (mainly from Thailand), and long-term care (LTC) (mainly from the Philippines, but also from Sri Lanka, India and Bulgaria). While in 1996 the construction sector was the largest employer of migrant workers (58% of all work-permit holders), by 2010 most permits were issued for the caregiving sector, which accounted for over half the total permits granted that year. By the end of the 2000s the agricultural sector had increased its share to a quarter of all permits allocated.⁶⁶³

Labor migration in Israel is based on contractual labor and is temporary, with no expectations of permanent settlement or citizenship rights for the migrant. Work permits are granted to employers or manpower agencies but not to the migrants, which maximizes employers' and the state's control of the foreign population; the state does not allow residence without a work permit or recognize the right of family reunification; it practices a stringent deportation policy, which at any time allows the detention and expulsion of undocumented migrants by a simple administrative decree.⁶⁶⁴ Note also that unlike in most European countries, foreign labor migrants in Israel have barely had access to the state's welfare system or health services, and rarely benefit from the union protection that is provided to Israeli citizens.⁶⁶⁵

Non-Jews arriving under the Law of Return

As stated, the 1990s waves included for the first time an increasing number of immigrants who were not Jewish according to *Halakha* (Jewish religious law that classifies a Jew only by a matrilineal definition) but entered Israel under the Law of Return. This law creates a legal framework that grants Israeli citizenship to Jews and their children immediately on arrival; since the 1970 reform, the "Right of Return" has been extended to grandchildren of Jews too, and

their nuclear families (even if not Jewish).⁶⁶⁶ Paradoxically, this amendment created a new oxymoronic category of “non-Jewish *olim*” (Hebrew, plural for *oleh*, designating Jewish immigrant, from the Hebrew word *aliyah*, literally ‘ascent’). Some of these immigrants belong to families where the father was Jewish and the mother non-Jewish; they were considered Jewish in their countries of origin (e.g., FSU) and only after arrival in Israel did they “discover” that they are not Jewish according to the religious law and that to become Jewish they must endure a lengthy process of conversion.⁶⁶⁷

The new status of non-Jewish *oleh* has substantial stratifying effects on the materialization of various social and civil rights in the context of an ethno-national state like Israel. They face difficulties in enjoying some civil rights such as marriage, burial and family unification. This is due to the monopoly of the religious institutions in matters of family and burial.⁶⁶⁸ The ethno-national axis is thus relevant for understanding the unique status of non-Jewish *olim* in Israel.

In sum, the 1990s brought new kinds of immigrants hitherto unknown in the Israel context, transforming the ethno-national mosaic of Israeli society. The changing composition of the ethnic landscape poses new challenges to both the collective identities in Israel and patterns of social inequality based on citizenship and ethnonational origin.⁶⁶⁹ The Israeli regime of incorporation reflects a double standard: an exclusionary model for non-Jews versus an “acceptance-encouragement” model for Jews. The current immigration regime is highly exclusionary regarding non-Jews not covered by the amended Law of Return (e.g., labor migrants and asylum seekers), removing a priori any possibility of incorporation into the society and the polity.⁶⁷⁰ Unwillingness to accept non-Jewish immigrants who do not enter under the Law of Return is expressed through exclusionary immigration policies (especially restrictions on family reunion and refusal to grant residence status or refugee status) and restrictive naturalization rules. The citizenship axis is thus relevant to understanding the marginal status of labor migrants in Israel.⁶⁷

Immigration and the challenge of membership

Migration poses an essential challenge to nation-states because the massive presence of immigrants has compelled these states to reconsider how they think about political and social membership.⁶⁷² The logic of nation-states as closed systems implies the existence of “boundaries that distinguish those who are members of a community from those who are not.”⁶⁷³ However, although the rhetoric of the welfare state within its boundaries is universal, its practice sometimes is not.

Possession of full formal citizenship does not prevent the development of many disadvantaged minorities as a consequence of multiple levels of formal rights and obligations for different groups in the state.⁶⁷⁴ Thus, the ways states handle the membership question determine the very fabric of the nation. As Freeman pointed out, “[i]t is precisely in the specification of the conditions under which membership may be acquired by outsiders that all states confront the limits of their generosity and universalism.”⁶⁷⁵

Recent scholarship on membership in Israeli society has raised concerns about differential rights and varying levels of citizenship status for the different ethnic groups.⁶⁷⁶ Research has suggested that membership in the nation-state needs to be considered as a relational entity in which different groups (both citizens and non-citizens) accede to different degrees of inclusion. According to Shafir and Peled, “[t]he true nature of a community is revealed as much by who has been denied full membership in it as by who has been wholeheartedly included.”⁶⁷⁷ This relational approach helps to highlight the internal stratification of membership by showing that “in practice, full citizens, second- and indeed third- and fourth-class citizens, as well as non-citizens may exist under a single democratic political authority.”⁶⁷⁸

So far, most scholarship on the concept of membership in Israeli society has developed at the macro level of analysis through laws and public policy. We suggest that a different way of looking at what “membership” means is through examination of the way majority group members (in a given

society) define the boundaries of the collective – in this specific case through the level of majority group members' willingness to share their national benefits (e.g., social and political rights) with minority out-groups. Israel provides an especially illuminating setting for testing attitudes of the majority group to immigrants (Jews as well as non-Jews). As the number of non-Jewish migrants has continued to grow in Israeli society, questions about the rights of migrant minorities and the viability of a multicultural society are becoming more crucial than ever before.⁶⁷⁹

Attitudes to granting political versus social rights

A growing body of research on public attitudes toward granting out-group populations equal rights has demonstrated that public support for the exclusion of foreigners from equal access to various types of rights is widespread across a range of Western societies.⁶⁸⁰ Most previous studies have treated majority group's attitudes toward granting rights to out-groups in different areas (political, social, economic, etc.) as being one broad and mutual concept, theoretically and empirically. However, Gorodzeisky⁶⁸¹ demonstrates that in Israel the majority group's attitudes toward allocation of political rights to labor migrants are distinct from their attitudes toward allocation of social rights. Theoretically, this claim derives from the citizenship literature argument suggesting that citizenship matters relatively little in the area of socioeconomic rights, while political rights are those that most clearly define the boundaries between citizens and foreigners in contemporary Western societies.⁶⁸²

According to Brubaker,⁶⁸³ in Western countries membership is organized in two circles: an inner circle of the political community and an outer circle of the social and economic community. In most Western societies, migrants who hold legal residence status have no need to acquire citizenship to be entitled to social and economic rights, hence to become full members of the socioeconomic community. On the other hand, one has to be a citizen to be entitled to the most significant political rights (i.e., the right to vote in national elections) thereby becoming a full member of the political

community. In line with this view of political rights, it is found that Israeli majority group members are much more reluctant to grant labor migrants political rights than social rights – apparently because the former would allow foreigners to have a say in decisions that may affect the entire polity.⁶⁸⁴

The level of willingness of members of the majority group to share national benefits and resources with different minorities can be viewed as the way that the majority group defines the boundaries of the collective.⁶⁸⁵ Majority attitudes toward granting immigrants political rights versus social rights show the place where the majority group members draw the line between “us” as in-group and “them” as out-groups, that is, what full membership means in terms of rights for majority group members.⁶⁸⁶ Following this view, the present chapter examines majority members’ attitudes toward granting out-group populations political rights versus social rights as two distinct concepts.

The study of majority attitudes toward granting out-group populations political versus social rights is especially illuminating in the context of Israeli society due to the ethno-national character of the Israeli state. Ethnic nationalism rejects the grant of political rights to non-citizen residents – labor migrants in the Israeli case. “It conceives the nation as a community of culture, imagined descent, and destiny that has a right to self-determination. A nation’s membership need not coincide with the resident population of a state where this nation is dominant. It is therefore [...] legitimate to exclude non-citizens from access to political rights.”⁶⁸⁷ However, as we shall see, the arrival of non-Jewish *olim* – non-ethnic immigrants who enter Israel under the Law of Return and who are granted citizenship upon arrival – has further complicated the issue of the allocation of political rights to out-group populations (in terms of citizenship status and ethno-nation origin) in Israel.

Explanations of exclusionary attitudes

Two theoretical approaches have been suggested to explain the mechanisms underlying exclusionary attitudes toward immigrant groups in host societies: the competition model and the cultural model. The central tenet of the competition model is that attitudes toward migrants are shaped by group identifications and the struggle between groups for power, resources, benefits and rewards.⁶⁸⁸ The logic of this model suggests that majority group members see out-group populations as competitors for scarce resources (e.g., jobs, wage rates, welfare services). Thus, dominant group members who perceive out-group population as threatening interests of their own collective in social and economic arenas tend to express higher negative attitudes toward the out-group population. The perception of threat or fear of competition rationalizes the exclusion of out-group populations (e.g., labor migrants, ethnic immigrants, non-ethnic immigrants) from equal access to societal and material goods (i. e., social and political rights).

The central tenet of the cultural model suggests that immigrant groups are usually perceived as posing a threat to the society's cultural and national homogeneity. The sense of cultural/national threat reflects fear of the intrusion of values and practices perceived as both alien and potentially destructive to the national culture. Such feelings stimulate prejudice, which leads to discrimination against out-groups. It has been suggested that questions of national identity tend to mobilize popular sentiments even more than issues of labor-market competition. Hence, the perception of threat to cultural and national homogeneity may give rise, for example, to discriminatory attitudes and anti-immigrant sentiments.⁶⁸⁹

In what follows we aim to contribute to the literature on exclusionary attitudes by examining the relationship between socioeconomic and national threat and the willingness of the majority (Jewish) population to grant social and political rights to ethnic and non-ethnic immigrants. In so doing, we attempt to shed light on the nature and meaning of membership in Israeli society.

Findings

Data, sample and methodological notes

The data for the present analysis were obtained from the “Attitudes toward Minority Workers Survey” administered to a representative sample of Israeli adults. The survey was conducted by the B.I. and Lucille Cohen Institute for Public Opinion Research at Tel Aviv University in 2007. The sample for the analysis consists of 668 Jewish citizens aged 24–60 years who were born in Israel or who immigrated to Israel prior to 1989, and thus represents members of the majority (dominant) group in Israeli society.

The exact wordings of questionnaire items are presented in Appendix [Table 2](#). In the following analysis, percentages of respondents who object to granting specific immigrant groups (Jewish olim, non-Jewish olim and labor migrants) social and political rights and view the immigrant group as a socioeconomic threat are based on percent of responses (to the relevant question) from 5 to 7 on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 refers to most positive attitude and 7 to most negative attitude. The only exception is the variable “threat to Jewish character of the state,” which was measured on a 4-point scale: respondents who say that they “very much agree” or “agree” with the statement form the percentage of those who view an out-group as a threat to national homogeneity. Percentages of respondents who express feelings of social distance from an out-group are based on responses (to the relevant question) from -3 to -1 on a -3 to +3 scale, where -3 refers to a possible contact with member of out-group as very unpleasant and +3 refers to a possible contact as very pleasant.

In the analysis that examines the association between “perceived threat” and “objection to granting rights,” the average level of objection to granting social rights is based on a mean score of responses to the questions referring to different social rights, and the average level of objection to granting political rights is based on a mean score of responses to questions referring to different political rights. In the same analysis, a sense of threat to the Jewish character of the state is

weighted by the level of commitment to preserve the state's ethno-national character (e.g., level of agreement with the sentence "Israel should be a Jewish state").

As the first step in our empirical analysis, we examine the majority's attitudes toward granting various immigrant groups social versus political rights, as one of the main dimensions of exclusionary attitudes. Next, we explore an additional dimension of exclusionary attitudes, namely feelings of social distance from immigrant groups. After that, we present data on two of the most important mechanisms underlying the inclination to exclude out-groups from access to different types of rights: perceived socioeconomic threat and cultural threat emanating from the presence of out-group populations. Finally, we examine the association between perception of threat and exclusionary attitudes toward immigrants on the part of the majority population.

Objection to allocation of rights to immigrant groups

Before examining attitudes toward granting political versus social rights to immigrants, we describe majority attitudes toward granting equal rights as general concept. **Figure 1** shows marked differences in the willingness of the Jewish population in Israel to grant equal rights to different immigrant groups. Opposition is least regarding ethnic immigrants – Jewish olim: only 6% of the Israeli majority group members oppose granting them equal rights. Opposition is much higher to granting equal rights to non-ethnic (non-Jewish) immigrants. More than a third of Jewish respondents oppose granting equal rights to non-Jewish olim – immigrants who arrive under the Law of Return and acquire citizenship upon arrival; and about half of the Jewish respondents oppose granting equal rights to labor migrants. These preliminary findings already suggest that exclusionary attitudes to out-groups are affected by both the "citizenship status" and the "ethno-national origin" of the out-group population.

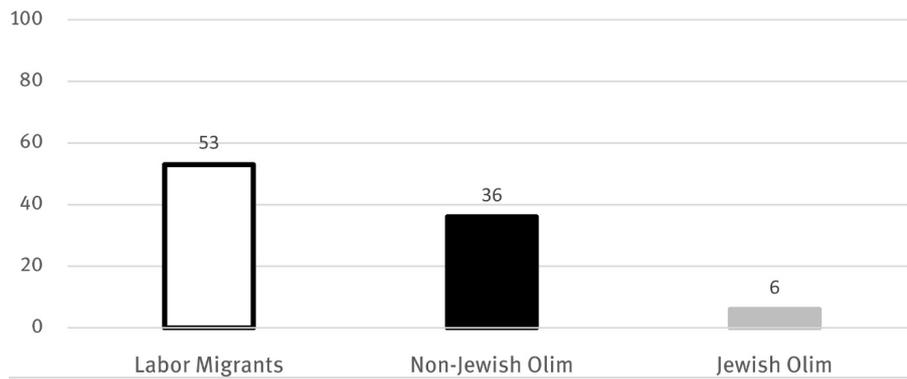


Fig. 1: Percentage of Israelis who object to granting an immigrant group equal rights

Figures 2a and 2b display findings related to the level of objection to grant political versus social rights to the immigrant groups. The majority group's members express much stronger objection toward allocating any immigrant group access to political rights, that is, to granting them the opportunity to have a say in decisions that may affect the entire polity, than granting them various social rights. The percentage of respondents who deny granting labor migrants and non-Jewish olim any rights in political sphere is at least double the percentage of respondents who deny granting them any rights in the social sphere. About two thirds of respondents object to the allocation of political rights to labor migrants, and about half of the respondents object to such rights being allocated to non-Jewish olim. By contrast, the level of objection to the granting of political rights to Jewish olim is dramatically lower (15%–17%) and the differences in levels of objection to granting Jewish olim political versus social rights is quite small.

Opposition to granting social rights is lowest for Jewish olim and highest for labor migrants; it is in-between for non-Jewish olim, suggesting that both citizenship status and ethno-national origin stand as important axes in the Jewish majority's cognitive map of membership status. However, the level of opposition toward granting social, and more especially, political rights to non-Jewish olim is much closer to the level of opposition toward granting such rights to labor migrants than to the level of opposition toward granting such rights to Jewish olim. These findings are especially interesting considering that Jewish and non-Jewish olim are granted

Israeli citizenship on arrival while labor migrants are non-citizens and have almost no chance of acquiring Israeli citizenship. These results suggest that immigrant group's ethno-national origin rather than citizenship status is crucial in the majority's willingness to allocate social, and especially political rights to the out-group population. Put differently, ethno-national origin seems a more important factor than citizenship status in shaping the majority group's opinion as to who are and who are not full members of the collective. However, differences in the level of support to excluding Jewish versus non-Jewish olim from political rights are much higher than those differences regarding social rights.

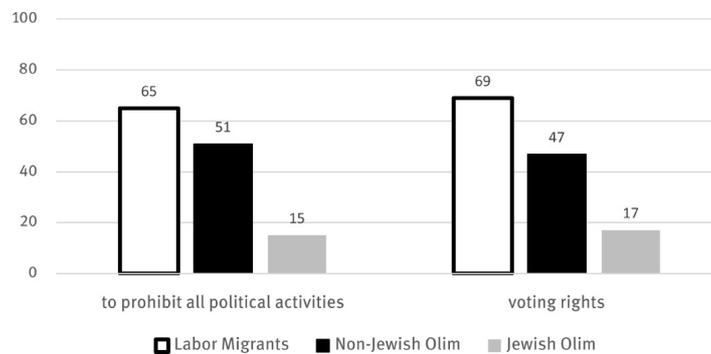


Fig. 2a: Percentage of Israelis who object to granting an immigrant group political rights

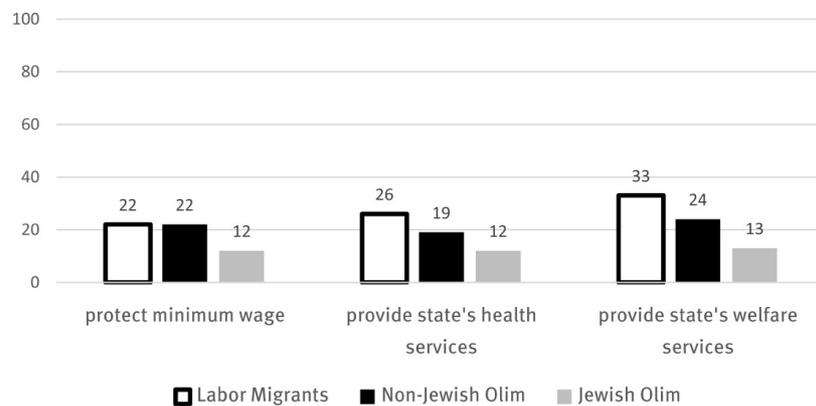


Fig. 2b: Percentage of Israelis who object to granting an immigrant group social rights

Social distance

In this section, we discuss an additional dimension of exclusionary attitudes, namely, feelings of social distance from specific out-groups. **Figure 3** displays percentages of Israeli

Jewish citizens who express a desire to maintain social distance from the three immigrant groups.

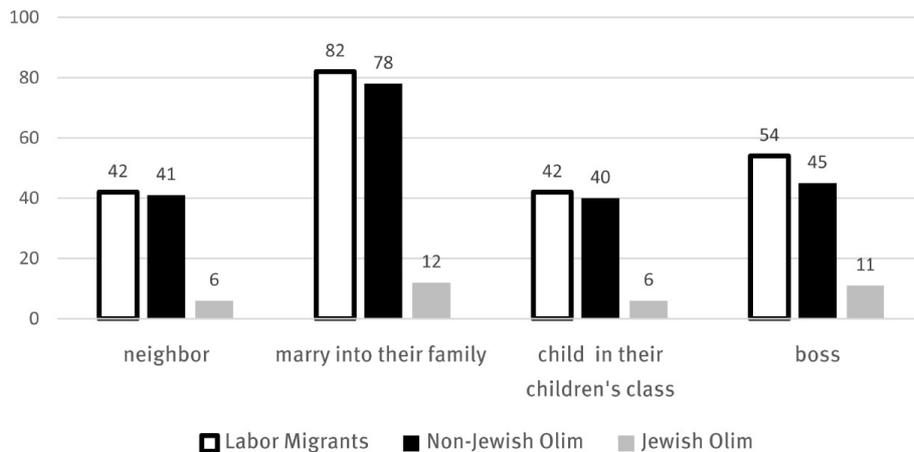


Fig. 3: Percentage of Israelis who feels it would be unpleasant to have a member of an immigrant group (as) neighbor; marry into their family; child in their children's class; boss

Levels of desired social distance from non-ethnic immigrant groups (i.e., labor migrants and non-Jewish olim) expressed by Israeli Jews are extremely high. Over 40% feel that it would be unpleasant to have a labor migrant or a non-Jewish oleh as a neighbor, or have the child of a labor migrant or non-Jewish oleh in their child's class. About 80% of respondents do not want a labor migrant or non-Jewish oleh to marry into their family. By contrast, levels of social distance from Jewish olim reported by the majority group are rather low. Only 6% of respondents are unwilling to have a Jewish oleh as a neighbor or their child sharing the classroom with Jewish olim children, and only 12% do not want a Jewish oleh to marry into their family or be their boss.

In sum, exclusionary attitudes toward non-ethnic immigrants are a very wide-spread phenomenon among majority group members in Israeli society. Specifically, support for denial of political rights and a desire to keep non-ethnic immigrant groups, regardless of their citizenship status, socially distant from the Israeli collective are highly prevalent among majority group members. As expected, the tendencies to exclude ethnic immigrants, namely Jewish olim, are substantially less pronounced.

Perceived threat

Figure 4 displays the majority group's perceptions of threat, namely the extent to which the presence of an immigrant group is perceived as having negative consequences for the majority group interests. A comparison of attitudes toward the different immigrant groups demonstrates that Israeli Jews perceive relatively lower levels of threat from Jewish olim but are more likely to feel threatened by non-Jewish olim than by labor migrants.

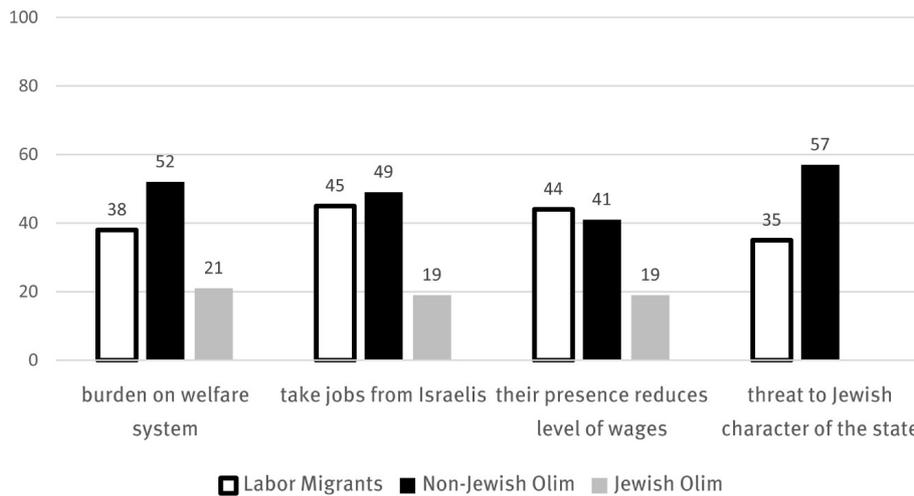


Fig. 4: Percentage of Israelis who perceive an immigrant group as a threat in different areas

Only a fifth of majority group members believe that the presence of Jewish olim threatens their collective interests in the socioeconomic arena. By contrast, feelings of threat emanating from the presence of labor migrants are much higher: approximately 40% of majority group members perceive them as a threat to their collective's interests in the socioeconomic sphere. Specifically, 38% of respondents claim that labor migrants are a burden on the state's welfare system; about 45% believe that labor migrants take jobs from Israelis and reduce their wage level. A comparison of attitudes toward different non-Jewish immigrant groups reveals that Israeli Jews are more likely to feel threatened by non-Jewish olim than by labor migrants. The difference is especially pronounced in the level of perceived threat in the welfare realm and with regard to job competition (52% and 49% of the majority population, respectively). Note too that the presence of non-Jewish immigrants is perceived as a threat to the Jewish character of the state but it is much more pronounced

with regard to non-Jewish olim than to labor migrants. Specifically, one third of majority group members perceive the presence of the labor migrants in the country as a threat to the Jewish character of the state, while more than half of them hold this perception concerning non-Jewish olim.

Perceived threats and opposition to allocating social versus political rights

The next figures display the level of opposition to granting political and social rights to labor migrants (Figure 5) and non-Jewish olim (Figure 6) across two groups of respondents: those who do and do not feel threatened by the immigrant group in the socioeconomic/national identity realms.

Figure 5 shows that respondents who do and do not perceive labor migrants as a socioeconomic threat do not differ in the level of their support for excluding labor migrants from access to basic social rights. Likewise, respondents who do and do not view labor migrants as a threat to the Jewish character of the state have similar levels of exclusionary attitudes to granting them social rights.

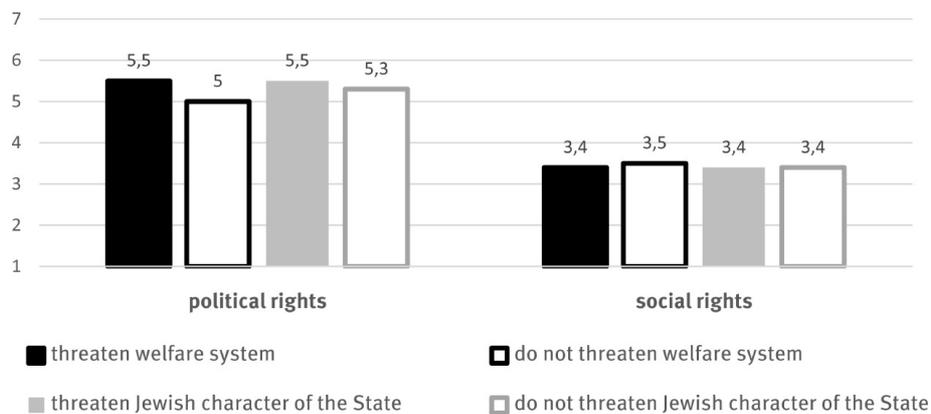


Fig. 5: Mean level of objection to granting political and social rights to labor migrants by threat perception

However, the picture is quite different when we compare attitudes toward the allocation of political rights to labor migrants. Majority group members who feel that labor migrants pose a threat to the welfare system of the state tend to express higher levels of opposition to allocating them political

rights than those who do not perceive labor migrants as such a threat.

Figure 6 shows that the level of objection to granting non-Jewish olim social as well as political rights is higher among respondents who feel threatened by non-Jewish olim in either the socioeconomic or national identity realm. At the same time, the differences between respondents who do and do not think that non-Jewish olim pose a threat to the collective interests of majority group are more pronounced in the inclination to exclude the immigrant group from access to political than to social rights.

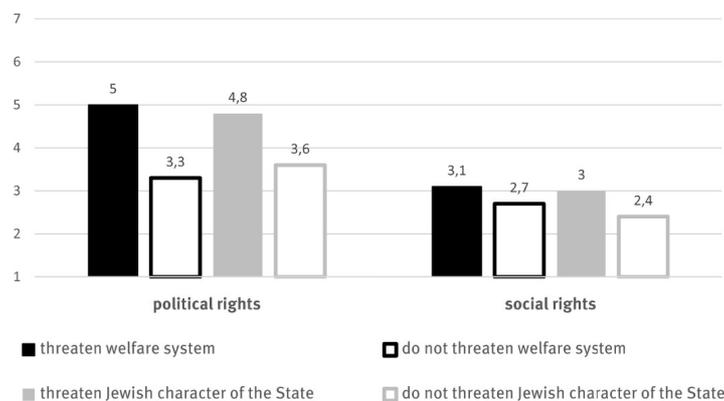


Fig. 6: Mean level of objection to granting political and social rights to non-Jewish Olim by threat perception

In general, the results suggest that the perceptions of threat to the interests of the majority group in the socioeconomic and national identity arenas play a more important role in shaping attitudes toward the allocation of political rights than social rights.

Discussion and conclusions

Our chapter examined majority views in Israel toward different groups of immigrants, Jewish and non-Jewish. The arrival of non-Jewish immigrant groups beginning in the 1990s started to turn Israel into a *de facto* immigration society despite its own definition as a country of *aliyah* (Jewish immigration). Our analysis joins the general debate in the literature on immigration, citizenship and membership that focuses on the central question regarding what nations owe to

immigrants in general and to those who do not share the same ethnic origin in particular.

Our study provided an opportunity to disentangle the interwoven effects of the out-group populations' ethno-national origin and citizenship status on the majority group's willingness to grant them political and social rights. The results shed light on the perception of different degrees of membership and the relative position assigned to different groups in the incorporation regime of Israeli society. The membership framework that guides Jewish respondents' positions on this issue is hierarchical, with two main membership discourses. First is the *ethno-national* discourse, which discriminates between Jewish and non-Jewish citizens and seems to be the most important axis for exclusion. As we have shown, the levels of socioeconomic threat and exclusionary attitudes to the three groups rank labor migrants and non-Jewish olim as the most excluded groups, in contrast to Jewish olim. Clearly, for the Jewish majority in Israel, access to rights depends more on ethnonational origin and less on citizenship. This clear distinction between Jews and non-Jews suggests that the impact of "ethnic origin" on exclusionary attitudes is stronger than that of "citizenship status." The second discourse, the *liberal* one, which differentiates citizens (Jewish olim and non-Jewish olim) from non-citizens (labor migrants) in their entitlement to rights, is less marked. Still, from this point of view labor migrants are in the most vulnerable position as the levels of exclusionary attitudes toward them surpass those toward non-Jewish olim.

The exclusion of non-citizens from access to social rights re-affirms the already marginal position of labor migrants in Israel. Jewish citizens are clearly willing to benefit from the cheap labor, which non-citizens provide, but are reluctant to grant them equal access to equal rights.⁶⁹⁰ Our data also show a clear picture of discriminatory attitudes toward non-Jewish olim,⁶⁹¹ suggesting that the possession of full formal citizenship does not prevent the development of many disadvantaged minorities as a consequence of macro and micro levels of discrimination.⁶⁹²

Our data show a markedly higher level of objection to allocating political rights as against social rights to both labor migrants and non-Jewish olim. These results imply the high importance of political rights (as compared with other social rights) for the majority population in delimiting the borders between “us” (as full members of the polity) and “them” as foreigners. In Brubaker’s terms,⁶⁹³ Israeli majority group members incline much more to exclude labor migrants (non-Jewish non-citizens) and non-Jewish olim (non-Jewish citizens) from the community’s political inner circle than from its socioeconomic outer circle. Still, the level of inclination to exclude Jewish olim from the political community is only slightly higher than that excluding them from the socioeconomic community. Hence, the ethno-national origin of “others” has special importance in shaping Israeli majority members’ attitudes toward granting them political (as compared to social) rights, that is, in majority members’ willingness to allow any political influence of these “others” on the society.

Further results demonstrate that the levels of objection to grant political rights to out-groups (labor migrants and non-Jewish olim) is higher among majority members who sense a threat by the out-groups to their collective interests in the socioeconomic or the national identity realm than among those who do not sense such a threat. Differences in the level of objection to grant social rights are much less pronounced with regard to non-Jewish olim and do not exist at all with regard to labor migrants. That is, the objection to grant political rights to labor migrants and non-Jewish olim is associated with a desire to protect the ethno-national community from any political influence of the immigrant groups, which may threaten the ethno-national community interests and privileges. At the same time, it is reasonable to suggest that attitudes toward granting labor migrants basic social rights could be rather influenced by democratic values and the commitment to human rights.⁶⁹⁴

Overall, our findings suggest that unlike some Western European countries, which are experiencing a trend toward the de-ethnicization of citizenship and membership,⁶⁹⁵ ethno-

national origin in Israel still counts for the acquisition of substantive citizenship. The exclusionary regime of incorporation coupled with a similarly exclusionary social climate toward non-Jews make it a *de facto* multicultural country but with few prospects for multiculturalism.

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Appendix

Tab. 1: Population in Israel by Citizenship Status, Origin, and Migration Status – 2012

Citizens	N	% of total citizens	% of total residing in Israel
Jews	6,186,100	75	73
Arabs	1,709,900	21	20
Other (non-Jewish/ non-Arab)	356,500	4	4
Total citizens	7,984, 500	100%	97%
Non-citizens	N	% of total non-citizens	
Undocumented labor migrants (entered as tourists and did not leave the country)	90,000	40	1.1
Labor migrants with a valid permit	74,567	33	1.0
Labor migrants over-staying their visas	15,315	7	0.3
Asylum seekers	46,437	20	0.6
Total non-citizens	226,319	100%	3%
Total citizens and non-citizens	8,478,819		100%

Sources: Central Bureau of Statistics 2014; Population, Immigration and Border Authority 2015

Tab. 2: Questionnaire items of the “Attitudes toward Minority Workers Survey” 2007.

Variables	Statements
Objection to granting equal rights	Foreign workers/Jewish <i>olim</i> /non-Jewish <i>olim</i> should be given the same rights in all spheres of life in Israel as those given to (other) citizens.
Objection to granting political rights	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) All political activities should be prohibited to foreign workers/Jewish <i>olim</i>/non-Jewish <i>olim</i> living in Israel. 2) Voting rights should be given to foreign workers/Jewish <i>olim</i>/non-Jewish <i>olim</i>.
Objection to granting social rights	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The state should grant health services to foreign workers/Jewish <i>olim</i>/non-Jewish <i>olim</i>. 2) The state should grant welfare services to foreign workers/Jewish <i>olim</i>/non-Jewish <i>olim</i>. 3) Minimum wages of foreign workers/Jewish <i>olim</i>/non-Jewish <i>olim</i> should be protected.
Perception of threat	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Foreign workers/Jewish <i>olim</i>/non-Jewish <i>olim</i> are a strain on the welfare services system. 2) Foreign workers/Jewish <i>olim</i>/non-Jewish <i>olim</i> take jobs from Israelis. 3) The presence of foreign workers/Jewish <i>olim</i>/non-Jewish <i>olim</i> lowers Israelis' wage level. 4) In the future the proportion of foreign workers/non-Jewish <i>olim</i> would be so high that they would be a threat to the Jewish majority of the state.
Desire of social distance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) It would be pleasant or unpleasant for you to have a foreign worker/Jewish <i>oleh</i>/non-Jewish <i>oleh</i> as a neighbor. 2) It would be pleasant or unpleasant for you to have a foreign worker Jewish <i>oleh</i>/non-Jewish <i>oleh</i> marry into your family. 3) It would be pleasant or unpleasant for you to have the child of a foreign worker/Jewish <i>oleh</i>/non-Jewish <i>oleh</i> in your child's class at school. 4) It would be pleasant or unpleasant for you to have a foreign worker/Jewish <i>oleh</i>/non-Jewish <i>oleh</i> as your boss.

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Topic V: Social (In)Justice

Introduction

What happens with social groups in society cannot be dissociated from structural-economic developments. It should be recalled that Israel, founded at the end of the Yishuv era, was strongly influenced by egalitarian and socialist ideas, and the endeavors of the pioneer generation associated with the Zionist labor movement. Over time, its orientation has changed tremendously, and analysts now debate how far that was for the best or for the worst. Much is said and written today about neo-liberalism's triumph in Israel, reflected in the increased privatization of enterprises and services, a withdrawal from some welfare arrangements and social security privileges and, as a result, a widening income-gap between groups. Hence, one of the major present-day debates about social justice focuses on citizens' social rights. On the one hand, some commentators stress the state's responsibility toward its citizens' well-being and would like Israel to adopt what Esping-Andersen⁶⁹⁶ calls the universalist social-democratic model of the welfare state. On the other hand, there are supporters of neo-liberalism who tend to emphasize people's responsibility for their own well-being, and thus advocate for a much more limited involvement by the state in welfare and the redistribution of wealth. This is certainly one of the central topics of any evaluation of Israel society's contemporary evolution.

Yossi Yonah points out that present-day perceptions of society attest to shifting paradigms. The majority of Israelis have moved away from advocacy of wealth redistribution schemes. It seems that the overwhelming majority, even among the demonstrators of the 2011 "tent protest movement," make their claims within the purview of neo-liberal philosophy. And yet this political reality does not preclude the possibility of the re-emergence of notions of social justice advocating wealth redistribution.

Danny Gutwein points out that since 1977, both right and left governments have pursued a neo-liberal policy. This policy has turned Israel into one of the countries with the highest degree of growth, coupled with the highest inequality. During this era, though, the lower classes loyally continued to support the right-wing parties. It was the housing problem that triggered the “tents protest” in 2011, which rapidly turned into a middle-class critique. In the January 2013 general elections, the protesting middle classes preferred Lapid’s liberal Yesh Atid over Labor with its avowed social-democratic program. The middle classes in fact supported the dismantling of the welfare state because they sought income-tax cuts and emancipation from state control. Today, all sectors are suspicious of the state. The agenda of the “new social democracy” is marked by the effort to reject privatization and revive **348** Introduction the idea of the welfare state: politically, to rebuild social democratic forces on the public scene.

Avi Simhon assesses that for most of its history, the Israeli economy relied on donations from world Jewry and was managed by bureaucrats and politicians. Nevertheless, within a century, it evolved from a poor agricultural economy into a powerhouse of high-tech economy while increasing its population tenfold. At the same time, a substantial part of the population has been left behind, with low formal education. Arabs and ultra-Orthodox Jews are especially poor. It is notable that as far as these groups are concerned, their poverty is partly self-inflicted and results from their choice to raise many children. Much of the inequality is thus related to decisions taken not only by governments but also by households.

Steven Plaut refers to the fact that Israelis widely accept the view prevalent among academics and the media that Arab and Mizrahi citizens are discriminated against. However, according to Plaut, there is no evidence that points to discrimination of these groups. In fact, Arabs gain a higher return on education than Jews, and universities implement affirmative action in favor of Arabs and sometimes of Mizrahim and women. Recent immigrants appear to be the one

group in the country at an earnings disadvantage, but one cannot contend that even their disadvantage is due to discrimination. The almost total lack of evidence for ethnic discrimination in labor markets does not, of course, preclude its existence in other aspects of society.

In brief, Yossi Yonah's and Danny Gutwein's views about social justice emphasize the great responsibility of the state for its citizens' well-being, and hence they criticize the contemporary prevailing neo-liberal philosophy and practices and advocate far greater involvement by the state in welfare and redistribution of wealth. Avi Simhon presents a neo-liberal view maintaining that individuals or households are responsible for their well-being. What is implied from Steven Plaut's chapter is that the current extent of the state's responsibility toward its citizens is satisfactory. In his opinion, the markets and labor markets are not discriminatory, and they should be relied on rather than on the state or non-market apparatuses. This stands in contrast to a certain interpretation of citizens' social rights, that expects the welfare state to free its citizens from a total dependency on the market.

20. Social Justice in Israel: Shifting Paradigm

Yossi Yonah

This paper was completed in October 2014.

The social protest taking place in Israel during the summer of 2011 provided one of the most salient contexts in which intriguing political debates were held concerning the idea of social justice, its meaning and its practical ramifications. It provides a prism through which it was possible not only to observe the wide gamut of voices in this regard but also to detect in this cacophony reverberations of old debates taking place in Israeli society for time immemorial. Thus, although echoing universal discontent with neo-liberal philosophy dominating economic policies world over and with the ensuing staggering economic gaps and the concentration of wealth in the hand of the very few, the social protest in Israel did not evince a widely shared alternative to this philosophy. Actually, as the protest progressed and entered its final stages, the ideological rifts among its activists, as well as among its supporters, threatened to tear it apart. The question of what social justice means lay at the heart of the ideological feuds waged among the rivaling factions, even when the demarcating lines between them could not be readily drawn. In what follows, I want to make a few comments about the political debates held in Israeli society during the social protest as well as about those following it since then. Embarking on this short journey, I freely incorporate descriptive and normative claims concerning the idea of social justice in relation to the voices and views transpired either explicitly or implicitly in these debates. This requires some measure of extrapolation and it runs the risk of abstraction, but hopefully the repay will be worthwhile.

Disclosure

The thoughts presented in this short essay are inspired by my direct involvement in the social protest of summer 2011. Together with Professor Avia Spivak, former deputy to the head of the Bank of Israel, we headed the Expert Team, or the Alternative Committee, a group consisting of more than 150 academics, experts in various fields of public policy and social activists, advising the protest movement of summer 2011. The Expert Team was formed as an alternative to the committee appointed by the government – the Committee on Social and Economic Change (CSEC).⁶⁹⁷ This committee was given the mandate to study the roots of the economic difficulties facing young generations in Israel and to draft policy recommendations aiming to address these difficulties. The formation of the Expert Team signaled a shared sentiment among the protest's leaders that the government does not intend to deal in good faith with the protest movement. Thus, they sought the guide and council of experts affiliated with non-government organizations and movements. And indeed, the Expert Team has drafted consequently a comprehensive report on the dire socioeconomic reality of Israel and articulated a set of demands and policy recommendations on behalf of the social protest movement that differ substantially from the report of the CSEC.⁶⁹⁸ In part, the differences between the two committees clearly attest to the different ideas of social justice guiding them.

A brief historical note

The disputes concerning the idea of social justice does not allow placing the protest movement and the government in separate ideological camps, for the disputes in this regard emerge also within the protest movement itself. Furthermore, these disputes echo old debates holding sway in Israeli society for long time and also witness different interpretations of the nexus that should hold between nationalism, socialism, liberalism, religion and capitalism. In old times, the leading interpretation of this nexus was the one embraced by Labor Zionism. It aspired to reach equilibrium between nationalism and socialism. However, it included many versions, ranging

from those calling for complete fusion of the two to those who sought a *modus vivendi* between Zionism and capitalism. The later approach has dominated Israeli socioeconomic affairs for almost four decades, that is, since the inception of the State of Israel till the mid-1980s.⁶⁹⁹ But even during this long phase the balance between the two – nationalism and capitalism – has been gradually tipped in favor of capitalism. Like in many other countries, labor parties went through gradual modifications that culminated in a drastic change of heart in the 1990s. The Third Way philosophy, given systematic articulation by the sociologist Anthony Giddens,⁷⁰⁰ paved the way for this radical change. “The government and the state,” Giddens argued, “need thorough-going reform, to make them faster moving, more effective and responsive, and to reflect the need for greater transparency and diversity in a society where consumer choice has become a prime force. The state,” he continued, “should become more of an enabler rather than a direct provider or producer.”⁷⁰¹ As it turned out, this philosophy was a proxy for an “unbridled form of capitalism.”⁷⁰² Commenting on the dire results following the integration of this philosophy in public policies, the Dutch Labor Party *Wouter Bos* succinctly stated that “[w]e went to bed while there was a reasonably controlled free market, but woke up with an unchained monster.”⁷⁰³

But Labor Zionism has been also facing a unique challenge, putting to test its commitment to universal values. Labor Zionism has always been tied up with meritocratic republicanism.⁷⁰⁴ That is, although initiating a social system providing an array of universal welfare benefits irrespective of national affiliation, it also held practices that impart social benefits to its citizens who share the values and the goals of a national community of meaning. Thus it endorsed a vague meritocratic system grounded in interplay between the contribution of the citizens to the community and the privileges and rights owed to them in return.⁷⁰⁵ As a result, constant and fluctuating negotiations of sort have always been waged between universal and particular principles of social justice, leading some scholars to doubt Labor Zionism’s

sincere commitment to universal and socialist values.⁷⁰⁶ The main challenge facing this dual system of social rights and benefits owes its existence to the presence of a sizable Palestinian national minority prevented from entering the symbolic boundaries of the republic, since “the republic” maintains close affinity with religious identity, i.e., Judaism.⁷⁰⁷

General Zionism – echoing middle class sentiment and aspiring to run Israel’s socioeconomic affairs on capitalist models – is another ideological trend informing Zionism. Although emphasizing the utmost importance of individual rights, especially property rights, and endorsing free market ideology,⁷⁰⁸ this ideological trend also maintains a strong and yet intricate relationship with nationalism. Thus like other Zionist ideologies, it was not able to equally incorporate Israeli Arabs within its conception of social justice, rendering them “strangers in the Utopia.”⁷⁰⁹ The limited conception of social justice associated with this ideological trend has been permeating the Likud Party and gradually dominating Israel’s political scene since the mid-1970s. It finally emerged a constitutive component of the *Zeitgeist* of our time. And yet, in contrast to what just said, it may be reasonably argued that the advance of capitalism furthers in various ways the lot of Arab citizens and other marginalized groups, for it limits and circumvents the tutelage system where the state functions as the main provider of benefits and opportunities.

Finally, there is religious Zionism. Although attesting to a variety of approaches toward the idea of social justice, the major forces in religious Zionism do not embrace progressive views in this regard.⁷¹⁰ Although establishing in the past a socialist movement (*Hapoel HaMizrahi*) and launching a religious Kibbutz movement (the Religious Kibbutz), as time went on dominant forces in religious Zionism have undergone a complete and radical transformation in their social philosophy, nudging them ever closer to neo-liberal ideologies. Aside from various sub-groups belonging within religious Zionism, who maintain relatively progressive views in this regard, this transformation was accompanied and augmented

by other developments within religious Zionism. First, religious Zionism has become, more or less, a single issue movement, whose main goal is to impose Israeli sovereignty over the occupied territories in the West Bank. Second, it managed to incorporate successfully its social demands within this religious and nationalist agenda, hence stripping them of strict socialist meaning. That is, this development is manifested particularly in the transfer of the welfare state from Israel's 1967s borders to the occupied territories, bestowing on its Jewish settlers generous benefits deprived of other Israeli citizens.⁷¹¹ Third, as far as economic affairs pertain to Israel's 1967s borders, dominant forces in religious Zionism view the free market as the supreme regulator and provider of social services. Many of them, however, supplement their faith in the free market with the view that close-knit (religious) communities and their charity based activities may alleviate residual poverty, that is, those marginal social ills that the free market fails to address in the propitious days to come, the halcyon days.

Although the various ideological camps operating within Israeli society throughout the years do not allow for the drawing of clear demarcating lines vis-à-vis the idea of social justice, it is still possible to distinguish between two main and contrasting ideological camps in this regard. As noted, these camps can no longer be readily captured along party lines. To put it concisely then, while the first camp, dominating government policies in the past, draws its inspiration from a worldview empowering the state to safeguard basic social rights of its citizens, the latter camp, informing current government policies, owes its ideological spur to neo-liberal worldviews that find their supporters almost in all Israeli political parties. Common to these worldviews is the advocacy of privatization schemes of public assets, the gradual transfer of responsibility in matters of social services from the state to the citizens and the curtailment of the trade unions.

Times are changing

These developments are not unique to Israel. Since the mid-1970s, the neo-liberal ideology began to emerge as a formidable alternative to Keynesianism in developed countries. The Keynesian approach, manifesting a social order combining economic principles and progressive social justice, advocates a social pact between the state, the private sector, and the labor unions. This pact envisions a progressive welfare state committed, among other things, to the provision of basic social services to its citizens in the fields of education, health care, and housing. The neo-liberal ideology contests the basic moral and practical assumptions of the Keynesian model. It particularly challenges the concept of justice underlying this model, a concept that recognizes inalienable social rights owed to citizens irrespective of their contribution to the productive forces of society, and it also argues that this model is seriously and greatly inefficient, if not all together practically disastrous. While the provision of welfare benefits deprives their beneficiaries of the motivation to work hard and contribute to the national product, the high rate of income tax levied on the private sector and its able entrepreneurs stifles their creative spirit and creative zeal, hence forestalling economic growth. The collapse of the Former Soviet Union, perceived as the strongest ideological rival and the ultimate nemesis of capitalism, in the beginning of the 1990s encouraged the rise of neo-liberalism and its unbridled form of capitalist policies and practices. This collapse, as experts argue, dissipated the fear that such practices may encounter social unrest that might be translated into political movements inspired by radical socialism. The collapse of the Former Soviet Union, believe advocates of neo-liberalism, has dealt a knockout blow to the public legitimacy of socialism, hence paving the way for thorough neo-liberal policies and practices.⁷¹² The Third Way philosophy may be seen, retrospectively, as an act of capitulation, unmindfully committed, to neo-liberalism.

Thus removing from the global political scene its fierce ideological rival, neoliberalism feels free to call for a radical reduction in the role of the state in economic affairs, to be manifested, among other things, in sweeping tax cuts, dramatic slashing of public funding to social services and curtailment of

labor unions. Citing ethical values and economic efficiency, this ideology calls for the institution of “a minimal state,”⁷¹³ a state that should be entrusted exclusively with the role of providing the basic conditions, laws and institutions necessary for unrestrained interplay of market forces. Free market economy plays, then, a crucial role in the way neo-liberal ideology envisions both the ideal state and the ideal of civil society operating within it. As Jessop puts it, the transition from Keynesian model to neo-liberalism means that the state should “promote product, processes, organizational and market innovation in open economies in order to strengthen as far as possible the structural competitiveness of national economy by intervening on supply side; and to subordinate social policy to the needs on labor market flexibility and/ or the constraints of international competition.”⁷¹⁴ Among other things, the neo-liberal state seeks to create an enterprising self, a sort of entrepreneur who astutely trades on the globally expanded, economic terrains.⁷¹⁵ This vision of the self – the *homo-economicus* self – has been particularly promoted as one of the main goals of the education system.⁷¹⁶

And indeed, in line with trends characterizing many Western countries and as a result of this paradigm shift, Israel has witnessed economic structural changes including privatization of public assets, curtailment of the trade unions, tax reforms decreasing the rate of tax on capital, dismantling of social services and drastic reduction of unemployment benefits. It was Ori Yogev who elaborated this policy most bluntly while assuming the position as the head of the budget department in the Ministry of Treasury in the years 2002–2004. “The most acute problem facing the budget,” he stated in a newspaper interview,

was the automatic pilot, the component in the budget requiring an automatic annual increase due indexation and population growth. We uprooted this component. We move to nominal budget. No more indexation [to cost of living]. We changed the indexation system so that it is indexed to the average income instead of to the cost of living. We reduced child benefits, we changed the pension schemes in the public sector, from a non-salary related pension benefits to salary related pension benefits, aiming to reduce future state expenditures in this area. We canceled [state expenditures to education and health according to] natural growth. We reduced the public sector. All these things halted practically increase of public expenditures according to the

automatic pilot, and therefore, it made it easy to implement the shift to the law of decreasing expenditures, limiting them to 1% annual growth. We also succeeded in using of the economic stagnation [of the year 2003] to change the rules of the game and to promote the most dramatic revolution of all, breaking organized work in Israel.⁷¹⁷

In other words, social policy has become subordinated, as Nitzan and Bichler argue, to neo-liberal economic policy, requiring the lowering of labor cost and the rendering of investment more attractive for capital.⁷¹⁸

As stated, neo-liberal ideology does not dodge the field of public education, the field traditionally presented as an alibi for capitalist ideology. That is, quality public education is often advocated, even by staunch capitalists, as a necessary threshold for fair competition in free market economy.⁷¹⁹ As long as all children are provided with more or less equal background conditions, allowing them to develop their potential and employ it as a means for upward mobility, thus goes the argument, inequality in future economic standing among them is legitimate, no matter how regrettable it may seem. But as things turned out during the last several decades, Israel, like many other Western countries, is moving away from its traditional commitment to secure such background conditions. As stated, neo-liberalism and its conception of the self view the self as homo-economicus, a person who is required to manage his entire affairs according to the dictates of the market and to assume full and exclusive responsibility for either his successes or failures.⁷²⁰ It ought to be emphasized however that equal opportunity in education was never sufficiently and adequately secured in Israeli society. Throughout its short history, Israel's education system has been plagued by various forms of discrimination and marginalization based on national, racial, ethnic and gender signifiers.⁷²¹ But it is only during the last several decades that the value of equal opportunity in education has received such a meager interpretation, stripping the state of the obligation to secure sufficient background conditions conducive to the development of personal capacities and talents.⁷²²

Socioeconomic gaps in Israel: selective findings

Whether due to faulty implementation, as zealot advocates of neo-liberal contend, or due to inherent flaws, as vigorous critics of neo-liberalism charge,⁷²³ the results of unbridled implementation of neo-liberal policies in Israel, as well as in many other countries, are nothing but appalling. Thus, between the years 1992–2010 the middle class in Israel has shrunk from 30.8% to 27.8%, and its share of the national income decreased in 14%.⁷²⁴ In addition to this, the share of the one top percent of the national income has risen and stood at the mark of 12% in the year 2008, next only to the US among the OECD countries. Also salary gaps in Israel are higher compared to all OECD countries, aside from the US,⁷²⁵ while the rate of poverty is the highest among these countries. As the report of the National Insurance Institute of Israel (NIII) indicates, in the year 2012 23.5% of Israelis live under the poverty line, while 33.7% of children live under the poverty line (817,210 children).⁷²⁶ Poverty in Israel, however, does not bypass working people. As the report of the NIII indicates, there is a dramatic increase in the number of poor people among working families. Thus for instance, during the years 1999–2012 there is an increase of 100% in the number of poor people among working families. That is, while in 1999 poor families among working families composed 3.5%, in the year 2012 they composed 7% of working families. “The entry of weak strata of Israel,” the report states, “decreases unemployment rate but encourages the phenomena of an increase of poverty among the working force and thus challenges the assumption that work in itself guarantees a selvage from poverty.”⁷²⁷ And indeed, the following findings attest to this dismal social reality. 50% of wage earners in Israel do not pay income tax since their salaries do not reach the minimum threshold for tax deduction. Furthermore, while the average salary stand at 9,000 shekels, 50% of wage earners earn less than 5,700 shekels and the number of workers who earn the minimum wage is the highest among OECD countries.⁷²⁸

According to a recently published report by the OECD, Israel is the only country among the OECD countries that reduced expenditures on social services per capita during the years 2001–2011.⁷²⁹ To understand the severity of the situation, it should be noted that while in 1985 public expenditures composed 80% of Israel GDP, in 2012 they composed only 42% of the GDP. And still, the rate of growth remains steady since 1972 and stood at the average of 1.8% per capita, rendering factitious the claim that reducing government's intervention in economic affairs stimulates growth. However, the impact of this policy, indicating a protracted pattern, is manifested in virtually all areas of public policy – housing, health, education and work. Thus the budget of the Ministry of Housing witnessed a decrease of 56% during the last decade, including a sharp cut in public assistance for housing purchasing from 8 billion shekels to 2 billion shekels. Similarly, public expenditures for health services went down from 3.8% of the GDP to 2.6% of the GD (from 38 billion shekels to approximately 26 billion shekels,⁷³⁰ indicating a decrease in the share of public expenditures of national expenditures on health from 75% in the 1990s to 62% in 2010.⁷³¹

Public expenditures in the field of education follow similar patterns. In the year 2010, the share of government expenditures on education of total national expenditures was 77.6%⁷³² while in 2013 it was 71%, compared to the average of 83% in OECD countries, thus placing Israel in one of the lowest places among these countries.⁷³³ Although Israel's public spending on education stands at the 7.4% (in 2010) in proportion to its GDP, is larger than the average OECD countries (6.3%), this figure is significantly mitigated by the fact that Israel has a large young population. Thus, when Israel's public spending is calculated per child, the picture becomes much less sanguine. Israel spends an average of \$3,910 per kindergarten child annually, compared to an OECD average of \$6,762. Investment per elementary school student is \$5,758 here, compared with an average of \$7,974, while the spending per high school student is \$5,616 as opposed to an OECD average of \$9,014.⁷³⁴ Furthermore, decreasing public

spending on education was differentially compensated by local municipalities and parents, hence exacerbating inequality of opportunities in education. Thus, for instance, the average monthly expenditures of the top 10% of Israeli households on education is four times larger than expenditures of the lowest 10% of Israeli households.⁷³⁵ In addition, while the top 30% of municipalities, measured by various socioeconomic parameters, allocate at least 4,180 shekels annually to education per child, the lowest 30% of municipalities allocate the average of only 150 to 750 shekels annually per child.⁷³⁶

Back to the social protest of the summer of 2011

These selective findings can unmistakably be attributed to the major ideological shift taking place in Israeli society over more than the last three decades concerning economic affairs. In the summer of 2011 throngs of Israelis took to the streets to protest against the economic reality engulfing them, blaming the government for an increase in the cost of living, for lack of housing, etc. The protesters, as noted before, did not articulate a unanimous value system from which they launched their criticism against government's inadequacy in promoting just and fair economic policies. On the contrary, they displayed wide gamut of voices and opinions ranging from far left to extreme right, from Marxists who wanted to do away with the state to libertarians who believe it should be restricted to the role of keeping law and order. And yet it was possible, as I suggested, to identify two main and diametrically opposite camps in regard to the question of what ought to be the role of the state in economic affairs. On the one hand, there were those who demanded rectification of the neo-liberal pact, and, on the other, those who demanded a renewal of the welfare state and its upgrade. While those belonging to the first camp hosted banners demanding "equality of burden," "the battle cry" of the other camp was "the people demand a welfare state." Each camp assumed a different conception of justice, albeit somewhat inchoate.

Equality of burden

The grievances commonly voiced by many of the protest leaders amount to a sense of betrayal or a breach of a pact, a pact implicitly agreed upon between the government and the middle classes. Such grievances, voiced by the dominating leaders of the social protest, were also particularly endorsed by the Student Association, being one of the most dominating forces in the protest movement. As they understand it, the pact implicitly agreed upon by the government and the middle classes decrees that while these classes acquiesce and even encourage structural transformations in Israeli economy, consisting mainly of complementary processes of privatization and decentralization, the state should have guaranteed the background conditions that accrue due reward for efforts, initiation and hard work on part of its diligent citizens. While the middle classes fulfilled their part of the deal, thus goes the complaint, the government reneged on its promise to fulfill its own part. “We have done military service,” they shouted in the demonstrations, rallies and press conferences, staged all over the country; “we attained schools and academic institutes,” they lamented; “we acquired professional qualifications, got a job, paid taxes and yet,” they exclaimed in frustration, “we are unable to make ends meet.” Here is a concise depiction of this complaint, of middle class mindset. “What attracted me initially,” wrote Asher Shechter,

was the story. Not justice [...]. Not my personal story, the story of a 26 years old young man who sees no future in this country, and even his present is shrinking from one day to another. What pulled me in, since the 14th of July [the day the protest broke out, Y. Y.] and henceforth, was the story of all of us: sons and daughters to a generation trampled by life conditions, a generation living on one loan to another, with high rent payment equaling in size to the size of the debt suffocating them. Instead of behaving as young adults in the prime of their virility and creativity, the sons and daughters of this generation pray that their month is rapidly shortened so that their salary are paid and they have a break for one day or two, and may be even able to frequent the coffee shop. We belong to a generation whose future is so fucked up and whose horizon is so gloomy, leaving us with no choice but to take to the streets and try to build a world in which there is room for its sons as well for all those pushed to the margins.⁷³⁷

Actually, the underlying moral assumption of these grievances owes its inspiration to a meritocratic republicanism.⁷³⁸ It

emphasizes a moral interplay between contribution and reward. Individuals are entitled to benefits mainly, if not only, due to their personal efforts and contribution to the productive forces of society, may it be in the army or in the job market. This conception, whether consciously endorsed by the protesters or implicitly assumed by them, echoes neo-liberal and Third Way philosophies. It also reverberates the memorable dictum of Margaret Thatcher – “there’s no such thing as entitlement, unless someone has first met an obligation.”⁷³⁹ It seemed that the government, though taken by surprise by the social protest and the large public support it gains, nonetheless endorsed enthusiastically this meritocratic conception of justice, for it coheres with its worldview. Thus when finally willing to concede that the grievances made by the protesters are well grounded and worth the concern of the government, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated that his government is ready to examine ways to alleviate the economic plight of the protesters but that he is willing to do so only under major condition. “We are talking about significant changes,” he stated, “but within the existing system: within the framework of modern economy.”⁷⁴⁰ To remove any doubt as to what the prime minister has in mind when using the expression “modern economy,” a senior cabinet minister was fast to add the following. “By no means,” he stated, “we are to return to the bankrupted communist models and its [ideological] descendants. It is futile to run away from the physical laws of modern economy.”⁷⁴¹

These moral and ideological beliefs surfaced again vigorously in the deliberations of the Committee for Social and Economic Change – known as the Trajtenberg Committee – and it permeates its recommendations. As noted before, this committee was appointed by the government and was given the mandate to study the roots of the economic reality facing the protesters, hindering their future economic prospects, and to draft policy recommendations intended to overcome it. “Social Justice,” the committee states, “means basic and consistent congruence between normative behavior, contribution and efforts of the individuals and the reward that the individual receives in one field or another. We do care,”

the committee continues, “much if there is someone who receives more than he or she deserves, and also if there is someone who receives less. This nourishes the sense of justice or injustice vis-à-vis the level of inequality that actually exists, as a result of what transpires in the two poles, the higher and lower.”⁷⁴² As stated, it was a meritocratic conception of justice that informs the committee’s deliberations and recommendations. If distortions do occur in the distribution of wealth, thus the committee maintains, it indicates failures that ought to be overcome. But this ought to be done while resorting to means available within the system, not to means that challenge it or aspire to replace it with another system. They believe that the existing system contains the potential to meet “the maladies inflicting Israeli society and any attempt to change it or to deviate from its principles bears many dangers to Israeli economy, including budget deficits, rapid inflation and even defaulting on its debts.”⁷⁴³

This position was enthusiastically embraced by the newly formed party *Yesh Atid*, headed by Yair Lapid. Emerging as the new promise of the up-coming general elections of 2013, Lapid and his party considers it as the cornerstone of their ideology. As he understood the social protest and its intentions, everything boils down to one basic demand – fairness. The protest, he argued, is not about a desire to bring about a structural change in the economic policy of Israel but about making sure that it yields fairness.⁷⁴⁴ Promoting this agenda as part of its election campaign, *Yesh Atid* won 19 seats in the election of 2013 and joined the Likud coalition government. Alas, it did not only join a coalition government committed to the same neoliberal policies that brought about the dismal economic reality that triggered hundreds of thousands of Israelis to take to the streets in the summer of 2011, assuming the position of the minister of treasury, the head of the party has become the main executioner of these policies. To conclude, the idea of justice shared by many of the protesters, the government, the Committee for Social and Economic Change and the minister of treasury drew its content and principles from an assortment of capitalist models, emphasizing an interplay between, on the one hand, the

contribution of individuals to the productive forces in society and personal efforts, and, on the other hand, due reward in return.

The people demand a welfare state

As the government appointed the CSEC, leaders of the protest movement approached academics, veteran activists and specialists in various fields of public policy, asking for advice and guidance. Thus came into being the Expert Team or the Alternative Committee, headed by Prof. Avia Spivak, former deputy to the head of the Bank of Israel, and by myself. The role of the Alternative Committee was to articulate on behalf of the protest movement a comprehensive and coherent worldview backing its political, social, and economic demands. Though coming from different fields of expertise, most members of this committee shared an ideological worldview advocating the renewal of the welfare state, albeit recognizing the need to adjust it to global reality. Following traditional social-democratic schemas, members of the committee acquiesce with the capitalist system but emphasize the duty of the state to safeguard basic social rights of citizens in the fields of education, housing, health, welfare and work. Drawing on progressive liberal tradition, the Expert Team gives precedence to citizens' basic entitlements irrespective of their personal efforts and contribution to the productive forces of society. It does not deny, however, the claim that some entitlements owe to personal efforts and contribution to the productive forces in society but it does not see them as constituting the primary principle of justice. Thus, for instance, it echoed the demands appearing in the platform of the Party of European Socialists which includes "needs-based social welfare benefits for all those who are retired, unemployed, or unable to work [...] to guarantee a life of dignity."⁷⁴⁵ It also proposed a "pact on wages, guaranteeing equal pay for equal work and setting out the need for decent minimum wage."⁷⁴⁶ But most important, the Alternative Committee demanded a gradual increase in public

expenditures, reaching finally the OECD's average, which stand at the mark of 50% of total GDP.

The Alternative Committee has limited success in widening social consciousness of the protest movement in light of these ideas and demands. Affiliated with the middle classes and displaying bourgeoisie sensitivity,⁷⁴⁷ many leaders and activists of the protest movement were not prone to embrace them. Their grievances, as stated, carried, at least initially, the hallmark of meritocratic republicanism and neo-liberalism. But gradually, they have become willing participants in the effort to articulate a comprehensive socioeconomic program that leaves room “for all those pushed to the margins [of society].”⁷⁴⁸ That is, they began to examine favorably the separation between personal efforts and the contribution to the common good, on one hand, and the right to basic entitlements, on the other. But all in all, the Alternative Committee failed to inculcate its worldview to the majority of the protest movement and its many supporters. Neo-liberalism and its vision of the entrepreneurial self proved to be ineluctably and deeply ingrained in the political consciousness of Israeli society. And indeed, as the dust settled and the time came to initiate change through party politics, the overwhelming majority of the public opted either for parties not immediately concerned with economic issues or for political parties committed to promote neo-liberal policies. As current economic reality reveals, these policies have neither improved the lot of the middle classes of Israeli society nor alleviated the economic ills plaguing its lower classes. Some estimate that the economic conditions of the middle as well as the lower classes even deteriorated since the protest of 2011, as the housing crisis stays unabated and the cost of living keeps rising. And yet it is to be seen whether future struggles in Israel, advanced under the banner of social justice, will still be governed by the beguiling promise of neo-liberalism or by worldviews committed to high ideals and values of human dignity, material equality and solidarity.

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21. Israel's Socioeconomic Debate: A New Perspective

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This paper was completed in June 2015.

The neo-liberal paradox of Israeli social protest

Distributive justice has increasingly become a central issue in Israeli public discourse during the last decade, while social and economic issues have taken their place alongside those concerning foreign and security policy. This change has come after more than three decades of strict neo-liberal policies, which have been pursued by successive Israeli governments led either by the right or the left.⁷⁴⁹ These neo-liberal governments have massively privatized the country's infrastructure, public utilities, and state-owned corporations. Likewise, the welfare state apparatus was largely dismantled and public services, like education, health, and housing have been commodified. Some law-enforcement agencies have also been privatized. Though the Supreme Court had blocked the privatization of the prison system, some functions once performed by the army, the police, and the judiciary systems have been increasingly privatized or outsourced.⁷⁵⁰ As a result, Israel has the dubious distinction of having one of the highest measures of inequality and poverty among the OECD members.⁷⁵¹

Dismantling the welfare state has impoverished the lower classes economically and excluded them socially, inducing them to subject themselves to the patronage of political and philanthropic organizations. The middle classes, too, have suffered from the privatization of the welfare state services, that have substantially eroded their social security and standard of living. Despite these damaging effects,

paradoxically, support of neo-liberalism has only increased in this period. The lower classes continued to support right-wing parties, the same that have subjected them to the injuries of privatization, while the middle classes loyally stacked to left-center parties that persistently undermine their economic and social wellbeing by pursuing neo-liberal policies, as well. The most prominent example of the latter is Yitzhak Rabin's second government (1992–1995): it advanced a vigorous peace policy with the Palestinians while engaging in massive privatization of welfare services and state-owned firms. This right-left neo-liberal consensus enabled the formation of coalition governments in which the *Likud*, the major party of the right, and the *HaAvoda* (Labor), the major left-center party, ruled together. Thus, since the 1980s a common feature of Israeli politics were governments of “national unity” in which the two major parties joined forces to promote privatization while underplaying their differences in other areas and, mainly, toward peace initiatives with the Palestinians.⁷⁵²

Having acquired a hegemonic status, neo-liberalism had set the boundaries of the social and economic discourse in Israel. This became evident in summer 2011, during the so-called “Tent Protest,” which mobilized in Tel Aviv and throughout the country hundreds of thousands Israelis, who protested against the high prices of food, housing, and for social justice in general.⁷⁵³ Such rallies were part of a global wave of protest against the severe social consequences inflicted by the economic crisis of 2008 and its aftermath. The Tent Protest paralleled the *Indignados* in Madrid, the *Kinima* in Athens, the “March for the Alternative” in London, the “Chilean Winter” in Santiago, and “Occupy Wall Street” in New York, to mention just a few examples. Each of these protests focused on a different issue: unemployment in Spain, austerity in Greece, budget cuts in Britain, education reform in Chile, wealth inequality in New York, and the high costs of living in Israel. While the excessive prices of cottage cheese and rents of flats was the trigger of the Tent Protest, it quickly developed into a broad middle-class critique, which took up a long list of social grievances. Thus, alongside “the people demand social justice,” the protestors’ two other most popular

slogans were “stop privatization” and “[re-establish] the welfare state.” No wonder that many observers, mainly on the left, erroneously perceived the magnitude and intensity of the Tent Protest and the socialist vein of its slogans as an evidence for the resurgence of social democracy in Israel after two decades of ideological and political decay.⁷⁵⁴

Hopes for a socialist renaissance, however, were premature and totally unfounded. One of the leading spokesmen of the protest movement was a popular journalist and television anchor, Yair Lapid, who decoded the movement’s ethos and translated its slogans into what in essence, was a compassionate conservative version of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s harsh Thatcherite policies.⁷⁵⁵ Lapid accurately read that while the Israeli middle classes were irritated by the negative implications of privatization on their standard of living, they faithfully continued to support its neo-liberal agenda. Rather than rejecting Netanyahu’s trickle-down economic policy, they were indulged by its illusions and demanded to receive the promised trickle. Lapid, who in the wake of the protests founded the *Yesh Atid* (‘there is a future’) party, fashioned these insights into a rousing and hugely successful political campaign. In the January 2013 elections the middle-class voters preferred Lapid to the Labor party at the time led by the avowed socialist Shelly Yachimovich. Labor lost nearly a quarter of its seats in the Israeli parliament, and Yachimovich was dismissed from the party leadership and replaced by the more business-friendly Yitzhak Herzog.

The middle-class neo-liberal tendencies resurfaced in the March 2015 elections, won by Netanyahu once again. Lapid’s party lost seats to Labor, led now by his political twin, Herzog. Alongside Herzog, Labor nominated to its candidate to the Treasury Manuel Trajtenberg – a neo-liberal economist, who helped Netanyahu to calm the Tent Protest. Likewise, Moshe Kahlon, a former communication minister in Netanyahu’s 2009 government, who gained fame as a monopoly-breaker, had split from the Likud and, following the footsteps of Lapid, proposed another version of a “compassionate privatization.” Kahlon’s newly formed party *Kulanu* (‘all of us’) won impressive 10 seats in the parliament, and Netanyahu willingly

nominated him as finance minister in his new government, whose guidelines revealed the convergence between their neo-liberal economic *weltanschauung*.

The left's neo-liberal turn has grown out of what might be called the "dialectics of privatization." The left middle-class supporters' adherence to privatization was informed by the belief that dismantling the welfare state would allow cuts in tax rates, which, in turn, would enable them to purchase better private services denied, however, from the lower classes. Only later did they discover that while a minority within the middle class indeed saw a rise in its economic and social status, the standard of living and social security of the majority had steadily declined. Yet, four decades of neo-liberal hegemony have turned many of the eroded middle classes into ardent believers in the "free market" and, as such, they still cling to the illusion that a reformed privatization may improve their relative economic and social status. As a result, Netanyahu has been able, without much effort, to contain both the Tent Protest and the following demands for social reforms.

Israeli neo-liberal hegemony transcends the deep ideological and political differences between left and right that incite repeated fierce struggles over peace, religion, judiciary, civic rights, identity, democracy, etc. Indeed, both the left and the right have subjected all conflicts to the neo-liberal logic and its *pensée unique* informs the institutionalization of the Israeli privatization regime. However, while Israeli neo-liberalism has much in common with other neo-liberal regimes, it has its exclusive traits.

Governance vs. government

In his classic work *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, David Harvey emphasizes the gap between neo-liberal theory – or rhetoric – and its practice. In the third chapter, "The Neoliberal State," Harvey calls attention to the irreconcilable contradiction between the alleged subordination of local economies to the global markets, and the actual power exercised by each sovereign state practice.⁷⁵⁶ Global neo-

liberal capital accumulation, he argues, depends on “the nation-state, with its monopoly over legitimate forms of violence.” Accordingly, the concept of “international competition and globalization” is mainly an ideological construct, a “secret weapon” used by neo-liberals to frustrate any democratic opposition to their agenda. Contrary to the neo-liberal propaganda, Harvey maintains, global markets are dominated by sovereign states, rather than the reverse. He further argues that neo-liberalism has redefined the concept of “state” by instigating “a radical reconfiguration of state institutions and practices.” Neo-liberals are “profoundly suspicious of democracy” and prefer “governance by experts and elites” who exercise their clout through “executive orders and judicial decisions.” Thus, neo-liberalism has blurred “the boundary between the state and corporate power” to the point that “money power [has] legally corrupted [...] what remains of representative democracy.” The neo-liberal transformation of the state, according to Harvey, has brought about a “shift from government (state power on its own) to governance (a broader configuration of the state and key elements in civil society),” like the non-elected “elite-led” NGOs. In this way, the shift from government to governance has transferred executive powers from the state to newly-established neo-liberal elites. At the same time, governance has nurtured the illusion that civil society can support “oppositional politics,” thus allowing neo-liberalism to establish its hegemony.

While different neo-liberal states have much in common, each country has developed distinctive traits of neo-liberalism, which reflect its particular socio-political history and conditions. The Israeli version of neo-liberalism shares common strategies of privatization with other countries, but it has developed two unique local institutions: the division of Israeli society into ethno-cultural sectors, and the settlements project in the occupied territories. In accordance with the guidelines of the neo-liberal agenda both the sectors and the settlements redefine the concept of “state” by transforming “government” into “governance.”

Compensatory mechanism: sectorialization and multiculturalism

The Israeli neo-liberal project got underway following the 1977 general elections, which put an end to 30 years of Labor hegemony and transferred power to a centerright coalition, led by the Likud party. While the Israeli neo-liberal turn coincided with a global trend, it had its own specific context and manifestations: it took place at the height of a decade of social reforms, which by constituting a nearly North European welfare state narrowed the high economic inequality that characterized Israel until the late 1960s.⁷⁵⁷ These reforms, however, came too late for the lower classes, which largely consist of *Mizrahim* (Israelis of Asian-African origin) who transferred their support to the Likud opposition. At the same time, a large segment of the middle-class *Ashkenazim* (Israelis of European origin) who were the power base of the Labor, were irritated by the expansion of the welfare state because they had rightly suspected that growing distributive equality would jeopardize their class privileges. Accordingly, many of them abandoned Labor in 1977 and voted for a new proto-neo-liberal party, *Dash* (the Democratic Movement for Change), which joined the Likud-led coalition.⁷⁵⁸ The “turnabout” that resulted from the 1977 elections was then a political meeting place for a paradoxical combination of socioeconomic forces and processes: the lower classes, frustrated at not having yet benefitted from Labor’s welfare state policies, turned to the Likud, at the same time that those segments of the middle classes that were threatened by the foreseeable consequences of the equalizing distributive policies turned against Labor.

Like other neo-liberal regimes, the right-center Likud-led governments used privatization as a means to undermine the Labor Keynesian hegemony, which rested on the welfare state and a massive public sector. By the 1980s, Labor and much of the Israeli left had embraced the neo-liberal creed as well,⁷⁵⁹ reflecting the short-term interests of its middle-class supporters. Adjusting to the decline in the left political power, the interest of its middle-class supporters focused in protecting their social and economic privileges by weakening the right-

controlled state. Accordingly, they supported the transferring of power from the state and its agencies to the market and civil society, where they wrongly believed that they could maintain their supremacy. Thus, privatization became the ideology and practice of the emerging right-left neo-liberal hegemony, informing both its social policies and its public discourse.

Privatization has dismantled the welfare state by turning social services from civic rights into purchased commodities. Its impact was felt most profoundly by the lower classes, who could not afford to buy commodified services. However, these same lower classes, as noted above, were also the political base of the Likud and the Israeli right in general, and these parties could not risk losing their support. A way out of this dilemma was the mechanism of sectoralization.

In the context of Israeli politics, sectors are hybrid organizations that developed since the mid-1980s, combining political parties with NGO-based service-supply systems, financed by both the government and private donors.⁷⁶⁰ Employing identity politics, these sectors split the lower classes into competing political parties, each of them using its electoral power to secure for its supporters palliatives to the commodified social services, which they could not afford individually. Such policy allowed the right to square the circle. Through earmarked special government “political grants” and a maze of NGOs, the sectors provided the lower classes with partial substitutes for the privatized social services. Moreover, while the sectors employ rhetoric of equality and call for government support for the poor, their very existence was conditioned on the dismantling of the welfare state. This dependence turned the sectors into one of the most effective agents of the liquidation of the welfare state and supporters of the privatization regime.

The most salient example of these sectors is *Shas*, a *Haredi* (ultra-Orthodox) Mizrahi party, which emerged in the mid-1980s with the advance of privatization.⁷⁶¹ Using a sophisticated separatist identity politics, Shas presented the negative distributive effects of privatization as a consequence of cultural and social, discrimination against the lower-class

Mizrahim. Indeed, Shas succeeded to gain their support by supplying sectoral welfare services to replace those that were commodified and no longer provided by the state. The advance of privatization in the 1990s encouraged the sectoralization of other groups in the lower classes, among them the Ashkenazi Haredim, as well as the immigrants from the Former Soviet Union and the Arab citizens of Israel.⁷⁶²

The case of the Israeli Arabs is particularly revealing. It is tempting to interpret the sectoralization of the Israeli Arabs as a by-product of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Yet, the Arabs' sectoralization is just one instance of the general trend toward sectoralization that was a by-product of Israeli neo-liberalism. The Islamic Movement, for example, played among the lower-class Arabs the same socio-political role that Shas played among lower-class Mizrahim. Indeed, Arab sectoralization is not different from the political behavior of other sectors in Israel. All the sectors are suspicious of the state: they promote governance, while weakening government as the organizing principle of the state.⁷⁶³ A case in point is the *Balad* party, founded by the former MP Azmi Bishara.⁷⁶⁴ *Balad* called for the transformation of Israel into "a state of all its citizens," but imbued this concept with entirely different meaning from its standard post-national version. *Balad* demands the partition of Israel into Jewish and Arab national autonomies that will constitute together "a state of all its citizens." Thus, in practice *Balad* seeks to further promote governance at the expense of government, and as such, is just another manifestation of Israeli neo-liberalism.

Compensatory mechanism: occupation and settlements

The settlements in the West Bank and Gaza are yet another example of sectoralization. In fact, the advance of privatization and the perpetuation of the occupation are two complementary aspects of Israeli neo-liberalism.⁷⁶⁵ As such, the following analysis will address only the socioeconomic consequences of the settlements. Like privatization, the

settlement project took off after the Likud's rise to power in 1977. The number of settlers in the occupied territories in the following four decades has grown approximately a hundredfold. When Labor lost power in 1977 there were about 5,000 settlers; a decade later, in 1986, their number had risen roughly to 50,000; today it is about 500,000. This chronological correlation is not accidental; in fact, the continuation of the occupation was essential to Israeli neo-liberalism since the settlements served the lower classes as a compensatory mechanism for the detrimental effects of privatization. Most of the settlements were built, mainly, in the West Bank, at the same time that the welfare state was gradually dismantled in sovereign Israel. The imagined separation between the occupied territories and sovereign Israel allowed the privatization regime to offer in the settlements inexpensive housing, as well as better financed schooling, generous municipal budgets etc. These substantial benefits have turned the settlements to an alternative welfare state that compensated the lower classes for the cutbacks in social services and their commodification in sovereign Israel.⁷

⁶⁶ Thus, while the left reproached the settlements as a political obstacle to peace, the lower classes perceived emigration to the "land of settlements" as an economic compensatory mechanism. The social logic of the settlements project is a sectoral logic, and like the other sectors it flourished with the decline of the Israeli welfare state. Accordingly, the political and ideological supporters of the settlements had become staunch champions of privatization and a cornerstone of Israeli neo-liberalism.

The sectoral logic of the settlements as a compensatory mechanism is most evident in the case of Shas. In the 1990s Shas was generally considered to be a dovish party; its spiritual leader, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, issued in 1992 a ruling that granted religious sanction to Israeli withdrawal from regions of the Holy Land – namely, the occupied territories – as part of a peace treaty with the Palestinians. But a decade later, in 2003, he cancelled this decree because, as he put it, the agreements with the Palestinian Authority did not achieve real peace. There may, however, be another, more likely,

reason, for this significant change of mind. By that time the settlements compensatory mechanism had attracted many of Shas lower-class supporters to immigrate to the West Bank. Accordingly, to retain their loyalty, Rabbi Yosef had to adjust his theology and politics to the economic interests of his supporters.

The affinity between the rise of neo-liberalism and the expansion of the settlements runs even deeper. The convergence between the Israeli military, Jordanian and Palestinian legal systems in the occupied territories has created an administrative maze that in keeping with Harvey's concept of governance facilitated the institutionalization of the relative sectoral autonomy of the "land of settlements," which was imported and duplicated by other sectors in sovereign Israel. The settlements have thus intensified the neo-liberal reconfiguration of Israel, a process that has gathered momentum with the increasing presence and influence of settlers in right-wing parties, such as the Likud and the Zionist-religious *Jewish Home* party. The increasing political influence of the settlers has changed the interrelation between neo-liberalism and occupation. While in the early stages, the settlements served to promote neo-liberalism, during the last decade the settlers spread the neo-liberal gospel in Israel and their political representatives – most prominently the *Jewish Home* leader, Naftali Bennett – are staunch supporters of privatization.⁷⁶⁷

Under neo-liberal hegemony, governance-based sectors like the settlements and Shas have increasingly become the dominant symbols representing the government in Israel. Consequently, identifying the state with the right, the middle-class supporters of the left had developed an intense discourse of moral resentment from the state depicting it as a repressive force. This critique of the state and its agencies has informed the growing alienation of the left from the principle of government. More and more they perceived shrinking in government power and expanding that of the markets and NGOs – namely, governance – as emancipation from the repressive state control. However, by adopting the principle of governance – that parallels the social demise of the middle

class and its increasing sectoralization – the left has further legitimized privatization,⁷⁶⁸ not only of social services but also of law enforcement agencies, namely, the state's actual sovereignty.⁷⁶⁹

The confusion of governance with government gradually obscured the essential differences between the two: state financing of sectoral services has been erroneously portrayed as a manifestation of a welfare state rather than a means of dismantling it. This common misunderstanding galvanized opposition to the concept of government and of the welfare state among left supporters, who further preferred a NGO-based governance to pursue their political and social ends. This ambiguity has made it more difficult and practically thwarted the emergence of an intellectual or political alternative to neo-liberalism. The left, by endorsing privatization, has transformed itself into just another sector in the Israeli governance-based federation of sectors and further fostered individualistic opposition to the welfare state. By doing so, the left simply accepted the neo-liberal rules of the game and, contrary to its avowed ideologies, reinforced the vicious cycle of privatization, sectoralization, and the perpetuation of occupation, all of which strengthen the hegemony of the right.

Post-Zionism as the ideology of the Israeli privatization regime

Privatizing the Israeli mind has been a vital ideological aspect of building the neoliberal hegemony in Israel. The *de facto* ideology of Israeli neo-liberalism is post-Zionism that preaches, indeed, privatization, sectoralization, and governance.⁷⁷⁰ The post-Zionist school emerged in the 1980s as a critique of the mainstream academic historical and sociological research in Israel, and with the growing popularity of the cultural turn it was extended to other scholarly fields. The post-Zionists condemned the Israeli academic historians and sociologists, arguing that in order to supply Labor Zionism with distorted propagandistic narratives

as a means to maintain its hegemony, they deliberately betrayed academic standards. In both its left and right versions, post-Zionism, indeed, helped to undermine the Labor hegemony: by reflecting the neo-liberal *zeitgeist* it has profoundly influenced and reshaped Israeli collective memory.

The main argument of the post-Zionists is that the Zionist ideology has informed repressive policies toward the Palestinians and Jews alike. The apotheosis of the Zionist “return to the land” ideology, the post-Zionists claim, was the Palestinian *Nakba* in 1948.⁷⁷¹ The Zionist ideology of “negation of the Diaspora,” which harshly criticizes all aspects of the Jewish diasporic life,⁷⁷² the post-Zionists maintain, had turned the Zionist leadership indifferent to the plight and destruction of European Jewry during the Holocaust.⁷⁷³ The post-Zionists went on and accused that the Labor Zionist elite abused Israel’s nation-building project and used it to exploit the Mizrahim economically, marginalize them socially, excluding them culturally and compel their assimilation into the Ashkenazi-oriented melting-pot. They argue in the same vein, that the Labor hegemony oppressed additional groups of “others,” such as the Haredim, the religious Zionists, the Holocaust survivors, and Yiddish speakers, to name a few. That critique gradually developed into a sort of Israeli nostalgia to the vanished Diaspora, depicting the Diaspora-Jew as the embodiment of “otherhood” and multiculturalism and as such, setting it as an alternative ideal to Zionism.⁷⁷⁴ This nostalgia was a complementary aspect of the privatization of Jewishness in Israel that has been encouraged by post-Zionism.⁷⁷⁵

According to the post-Zionist critique, then, Labor Zionism turned Zionism and Israel into serial victimizers. Hence, the only way through which Israel can emancipate itself is by disavowing the Zionist ethos, adopting a multi-cultural agenda that will transform it either into “a state of all its citizens” according to its left version or a “neo-Jewish” state according to its right one. Until then, the only option open for morally-committed Israelis who do not want to be perpetrators or bystanders, the post-Zionists insist, is to

dissociate themselves from the evil Zionist-Israeli collective either by privatizing themselves, or by forming alternative identity-based collectives.

Despite the acrimonious nature of the post-Zionist indictment, its main contentions came to be increasingly accepted by the Israeli mainstream.⁷⁷⁶ One main reason for this paradoxical development is the affinity between post-Zionism and neo-liberalism, both of which promoted privatization and preference for governance over government. The Zionist ethos, as formulated by Labor Zionism, was institutionalized in the Israeli welfare state and shared its ideological and political assumptions: social solidarity, state intervention, Keynesian economics, unionism and socialism. Accordingly, in the 1980s and 1990s the hegemonic Zionist ethos imbued neo-liberalism with a seal of illegitimacy that posed a major ideological hurdle to the advance of privatization. In order to overcome this obstacle, Israeli neo-liberalism cultivated post-Zionism as an alternative ideology. In fact, post-Zionism became the “cultural logic” of the Israeli privatization regime in the same way that postmodernism is “the cultural logic of late capitalism.” The moral critique of post-Zionism has thus laid the ideological foundations for Israeli neo-liberalism and provided it with an intellectual basis for dismantling the welfare state and its replacement by either the market or the sectors.

The interrelationship of neo-liberalism and post-Zionism reveals the cultural dimension of the Israeli socioeconomic discourse, namely, that a substantial part of it takes place under a cultural guise. Thus, identities replace classes and religious convictions overshadow distributive preferences.⁷⁷⁷ That post-Zionism is the ideological face of the privatization regime is revealed by the fact that despite its origins on the left, under the neo-liberal hegemony post-Zionism has developed a right-wing variant, and like privatization it has become a meeting place for the Israeli left and right alike.⁷⁷⁸ This convergence can explain the modification underwent by post-Zionism with the establishment of the neo-liberal hegemony. In the 1980s and 1990s, at the initial stages of the privatization regime, the post-Zionist critique was aggressive

and toxic. With the advance of neo-liberalism, however, it became less hostile and alienated, a process that added to its effectiveness and popularity as the ideology of the neo-liberal mainstream.

Neo-liberal and social-democratic critique of the privatization regime

The Tent Protest has reformulated the contours of the Israeli socioeconomic discourse, which has since then been dominated by a neo-liberal critique of the privatization regime. The protest reaffirmed the neo-liberal hegemony, yet it also engendered a more disapproving attitude to certain aspects of the privatization regime as it developed since the 1980s, and did demand its revision. The neo-liberal critique of the privatization regime is most obvious with regard to the high cost of living. The Tent Protest, with its emphasis on the high housing costs, emerged from previous several consumer protests that erupted in the winter of 2011. In the wake of the Tent Protest Israeli neo-liberals became more critical of the structural aspects of the privatization regime and its distributive consequences. This critique has focused on the Israeli tycoons, whom privatization has turned into the masters of the country's infrastructure. It questioned the state's low share in the profits from natural resources, like offshore natural gas fields and the Dead Sea minerals, and demanded to raise the royalties and taxes for the exploitation of natural resources. Likewise, the Tent Protest encouraged public condemn of the excessive profits of the financial sector, the banks in particular; the disproportionate salaries of the managerial elite; and above all, the lack of real competition in most sectors of Israeli economy, dominated as it is by monopolies, duopolies, and the like. The upshot of this critique has been a demand for a stronger and more deterrent government inspection, and a tighter and more effective regulation in order to guarantee competitiveness in the Israeli market.

The most sophisticated version of this neo-liberal critique of the privatization regime has been voiced by Guy Rolnik, the founder of *The Marker*, the economic supplement to the daily newspaper *Haaretz*. Rolnik argues that the real division in Israeli politics and economics is not between right and left but between insiders and outsiders, those who are “connected” to power and those who are not. Connected Israelis are the tycoons, the managers, and employees in private and state monopolies, as well as the organized civil service and public-sector workers. In order to reduce the cost of living, advance economic innovation, and guarantee Israeli democracy, Rolnik argues, competitiveness should be encouraged by breaking up the power of the “connected,” namely, the tycoons and the trade unions in the monopolies and the public sector. This is, however, precisely the policy that Netanyahu has pursued as both finance and prime minister. He has curtailed organized labor, especially in the civil service, and decreased the concentration in the financial sector. Furthermore, as prime minister, in 2010 Netanyahu set up a commission to study concentration in the entire business sector, whose recommendations were adopted by his government two years later. His anti-concentration policy attests to a structural change that Netanyahu strives to introduce into the Israeli privatization regime: to broaden its social base and to replace the handful tycoons with a larger capitalistic class that would solidify it politically. The concurrence of Netanyahu’s policies with the “connected” thesis of Rolnik, exposes the latter’s neo-liberal logic. This is all the more obvious given both Netanyahu’s and Rolnik’s campaign against organized labor, which is generally considered to be a primary safeguard of the welfare state. Thus, despite its radical rhetoric, the “connected” thesis is actually the current ideological phase of Israeli neo-liberalism and underlines the modifications it strives to introduce into the Israeli privatization regime.⁷⁷⁹

The Tent Protest had repercussions on Israeli Social Democracy, as well. After its defeat in 1977 the Israeli Labor movement adjusted itself to the new neo-liberal hegemony and took an active part in the advance of privatization. It was only in the late 1990s and early 2000s that Social Democracy

reappeared as a significant political force, mainly through the opposition to Netanyahu's Thatcherite policies during his term as finance minister in 2003–2005, an opposition which was led by Amir Peretz, the secretary of the *Histadrut*, the Israeli main trade union organization. The agenda of this new Social Democracy focused on three main goals: ideologically, to reject privatization and rehabilitate the idea of the welfare state; and, politically, to build social democratic factions in the main left-wing parties. The rising public profile of the social democrats led to a third and most significant effort, mainly, to recover trade unionism. A new general trade union, *Koach LaOvdim* ('Power to the Workers') was established in 2007. It has successfully organized workers, especially in privatized services. The challenge from Koach LaOvdim encouraged the Histadrut to reassume and invigorate its unionizing efforts, which it has done with considerable success. The significant achievements on these three tracks led the social democrats to believe, mistakenly though, that the Tent Protest succeeded thanks to their efforts over the preceding decade.

The disillusionment that came in the wake of the Tent Protest, changed the agenda of the Social Democrats, as well. Up to 2011 a substantial vanguard among them believed that they could challenge the neo-liberal hegemony. However, their continuing failure to turn the spirit of protest into a political power, both in two consecutive general elections and within the Labor party, changed their perspective. Thereafter they limited their goals and pursued efforts that did not challenge the neo-liberal hegemony as a whole, but only certain aspects of it. Thus, while social democratic forces remain active in the field of industrial relations, the goal of unionizing became more economic and less political. Likewise, there is a growing cooperative movement – from cooperative restaurants and groceries to software firms and banks – but, again, without any political horizon. In this respect, Israeli social democratic activism is not fundamentally different from the neo-liberal critique of the privatization regime. Despite some substantial changes it has undergone, the Israeli socioeconomic discourse thus remains entirely within the bounds of neo-liberalism.

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22. A Short Economic History of Israel

Avi Simhon

This paper was completed in November 2014.

The Israeli economy is unique in its development and achievements. For most of its history, it relied on donations from world Jewry and was managed and controlled by bureaucrats and politicians. Nevertheless, within a century, it evolved from a poor agricultural economy into a powerhouse, producing state-of-the-art high-tech products while increasing its population tenfold. That is not to say that currently most of the Israeli population is directly employed in the highly profitable high-tech industry. On the contrary, a substantial and growing part of the population is left behind, with skills and educational levels comparable to developing countries, resulting in very high inequality.

From the end of the 19th century to 1985, the Israeli economy was managed first by technocrats sent by Baron Edmond de Rothschild and later by politicians who created a unique fusion of a planned economy with private enterprises. This structure was stable and even led to prosperity, until the 1970s when it began to crack and eventually crashed in the mid-1980s. Following a sequence of profound reforms, and riding the wave of global technological changes, Israel was transformed into a capitalist-style export-driven economy. To understand this evolution and the roots of the current social economic state of affairs, I will begin with a brief description of Israel's economic history, starting in the late 19th century when a new type of Jewish immigrants began arriving at its shores.

The Israeli economy – early beginnings

In his book *The Innocents Abroad*, documenting his 1867 journey through the Holy Land, Mark Twain describes it as a “prince of desolation.” This was no exaggeration. In the second half of the 19th century, Palestine was a forsaken province in the crumbling backwater of the Ottoman Empire. The first rail line, less than 100 kilometers long, was inaugurated in 1892, 20 years after the completion of the transcontinental rail connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and at a time when Europe was already covered by a bustling thick rail network.

In the mid-19th century, before the onset of the first wave of Jewish immigration, there were approximately 300,000 Arabs and 25,000 Jews living in Palestine.⁷⁸⁰ The only industries were meager production of olive oil and cigarette folding. Most of the population was comprised of Arab sharecroppers who employed ancient agricultural techniques cultivating the lands of absentee landowners that barely allowed them to earn a subsistence level of income. The low productivity of land is evident from the very low prices for which Jews purchased it. For example, in the early 1880s, land in Petah Tikvah (near Tel Aviv) was sold for 5 francs per dunam (10 dunams are approximately 2.47 acres). In subsequent years, when Jews began to buy large swaths of land, much of it by Baron Edmond (Benjamin) de Rothschild for Jewish settlement, prices rose quickly to 20 francs per dunam on speculative grounds.⁷⁸¹

The massive land purchase led to the first conflicts between dispossessed Arab sharecroppers who toiled the land and the Jewish settlers. According to custom enshrined in Ottoman law and later adopted by the British Mandate, current occupiers of the land had to be compensated and were given alternative land and other forms of compensation (*mafruz*). However, settlements with the local tribe chiefs and village heads (*muchtars*) did not always satisfy the population, especially those who used to roam the land with their cattle and had no legal rights. These circumstances as well as, in many cases, criminal acts committed by Arabs such as cattle thieving and larceny that were commonplace during the last

years of Ottoman rule, deteriorated into a national struggle, first on a local scale, and later fueled national ethnic strife.⁷⁸²

The trickle of Jewish (and Arab) immigration that was accompanied by Jewish capital inflow and the arrival of agricultural experts sent by the Baron Edmond de Rothschild gradually but profoundly transformed agriculture and initiated a process of development. The replacement of the corrupt Ottoman rule by the more liberal British Empire in 1918 accelerated this process. By 1931, there were 880,000 Arabs and 175,000 Jews living in Palestine.⁷⁸³

In the 1930s, the Jewish economy in Palestine was still based primarily on agriculture, but industry was rapidly developing as well. Three major industrial companies were formed: the “General Electric Company,” supplying electricity, “Nesher Cement Enterprises,” producing cement for building and construction, and “Palestine Potash Limited,” which produced important chemicals for the agriculture sector and for the British munitions industry. All three were established by Russian Jews who fled the Bolshevik revolution and were funded by Jewish capital raised in Paris, London and New York, with Edmond de Rothschild acting as the intermediary.

Apart from investing huge sums in land purchase, Edmond de Rothschild also sent at his own expense dozens of agricultural experts and managers to train the Jewish settlers who had no previous knowledge in agriculture. After 50 years of investment and training of several generations of Jewish settlers, Jewish agriculture seemed to have reached a high level of technological expertise although, to the dismay of the Baron who had followed them for more than 50 years, they did not achieve economic independence and were dependent on Jewish economic aid: “[...] far from reaching viability, the economic base of the Jewish settlement right up to the war of 1948 was to an extreme degree fragile and precarious, then the contribution of capital, fixed and liquid, technological skills and managerial competence, so far from being historical embarrassment may seem insteadlike an indispensable condition for its survival.”⁷⁸⁴

Alongside the fast developing Jewish economy impelled by the expertise of Jewish immigrants and the import of Jewish capital, the Arab economy, in contrast, was evolving very slowly. On the one hand, the Arab economy was benefiting from the expansion of Jewish farming and large infrastructure projects, such as the draining of the swamps along the coast. This generated employment opportunities for the local Arab population, and attracted Arab immigration from Egypt and Syria. On the other hand, their backward agricultural techniques, lack of expertise, and shortage of capital created a situation where the Arab economy was falling further and further behind the increasing sophistication of Jewish agriculture and industry. The Arabs were too poor to consume Jewish products and also too unproductive to compete with Jewish produce. The gap was so large that the Arabs were ill-equipped to make use of the country's growing infrastructure created by the Jews. Thus, two separate economies emerged – one Jewish and the other Arab – which were connected mainly by the employment of unskilled low-wage Arab workers in the Jewish economy. However, continuing immigration of Arab workers from the neighboring countries kept their wage rate low, increasing the gap between the two communities. For the Arabs, the growing disparity between them and their Jewish neighbors – who had been only a couple of decades ago, under Ottoman rule, equally poor and legally inferior to the Muslims – represented a sore point which they found and still find hard to accept.

The State of Israel in its first decades – 1948 to 1985

The beginning of Israel's War of Independence in 1947 was set against the backdrop of a growing and even flourishing economy. However, almost two years of hard fighting cost the lives of 1% of the Jewish population and destroyed its most successful industry, the Potash industry, which by 1947 accounted for half of its industrial exports. The story of "Palestine Potash Limited" tells the story of Israeli industry. It was founded by Moshe Novomeysky, a Jewish mining

engineer who fled from Russia to Palestine following the Bolshevik revolution. Being bored with farming, he examined the mineral content of the Dead Sea. After discovering the commercial potential of the Dead Sea, he approached Edmond de Rothschild for financing. The latter, who was eager to develop an industrial basis for the country, made contact with Jewish investors in London and New York. The new company purchased the franchise to extract Dead Sea minerals and began its operations in 1932 at two sites on its shores. Success was almost immediate and within a few years the company became the dominant industrial firm in Palestine.

The War of Independence, however, caused the firm's ruin. One of their production sites, as well as the road from the Dead Sea to the port, were seized by the Jordanian army and became part of the Jordanian kingdom. Novomeysky tried to persuade the Israeli government to jointly construct an alternative route to his remaining factory but the decision was delayed. Eventually, after a few years of deliberation, the Labor-led government decided to construct the road but nationalized the company, claiming that natural resources belonged to the whole nation. Interestingly, the nationalized company did not return to its dominant position in the Israeli economy until its privatization in 1995. Since then, it has grown rapidly, aided by low tax rates and royalties. In 2010, the government dramatically raised the tax rate on the firm, and then raised the royalties imposed on the quarrying sector, which led to bitter strife with the company.

With the establishment of the state, a similar fate befell almost all the large industries, including three of the most important firms. The Electric Company was quickly nationalized. Nesher Cement was handed over by its childless founder to the *Histadrut* (the National Confederation of Labor Unions) following a series of debilitating strikes of its workers. The construction company held by the Histadrut, *Solel Boneh* (literally, 'paving' and 'building'), was granted favorable conditions by the government and became the dominant company in this large sector.

The economy of the new Jewish state had been designed in a very peculiar way. Most of the major industries were

controlled by either the state or by the Histadrut, and more than half of the agricultural output was produced by collectives affiliated in some way to the Histadrut. Importantly, both the Histadrut and the government were firmly controlled by the ruling Labor Party.

Unlike other countries where such high levels of collectivization and state ownership of capital were associated with political strife, in Israel this semi-communist structure seemed natural and reasonable to most people. There were several reasons for the wide public acceptance of government control. First, the country was recovering from a hard war that claimed the lives of 1% of its Jewish population and devastated its economy. Second, immediately after the war, Israel experienced a huge influx of impoverished Jewish refugees that almost tripled its population and strained its meager economic resources. This national burden required that the new government have access to sufficient resources. Third, most Israelis came from backward countries in Eastern Europe and North Africa and had not seen a well-functioning liberal economy, and therefore had little trust in “market forces.” They thought that alleviating the food shortage of the post-war years and establishing the economy should be managed by the state. Fourth, unlike the communist countries that were established at the same time in Eastern Europe, the government did not have to forcibly confiscate private property to create this structure. More than 80% of the land was passed to the state directly from the British Mandate government, who had in turn inherited it from the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, there were few dispossessed owners of private land or property to object to the large ownership role taken by the new government. Fifth, the government was already responsible for allocating the relatively large donations that came from the Jewish Diaspora, and so the idea that it allocates resources was already accepted. Finally, there was a strong sense of communality and shared destiny that caused people to attach high value to the common good relative to their own.

The people at the helm of the economy did not seem ideologically opposed to private ownership. In fact, they

believed that small and medium-size enterprises should be managed by private entrepreneurs. Therefore, they established a system in which the state and the Histadrut controlled almost all capital flows but lent this capital at relatively low interest rates to private entrepreneurs. This system, however, had a serious flaw: because government officials and ministers determined who gained access to these subsidized funds, in many cases, they did not allocate funds on the basis of economic efficiency. Until 1977, the government was firmly controlled by the Labor Party, and party officials ensured that affiliates of the party received the lion's share of funds, while also making sure that the opposition received some funds as well.

Thus, Israeli society felt, and to a large extent was, relatively egalitarian. Almost all the large companies were controlled either by the state or by the Histadrut, and both individuals and firms were subject to high tax rates. Consequently, there were very few people rich enough to be in the public eye. During this period, the ruling elite was composed mainly of the bureaucrats of the Labor Party who managed the large enterprises held mostly by the state and the Histadrut. While their salaries and other benefits were well above those enjoyed by the average Israeli, economic disparities were very modest compared to those of later periods and so there was general acceptance of the system. Nevertheless, the fact that over 80% of workers were employed by the state and Histadrut, both controlled by the Labor Party, created an impression of favoritism and a widespread feeling of discontent among those not favored by the system.

This system of state control survived in a democratic country because it seemed to be successful in achieving the country's dual objective of fast economic growth and modest levels of inequality. Between 1950 and 1972, the economy grew at an annual average rate of 9.9% (5.1% in per-capita terms), with the Gini index in the early 1980s at 0.31 – a remarkable achievement in light of the fact that the Arab population was extremely poor before the establishment of the state, and that many of the Jewish immigrants arrived in the

early 1950s with very little capital, education or marketable skills.

However, the apparent economic success concealed a deep structural problem. Though a state-controlled system can generate enough domestic demand and thereby stimulate production, it is by and large not sensitive to price signals or allocative inefficiencies. The system, therefore, fails to reward the most competitive firms and eliminate less-efficient rivals. In such an economy, local companies can sell to a domestic captive clientele, but they are not efficient enough to compete abroad. Hence, the economy can grow only as long as it is able to finance large trade deficits from outside sources. At first, when the economy was small, American Jewry was getting rich very rapidly and German reparations were substantial. During this period, the problems in the nascent Israeli economy could be concealed by large foreign currency donations. In particular, in the 1960s the country received unilateral transfers that financed 40% of its imports. Most came from US Jews, German reparations and to a much lesser extent, US government loans and donations. As the Israeli economy grew, so did its needs in foreign currency and at a faster rate than could be provided by American Jewry. All this led to a crisis following the Yom Kippur War in 1973. The war swallowed up billions of dollars and generated a great deal of panic among policymakers who borrowed huge sums in the war's aftermath. The panicked government borrowed heavily, mainly from the US government, to prepare for the war that just ended. Ten years later, when the loans matured, the futile attempts of the government to refinance them while keeping the existing system, threw the Israeli economy into such disarray that a fundamental reform was inevitable.

The reforms of 1985

In the wake of the Yom Kippur War, the government borrowed huge sums domestically and abroad, which required the country to begin repaying its debt 10 years later. This led to the economic crisis of 1984, which was highlighted by

massive government deficits and an annual inflation rate of 450%, as the government resorted to printing money to pay its bills. The first thing that had to be done was to drastically reduce the government budget deficit, which was hovering around 15% of GDP in the early 80s.⁷⁸⁵ Raising taxes was almost out of the question since tax rates were already very high, and it was unclear whether raising them further would increase government revenues. As a result of the 1984 election, a national unity government was formed comprising almost all the *Knesset* (Israeli parliament) members. The new government had a prime minister from the Labor Party, a finance minister from Likud, and at the head of the Histadrut was a Labor Party leader. This enabled the government to pursue any course of action it found suitable to resolve the budget crisis. The new government made two significant changes to lower government spending. First, it temporarily slashed real wages by 30% for government workers. Second, the new government discontinued the old policy of providing cheap government loans to the business sector. These two measures alone reduced government spending by over 10% of GDP.

It is not clear whether the politicians who implemented the “Stabilization Plan” realized the long term consequences of their actions for the structure of the Israeli economy. The plan was promoted by an advisory committee which included a special envoy of the US foreign secretary, Stanley Fischer – who later became the chancellor of the Bank of Israel – and also came with a generous US financial contribution of four billion dollars to soften the blow of the reform. The (temporary) reduction in wages and subsidies, along with the US aid, turned a huge government deficit into a surplus and thus bought time for the government to reform the economy.

In the years following the reform, under the leadership of Moshe Nissim – a seemingly unassuming (which is why he was nominated in the first place) finance minister – several measures were taken that transformed the Israeli economy entirely. First, a new law was enacted that gave independence to the Bank of Israel. This independence implied that the government could no longer control interest rates, and

therefore could not simply print money to finance deficits. This imposed fiscal discipline by preventing the government from simply imposing an “inflation tax” to balance the budget. Second, companies were allowed to issue debt in the stock market without obtaining permission from the finance ministry, thus allowing the private sector access to capital markets and forcing the government to compete with the private sector for funds. These reforms alone were not sufficient to establish well-functioning mature capital markets in Israel, but they represented a big first step in this direction.

These reforms, however, proved fatal for many domestic Israeli companies, including those controlled by the Histadrut, which were ill-prepared to compete in this new environment. Previously, businesses that had political clout could rely on access to cheap loans that allowed them to conceal their inefficiencies. Now that all firms were forced to turn to the financial markets rather than politicians to appeal for funding, inefficient firms could not afford to fund their operations at the new higher interest rates and were thus forced into bankruptcy. Within several years of the reforms, the Histadrut’s economic empire, which had encompassed a quarter of Israeli industry (another 40% were owned by the government), had all but vanished. The kibbutzim, which were affiliated with the Histadrut, also became insolvent as a result of the new way of allocating capital. However, the new system had a great benefit as well – more efficient companies were now able to gain access to the capital markets and began to flourish.

Among the many reforms of Moshe Nissim was a considerable reduction in tax rates facilitated by the reduction in government expenditures. Thus, Israel transformed from an economy where most of the capital was owned by the state and the unions into a “normal” capitalist economy subsequent to the reforms of 1985. Over the next decade, the various governments moved to open Israel up to the global economy by gradually relaxing its fixed exchange rate regime and by reducing tariffs across imported goods, most notably on textiles.

These reforms, accompanied with the high-tech revolution, transformed Israel’s industries and turned the Israeli economy

from a closed, inefficient one relying on foreign aid to an export-led highly competitive economy. Until 1999, this process was accompanied by a slow but gradual increase in inequality. However, at the turn of the 21st century the Gini index was at 0.35, a little above the average in OECD countries.

The Netanyahu reforms of 2002 to 2005

The first nine months of 2000 were the best ever in the economic history of Israel. The economy was growing at a per capita rate of 7%, led by a 22% jump in exports that seemed poised to surpass imports for the first time in the nation's history. The government, which enjoyed an unprecedented rise in revenue, decided to increase child allowances to secure the support of the ultra-Orthodox parties and had the benefit of also reducing income inequality. However, in a dazzling reversal of fortune, by October 2000 the global dotcom bubble had burst and the Israeli economy slid, aggravated by the Second Intifada, into a deep recession. The recession was global, although Israel was hit more than other countries because it had (proportionally) the largest dotcom sector in the world. The recession was exacerbated by the bloody Intifada that cost the lives of more than 1,000 Israelis.⁷⁸⁶

The new government elected in 2002 had a very thoughtful and ideologically motivated finance minister – Benjamin Netanyahu. He used the crisis to advance new reforms that were politically too difficult to adopt in normal times. Even today, some of the many reforms enacted by Netanyahu during his two-and-a-half year tenure as finance minister have profoundly changed Israeli economy and society.

The most significant of all the momentous reforms Netanyahu enacted was a drastic reduction in child allowances, which were slashed by more than 80% for every child beyond the third in a family. Before the change, Israel was devoting 1.6% of its GDP to child allowances. The reform halved this proportion. Unlike other developed countries, fertility rates were rising in Israel up to 2003, reaching almost

three children per woman – double the OECD average. Fertility levels were especially high among Arabs, and in particular among the Bedouin population (9.2 children per woman), and among Haredi Jews (7.7 children per woman). The reduction in allowances had an immediate effect on the fertility rate of the non-Jews, which is declining rapidly ever since. The reforms had a much weaker, albeit significant, effect on the fertility of ultra-Orthodox Jews.⁷⁸⁷ In retrospect, much more important than the savings to the government budget, is the enduring effect of the reforms on demographic trends. Before, Israel seemed to be fast approaching a time when Muslim Arabs (within the 1967 borders) would compose 40% of its population. In the wake of the slashed child allowances, the trend has been reversed and it is now projected that they will comprise less than 25% of the population. However, it is still projected that together ultra-Orthodox Jews and Muslim Arabs will compose more than 50% of the Israeli population by the middle of the century.⁷⁸⁸

While the slashing of child allowances has had a tremendous and lasting effect on the demographic composition of Israel (and therefore its economy), the policy caused, at least in the short and medium term, a sharp rise in income inequality. Until 2003, child allowances constituted a substantial part of the poorest three deciles' income, and therefore the cuts raised inequality to unprecedented levels. Inequality, which was in 2000 just above the average of developed countries, increased rapidly with the Gini index shooting up from 0.35 to 0.39 by 2006. Thus, while the drastic cut in child allowances will have a long-run positive effect on poverty and inequality through its effect on the demographic composition of future generations, it caused a sharp rise in inequality in the short and medium term. Subsequent governments did very little to smooth the transition. They did not adopt measures that could alleviate the immediate pain without distorting the demographic composition of the Israeli society.

Another reform that Finance Minister Netanyahu enacted was an abrupt shift from defined benefit to defined contribution pension plans, and an increase in the retirement

age of men and women from 65 to 67 and 60 to 62 respectively. Until 2003, most workers were promised that upon retirement they would receive a pension proportional to their salary prior to retirement. Under the new system, workers and employers pay each month a certain proportion of the salary to new, privately managed pension funds. The funds invest 65% of the contributions in the capital markets whereas the other 35% are kept in special government bonds that generate a guaranteed real annual rate of 3.8%, and when workers retire they receive the proceeds of their investments.

The reform transferred much of the burden of pensions from the government to the pensioners, thereby eliminating the danger haunting most governments in the developed world, and in particular in the US, that in the future they will not be able to meet their obligations.

However, turning over pension funds to the capital markets exposed pensioners to the volatility of financial assets. Would the government be able to stand by and see the pensioners suffer a sharp decline in their standard of living in the wake of a stock market crash? This question was put to the test sooner than expected when, toward the end of 2008, the stock market fell sharply and most pension funds lost between 15% and 30% of their assets. For the few months that the crisis lasted, the government resisted pressures to compensate the pensioners, after which the markets picked up again and almost all the funds regained their losses.

The pension funds' reform, as well as other reforms enacted during Netanyahu's tenure at the finance ministry, transformed Israel into a capitalist economy in the Anglo-Saxon style. Within a few years of the reforms, tax rates and the share of government expenditures in output declined below average OECD levels and inequality rose well above it. Those who believed that these reforms would usher in an era of fast economic growth were disappointed. In spite of the high-tech revolution that has swept Israel's industry and made it economically strong and stable by the accumulation of large foreign reserves, GDP per capita still lags well behind that of the developed world, and the gap stubbornly refuses to close. On the other hand, those who expected the lower income

classes to revolt against reduced allowances or the middle class against the rise of the retirement age and the growing uncertainty regarding their pensions, were bitterly disappointed as well. Until 2011.

The social protest of 2011

In June 2011, an unprecedented event occurred. An unknown computer technician called for a boycott of cottage cheese, by far the most popular dairy product in Israel, in protest of its high price. He was right. The price of cottage cheese had risen by 70% within a few years after the monopoly in the dairy market, previously owned by the farmers' cooperatives, was purchased by a global investment fund. The public responded enthusiastically to the call and the producers had to reduce the price by 20% to quell the public outrage. A few weeks later a new protest was declared, this time demanding an improvement in the standard of living of the middle class in general, and government action to combat rising housing costs in particular. Again, the protesters had a point: the cost of housing had increased by more than 60% during the preceding four years while wages stagnated.

At its peak, the protest movement involved nearly half a million demonstrators and was viewed by the political establishment as a watershed moment. Netanyahu, who was at this time prime minister, quickly reacted by establishing a committee "for social and economic change" manned by academics and the most senior government officials. The committee was given seven weeks (!) to come up with detailed recommendations on how to reduce the prices of food and housing, and improve government services, education and many other aspects of life in Israel. The final report included all the right words on social justice and a fair society and was quickly adopted by the government, with the main reservations coming from the ultra-Orthodox coalition members.

But then the protest seemed to abate and many of the recommendations, especially those related to housing, were never implemented. The recommendations that were

implemented included a rise in the tax rates, a measure the committee argued to be essential to maintain the level of government services required for strengthening the welfare state.

The protest halted the process of the diminishing role of government in Israel. It also made it clear to the politicians – and the following elections proved it – that the middle class expects them to improve its material welfare here and now. No more could an ideologically-driven prime minister reduce the size of government and lower tax rates for the rich with the promise that prosperity would trickle down. The middle class wants prosperity to rain down and to feel the results before the next elections.

The committee's report, comprehensive as it was, touched only in passing on the most important issue for the future of Israel's economy and society: the curriculum of ultra-Orthodox schools. Ultra-Orthodox schools had always been autonomous in deciding what their children learn in school, although it meant that they received reduced funding from the state. In 2007, in order to entice the ultra-Orthodox parties into his coalition, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert agreed to equalize their funding to the level enjoyed by the rest of the education system, while allowing them to maintain full autonomy in what they teach after the eighth grade. The result is that the majority of boys in the ultra-Orthodox community devote their entire time to religious studies from the ninth grade on! This implies that more than a quarter of the Jewish boys in Israel discontinue their general studies at age 13. If this policy is not altered, a large and increasing proportion of the population will have the labor market skills and productivity typical of a third world country.

Finally, studying the nature of inequality in Israel reveals that Arabs and ultra-Orthodox Jews are very poor relative to the rest of the population. One could argue that Arab poverty is due to government negligence, which could be supported by the fact that Jews at the same low socioeconomic status receive higher governmental funding for schooling and infrastructure. On the other hand, it could be argued that on average, Arabs receive more allowances than Jews and that

these exceed their tax payments so that they are net receivers of public funds. In any event, what is true about the Arabs and the ultra-Orthodox Jews is that much of their poverty is self-inflicted and the result of their choice to raise many children. It is not uncommon to find among them families of seven and more children. Such families will be poor almost by definition, and will raise generations of children into poverty.

Thus it is important to remember that much of the inequality in Israel is related to decisions taken not only by the government but also by households. As for the growing number of children that by age thirteen stop studying mathematics, English and sciences, at this point the government cannot be blamed for its actions, but for its inaction.

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23. The Myth of Ethnic Inequality in Israel

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This paper originally appeared as “The Myth of Ethnic Inequality in Israel,” *Middle East Quarterly* 21, no. 3 (2014).

It is commonplace to attribute much of Israel’s domestic tensions to supposed Jewish discrimination against the country’s Arab citizens.⁷⁸⁹ Nearly every Israeli Arab nongovernmental organization insists that such discrimination characterizes the Jewish state in general and its labor markets in particular.⁷⁹⁰ The Israeli media routinely interview Israeli Arabs (and non-Ashkenazi Jews) who claim to have been victims of discrimination. These allegations are echoed by Jewish Israeli academics, think tanks, and journalists, especially on the political Left, not to mention the international anti-Israel movement and the boycott, divestment, and sanctions campaign. Indeed, the US Department of State has even joined the growing outcry concerning Israel’s alleged racist discrimination against its Arab citizens.⁷⁹¹

Of course, in reality, Israel is the only Middle Eastern entity that is not an apartheid regime, and the apartheid slander holds no water whatsoever save in the minds of the Jewish state’s enemies and defamers. Yet discrimination is a scientifically empirical question subject to testing and not a matter of subjective personal opinion. Stripping away the venomous anti-Israel rhetoric, the legitimate question remains whether and how much discrimination really exists in Israel.

Inequality myths

Ethnicity in Israel is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. Both Jews and Arabs are subdivided into ethnic sub-groups, making exploration and analysis of ethnic disparities a

complex challenge. In official statistical data on income, Israeli Arabs are treated as a single population group, but this is somewhat misleading. There are important differences in socioeconomic status and performance among Arab Christians, Arab Muslims, and Druze. Those sub-categories are in fact amalgams of even smaller divisions. For example, there are interesting differences between “ordinary” Arab Muslims and Bedouins. The Israeli Income Survey sample does not include the Arab population of the “occupied territories,” except for East Jerusalem and the small population of the Golan Heights, both of which are formally annexed to Israel.

Ethnicity among Jews is even more complex. It is commonly measured in Israel for statistical purposes based upon the continent of birth of the person or the person’s father. Jews born in Asia and Africa (or the children of fathers born there) correspond roughly to Sephardic or Mizrahi Jews. Those born in Europe, the United States, or Australia (and their children) correspond roughly to Ashkenazi or Western Jews. These distinctions are imperfect as there are Ashkenazi Jews who come from Asia and Africa (including South Africa and some Egyptian Jews) and Sephardic Jews who come from Europe (including from Greece, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria). Over time this “continent of birth” criterion for defining ethnicity is losing its validity because of the rapid increase in native-born Israelis who are themselves sons and daughters of native-born Israelis. In addition, the high intermarriage rate among Jews in Israel from different communities is blurring ethnic distinctions.⁷⁹²

Before tackling the specific patterns of ethnic inequality and discrimination in Israeli labor markets, it is necessary to dispose of certain myths and superstitions, beginning with the assumption that heterogeneity proves discrimination. It is a common but mistaken belief that, in the absence of discrimination, the numerical representation in any profession or wage range for all groups in a society should be the same as the proportion of that group in the general population. This might be called the false axiom of “natural homogeneity.” Thus if Group A is over-represented in a profession, compared

with its weight in the general population, then it must be the beneficiary of discrimination in its favor. If Group B is under-represented, it must be suffering from discrimination against its members. Many then conclude that affirmative action quotas are needed to remedy the problem. This is known as the “disparate impact” standard or pseudo-evidence.⁷⁹³

But the axiom of natural homogeneity is completely specious. Nowhere in the real world does fair competition produce homogeneous representation in any market. Indeed, the only way in which such homogeneity can be achieved is through a rigid anti-competitive system of assignments in hiring or admissions by quota, one that suppresses individual interests, skills, culture, economics, family, educational and regional backgrounds, and meritocracy.

The world is full of examples of radical departures from numerical homogeneity in representation that clearly have nothing at all to do with discrimination: Jews around the world are over-represented among those admitted into universities relative to their numbers in the general population even in countries that have official policies of discriminating against Jews. Asian Americans are also over-represented among US college students but not because these colleges discriminate against non-Asians. American blacks are not prominent in sports because of anti-white discrimination. About 60% of the medical students in Israel are women, and this is not because the medical schools discriminate against men. Israeli Arabs are grossly overrepresented among students in schools of pharmacy, and it is not because these schools discriminate against Jews. Men are enormously over-represented among the prison populations in all countries, and it is not because of gender discrimination. And so on and so forth.

The fallaciousness of the idea that discrimination is proven by deviation from numerical homogeneity in representation cannot be over-emphasized. It crops up in almost every debate about ethnic or gender discrimination. When feminists, media commentators, and even many academics wish to prove that discrimination exists, their proof usually consists of presenting numbers that show departure from homogeneity. Such figures are selected when they serve the agenda of the commentator or

advocate. Yet it turns out that Israeli Arabs own proportionately twice as many cars as Israeli Jews;⁷⁹⁴ no one has suggested that this attests to discrimination in Israel against Jews.

In 2013, the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* ran an exposé about supposed discrimination against Israeli Arabs by Israeli banks, which quickly became the focus of a parliamentary investigation.⁷⁹⁵ The alleged evidence was that Israeli Arabs were paying, on average, higher bank fees than Jews for certain services. But a closer look showed that Arab bank accounts tend to be held in small rural banks with higher per-unit costs and may both be smaller on average and in different sorts of accounts than those held by Jews. For example, Arabs hold fewer long-term provident savings or retirement accounts, in part because the age structure of the Arab population is younger than its Jewish counterpart. All this results in different arrays of fees being charged but has nothing to do with discrimination. However, such an explanation would provide little sensationalist grist for the media or headline-grabbing power for politicians.

If numerical representation and deviation from natural homogeneity add nothing in terms of understanding discrimination, what about analyzing differences in wages and salaries directly? It would seem that if discrimination does indeed exist in a society, the most promising arena to seek it out is the labor market. But here, too, problems exist.

Analysis of possible discrimination as reflected in labor market wages has the advantage of being able to utilize a rich data set, unlike other markets in which discrimination is alleged. It also matters more. Few, including Arab leaders, would care very much if, after controlling for all the other possible explanations, Israeli Arabs were really paying higher bank fees than Jews. But everyone would think it is important if Arabs were the victims of wage discrimination. Having noted this, it still needs to be emphasized that the mere documentation of a disparity in wages between Jews and Arabs does not in and of itself prove anything, much less discrimination.

Consider the following situation: Suppose that it is found that 45-year-old Israeli Jewish software engineers with postgraduate degrees earn several times the wages of 20-year-old Arab youths who never finished high school. Would this datum be evidence of discrimination against Arabs in the labor market?

Of course, 45-year-old engineers in any ethnic population generally earn far more than 20-year-old high school dropouts. Their labor is simply worth more, and the market prices it accordingly. If one controls for education, age, and field of study, it is possible to compare 45-year-old Jewish engineers with Arab engineers, or 20-year-old Jewish with Arab high school dropouts, to see if there are any residual gaps in wages. There could also be other factors not yet taken into account that explain observed residual disparities, for example, disparities between wages in rural/peripheral labor markets and those in metropolitan areas. Any suspected ethnic discrimination is tentative and needs to be assessed in light of many other non-ethnic factors that affect wages.

Special attention needs to be paid to differences in labor force participation rates. Arab women in Israel, especially married Muslim women, have very low participation rates. This means that most employed Arab women are young and not yet married, which in turn generates a considerable gap in earnings levels when compared with Jewish women (and men of all groups). Gender differences in wages must be separated out to understand patterns of ethnic inequality.

It has been demonstrated in other countries that something as innocuous as age structure may often explain a considerable portion of disparities in earnings across ethnic/racial groups. For example, the eminent economist Thomas Sowell has demonstrated that one of the major causes for racial inequality in the United States is age difference, with the black and Hispanic population considerably younger than the white population for a variety of demographic reasons. He pointed out that “Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans have median ages of less than twenty years while the average Irish American or Italian American is more than thirty years old, and Jewish Americans are over forty.”⁷⁹⁶ Since 40-year-olds

invariably earn far more than 20-year-olds, a significant portion of earnings disparities among American ethnic groups reflects nothing more than age structure differences.

Age structure also explains part of the earning differences in Israel since Israeli Jews are on average considerably older than Israeli Arabs, particularly Israeli Muslims. It is estimated that the median age of Muslim Israelis is 19 while the median age of Jewish Israelis is 31.⁷⁹⁷ (Interestingly, Christian Arabs have an age structure similar to that of Jews, with median age 30, and also have mean earnings very close to those of Jews.) So an age-explained earnings gap similar to that in the United States arises where age explains part of ethnic inequality.

Data and raw inequality patterns

The Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) conducts an annual survey of income and wages. It is a large, scientifically-designed, representative survey that covers the entire Israeli population excluding the population in the “occupied territories,” foreign temporary workers, and tourists. The CBS is staffed with professional statisticians of the highest caliber, and its operations are in line with international standards of professionalism and integrity.

Part of the income survey is based on households (N=14,996) and measures income at the household level from various sources. Another is based on income from salary and other sources for individual earners (N=35,680) aged over 15. A household can have multiple earners. Income measured includes that from salaries, self-employment, capital, pension, alimony, social insurance, governmental support, and other categories.⁷⁹⁸ Other variables contained in the survey include age, marital status, schooling, ethnicity, occupation, and location of residence.⁷⁹⁹

What does the income survey show about ethnic inequality in Israel? One can begin to digest the data starting with the raw numbers and measures of earnings, not adjusted for variables such as age and years of schooling. These numbers

explain little about actual patterns of income inequality in Israel but offer a starting point for exploration.

In the Israeli “Income Survey of 2011,” the average salary for the entire population of Israeli Arab males was 50.2% of the mean for the entire population of Jewish males. Jewish females on average earned salaries that were 61.8% of those of Jewish males. Arab females earned only 34% of the salaries of Arab males and 28% of the salaries of Jewish females,⁸⁰⁰ but this was no doubt in part because of part-time employment common among Arab women. Raw household income disparities follow a somewhat different pattern because salaries are only one component of household income. Household income for Arabs was about 55% that of Jews. While these raw disparities appear large, they are not unusual when comparing across ethnic populations within countries. The real question remains what is causing them.

There are also disparities in the raw figures among subgroups of Jews, to some extent caused by age structure. The groups with the highest salaries and household incomes are native-born Jews. Those born elsewhere are usually divided between recent immigrants and earlier immigrants. The dividing line for distinguishing recent immigrants is necessarily arbitrary; in the discussion here, the cutoff used is 1990. In the last two decades, the largest group of new immigrants has been from the Former Soviet Union. A separate smaller group, about whose economic performance relatively little is known, consists of Jewish immigrants from Ethiopia. These will be separated out here from other immigrants by distinguishing them as recent immigrants born in Africa. This, too, is an imperfect measure, and some Jews from North African countries and from South Africa are probably mixed into this subsample definition as well.

Among native-born Israelis, the Ashkenazi males earn 16% more than the Mizrahi/Sephardic males. Ashkenazi and Mizrahi females earn exactly the same average salaries, which are about 40% lower than for native-born Ashkenazi males. Among foreign-born Jews, Mizrahim earn average salaries 32% lower than Ashkenazim for males, and 39% lower for

females. Women in all population groups earn less than men in the same groups.

So the starting point is a set of seemingly wide disparities in average earnings across Israeli ethnic groups. Jews earn more than Arabs, in fact twice as much on average; women earn less than men; Mizrahim earn less than Ashkenazim. Two additional caveats need to be mentioned. First, these numbers are based on reported salaries. While survey respondents were told the information was confidential and would not be passed on to the tax authorities, it is possible that some of the salary numbers are in fact under-reported. Israel is thought to have a significant underground or unreported economy where cash is earned under the table. For a variety of reasons, including concentrations in occupations in which non-reporting is easier and more common, it is generally believed that non-reporting of income is higher among Arabs than among Jews.

An additional caveat is that disparities across ethnic groups in salaries and in household income are different from disparities in household expenditures. Standards of living are ultimately measured in real consumption rather than in monetary terms, and in Israel, gaps in levels of expenditure among the ethnic groups are considerably smaller than those in salaries or incomes. In addition, intentional underreporting of income is unlikely to affect reported levels of expenditure, and so these data may be more reliable. The bottom line is that raw inequality among Israeli ethnic groups is considerably smaller when measured in terms of expenditures rather than incomes.

Analysis of individual salary and earnings

To understand properly the role of ethnicity in explaining disparities in earnings, one needs to take into account other non-ethnic factors that affect earnings, notably gender, age, education (measured in several different ways), marital status, number of persons in household, immigration status (new immigrant vs. not), membership in certain elite professions such as manager or engineer, and geographic variables (residence in one of the large cities, in medium-sized towns,

etc.). Statistical estimates of the impact upon earnings by individuals of a variety of ethnic, demographic, and other factors are presented in [Table 1](#) below.

First, after controlling for age, education, and other non-ethnic explanatory variables, is it really the case that Arabs underperform in the Israeli labor market when compared with Jews? The answer is generally, no. It does depend on which definition of earnings is being used.

When estimating only salaries for both men and women together (not shown in the table), Arabs do indeed underperform when compared with Jews. The difference is not very large (approximately 450 shekels a month or a bit over \$100), and this is very small when compared to the raw disparity between earnings of Jews and Arabs, seen above as being approximately a 100% difference. The disadvantage in salary earnings for Arabs is about the same as that experienced by Jewish new immigrants in Israel.

But salaries are only one component of individual earnings. Salaries are what employees receive from employers while “all individual earnings” include things such as self-employed income by artisans or shop-owners or owners of proprietary establishments. Such self-employed and proprietary income is probably more common among Arabs than Jews, the latter being more likely to be salaried employees. The numbers in the table here show the results when analyzing all individual earnings from all sources, including such non-salary sources. When controlling for age, schooling, and the other non-ethnic factors, Israeli Arabs outperform Jews on average, earning more than Jews of similar age and schooling levels. Indeed, on average Arabs earn more than both Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews, about 9% higher, other things being equal.

The fact that the labor market disadvantage of Israeli Arabs disappears entirely when total individual earnings (as opposed to salaries alone) are analyzed may be because many Arabs are self-employed.⁸⁰¹ In any case, it turns out that not only do non-ethnic factors explain the bulk of the raw disparity in earnings between Israeli Arabs and Jews, but in

many cases they explain more than the total disparity. In the case of total individual earnings income, they explain more than 100% of the raw disparity (meaning that, after controlling for explanatory variables, Arabs actually outperform Jews).

The picture becomes clearer when men and women earners are analyzed separately. This has the advantage of removing gender differences in labor force participation rates from the analysis of the role of ethnicity. The gap in earnings for Arab women compared with Jewish women is quite small when controlling for other variables; it is only about 2% to the advantage of Jews. But for males, Arabs are at a 10% advantage over Jews in total individual earnings. Again, Arabs outperform Jews.

Arabs also have a disadvantage compared with Jews when it comes to total household earnings (not shown in the table), as opposed to total individual earnings. But the wider gap at the household earnings level is due to factors outside the labor market. Jews have higher savings rates than Arabs, and thus have higher levels of household capital income.⁸⁰² Jews are also older and so receive on average higher amounts of retirement income. These disparities in non-labor income at the level of households largely reflect differences between Jews and Arabs in savings behavior and household composition and cannot be attributed to labor market discrimination.

What about disparities across ethnic sub-groups of Israeli Jews? The first notable pattern is this: The main group that over-performs compared with others is native-born Israeli Jews or *sabras*. Being born in the country confers a distinct earnings advantage in Israel as it does in most other countries. There is a modest advantage in income, about 8% for men and 2% for women, for those who are native-born Israeli Jews, compared with those who are foreign-born. And this is true for both Ashkenazi and Mizrahi Jews.

When controlling for other non-ethnic factors, Ashkenazim have a small advantage over Mizrahim among men, about 2% for total individual income and 4% for salary alone, much smaller than the gap in the raw earnings numbers, and much

smaller than the premium enjoyed by native-born Jews. For women, Ashkenazim slightly underperform Mizrahim. More generally, because of the advantage of being a *sabra*, a native-born Mizrahi Jew would generally outperform a non-native Ashkenazi Jew, other things being equal. When men and women are separated in the analysis of earnings, the “natives” retain an earnings advantage among both genders. Mizrahi Jewish women are outperforming the Ashkenazi Jewish women.

Recent immigrants in Israel are at an earnings disadvantage compared to the other population groups. Controlling for age, education, and the other non-ethnic factors, recent immigrants earn about 5.5% less in total individual earnings while for salary alone (not shown in the table), they earn 10–14% less than other Israelis. The earnings disadvantage is larger for men than for women. Interestingly, immigrants from Africa (mainly Ethiopians) do not suffer from any special earnings disadvantage as compared with the earnings levels of all recent immigrants. All immigrants are at a modest disadvantage in the labor market, but Ethiopians no more so than non-Ethiopian immigrants. When men and women are analyzed separately, Ethiopians slightly outperform the other immigrants.

Are Israeli Arabs disadvantaged because of schooling?

Economists like to describe schooling and degrees as “human capital,” and it is possible to measure the returns or market rewards to this capital using statistical methodologies. One issue that has frequently been debated in Israel is whether educated Arabs are at a market disadvantage, since – because of discrimination – they are less capable of capitalizing upon their educational achievements.⁸⁰³

Once again, the presumption of discrimination does not survive empirical statistical analysis. The truth is quite the opposite: The return on schooling for Israeli Arabs is generally considerably higher than it is for Israeli Jews. In almost every

estimate, using different measures of schooling and of earnings, the return on education appears to be higher for Arabs after controlling statistically for other variables.⁸⁰⁴ This is true both for salaries and for all individual earnings. Since the reward for educational achievement is, if anything, higher for Arabs than for Jews, this rules out the claim of systematic discrimination against Arabs who accumulate human capital and capitalize upon it in the labor market.

The return on schooling is not the same, however, as the reward for membership in elite professions. Arabs, like Jews, who are members of managerial or other professional groups (lawyers, doctors, engineers, etc.) enjoy a significant earnings advantage over those who are not members of these groups. The bonus or premium for Arabs, however, is lower than that for Jews. Discrimination cannot be ruled out as a causal factor here although other factors unrelated to discrimination could also explain these disparities, including differences in distribution among professions within the broader elite professional categories.

Where is the apartheid?

The most surprising conclusion from the econometric analysis of ethnic earnings disparities in Israel is how many of the stereotypical characterizations of Israel turn out to be false. Ethnicity in Israel simply does not play a large role in the labor market, in contrast with gender or schooling.

While it is widely presumed that the Arab minority underperforms in the labor market of the Jewish state, either because of discrimination or other structural or cultural disadvantages, this turns out not to be so. That accusation is central to the claim that Israel is some sort of apartheid regime. While the raw mean earnings of Arabs are considerably lower than those of Jews, the two populations differ in many significant ways, including age and schooling, and little can be concluded from this raw comparison on its own. When education, age, marital status, geographic location, and professional group membership are taken into account,

Arab-Jewish earnings disparities all but disappear, and in some cases, they even invert, so that the Arabs outperform the Jews. This is particularly true of male earners. If the data fail to show a clear pattern of Arab underperformance in earnings compared with Jews with similar levels of schooling, the stereotype of Ashkenazi Jews outperforming Mizrahi or Sephardic Jews appears just as inaccurate. Once education and the other explanatory variables are controlled, there is very little difference between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim earnings, and in a few cases, particularly for women, Mizrahim outperform Ashkenazi women. The Ashkenazi-Mizrahi distinction certainly appears to be less important in explaining earnings differences than the distinction between native-born Jews and foreign-born Jews or recent immigrants. Here again, there are differences between men and women. Ashkenazi women slightly underperform Mizrahi women, other things being equal, while Ashkenazi men slightly outperform compared with Mizrahi men. The bottom line is that the data do not support the presumption that Mizrahim are systematically disadvantaged in Israeli labor markets.

While new immigrants underperform relative to other Jewish Israelis, other things being equal, Ethiopians do not appear to suffer from any special earnings disadvantage compared with other immigrants. If Ethiopian immigrants earn low levels of salary, it is because they have low levels of schooling. But given their level of schooling, they earn the same on average as immigrants from Russia, South Africa, and Argentina. When estimating total individual income separately for men or for women, the Ethiopians even slightly outperform the other immigrants.

In spite of what statistical analyses have to show, the subject of discrimination in Israel continues to fill the media, which seem to be obsessed with it even while refusing to examine actual data. For example, in the summer of 2013, a television documentary on Israel's Channel Ten, produced by popular journalist Amnon Levy, triggered considerable media debate inside Israel. It claimed to have investigated and discovered that anti-Mizrahi discrimination is as bad as it had

been back in the early decades of Israeli independence.⁸⁰⁵ Real data show otherwise.

The problem is not just in the media. The academic careers of many in Israel, particularly in sociology, have been constructed entirely upon unsubstantiated allegations of Israeli racism. Israeli sociologists in general tend to accept at face value the notion that any documented disparity in earnings or numerical representation between Israeli Jews and Arabs must be due to discrimination.⁸⁰⁶ Perhaps the most notorious example is that of Yehouda Shenhav, a sociologist at Tel Aviv University. Shenhav is father of the notion that “Oriental Jews” are in fact “Arabs of the Mosaic faith,” and together with Arabs, share a victimhood imposed upon them by racist Ashkenazi Zionists.⁸⁰⁷ Shenhav and those of similar ideological orientation operate the Mizrahi Democratic Rainbow, dedicated to liberating “Oriental Jews” from Ashkenazi bigotry and capitalism.⁸⁰⁸

In Israel’s media, it is considered common knowledge that Arabs, Mizrahim, and Ethiopians are victims of harsh discrimination.⁸⁰⁹ The accusations of apartheid may be malicious, disingenuous, and over-the-top – or so most Israeli commentators and sociologists would agree – but the presumption of an underlying widespread pattern of discrimination is, to their minds, undeniable. The extent to which some in Israel go to manufacture evidence of discrimination can be awe-inspiring. For example, the ordinarily prestigious Israel Democracy Institute (IDI), a left-wing think tank, published a study in May 2013 that claimed to have discovered unambiguous proof of widespread discrimination in Israel against Arabs.⁸¹⁰ Composed by IDI legal staffer Talya Steiner under the supervision of Hebrew University professor Mordechai Kremnitzer, the study’s evidence was the number of complaints about discrimination submitted to the Israeli Commission on Equal Opportunities in Employment. Yet while numerous complaints from women reached the commission, only 3% of the complaints it received were from Israeli Arabs, who represent about 18% of the labor force. Of these, only three of the complaints received in the

entire 2011 year by the commission about alleged anti-Arab discrimination were deemed worthy of investigation. So instead of concluding that the evidence points to an absence of discrimination, the IDI's conclusion was that it all proves how badly discriminated Israeli Arabs are in Israel; after all, they are so victimized that they do not even file complaints about discrimination.

Conclusion

There is no evidence that points to ethnic discrimination against Israeli Arabs or Mizrahi Jews in Israeli labor markets. Recent immigrants appear to be the one group in the country at an earnings disadvantage. But it would be difficult to make a case that even their disadvantage is due to discrimination since immigrants in all societies are at a competitive disadvantage compared with natives.

There could be other groups in Israeli society that are victims of discrimination, but the data are not available in a form that allows for investigation. In particular, a plausible case for such discrimination may be that against ultra-Orthodox Jews. Gender discrimination also cannot be ruled out, but that is a separate and difficult methodological question beyond the scope of the discussion here.

The nearly complete absence of evidence of ethnic discrimination in Israeli labor markets does not, of course, preclude its existence in other markets or aspects of society. As was shown here, Arabs earn a higher return on education than Jews. But this does not rule out possible discrimination against Arabs in admissions to universities and colleges. It should be noted, however, that Israeli universities routinely implement affirmative action preferences in favor of Arabs and sometimes in favor of Mizrahim (and women).⁸¹¹ The only other documented university discrimination is that which grants some preferences to army veterans, a practice found in most countries.

There have also been allegations that Israel discriminates in its fiscal allocations and revenue sharing where Arab towns and villages are underfunded. But an empirical analysis of the question found just the opposite; if anything, the Arab local authorities were being over-funded.⁸¹² Evidence regarding other alleged forms of discrimination by Israel tends to be just as skimpy. Some accusations are based upon Israel's granting automatic citizenship to Jews under its "Law of Return." But such citizenship entitlements are not unusual in the world and can be found in many other countries, such as Armenia, Greece, Bulgaria and Romania, and are guaranteed under the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.⁸¹³ Another indictment of Israel concerns the discriminatory nature of its military conscription. Jews and Druze are conscripted into the Israeli military while Arabs may volunteer for service but are not conscripted. Again, this practice may indeed constitute discrimination but that discrimination is against Jews, not against Arabs.

None of this proves that discrimination never exists in Israel against Arabs, against Mizrahi Jews, or anyone else. But the very fact that empirical evidence of discrimination is so hard to discern or observe must itself serve as an important warning indicator about its magnitude or lack thereof.

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Appendix

Tab. 1: Impact Effect of Various Factors on Salary Earnings for Men and Women²⁶

	(3) Individual's Total Income (includes self-employ and "other" income) – Males and Females	(1) Individual's Total Income from all Sources – Males Only	(3) Individual Total Income from all Sources – Females Only
Age	Decreases by 1.3% for each extra year	Decreases by 1.1% for each extra year	Decreases by 1.5% for each extra year
Effect of adding one extra year of schooling	–	–	Increases 6.0%
Increment for having matriculation diploma (only)	Decreases by 6.0%	Decreases by 7.6%	–
College graduate dummy (increment over matriculation alone)	Increases 39.6%	Increases 42.5%	–
Postgraduate degree (increment over having BA)	Increases 10.6%	Increases 12.5%	–
Increment for being married	Increases 44.9%	Increases 56.5%	Increases 35.5%
Increment for being male	Increases 35.3%	–	–
Adding one person to household size	Decreases by 3.6%	Decreases by 3.4%	Decreases by 3.8%
Increment for being Arab	Increases 8.5%	Increases 9.8%	Decreases by 2.1%
Increment for being native born (<i>sabra</i>) Israeli Jew	Increases 7.3%	Increases 8.3%	Increases 2.1%

	(3) Individual's Total Income (includes self-employ and "other" income) – Males and Females	(1) Individual's Total Income from all Sources – Males Only	(3) Individual Total Income from all Sources – Females Only
Increment for being Ashkenazi	Decreases by 0.1%	Increases 1.8%	Decreases by 3.7%
Increment for residence in Jerusalem	Decreases by 7.6%	Decreases by 15.4%	Decreases by 3.2%
Increment for residence in Tel Aviv	Increases 17.2%	Increases 15.0%	Increases 20.6%
Increment for residence in Haifa	Decreases by 13.5%	Decreases by 12.0%	Decreases by 15.0%
Increment for being new immigrant (arrived since 1990)	Decreases by 5.5%	Decreases by 7.5%	Decreases by 4.3%
Increment for being new immigrant from Africa (over previous increment for being immigrant)	Decreases by additional 2.9%	Increases by 0.3%	Increases by 8.1%
Dummy if employed in "academic" profession	Increases 45.7%	Increases 45.6%	Increases 45.5%
Dummy if employed as "professional"	Increases 31.6%	Increases 36.3%	Increases 23.7%
Dummy if employed as "manager"	Increases 75.6%	Increases 72.2%	Increases 75.9%
Size of sample used for estimates	20,069	10,424	9,703



Topic VI: Feminism

Introduction

Gender is today rarely an open debate in Israel between male and female scholars or analysts: indeed, gender equality has become a value associated with “political correctness.” In practice, claims and protests of women’s organizations have shown that this value encounters difficulties and de facto distortions, and this due to multiple circumstances widely discussed in the literature – such as limited opportunities available to women, commitment to family tasks and many others. Concomitantly, women are less present in public and political activity, and figure in smaller numbers in political headquarters, among high-ranking businesspeople, and in the academy. In all these respects, debates about gender in society tend most often to focus on claims by women against the failure to implement, to the required degree, the assumedly consensual principle of gender equality.

The debate on women in society continues, and it becomes clear as soon as one examines the agendas of different publics of women. Israel provides a good example of some of the general problematics involved. Western-style families are the rule in Israel’s secular middle class, within the Jewish population. As in similar countries, women’s associations have formed in Israel to combat the covert discrimination that affects women in comparison to men. Here, moreover, some specific circumstances aggravate the issue of gender discrimination. Israeli society, indeed, is perpetually challenged by belligerence, and values of masculinity have long received special esteem. These attitudes reduce women’s social roles to secondary ones in some crucial settings, such as the military and the security sector in general, where important public roles often later lead to prominent positions in other spheres of activity.

On the other hand, women belonging to given groups where feelings of deprivation are widespread may try to raise

claims both as members of such groups and as women. Often their interests are not reflected in the organizations and agendas of middle-class women, and they need outlets of their own. Moreover, some Israeli ethnic and religious groups tend to comply with traditional norms that, as a rule, apply non-egalitarian norms between genders. Feelings of deprivation among women may be particularly strong here, and their specific vicissitudes give rise to claims that clearly differ from those raised by middle-class women's movements.

The variances of attitudes between different female publics may then become the setting for major debates between feminists. Viewed as a whole, the following texts refer, in various terms and with diverse emphases, to those differing perspectives.

Henriette Dahan Kalev focuses on two dimensions with regard to the Israeli case: the historical dimension that discusses how the first seeds of feminism were planted and developed in the society, and the sociological dimension that refers to feminist debates in the context of the country's multi-factional social structure. The analysis is illustrated by case-studies, one of which reports on women's representation in religious councils. This case was the object of a petition to the Supreme Court and showed that while the courts provide women with justice, issues involving the status of religion in Israeli society call for political intervention.

Sylvie Fogiel-Bijaoui offers a more nuanced approach. She speaks of a dual picture confronting women in Israel. It consists of an impressive evolution toward gender equality, that is paradoxically embedded in a conservative patriarchal power structure. This duality is shaped by a neo-liberal economy intersecting with gendered ethno-religious cleavages characterizing large parts of the population. The women's movement has been strong enough to bring about cultural changes, but not powerful enough to shatter deeply entrenched gender barriers in given domains. Middle-class women have made much more significant progress than others, and it remains to be seen if the feminist actors, now with a much stronger presence in the public sphere than in the past, will be

willing to genuinely expand their gains to the general feminine public.

Orit Kamir contends that under an ideology of gender equality, gender roles in contemporary Israel were grounded in a masculinization of the collective identity and empowering men vis-à-vis women. The resulting “schizophrenic” feminine existence enabled society to pretend to be liberal, while upholding discriminatory patterns linked to the retention of religious norms. The analysis of six Israeli feature movies produced in 2014, that were written and/or directed by women, shows according to Kamir that the present circumstances awake strong reactions on the part of women. These movies give expression to women’s increasing awareness and criticism, and shed light on the sexist “gender pact” which tends to imprison femininity in archaic patriarchal structures.

Khawla Abu-Baker discusses the case of Arab women in Israel. She points out external factors, represented by state institutions interacting with internal factors consisting of patriarchal figures, which jointly impose systemic oppression of Palestinian society and of Palestinian women, particularly. She also underlines that when the state initiates improvements for women through welfare legislation, Palestinian society often receives them negatively. Political-cultural influences stemming from the Islamic world are also influential. Discriminatory laws, poverty, and lack of equal conditions for Palestinian society, together with patriarchal customs and discriminatory inheritance laws, all contribute to the preservation of existing gender regulation.

These various analyses do not explicitly gainsay each other, but it is easy to identify the contradictory perspectives that each one sustains and proposes. It appears that gains in gender equality over time are neither necessarily general, nor unambiguous; this accounts for the hazy picture that these analyses yield when taken conjunctively.

24. Debates within Israeli Feminism

Henriette Dahan Kalev

This paper was completed in August 2014.

Conceptual framework

Feminism is first and foremost personal. It becomes political as the person experiences a consciousness change. A person becomes feminist when understanding that what seemed personal concerns in fact many. Feminism is a personal experience that captures the individual's awareness, one by one. A first move of agency from a state of subordination toward freedom must start at consciousness transformation. Women may capture new ideas of liberation but do nothing to change their lives. The strategies that the first feminist activists in the women's liberation movement in the Anglo-Saxon world employed, such as open rebellions and demonstrations, did not always seem appropriate for feminists in other parts of the world or other cultural or religious communities. Differences in social structures, ethnicity, race, and many more parameters determine how women react to the experience of feminist awakening. How they respond to the promise of liberation and what possible strategies they may employ to make a change depends not only on the personal consciousness change, but also on the strategies available within the political, economic, cultural, religious and other conditions. Women bring about change not only in democracies and liberal communities. In secret societies, such as the Bedouin or the Sub-Saharan society, bargaining strategies are employed and prove to be more effective in the balance of power that involves gender relations.⁸¹⁴ As the very feminist idea of liberation of women captures the minds of women one by one, women crossing the lines of conformism with the dominating patriarchal order and moving to the feminist zone are lonely. Their decision involves

considerations on the price they might pay and on what they might lose if they stand up for their rights. Then, if they cross the line and manage to be followed by small groups, they find themselves in the new and unfamiliar zone of an “in-between” sphere, neither private nor public.⁸¹⁵ They are engaged in forming a new language, inventing new strategies and constructing new patterns of behavior. In other times feminists may stay put and docilely remain at home or pave their own new ways on a personal basis, at home with their spouses. Even when it is not observable, it does not mean that women do not experience consciousness change to feminism. It may simply mean that they do not become political activists. The essence of feminist consciousness awakening that resides in a woman’s decision to take an action is that feminism charges a price when going against the stream and challenging the very powerful patriarchal order of things. This has been time and again the hindering force to act. Women learned that becoming feminist activists involves risking existing valued assets such as rewarding loyalty to traditional familial ties that are precious to them, or losing material, spiritual and community support or economic security and sanctions. In segregated conflictual and split societies women experience a hard time to build up women’s solidarity, although great hopes are associated with values such as sisterhood and feminist solidarity. Feminism never succeeded in crossing sectorial lines. On the contrary, the assets of sisterhood often remained fragile even in the few times when small numbers of women from opposite groups such as right wing and left wing, black and white, or religious and secular gathered a movement. This is because power relations never stop at the threshold of feminist movements, or any other movement. Social sectors such as national, religious, cultural or any other sector bind their members with cohesive forces and demand loyalty that is conditioned in sanctions and reward. Old bonds are often dragged into new constellations, and women are not an exception. In some cases, when old and new bonds stand in conflict, such as class bonds and feminist bonds, a deliberate attempt to deconstruct the older bonds is made, as we shall see in one case below. Hence, typical splits inherent to many societies infiltrate into new feminist initiatives despite slogans

of sisterhood, equality and solidarity. This was the case in the women's lib movement in the USA and Europe, and it also affected the Israeli case. Consequently, it would be better to relate to the promising message of feminism as representing diverse feminist agendas and strategies rather than one feminist entity.

Historical dimension: first seeds of feminism

A few years before 1967, Israel was in crisis struggling with security and threats from outside, and economic and social difficulties from inside. Growing social and ethnic gaps resulted in a negative balance of Aliyah which manifested itself for the first time in 1965 in migration of Jews out of the country. Unemployment increased to two digits, recessions and enduring political scandals threatened the political stability. At the same period of time, countries in the West experienced youth rebellions against European decadence, led by Red Danny and students, radical resistance groups such as the Red Brigades, "Make Love not War" protests and the movement against the Vietnam War in the USA, along with the struggle for human rights of the African American and the women's lib movement. They all shook the Western world.

In June 1967, Israel was attacked by its Arab neighbors and the war ended in a glorious victory that surprised both Israel and the world. Following the war most of the crises resolved as Israel had proved to be an industrious powerful country with advanced military technology and strong defense forces. Following the war economic contracts and agreements put an end to the recession and unemployment; the security threat was removed for a while. The war victory stimulated Zionist sentiments of Jews in well-off countries and waves of Aliyah turned the balance to a positive direction again. The Aliyah which came after the 1967 War, consisting, among others, of young women that experienced and took part in human rights activism, protests against the war in Vietnam and women's lib movement activity in the USA, flew to the country, importing some of these ideas to Israel. They began to

disseminate seeds of liberal activism and civil rights. In one case social protest against deprivation of *Mizrahim* (Jews of Arab and Moslem origin) by the stronger sector of society consisting of *Ashkenazim* (Jews of Europe and the Americas) led to the establishment of the “Black Panthers Movement.”⁸¹⁶ In another case they formed a left-wing movement “Shalom Achshav” (Peace Now)⁸¹⁷ and in a third case they planted first seeds of feminism. Women like Naomi Kiss, Galia Golan, Marcia Friedman, Marilyn Safer, Barbara Swirski, and many other young women gathered small groups and formed feminist agendas. They called for equal opportunities for women, the stop of domestic violence and granting women equal wages. This mixture of issues was mostly expressed through grassroots activity with various types of strategies ranging from demonstrations through networking, legislation attempts and lobbying. They opened the first shelters for battered women in Haifa, founded *The Women’s Voice Journal* in Jerusalem and Haifa, and “Women to Women,” a twin organization to the one in the USA. They founded the “Women’s Lobby” in Jerusalem and began a tradition of gathering once a year in an annual feminist movement conference in Kibbutz Givat Haviva, a kibbutz known for its communist ideology. Some legislation attempts took place in 1973, especially against control of abortion. The feminists who expressed their Zionist sentiments through these initiatives for about a decade made an effort to open women in Israel to feminism, succeeding in motivating mainly women like them: well educated, liberal, secular or conservative, left-wing feminists. Yet, as one Yemenite Israeli poet, Bracha Seri, has put it, they failed on a different level:

What do they [the Ashkenazi women, HDK] know about what it means to be a Mizrahi woman? A woman with many children, religious? They close their ears to us. They are patronizing. What can one say! How can you even talk with them about our regular harassment – an unrequited love [...]. They gave you all the reasons in the world to make you feel a stranger [...]. No opportunity to open your mouth. There is nobody to talk to anyway. A club [...] of feminist *Neturei Karta* [an exclusive sect of ultra-Orthodox Jews, HDK] – most of the time even the language is different. A club for immigrants where the domain and language is English.⁸¹⁸

This comment reflects in a nutshell the deep alienation most women felt when meeting the young feminist migrants from

the USA and explains why Israeli women had difficulties to identify with the promise of liberation associated with the feminist activity. It reveals the birthmark of feminism that will later on become the major debate. Engaged with strong feminist and Zionist enthusiasm, the young women failed to see the complexity of the Israeli society and were confident that their feminist ideological messages will swiftly engage the Israeli women into a revolutionary movement. In a sense this blindness may have been an advantage for the feminists, because knowing beforehand about the complexity of the Israeli social structure would have discouraged them from making an attempt to share their feminist ideas. At this stage the seeds were planted and women may not have joined the activists, but that did not mean that awareness was not arisen and urged. The first dialectical phase of feminism in Israel came to its end. The revolution may not have occurred but it was not a bitter failure either. In the late 1980s a second phase of feminism developed and we witnessed a slow infiltration and adjustment of the liberating ideas to the various social sectors. Some changes required frontal and conflictual strategies, others legal means and yet others bargaining. A closer look at the forces acting from within the society discloses how the new feminist ideas affected not only women but rather the larger domains of civil society as in the case of the civil-military interface.

Social dimension: multi-faction structure

The civil-military interface: Alice Miller High Court Decision⁸¹⁹

Militarization

Israeli society is intensely occupied with security issues since its foundation. From a very early age Israeli citizens are socialized to perceive the military in the civil life as central.⁸²⁰ The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) have always been involved in the educational system; took part in agricultural and settlement projects, the integration of immigrants, and thus have been

viewed as “the people’s army.” This entailed a very high chunk of the state’s budget and far too much power and control over civil life. Ideological justification is fostered by security threat on the state and keeps the military at top priority. Mandatory law of service in the army drafts all citizens at the age of 18, male and female, to serve in the IDF. Drafting women suggests that rights and duties are allegedly equal to both genders. However, gender division of labor, as prevailing in civil life, effects both the division of labor in the army and after the soldiers are released and start their civilian life. Until the early 1990s most women soldiers functioned mostly as secretaries, in welfare services and held educational positions. Many professional military and combat tracks were closed to women. This division was valid also to women who chose a professional military career. The access and promotion to the better paid positions were closed as well. Consequently, opportunities to get access and develop professionally were severely gender unequal. Women could not access professions as pilots, in armor, flotilla or high tech positions. The options for men relied very much on “old boys’ networking” that reserved the best jobs for veteran high rank male officers. Deprived from these opportunities in the military and the civil sphere, women could hardly progress or run for prestigious positions. At the retirement age, which is around the early fifties for soldiers in general, men could often develop a second well-paid professional career. This resulted in multiplying the obstacles that women faced, both in the IDF and the civil sphere. The jobs at the top implicitly require military experience regardless of their training, and almost all high rank veteran officers enjoy the fictional credit of being qualified for political, economic, technological, industrial and even academic positions. Thus both, inaccessibility to the public sphere and its militaristic nature subordinate women to a masculine social structure, where the role left for them to fill is family and reproduction. On another dimension of this gender equation, power relations in every sphere subordinate women to men and bound the equation to abuse of power. Sexual harassment was for many years a norm in the IDF. When feminist ideas began to disseminate in the civil sphere abuse of power in the military was one of the first issues that

surfaced in the public discourse. It infiltrated into the IDF and the military authorities appointed committees asking for investigation and reports regarding gender issues in general. The reports drew a picture of gender inequalities and abuse of power but abstained from describing them as discrimination and harassment. It was when they appointed civil consultants from the academia that the reports were criticized, re-conceptualized and named as such. They related to sexual harassment and power abuse and recommended gender reforms of professional opportunities. Some new professions and rank promotions opened up for women. However, the most prestigious forces and positions did not open up without explicit feminist struggle. But feminists debate the issue of equality of women in the IDF: Should women contribute to the militarization of the society or abstain from it and work to demilitarize it? This debate will be further discussed after presenting the struggle of Alice Miller for the right of women to access the IDF pilots' course.

Alice Miller High Court Decision

In 1995 Alice Miller, a young Israeli citizen, was drafted to the mandatory military service. She applied to the IDF pilots' course, an unusual application for women till that time. She was rejected and took the Air Force to the civil High Court. The Women's Lobby and Naamat Women Labor Organization represented her in court. The chief commander of the Air Force, General Herzl Bodinger, represented the IDF. Explaining the rejection he contended that the pilots' course is expensive and focuses on the security interest of the nation and the state, rather than on individuals' ambitions. Gender equality in this case, he argued, would violate the principle of maximization of cost and benefit considerations of the Air Force. The chances of the Air Force to maximize the output of the investment in the pilot, he argued, would be very slim in the case of women, especially if the female pilot gets married and bears children before the investment is returned by service. In addition, he mentioned the reproduction damage women risk when spending many hours flying. He concluded by explaining that the decision to draft women will also require expenses for gender adjustments and structural

changes, like regulations for the purpose of logistic gender separation of bathrooms, barracks, etc. The judges, after weighing and considering the questions of efficiency versus equality decided 3:2 with Judge Dalia Dorner's decisive position contending that the army is of the state, and the state is a democratic state, and thus the equality argument prevails in this case: that is, Alice Miller should be accepted to the course in the understanding that democracy costs money. This decision resulted in some further reforms not only in the Air Force but also in other forces and for the last five years the statistics show that the accessibility of women to most IDF positions is increasing. At present women are only one rank away from the highest, Brigadier General, but not all the positions are open, yet.

The debate

The public debate regarding gender equality in the IDF has opened "Pandora's box." The IDF's centrality in the life of Israeli society had been revealed again, but now it also showed how complexly gender issues are embedded in this structure. Semi-military positions that traditionally were part of the IDF vocation reopened and were questioned. On the other hand, women saw the new opportunities promised in realizing the rights to participate in the new militaristic professions, both in the IDF and the civil sphere. But given the complex social structure new complications arose. Religious male mandatory service interfered with gender demands for equality, as a condition for the service on the part of the Orthodox draftees consisted in keeping gender separation in the military unit, according to which men and women cannot be trained together or work on the same tank or helicopter. These new issues blended with persisting old debate and exacerbated the controversy regarding the dominating role of the military in civil life. Controversies rose also within feminist factions disputing the feminists' responsibility in the Israeli society. When it became public that Alice Miller's motivation to join the feminist NGOs was more personal than feminist, and when she refrained from taking a lead in the struggle as a feminist, disappointed voices began to wonder whether the struggle for an interest of an individual woman was worth the support of

the feminist NGOs. There were other voices that argued against the overemphasis of the gender and military debate in general. Yet other voices questioned the value of the achievements and called for the women's role to take an oppositional stance and struggle against the over-militarization of civil life. The court decision and the IDF gender reforms may be good for equality, but at the same time they enhance the essentially masculine ethos, hence fostering male domination, they argued. Feminist uniqueness lies in the counterpoint as demilitarized activism. On top of these arguments there was the class contention according to which it was argued that the number of women who would benefit from the court decision precedence could be reduced to a few upper class women and the vast majority of women who really needed feminist support would not gain much from it, therefore the feminist effort should not be wasted on this issue, but rather focus on issues that concern the middle lower class majority of women.

Alice Miller had finally ended by failing the pilots' course but the precedent paved the road to other women who dared to apply to the pilots' course and completed it. The dilemma remained undetermined. The voices in favor of equality of access to military positions and open opportunities took the stance that as long as the military is so central in civil life and that society prioritizes qualifications acquired in the IDF, feminists should struggle to promote women's chances to enter higher positions in the civil hierarchies through gender reforms in the IDF. The opposing view that demanded restriction of militarism both in the IDF and civil life and the extension of women's representation in civil life stressed the feminist role in demilitarization of civil life. The debate continues.

Second dilemma: Mizrahi feminism and the "quarters principle"

Multi-factions' intersections

The Mizrahi-Ashkenazi rift in Israel is an intersectional conflict that stratifies the society along lines of class and

ethnicity. When feminist winds blew in from the USA to Israel a very small number of Mizrahi women participated in feminist activities. They were mostly well-educated women who made it from deprived segments of the populations on the social margins to the middle class. Operating from the bottom of social strata they knew what it meant to struggle and achieve. They were each well aware of feminism and women's rights and were devoted to the feminist initiatives' missions. This awareness was grounded in fair understanding of discrimination not only for being a woman but also for being of Arab and Moslem origin in a country with Western orientation. Along with these women there were Palestinian-Israeli women who also belonged to the minority of those who made it. They came mainly from Haifa and Nazareth: women who originated from communist families, highly committed to Marxist ideology, often Christian. For both categories of women sisterhood was an empowering message and they endeavored in neighborhoods and amongst Arab communities to recruit women for feminism. But shortly after, they began to realize that there is an undercurrent stratification going on within the initiatives which subverted their beliefs in sisterhood, just like Seri, the poet that was quoted above, remarked. Ethnic divide surfaced throughout the activities. Whereas Ashkenazi activists went to the meetings with the political leaders and legislators, traveled abroad to represent the women's movement and the feminists in Geneva, Marrakesh, London, and even at the Oslo negotiations in the mid-1990s, Mizrahi and Palestinian women did the field work, the organization of demonstrations and maintained the infrastructure of these activities. Ashkenazi feminists dragged social deficiencies and divides from the larger society into the feminist initiatives. Mizrahi and Palestinian activists complained in NGOs such as the Women's Lobby, the Jerusalem Link, Kol HaIsha (The Woman's Voice), Isha LeIsha (Woman To Woman) and many others. No wonder that apart from the handful Mizrahi and Palestinian activists, the vast majority of women in Israel found it difficult to identify with the movement's ideology⁸²¹ and refrained from joining it.

The rebellion

Feminist conferences traditionally were held in Givat Haviva. Many groups and NGOs participated in an annual conference to celebrate the women's lib movement. Mizrahi and Palestinian women continually experienced exclusion and feelings of marginalization and harbored bitterness and tensions, until they blew up dramatically in the 1995 conference. On a Sabbath evening in the main session which discussed the Israeli feminist future, Mizrahi activists Netta Amar, Tikva Levi, Ella Shohat and others entered the stage and demanded that the session will stop at once to give the floor to another discussion: the discussion about the discrimination of Mizrahi and Palestinian women in "the movement." Similar to the conflict between the white and the African American women, such as Audre Lorde, and bell hooks in the USA,⁸²² they openly accused their Ashkenazi comrades of oppression, patronization and discrimination. The Ashkenazi feminists were deeply hurt and accused the Mizrahi and Palestinians of their ingratitude. They disputed and disagreed, ending with some of the Mizrahi and Palestinian participants splitting up. The Mizrahi women who left traumatized began to meet separately and built up their own agenda and forum. One year later they celebrated the first Mizrahi feminist conference led by activists Netta Amar, Daphna Baram, Tikva Levi, Mira Eliezer, Avital Moses and others.⁸²³ They gave the movement the name Ahoti,⁸²⁴ (My Sister). It was indeed a significantly different agenda from the Israeli/Ashkenazi one. Almost instinctively they returned to their past history in an attempt to recover their erased historical narrative.⁸²⁵ They began to reconstruct the life stories as heard from the mouth of their parents, mothers, placing them next to the Zionist curricula which they have learned at schools. The ethnic rift played a dominant role in this reconstruction and intersected various topics of the feminist debate. The Palestinian feminists who participated in the initial rebellion did not join this initiative. Instead, they turned inside their community to form their own agenda, as will be discussed further below. The Mizrahi agenda began to form around identity questions and to look for more particular

issues that concerned lower class women, immigrants and foreign workers, to where their roots belonged. Today, Ahoti, located in the south of Tel Aviv, where the extremely deprived women often wander, is one of the few feminist NGOs that opens its doors to Ethiopian women, women refugees who were smuggled to the country from African countries at war, or sex workers from the FSU. In this respect, Ahoti is still the organization that maintains Mizrahi and lower-class feminist agenda. It continues the legacy of the founders.

The quarters principle

But not all the women left the main group. Some Mizrahi continued the debate from within until a solution was formed around an idea that they called “quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter.” It focused on securing equal representation of four social groups within every initiative: Mizrahi, Ashkenazi, Palestinian and Lesbian women. This order prevails today as well and it may be concluded that the event in 1995 was a historical moment which reformed the feminist movement and ensured equality in some sense to some of the social groups in the Israeli society. It does so despite the fact that the quarters principle does not guarantee that the best representation for each sector will always be ensured. Moreover, this principle does not ensure that all sectors in the divided Israeli society will be represented. Nevertheless, what was achieved was the collapse of the domination of Ashkenazi upper-class women. The feminist movement never recovered from this split and suspicion still persists in the discourse. Ever since, Israeli feminism consists of a plurality of NGOs that specialize in diverse issues for diversified populations. Some support lower-class women, some promote women’s representation in small or large businesses, in political parties or military institutions. Small initiatives and organizations keep on appearing and respond to special needs of different groups of women for a limited amount of time. Consequently when a common goal is identified by a number of NGOs they form a coalition and join forces to promote it, such as the struggle against trafficking of women, cooperation for peace and equal opportunities in public institutions. These diverse and vibrant initiatives mostly emerge in Tel Aviv and the center of the

country. It does not really reach the periphery where high rates of female poverty, single mothers and non-Jewish Israeli citizens struggling to survive.

Third dilemma: the state's laws vs. the Arab codes – Al Fanar

Between loyalties

Israel's Arab population consists of 20%. They are divided along various factions of Muslim, Druze, Bedouins, Cherckees and Christians. But the Jewish-Palestinian rift runs largely along lines of the Israeli-Palestinian and class conflict. Until 1966 this population lived under military government. They were and still are severely deprived from social and political rights. The state's policy consistently preferred to grant the population rights to be led by traditional Arab leadership of patriarchs, the sheiks, imams and cadies. The Muslim Sharia prevails for the family law and tribal or extended families' (*hamullas*) customs are common. All these are held within the rule of law of a democratic state and affect significantly the community as a whole and individuals as well. Thus tension is prevalent and individuals are caught within a multi-instances system. The Zionist context and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict worsen the already complicated enough status of the individuals, male and female, and the gender relations. This is the scene in which Palestinian-Israeli women find themselves when wishing to take action and make an effort to bring about change. Al Fanar (The Lighthouse) was an initiative that took this risk.

Al Fanar

In 1994 young Palestinian-Israeli women gathered a small upper class group from northern Israel and laid a spotlight on the phenomenon of "honor killing." They called it Al Fanar (The Lighthouse). This group challenged the traditional custom of murdering women for suspicion of adultery, virginity loss before marriage, or rape. It is not an issue of honor, but sheer murder that must be ended at once,⁸²⁶ they argued. The scholar Nadia Kevorkian marked this struggle as

the struggle against “dead women walking.”⁸²⁷ The task Al Fanar took upon itself was twofold: first, to break a circle of silence around a taboo that kept breeding this violent tradition within the Arab society; and second, to break silence around the state’s abstention from taking the necessary steps to enforce the law for murder equally within the Arab community as in the larger society. “Palestinian women’s lives are cheaper,” they contended. The state, on its part generally preferring to respect the community codes at the expense of the individual rights, counted on the inner institutions’ resolution such as blood avenges and ransom.

The Arab street responded with double condemnation: How dares Al Fanar to bring such a shame and embarrassment to the Arab community and tradition; and the other was directed to the disloyalty to the Palestinians who live in the heart of the Zionists, i.e., the rule of the enemy. This was considered almost as treason.

From the state’s police perspective things were no less problematic as it turned out that even when the state arrested a suspect for the intention to commit the crime, according to the custom the responsibility passes on to another member in the family, because the redemption of the family honor is the responsibility of the collective. Bringing the problem to public awareness however, revealed how complex it is for a feminist to make a change in the Palestinian-Israeli community. The patriarchal bonds are gripping the desire for liberation and when women engage in making a change they really risk their lives.

Polygamy

The problem of polygamy in the Palestinian community is similar to the murder for “family honor” in its nature. Polygamy in Israel is illegal but women continue to be married, sometimes compulsively, within polygamous families in the Bedouin community. Muna, the Bedouin women from Rahat, the biggest town of Bedouins in the Negev,⁸²⁸ took upon herself the risk to bring the voice of women who silently continue to suffer from compelled marriage in polygamy to public attention. The rate of polygamous marriage increased in

the last decade due to the increase of the better educated women in the Bedouin community. The paradox of better educated women who marry within polygamy is explained by the fact that by the time these women complete their studies they are at an age that is considered late for them to find a match. Hence if they want to stay within the community they accept the terms of marriage that the family or tribe offers them.

Muna, supported by the Southern Branch of ITAKH MAAKI NGO, an organization of women solicitors which helped her in formulating the statement for the campaign, faced the same twofold condemnation like Al Fanar activists: for her accomplice with the Zionists and for shaming the male members in the community. According to the customs she was supposed to approach the community male sages. After she did and nothing happened, she went on to the NGO and the media. Coming from the low strata even within the Bedouin community, and being divorced and very poor, she was desperate and had not much to lose. She has literally put her life in jeopardy and came out to speak. To her surprise it was proved to be feministically empowering and protecting, and she was left alone by the male community authorities. However, the dilemma remains, whether to take the risk and be the first to “lean on the fence” and hope that other women will follow, or remain silent and subordinate: the classic dilemma of “to be or not to be.” The cohesive and old custom bonds in secret societies began to crack around the issue of polygamy, but the way is still long for Muna and her comrades.

Religious reforms: Shakdiel’s High Court Decision for the representation of women in religious council⁸²⁹

Religious feminism

The religious population in Israel consists of about 17%. The problem of presenting the exact percentage lies in the range and definition of how religion is practiced and perceived. Ultra-Orthodox communities for example are heavily

patriarchal and tend to solve their problems through inner rabbinic institutions. They segregate themselves from the larger society and lead a very rigid gender division of labor. There are though other factions that range on a more moderate religious spectrum, more integrated and tolerant to the larger society's order. Gender relations are practiced generally according to Jewish religious laws of Halakha in various degrees of flexibility. Religion, by offering value systems for all domains of life, contradicts with feminism that is founded on the idea of transformation and change. Such are the codes of modesty that go against activism in the public sphere or mundane political activity often planned for Fridays and the Shabbat. Hence religious feminists founded their own NGOs. Koleh and Emuna are two of the prominent religious NGOs that set agendas that concern religious women and offer appropriate tools aimed at feminist concerns within the religious community. On the one hand, they identified special ways to cope with "regular issues of gender" such as struggles against domestic violence and women's health issues, and on the other hand, they bargained and negotiated with the patriarchs and sages of the religious communities in order to generate some reforms. The right of women to read in the Torah in the synagogue and reforms of the laws of Halakha in favor of gender change of relations are two of many examples. Strategies of negotiation and bargaining are tools that enable women to bring about changes without having to leave the community. After two decades of changes in gender relations among the different religious factions, deep reforms occurred that can be perceived as a revolution. This case proves that major debates maybe managed with strategies other than frontal conflicts or liberal modes of public protests.

Shakdiel's precedence

I will conclude this part and the article with the case of Lea Shakdiel's High Court precedence of representation of women in religious councils. In 1987, Lea Shakdiel, a woman from the southern town of Yeruham, identified as religious Zionist, has forwarded a petition to the High Court, claiming that her candidacy for the municipal religious council was rejected. Until then all the religious councils consisted of men only. The

High Court that often prefers not to interfere in the religious courts' decisions took the challenge this time and determined the precedence in favor of representation of women in the religious councils. The High Court decision ordered the Yeruham council to accept Shakdiel's candidacy. Shakdiel carried out the election campaign for the religious council and was elected. But being inexperienced in politics she had no idea of how political games are played in Israel. She learned that decisions may be taken outside the framework of meetings and when voting time came, she was always in the minority. Sometimes she was informed after the decisions were taken or was isolated. The lesson of feminism in this case was that the court may make justice with women, but if there is a debate that is rooted deep in patriarchal religious tradition, the struggle for representation must also cross experience in political manipulation. The debates on representation not only in the religious councils but also in all other religious institutions are still on. Women run for positions in academic, political, religious institutions. And sometimes they win.

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25. Navigating Gender Inequality in Israel: The Challenges of Feminism

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This paper was completed in September 2014.

Introduction

On October 10, 2013, the editorial of *Haaretz*, a leading Israeli newspaper, reported under the title “Women in Israel: Illusion of Equality” that though “the common wisdom in Israel is [...] that Israeli society is marching toward an age of full [gender] equality [...], this has not yet been translated into action on the ground.” It went on to say that Israel does not challenge most of its discriminatory arrangements, and thus, de facto, encourages mechanisms that obstruct, discriminate against, and harm women.

The view that Israel is “marching toward an age of full equality” is no doubt based on outstanding women such as Ada Yonath, winner of the 2009 Nobel Prize in Chemistry; Tzipi Livni, a leading voice in Israeli politics; Karnit Flug, governor of the Bank of Israel; Adina Bar-Shalom, the founder of an ultra-Orthodox technology college for women in Jerusalem, and Haneen Zoabi, the first (Muslim) Arab woman elected to the parliament on an Arab party’s list.⁸³⁰

However, the argument that gender equality is only an illusion is also based on hard evidence, such as ultra-Orthodox and Islamist parties with no women representatives to elected bodies, rabbis (who are not ultra-Orthodox) encouraging religious soldiers to leave events at which women performers sing, or the discriminatory policy of state-supported academic institutions which, for more than a decade now, have offered

various gender-segregated programs to ultra-Orthodox students.

In this paper I analyze this dual picture of an impressive march toward gender equality paradoxically embedded in a virulently patriarchal power structure, that is, in a structure that (re)produces men's dominance over women. To this end I adopt the approach of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),⁸³¹ which defines gender equality as men's and women's equal access to, and equal opportunities in health and bodily autonomy, education, employment, and political life. Following feminist scholars, I assume that the various dimensions of gender (in)equality reflect the institutionalized relations of power, prestige, and property organized around socially constructed gender differences. I also assume that the gender order is multifaceted and constantly transformed by the interactions between civil society and the state so that it takes different forms in different times and places.⁸³² Moreover, as feminist debates have demonstrated, a feminist analysis must take into account the ways in which gendered disadvantages are experienced differently according to the shifting intersections between various social categories, such as gender, race, class, disability, and sexual orientation. Consequently, the recognition of women's experiences implies that a gender analysis addresses how different categories interact on simultaneous levels, thus constructing the intersection of multiple forms of discrimination.⁸³³

My analysis is based on data provided by the OECD, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), and the UN, as well as on data provided by the Central Bureau of Statistics of Israel or appearing in Israeli NGOs' sites and publications.

I argue that gender (in)equality in Israel is to be understood by referring to the two institutional tensions that characterize the country. The first, common to all liberal democracies, is the tension between the liberal-democratic institutions and gender equality: after all, liberal democracies have yet to institutionalize many of women's human rights.⁸³⁴ The second is specific to Israeli democracy and is linked to

Israel's self-definition as a "Jewish and democratic state" and to the fact that, de facto but sometimes also de jure, some social cleavages are institutionalized as, for instance, the fundamental cleavage between Arab and Jewish citizens of Israel.⁸³⁵ In that case, the fact that Jewish and Arab women's modes of exclusion are different must be considered in order to understand how distinct kinds of intersections between ethnicity, class, religion, and gender organize different paths to rights and opportunities.⁸³⁶

I also argue that the Israeli women's movement – a pivotal actor in the vibrant Israeli civil society – is at the turn of the 21st century a movement that, to a limited extent, manages to promote gender equality through practices that penetrate many different areas of life, transforming the gender order's normative structure.⁸³⁷

The article is divided into four parts: firstly, "The march toward full equality" deals with the impressive advances in gender equality in Israel. Secondly, "Gender inequality: the patriarchal power structure" points to the different mechanisms that discriminate against and subjugate Israeli women. Thirdly, "The intersectionality of gender inequality" refers to the deep and cumulative social cleavages reflected in different kinds of access to social resources and in different structural opportunities for different groups of women. Fourthly, "Navigating inequality: the challenge of feminism" explores how feminism in Israel challenges the gender order and sometimes even succeeds in making meaningful spaces for women's human rights.

The march toward full equality

Among the numerous indicators of the march toward gender equality in Israel, the first is life expectancy, which provides insight into women's and men's living conditions. Israel, like most of the OECD countries, has enjoyed large gains in life expectancy over the past decades, thanks to the rising standard of living, public health interventions, and progress in medical care. In 2012, life expectancy in Israel reached 81.8 years:

83.6 for women and 79.9 for men – above the OECD average, which was 80.2 years, 82.2 for women and 77.5 for men.⁸³⁸

Another indicator of gender equality is education, which plays a key role in enabling women to participate in society and in the economy and increases their autonomy in the private and public spheres. It appears that over the past decade tertiary attainment has greatly increased across OECD countries. In 2011, on average, 31% of people aged 25–64 years had an academic degree: 29% of the men and 33% of the women. In Israel in the same year the percentages were, respectively, 45%, 42%, and 49%. Thus, Israel's inhabitants, especially its women, appear to be among the most educated in the world.⁸³⁹

One more key indicator of gender equality is women's access to employment. As research has amply shown, paid work – when women have control over economic resources – enables them to improve their position in the family and in society at large, transforming gender norms, together with cultural and legal practices.⁸⁴⁰ In the OECD countries, women's employment has been growing, generally speaking, for decades. So, in 2012, among persons aged 15–64 years, the OECD average employment rate was 70.9% (79.7% for men and 62.3% for women), while in Israel the average rate was 71.5% (75.9% for men and 67.1% for women).⁸⁴¹ It can thus be argued that Israeli women, because of their increased participation in higher education and their higher qualifications, increasingly make up a significant percentage of the labor force, a process that is transforming the patriarchal order, its structures, and its norms.

This process is likewise reflected in various areas, among them the political and legal ones. The leap forward in women's descriptive representation (which reflects the sociological composition of the electorate) in the 2013 elections is a case in point, because the 19th Knesset holds a record with 27 women MKs (22.5%). Even though this percentage is only slightly higher than the world average (22.3%) and globally places Golda Meir's country in 66th place out of 188 countries, and regionally in 20th place among the 34 OECD countries, this is

still a leap forward. One reason is that from the first Knesset (1949) to the 15th (1999), the percentage of women MKs never exceeded 10%; only after that did it begin to rise steadily.⁸⁴² Moreover, the “chosen” women, much more so than in the past, now represent different societal groups, including “newcomers” (from the FSU and Ethiopia) and disabled women.⁸⁴³

The other reason for what I see as a leap forward relates to women’s substantive representation that seeks to advance a group’s interests – in our case, women’s human rights.⁸⁴⁴ One example is the first official feminist Knesset lobby, *Shdulat Haverot HaKnesset*, initiated by Merav Michaeli (Labor) in 2013, of which most of the female MKs are members. This lobby promotes gender equality by including gender issues and gender mainstreaming in Knesset legislation.⁸⁴⁵

In the legal area, it may even be appropriate to suggest that gender equality has been secured as a basic principle in Israeli legislation. Israel’s Declaration of Independence (1948) states that Israel will ensure complete equality to all its inhabitants, irrespective of religion, race, or sex – a declaration further developed in the Women’s Equal Rights Law (1951). This approach is reflected by many other laws, amendments, and court rulings, regarding property relations between spouses; equal opportunity in employment; single-parent or same-sex families; domestic violence; sexual harassment and women’s trafficking. Thus, it comes as no surprise that in 2013 Israel ranked 19th of 187 countries in the Human Development Index.⁸⁴⁶

Paxton and Hughes⁸⁴⁷ argue that although there has been substantial progress toward gender equality in much of the world, women still face substantial gendered disparities. Israel, of course, is no exception.

Gender inequality: the patriarchal power structure

Among the central parameters of women's health are women's rights to bodily autonomy, movement, and reproductive freedom. Obviously, that excludes any kind of physical or sexual assault, limited access to contraception, corporeal mutilation, and femicide. Among these issues, one of the most salient is domestic violence or violence against women by someone they are intimate with.⁸⁴⁸ In Israel, according to a survey conducted in 2013 by the Women's International Zionist Organization (WI-ZO), a leading women's organization, the incidence of domestic violence is on the rise. In 2013 alone, 19 women were murdered by their partners, and 11,000 domestic violence complaints were filed with the police. WIZO estimates the number of domestic violence victims as 200,000 women.⁸⁴⁹ As the 2010 UN report reminds us, current statistical measurements of violence against women provide a limited source of information, though it is widely accepted that this abuse is a manifestation of the historically unequal gender power relations.⁸⁵⁰ So, one can say that notwithstanding the "march to equality," domestic violence is still an acute problem that highlights the power of patriarchy in Israel.⁸⁵¹

The labor market is no less an indication of the strength of patriarchy. Despite women's education and employment rates, women are still generally absent in top positions. This is connected to the normative Israeli gendered division of labor and to the ideology that women's participation in the labor market is second to their work at home. This is also connected to occupational segregation, caused by gender-based discrimination that often occurs either horizontally, across occupations, or vertically, within the hierarchy of occupations.⁸⁵² It is also related to the fact that women work fewer hours than men: in 2012, 18.5% of Israeli men worked part-time compared to 34.9% of the women,⁸⁵³ of course, not always by choice. These rates are much higher than in the OECD countries, where the average rates in 2010 were 6% and 25%, respectively.⁸⁵⁴ Yet, the full meaning of gender-based discrimination in women's employment appears in the gender gap in average gross hourly earnings of full-time employees, which in 2011 amounted to 26% in Israel, while in

the OECD it was “only” 17.3%.⁸⁵⁵ It seems that in Israel more than in many OECD countries the societal legacies justify unequal pay for men and women for the same or similar work.

The picture in the political arena is no less ambivalent. The descriptive and especially the substantive representation of women in the 19th Knesset mark some improvement in gender equality. But the situation is different at the cabinet level and at the local level. The cabinet now has four women ministers (18%). However, as Kenig emphasizes, “[t]he scarcity of women in the Israeli cabinet is extreme in a comparative perspective. Israel is located in the 95th place out of 133 countries, according to the World Economic Forum [...]. Amongst the 34 OECD nations, Israel is close to the bottom of the list, ranking 29th.”⁸⁵⁶

The data at the local level are, in fact, more disturbing. In the 2013 elections, only 6 women (2%) were elected as heads of local authorities: four as mayors and two as heads of regional councils. In the municipal councils, women comprise 14% of the members.⁸⁵⁷ Here, too, Israel is close to the bottom of the list globally.⁸⁵⁸

However, it is certainly the legal domain that is the most puzzling. On the one hand, laws exist that promote gender equality and women’s human rights, as noted briefly above. On the other hand, personal law in Israel is exclusively regulated by religious courts, following the Law of the Rabbinical Courts (1953) and the Law of the Druze Religious Courts (1962).⁸⁵⁹ Underlying Israel’s personal law are not only the impossibility of interfaith marriage but also the legitimation of constructing women as the property of their husbands. One of the consequences is that married Jewish women cannot divorce without their husband’s consent – even if they are battered women. The principle that a woman belongs to her husband, a principle shared by all recognized religions in Israel, also dictates the cultural and sometimes legal rules of modesty, which relegate women to the private sphere, allowing them to speak, sing, or appear in public, if at all, only under male supervision. In other words, personal law subordinates women to the authority of their husband and of

their ethno-religious community's male members. This situation is specific to Israel and does not exist in liberal democracies.⁸⁶⁰

Three interrelated factors can help us grasp the essence of this gender order. The first is that Israel, like many countries in the “global village,” has a neo-liberal policy, fueled by the “secondary work” ideology. This means that women more often than men are incorporated in the workplace in conditions of precarization (paid work with limited duration; lack of control over working conditions; lack of protection in employment, and low incomes).⁸⁶¹ As an illustration one may point to the fact that women represent 67.3% of the lowest income decile and only 23.3% of the top income decile.⁸⁶²

The second factor that helps us understand gender inequality in Israel is the enduring Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which sustains a comprehensive social and cultural structure and encompasses all aspects of life. This explains why Israel is one of the only states to enforce mandatory conscription for women – a factor sometimes perceived as central to gender equality – and why (Jewish) women serve as soldiers in the Israel Defense Forces, comprising about 34% of the regular army and 3% of combat-related units.⁸⁶³ Nevertheless, the Israeli military has always been organized along gender lines and has always shaped gendered opportunity structures for civilian society. Thus, the military furnishes men – in comparison with (Jewish) women – with more personal, social, and institutional capital, which helps them to establish themselves in civilian life, especially in politics. That is, the military is one of the main forces in the construction of men's hegemony in Israel.⁸⁶⁴

The third factor that contributes to the understanding of gender inequality in Israel is the exceptional centrality of religion in codifying the social order. It can even be argued that religious personal law is “nationalized,” because it preserves the symbolic and legal boundaries of the national collectives, especially those between Jews and Arabs and those between different Arab groups. Religious personal law is also perceived as central to the creation of the collective

identities of the competing ethno-religious groups in Israel's population. Thus, in a state of conflict, even though the existing situation constructs women as "others," neither group wants to change it.⁸⁶⁵

As noted above, intersectionality posits that multiple social categories intersect at the structural level, creating multiple interlocking systems of privilege and oppression. I now elaborate on this point.

The intersectionality of gender inequality

In Israel, women's access to the labor market differs meaningfully across the different ethno-religious groups. For example, in 2012 the average employment rate among Jewish women (aged 15+) was more than 60%; so was the average employment rate of Israeli-born women and of women immigrants from the FSU;⁸⁶⁶ so, too, was the rate for ultra-Orthodox women (62.1% in 2011)⁸⁶⁷ and for Ethiopian-Israeli women aged 22–64 (62% in 2009–2010).⁸⁶⁸ Dramatic disparities in employment rates, however, appear when we refer to Arab women. In 2012, the employment rate for Arab men was 66.1%, but for women (aged 15+) it was only 27.1%: 48.1% for Christian women, 34.7% for Druze women, and 23.7% for Muslim women.⁸⁶⁹ This is surprising if we consider that the education level of Arab women has increased continuously and that in 2011, for 24% of the men and 24% of the women it was 13 years or more.⁸⁷⁰ This is all the more surprising if we also consider the decreasing fertility rates among Arab women: in 2011, the total fertility rate (TFR) in Israel was 2.98–3 for Jews, 3.51 for Muslims, 2.19 for Christians, and 2.33 for Druze; that is, there was a radical decrease for the Arabs and a slight increase for the Jews, in comparison to the 1990s.⁸⁷¹ The rise in education and the decrease in fertility rates should have boosted employment of Arab women greatly, but their discrimination as women in their community and their discrimination as Arabs in the society at large have kept this from happening.⁸⁷²

In addition to access to the labor market, income levels also have a decisive impact on gender equality. However, there are important income discrepancies among Israeli women.⁸⁷³ For instance, in 2011 the average income of women in Israel was NIS 6,871; Arab women earned 70% of that and ultra-Orthodox women earned 72%. According to Dahan, in 2011 even the average gross hourly wage of Mizrahi women (Jewish women born in Israel to a father born in Asia or Africa) was 20% lower than that of Ashkenazi women (Jewish women born in Israel to a father born in Europe or America) but not including ultra-Orthodox or new immigrants from the FSU.⁸⁷⁴

In sum, with regard to access to employment and earnings the Israeli labor market is not only gendered but also highly segmented. It is structured by different opportunities and different returns, for the same or equivalent qualifications, according to gender, ethnic, religious, and national affiliations. Thus Mizrahi, ultra-Orthodox, and Arab women are overrepresented among precarious (women's) jobs, especially if they live in the geographic and/or socioeconomic periphery.⁸⁷⁵

In connection with intersectionality, one must also consider politics. From this perspective, the limits of the leap forward in the Knesset are manifest, especially in connection with the fact that Islamist and ultra-Orthodox parties, under the guise of "multiculturalism," do not allow women to be elected. This explains in part why among women Knesset members only one is an Arab, elected on a non-religious list and why no ultra-Orthodox woman has ever been elected. At the cabinet level, the picture is similar: of the four women who serve as ministers, three belong to the Ashkenazi elite and one is from the FSU. There are no Mizrahi women, though Mizrahi have been 25% of the ministers, on average, for the past two decades.⁸⁷⁶ In local elections, of the 330 women elected, only eleven are Arab,⁸⁷⁷ a score that is low mainly because of deals between clans and extended families (*hamullas*) and their active exclusion of women from the political arena.⁸⁷⁸

Now I turn to how feminism has challenged this gender order in the past and may challenge it in the present and the future.

Navigating inequality: the challenges of feminism

Feminism is an ideology and a social movement that promotes women's human rights. It is a prominent actor in the dynamic Israeli civil society. Its impact, especially from the 1990s, is manifest in the gendering of dominant discourses and practices. Israeli feminism is supported by a multitude of women's and feminist organizations and NGOs, which enable diverse voices to be heard in the public sphere. It is backed by various programs of women's studies, men's studies, and gender studies, in universities and academic colleges throughout the country. State feminism – comprising the state agencies that work to produce feminist outcomes – is also an important supportive agent. At this level, the most prestigious institution is the Knesset Committee for the Status of Women and Gender Equality (formerly the Knesset Committee on the Status of Women), established in 1992, which has been highly instrumental in promoting legislative measures and in raising awareness of women's concerns.⁸⁷⁹

One salient manifestation of this feminist orientation is the case of President Moshe Katsav who was sentenced in 2011 to seven years in prison for rape and sexual harassment. Another such manifestation is the local legislation of international law, such as the Fourth Amendment to the Women's Equal Rights Law on Women, Peace, and Security (2005), implementing Security Council Resolution 1325, and calling – thus far unsuccessfully – for increased participation of women at all levels of decision-making for the prevention of conflict and in peace negotiations.⁸⁸⁰

The strongest display of this feminist orientation, however, is the emergence in the 2009 elections of a “gender gap”; that is, more Jewish women than men voted for the center and the left and more Arab women than men voted for *Balad*, Zoabi's

party. This is explained by the fact that in these elections Tzipi Livni discovered the “feminist ticket” and played it successfully, while Zoabi – included in her party’s list because of its one-third quota for women – attracted some young Arab women.⁸⁸¹ In the 2013 elections, the gender gap reappeared, even more powerfully. At that time, three women led left and center parties – Gal-On (Left), Yachimovich (Labor), and Livni (Center) – while Zoabi kept her place on the Balad list.⁸⁸

² Thus, in 2013, more women than men voted for these parties and, as noted above, the whole process was also reflected in the leap forward of women’s political representation. Following Shamir and Gedalya-Lavie’s conclusion,⁸⁸³ it can be argued that women are becoming a political force because of the growing gender awareness of female voters.

Nevertheless, feminism is still trapped in the institutional tensions that characterize Israel and, compared to liberal democracies, has more difficulty in bringing about systemic change. Not only has the neo-liberal economy led, in Israel as in many parts of the world, to the NGOization (professionalization) of the feminist movement; the socio-cultural cleavages that characterize Israel’s population and the ongoing conflict have also led to the glorification of identity politics. The result has been a fragmented and less-politicized women’s movement, usually supervised by middle-class actors, strong enough to bring about cultural changes but not strong enough to shatter deeply entrenched gender barriers in the economy, family law, and politics. Therefore, to gain more influence, feminist actors – grassroots organizations, NGOs, and feminist state institutions such as the Knesset Committee for the Status of Women and Gender Equality or the feminist Knesset lobby – must incorporate economic, family, and political women’s human rights on their agendas.

First on that agenda should be the fact that so many women, especially Arab women, of working age do not work, and the fact that so many working women work in precarious jobs. This priority is based on three assumptions. Firstly, according to the OECD, this picture is one of the factors that explain why Israel has the highest rate of poverty in the OECD: in 2012, 20.9% of families, as compared with the

OECD average, 10.9%.⁸⁸⁴ Secondly, the dynamics of inequality in Israel were repoliticized in the 2011 Tent Protest by the young generation, including young feminist women, who challenged key elements of the prevailing model of state-economy relations, in pursuit of a remaking of the structure of inequality.⁸⁸⁵ Thirdly, the gender gap described above derives markedly from the greater support among women for welfare issues and for state intervention in the economy.⁸⁸⁶

In that context, there is a need to elaborate a social-democratic strategy that takes into account the diverse groups of women, including the social downgrading of FSU women,⁸⁸⁷ the marginalization of Ethiopian-Israeli women,⁸⁸⁸ and female labor migrants, with regard to whom many of the policies in Israel are not consistent with the CEDAW.⁸⁸⁹

With regard to women's human rights, high priority at the national level should be given to family law issues, by taking into account, for example, the proposals advanced by *Kolech*, a leading religious-feminist organization,⁸⁹⁰ and those raised by Arab feminists, regarding, inter alia, polygamy and "family honor" killings.⁸⁹¹

Finally, to have a significant impact on women's political representation, feminist actors could intensify their demands for legal gender quotas, mandated by electoral law, at the national and local levels, instead of the existing voluntary party quotas. This might increase women's representation, which is still low at the Knesset level and very low at the local level, and could impose, according to the basic democratic ethic, women's representation on the ultra-Orthodox and Islamist parties.

Because society and politics in Israel remain dominated by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and neo-liberal discourse, it is naive to think that this program will be implemented soon. But small steps in this direction, supported by a critical mass of feminist actors, may become a big step on the long journey to gender equality.⁸⁹²

Conclusions

In this paper I have analyzed the dual picture of women in Israel: an impressive march toward gender equality paradoxically embedded in a virulent patriarchal power structure. I have argued that this duality is basically shaped by Israel's neoliberal economy intersecting with gendered ethno-religious cleavages that characterize Israel's population. I have also noted that the women's movement has been strong enough to bring about cultural changes, and with it a political gender gap, but not strong enough to shatter deeply entrenched gender barriers, in the economy, family law, and politics. Consequently, some categories of women, especially in the socioeconomic center of Israel, have made much more significant steps toward gender equality than others. It remains to be seen if the feminist actors, much more present in the public sphere than in the past, will be willing and able to transform at least part of this situation and by doing so, to democratize Israeli democracy.

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26. The Schizophrenic Reality of Israeli Women: A Cinematic Perspective, 2014

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This paper was completed in November 2014.

Preface

This chapter offers a perspective on the status of Israeli women in 2014. Rather than present the standard review of women's rights in the public and private spheres, the extent of their sexual victimization and their status in politics, the workplace and academia, the chapter explores Israeli women's contemporary cinema and follows the themes and critiques raised by it. This way I introduce you, simultaneously, to Israeli women's realities, as experienced and critically portrayed by Israeli women filmmakers, as well as to women's cinema in contemporary (2014) Israel. Finally, I offer a theoretical feminist perspective on Israeli gender construction that may frame the movies' portrayal and critique of Israeli women's lives.

“Women's movies” were never a significant constituent of Israel's movie industry; at least not until 2014. In the course of this year, audiences were introduced to six new Israeli feature movies written and/ or directed by women, focusing on Israeli women's lives and expressing powerful feminist critique:⁸⁹³ *Six Acts*,⁸⁹⁴ *Zero Motivation*, *She Is Coming Home*, *That Lovely Girl*, *Self Made* and *Gett: The Trial of Vivian Amsalem*. Four of the six enjoyed very high public visibility as well as critical acclaim. Written in 2014, this chapter presents and discusses five of these movies,⁸⁹⁵ offering a conceptual framework that may illuminate and enhance their social critique.⁸⁹⁶

Any non-Israeli watching these six feminine-feminist movies would likely suppose that they reflect two distinct societies. One (depicted in *That Lovely Girl*, *Six Acts*, *Zero Motivation*, *She Is Coming Home* and *Self Made*) is a 21st-century liberal society, in which women enjoy formal equality and liberty and struggle with Israeli versions of gender predicaments typical of contemporary Western societies (sexual abuse; insidious employment discrimination, such as sophisticated glass ceiling; persisting patriarchal gender stereotypes; and, in *Self Made*, the double burden of being a woman and a member of a conservative Muslim minority in a liberal Western state). The other society (depicted in *Gett*) is one that adheres to bluntly traditional, patriarchal norms, interpreted and upheld by explicitly conservative, all-male, religious institutions. For an innocent onlooker, it is hard to grasp that the women portrayed in all six movies are members of a single society; that the two seemingly distinct social realities not merely exist in Israel, but both apply to the very same Israeli women. For most Israelis, this extreme duality is so obvious that it is completely transparent; they cannot imagine a different socio-legal reality.

This inconceivable duality and the schizophrenic existential condition it imposes on Israeli women is, in my mind, Israel's greatest gender predicament.⁸⁹⁷ Through Israel's 2014 women's movies this chapter presents this conundrum, pointing to the underlying national-religious socio-cultural structure that upholds it. I rely on the six mentioned movies to illustrate my argument and reinforce it. I begin by addressing the specific gender concerns that each of the movies portrays and calls attention to, and continue to discuss the deep rift presented by the aggregate, between the liberal and the patriarchal aspects of Israeli society; the free and the subordinated aspects of Israeli women's existential condition.

Sexual objectification and abuse: *Six Acts* and *That Lovely Girl*

Keren Yedaya's *That Lovely Girl* did not enjoy the huge popularity of the other 2014 women's movies. This is hardly surprising, given that the movie features an incestuous relationship between a sadistic father (Tzahi Grad) and his 22-year-old dependent daughter, Tammy (Maayan Turgeman). Based on an autobiography by an Israeli woman writer who calls herself Shez, the movie exposes its audience to the stifling reality of a young woman imprisoned in a tormenting relationship with a dominant, self-centered father. He loves, degrades, pampers, attacks, torments, controls and rapes her regularly. He is the exclusive center of her confined world. She is completely devoted to him, fears him, is torn with jealousy when he sees other women, and expresses her frustration, humiliation and self-hatred in bouts of bulimia and self-cutting. Attempting to escape her imprisonment, she "allows" a group of nice young men on the beach to have serial intercourse with her. Her hopeless attempt to establish a life away from his reach, with the help of a kindly female stranger, is doomed to fail; he is the home she longs to come back to. Relentlessly trapping the viewer in enclosed spaces, the movie offers no explanations, insights, or hope.⁸⁹⁸

There is no reason to think that incestuous abuse, its manifestations and results, are any different in Israel than elsewhere.⁸⁹⁹ The painful *Seder* meal in Moshe and Tammy's home could have been a Christmas one. In the 21st century, Israeli public discourse on this topic has developed subtlety and nuance. Israel's mainstream is increasingly exposed to reports of incestuous exploitation and to its disastrous results, including victims' self-destructive patterns of conduct, such as anorexia and bulimia, self-cutting, alcohol and drug abuse, and dangerous sexual conduct that often ends in repeat victimization. *Six Acts* seems to pick up where *That Lovely Girl* leaves off, focusing on a teenager whose low self-esteem and apparent self-destructiveness play into male adolescents' need to practice sexual conquest. *That Lovely Girl's* gang rape on the beach is the theme developed in detail in *Six Acts*.

Written by Rona Segal and directed by Jonathan Gurfinkel (both young filmmakers), *Six Acts* unfolds how a teenager's desperate longing to feel accepted by her upper-class

schoolmates, results in her systematic sexual abuse by a group of these “good boys.” New in a Herzliya high school, 16-year-old Gilli (Sivan Levy) is aching to make friends. To her chagrin, hers is a middle-class family in a *nouveau riche* neighborhood, equipped with private swimming pools, fancy cars, I-phones, expensive clothes and frequent travel abroad. Half consciously Gilli offers one of the “coolest” guys in her class the single thing of value that she feels she owns: her body. His close friend, Omri (Eviatar Mor), boldly demands his share of the action, and Gilli finds herself passed from one adolescent to the next, her worth decreasing with every sexual interaction. Clutching on to her desperate hope and self-delusion, Gilli pretends to welcome the sexual encounters and resorts to alcohol and provocative conduct. This merely “justifies” the boys’ disrespectful demeanor and the other girls’ condemnation and distancing. Parents and teachers seem to see no evil, hear none and certainly say naught. The poignant film captures the banality of abuse and downward spiral, and the cynical cruelty of liberal societies’ sanctification of “choice,” “consent,” “agency,” “self-determination” and “sexual liberty.” It well deserved the many awards bestowed on it both in Israel and internationally.

In many ways, *Six Acts* – like *That Lovely Girl* – addresses universalistic themes, and, as noted by many reviewers, could have been set in any neo-capitalistic consumer society in the world. Simultaneously, it is thoroughly Israeli in its realistic – almost documentary – depiction of youth in an affluent Israeli community (Herzliya), as well as in its commentary on family and group dynamics and gender relations in the upper Israeli echelons.

Much like the men in Tom Topor and Jonathan Kaplan’s *The Accused* (1988), the adolescents in *Six Acts* commit sexual abuse pressured by their peers and the prevailing dictates of “masculinity.” Each of them feels compelled to prove to his cohorts that he is as manly as the next guy, and that he too can conquer and penetrate the available female. This, of course, comes at the expense of a vulnerable, lonely, very young woman, who, encouraged by liberal conventions, presents herself as sexually active, willing and desiring. The young

men treat her as a sexual object through which they can flaunt their “masculinity” and establish hierarchical status amongst themselves. As an object, the more “used” she is, the less desirable. The adults on screen, mostly the boys’ parents, wish to seem liberal and cool much like their sons. Due to liberal acceptance of Gilli’s “sexual conduct” and traditional belief that “boys will be boys,” they lack empathy and a moral backbone, and choose to conveniently look the other way.

“Liberal” confusion and sexual peer pressure among young men is, of course, not uniquely Israeli.⁹⁰⁰ In the Israeli context, the young men face mandatory military service and likely combat experience. The teenagers’ sense of necessity to “conquer” young women is inseparable from the sense implanted in them that the enemy, the other, must be combated and defeated. For the film’s young men, raised in a militaristic society, maturation into masculinity involves violence, force, struggle and triumph. It requires doing whatever it takes to get what must be gotten, the end justifying all means. Such initiation into adult manhood renders sexuality as yet another battlefield, and women yet another “other” that must be conquered.

Since 1992, Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty declares that dignity is the fundamental value underlying Israeli society, law, and human rights. But the society’s militaristic orientation, and the indoctrination of men into competitive machoistic manhood, undercut the attempt to foster a dignity-based Israeli society. From a gender oriented perspective, women, particularly in a situation such as Gilli’s, pay a dear price for the social training of men to repress emotions and empathy to the other in the process of becoming militant, “real men.”

In 1998, Israel passed a sexual harassment law, defining sexual harassment as an offense to human dignity, as well as a restriction of liberty, infringement of privacy and gender discrimination.⁹⁰¹ The law lists six prohibited behaviors, defining them as criminal offenses, as well as civil torts and employment transgressions that all employers must prevent in their workplaces. The law has brought about a significant

change in social norms. Nevertheless, the militaristic nature of Israeli society undercuts this progress, breeding and perpetuating men's objectification of women into "others" that must be sexually subjugated.⁹⁰²

Military training for workplace gender discrimination: *Zero Motivation*

This very point is similarly taken up by Talya Lavie's debut movie, *Zero Motivation*, which has enjoyed tremendous popularity, quickly achieving the status of a cult film. When Zohar (Dana Ivgy), the film's protagonist, decides that she must dispense with her virginity, she flirts with a combat soldier passing through her air force camp. He seems shy, a little awkward, but willing. After a long, nerve-wrecking day, they are finally alone together in an empty backyard. Here, the combatant literally attacks Zohar, tearing her clothes off and pushing himself into her. When, taken aback, she asks him to be a little gentler, he replies that if it is gentleness she seeks, she should not have taken up a warrior.

Zero Motivation is a quick paced, over-the-top screw-ball military comedy, in the tradition of *The Good Soldier Schweik* (1923, Jaroslav Hašek) and *Catch 22* (1961, Joseph Heller). The near-rape scene transforms into a self-reflective homage to *Thelma and Louise* (1991, Callie Khouri and Ridley Scott), when Zohar's roommate arrives on the scene just in time to prevent the rape. At gunpoint she forces the male soldier to continue with his sexual conquest, but replace Zohar with a trashcan, noting that it is an object more suitable for his action.

Zero Motivation portrays the military experience of young Israeli women stationed in a remote air force camp. They are compelled to perform brainless, menial tasks that fail to challenge or engage them. A thick glass ceiling separates them from the camp's high ranking male officers. Some of the young women, particularly the laughable female officer, buy into the system, repeating empty institutional slogans of patriotic heroism. Others pass the time singing mindlessly and growing numb and dull. One is determined to be transferred to

Tel Aviv, and engages in obsessive plotting and manipulation. Zohar, a bright, witty young woman whose job is to open envelopes and empty paper baskets, struggles to maintain her sanity and individuality. She seeks friendship, explores her femininity and experiments with sexuality – all framed by endless meaningless military rules and regulations. Zohar experiences female bonding, betrayal, loneliness and revenge; she flirts and is sexually attacked. Her army service is portrayed as an Israeli version of initiation into maturity.

The trials of Zohar and her friends are very likely not much different from those of women soldiers in armies of other liberal societies.⁹⁰³ But since in Israel women's military service is mandatory, Zohar – along with many of her peers – feels trapped in a total institution that she would never have chosen to belong to. The confinement to brainless jobs under a thick glass ceiling, the strict, arbitrary rules and regulations that invade privacy, obstruct individual growth and restrict the exploration of femininity and sexuality – these are identified by the films' Israeli female viewers as rites of passage into Israeli adulthood that they too were forced to endure. These rites of passage constitute indoctrination into acceptance of male dominance in the workplace, as well as militaristic male-centered mentality in all spheres of life. They encourage Israeli women who wish to intermingle with hegemony, to adopt chauvinistic points of view and distance themselves from other women, femininity or feminism.

Restrictive stereotypes of femininity: *She Is Coming Home*

Maya Dreifuss' *She Is Coming Home* won the Jerusalem International Film Festival Award (July 2013) for first-time screen writers and directors. It depicts the thirty-something screen writer Michal (Yael Sharon), who, ending a long relationship, moves back in with her parents in Herzliya and embarks on an enigmatic, unsettling relationship with Ze'ev (Alon Abutbul), a fiftyish married school principle. With neither a husband nor children, Michal is a lone misfit. She

seems to have not a single woman friend. Instead of raising a family and participating in the rat race, she reexamines her parents and their marital relationship, trying out versions of femininity in her own inexplicable dead-end relationship with Ze'ev. Rebelling against her overbearing, embittered, stereotypical "Jewish mother" (Liora Rivlin), Michal vacillates between the roles of "the innocent maiden," playing basketball with Ze'ev's pupils, and "the whore," showing up in his hotel room "dressed to kill." These one-dimensional virgin and whore stereotypes seem to exhaust her sexual imagination, leaving her hurt, frustrated and stuck.

Michal embodies a young, middle-class, Israeli woman who enjoys the freedom granted her by a liberal society to evolve as she pleases and realize her potential. Yet she finds herself trapped in dull feminine stereotypes and conventional gender roles and relations. Struggling to avoid living the stereotype of "dotting, frustrated, martyr mother," performed by her mother, she acts out the stereotypes of the virginal maiden and the voluptuous whore, failing to find her authentic femininity, sexuality and individuality.

In the post-collectivist era, some young Israeli women – such as Michal – refuse to evolve dutifully in a manner most useful for the state and nation. They seek to find not merely their own voices, but also their own femininities, destinations and forms of happiness. They reject the model of "good mother," searching for alternatives. Such young women run into underlying, unacknowledged traditional stereotypes and conventions. Feeling cheated and frustrated, they bang their heads against the stone wall of social norms.

Israel's discriminatory, religious family law – *Gett: The Trial of Vivian Amsalem*

Written and directed by sister and brother Ronit and Shlomi Elkabetz, *Gett* was accepted enthusiastically, receiving three prizes at the Jerusalem International Film Festival (July 2014), two Ophir prizes (September 2014), and the Israeli nomination

for the Best Foreign Language Film competition at the 87th Academy Awards.

Gett is shot, from beginning to end, in a rabbinical family courtroom and the corridor leading to it, depicting the battle fought by Vivian Amsalem (the mesmerizing Ronit Elkabetz) to attain a *gett*, i.e., *halakhic*, Jewish divorce. The movie reveals what is axiomatic for Israelis, but non-Israelis may find utterly perplexing: that divorce in Israel is administered by religious courts, based on their clerical interpretation of ancient religious laws. For Jews who seek to divorce in Israel, this means pleading before an ultra-Orthodox rabbinical court, which applies its ultra-conservative interpretation of the ancient *halakhic* Jewish law. In this court, a married Jewish woman may divorce her husband only if he willingly grants her a *gett*. A woman may request that the rabbinical court coerce her husband to grant her a *gett*, but in order to persuade the court to do so she must convince the rabbis of a good cause.

Vivian Amsalem does not love her husband and believes that he hates her and will do anything to hurt her. She claims that they are not suitable, and that she does not wish to share her life with him. But for the rabbis this is not sufficient legal cause to even demand of a man to grant his wife a *gett*, let alone coerce him to do so. “Know your place, woman,” they scold her. A witness for the defense addresses the rabbis, offering his own life as an example: “Do you think my wife and I suit each other? No, we don’t. So I make her suit me.” Despite Vivian’s five years’ persistence, the rabbinical court refrains from offering her any kind of relief.

Whereas sexual abuse has been the topic of several powerful 21st-century Israeli movies,⁹⁰⁴ *Gett* may be the first Israeli mainstream feature movie to focus on the acute topic of rabbinical family courts and their administration of divorce.⁹⁰⁵ Although evident to most – perhaps all – Israelis, this topic is taken for granted to the degree of being invisible.

The legal reality on this point is clear and noncontroversial. Israel has never enacted civil law regarding marriage and divorce, leaving these institutions exclusively in

the hands of religious courts that administrate them based solely on religious laws. For Jews, these laws are mostly ancient *halakhic* laws, as interpreted by the conservative ultra-Orthodox rabbis who sit as judges in the rabbinical courts. Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari, expert on the topic of family law in rabbinical courts, has described the law on this point – as on many others – in her book *Women in Israel: A State of Their Own*. She begins by clarifying that “Jewish law, perhaps more than any other religious legal system, is pluralistic. It is therefore misleading to present Jewish law as a monolithic normative system or claim a certain representation of Jewish law on a particular issue as an ultimate portrayal of the Jewish law on that issue.”⁹⁰⁶ What is enforced in Israel, through rabbinical courts, as Jewish law, is merely one extremely conservative interpretation of it. Under this law, “marriage is in fact a unilateral act on the part of the man who betroths the woman, in a legal transaction that corresponds to acquisition. The status of men and women during the marriage is far from equal. As a traditional patriarchal system, Jewish law strongly adheres to strict gender roles in the family.” One great difference applies to men’s and women’s sexual conduct:

While a married man’s sexual relationship with a woman other than his wife hardly carries any legal consequence, except for the very rare possibility of considering this to be a ground for divorce, a married woman’s sexual relations with a man other than her husband carry extremely harsh consequences: she is to be immediately divorced while losing her monetary rights otherwise acquired according to the Jewish law. She is prohibited from later marrying either her former husband or the man with whom she had ‘committed adultery,’ and any child that results from the adulterous relationships is considered a ‘bastard’ (*mamzer*) who is precluded from marrying within the Jewish community, except for a convert or a *mamzer* like him/herself. These grave and unequal consequences of women’s extramarital relations profoundly implicate women’s position within the divorce process, which is the main form of discrimination against women under Jewish law.⁹⁰⁷

Halperin-Kaddari emphasizes that “[w]hat distinguishes Jewish marriage and divorce rules from other legal and religious systems is that both marriage and divorce are autonomous, voluntary acts of two individuals, not legal actions constructed by the external judicial or religious organ.”⁹⁰⁸ What this means is that marriage and divorce can only be performed by the parties themselves, of their free will, and more specifically: by the man, of his free will, since the

woman's will may be substituted (for a legal presumption or a rabbinical decision). The rabbinical courts' function is thus not "constitutive," but merely "declaratory": they declare that the man has freely and mindfully "purchased" a woman for a wife, or that he freely and mindfully divorced her, i.e., relinquished his rights over her and set her free. "Where there is no consent, no divorce can be processed, since contemporary rabbinical courts perceive themselves incompetent to annul marriages, although Jewish law does provide for this mechanism under certain circumstances."⁹⁰⁹

One would think that if a woman fails to obtain a *gett*, she could separate from her husband *de facto*, and start a new family. But *halakhically*, and therefore legally in Israel, in such a case she remains married, i.e., she continues to belong to her husband, and her new relationship is considered adulterous. This implies loss of all her monetary rights, and imposition of the *mamzer* status on her children, which means that they are barred from marrying in Israel. Thus, an Israeli Jewish woman who wishes to maintain her monetary rights and be free to remarry must attain a *gett*. She must convince the rabbinical court to use its power to influence the husband to release her.

Rabbinical courts may use several terms of ordering divorce, from the very lenient recommendation to divorce, to the harshest term permitting coercion under very rare circumstances. Each term permits varying degree of sanctions against the recalcitrant party, and the highest category of coercion permits the incarceration of the recalcitrant husband. However, divorce claims against women are easily accepted by rabbinical courts, and women are ordered to accept the *gett*. Similar claims against men, under similar circumstances, rarely produce an order to grant the *gett*. Contemporary rabbinical courts tend to refrain from compelling a man to divorce.⁹¹⁰

Even physical violence is not usually viewed as justifying coercion of a divorce on the man, but merely a recommendation for him to grant a *gett*. Since this is common practice and common knowledge:

This leads the way for a common course of negotiation, which generally results in the woman buying her way out of the marriage by paying whatever the husband demands in terms of property rights, child support and so on. Women who refuse to pay for their freedom to remarry have no recourse in the Israeli legal system. They are *agunot*, women who are 'chained' or 'anchored' to their husbands, with no relief available in the religious civil system. [...] Thus, the power imbalance is not remedied by the judicial system.⁹¹¹

This is also the fate of a childless widow (a woman whose husband died without leaving offspring). She is *halakhically*, and so legally, considered married to the dead husband's brother, and can only be free to remarry if and when the brother agrees to divorce her, in a procedure called *halitza*. "In these circumstances, the widow's freedom to remarry depends on the deceased's brother's cooperation, and there are cases of money being demanded in exchange for *halitza*. [...] According to data supplied by the Administrator of the Rabbinical Courts, there were twenty such cases of women in need of *halitza* on average a year during the 1990s."⁹¹² The passing of a new 1995 law, Rabbinical Courts (Enforcement of Divorce Decrees) (Temporary Measures), had a small impact, because "making use of this mechanism is dependent upon the personal conviction of the religious judge as to its *halakhic* legitimacy. Furthermore, on the practical level, still fewer than half the cases where restraining orders are issued actually result in a divorce: 71 of 163."⁹¹³

This is the reality that the 2014 movie *Gett* vividly depicts. As mentioned earlier, despite wide public awareness of this extremely discriminatory socio-legal reality, *Gett* is the first Israeli feature movie to openly address, portray and criticize it.

Four of Israel's 2014 women's movies depict and offer a feminist critique of incestuous abuse, adolescent group intercourse, militaristic chauvinism, confining gender roles and stereotypes and indoctrination into male domination in the workplace and the public sphere. All this is set against the portrayal of Israeli society as a liberal, Western one, and its gender concerns as typical of such societies.⁹¹⁴ The movies further attest to the professional proficiency, independence, feminist awareness and power of Israeli women filmmakers. The movie *Gett* exposes the religious-patriarchal, explicitly gender discriminatory and oppressive nature of Israel's marriage and divorce law. The agglomerate of movies reveals an unsettling duality in Israel's construction and treatment of its women, which I now turn to address.

Conceptual framework: the double Zionist standard regarding women

The Israeli Declaration of Independence (1948) constituted gender equality, and the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty (1992) guaranteed full human rights to all Israelis, men and women alike. This seems to have reflected and refracted women's self-perception. In the early days of statehood, as in the preceding decades of Zionist pioneer settlement, Israeli women proudly posed (in very short pants and sleeves) toiling the land and carrying weapons; they pronounced and celebrated their right to fully and equally participate in agricultural work, as well as military service and society building.⁹¹⁵ In the early 1970s, they took pride in Golda Meir's prime ministry, and in 2007 they did not hesitate to demand – and bring about – the investigation of Israeli president, Moshe Katsav, for rape and sexual harassment, which eventually led to his resignation, prosecution, conviction and incarceration. Accordingly, most Israelis, men and women alike, are quick to state that Israeli women have never needed feminism, since they have always enjoyed full equality, power and high esteem. At the same time, these very same Israelis are fully aware of Israel's marriage and divorce laws, which subjugate women to men and to archaic religious institutions, which discriminate and humiliate them. Most women, like men, seem to accept this reality as indisputable fate.⁹¹⁶ It seems that in Israel, women are conceived as equal citizens and powerful individuals – and at the same time “naturally” discriminated by patriarchal, religious family law. Where does this double standard come from, and what deep, collective purpose does it serve?

I suggest that the source of this split can be traced to the original goals of political Zionism, the national Jewish movement that envisioned the Jewish state of Israel and shaped it accordingly.⁹¹⁷ Political Zionism was established by central European Jews at the end of the 19th century, the era of nationalism, in response to European national movements' blunt rejection of Jews. This rejection was allegedly based on Jewish men's

insufficient manliness. Jews such as Theodor Herzl, the founder of the political Zionist movement, were integrated through education, economic activity and legal rights in their European societies, but were commonly not viewed as manly enough to be considered full members of the nations in which they lived.⁹¹⁸ Herzl himself attended a German-speaking university, studied law, was a journalist and a playwright, but had to struggle for membership in a German fraternity, since the initiation involved dueling, a ritual that Jews were not considered manly enough to partake in.⁹¹⁹ Political Zionists were determined to prove to the world – and to themselves – that they could be as manly and nationalistic as any other group of European men. Their vision was not merely to establish a Jewish state, but to establish a new Jewish manhood, adequately masculine and nationalistic. More specifically, in line with European notions, the new Jew would be assertive, bold, self-restrained, commanding and honorable in his dealings with other men, his peers; he would be the powerful patriarch of the Jewish family and vis-à-vis his Jewish wife; he would be a member of a manly, autonomous, self-determining national collective – a Zionist. In the eyes of the founding fathers of political Zionism, Jewish men of their day (many of whom were yeshiva students) were effeminate in comparison with other European men, dominated by their powerful (“manly”) wives and hence members of a dishonorable, despised collective. Reconstructing the Jewish man was a monumental task that required the movement’s full attention.

Political Zionism, much like other European national movements of that era, was almost completely oblivious to women and femininity.⁹²⁰ The political Zionist movement was only interested in women inasmuch as they could either hinder or enable and support the creation of new, honorable, powerful Jewish men. No energy was dedicated to the envisioning of a new Jewish woman: she was to be the mirror in which the new Jewish man would see himself as – and become – a masculine, nationalistic man. Accordingly, the Zionist woman was

expected to fulfill several roles, all reflecting and facilitating the needs of the new Jewish man.

In a binary response to the Jewish collective's traditional European depiction as a single-gender, "feminine," "effeminate" group, Zionism aspired to transform Jews into a single-gender super-manly group. In the eyes of the world, therefore, Zionist women were required to be as manly and honorable as the men. In the internal public sphere, in which Jewish men were to interact with each other honorably, women were expected to adhere to the masculine honorable standards, yet not to compete with the "real men" or challenge their superiority. They were, rather, to behave as "secondary," "diminished" men, leaving the front stage and lead roles to the true Jewish men. In the private realm of the Jewish family, the Zionist woman was to stand by her new Jewish man and allow him to rule as a powerful patriarch.

I believe that these expectations, laid down in Zionist novels, plays, public lectures and countless letters and diaries, were fully understood by Zionist women, and on the whole – internalized by them. I argue that this unwritten pact between Zionist men and women underlies gender construction of Israeli (Zionist, mainstream) society to this day. Israeli women have by and large accepted the requests of Zionism, and constructed their self-perception accordingly. They have learned to be proud members of the manly, national, Zionist collective, "lesser men" in the internal Israeli public sphere and traditional women to their Jewish men in the private family sphere.

When Zionist women posed, at the turn of the 20th century, with weapons and work tools, they did so knowing full well that in fact they were almost unanimously denied participation in combat or agricultural work.⁹²¹ Posing for the cameras they were dutifully preserving the equality myth, to enhance the collective's manly honor among the nations. Their photos demonstrated that all Zionists, men and women alike, were equally "manly." Golda Meir, the single woman prime minister in the history of Israel, held cabinet meetings in her kitchen, always in skirts, and tirelessly stressed her grandmotherly characteristics. She was said to be a "real

man,” but even holding the highest political position in the state, found it necessary to reassure the men surrounding her that she did not threaten or overshadow their manhood. In the private family sphere Israeli women mostly accept the halakhic law that subjugates them, as if the Israeli legislature were powerless and incapable of enacting modern, egalitarian laws of marriage and divorce. In so doing, they enable their men to be omnipotent patriarchs, just like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, assuming the traditional role of the nation’s mothers (Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah). This social reality is openly reflected in the Law of Women’s Equal Rights (1951), which refrains (section 5) from applying gender equality to marriage and divorce. The same socio-legal reality is reaffirmed in the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty, which upholds (section 10) all existing Israeli law, including the discriminatory laws of marriage and divorce.

Since the 1990s, Israeli society has gradually learned that women in Israel are battered, raped, harassed and murdered by their husbands and fathers as in any other part of the world; that Jewish, Zionist men do sometimes batter, rape and kill their wives and daughters. This could have driven Israeli women to rethink their historical Zionist “contract” with their men. I claim that Israeli men and women managed to avoid such reconsideration of the fundamental construction of gender roles by pathologizing a segment of the private sphere, while absolving the remaining terrain. This is to say that some evil, degenerate men amongst us do indeed rape, batter and kill their wives and daughters, but they are the “other” (the sick, outsiders, “not-really-Jewish”). While the pathological part of the private sphere shames us and must be penalized, separated and distanced from the collective body, this aberration does not reflect on the vast, normative parts of the private sphere, and those should be respected and left to rule themselves.

A second look at 2014 Israeli women’s movies

Having presented you with an outline of a conceptual framework, let us return to the 2014 Israeli women's movies reviewed in this chapter. I suggest that, read against the conceptual framework, these movies illuminate the diverse roles that Israeli (Zionist, mainstream) women still fulfill according to the historical Zionist gender "pact" – as well as Israeli women's increasing awareness and growing critique. 2014 women's movies can be read as a socio-cultural text, exposing, reflecting on, and condemning Israeli women's schizophrenic reality and demanding a change.

Shira Gefen's *Self Made* focuses on two women: one Jewish Israeli, the other Palestinian. Here, the Jewish Israeli woman is not a proud member of an honorable, manly collective, but merely a singular individual woman. Through a technical mistake, she finds herself switching places with another singular individual woman: a Palestinian one. The presentation of both protagonists as singular individual women, who may find themselves in each other's lives, offers gender and human individuality as a common denominator that challenges Israeli women's historical role as members in a manly collective. Rather than be "an honorary (small) man" among Jewish Israeli men, the movie's Jewish Israeli woman is situated in a one-on-one relationship with a Palestinian woman.

Six Acts, *Zero Tolerance* and *She Is Coming Home* all challenge Israeli women's role in the internal Israeli public sphere. In these three films, teenage girls, female soldiers and young professional women attempt to be equal persons and citizens in a society in which this means "lesser men." In *Six Acts*, Gilli engages in casual sexual activity, like "one of the boys" – only to realize that beneath the thin conventional layer of gender equality (sometimes mistaken for liberalism), "boys will be boys" and girls will never be allowed to. Young men are collectively encouraged to become "real men" – combatants who overpower the enemy and conquer women – while young women who "sleep around" are not socially constructed as "honorary (if lesser) men" but as "easy to get/shameless sluts." The protagonists of *Zero Motivation* wear the prestigious air force uniform only to be reduced to

performers of mindless secretarial jobs, coffee bearers and sexual objects. Under the guise of the misleading uniform that portrays them as “honorary (if lesser) men,” they are, in fact, demanded to perform the menial feminine gender roles of traditional patriarchal societies. Ten years older, we are told by *She Is Coming Home*, as professional career women, they can choose to become domineering, frustrated, bitter, stereotypical “Jewish mothers,” enjoying the facade of respectability, or vacillate aimlessly between patriarchal stereotypes of “maiden” and “slut.” In all age groups, feminine solidarity is almost non-existent in a world in which women attempt to be “honorary (lesser) men” among men.

That Lovely Girl and *Gett* focus on the private, family sphere. *That Lovely Girl* depicts the paradigmatic, blood curdling reality of the “pathological part” of this sphere, illuminating not merely its horror, but also its proximity to “normal” family life. *Gett* goes a step further, and tears the veil off the holy of holies, declaring that the normative part of the family sphere is similarly pathological. The discrimination, humiliation, restraint and abuse of the Jewish Israeli woman is no better in the normative part of the private sphere than in what has come to be viewed as the pathological exception. This reality, shot in the corridors of the rabbinical family court, is just as claustrophobically oppressive as the prison of a “demented” incestuous father portrayed in *That Lovely Girl*.

The six Israeli women’s movies of 2014 seem to shed light on all three dimensions of Israel’s historical “gender pact,” harshly exposing and critiquing them. Some Israeli Jewish women, apparently, are questioning women’s membership in the manly Zionist collective, which, they suspect, comes at the expense of individual humanity and femininity as well as cross-cultural sisterhood; they are re-evaluating the status of “honorary (lesser) men” in the Israeli public sphere, which, they claim, comes at the expense of sexual abuse and gender discrimination; they are reviewing even the sanctity of the private Israeli Jewish family sphere, which empowers Jewish men while imprisoning women in archaic, pathological socio-legal patriarchal structures. If these movies reflect current sentiments among Israeli Jewish women, if they reach

audiences and affect them, perhaps Israeli women will eventually decide to rethink the historical “gender pact,” form feminine solidarity, and bring about change. When they chose to fight “pathological” sexual abuse they discovered that they had significant power. Perhaps they might do so again.

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27. Gender Policy in Family and Society among Palestinian Citizens of Israel: Outside and Inside Influences

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This paper was completed in October 2014.

Introduction

This article attempts to analyze and discuss the issue of the lack of gender equality in Palestinian society in Israel. It focuses on the dialectics of a complex of influences, the intersection of factors stemming from Israel's policies as a sovereign state toward its Palestinian minority on the one hand and factors stemming from the consideration of the society of Palestinian citizens of Israel toward its male and female members, on the other hand.

The scope of this article is too short to describe, in its introduction, the massive activity, fieldwork and the rapid positive changes that Palestinian women are experiencing in the public and private spheres. The article therefore focuses on an examination of the factors imposed by the State of Israel and those acting on the side of Palestinian society that lead to the continuation of gender discrimination in that society.

The first main argument presented here is: The society of Palestinian citizens of Israel is characterized by both traditionalism and modernity, conservatism and change that are experienced simultaneously, integrated within its daily life and in the main these processes coexist in harmony.⁹²² It is impossible to understand these dynamics without understanding the intersectionality between official institutions of the State of Israel and the institutions of Palestinian society. Intersectionality relates to the influence of the intersection

between practices or systems of oppression, hegemony and discrimination.

The second main argument is therefore that outside factors, represented by state institutions act together with internal factors represented by patriarchal figures in Palestinian society to exert different forms of systemic and institutionalized oppression, both overt and covert, on individuals and groups in Palestinian society that shape policy regarding social stratification and gender within it.

Systemic institutionalized oppression takes place when laws, customs and practices reflect and create a lack of equality based on the membership of the individual in a particular social group. If the circumstances of oppression are imposed through institutional laws, customs and practices, then the institution is considered oppressive, whether the individuals working in that institution intend to oppress or not.⁹²³

Historical, cultural, national and geographic reasons have meant that various cultural influences act on Palestinian citizens of Israel simultaneously, and each of them in turn generates unique acculturation and socialization processes. These influences include: firstly, the State of Israel, including its institutions, laws and culture. This factor exposes Palestinian society to laws, institutions and a lifestyle that is mostly “Western” and does not constitute a natural continuation of the experience of this society’s traditional way of life. Secondly, Palestinian society inside Israel is influenced by the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and Gaza and the diaspora: this influence is divided into the national facet with all its various hues represented by political movements and parties and the cultural facet including political Islam as a comprehensive lifestyle. Thirdly, the Arab world, especially through Arab satellite media, literature, music, other entertainment and printed media: this influence reinforces the fluency of literary Arabic, exposing the Arab world to local dialects, mentalities and different family values, processes of democratization on the one hand and Islamization on the other hand with all its various streams. Fourthly, globalization,

especially its influence on youth culture and the culture dealing with hi-tech and business.

The Ecological Systems Theory of Bronfenbrenner⁹²⁴ attempted to explain how humans live in their ecological environment, including their relations with the family, institutions serving the individual such as education, welfare, politics, media systems, laws, and cultural values and the influence of the interaction between these different factors on the individual. This broad and deep systemic perspective will help us to understand the individual Palestinian citizen of Israel living in a complex ecology composed of an entirety of the above-mentioned circles of influence acting simultaneously, sometimes in harmony and at other times creating dissonance.

Intersectionality of the influence of the state

State laws that intervene in and shape the social structure of Palestinian society

On the eve of the establishment of the State of Israel, 15% of the Palestinian population lost their state and became a minority group, citizens of a newly created state.⁹²⁵ Macro-changes were imposed upon this group, including change in geographical domicile, especially for all the displaced internal refugees, and change in status from landowners to destitution. There was also a cultural change from belonging to a Palestinian state with a dominant Arab culture to belonging to a “Western” state with a dominant Israeli Jewish culture, from a state influenced by the Islamic religion to a state influenced by Judaism. The prevalent consideration of the Palestinian population toward the laws and culture of the young state, which were enforced upon them, was one of suspicion and hostility.⁹²⁶ Laws that influenced the Palestinian population were firstly the Compulsory Education Act (1949) that obliged all parents to ensure the regular attendance of their children in educational institutions from grade 1 through grade 8. This law was amended in 1968 with the reform of junior high schools, extending compulsory education to grade 9. In 2007,

the Knesset authorized an additional extension to the end of grade 12.⁹²⁷

In 1945, the Palestinian Arab population numbered 1.2 million residents. Palestinian school students in state education in that year numbered 56,359 boys (78.6%) and 15,303 girls (21.4%). The number of Palestinian students in private education systems (Christian and Muslim) stood at 36,673, 43% of them were boys.⁹²⁸ The Compulsory Education Act altered the structure of the classic existing social stratification, abolishing the work force of children and adolescents, and allowing poor children to receive education like the wealthy, and enabling the general population of girls to receive the same education as the boys.

The second law with far-reaching effects was the Marriage Age Act (1950) that was amended in 2012, raising marriage age to 18 years and supporting the enforcement of the first act. The third law that challenged the power relations structure in the Palestinian family was the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act (1991) that tested the concepts of parental control, parental authority and equal rights between spouses; in fact, it created new norms for marital and family relations.

These three laws were mostly received by Palestinian citizens with resistance and hostility was demonstrated toward the state that was accused of trying to control Palestinian society's institutions and culture. Palestinian society also related with animosity toward the Palestinian officials and activists who acted to promote the laws and accused them of cooptation and betrayal of cultural values. This reality was characteristic throughout the period of the military regime that was imposed on the Palestinian population until 1966.⁹²⁹

Education and new elites

Financial difficulties on the one hand and the restriction of freedom of movement due to the conditions of the military regime on the other hand encouraged Palestinian families to promote the education of a tiny percentage of young people, who acquired higher education in Israel and abroad and became the new elite. These academic cadres gradually

replaced the traditional leadership in the management of local governments and political, economic, educational and social institutions. In the 1970s, academics constituted a mere 0.4% of the Palestinian population. This rose to 2.2% in the 1980s and to 3% in the 1990s.⁹³⁰ There were just a few hundred Palestinian women graduates constituting a tiny percentage of the population. This reality did not enable equality between the sexes since the number of those with high school and higher education was totally unequal for men and women. This equality became possible, with even a tilt in preference of women, only in the 21st century. Thus, by 2012, the percentage of Palestinian men in the Israeli population completing 16+ years of education was 11.6% in contrast to 12.6% Palestinian women.⁹³¹

The occupation of the West Bank of Jordan and the Gaza Strip by Israel, and the opening of these borders to the culture of the Arab world and its political and religious institutions led to new and varied influences on the Palestinian citizens of Israel. They were exposed to a world of educated women, employed in senior positions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as doctors, engineers, pharmacists, school principals and teachers in schools for girls. The work of these women was enabled especially, and paradoxically, through the separation of the sexes in education that operated there and in most of the states of the Arab world. Palestinians in Israel learned that their political/ national reality led them to be held back in the race for progress, especially with regard to higher education for women.

In response to the Israeli policy of intensive appropriation of lands, imposed on the Palestinian population until the 1970s, the younger academic generation initiated widespread political activity that reached a peak with the establishment of the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, that gradually replaced the rule of the *mukhtars* (village heads) in Palestinian society. Due to the Front's declared egalitarian ideology, women were invited to take part in these new institutions, although they were not promised an equal part in the administration and leadership. The process was very slowly reversed: although women staffed the operative mechanisms,

the young male academic leadership cadre cooperated with the family and *hamulla* (extended family) leaders, promising their support, so that a young, all-male, leadership began to man the organizations' management of the new social and political movements and the leadership of local governments. Thus young male Palestinian reformist academics contributed to the reconstruction of the political, social and cultural influence of the traditional leadership and excluded women from the leadership, sufficing with their representation in a declarative and symbolic manner.⁹³²

The 1980s were characterized by growth of Palestinization on the one hand and Islamization on the other hand.⁹³³ Discussion ensued concerning the issue of social and political gender equality. Palestinian movements and parties appeared that challenged state policies, advocating full equality and democratization; gender equality was mentioned as one of the important issues; however none of these parties or movements placed a woman at their head. The cadres in the front lines of these bodies claimed: (a) the national (external) struggle is preferred over the (internal) struggle for gender equality; (b) Palestinian women are not assertive, they do not fight to be included in the front lines and so they are not worthy to lead the society at this historical stage.⁹³⁴ The first argument is a classic argument in all similar situations in the Arab world.⁹³⁵ And the second argument is the classic argument in the dynamics of relations between oppressors and the oppressed.⁹³

6

The influence of non-governmental organizations

The connection of Palestinian citizens of Israel with other Palestinians in the Arab world and in other countries, together with the influence of globalization processes, especially those stemming from Europe and the USA, has provided support for the establishment of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Most of these organizations have relied either overtly or

covertly on democratic principles and equality between groups including gender equality. A few of the organizations have declared that they are feminist, even receiving feminist training and their publications use feminist terminology.⁹³⁷ Both men and women work in the NGOs, however most of the funding bodies conditioned continuation of funding on the employment of women and with time women have been appointed to manage most of these organizations, but not only women. Several organizations opened simultaneously in Israel, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The cadres employed in these organizations received joint training and guidance and collaborated to form joint programs and projects (for example: “The Feminist Research and Training Project for Palestinian Women” that included Palestinian women from East Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Israel, Jordan and Lebanon).

Women’s organizations provided most of the education services for early childhood, education and vocational training for illiterate women and welfare services for children and women in distress in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Most of these organizations were managed by women who became knowledgeable experts and became a part of an international professional network.

During this period, the influence of the Islamic Movement began to be reflected in the Palestinian population in Israel. It was fed especially by the influence of the Islamic Movement in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, Arab states and Islamic states.⁹³⁸ Signs of Islamization began to appear in the Palestinian street in Israel in the dress code of women and men, supporting local and imported production of Islamic clothing, ritual products, religious tourism to Mecca, a flow of local and Islamic NGO resources for the establishment of mosques and an alternative Islamic education system, especially for early childhood. Men managed the Islamic Movement and its financial bodies, while women organized associations that relied on the ideologies of different streams of the Islamic Movement.⁹³⁹ Women worked as teachers in Islamic kindergartens, as instructors in the summer camps and in the systems for financial and welfare assistance. In 2010, it

was noted that there were about 100 unrecognized kindergartens belonging to the Islamic Movement in Northern Israel.⁹⁴⁰ Women leaders in these settings were subordinate to the official leadership of the Islamic Movement and disseminated its ideology. Thus, they fulfilled their role while maintaining the existing status of gender equality in the family and society in accordance with the principles of the Islamic Movement.

The Islamic Movement re-educated broad sectors of Palestinian society in Israel to return to the bosom of their religion and to adopt a traditional religious lifestyle. Nevertheless, the movement's institutions encouraged and supported both men and women to complete their academic education in Israel and abroad under the condition that they observe religious principles. The Islamic Movement intelligently employed modern tools, including men and women in public spheres, and promising to maintain traditional principles in the private sphere. Thus, it reinforced the status of the patriarch represented by the figures of religious leaders, fathers and husbands. A group of feminist religious women adopted Islamic feminism, which suffices with the realization of Muslim women's rights that were promised in the Koran and *Sunnah* (the Prophet's oral prescriptions). These religious feminist women cooperated with similar organizations and with leaders in the Arab world.⁹

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In the 1990s, with the return of Palestinian leadership to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and establishment of the Palestinian Authority, the status of feminist women leaders deteriorated. Until then, most of them stood at the head of NGOs, they received their organizations' funds from Palestinian and other bodies located in the West and enjoyed instruction and cooperation within a wide-branched international professional network.

A classical conflict regarding the management of institutions and organizations ensued between the existing women leaders and men in the political leadership, who had returned from Tunisia; this conflict was conducted with the

old-new weapons, besmirching the women's personal and political reputation. Women's NGOs, funded by Western organizations were accused of serving colonialists and trying to break up Palestinian family and social structure by persuading Palestinian women to adopt the argument of equality between the sexes, which, in the critics' opinion, was foreign to traditional Palestinian society and in contradiction to several principles of the Islamic religion. These accusations seriously harmed the demands of Palestinian women for complete equality, equality resembling the definitions of the classical feminist movement. The direct accusation equated feminism with colonialism; Palestinian women, proud of their feminist heritage in the field, became targets for social and political attacks. This trend also existed in the Arab world,⁹⁴² and filtered through into Palestinian society in Israel.

Intersectionality of internal factors in relation to gender in the Palestinian family and civilian society in Israel

The education boom and neo-patriarchy

Contrastingly, in the 1950s, the dawn of the establishment of the State of Israel, there was a change in the structure of the Palestinian family.⁹⁴³ The diminishment of the population due to expulsions beyond the borders of the state on the one hand⁹⁴⁴ and massive expropriation of lands on the other hand had a direct influence on the transition of the Palestinian population from agrarian labor and lifestyle to proletarian labor and lifestyle.⁹⁴⁵ The disappearance of the lands as private property and the reduction of revenues from agriculture in the remaining fields brought an end to the need for cheap labor in agriculture. Gradually, all the children in the family, boys and girls, registered for schools in their villages and towns. Except for a few schools belonging to church orders, the entire education system was coeducational for both genders. Localities where there were high schools, registered a higher proportion of girls who graduated from high school.⁹⁴⁶

Privileged families and parents with a modern social outlook encouraged their daughters to acquire higher education, especially teaching studies. The diminishment of professional academics in the remnants of Palestinian society that remained in Israel, as a direct result of *Al-Nakba*, led the new state to encourage new teachers to take up employment immediately after high school or studies in a teacher's seminar. The first generation of Palestinian government employees were teachers, who worked in their home towns or villages although some worked as peripatetic teachers in several localities where there were no graduates.⁹⁴⁷ The establishment of a teachers' seminar in Haifa (later the Arab College, Haifa), as a boarding college, encouraged traditional parents to send their daughters to study teaching. In addition to studying teaching, boys also studied other free professions in Israeli universities and the Technion. Some, assisted by funds from the Communist Party, even went to study higher education in Communist states of Europe, and later funded by their nuclear and extended families, they were able to study in all European countries and North America. By the end of the 1970s, all the above-mentioned institutions included Palestinian students on their campuses.

The patriarch enjoyed the modernity of Palestinian women: fathers envisaging the economic potential in higher education allowed their daughters to further their studies. Some families forbade their daughters to study far from home, since this necessitated sleeping outside the home, far from patriarchal supervision. Thus the father, directly or indirectly, determined the choice of discipline to be studied and consequently his daughter's vocation. Young women who arrived in the higher education institutions immediately after high school, without a profession, and with slim chances of receiving a grant (since they had not served in the Israeli army), were forced to rely on funding for their studies from their parents, usually the father. Parents conditioned their financial support on supervision of the women students' behavior, demanding that they maintain traditional values and sustain the family's good reputation. Practices enforced to maintain family traditions shaped the subjects studied in

higher education, one of the levers of modernity, without allowing the women to choose the disciplines. Thus, although they studied in multi-cultural institutions of higher education, the women were not able to enjoy a true inter-cultural experience in its broad sense due to restrictive paternal conditions.

An additional group of families, under the influence of norms that developed in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, were willing to fund their daughter's higher education studies on the condition that she promised to give her future income for at least three years to her father, a sort of compensation for the expenses invested in her studies. This practice was especially important for poor families, since it allowed additional brothers and sisters in their turn to acquire higher education. The women continued to reimburse their fathers, even after their marriage, until the end of the predetermined period. This arrangement meant that the women did not become financially independent. At the same time, the father and later her husband and family maintained their financial investment and even increased their financial revenues from it, in addition to the profit of improving their social reputation.

The acceptance of Palestinian women graduates from an accredited academic higher education institution in Israel or Europe did not change the Palestinian family structure or the nature of marital relationships or the traditional division of roles and authority in the family. Consequently, it did not alter women's status in the family and in Palestinian society. Where there were changes, they were specific, conditioned by various factors.⁹⁴⁸ However, where there was an intersection of several factors, such as economic, political and national status, the traditional situation continued to exist, with modern decor. Sometimes, a spark of feminist discourse engendered re-examination of the socialization processes, education and distribution of resources within the family and society, and discussion concerning women's participation in political power.⁹⁴⁹ The patriarchs neutralized this budding discourse, strongly criticizing its content and diverting the discourse so that the women who instigated it were accused, as already noted, of betraying their tradition and acting as agents for

foreign colonial culture, threatening to undermine proper family and social order and insulting local patriarchal leadership. Traditional women also participated in the attack, influenced by the values of patriarchal education, which saw the feminists' suggestions for a new division of functions and gender equality as a serious injury to morale, and to the tradition and values of Islam.

Both in the private and public spheres, Palestinian men refused to alter the traditional distribution of functions and held on to the status quo. Without any immediate response, and faced by men's refusal to enlist to their assistance, Palestinian women who entered the labor market in the public sphere relied on the help of other women in order to continue to fulfill their traditional roles, such as child care and administering the household.⁹⁵⁰ Help was given by mothers, sisters, mothers-in-law and other female members of the family and even by women outside the family for payment. In most cases, when relatives enlisted to help poor working women, the situation limited possibilities for economic, political and social progress of all the women involved, those who worked and those who supported them by fulfilling their traditional roles. With regard to a sense of welfare, the multiplicity of the women's roles and the often conflicting expectations from them, for example to invest more time in looking after the family yet also to bring more income into the family, often harmed their sense of psycho-social wellbeing.⁹⁵¹

This same reality actually reinforced neo-patriarchy⁹⁵² and improved men's status; they married educated women, who were more independent, and their income increased, also increasing their living standard. Children received better supervision and education, enabling the patriarch to continue to expand their investment in their work, in their hamulla, social and political relations. Fathers and brothers enhanced their social pride and reputation especially when their daughters with academic education and employed in positions that promised a permanent income, were married to "busy" men.

Economy, gender, and maintenance of the family structure

Three deficiencies in areas of state responsibility influence the circumstances of Palestinian women's employment in Israel. Firstly, Arab villages and towns in Israel suffer from a lack of industrial areas in their close vicinity. This severely limits the opportunities and character of work available in these localities, especially for women;⁹⁵³ secondly, a lack of public transportation in Arab villages and between Arab localities;⁹⁵⁴ and thirdly, a lack of services including educational and welfare centers for mother and child, at reasonable prices, that could help the woman to be more available for financially profitable work outside the home.⁹⁵⁵ In addition to the registered number of Palestinian women employed in regular work who constitute 22% of all Palestinian women of working age,⁹⁵⁶ there are unrecorded numbers of Palestinian women, especially in rural localities, who are employed in family businesses or temporary employment, such as harvesting crops with family members or through their agency.⁹⁵⁷ These occupations are founded on the exploitation of Palestinian women as cheap labor.⁹⁵⁸ Women agree to work under difficult conditions and almost without any significant financial remuneration and thus cooperate with and reinforce the economic and social status of the patriarchy, contributing to the continuity of the patriarchal structure that oppresses and discriminates against them.⁹⁵⁹ The contextual reasons for this are: Firstly, in comparison to the reality of working for nothing, when women, either single or married, continuously contribute to the home and family economy, even raising the children of relatives without any financial compensation, any tiny income is appreciated by this group of women as significant income. Secondly, most of the women in this group are not mobile; they live their daily lives under patriarchal supervision and need permission or accompaniment by someone on behalf of the patriarch if mobile. In Druze society for example, in order to ensure the continuation of their tradition, religious leaders have issued an edict that prevents a woman driving license owner and her parents from entering

the *khilwah* (Druze prayer house). In other words, they threatened to impose religious excommunication on the family, a very meaningful far-reaching sanction in traditional society.⁹⁶⁰ The edict does not apply to Druze males with a driving license. This is a classical example of the use of traditional means, such as religion in order to prevent signs of modernity, such as a woman driving that would enhance her mobility and independence.

Working outside the home, even under conditions resembling slavery, allows a certain distancing from the extended family and the woman can create new and refreshing relationships, enjoying a momentary sense, however false, of independence and dominion. Their working conditions strengthen the employer, but they never ensure financial independence for their Palestinian women workers or income equal to that of the Palestinian men (or Israeli Jewish workers). Thus, their status within their families as breadwinners remains inferior and unvalued. In encounters at home between a couple, the husband will act as the one who is returning from hard work and will demand relaxing treats from his wife at home. However, the woman cannot demand this consideration from the man, and will act as a homemaker that enlists to manage her traditional roles successfully.⁹⁶¹

Marriage, building a family, and economic power

Heterosexual, monogamist, endogamous marriage within the same religious group and patriarchal domicile are predominant characteristics of marriage in Palestinian society. Women move to live in their husband's locality. Lack of suitable lands for house construction in Arab villages and towns have increased the price of the few private lands still available as reserves for building for the younger generation. On the other hand, the presence of several male brothers needing housing, with an average difference in age of approximately two years between them, means that the project of house building for children is of primary importance for Palestinian families. A further consideration is that the low income of Palestinian citizens in comparison to other citizens of the Israeli state

means that being able to own a home is a challenge to Palestinian society in general.

The intersection between the expropriation of lands, poverty and lack of equal conditions for the Palestinian population to purchase a home in Jewish towns and villages, together with patriarchal practices and discriminatory inheritance laws have encouraged the continuation of the patriarchal mechanism. Parents, who take responsibility for their male children, begin to build housing units for them close to their own homes, immediately when this becomes financially possible. It is usually cheaper to build several housing units simultaneously over several years. This practice has meant that sons continue to live close to their parents and prevents a process of migration to the larger towns. Thus too, parents of a bridegroom determine the bride's future place of residence and determine how she assimilates within the life of the husband's nuclear and extended family of origin.⁹⁶²

This fact has led to a norm that the investment in male children is a fixed longterm investment, while the investment in female children is a moveable and transitory investment. Families avoid bequeathing their property to their daughters and thus a continuous gap is formed between the values of private property held by women and by men when they marry. In several areas in the Triangle region and the Galilee, it is accepted practice that the family of the groom provides a home – solid immovable property and investment – and the family of the bride provides the furniture – disposable moveable property that loses its value by time. Although women invest from their income in the construction of their home and sometimes in the construction of a home for their husband's brothers, in order to prevent them from attaining future rights on these houses, the grandparents register the property in their names without dividing rights in the property among their male children and grandchildren. For reasons justified as etiquette, customs prevent women from conditioning their residence in the husband's locality on the registration of the family home jointly in their name and in the husband's name. Women who insist on this are accused of

attempting to break up the property of the joint family of origin.

In order to shatter the reality that excludes and restricts the woman, she or her husband needs to enjoy a high enough income to enable them to purchase new private land or a private house in the same locality or one of the towns. This solution implies the weakening of inter-generational connections, a diminished sense of affiliation to the extended family and the hamulla, weakening the patriarch's role and encouraging equality of opportunity for men and women. However, this solution is unavailable for most young couples due to economic limitations and they remain under the dominion of the patriarch.

Conditions of marital relations that create gender gaps

The children of the first Palestinian women academics in the State of Israel did not lead a more equally shared life in terms of gender in comparison with children of women who were not educated.⁹⁶³ When they chose to marry, the principles of gender equality were not central conditions in their choice of a spouse.⁹⁶⁴ Feminist discourse had not filtered into the Palestinian family in Israel and remained within the domain of women's organizations and field activities.⁹⁶⁵

Women did not succeed in exploiting their education as human capital within the nuclear family and the extended family or within their society.⁹⁶⁶ Patriarchal power bypassed their qualifications by maintaining traditional values, such as the retention of the custom of men marrying "down," especially maintaining a gap in ages to the benefit of the groom. This custom entails men marrying women younger than them, less educated, sometimes even before they have completed their school studies and become financially independent. Thus, marital relations are shaped in light of a complex of advantages for the man and are maintained for years, even when the woman reduces gaps between her education and income and that of her husband.

The fact that many women decide to further their academic education has led to a rise in the age of marriage. Because of the gap in ages allowed between the spouses, single women graduates aged 24 find themselves competing with a large group of women aged 17–24, so that men continuously prefer to marry younger women, when they search for a spouse. These men do not give preference to women's education, rather to younger age and earning ability.⁹⁶⁷ This trend strikingly points up the lack of awareness and acceptance of gender equality, even among educated Palestinian men. Thus, the number of Palestinian spinsters has increased, including both academic and non-academic women. This relatively new trend has encouraged some Palestinian women, for the first time, to marry “down.” Palestinian society disparages single women, calling them *a'wanis* (‘old spinsters’) and considering them socially or mentally deviant.⁹⁶⁸

As the number of women academics has risen, the age of marriage has also risen for both sexes in all three sectors of Palestinian society: Islamic, Christian and Druze.⁹⁶⁹ This increase has not brought any change in preference toward marriage of persons of the same age. The family/society maintains the age gap between the groom and bride to the benefit of the groom usually maintaining a gap of 4.4–5.5 years between them.⁹⁷⁰ This fact has generated new individual and family practices: Firstly, in 1987 the median age of Muslim men at first marriage was 24.0 and of women 20.1; in 2007 the median age for marriage for Muslim men was 26.0 and for women 20.7. In other words, the age gap between bride and groom rose from 3.9 years in 1987 to 5.3 years in 2007.⁹⁷¹ This fact indicates a step backwards toward tradition and inequality. Secondly, despite the increase in the proportion of academic women, the proportion of men who chose to wed women with academic education less than their own actually increased.

The number of single women rose; the percentile of women who married husbands with a lower level of education than their own also rose.⁹⁷²

Modernity leads to a return to tradition

Until the 1990s, Palestinian society's social norms encouraged women to marry "up" in terms of age, education and financial resources and income. Women who chose to invest in education and acquired one or more academic degrees, experienced social and financial independence during their studies; yet they did not succeed in translating their academic success into the choice of a spouse with equal qualifications.⁹⁷

³ The norm of an age gap and education gap allows men a very broad range of choice in relation to the women's range of choice. Thus, a man aged 30 would be eligible to choose a woman from all age categories from age 17–30, while women aged 30 would be limited to a choice of men aged 30 or more.⁹

⁷⁴ At the age of 30, most men are already married and have established families. Those who have not yet married by age 30 prefer younger women. Single women aged 30 find themselves having to choose between socially derided spinsterhood, and marrying "down," in other words with men of lower social or education level than them. The increase in the number of Palestinian single women⁹⁷⁵ and in the number of women marrying "down"⁹⁷⁶ indicates the failure of academic and/or careerist women to translate their success into the realization of gender equality between spouses within the family. Examples of this kind meant that parents who stopped encouraging their daughters to marry at an early age in the 1970s, began again in the 1990s to entreat them to adopt the traditional values that they had abandoned for modern values. Thus, they again began to encourage their daughters to marry at an early age, now combining the establishment of a family with studies and work, as noted above.⁹⁷⁷ This example provides further evidence of the success of the traditional mentality and approach over processes of change and modernization.

Fertility

In addition to women's increased participation in the labor market, the increase in the number of men and women studying higher education influenced a decrease in fertility

rates of Palestinian women from all three religions in a comparison between the 1980s and today.⁹⁷⁸ Nevertheless, parents' attitudes and desires continue to influence a young couple's decision-making processes concerning the timing of bringing children into the world. Thus, most young couples do not use contraceptives before the birth of a second or third son or daughter.⁹⁷⁹ This means that in most young families, their children are born within the first five years of marriage. Successive births taking place at the beginning of their marriage prevent the women, some of whom marry before beginning further education, from having the time and ability to study. Some of them even begin to work and combine their marital process, pregnancies and establishment of the family with academic studies and work. In practice, young Palestinian women compress all the most important developmental stages of their lives into these five years. The emotional and physical burdens that they endure lead to rapid burnout and chronic exhaustion, so that they suffice with the completion of tasks required for each role, forfeiting ambition and any sense of self-realization.⁹⁸⁰ During this period, as noted, other women help these women to advance their various careers as professional women, mothers and homemakers, while the husband is usually free to establish himself professionally, socially and politically. In this personal-family-social reality, women avoid advancement in any of the areas that they have taken upon themselves; they are afraid to continue their higher education since it may harm their functioning in other areas of responsibility, burdened by guilt feelings toward their young children, feeling that they cannot invest the necessary hours in childcare. This group of women avoids seeking promotion to senior roles such as coordinators or managers and they delay coping with this issue until their obligations to their young children lessen. In the mental and social domains, they have no free time to develop relationships with members of their extended family and the surrounding society. The women's steps are supervised and any decision that reflects a preference for one domain over another will be criticized by their family, their husband's family of origin, the extended family and surrounding community. Criticism directed toward them acts to maintain the woman's sole responsibility for her

multiplicity of roles and the women's sense of a lack of wellbeing.⁹⁸¹ In contrast, men allow themselves to expend time and energy in one or two domains that they choose, such as work and social activity, or political activity and leisure time. The families of origin (the wife's and her husband's), the extended family and surrounding community will support these choices and even justify them. In a broader systemic way, as noted, this "norm" does not only influence the advancement of the female public with their multiple careers, but also leads to the stagnation of the situation for all women and all men in general. High prices have been paid by the minority of women who chose not to follow the herd, rather to make their own chosen preferences such as building a career, neglecting the matter of fertility or motherhood and even standing for election in opposition to men in political life.⁹⁸²

Participation in politics

The dispute concerning the equality of Palestinian women as candidates for election in local and national politics has resounded since the beginning of the 1990s.⁹⁸³ Over the years, pro-active associations and affirmative action projects have been established such as the "National Project for Arab Women's Representation in Local Government" under the auspices of a coalition of women's organizations and the "Women's Equal Representation" project, aimed mainly at encouraging equal opportunities for women.

In 2003, 249 Palestinian women candidates stood for election in local government but only two were elected. In 2008, 149 women stood for election in local governments, only six were elected.⁹⁸⁴ In 1987, one – and the only – woman was elected as mayor. In 1999, Hussniya Jabara was elected as the first Palestinian woman to become a member of the 15th session of the Israeli Knesset on behalf of the Meretz Party. After her election, Nadia Hilou was elected on behalf of the Labor party to the 17th Knesset, and most recently, Haneen Zoabi was elected on behalf of the Balad party to the 18th, 19th and the 20th sessions of the Knesset. She was also the

first Palestinian woman to be elected on behalf of a Palestinian party. In 2015 Aida Touma-Suleiman was elected for the 20th sessions of the Knesset on behalf of the Communist Party and the Front Movement for Democracy and Peace. The election of these women was preceded by successive elections of Palestinian men who stood for Zionist parties and parties defined as left-wing Zionist. Palestinian society through Palestinian media, Palestinian women's organizations and Palestinian parties attacked the women, who were elected to the Knesset, and described them as collaborators, Zionists, traitors, and serving the oppressors of the Palestinian nation.⁹⁸

⁵ Palestinian men elected by the public in the same frameworks did not suffer this censure. The attacks by Palestinian society against the elected women from Zionist parties on the one hand and the attacks from Jewish society against Member of Knesset Haneen Zoabi, who was elected from a Palestinian national party on the other hand, created a delegitimization of the role, status and contribution of Palestinian women elected to the Israeli Knesset. Here too, the immense investment that led to the election of women to this high-ranking political position was not exploited as a lever for the alteration of Palestinian women's status.

The example of Palestinian women members of the Knesset demonstrates the dynamics of cooperation in which there is intersectionality between state factors and factors of Palestinian society. When factors in the state, such as Zionist parties chose a Palestinian woman for the Knesset, factors in Palestinian society blocked the progress of this trend by marking the woman as the enemy of Palestinian society, because this trend threatened to undermine the status of Palestinian men at the head of the political pyramid. In contrast, and similarly, when social factors such as the Palestinian parties chose a Palestinian woman for the Knesset, other factors in the state blocked the acceleration of this trend by marking the woman as the enemy of the state. A research study that examined the mechanism of corrective discrimination as a solution for the elevation of Palestinian women in politics in Israel found that Palestinian women supported such a process but Palestinian men objected to it.⁹⁸⁶

Thus, it seems as though there is no practical solution that would allow Palestinian women to participate in political activity as equals to Palestinian men, while continuing to be accepted by both the state and Palestinian society.

Summary

The society of Palestinian citizens of Israel is characterized by both traditionalism and modernity, conservatism and change, processes that are experienced simultaneously in their daily lives, and in the main, in harmony. The gender discrimination that exists in traditional societies is obvious and becomes more acute due to intersectionality with national discrimination that prevents the general Palestinian minority society from realizing complete equality in economic, political and education resources with the majority Israeli Jewish society. In the reality of discrimination and systemic and institutional oppression that the state imposes through official overt and indirect tools at its disposal against Palestinian society, a situation is created in which the oppressed society institutionalizes gender discrimination and channels existing resources for the benefit of men, who are considered as having the potential to retain the resources and power. Palestinian society has developed mechanisms, most based on Palestinian traditions or religious rules, in order to impede the changes and achievements attained by Palestinian women, to ensure the continuation of male domination in the society and to reinforce it. Intersectionality of discriminatory laws, poverty and lack of equal conditions for Palestinian society, together with patriarchal customs and discriminatory inheritance laws encourage the continuation of the patriarchal mechanism and reinforce existing gender regulation.

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Topic VII: Discontinuities

Introduction

The topic that closes our series of scholarly controversies about cleavages may be termed “how and when did the current societal and political configuration of the Israeli reality crystallize?” When asked about major discontinuities in Israel’s recent history, many analysts mention the dramatic shift that took place on the political scene with the 1977 upheaval, when decades of dominance by the social-democrat Labor party (Mapai) came to an end with the success of the right-wing Likud party led, at the time, by Menachem Begin. For many commentators, the rightist regime represents the opening of a new era in the country’s social and political history. None of the contributors to this section denies that this phase was a genuine turning-point in the evolution of Israel. Different analysts, however, set the emphasis on other aspects in divergent general perspectives. Some commentators who are more critical of Israel’s historical development in general (post-Zionists), evaluate that upheaval in less drastic terms than others regarding the discontinuity it represents vis-à-vis past decades and impacts on Israeli society.

Michal Shamir analyzes the shift as a seminal event that had enormous implications for all realms of life – political, judicial, economic, social, and cultural. She views it not as a revolution, but rather a realignment and the formation of a new cleavage in society. These are still in effect today, despite repeated turnovers in government and the rise and fall of old and new parties, political reforms, colossal demographic changes, and momentous events such as wars, intifadas, peace negotiations, and social protest. The critical background event, she maintains, is the reality of the occupation of the territories. Her thesis is that this is the context of the pervasiveness and sturdiness of the 1977 realignment cleavage, which has significant repercussions for Israeli politics and democracy until this very day.

Sigal Ben-Rafael Galanti concurs with this approach by delving into the “dominant party” notion for understanding such a party’s impacts on society. She suggests that the Likud – even if it has not been uninterruptedly the largest elected party heading the government – put in place a regime that differs significantly from Labor’s, and has instilled an essentially different perspective in society. Those innovations are crucial for understanding the sensitivities of post-1977 Israeli society. She elaborates on this point of view by focusing on the Likud’s performance in retaining a socio-political status quo, in spite of all the circumstantial transformations the country has undergone.

Mohanad Mustafa and Muhammad Amara endorse the idea that 1977 marked the beginning of a new phase. For them, the rise of the right had above all the effect of accelerating the emergence of a nationalist discourse among Israel’s Palestinians and the questioning of the Palestinians’ status within it. This development exacerbated Arab-Jewish tensions. Moreover, the future of the Palestinian occupied territories has now become the top issue on the agenda of Israel’s Arabs.

Lev Luis Grinberg discusses the 1977 upheaval by assuming that Israel’s rightist leaders signed the peace agreement with Egypt reluctantly, and were actually unhappy about unavoidable drastic changes in the national economy. They succeeded, however, in initiating crucial steps such as the local legitimization of Israel’s military rule over Palestinians in the territories, and the encouragement of the settlement movement on the West Bank – despite the opposition and pressures of the Great Powers and the resistance of the Palestinian organizations.

Arye Naor sees the consequences of the upheaval as much more far-reaching. Menachem Begin’s term of office as prime minister sets him among the most influential shapers of Israel’s history, second only to David Ben-Gurion. His nationalist-Jewish-liberal ideology was reflected in unprecedented steps – from the peace treaty with Egypt to a program of autonomy for the Palestinians recognizing their “legitimate rights.” Begin also decided on capital issues like the bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor and, on the other

hand, the launching of Project Renewal in disadvantaged neighborhoods. He weakened the Labor party's power and formed a political partnership with the ultra-Orthodox. When Begin resigned from office in the summer of 1983 he bequeathed to his successor a State of Israel different in its image, values, and policies from the one he had inherited.

In sum, all these contributions show the crucial importance of the 1967–1977 sequence in the formation of today's Israeli reality. Yet essential differences set them in opposition to each other, concerning “what is essential in today's Israeli reality”: Shamir emphasizes the political aspects and insists on the dimension of the polity's divisiveness; Ben-Rafael Galanti evinces the changes in the prevailing political culture that took root in society; Mustafa and Amara see the new sequence as a drastic development in Arab-Jewish relations in Israel and between Israel and the Palestinians; Grinberg turns to the issue of the occupation of Palestinian territories and the creation of Jewish settlements as central foci of the further evolving of the social-political reality. Naor underscores the irreversible role that Begin's leadership played in the shaping of post-1977 Israel.

28. “Ladies and Gentlemen, Mahapach”: The 1977 Realignment from a Political Historical Perspective

Michal Shamir

This paper was completed in December 2014. It is a review article that is largely based on Arian and Shamir 2008; Shamir 1986, 2015; Shamir and Arian 1999, 2011. See also the contributions over the years in the book series *The Elections in Israel* published since 1969 and edited over the years by Asher Arian and Michal Shamir; and the *Israel at the Polls* series published since 1977 by various editors, including Daniel Elazar, Howard Penniman, Shmuel Sandler, Ben Mollov, Jonathan Rynhold, and Manfred Gerstenfeld.

The 1977 national elections in Israel were etched in the national memory by the words of Haim Yavin, the newscaster on the only television channel at the time: “Ladies and gentlemen, *Mahapach*.” *Mahapach* means literally ‘dramatic change, turning point, turnaround, upheaval, shakeout.’ In those elections, the electorate, for the first time in Israel’s history, unseated the ruling party, the Labor-Mapam Alignment. It was indeed a seminal event, the abrupt end of Labor’s dominance, carrying with it enormous implications in all realms of life – political, judicial, economic, social, and cultural. In this short chapter I will focus on politics, basing my discussion on two concepts from Political Science: *realignment* and *cleavage*. I argue that the 1977 realignment is the only realignment in Israel’s electoral history, and is still in effect today in the sense that its ensuing cleavage is still in force, despite repeated turnovers in government, the rise and fall of old and new parties; noteworthy political reforms; colossal demographic changes; and momentous events such as wars, Intifadas, peace negotiations and a massive social protest. The critical event in the background of this cleavage is the Six-Day War and the occupation of “the territories.” This context is the source of the substance, pervasiveness and

sturdiness of the 1977 realignment cleavage. And it has significant repercussions for Israeli politics and democracy.

Realignments and cleavages⁹⁸⁷

Realignment is an electoral change that persists, a significant shift in the group basis of party coalitions, usually resulting in a shift in the relative size of the parties' vote shares. It involves the party system and politics, the mass electorate as well as the elites and public policies. Realignments are the result of processes that operate rather imperceptibly, election after election, to form new party alignments. They may be abrupt, occurring over one or two elections, or take longer and expand over several elections in realigning electoral eras.

Established party systems have undergone realignments from time to time and then one system of cleavages is replaced by another. By cleavage political scientists mean not simply the result of social distinctions or groupings. Those become politically relevant when they gain normative and policy meaning, and are organized as such. The combination of the three dimensions – sociological, ideological and institutional – consolidate and polarize the party system around what one may call a full cleavage, which expresses disagreements over values and policy preferences, with social demographic group anchors, and with an institutional party expression.

The 1977 realignment of the Israeli party system

Israel's party system is a multi-party system, the result of the diversity of Israeli society, and the one-constituency PR (proportional representation) electoral system featuring a low threshold of representation. Nevertheless, from the founding of the state until 1977, one party, Mapai/ Labor/Alignment, was dominant: it was the largest party by far, easily won every election, was situated in the center of the political map, formed all of the governments, and was considered by all, including

its opponents, to be the dominant party. It shaped and reflected the spirit of the times, a period that largely overlapped the nation's formative stage, although its rule extended beyond. It drew support from all groups in the population, and disputes and rifts were handled via cooptation, symbolic measures, denial, repression and neglect.

The 1977 elections brought Labor's dominance to an abrupt end with the fall of the Labor Alignment and the rise of the Likud to power. Labor lost over a third of its support; from being the ruling party with 51 Knesset members it dropped to second place with 32 Knesset members only. The winner, Likud, increased its support by about ten percent and obtained 43 seats. However the realignment of the party system did not occur on May 17, 1977. The process began earlier and continued into the 1980s in what should be considered a realigning electoral era. There were already signs of it in the 1973 elections, postponed from their original date and held after the Yom Kippur War. In those elections, the gap between the two largest parties – the Likud (which was formed in the lead-up to these elections) and the Labor Alignment – shrank dramatically, and the gap between rightist and leftist parties narrowed significantly. The elections of 1981 and 1984 solidified the realignment.

Any realignment, and the 1977 realignment not excluded, is the culmination of multiple processes. Indeed, any dominant party system, as Duverger observed long ago, “bears within itself the seeds of its own destruction.”⁹⁸⁸ Due to the inner structure of the dominant party itself and to its interactions with groups and actors in the system, dominant parties are bound to fall. So Labor would have fallen from dominance anyway.

The most conspicuous characteristic of the realignment was the ascent of the Right and the change in the control of government. Two major explanations, beyond the wearing off of the dominant party, have been offered. The social and sociological interpretation puts the finger mainly on ethnic and class factors. The political and ideological interpretation identifies the turning point that ultimately led to the realignment and defined its nature in the Six-Day War and the

conquest of Judea, Samaria, the Gaza Strip, Sinai and Golan Heights, with their profound and contentious religious and historical implications. Until 1967, various approaches to the Arab-Israeli conflict were on the public agenda and played a significant role in politics, but the alternatives were confined to the pragmatic realm, actually within the leftist camp and even within Mapai. The alternative of the political Right which was represented by the Herut party and spoke of the Greater Land of Israel and even of two banks of the Jordan River was not realistic. It became realistic, and in a very concrete way, in the wake of the war. The fundamental questions of the state's identity, which were ostensibly settled when the UN partition decision was accepted and the state was founded in 1948, were reopened. These were the profound questions about the goals of Zionism, the nature of the state, relations with the Arabs and, of course, the borders. New – maximalist – alternatives became realistic, accompanied by an emotional and messianic nationalistic climate. In this sense, the Six-Day War underlies the realignment of 1977. The electorate changed its vote, parties revised their platforms and new parties arose.

Paradoxically, this was not evident in the results of the first election held after the Six-Day War in 1969: the Labor Alignment (Labor and Mapam) won a record 56 seats (compared to 26 for Gahal, the predecessor of Likud). However the left bloc began its descent in these elections, declining from around 70 to 66 seats. Under the surface, voters with hawkish views already began to shift toward the right; doves moved toward the left; and young voters were more hawkish and turned to the right. This is evident in survey data from the first Israel National Election Study (INES)⁹⁸⁹ carried out in that year. The numbers were not large, but the processes started to take shape in 1969.

Leading up to realignment, the influence of the schism over the future of the territories was gradual, and, as noted, was already reflected in the 1969 INES. The 1977 elections were critical, because of the downfall of Labor and rise of the Likud to power, but also due to the sociological characteristics of the voting patterns in these elections. The ethnic dimension

drew most of the political and academic attention, with an emphasis on the marginalized status of immigrants from Asia and Africa and their feelings of deprivation and alienation vis-à-vis the party and establishment of Mapai, in charge of their absorption in the 1950s. As they became less dependent economically, politically and socially, and as the second generation came of age, the protest and alienation found their way into the ballot box, and the main beneficiary was the principal opposition party – Herut, later Gahal and Likud. Election surveys from 1969 and 1973 do not show clear signs of these processes, but in 1977 they were expressed in a dramatic way: all of the groups left the Labor Alignment, but the Ashkenazi Jews who abandoned the party voted en masse for the newly established center party Dash, while the Mizrahim voted for the Likud. This “ethnicization” of the vote paved the way for the role the ethnic factor in the following elections, when it became a leading feature in the political parties’ electoral mobilization strategy.

The next two elections, in 1981 and 1984, solidified the realignment. After the Likud rose to power and due to the strong competition with the Labor Alignment, both sociological and ideological forces operated in tandem. The focus was on the ethnic distinction between Sephardim or Mizrahim and Ashkenazim, but, simultaneously, the political significance of religiosity increased: Jewish religious voters tended to vote more for the Likud and for the right-wing bloc, while secular Israelis voted more for the Labor Alignment and the Left. Amidst the realignment, and particularly from 1984 and onward, the importance of religion grew and religiosity became the key structural sociological dimension shaping voting patterns among Jews, much more than the ethnic dimension. And this remains true today.

The 1977 realignment cleavage: collective identity dilemmas

The combination of the ideological and sociological factors worked to consolidate and polarize the party system around

the cleavage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It became a full, consistent and interlocking cleavage entailing the three dimensions that define and reinforce political cleavages: It expressed disagreements on value and policy preferences rooted in collective identity dilemmas; with social group anchors – national, religious and ethnic; and with an institutional partisan embodiment.

The competitive two-bloc party system which resulted from the 1977 realignment aligned along one dimension of right-left. It was narrowly defined by the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the dispute over the territories. However, this cleavage represents a much deeper struggle over Israel's collective identity, on its social communal and territorial boundaries. Its external dimension relates to the state's borders and relations with the rest of the world, in particular the Arab world and the Palestinians. The internal, closely related dimension concerns the meaning of Zionism, nationalism, citizenship, relations of state and religion, and the tension between a Jewish and democratic state.

These dilemmas which “the territories” issue epitomizes underlie the central dimension defining the party system. The concept of Greater Israel is inherently linked to the legitimacy of Israel as a Jewish state based on religion and tradition connecting the people, its history and land. Secular Israeli nationalism is also replete with religious symbols, and religion became more intertwined with nationalism after 1967, with the religious sources and leaders providing legitimacy and the driving force for the settlement movement in the territories and the idea of Greater Israel. The overlap between the internal and external dimensions of collective identity grew stronger.

The internal and external dimensions fed each other, and the empirical connection between them increased in both politics and public opinion. The phenomenon of what is referred to as *Hardal* (ultra-Orthodox nationalist) lucidly expresses this process within the religious camp, as the national religious community became more ultra-Orthodox in observing Jewish law; and ultra-Orthodox Jews became more nationalistic – and even the most nationalistic – vis-à-vis the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The “natural” coalitions were of

the Right and religious parties. Religious doves disappeared at both mass and party levels. The Arabs were in the Left. The sociological distinctions between Jews and Arabs and among Jews according to religiosity became the most significant ones politically. Attitudes on the issues of dispute on this dimension are closely tied to group affiliation and voting patterns. Jews, religious Jews, Mizrahim, those with a lower level of education and status tend to vote for the rightist parties, while Arabs and Jews who are secular, of higher status and Ashkenazim tend more toward the left.

None of the subsequent turnovers in government or changes in party or bloc strength are comparable to the 1977 Mahapach, nor did they change the cleavage structure. The 1992 elections brought Labor back to power after 15 years and led to a dramatic change in policy – the Oslo Accords – but the movement of voters from one party to another stemmed from policy views more than group affiliation and only reinforced the cleavage structure. The same is true of the following elections: neither of them led to significant and long-lasting changes in the strength of the blocs or in the ideological or sociological basis of the party coalitions. Certainly, voting according to issues and the performance of the candidates increased; and major changes occurred in the preferences of voters. Since the late 1980s, following the First Intifada, readiness for compromise in the conflict increased. Since 2000, following the failure of the Camp David summit and the Second Intifada, the pragmatism and readiness for compromise remain, but there is also pessimism and profound distrust of the other side. This is basically the meaning of the Center today, and the package that Kadima, the center party founded by Arik Sharon following the 2005 Gaza disengagement, offered voters. The Center indeed grew since the turn of the century, and in the 2006 elections, Kadima succeeded more than any other party and formed the government. But even in the 2006 elections, labeled in public discourse *Mapatz* (literally ‘explosion’), the same cleavage still determined the structure of the party system and politics; and the group sociological basis of the vote did not change. If anything, the distinction between religious and secular Jews only grew stronger because those moving from the Likud to

Kadima tended to be less connected to religion and tradition. Thus, the Likud and the rightist bloc became more religious than in the past. The “explosion” of 2006 – with the decline of the veteran parties and the unique success of a newly established center party – indicated more than anything the depth of the weakening of the party system,⁹⁹⁰ not a change in the cleavage structure. The 1977 realignment cleavage continued to underpin the system, and in a similar way.

It is no coincidence that the issue of the Jewish and democratic state came to fore on the public agenda in the mid-1980s with the institutionalization of the 1977 realignment around the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the territories, and the lining up of the parties, candidates and political blocs along this dimension of collective identity on its two components. In terms of values, these dilemmas entail different priorities between Israel as a Jewish state, peace, democracy and Greater Israel. The Right emphasized the values of a Jewish state and Greater Israel, and the Left focused on peace and democracy. The overall Israeli Jews’ value system concentrated on the Jewish state and peace.

Issues of collective identity have greater potential than other issues to turn into full cleavages and to persist. Collective identity links symbolic politics with preferences and interests, which renders it an “easy issue” in the voting calculus. It combines group affiliation with views and preferences, and leads to voting based on both. And precisely for these reasons, collective identity is an easy and comfortable resource for political agents to use to mobilize political support. In the Israeli case, this cleavage has special power due to the combination of the external and internal dimensions in the context of an ongoing conflict.

Realignment and dealignment

In the 1990s began a process of dealignment of the party system, in parallel to the institutional reform of the direct election of the prime minister. What characterizes this process – in Israel, like in most Western democracies – is the

weakening of the parties and of the connections between the voters and the parties. Parties as institutions have lost their power and roles, and both the party organizations and party loyalties have weakened and destabilized. This results in frequent changes in government; volatility in the election results and difficulty in predicting them; the disappearance or decline of long-standing, especially aggregative parties, and the emergence of new parties; lesser identification of voters with parties, less loyalty in the vote and split voting when possible; the deferral of the vote decision until late in the election campaign; more voting according to issues and the performance of candidates, and less according to party identification; distrust of parties and alienation from them; and a decline in participation in the elections.

This process of dealignment superimposed itself on the 1977 realignment. There has been no realignment of the party system since, and the 1977 realignment and its collective identity cleavage are still in effect, with the same value and policy issue dilemmas, and the same collective group bases for the vote. The dealignment means that the organizational party anchor of the cleavage is weakened, and in this sense it is no longer possible to speak in terms of a full cleavage. Since 2003 and especially since the 2006 elections, the party volatility seemed to affect the allegedly durable structure of the blocs. But despite the dealignment and the growing strength of the Center, the basic left-right bloc structure is pretty much intact, now perhaps better labeled Left and Center versus Right and Religious. No new defining dimension was able to penetrate and replace the collective identity dimension in politics, and the central factor in the vote remains the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The struggle over the collective identity of the state continues to be the dominant cleavage in the party system and in the political discourse, and the interrelationship between the internal and external facets comes more and more to the fore, well displayed in the deliberations and legislation initiatives of the 18th and 19th Knessets.

A party system “captive” by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: repercussions

The conflict with the Arabs was always on the public agenda of Israel, and defined one dimension in the Israeli multiparty system. But until the Six-Day War, it was one cleavage out of several cross-cutting ones, and domestic divides fared as well: on economic policy, religion and state, along ethnic lines, between Jews and Arabs, Zionist and non-Zionist. Before the 1967 War, the elections were about and were understood in terms of domestic issues; not so since. Following the Six-Day War and the 1977 realignment, the conflict swallowed up most of these other divides, and became the major cleavage dimension along which parties are arrayed and defined as “left” (meaning dovish) and “right” (hawkish). It took several years and three elections since the Six-Day War to bring about the first turnover in government, but the realignment of the party system was going on under the surface largely unnoticed. The conflict cleavage, which centers narrowly on “the territories” but is rooted in the much deeper struggle over collective identity, became a full cleavage and took over politics. The party system and with it Israeli politics and political discourse have been taken captive by this interlocking cleavage which holds strong even in the face of dealignment, and in spite of a most dynamic society and a turbulent international and regional environment.

It is a well known fact that the 1967 War marks a watershed in Israeli society, which has been debating ever since whether it has occupied or liberated “the territories.” From either perspective, Israeli democracy has been blemished and burdened. Democracy is a fragile enterprise and an instrumental value that easily gives way to in-group conservation values under conflict. A lot has and is being written about various aspects of these processes, but here I wish to highlight one aspect of democratic politics that has been largely overlooked: since the Israeli party system and its politics have been “taken captive” by the conflict with the Palestinians and the debate about the future of “the territories,”

democratic representation and electoral responsiveness have been impaired.

As the conflict dimension overrides, it keeps out other issues and it is handicapping political parties that do not define themselves on this cleavage. New issues find it hard to intrude; they are always treated as residual. The fate of post-materialist issues in Israel is a case in point. Quality of life issues such as the environment, values of personal freedom, self-expression, citizen involvement, education, or gender equality have been pushed aside. The lack of success of the green parties in Israeli elections exemplifies this again and again.

But also “old” issues have been pushed aside and outside electoral politics. Most noteworthy are the bread and butter issues of social-economic policy, the political core in most established democracies. This is an important underlying explanation for the ease in which the transformation of Israel’s political economy could be accomplished, since the 1985 Stabilization Plan and onward, and also for the unexpected and massive social protest in 2011. Israel’s macroeconomic policy has changed into a neo-liberal one, and the neo-liberal discourse took over. At the same time the preferences of the voters were most of this time more in line with welfare state policies. The trend in this direction since the mid-90s accelerated in the middle of the first decade of the 21st century. Thus a striking gap exists between the public’s social-economic preferences and their representation in the Knesset and in government policies. Comparative research shows that governments’ social-economic policy tends to reflect and respond to public preferences. But then in most countries and most of the time this is the major cleavage dimension in politics and in elections, whereas in Israel, this is not the case, and this issue is disconnected from electoral politics.

One severe result of the 1977 realignment is the lack of representation of public opinion on social-economic policy: there is a disjunction between domestic policy preferences of the electorate and actual policy. This could come about because for much of this time elections were not held on these issues. There were no clear distinct differences among the major parties on these issues making it difficult for voters to

distinguish between them on this dimension. The parties did not present coherent policy alternatives in the social-economic area; and position issues in the social-economic domain were not on the agenda in the party system or in election campaigns. Questions about social-economic policy were quickly and easily defined as professional issues that should stay out of politics. There was no ongoing meaningful and enlightening public discourse and controversy that can help citizens understand the issues, formulate their views and connect them to their voting preferences. Indeed there was little issue voting on this dimension.

The 2006 election provides an excellent example. In that election, Amir Peretz, former head of the Histadrut Labor Union, was elected to head the Labor ticket and he positioned the social-economic agenda in the forefront of the campaign. In the background was the ongoing policy of severe welfare cuts under the Likud government. The media and much of the parties' advertisements focused on poverty, education, health, and welfare. Nevertheless, even in this election, security concerns ended up dominating the campaign as it wore on, as well as voters' considerations, and there was no significant redrawing of the social basis of the vote. Then Amir Peretz took the post of minister of defense in Olmert's coalition government that he joined, Labor was totally insignificant in the formulation of social and economic policy in this government, and this issue was shelved again. The "conflict" dimension overpowered the political system and its major actors.

In the summer of 2011, a widespread social protest erupted in Israel that included tent campsites throughout the country and protest demonstrations that peaked in September with the "March of the Million," drawing 400,000 protestors. This social protest took politicians, social and political commentators and activists alike by surprise. It included under its umbrella a variety of groups and claims, and insisted on being apolitical. The substance of the protesters' claims and the language of the protest focused on social justice and quality of life issues. It had a consensual appeal and huge levels of support. The social protest changed dramatically the

public discourse on social and economic issues, brought to the fore the ills of Israeli economy and the gap between the public and its representatives' preferences and policy, thus breaking the pluralistic ignorance in this regard.

In the following elections of 2013, the social protest was simmering beneath the surface. In the election campaign, the challenges raised by the protest did not develop into “position issues” on which the different parties disagree. Rather, as if a consensual “valence issue,” just about all of the parties wanted to portray themselves as “social.” But the voters continued to vote primarily on the conflict; as in previous elections and despite the social protest, the conflict rather than socioeconomic preferences was their primary consideration. Nevertheless the elections were interpreted in terms of the issues the social protest had raised. Thus in the elections, just as before and thereafter, the protest changed dramatically the public discourse on social and economic issues, yet its effect on policy is debatable. But the bottom line is that even this exceptional and colossal social protest could not uproot the grip of the conflict and its underlying collective identity cleavage. Also in the 2013 elections, and at the time of this writing, leading to the 2015 elections, the 1977 realignment cleavage is still in effect and its external and internal collective identity dimensions coalescing more than ever before.

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29. The Likud as a Dominant Party and Israel's Post-1977 Infrastructure

Sigal Ben-Rafael Galanti

This paper was completed in April 2015.

Introduction

“Dominant parties” are usually defined as democratic parliamentary forces that possess a large majority and remain in power for a prolonged period, bringing about deep changes (revolutionary changes) in their societies’ foundations (status quo) to the point of being identified with an epoch.⁹⁹¹ Thus, among other aims, researching such parties is of importance for understanding their societies’ modus operandi and even their *raison d’être*. Yet there are examples of influential parties that succeed to become identified with an epoch of given societies though they are not compatible with this classic definition. It is suggested here that the Israeli party *Likud*⁹⁹² – even if it does not always enjoy large majorities, is not consistently elected, and in many respects expresses the status quo stance that existed on the eve of its election – succeeded to consolidate new Israeli value foundations, reflecting the Likud spirit that is much different from the one that typified the Labor epoch that preceded the Likud regime. Therefore, in order to contribute to the understanding of the post-1977 Israeli society, we see it as essential to treat the Likud as a dominant force and thus propose an enlargement in the classic dominant party’s definition.

With an aim of showing that Israel’s post-1977 expresses the “Likudic” values and thus the dominance of the Likud, this chapter opens with theoretical remarks regarding the concept of dominant party and the main problems of its classic

definition, leaving aside important cases. It then turns to describe the first Israeli foundations laid down by the Labor regime and the reasons for their decay. Given this background, we then turn to introduce the Likud, its historical background, parliamentary status, its basic views and their compatibility with the circumstances that brought about the decline of Labor that permitted the party's rooting. The chapter ends with concluding remarks regarding the Likud, the essence of Israeli foundations under its lead, and how dominant parties should be perceived in general.

Dominant parties

The phenomena of dominant parties raise important questions regarding the circumstances in which they develop, what impels people in pluralistic democracies to elect and reelect the same party, but most of all, what these forces teach us about the foundations of their societies. Furthermore, while some point out the advantages of dominant parties as “stabilizing mechanisms,”⁹⁹³ others see the political systems that are dominated by such forces as “uncommon democracies”⁹⁹⁴ and emphasize their harm to free competition, economy, social developments, voting behavior and the attentiveness to the citizens.⁹⁹⁵

More specifically, though the theoreticians refer differently to dominant parties, there exist common understandings that allow drawing a classic definition to this phenomenon: these parties should have a substantial parliamentary majority – 40%,⁹⁹⁶ 50%⁹⁹⁷ or even around two-thirds⁹⁹⁸ of the parliamentary seats, or at least 40% of the votes.⁹⁹⁹ Secondly, researchers insist that they head governments constantly for a prolonged period: three consecutive elections,¹⁰⁰⁰ 20 years,¹⁰⁰¹ or even 30.¹⁰⁰² And thirdly and most important, it is expected that they would bring about deep change in the status quo of their society's situation and allow new value foundations, to the point of being identified with an epoch.¹⁰⁰³ In this vein, as an example, for Almond the classic dominant

powers are the anti-colonialist movements that, following independence struggles, become long-time leading parties that designated their post-colonial societies.¹⁰⁰⁴

And indeed, there are quite a few examples of revolutionary long-run ruling parties of large majorities in democracies:¹⁰⁰⁵ the Social Democrats in Sweden designed their country as a welfare state; the Christian Democrats in Italy reorganized postwar Italy as a European democracy; the anti-colonialist Indian National Congress (INC) led India to become an independent, non-aligned, democracy; while Israel's Mapai/HaAvoda (Labor) party, starting off in pre-Israeli society under the British Mandate in Palestine (Yishuv), established Israel as a pragmatic pro-Western Zionist collective democracy. Similarly, it seems that when a dominant party loses elections, especially when no other dominant force succeeds them, many of their societies' basic foundations remain untouched: no major changes occurred in Sweden, Italy, and India when their dominant ruling parties stepped down and even in Israel – though it is claimed here that Labor was succeeded by a new dominant force – many of its patterns remain untouched.

On the other hand, it seems that there exist parties that have cardinal influence on their societies' development and though lacking main components of the classic definition of dominant parties they should be analyzed as such forces: the 1933–1955 US Democrats of the New Deal, WWII, and its ensuing redesigning of the world order, that did not enjoy a constant parliamentary majority in the 1940s; the French Socialists under Mitterrand (1981–1995) that were obliged to form cohabitation governments but succeeded to initiate a new social infrastructure in France; and the post-1993 LDP that prior to the 1990s was considered dominant, though reaching the opposition from time to time continues to hold major influence in today's Japan. Thus, specifically, through the case of the Likud that has cardinal influence on post-1977 Israel we suggest here an enlargement of the classical definition of dominant parties.

The Labor epoch and its decline

With an aim of understanding why the Likud's regime period should be distinct from the Labor epoch, we clarify here some of the latter's regime's characteristics and the reasons for the crystallization of a new status quo still under its rule. Thus, it is first to note that the pre-Israeli Labor regime was consolidated chiefly in the Yishuv that consisted of immigrants – mainly from Eastern and Central Europe¹⁰⁰⁶ – that belonged to a huge range of circles, each one holding a different Zionist approach. However, since the 1920s the strongly ideologically committed and most organized Zionist socialists succeeded to establish sophisticated foundations for a solid political camp – the Labor camp – that was hard to compete. The camp's leading Labor party (at that time called *Mapai* in Hebrew) became the principal force of the Yishuv and in the general organized Zionist movement. In 1948 it was the spearhead that established Israel and under different names ruled it uninterruptedly until 1977, gaining vast Knesset majorities of 30% to almost 50%, while the entire Labor camp held 50% and more. During this period, Israel underwent dramatic events: the huge Jewish immigration of the 1950s, especially from Moslem countries, changed Israel's initial demography beyond recognition; and major military campaigns enlarged the country's original borders, while adding an Arab population under Israeli sovereignty.

As for Israel's foundations set by Labor one may firstly mention its "Israeli Zionism," emphasizing an active Jewish return to the ancient Jewish land in order to establish a modern secular Jewish state. In this spirit, national solidarity was to be based on a secularized national culture, including secular reference to the Bible, and the revival of the Hebrew language.¹⁰⁰⁷ Furthermore, although Labor cooperated with religious forces in the Knesset and governments, accepting some of their demands, including the semi-traditional definition of a Jew in the amended Law of Return (1970), it was mainly out of political compromises. Subsequently, the Labor camp designed the Yishuv and nascent Israel as a social democrat society supporting equal opportunities, with a fairly

planned economy. It set up socialist settlements – the kibbutzim and the moshavim – and the Histadrut workers' organization that served simultaneously as a trade union, owner of enterprises, and provider of social, health, cultural and educational services.¹⁰⁰⁸ And even more so, regarding immigration, Labor supported a melting-pot policy, expecting Israel to become “one” under the party's values.¹⁰⁰⁹

Regarding the Jewish state's/Israel's final borders, the Labor camp has always preferred a pragmatic approach, leaving doors open to meaningful agreements with the neighboring countries and the Palestinians. In this respect, already in the 1930s David Ben-Gurion – Labor's establisher and leader and eventually Israel's first prime minister – accepted the principle of two states for two peoples in Western Palestine. Furthermore, under the lead of this party the Zionist movement accepted the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine; furthermore, borders were not mentioned in Israel's Declaration of Independence. This pragmatism continued with the capture of the Sinai Peninsula and its return (1956), and following the Six-Day War (1967) after the West Bank of the Jordan River, Sinai, and the Golan Heights were conquered (the 1967 territories), when Israel adopted resolutions consenting to withdrawals from those territories in events of a peace treaties. This stance projected also on Labor's security position: though investing heavily in security, basically it considered it as a means. And finally, it is true that the Labor camp included also hawkish circles – such as Yitzhak Tabenkin and his disciples from the Hakibbutz Hameuchad kibbutzim movement – at the same time it should be remembered that they usually justified their views by security needs, and remained basically flexible.

Substantive as they were, Labor values were challenged by major developments: as of the 1950s the young enlarging Israeli society absorbed growing populations – especially newcomers from Moslem countries (Mizrahi Jews) – that strongly identified with the Jewish religion and its traditions. Thus, a basic gap between Labor's Israeli Zionism and the newcomers' pro-religious attitudes spurred increasing resentment to the melting-pot ideology under Labor values.

Gradually there grew multiculturalist tendencies that intensified with the immigration of Russian-speakers since the 1990s.¹⁰¹⁰ Compounding those were the multiplying crises in government- and worker-owned enterprises that created growing dependence on the government,¹⁰¹¹ fostering reservations from Labor's alleged dream of an equal society and attentiveness to all sectors.

From another angle, the biblical 1967 captured territories legitimized alleged unrealistic territorial aspirations.¹⁰¹² In the Labor camp, the hawkish voices demanded an annexation and settlement of the territories claimed to have strategic importance. Young members of kibbutzim and moshavim even established the "Greater Israel" movement, while among the religious Zionist camp activists launched the more messianic "Gush Emunim" movement that aimed at implementing the religious imperative of settling the biblical "Land of Israel" in the 1967 territories. Finally, the endless wars and terrorism planted doubts within great parts of the Israeli society regarding the possibility of reaching reliable peace agreements with the country's neighbors and the Palestinians. This provided even stronger justification for remaining in the 1967 territories, while security was more and more considered a goal in itself. Given this background, it appeared that for many Israelis the country's classic notions influenced by Labor's values had lost their relevance.

The Likud epoch

From the fringe of the Zionist movement to an enduring governing elite

Following the description of tendencies typifying the Labor epoch we may pass now to describe the roots of the Likud and its characteristics. Thus, this political force was preceded by the Herut party (1948–1965) that merged with other forces to become Gahal Alignment (1965–1973), the Likud Alignment (1973–1988), and the Likud party (most of the time since 1988; though for short whiles it led the alignments of Likud-Gesher-Tzomet in 1996–1999 and the Likud Beitenu in 2013–

2015). Moreover, the party and its predecessors are the main successors of the radical territorialist Zionist Revisionist camp established as of 1922 by Ze'ev Jabotinsky – a secular Russian Jew, educated in the West, who rejected the Zionist movement's basic pragmatism. More radical leaders of the Revisionist camp were Abba Ahimeir and Uri Zvi Greenberg. Due to the Revisionists' general radicalism, the British authorities and the Labor camp suppressed them along the Yishuv days. Moreover, as long as Ben-Gurion was prime minister of Israel, he continued fiercely to delegitimize their descendants. Thus, in 1929 when Jabotinsky traveled from Palestine to attend the World Zionist Congress, he was never allowed to return and eventually died in 1940 in the USA. In these circumstances, as of the 1930s the Revisionists focused mainly on activity among the huge petit bourgeois traditional Polish Jewry.¹⁰¹³

To be more detailed, the Revisionist camp included various organizations, such as the Revisionist Party, Beitar youth movement, the Revisionist National Labor Federation, the Irgun underground, the extreme radical Brit-Habiryonim and the Lehi underground (a splinter of the Irgun). At first, the camp participated in the organized Zionist movement. However, following the assassination of Labor leader Chaim Arlosoroff (1933) and suspicions regarding Revisionists' involvement in the affair, Revisionist-Labor relations that were apriori very tensed, now became unbearable and though Jabotinsky and Ben-Gurion tried to reach a collaboration agreement, it was thwarted by anti-Ben-Gurion Labor circles.¹⁰¹⁴ The outcome was the creation of an alternative radical Zionist movement (1935) – the New Zionist Movement – with a large membership, especially in Eastern Europe.¹⁰¹⁵ Prior to Israel's establishment (1948) the Revisionist Party returned to the organized Zionist movement, and their representatives even signed the Israeli Declaration of Independence, but the more radical Beitar, Irgun and Lehi continued to act independently, using terror. It was only following statehood and the IDF's bombing of the Irgun's weapon-ship Altalena (June 1948) – caused by Irgun's refusal to hand over its entire weapon to the young Israeli authorities – that these

organizations adopted legitimate rules.¹⁰¹⁶ Hence, quite quickly Herut was founded by Irgun ex-combatants and became the main ex-Revisionist force and Israel's chief radical right-wing opposition (1949–1967; 1970–1977).

Furthermore, though radical, Herut sought influence by cooperating with large circles, under the lead of Menachem Begin, Irgun's last commander. Since the late 1950s it moved closer to the Israeli bourgeoisie with whose political party – the rightist Liberals – it initiated Gahal (1965). Yet, its most important alliance was established with the Mizrahi newcomers and their offspring that populated the peripheral towns and poor neighborhoods that with time became Likud's central constituency. More groups to which Gahal/Likud made efforts to get closer to are ex-generals, Greater Israel supporters from the Labor and the religious camps and, when already in power, the 1990s Russian-speaking immigration. In this vein, in 1964, following a tough struggle, Herut managed to enter the socialist Histadrut, while a greater peak was in 1967 when Gahal joined Levi Eshkol's national emergency government to remain in the coalition until 1970. Then prime minister Golda Meir agreed to adopt the principle of withdrawal from territories in cases of peace agreements.¹⁰¹⁷ In many ways these collaborations had legitimized the party strongly.

The party finally reached the main governing position in 1977 when already called Likud. Since 1977, it gains majorities most of the time and establishes most governments. Nonetheless, in many cases its majorities are quite narrow – as of 1992 it has not reached a third of the Knesset and in the last few years it has not gained more than a quarter of its seats, making it less than half of a minimal coalition (61 MKs). Furthermore, in few cases the Likud led coalitions while being the second largest party of the Knesset due to an election of a Likud prime minister, while Israel had a hybrid electoral system (1996–2001) based on separate votes for the Knesset and for the prime minister, or in other times, because the largest party did not succeed to establish a coalition. In these cases the Likud came out as no more than a pivotal party, able to form the largest/ the only possible coalition. If focusing on

Likud's performance on governments, it is to note that though heading most of Israel's governments since 1977, it was not always consistent: under Yitzhak Shamir the party headed cohabitation governments for a long while with Labor (1984–1990), and at other times Labor (1992–1996; 1999–2001) and the centrist Kadima (2006–2009), based on ex-Likud and ex-Labor circles, have headed governments while the Likud was in the opposition. To illustrate these tendencies, **Table 1** shows Likud's parliamentary and governmental performance since 1977.¹⁰¹⁸

Tab. 1: The Likud in the Knesset and in government since 1977

Years	Likud's position	Likud seats in the Knesset (contains 120 members)	Likud seats in the Knesset in approximate %
1977–1984	Main governing position	43–48	36%–40%
1984–1990	Co-governing with Labor	41–40 (Labor 44)	34%–33%
1990–1992	Main governing position	40	33%
1992–1996	Opposition	32	27%
1996–1999	Main governing position	32 (Labor 34)	26%
1999–2001	Opposition	19	15%
2001–2003	Main governing position	19	15%
2003–2006	Main governing position	38	31%
Years	Likud's position	Likud seats in the Knesset (contains 120 members)	Likud seats in the Knesset in approximate %
2006–2009	Opposition	12 (Kadima 29; Labor 19)	10% (Kadima 24%; Labor 15%)
2009–2013	Main governing position	27 (Kadima 28)	22% (Kadima 23%)
2013–2015	Main governing position	31	25%
2015–	Main governing position	30	25%

Thus, despite being suppressed, the Revisionists survived and their descendants reached power in 1977, to become Israel's long-run main leadership, though its majorities and consistency in power were not typical to dominant forces.

The “Likudic” value infrastructure

Given the backdrop of the Labor epoch and the Likud's history and regime, we may now deepen in the Likudic values and show their uniqueness in comparison to the Labor ones. Starting with Jabotinsky and later on Begin, both were dominant and centralist leaders, but within the Revisionist camp and Herut/Gahal/Likud different ideological versions have always existed besides the main stream. Furthermore,

every Revisionist organization and those connected to Herut/Gahal/Likud had its own specific positions connected to its area of activity, such as youth, underground struggles, or salaried workers. Classic inner-Revisionist discourses referred for example to the ways a Greater Jewish State should be achieved; against whom the Yishuv ought to struggle: the anti-Zionist rebellious Arabs, the British who gradually retreated from their 1917 promise to support a Jewish homeland, or both; and whether to rely on a conventional struggle, or the use of terrorism.¹⁰¹⁹ Inner-Herut/ Gahal/Likud discussions focus on the place of Judaism in the Israeli sphere, and how to react to international pressures concerning territorial concessions. Yet since statehood it is mainly the central leaders and the formal platforms that most strongly represent the party and while leading governments, the governmental central policies can also be identified with the party's agenda.

To be more precise and with an aim of understanding the essence of the Revisionist/Herut/Gahal/Likud basic outlook, it is first to note that its Zionist interpretation could be described mainly as “Jewish Zionism” – a midway approach between secular perceptions and the religious ones.

Jabotinsky originally held a secular Zionist approach and saw religion as a private matter. Nevertheless, since the 1930s the Revisionists' main stream and later on Herut/Gahal/Likud preferred a midway approach between religious and secular nationalism – to be called here “Phyletism”: a term that derives from the Greek word *phyle* for tribe and was used by modern Orthodox Christianity to describe nationalism leaning upon ethno-religious characteristics, though not striving to realize a religious state. In this vein, influenced by the huge traditional Polish Jewry and the strong Beitar movement in Poland, in 1935 the Revisionist New Zionist Movement formally accepted that one Zionist goal is to position the sanctities of the Torah as a basis of the Jewish nation.¹⁰²⁰ Over time, Jabotinsky himself developed dialogues with rabbis and showed great sympathy for Judaism, while religious organizations – such as the youth movement Brit-Hahashmonaim – were formed within the Revisionist camp or encouraged to become part of it.

With statehood, though some Herut leaders such as Eri Jabotinsky and Hillel Kook and Revisionist organizations like the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation preferred secular Hebrew territorialist nationalism, Begin and those around him emphasized the midway approach. Thus, in negation of the Zionist religious stance seeing the Halakha as the only Jewish constitution, Herut supported an Israeli democratic constitution in the first Knesset, though it was never fully realized. Yet, in 1953 the party backed the intention to hand over to the rabbinical courts the control over all matrimonial matters, and furthermore when Ben-Gurion hesitated regarding the definition of who should be considered a Jew (1958), it was obvious for Begin and he declared that history and God have already decided what the Halakha clearly defines.¹⁰²¹ In the same vein, Gahal adopted another midways stance – non-religious, but still traditional – when the Law of Return was amended: it supported the definition of a Jew as being born to a Jewish mother or being converted, not necessarily according to the Halakha. Nevertheless, in many ways, this stance considered the Halakha spirit.

Since reaching the main governing position the Likud has never pushed clericalism, but is much explicit that it deeply honors the Jewish religion. Thus, with his first victory (1977), Begin declared his intention to become a “Jewish-style prime minister,” starting a tradition of visits to the Western Wall as a gesture of thanking for electoral success. More practical steps regarded deep attentiveness to religious forces’ pressures, such as demands to exempt yeshiva students from military service and nominations of religious ministers of education from the main Zionist religious party, the Mafdal. And even more so, along the years, the Likud education ministers saw importance in adopting school programs aimed at deepening acquaintance with Jewish tradition, history, and the connection with the territories of ancient Israel, such as compulsory school-trips to Hebron’s Cave of Patriarchs, situated in the occupied territories. Finally, not only had Gahal/Likud consistently justified the importance of retaining the 1967 territories under Israeli control, like religious forces, it justified this position by the Jewish imperative to settle the biblical land. As an

example, when starting his term as prime minister, Begin promised that there would be many more *Elonei Moreh* (plural form of the name of the first settlement on confiscated Palestinian land) and admitted that this was a religious mission for him.¹⁰²²

Regarding the Revisionists' and later on their Israeli successors' ideal regime we may start with Jabotinsky who gave much weight to the individual and in principle advocated a democratic regime. Nonetheless, at the same time he maintained that in acute matters – such as racism – the individual needs the support of his nation and saw it as essential to realize nation-states in general and a Jewish state specifically, due to the Jewish diasporic sufferings. Furthermore, as an admirer of the West, he expected the Jewish state to host the creation of a modern Jewish supreme civilization, combining Western spirit and biblical morality and as such be an example to all nations striving to become liberated. Jabotinsky insisted that this goal was to be achieved at any price, even if non-democratic phases are needed to enable a crystallization of a Jewish majority in Palestine.¹⁰²³

Other Revisionists were less committed to the democratic dogma and some even advocated the re-creation of the biblical kingdom of Israel.¹⁰²⁴ Nonetheless, Herut/ Gahal/Likud accepted the principle of democratic Israel, though they have always preferred a republican version, seeing the Jewish collective as the main value. In this vein, lately (2014) Netanyahu has advocated the promotion of a basic law that would define Israel as the state of the Jewish nation, sharpening the connection of Israel with the entire Jewish world, apart from being a democracy.¹⁰²⁵

As for their economic views, Jabotinsky, most Revisionists, and Herut/ Gahal/Likud were not fond of a worker-based economy and preferred capitalism, while being attentive to the salaried employees. And even more so, the Revisionist camp included the Revisionist National Labor Federation, Herut became part of the Histadrut trade union in the 1960s, and Begin had always perceived himself as a leader attached to the lower classes, promising social facilities. Once

in power the party adopted radical neo-capitalist reforms, liberated the Lira (to be called later on Shekel and New Shekel) and encouraged privatization. Yet it also made efforts to elevate the poor neighborhoods and supported young Likud mayors of development towns in order to advance their communities. With time, the socialist foundations of Israel decayed completely and the capitalists became an important elite, while Labor, when in opposition or governments, practically accepted this paradigm.¹⁰²⁶ Furthermore, in contrast to Labor's melting-pot ideal, though the Revisionists and later on Herut/Gahal/Likud were radical rightists and ideologically committed, at the same time they manifested a multiculturalist approach. Jabotinsky explained that while socialist Zionism demands an adherence to two flags – a Zionist and a socialist – the Revisionists are solely Zionist (monist), embracing every Zionist. In practical terms, the Revisionists opened their ranks and elite to a whole range of groups, while Herut/Gahal/Likud continued that tendency. And indeed, gradually, the spearhead leadership of the Revisionists/Herut/Gahal/Likud became more and more pluralist and included the Yishuv Revisionist activists and their offspring (“the Princes”), among them many traditional and religious Jews, Mizrahim of the “Old Yishuv” (the pre-Zionist Jewish community in Palestine), Mizrahim that immigrated to the Yishuv and mainly Israel in the 1950s and their offspring, different circles of the Israeli capitalist bourgeoisie, settlers living in the 1967 territories, Russian-speaking immigrants, alongside ex-generals, and even moshav and kibbutz members.¹⁰²⁷ This attitude has always made the Likud non-elitist, multisectoral and even populist.

Concerning the borders of the Jewish state, like the romantic nationalists, Jabotinsky maintained that national cultures should develop in the nations' natural geographic zones. Thus, in the case of the Jews, since dreaming along their diasporic history to return to their ancient land from where they were expelled, there is a proof that their revival should occur in their entire natural/ historical territory. Practically, and assuming that the area of the original British Mandate in Palestine is approximately the ancient Jewish state,

Jabotinsky demanded to establish the modern Jewish state across that entire area. In this vein, the immediate background of the launch of the Revisionist Party was the establishing, under British encouragement, of the Kingdom of Transjordan, blaming the Zionist movement for letting it happen.¹⁰²⁸ On their behalf, the more extreme Brit-Habiryonim and Lehi referred to a much larger hoped-for Jewish state. In addition, to different extents, the different Revisionist ideologues supported the ideal of military Zionism, holding that it is only through tough actions and even armed struggles or terrorist attacks that one should respond to those refusing to accept the greater Jewish state idea.¹⁰²⁹ When Israel was founded, due to its limited territory, Begin as the commander of the territorialist Irgun hesitated whether to recognize it, and it was until 1967 that Herut's formal program asserted that Greater Israel would be realized when an opportunity would come along, supporting a takeover of the East bank of the Jordan River. Nevertheless, after the Six-Day War, Begin advocated increasing demands to annex and settle in the conquered biblical territories and no longer demanded a non-realistic takeover of Jordan. Moreover, unlike the Labor Greater Israel circles that emphasized security aspects on the one hand, and the religious circles that promoted a messianic return to the biblical land, Gahal/Likud saw in retaining and settling the territories a return to ultimate cradle of the Jewish people. Given this background, we may understand why the party chose to leave Golda Meir's government in 1970 when it agreed to make territorial concessions in case of a peace agreement.¹⁰³⁰

When in power, the Likud allegedly moves closer to Labor's pragmatism and there are no few examples that it agrees to retreat from territories: in 1979 Begin left the Sinai and agreed on a five-year autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza, after which a referendum among the Palestinians inhabitants of these regions would decide on their political destiny; though extremely radical when heading the opposition during Yitzhak Rabin's second government (1992–1995) and Shimon Peres' second government (1995–1996), Netanyahu's first government (1996–1999) respected the Oslo Accords,

reached by Rabin and retreated from Hebron; while for his part, Ariel Sharon disengaged unilaterally from the Gaza Strip. Nevertheless, at the same time it seems that the Likud does these concessions not out of apriori pragmatism, but due to the inability to resist massive pressures and especially those of the United States, on which Israel relies. It was not easy for Begin to make concessions and most of the time during the Camp David conference he even refused to collaborate with his American and Egyptian colleagues.¹⁰³¹ Moreover, Begin was challenged by the radical Geula Cohen who split from the Likud to form the extreme rightist Tehiya. Shamir who, under American pressure, agreed to halt settlement in the territories and was pushed to the Madrid Conference that was supposed to reach a macro agreement regarding the Middle East, faced strong opposition from major Likud leaders, including Sharon. Each time that Netanyahu makes concessions he searches for ways to retreat from them, while Sharon – though he disengaged from Gaza – had to disengage from his party that negated his steps. And finally, vis-à-vis Israel's security, since it basically intends to settle and retain territories, in order to challenge permanent Palestinian antagonism to this goal, security has become more of an end than a means.¹⁰³²

All in all, it does indeed seem that the Likud represents an alternative set of values compared to the Labor ones. And even more so, the main point is that these values were promoted as the foundations of Israeli society. It was once Herut that made efforts to become legitimate by approaching mainstream and legitimate groups while sharpening consents with accepted views. But over the past few decades the contrary is happening: parties adopt obvious Likudic outlooks in order to present themselves as legitimate. Since the 1970s, ultra-rightist parties such as Tehiya, Ichud Leumi, Otzma LeYisrael have accepted in different forms the concept of Jewish Zionism. In this respect, even today's main religious Zionist party, HaBayit Hayehudi, silences a little bit its traditional religious Zionist approach and moves toward a middle way, trying to attract non-religious circles and insisting that it can become a mainstream ruling party. Most of the parties' front line leaderships include now a multi-sectoral leadership that

allegedly represents a growing spectrum of social sectors as did the Revisionists, Herut/Gahal and mainly the Likud. This typifies Labor (called now Hamahane Hatzioni), Kadima since its launch and until its decline (2006–2015), the central Yesh Atid, Kulanu and even the rightist religious HaBayit Hayehudi that all prefer a leadership of an extremely large range of sectors. Moreover, as mentioned, the neo-liberal paradigm has become the leading economic approach and although since 2011 Israel has witnessed social protests and some parties are paying more attention to the middle and lower classes, the main forces do not consider resolutions outside the neo-liberal paradigm.

As for Israel's borders – besides the Likud and the religious Zionists – since the 1970s many parties adopted the idea of Greater Israel: to different extents the ultrareligious parties support it and a whole range of past and present rightist forces – such as the Tehiya, Tzomet, Haderech Hashlishit, Ichud Leumi and Otzma LeYisrael – try to convince in their sincere intention to keep the 1967 territories under Israeli rule due to Likud's concessions. The same can be said of security that became a goal of itself: thus, in the recent "Protective Edge Operation," the main criticism came from the right-wing, demanding a stronger fight – a more Likudicstyle war – even if under international pressure, Netanyahu was forced to hold a more moderate approach – usually accepted by the center and the moderate left.

The Likudic values and its compatibility to the crystallizing of young Israel's reality

After describing main Likudic values, a natural question rises regarding the reasons for these values' rooting. In this regard, when considering the developments in young Israel that brought about a new status quo and challenged the Labor regime, we may suggest that the Likudic values are compatible with the new reality, legitimize it and are thus able to root as Israel's post-1977 foundations. To be more precise, the Jewish Zionism of Herut/Gahal/Likud is compatible with the mentioned worldview of many of the 1950s traditional newcomers – combining Zionism and closeness to tradition and religion. The monism and openness of the Revisionists

and Herut/Gahal/Likud toward many Zionist circles and social sectors fit the growing multicultural tendencies and nurture them. The same can be said regarding Likud's liberal outlook which complements the growing disappointment in the 1970s with the worker-based economy. As for the Greater Israel idea, though it was the main unrealistic aspiration of the Revisionists and Herut/Gahal well before 1967, after the Six-Day War it became not only realistic, but met the will of a growing number of groups which, for different reasons, preferred to leave the territories under Israeli rule and inhabit them. And similarly, Likud's rigid security outlook contributes to growing doubts in Israeli society regarding possible reliable longterm relations with its neighboring countries and societies. In other words, developments prior to Likud's rule created the soil on which the party could flourish and become a force of dominant influence.

Conclusions

Already while ruled by the Labor party, Israel faced challenges and a new reality that crystallized, which did not support anymore many of Labor's values that had served as the country's first value foundations. The Likudic values however may be seen as compatible with the new status quo that was a perfect soil for its rooting and major influence. Hence, if once Israel's nationalism was defined in secular terms, it is now based on a Jewish Zionism manifesting deep respect for Jewish history, religion, and tradition; intentions to promote a unified Israeli society under a social democratic regime were replaced by a neo-liberal multicultural republican approach; and instead of a basic pragmatism vis-à-vis Israel's borders – while seeing security as a means – a more rigid outlook concerning territorial compromises and security have taken the place. That is, post-1977 Israel experiences the Likud epoch.

Nevertheless, as shown, if considering the classic definition of dominant party – a democratic parliamentary force that possesses a large majority and remains in power for a prolonged period, while promoting new value foundations in

its society to the point of being identified with an epoch – the Likud lacks few of these characteristics: it has not had constant large majorities, consistent rule, and in a way it accepted the existing status quo and legitimized it. On the other hand it would be incorrect to analyze post-1977 Israel as a state ruled by casual coalitions and refer to this epoch as a continuation of its precedent. Thus, on the basis of the case of the Likud, and with the aim of focusing on parties that have cardinal influence on their societies and on societies that are ruled by such influencing parties, it is suggested here to broaden the definition of a dominant party. And to be more precise, we consider it more effective to perceive a dominant party as a ruling force in democracy whose values become mainstream values of its society, to the point of being identified with an epoch.

Such thinking might help to reach a more accurate picture of the political forces and societies that mistakenly are not defined as dominant forces, or dominated by such forces, respectively. Furthermore, enlarging the definition of dominant parties could help us reach a better understanding of democracies and democratic development, at least regarding the extent of societies led by dominant forces; how innovative those forces are; and finally, whether political systems ruled by such parties are really “uncommon.”

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30. The 1977 Changeover: The Emergence of a New Discourse among Palestinians in Israel

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This paper was completed in October 2014.

Introduction

The elections of May 1977 marked the beginning of a new phase in the history of Israel. After three decades during which the Zionist Left, represented by Mapai (later the Labor party), held power, the Zionist revisionist Right, represented by the Likud party headed by Menachem Begin, for the first time won an election and formed a government. The results of this election are usually described as a “coup,”¹⁰³³ a term first used in this connection by the Israel Broadcasting Service’s well-known newscaster Haim Yevin, in order to express the shock which the election results had for the Jewish state’s political system after three decades in which one party predominated. Begin himself said of his party’s and his own personal victory that it was a historical change: “This evening a change has begun in the history of the Jewish people and the Zionist movement.”¹⁰³⁴

The first part of this paper analyzes the factors which led to the above-mentioned political upheaval and the second part discusses the changes in Palestinian political discourse inside Israel in the wake of the “coup.” It will be seen that this political change and the rise of the Right had the effect of accelerating the emergence of a discourse among the Palestinians in Israel concerning the issue of the definition of Israel as a national ethnic (Jewish) state and the Palestinians’ status within it. The study also analyzes the historical paradox inherent in the relationship between the Israeli political Right

and the Arab minority. Indeed, the social changes that accompanied the “coup” both before and after played a role in exacerbating ethnic policies in dealing with the Arab minority, despite the fact that the foundations for the policies of discrimination were laid at the time the Labor party was in power. The paradox lies in the fact that the Israeli Right in fact opposed many of the discriminatory policies against the Arabs as long as it was in the opposition. In particular, it opposed the military rule imposed on Arabs who were citizens of Israel. The study also argues that the clear position of the Right with respect to the future of the occupied Palestinian territories is diametrically opposed to that of the Palestinians in Israel, who are in favor of Palestinian self-determination and the establishment of a Palestinian state in the territories occupied in 1967. The occupation has become a major theme in the Palestinian discourse inside Israel, as has their status within the state and the relationship between majority and minority within it.

The political upset in Israel in 1977: background and political repercussions

The changeover had numerous political dimensions, first and foremost being the victory of the Likud party headed by Begin, who now formed a government. Begin was a bitter foe of David Ben-Gurion, the legendary founder of the State of Israel and the head of the Mapai party, who steadfastly refused to form a coalition in which Begin’s party, originally called the Herut movement, took part, in line with Ben-Gurion’s famous declaration, “without Herut or Maki” (Maki: the Communist Party in Israel), thus placing a non-Zionist party together with the right-wing Zionist Herut party. Some scholars consider the results of the 1977 elections as the beginning of the “second Israel republic.”¹⁰³⁵ Others describe it as the victory of “the second Israel,” that began to take shape toward the end of the 1960s, over “the first Israel,” founded and led by the Zionist Labor movement.¹⁰³⁶

Israeli researchers used the theoretical framework of the “dominant party” presented in Maurice Duverger’s *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State* in order to describe the Mapai party’s hegemony over Israel’s political system during the state’s first three decades of existence.¹⁰³⁷ A dominant party does not imply a one-party system. It may well emerge in a multi-party system and does not even have to occupy the majority of seats or receive the most votes. But despite the existence of other political parties and its lack of a majority in parliament, a dominant party will control the political system by force of its great and restrictive influence on developments in many domains in the country and the latter’s connections with the party. For this reason the 1977 elections were deemed as marking the end of the dominant party system in the Israeli scene.¹⁰³⁸

The first signs of approaching political change in Israel appeared at the beginning of the 1970s. In the general election of 1973 the Likud party received almost as many seats in the Knesset as the Ma‘arakh (the new name of the Mapai party). The period from the end of the 1960s, and especially after the June 1967 War (known in Israel as the Six-Day War) until the mid-1970s, saw many changes, which eventually led to the political upset of 1977. The most significant change was the growing support which the Likud party received from Mizrahi Jews who immigrated to Israel from the Middle East and North Africa. Since 1973 more than half of such Jews voted for this party (with the exception of the 1999 elections).¹⁰³⁹ Peled and Shafir¹⁰⁴⁰ discuss the structural and ideological factors behind this development. After the 1967 War structural changes in the Israeli economy reduced the social and economic dependence of many Mizrahi Jews on the Labor party’s institutions. This gave rise to the emergence of a second generation of Mizrahi Jews, who protested against their social marginalization and took a different social and political path than their parents. The economic policies which the government pursued in 1965 had the purpose of weakening the demands of the workers and led to higher unemployment and lower wages, especially among the Mizrahi Jews. Furthermore, the abolition of military rule among the Arabs of

Israel and the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1967 had the effect of bringing cheap labor into the Israeli market. This in turn led, for the first time since 1948, to fierce competition in the labor market between Mizrahi Jews and Arabs. One effect of this was to drive the Mizrahi Jews into the Likud party, which adopted a strong nationalist tone in its discourse and declared policies toward the Arabs. Finally, the Zionist Labor movement after 1967 was convulsed by a political and ideological dispute concerning the position it should take concerning the future of the Palestinian territories, while the political Right in Israel as represented by the Likud party presented a clear position in favor of treating the occupied territories as part of the historical homeland of the Jewish nation.¹⁰⁴¹

The social protests at the end of the 1960s marked the beginning of the “second Israeli state.”¹⁰⁴² In the “first state” the Zionist Labor movement dominated all the vital services in the state since 1948 while the “second Israel” represented the first cracks in its dominance. Thus social protest movements such as the demonstrations in Haifa’s Wadi Salib neighborhood, the emergence of the Black Panther movement and the protests in Jerusalem, all of which were expressions of social and political discontent on the part of Mizrahi Jews, were among the most significant challenges to the dominant position of the Labor party. These protests were also evidence of the failure of the social policies aimed at integrating Mizrahi Jews into Israeli society; in addition, they marked the beginning of a movement by marginalized social forces toward the political right-wing in Israel.¹⁰⁴³ Most Mizrahi Jews lived in the so-called development towns, in the (economic and geographical) periphery. Most of these towns were established in the 1950s for the purpose of providing homes for the Jewish emigrants from Arab and Muslim countries. Before the great Russian immigration at the beginning of the 1990s the Mizrahi Jews constituted 75% of the inhabitants of the development towns.¹⁰⁴⁴ Political protests grew stronger after the war of October 1973. For the first time political legitimacy was given to public debate over the results of that war. Another development was the appearance of the settlement movement

in the occupied Palestinian territories, which took part in the rise of the nationalist-religious discourse, and brought about a split in Israeli society around the issue of the future of the territories occupied in 1967, which has remained the most important dividing line within Israeli society to this day.

In their study on the inner changes that took place in the Herut movement, Cohen and Leon point out three developments that helped transform that movement from the position of opposition party that it held for three decades into the ruling party within the Likud in 1977.¹⁰⁴⁵ The first of these developments was a transition from an exclusive focus on political and ideological issues to an interest also in the public's economic and social concerns. This marked a certain intellectual flexibility which attracted a new public to the party. The second development was organizational: the Herut movement united with a number of other movements and together they formed the Likud party. This change was accompanied with a revival of the party's branches and its reorganization. The third development was of a social nature: the party's grassroots, which in the past consisted mainly of former members of the former military Lehi and Irgun organizations, was now expanded to include a broader spectrum of people of various ages and ethnicities, in particular the Mizrahi Jews.¹⁰⁴⁶ In the first three decades of the state's existence these groups had been marginalized, but Mizrahi Jews attained greater influence by bringing the Likud party to power. This party was now perceived as the representative of the weaker classes in Israeli society, despite the fact that the Likud party held classical liberal views on the economy.

At the same time the ruling Labor party was weakened, due to corruption scandals that involved the party leadership. The party also failed to understand the social, economic and political changes in Israeli society, which was no longer the same as it was after the 1967 War.¹⁰⁴⁷ In addition, it did not have a clear policy toward the future of the occupied Palestinian territories.

The political upheaval in Israel led to the creation of Mizrahi elites, which penetrated forcefully into Israeli society. The political activism of Mizrahi Jews took a number of forms, including the formation of a Mizrahi middle class, part of which played a role in the 1977 election upset while others came to occupy senior positions in the large parties such as Labor and Likud, where they wielded actual influence and were not merely an embellishment.¹⁰⁴⁸ The political change also enabled marginal social groups, or people living on the margins, to obtain a higher education. The accessibility of higher education was one of the political and social changes experienced by Israeli society at the end of the 1970s, which also saw the rise of new social and political forces on the Israeli scene. The Likud party demonstrated its social commitment toward the Mizrahi Jews that had brought it to power, and ensured the accessibility of higher education especially among them.¹⁰⁴⁹

The role which Mizrahi Jews played in the changeover of 1977 is still the subject of academic debate. However, there is agreement that the sectarian factor played a role in the political changes that took place following these elections. These changes were particularly evident in the elections of 1981, in which the Likud strengthened its hold on the reins of power by once more winning with the help of the Mizrahi Jews. This turned the changeover into part of a continuing socio-political process that wrought changes to Israeli society.¹⁰⁵⁰ One of the most important processes was a reformation of the Israeli-Zionist historical memory. After the Likud came to power in 1977 a remaking took place of the Israeli historical memory that had been constructed by the Labor party and by Ben-Gurion, who took care to remove all traces of the Revisionist Zionist movement from the shrine of the Israeli historical memory. Thus, for example, no mention was made of the role of the military organizations of the Irgun and Lehi in the founding of the State of Israel. Ben-Gurion also refused to make any mention of his historical rival Jabotinsky as a founding figure in historical memory. The electoral upset of 1977, however, brought about a reconstruction of historical memory and the reintroduction into it of Revisionist Zionism

and its components. This was done forcefully, for instance, through official writings, the naming of streets and neighborhoods.¹⁰⁵¹ The ruling party also broke with the economic policies of its predecessor and began to liberalize the economy.

In addition, the political upset brought about the establishment of the most important and successful religious movement of Mizrahi Jews, the Shas movement, which put stress on the oriental Jewish identity through policies of promoting that identity.¹⁰⁵² Many attempts have been made to found sectarian parties in Israel, but they all failed for a number of reasons, but mainly because the Ashkenazi Jewish elite pursued policies that were hostile to the establishment of sectarian political parties and lists. However, the Shas movement was successful, in part because of the “coup” of 1977, which demonstrated the political power of the Mizrahi Jews and their elites, the result of the Likud party’s policy of promoting the oriental identity, which subsequently benefited the Shas movement.

The emergence of the Shas movement (Union of Sephardim Observers of the Torah) was an expression of protest against two institutions, the Ashkenazi religious establishment represented by the Agudat Israel movement, and the Ashkenazi socio-political establishment. The movement’s name combines the sectarian with the religious, in line with the social and religious foundations on which the movement tried to base itself.¹⁰⁵³

The political “coup” helped increase the influence of the Jewish settlers in the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967. Indeed, although the settlement of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip began and continued for a decade under the Labor government, it intensified after the Likud came to power, when the settlers became an influential element on the Israeli political scene.¹⁰⁵⁴ Security considerations played a vital role in the Jewish settlement of the West Bank during the first decade of the occupation (when the Labor party was in power). After the Likud came to power, during the second decade of the occupation, the concept of security

considerations in settlement activity was broadened, and ideological movements, especially the messianic Gush Emunim movement, were given freer rein to engage in settlement.¹⁰⁵⁵ Ariel Sharon, who was minister of agriculture in Begin's first government, supported settlement in empty regions on the hill slopes, in order to control Palestinian population centers and the Palestinian public sphere. But the Gush Emunim movement broke the geographical unity of the Palestinians by building settlements in the midst of Palestinian agglomerations, in an attempt to prevent the division of *Eretz Yisrael*, 'the Land of Israel,' and the establishment of a Palestinian state.¹⁰⁵⁶ Official government policy, which encouraged Jewish settlement, led to the establishment of a settler organization, a "council of settlements" (Yesha'a), which became the supreme official organizational framework for the settlements in the West Bank (and the Gaza Strip, before the disengagement of 2005).¹⁰⁵⁷ In short, the political "coup" of 1977 brought about far-reaching political and social changes in Israeli society. Did these changes affect the Arab citizens of Israel politically? Did a clear change occur in their political discourse? The answers to these questions will make up the second part of this paper.

The Palestinians in Israel and the emergence of a new political discourse after 1977

The Palestinians in Israel are the Arabs who remained on the land on which the State of Israel was established in 1948. Israel granted them Israeli citizenship immediately after it declared its independence. At the time they numbered about 155,000 people, most of whom resided, and still reside, in Arab villages and towns. While Israel gave them citizenship, it also imposed military rule on them for nearly twenty years, and for all intents and purposes cut off their ties to the rest of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and to the Arab world.¹⁰⁵⁸

The period of military rule (1949–1966) was important for its effect on the political discourse and organization of the

Palestinians in Israel. The military rule placed a series of restrictions on Palestinians' right of movement within Israel. To move from one region to another, for any reason, required a permit from the military.¹⁰⁵⁹ This, in turn, placed obstacles on political organization within Palestinian society. It also, in addition to the Palestinian defeat in 1948, put an end to the process of urbanization and modernization which Palestinian society underwent in the 1930s and 1940s. The system of permits was subject to security considerations and personal connections. The military officer used clan heads and traditional leaders as conduits for granting government concessions in many domains, such as education, work and permission to move from one region to another. They also controlled their political choices during elections.¹⁰⁶⁰ The purpose of military rule was to control and supervise the Palestinian minority that remained within the new state. Lustick mentions three basic control tools used by the state in order to strengthen and maintain its hold on the Palestinians in Israel: retaining and encouraging existing religious divisions (between Muslims, Christians and Druze), geographical divisions (Galilee, the Triangle, the Negev) and family divisions. This implied a refusal to recognize the Arabs as a national minority, accompanied by attempts to integrate the Arab elites through special privileges, in order to discourage them from engaging in a national political discourse and from pursuing the collective objectives of its national groups, and lastly, a strengthening of Arab society's collective subservience, especially in the economic sphere, by turning the Arabs into a proletariat in the Jewish market.¹⁰⁶¹

During the period of military rule two mutually contradictory systems emerged, a democratic system that ruled Jewish society, and an undemocratic system that ruled Arab society, through military rule and its various branches. Although the state did give the Arabs some political rights as citizens, such as the right to vote, it reduced other rights which the democratic regime and the rights of citizenship implied, such as the right of free political assembly, the right of movement and the right to congregate. The military rule also administered a separate judicial system for Arabs; Arab

citizens of Israel came under the jurisdiction of military courts while the Jews were under the jurisdiction of civil courts.¹⁰⁶² The separation between Jews and Arabs in Israel showed that the Jews in the state enjoy collective national rights, while the Palestinians enjoy individual rights, which however are not equal.¹⁰⁶³ In summary it may be said that the political discourse among Arabs during the period of military rule had the purpose of getting over the defeat and preserving the survival of the people in their homeland after the war. This involved the growing presence of civil discourse in its primeval sense, which focuses on pleading with the authorities to grant limited rights and freedoms to the citizens, in order to ensure a minimal existential and economic security for a society that came out of the war of 1948 defeated, weakened and deprived of its means of livelihood. During this period the national discourse, that is a discourse focusing on the Palestinian national issue and its relation to the situation of the Palestinians in Israel, had only a limited presence, if it existed at all. The military rule isolated the Palestinians in Israel from their Palestinian, Arab and Islamic surroundings. The seed of their political struggle was the demand to abolish the military rule that restricted their political and civil rights, without linking that with the Palestinian national issue. In other words, the core of political discourse in those years was of a civil nature, isolated from the national political discourse which considers the Palestinians in Israel as part of the Palestinian question.¹⁰⁶⁴

The decade between June 1967 and the year 1977 was an important period in the history of the Palestinians in Israel on a number of levels – social, political and cultural. It was during this period that Palestinian society in Israel saw the emergence of a middle class and a petite bourgeoisie, as well as a class of intellectuals who had graduated from Israeli universities. New political movements arose and there appeared local and national political leaders of the second generation, which took pride in its Palestinian identity. National political organizations of a collective national character came into being, with the purpose of organizing political and civil activity among the Palestinians in Israel, such as the National Committee of

Heads of Arab Local Municipalities, Arab Student Committees in the universities, the National Union of Arab Students, the Union of Arab Writers, and others.¹⁰⁶⁵

In this decade there occurred one of the most important and influential events in the history of the Palestinians in Israel, Land Day, which took place in March 1976. This is considered the greatest organized protest by Palestinian society from the founding of the State of Israel until October 2000.¹⁰⁶⁶ Palestinian citizens held large protest marches and a general strike was called in all Arab regions and towns to protest plans for expropriating Arab land in Galilee. Six people were killed in the protests and hundreds were wounded and arrested.¹⁰⁶⁷

The new political leadership organized the Palestinians in Israel on national lines, and undertook to increase activities and political steps to support the Palestinians' right to self-determination and to fight against the occupation. The victory which the Democratic Front achieved over the traditional leadership in the municipal elections in Nazareth, the largest Arab city in Israel, marked a new stage for the second generation Palestinian leadership. The new political leadership experienced the defeat of 1967, but contrary to the first generation, which accepted the results of the 1948 defeat and the inferior status of Arabs in Israel, the second generation of political leaders, especially those who were graduates of Arab student movements at Israeli universities, wanted to change the political situation of the Arabs in Israel and their civil status, and also to support the demand for self-determination by the Palestinians in the occupied territories.¹⁰⁶⁸

This decade also witnessed the emergence of two political movements among the Palestinians in Israel, the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (Hadash) and the "Sons of the Land" movement (Abnaa el-Balad). The latter was founded in 1972 and began operating at the local level and also engaged in nationalist political activity on campuses. The movement considers itself part of the Palestinian national movement and considered the issue of the Arabs in Israel as part of the Palestinian question, whose solution must precede any debate

concerning the civil or national status of the Arab citizens of Israel. It maintained that the solution to the conflict is the establishment of one secular state over mandatory Palestine.¹⁰⁶
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Hadash was founded in March 1977, that is, one year after Land Day. The Front was formed out of an initiative at the 18th congress of the Communist Party which took place between December 15 and 18, 1976. It was established in its national version as an alliance between the Israeli Communist Party and the Jewish Black Panther movement that emerged toward the end of the 1960s as an expression of protest against the sorry situation of Mizrahi Jews. A group of non-communist Arab leaders but who sympathized with the Communist Party's struggle also joined Hadash, in addition to several other bodies, including the Druze Initiative Committee, the Democratic Front for Nazareth and the Israeli Socialist Left movement.

The Front and the Communist Party differ from the other groups in a number of ways, the most important being the following: they are based on a Jewish-Arab anti-Zionist foundation; peace (establishment of a Palestinian state); and equality. These are their main objectives; Hadash sees equality between Jews and Arabs and peace between Israel and the Palestinians as its major goal, in pursuit of which it demands radical changes. They openly call for changing the country's Jewish Zionist character and argue explicitly that the roots of the discrimination and prejudice from which the Palestinians suffer are to be found in the Zionist ideology, which distinguishes between Jews and non-Jews.¹⁰⁷⁰

The period that followed the political "coup" saw a change in the political behavior of Palestinian voters in Israel. While in the decades that preceded the "coup" most Arabs voted for Zionist parties or its Arab lists,¹⁰⁷¹ subsequently half or more of the Arabs voted for Arab parties (with the exception of the 1992 elections). Smootha believes that this trend is a "sign that the Arabs are slowly 'liberating' themselves from the Jews and the Israeli authorities and constitutes proof for growth of a national spirit among the Arab citizenry."¹⁰⁷²

This is what happened at the level of political organization. On the level of the political discourse the electoral upset of 1977 strengthened tendencies that began to emerge already after the June 1967 War and only reached a degree of ripeness after the election of 1977. The rise of the political Right played a role in the formation of this discourse.

The rise of the political Right in Israel has strengthened the discourse of equality on one hand, and enhanced the status of the Palestinian issue in political discourse on the other hand. The rise to power of the Right made the two-state solution less accessible, because of the right-wing ideology that considered the “Land of Israel” to belong to the Jewish nation and was willing to give the Palestinians in the occupied territories at most a kind of autonomy under Israel’s control. This is what Israel committed itself to doing in the peace agreement with Egypt, although it never carried it out, and the Palestinians rejected it, demanding instead the right of self-determination in order to establish a Palestinian state. The Arabs in Israel were of the same mind. This gave rise to a paradox in the political discourse and behavior of the Palestinians in Israel, who came to consider the Right as posing a political threat to their status, despite the fact that the Israeli political Left had ruled the country for 30 years and had done nothing to improve deeply the situation of the Arab citizens and did not implement the two-state solution. So the Arabs, because they felt threatened by the Right and were allied with the Left, became part of the Israeli Left. Hadash, a Jewish-Arab movement, pushed strongly for this approach.¹⁰⁷³

The rise of the Israeli right wing in 1977 and its positions on how to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict led to an increase in the importance of the Palestinians in Israel as perceived by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which saw Arabs in Israel as a political force that could ally itself with the Israeli Left in order to defeat the right wing.¹⁰⁷⁴ This tendency led to a more profound perception of the Arabs as belonging to the Israeli Left, and that in turn gave rise to Arab political movements in the 1980s that constituted the beginning of ideological and political pluralism among the Arabs in Israel, after a long period of dominance by the Israeli

Communist Party and the Hadash, and marginally the “Sons of the Land.” In the 1980s the Progressive Movement for Peace, the Islamic Movement, the Arab Democratic Party and the National Democratic Assembly were founded, as was the most important collective framework of Israel’s Arab citizens, the High Follow-Up Committee for the Arab Community in Israel.¹⁰⁷⁵ These parties, especially the Islamic Movement and the National Democratic Assembly, a nationalist Arab party, rejected the view that the Arabs in Israel were part of the Israeli Left; rather, they claimed that the Arabs had their own national or religious identity that went beyond the political classifications in the Israeli arena.¹⁰⁷⁶

A new political discourse began to form and came out in the open with the publication of the document of June 6, 1980. That was the first political document that gave collective expression to the new political discourse among the Palestinians in Israel. In it the national and the civil issues are clearly linked. The document, which was signed by thousands of Arab citizens, states:

We, the people of this country, who have no other homeland than this [...] have not and cannot disown our venerable origins, even if faced with death itself: We are a living, conscious and active part of the Palestinian Arab people. We have not and cannot cede the right of this people to self-determination, liberty and independence on its native soil.¹⁰⁷⁷

The document linked the situation of the Palestinians in the occupied territories with the deteriorating status of the Arabs in Israel, as follows:

The continuation of this deterioration (in the Palestinian territories) has a direct effect on the lives and future of the Arab citizens of Israel, who are victims of national persecution and racist oppression. In the shade of the present government, especially in recent months, the bloody racist incitement against the Arabs has become openly permitted in Israel, beginning with the declarations of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Agriculture and ending with the media and a number of district officers, heads of local municipalities, and publications of racists at Israeli universities. We also note that this bloody racist climate prevails also among the executive authorities, especially the police, the army and the border guard.¹⁰⁷⁸

This document, justly considered the first collective document of the Palestinians in Israel, testifies to the political discourse that emerged after the 1967 War, and to the reorganization of

the relationship between the national and the civic dimensions, which were now treated as inseparable.

The first Lebanon War in 1982 played a role in giving more depth to the political discourse among the Palestinians in Israel, which began to combine a stronger sense of Palestinian belonging with opposition to the Jewish identity of the state. The Lebanon War was the first war between the Palestinian national movement and Israel which the Palestinians inside Israel watched without being under control of military government. The Lebanon War, which took place during the second government headed by Begin after the “coup,” came at the culmination of a national political discourse among the Palestinians and caused a rise in manifestations of protest against the right wing in Israel, strengthening the alliance with the Left, which opposed the war. At the same time, it also helped bolster the identity of the Palestinian Arabs and their solidarity with the Palestinian national movement. In addition, this war also played a role in raising the level of political protest on the part of the Arab citizenry against the Israeli occupation on one hand and against the state’s Jewish character on the other.¹⁰⁷⁹

The rule of the Right in Israel between 1977 and 1992 (except for the two years of national unity government between 1984 and 1986) brought about a transformation in the struggle of the Arab citizens, which came to focus on the occupation and the establishment of a Palestinian state within the borders of June 4, 1967. However, the triumphant return of the Labor party to power in 1992, with Yitzhak Rabin as prime minister, and the beginning of accelerated talks between Israel and the PLO, brought about a renewed focus on the issue of citizenship and the status of the Arabs within the Jewish state. The signing of the Oslo Accords gave an additional impetus to the tendency to link the Jewish character of the state with the status of Israel’s Arab citizens. The Arabs were of the opinion that the resolution of the Palestinian problem would not improve their own status, indeed, that their civil status as equal citizens and their national status as a national minority were dependent on the Jewish character of the state, which would not give them equal rights as individuals or collective.¹⁰⁸⁰

There are those who put the emergence of a political discourse linking the state's Jewish nature with its colonialist policies in the beginning of the 1980s rather than the 1990s.¹⁰⁸

¹ This discourse is based on the claim that Israel's adoption of the Zionist ideology within the framework of the Jewish state constitutes the fundamental factor determining the status of the Palestinians in Israel. Toward the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s writings began to appear that studied the state's Jewish character as a major factor in defining the status of its Arab citizens. Zureik¹⁰⁸² and Lustick¹⁰⁸³ studied the evolution of Palestinian society within the framework of the ethnic Jewish state, while Mar'i¹⁰⁸⁴ pointed to the connection between the political system and the Arab education system. Although all four scholars used the same data concerning the political realities that emerged after 1948, they dealt with the evolution of Palestinian society within the colonial framework. Zureik used the "internal colonial" model which focused on the relations between colonial and native societies; Lustick approaches the issue from the perspective of the power relationships between the Jewish state and Palestinian society and the attempts of the former to dominate and control the political evolution of Palestinian society; and Mar'i pointed to the relation between the political regime's attempts to control the Palestinian citizens through the Arab education system and imposing the Zionist narrative on the Arab students.

The political discourse among the Arabs of Israel, which has focused on the national issue and the country's ethnic character, reached its culmination in the publication of its conceptions for the future in the form of four documents published in the years 2006 and 2007, namely "Future Vision for the Palestinian Arabs in Israel" (December 2006); "An Equal Constitution for All" (Musawa Center, November 2007); "The Democratic Constitution" (Adala Center, March 2007); and "The Haifa Document" (Carmel Mada Center, May 2007). These documents focused on the collective rights of the Palestinians in Israel as a national minority and on the historical relations with the Palestinian people, by stressing their unique historical narrative, linking the situation of the

Palestinians in Israel with the state's Jewish character, and demanding the establishment of a harmonious, neutral democratic state.¹⁰⁸⁵ Jamal¹⁰⁸⁶ is of the opinion that the contents of these documents are not new. He argues that the ideas and proposals in them are identical to those that were in vogue within the Arab political discourse in the preceding decade, and that the importance of the documents lies in the fact that they show that the ideas in them, which a decade previously had been at the margins of the Arab political discourse, came in the course of the last decades to occupy a central position in that discourse.

Jamal also enumerates the features of and changes in the Arab political discourse in the last two decades. More specifically, he points to five features: 1. the politicization of indignity, that is, the first nation status of Palestinian society, which therefore has collective rights and specifically distinct rights of citizenship; 2. true civil and national equality in the constitution, that is, installing the concept of equality as a constitutional value in Israel in the sense of full rights to participate in determining the state's budgets and basic symbols, and the right to participate in government and not merely the requirement of non-discrimination; 3. combining the policies of resource allocation with the policy of recognition, since discrimination is not a bureaucratic operation but is structurally inherent in the nature of the state and its ethnic structure: the Palestinians declare that a just allocation of resources cannot take place without recognizing Arab society as a national minority; 4. unification of individual and collective rights, in the sense of a demand to move from a policy of individual integration to a policy of recognizing the collective rights of the Palestinians in Israel, which have become a distinct component of the discourse on the rights of the Palestinians in Israel. And lastly: promotion of the right to autonomy: Arab writings and the Arab political discourse speak about the right to self-determination of the Palestinians in Israel in the form of cultural autonomy inside the State of Israel.

In short, it cannot be said that the "coup" was an originating event in the political discourse of Palestinians in

Israel, but it did accelerate the tendency to associate between civil status and the national issue in that discourse, which began already at the beginning of the 1970s. It also turned the state's Jewish character into a major issue, one that reached its culmination in the 1990s. The period after the changeover was one of growing political and ideological pluralism among the Arab citizens of Israel, which put an end to the dominance of the Israeli Communist Party. This in turn aroused political and intellectual activism in Arab society, which tried to go beyond the civil discourse led by the Communist Party and connected it to a solution of the occupation issue, leading to a new stage in which the two were linked with the issue of the Jewish state. The occupation and civil status in the new Arab discourse are thus connected with the issue of the state's Jewish character.¹⁰⁸

⁷ The focus on a national ethnic discourse and the rise of a national religious discourse in Israeli society have given further impetus to this discourse, which culminated in the 1990s.

Conclusion

The political upset of 1977 brought about great changes in Israeli society, some of which are still in effect today. One of the most significant political changes was the end of the dominance of the Labor party on the Israeli political scene. Since 1977 the Likud party has been in power most of the time and is today considered the natural candidate to form a government. In the general elections of 2013 there was no candidate to compete with Likud's Benjamin Netanyahu over the formation of a government in Israel.¹⁰⁸⁸

The political "coup" wrought changes in Israeli society and the Israeli political scene. The transition to a market economy was accelerated and the state's role in the economy diminished, in line with the liberal approach to the economy favored by the ruling party. This has led to new socioeconomic mobility in Israeli society. The "coup" has also had an effect at the political level, where it caused new political elites to step on the Israeli political stage, the oriental elites, and an increase

in the importance of the settlers in the political arena. It also brought about the beginnings of pluralism in party politics in Arab society and a new alliance with the Israeli Left against the Right. In addition, it generated regional changes as well, such as the peace treaty with Egypt, by which Israel took the most important Arab country out of the conflict with it. A new historical memory also began to evolve, in line with the historical memory promoted by the ruling party.

With respect to the Palestinian citizens of Israel, the “coup” created an important stage in their political history and their intellectual discourse. A political discourse emerged which focused on the state’s Jewish character as a fundamental variable that determined the civil and national status of the Palestinians in Israel. This stage also marked the beginning of the conflict between the Arabs and the Israeli Right and the creation of temporary alliances between the Arabs and the Left for the purpose of bringing down the Right. The Right constituted a strategic threat for the status of the Arab citizens of Israel, in the view of the Arab political discourse, because it did not recognize the Arabs’ national rights and the right to self determination of the Palestinian people in the West Bank. This happened at the same time as the emergence of a national identity among the Arab citizens, who came to consider themselves as part of the Palestinian people and fought for their national rights within Israeli citizenship. The “coup” of 1977 was a historical watershed in this respect, for the rise of the Right was accompanied by a stronger sense of Palestinian national identity among the Arab citizenry. The new Arab generation came to feel pride in its national Palestinian identity, which helped enhance the status of the Arab citizens of Israel within the Palestinian national movement as represented by the PLO and exposed Palestinian society to the Arab world. This exposure began after the occupation of 1967, but became more profound at the end of the 1970s due to the rise to power of the Israeli Right.

The new political discourse among the Palestinians in Israel is dominated by the issue of collective national rights. In fact, it may be claimed that the dominant political discourse at present in Palestinian society consists of the following

components: insistence on the first nation nature of the Arab minority, which means that the state must respect its cultural uniqueness as a native collective living in its homeland; the Arabs in Israel demand recognition as a national collective rather than religious communities, and therefore they insist on cultural autonomy in the Arab school system and on collective rights; the third component is the struggle against the state's Jewish character, this being at the heart of the political discourse since the 1990s, based on the claim that Israel's religious-ethnic character is the cause of the structural discrimination against and marginalization of the Arab citizenry, and also the reason why the latter has not received recognition as a national collective with collective rights as required by international conventions regarding first nations.

This discourse also declares that a solution to the occupation issue is an important matter, but can have no crucial positive implications for the status of the Arabs in Israel where the struggle must go on to make Israel give equal recognition to all national collectives in it.

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31. The 1977 Paradox: Immediate Crises and Long-Range Economic and Political Restructuring Outcomes of the Changeover

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This paper was completed in December 2014.

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“Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please, they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves.” Karl Marx, *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*

Introduction

Menachem Begin did not choose the circumstances of his rule. Apparently he would prefer to be prime minister in 1967, during the glorious war and the conquest of biblical regions of Eretz Yisrael, instead of 1977, when he reluctantly signed a peace agreement that pulled back the Israeli military to the international border in Sinai, and recognized the “legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just requirements.”¹⁰⁸
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The same could be argued about the economic policy. Jabotinsky and the Revisionist Party were the most radical opponents to Mapai rule and its control of the economy through the Histadrut quasi-state and early since the British Mandate days he called to break its power and favored a liberal economy. However when his political heir Menachem Begin came to power he failed to change the economic structures during his rule,¹⁰⁹⁰ the liberalization of foreign currency led to hyper-inflation and the stock-market crash, forcing the government to nationalize the banks in order to bail them out. It was only when Begin resigned that the new

elections facilitated the formation of a National Unity Government (NUG), which halted inflation cutting subsidies, a policy that dismantled the Labor owned companies and the cooperative organization of settlements. It was the NUG that forced the Histadrut to privatize its assets, changing the whole power structure of the Histadrut, imposing a new neo-liberal economic structure. Apparently in the economic sphere Begin would prefer to be the PM in 1985.

Begin resigned after a six-year rule, disappointed from the results of his policies, from his ministers, and mainly depressed from the casualties caused by the Lebanon War.¹⁰⁹¹ However, from a historical perspective, I will argue here, the interpretation of Begin's rule as a failure is erroneous. I will reject theoretical approaches assuming rationality, consciousness or intentionality in history, and support the approach that assumes that history is eventful, path dependent and has unintended consequences.¹⁰⁹² I will argue here that the six years of Begin's rule (1977–1983), were fundamental to institutionalize and legitimize the new Israel regime after 1967, both the legitimacy of Israel's military rule of Palestinians and the Israeli neo-liberal economy.

I will argue here that these outcomes were not the product of rational or intentional policy, but they were the unintended consequences of the tension between Begin's ideological motivated decisions, and the adversary circumstances and obstacles he faced in 1977. It was the compromise between Begin's ideological motivations (to liberalize the economy and annex the West Bank and Gaza) and adversary forces (structural economic powers, and Palestinian resistance) that produced innovative ways to maintain and legitimize the regime of the "new Israel." Begin resigned and left his office depressed and disappointed, but from an historical perspective, I will argue here, his six years rule created the conditions that shaped the future economic and political structures that prevailed since then.

This article will analyze the historical background of the 1977 changeover, the immediate diplomatic and economic policies, and their long range implications, arguing that

understanding the motivations and contradictions in the 1977–1983 period is essential to comprehend further developments and the effective maintenance of the military regime and neo-liberal economy since then. In other words, the economic crisis provoked by the liberalization of the currency was essential to legitimize a radical structural adjustment plan, and the peace agreement with Egypt provided the formula to coopt the PLO by the Oslo “peace process.”

The historical background: Zionist Labor and Revisionist opposition

The Zionist Labor movement was in power from 1933 to 1977; it built the political and economic institutions of the state, and controlled almost every public service and civil society organization, including welfare and cultural institutions. In the eve of 1977 political sociologists could hardly imagine that the Labor movement was on its last days.¹

⁰⁹³ However Labor rule entered a deep crisis after the expansion of state borders in 1967, despite the euphoria after the quick and easy victory: first, legitimation crisis of the state, because Zionist Labor was unable to provide ideological legitimation to the integration of the Palestinian population in the economy without granting them political rights, and second, an economic crisis, unable to contain the pressure to expand subsidies to private and Histadrut capital, middle class mortgages, lower class transfer payments, and increasing military expenses. Given this double crisis, the Labor movement found no internal political forces able to confront the situation and the material interests of its economic enterprises and bureaucracies to expand subsidies prevailed. It was precisely the election of a Likud government that made possible to face the new realities, legitimizing and institutionalizing the “new (expanded) Israel.”

These developments contradicted the political strategy of Labor Zionism since its inception. Since the establishment of the first Zionist Labor parties in 1905 they sought to segregate Jews from Arabs and to build a separate society, polity and

economy. While researchers disagree on the motivations of this strategy, whether it was economically oriented,¹⁰⁹⁴ ideologically oriented,¹⁰⁹⁵ or power oriented,¹⁰⁹⁶ all sociologists agree that separation from the local Arab population was the goal of the Zionist Labor movement and the logic of its institution building.

The goal was to control markets in order to prevent what economists call the “advantage of the small economy,” namely, to prevent the free market competition between Arab and Jewish labor and products, and to establish political control of lands purchased with Jewish donations, which were transformed into public capital.¹⁰⁹⁷ In order to do so the Zionist Labor parties organized cooperatives in agriculture, construction and transportation, subsidized by Zionist public capital, they built public services in health, education, housing, employment exchanges and pension funds, and also publicly owned economic enterprises, including factories, construction, port, financial and insurance services and more. The goal of these institutions was to provide employment and public services to the Jews. All this power was concentrated by the Histadrut, ruled by the Zionist worker parties, mainly Mapai and the Labor party later on.¹⁰⁹⁸

The Revisionist movement rejected the Labor Zionist strategy of settlement because it led necessarily to a territorial compromise and to strong political control of the economy and society. Ze'ev Jabotinsky's liberal attitude suggested the inclusion of the Arab population within the Jewish expanded state, attributing them cultural autonomous rights. Hence he called to break the power of Zionist Labor institutions, mainly the economic power of the Histadrut.¹⁰⁹⁹ The Revisionist movement established alternative institutions, mainly the Histadrut Haleumit, which remained a very small and marginal organization mainly supplying health services for its members.¹¹⁰⁰

The main power of the Histadrut was based on the dependency of the workers and middle classes on the welfare services it provided, in the absence of British Mandate governmental welfare institutions. During the 1948 War and

the establishment of the Jewish state, the main clashes between the Revisionist movement and the ruling party Mapai were around the authority of the new government over the military autonomous organizations, mainly the Etzel¹¹⁰¹ (the most salient was the Altalena Affaire) and around the borders of the state. Military and political leaders from Etzel, Lehi and Palmach¹¹⁰² and the Kibbutz movement criticized Mapai due to the territorial compromise of partition and halting the war before the military occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. However, after the war, the central political targets of Revisionist opposition critics were around the economic institutions and the centralized economy and political power of Mapai.

Mapai succeeded to retain its dominant position in the Israeli society due to the maintenance of the powerful institutions it built during the pre-state period, mainly the monopolistic power of the Histadrut in the economy and public services. In addition, also the military establishment was closely connected to the ruling party, and it facilitated the control over the political behavior of Arab citizens through the military administration.¹¹⁰³ In other words, Mapai succeeded to maintain its pre-state power by expanding the dependency of Israeli citizens on its monopolistic control of two institutions, the Histadrut (mainly for Jewish citizens' dependency) and the IDF (for Arab citizens' dependency).¹¹⁰⁴

This almost complete control of society, economy and politics was challenged by two main processes after the establishment of the Jewish state: the consolidation of democratic rules of the game, and the stabilization of the economy and full employment in the 1960s.¹¹⁰⁵ Given the new democratic conditions of economic and political rights the citizens were empowered vis-à-vis the state, and a vibrant civil society emerged: working class autonomous trade unions and worker committee organizations, employer and business associations, middle-class professional associations, and autonomous media and academic institutions.¹¹⁰⁶ The government's initial response to the economic demands of professional and industrial workers, Kibbutz movement and

employers was the expansion of state subsidies, but it was clear that it cannot continue subsidizing forever.¹¹⁰⁷

The “crisis of statehood”¹¹⁰⁸ was reflected during 1960–1965 by a fierce power struggle within the ruling party Mapai, intentionally misinterpreted as a security affair, the Lavon Affaire.¹¹⁰⁹ The conservative forces, claiming the maintenance of the pre-state Histadrut structures led by Levi Eshkol prevailed, and the statist reformers¹¹¹⁰ (based on the security establishment) followed Ben-Gurion who finally abandoned the party and organized an independent list (Rafi) toward the 1965 elections. Despite the electoral success of the Alignment (a new list including Mapai and Achdut Haavoda) conservative forces in 1965, it did not solve the crisis provoked by the economic empowerment of rank and file workers. Hence, during 1965–1967 the government attempted to lead a structural adjustment policy by a deep cut of state development investment and subsidies.¹¹¹¹ This initial attempt of structural adjustment implemented immediately after the elections could be successful, however it was abruptly discontinued by the 1967 War and the expansion of Israel’s borders, population and markets. The war ended the austerity efforts and produced a different type of “structural adjustment,” starting a new period of expanded subsidy demands, pushing the state to a deep fiscal crisis, given the political incapacity of the government to restrain the demands.¹¹¹²

The context of the 1977 changeover

As a matter of fact the 1967 War new structure facilitated the maintenance of the pre-1948 political-economic institutions and their coexistence with the statist establishment by the expansion of the state domains, populations and markets.¹¹¹³ It created a kind of “functional division of power” between the old Labor establishment (mainly ruling the pre-1967 borders) and the security establishment, the sovereign of the new expanded areas under military administration. The cooperation

of the two main institutional forces after 1967 facilitated the continuation of another ten-year rule of the Zionist Labor parties, now re-united in an expanded Alignment, including Mapai, Achdut Haavoda, Rafi (the Labor party) and Mapam. The 1967 War prevented the structural adjustment of Israel to a democratic sovereign state, creating new structural conditions, including non-citizen populations. As a matter of fact the 1967 expansion was a kind of “reversed” structural adjustment: instead of adjusting the pre-1948 institutions to the new conditions of a democratic state with autonomous and powerful civil society, it adjusted the state to the colonial pre-1948 borders, a divided civil society dependent on state subsidies. The expansion of free markets and political rights, which characterized the 1948–1967 period and statehood crisis, were structurally limited by the military rule of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBGs) and the functional division of labor between the Histadrut and the IDF, which weakened the Israeli workers too.

The two new challenges of the dual regime established in 1967 were the legitimation of the military domains and the constantly expanding subsidies of the state. The failure to find viable solutions to the new problems, according to the analysis suggested here, was the main reason of the fall of the Labor movement from power in 1977, and was also the main source of Begin’s apparent failure during his rule. However the initial policies of Begin government, the peace treaty with Egypt and the economic liberalization, created the necessary long range conditions to restructure the economy and legitimize the military rule.

The first signs of unrest and instability after 1967 took place in 1971, when mass protests of the Black Panthers against the discrimination of Oriental Jews (Mizrahim) sparked following the ceasefire with Egypt.¹¹¹⁴ The protesters’ demand of equal rights to Ashkenazi Jews was very effectively capitalized by Menachem Begin by transforming the democratic claim of equal citizenship to the ethno-national formula of equal rights to the Jews in the whole Land of Eretz Yisrael.¹¹¹⁵ The Black Panther’s demands were inflationary, because in order to legitimize the regime the government

started granting universal social security and transfer payments that expanded the fiscal deficit.¹¹¹⁶

The second event that destabilized both Labor rule and the economy was the Yom Kippur War, which provoked a mass protest movement of reservist soldiers demanding the establishment of an Inquiry Commission and later on demanding the resignation of the PM Golda Meir and Minister of Security Moshe Dayan. The economic effect of the war was inflationary too, due to the demand to increase the security budget. The political impact of the Yom Kippur War and the critical attitude of the Oriental Jews to the Labor administration was already felt in the December 1973 elections, when the right-wing block of Herut and the Liberal Party increased 50% of their parliamentary power (from 26 to 39) and became the only alternative to Alignment.

It took, however, four more years of economic and political deterioration until the fall of the Labor movement in the next elections, and the total loss of its hegemonic position. During 1974–1977 the inability of the ruling party to restrain economic demands and to legitimize the military control of occupied lands became evident. Opposed to Likud's claim of legitimate rule of the whole Eretz Yisrael due to the divine promise of God to Abraham, Labor claimed that the territories provide security, and called the new borders security borders. However the new borders proved to be insecure: the military control of Sinai provoked the disastrous Yom Kippur War, with 2,600 casualties, and the control of Gaza and the West Bank provoked a wave of terrorist attacks by the PLO. Security was a very weak argument to legitimize the military expansion, and the divine promise appeared more coherent, and attracted also the youth of the National Religious Party, the historical partner of the Labor movement.

At the economic level the situation was not better. The government expanded the security budget, subsidies to capital and mortgages, and later on transfer payments, creating a big fiscal deficit that pushed to dollar devaluations, inflation and wage demands. The inability to contain all these inflationary forces led to increasing instability, the CPI went up to 38% in 1976. The Likud blamed the interventionist policy of Labor in

the economy, proposing instead a liberal economy, and criticized the ambivalent attitude toward the territorial expansion, promising to annex the occupied WBGS (Judea and Samaria in biblical terms) to the State of Israel.¹¹¹⁷ Given the expected fall of the Alignment in the upcoming elections several groups of middle class and Labor enterprise CEOs organized a “center” party (Dash, Democracy for Change), criticizing Labor both for its too interventionist economic policy, and the blurring of state borders. Following the 1977 elections the Likud got so strong support that it could form a ruling coalition with the NRP and Orthodox parties, without Dash, but Begin wanted them to legitimize his rule in the eyes of the Labor movement supporters.

The first period after the 1977 elections

As already mentioned a crucial problem of the Likud government was to gain legitimacy among the Labor supporters after 44 years of Labor hegemony. They were mainly Ashkenazi middle and upper classes in strategic positions in the military, the media, universities, business, public services, trade union leaders and more. These social groups, which were indeed disappointed with the Labor leadership, were also shocked by the possibility to change the sovereign borders of the state by annexing the WBGS. The first signs of discontent and potential delegitimation of the Likud government appeared soon, when a group of military reservist officers signed a petition warning that they will have difficulties to serve as reservists in the IDF if the government expands the settlements.¹¹¹⁸ These officers were the basis of the reservist army, and Begin could not ignore their alienation from his electoral campaign and expansionist strategy.

Also in the economic sphere the prospects to gain cooperation with the new government’s liberal policies were not promising. The Histadrut leadership, the main broker of collective wage agreements, has already failed to restrain strong organized worker committees and trade unions during 1970–1977. The difference was that until 1977 the Histadrut

leadership was very close to the ruling party, and had a strong political incentive to restrain wages. However when the Likud was elected the political incentive disappeared, and only the economic interests remained, as well as the Histadrut's institutional dependency on state subsidies: Hevrat Haovdim enterprises, the Histadrut Health Insurance and the Pension Funds. During the first years the new Likud government did not touch these fundamental factors of the pre-state economic institutions. Instead of changing the political-economic institutions and structures the new government continued the previous Labor policy, attempting to exchange state subsidies for wage restraint, but the Histadrut was unable to deliver the goods, because it had no legitimacy and no capacity to restrain wages.¹¹¹⁹

The Histadrut Alignment leadership was strengthened vis-à-vis the new government immediately after the Likud's electoral success, due to its re-election with an unprecedented support, when it got for the first time in history a larger number of votes in the Histadrut elections than the Alignment got in the Knesset elections.¹¹²⁰ Given the recent electoral support, in addition to the pressure of strong worker committees and trade unions, and its own political interest to confront the new government liberal policies, the chances to reach a restrained wage agreement were almost zero.

The combined economic and political challenges led the new government to initiate two drastic moves: first, in the political sphere the invitation of Anwar Sadat to speak in the Knesset and beginning negotiations over a comprehensive peace agreement based on the principle of lands for peace; second, in the economic sphere the liberalization of foreign currencies, allowing Israelis to open dollar accounts and ending the state control of the exchange rate. While the first move was very effective in calming down the opposition spirit of the reservist officers and the anti-annexation camp, the second move only deteriorated the fiscal crisis, increased inflation, and mobilized the workers against the government. Although the economic crisis was temporal, and peace with Egypt was a historical strategic move, the government rapidly started to lose public support due to the economic damages

inflicted on the Likud constituencies by uncertainty and hyperinflation.

The peace negotiations mediated by the US progressed rapidly, and the Camp David Accords signed in September 17, 1978 called "A Framework for Peace in the Middle East" included general guidelines for "transitional arrangements" in the West Bank and Gaza.¹¹²¹ The negotiations on the details of the "Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty" took six months more, and finally accomplished a compromise on the issue of borders, including a full withdrawal to the international border in Sinai within three years, and in case of disputes it was agreed that they will be solved by conciliation or submitted to arbitration. The framework agreement on the West Bank and Gaza recognized the "legitimate rights of the Palestinian people," and promised the establishment of elected self-rule authority with a strong police force. The idea of Palestinian autonomy was anchored in an old plan of the former Revisionist leader, Ze'ev Jabotinsky, on the Arab question, formulated before the establishment of the State of Israel. In order to prevent partition of Eretz Yisrael Jabotinsky suggested granting cultural autonomy to the Arab minority (assuming that in the future they will become a minority).

According to the comprehensive agreement the Palestinian Authority was supposed to rule during five years, and during that period a final settlement of the conflict was expected to be negotiated. This agreement was not implemented due to a crucial dispute on the interpretation of the Palestinian Authority's sovereignty, whether it was over the population or also over the land. In short, the basic disagreement on the WBGS between Begin and Sadat was whether the Israeli government could continue ruling the territories and expanding the settlements or not. This dispute completely discontinued the Israeli-Egyptian negotiations over the Palestinian issue, while the PLO rejected in total the idea of an interim Palestinian Authority.

The relations with the PLO remained violent, and the military confrontations in Lebanon increased since the peace negotiations started, including missile fire from South Lebanon and air attacks on refugee camps in retaliation.

Escalation of fire during summer 1981 led to the first US mediation between the PLO and the Israeli government. A ceasefire agreement was signed indirectly in July 1981, and lasted until the Israeli withdrawal from Sinai was completed (in April 1982). A month and a half later the Lebanon War started.¹¹²²

The enthusiasm of the peace camp with the peace agreement and the withdrawal from Sinai was rapidly transformed into the most open opposition to the new war in Lebanon. For the first time soldiers and officers openly expressed their opposition to a war while fighting continued, leading to the largest demonstrations since then, and the climax of the 400,000 demonstrators after the Sabra and Shatila massacre. The Lebanon War was interpreted as a “war of choice,” given Begin’s government intention to continue ruling the WBSG and expanding the settlements.¹¹²³

Despite the popular opposition to the Lebanon War the fight continued after the PLO abandoned Beirut, now mainly due to the resistance of Lebanese military units – Muslim Sunnis and Shiites, and Druze units – against the Israeli military occupation. The war continued causing casualties, with no prospects to end, and it increased the tension within Israel between the war opponents and supporters, culminating with the killing of a Peace Now demonstrator by a grenade thrown against them.

The economic deterioration and opposition took place even before the mentioned events. The decision to liberalize the foreign currency did not take into account two crucial facts: first, that all contracts were linked to the dollar, due to the creeping devaluation implemented by the last years of Labor rule; second, the government was committed to subsidize the “non-indexed” loans given to capital investment (private and Histadrut) and mortgages.¹¹²⁴ In other words the big majority had an incentive to save in dollars, and the government was subsidizing the gap between original loans and their indexation. The meaning was that inflation and the government deficit increased rapidly, and the Histadrut

constantly demanded the indexation of wages in order to prevent sharp deterioration.

In April 1979 the finance minister cancelled the non-indexed loans to private enterprises and mortgages causing serious damage to those that have recently taken loans expecting cheap returns, and now they had to pay monthly the high inflation indexation. The non-indexed loans continued to be granted to the Histadrut companies (the Hevrat Haovdim Financial Plan) hoping that the Histadrut will cooperate and restrain wages. However given the high inflation the Histadrut was unable to restrain wages, and it declared, together with the Employer Associations (Lishkat Hateum) autonomous COLA wage agreements (secretly promising private employers non-indexed loans subsidized by the state¹¹²⁵). Given his inability to restrain prices, wages and the fiscal deficit, the first Likud Finance Minister, Simha Erlich, resigned in September 1979, leaving a disastrous economic situation, with 111% inflation, to the next minister, Yigal Horowitz.

The new minister attempted to halt inflation by cutting state investments and shrinking credit, and restraining wages by pressure on the Histadrut institutional dependency on state subsidies, but failed in both fields. After one year of failed attempts he cancelled the non-indexed loans given to the Histadrut companies in order to shrink free credit granted by the Hevrat Haovdim Financial Plan also to private companies.¹
¹²⁶ This move did not halt inflation, that increased to 133% in 1980, but created a wide front of opponents to the minister and he was fired by Begin toward the approaching elections in June 1981.¹¹²⁷

The Likud was in dire straits in the polls when the new finance minister, Yoram Aridor, was appointed, six months before the elections. This was the shortest “electoral business cycle” ever, using all means in order to improve the bad image created by three and a half years of inefficient economic measures. Indeed, by lowering customs and taxes, and increasing wages, the new minister succeeded to recover Likud’s popularity among its constituencies toward the elections. Indeed the Likud won a neck to neck campaign, but

Aridor's electoral economic policy fueled the financial markets after the elections, creating bubbles in the stock market. After the elections everything deteriorated, prices climbed to 190% in 1983, and 445% in 1984. Menachem Begin resigned from his office in September 1983 – completely disappointed with the inability of his government to pull off the soldiers from Lebanon, and one month after the resignation the stock market crashed.

In the economic sphere, however, the capacity of the government to bail out the crisis was not better than the government's incapacity to pull out from Lebanon. Begin's six years of PM were indeed a deep failure, because he attempted to implement his economic and political principles, without taking in consideration the expected obstacles and resistance. However, paradoxically, the economic and political crises facilitated, in the long range, the accommodation between Begin's goals and various adversary forces, consolidating the military rule of the Palestinians and the liberalization of the economy by the next governments: by the NUG (1984–1990), and Rabin's rule (1992–1995).

The long-range effects of Begin's administration: the economic structural adjustment and the “peace process”

The Likud government after Begin's resignation and the nomination of Yitzhak Shamir as PM did not succeed neither to halt inflation nor to end the Lebanon War, and declared new elections a few months after the resignation. However, despite the disastrous political and economic situation the election results were close to even, with a small advantage to the Alignment (44–41). Similar to the 1977 and 1981 elections, also in 1984 the main mobilizing agenda was the ethno-class hostility between lower classes of Oriental Jews and middle classes of European Jews.¹¹²⁸

A few small center parties conditioned their participation in the coalition upon the formation of a National Unity

Government by the two big parties. The NUG represented 105 KM (out of 120) and defined two main goals: ending the Lebanon War and halting inflation. The idea was that a unity government will neutralize opposition to drastic measures, preventing any effective mobilization of civil society organizations against the government. The participation of the Labor party in the government was crucial to bring in the Histadrut cooperative attitude to halt inflation and restrain wages, and the Likud participation was crucial to prevent opposition to the withdrawal from Lebanon. The NUG coalition was facilitated by a rotation agreement: the first two years the Labor candidate (Shimon Peres) will serve as PM, and the next two years the Likud candidate (Yitzhak Shamir). Indeed the NUG was a very efficient political formula to bail out the state from its double crisis – within one year the IDF withdrew from Lebanon and the inflation was reduced from 445% to 20%.

The Emergency Economic Stabilization Plan

The Emergency Economic Stabilization Plan (EESP) was implemented in July 1985 and started a structural adjustment process since then, dismantling the old economic institutions established by the Labor movement, and building a complete new institutional setting. The deep crisis provoked by the liberalization of the currency created the appropriate atmosphere necessary to legitimize the dismantlement of old Histadrut institutions. The first step of the structural adjustment was directly related to all Histadrut enterprises, which were historically based on state subsidies. As we may recall the transformation of this institutional dependency on state subsidies was one of the main intentions of Mapai's economic recessive policy during 1965–1967. The restructuring attempt was discontinued following the expansion of the borders and the renewal of state subsidies.¹¹²⁹

Since 1985 the fall of Histadrut enterprises was total, due to the cut of state subsidies since 1980, and the discovery of the deficits when the “carpet” of inflation was removed. The

economic decisions that provoked the fall of Histadrut institutions were taken in April 1979 and October 1980, but the long range implications were discovered only in 1985 when inflation was halted. Following the implementation of the EESP all the economic activities connected with the Histadrut entered a deep crisis: the agricultural cooperatives (kibbutzim and moshavim), the Hevrat Haovdim companies, the health care services. Since 1986 Hevrat Haovdim and agricultural cooperatives entered a process of privatization,¹¹³⁰ and in 1994 the Rabin government enacted a Law of National Health Insurance that disconnected health services from Histadrut membership, sharply shrinking it by 70%. Collective wage negotiations were frozen for long periods since 1985. State intervention in the capital markets started to be reduced in 1997 when Netanyahu discontinued part of the state commitment to buy pension funds shares in fixed interest, pushing them to invest the worker savings in the markets.

This radical structural adjustment could occur only after a deep crisis, which was provoked by the liberal ideology of the first Begin administration, and the drastic cut of state subsidies due to the fiscal crisis of the state. In order to halt the crisis the cooperation of Labor party and the Histadrut was necessary, but it was also necessary to cancel the initial decision that caused the crisis, namely cancelling the foreign currency liberalization and fixing the price of the dollar.¹¹³¹ In addition, in order to prevent political pressures on the budget a series of laws were enacted to prevent big fiscal deficits and to guarantee autonomy of the Central Bank.¹¹³²

As the mentors of imposed structural adjustment plans have argued a deep crisis is necessary to legitimize drastic structural changes.¹¹³³ A big debt, dependency on foreign loans and private investment were excellent means to impose structural adjustment plans, like it occurred indeed in Latin America and Eastern Europe. However this was not the situation in Israel during 1974–1977, the US supported the economy and the security budget, and there was no doubt that it will be able to pay the external debt. The crisis and hyperinflation were provoked by the drastic means of the Begin government; without them the Israeli economy could not be

restructured in such dramatic way. However provoking the crisis was not the intention of the liberalization policy. The obstacle to the implementation of a smooth restructuring of the economy without drastic measures was the conservative attitude of the Labor movement institutions, mainly concerned with survival. When Begin came to power in 1977 he did have political and economic strategic goals, but it took some time to restructure Israel, it took a double crisis, economic and with the Palestinians.

The restructuring of the Israeli-Palestinian relations

Similar to the economic sphere also in the relations with the Palestinians the first steps of Begin's administration led to a deep and long crisis, but in the long range the initial goal was achieved, and implemented later on by Labor party leaders: Peres implemented the neo-liberal economy and Rabin implemented in 1993 the Palestinian self-rule plan. The main difference was that in the economic case the sequence of events was more direct, and the new economic structures were defined only after the crisis deteriorated. In the restructuring of the relations with the Palestinians the dynamic went in the opposite way: the formula of the new relations was already established in the Camp David agreement with Egypt in 1978,¹ ¹³⁴ but the crisis went on, and the sequence of events that led to the new structure was extremely convoluted.

The basic idea of an elected self-rule Palestinian authority with a strong police that was agreed in the 1993 Oslo Accords, was already formulated in the 1978 Camp David Accords signed by Begin and Sadat. However in 1978, after the framework agreement was announced, the PLO and the civil society organization in the WBGS immediately started a campaign against the implementation of an interim self-administration without ending the military occupation and without a clear final settlement goal. The Israeli military government attempted to impose the principles of autonomy by the nomination of a civilian, Prof. Menachem Milson, as

head of a civil administration of the WBGS. The main struggle of the Palestinian civil society organizations under occupation, until June 1982, focused on sabotaging the decisions of the civil administration.¹¹³⁵ The backing of a civil non-violent struggle in the WBGS by the PLO leadership in Beirut was one central motivation of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the siege of Beirut. During the eleven months of ceasefire the civil struggle in the WBGS aimed to delegitimize the Likud expansionist policies, despite the peace agreement with Egypt.

The goal of the Lebanon War was to remove the PLO from Beirut, from the north border of Israel, and from the close influence on the occupied Palestinian population. Despite the protests of peace supporters within Israel against the war, the main goal to remove the PLO was achieved already in September 1982, when it was forced to move its headquarters and militias to Tunisia. The paradox is that pushing the PLO far away encouraged the Palestinian civil society under military occupation to expand and deepen the non-violent revolt. The civil resistance that sparked in December 1987 in the WBGS against the military authorities was much more effective than the violent resistance, firing missiles or terrorist attacks, and legitimized the political claim of an independent state in those areas.¹¹³⁶ The PLO National Council declared in November 15, 1988 the establishment of a Palestinian state in the occupied territories, and the US started low level diplomatic negotiations with them. The NUG was unable to take a positive decision in response to these developments, ultimately ending in the dismantling of the coalition and the formation of a narrow right-wing coalition. The two last years of Likud rule (1990–1992) were characterized by terrorist attacks within the borders of Israel (mainly individuals using knives), increasing personal insecurity, and emphasizing the lack of any effective response by the government.¹¹³⁷ The need to stabilize the relations with the Palestinians could lead to the mutual recognition and the Oslo Accords only after the Labor movement won the 1992 elections, under Rabin's leadership.

Given the deep crisis of the PLO provoked by the Gulf War (in January 1991) Yasser Arafat accepted in September

1993 the same terms he had rejected and fought against since 1978: elections to a legislative council and the establishment of a self-rule Palestinian authority over restricted areas in the WBGS, without any agreed final goal. The “Oslo A” and “B” agreements and the Paris economic protocol, established the institutional means to control the Palestinian population during the next five years (until 1999). These arrangements, already offered by Menachem Begin in 1978, created a never ending interim situation, usually called the “peace process.” The “peace process” became the most sophisticated formula to prevent the legal annexation of the WBGS to Israel (the original platform of the Likud before assuming power) that would create a political crisis and a binational state, but also legitimized the Israeli continuous domination as a temporary situation, that lasts since then. This was Begin’s compromise with Sadat, aiming to maintain Israel’s rule on the whole Eretz Yisrael, and continue the expansion of Israeli settlements.

Conclusion

The decisions taken by Begin’s administration in its first year of rule, based on his ideological strategic goals – the liberalization of the economy and the perpetuation of Israel’s rule in Eretz Yisrael – facilitated the solution of the double economic and political crisis provoked by the Alignment administration during 1967–1977. One problem was how to legitimize the expansion of Israel’s borders and the integration of the Palestinian population in the economy, without political rights and under military rule. The solution of an interim Palestinian self-rule, with never ending “peace negotiations,” was already agreed with Egypt in 1978, but it took 15 years of Palestinian resistance until it was accepted by Arafat in 1993. The second problem was the economic crisis provoked by the extensive state subsidies of the Histadrut enterprises, private capital and mortgages. The crisis increased immediately after the liberalization of foreign currency, forcing the state to end non-indexed loans and subsidies to private capital in April 1978 and Histadrut enterprises in October 1980. Hyperinflation and the fiscal crisis of the state forced the political

parties to accept privatization, limiting direct forms of state intervention in the markets, and empowering private capital and weakening organized labor.

Both outcomes were according to Begin's ideological goals, but could not be directly implemented by the Likud due to great obstacles and resistance: the Palestinians resisted self-rule for 15 years, including the Lebanon War and Intifada in the 1980s; the Histadrut enterprises and private capital resisted the cut of their subsidies. In both cases Labor party leaders were necessary to implement Begin's goals and overcome resistance: Peres' rule was a crucial precondition to subdue the Histadrut, and Rabin was the only leader with the legitimacy and readiness to recognize the PLO. Both Labor leaders implemented Begin's policies; however he was not alive to witness the successful outcomes of his strategic decisions.

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32. Dialectics of Change through Continuity: The 1977 Political Upheaval Revisited

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This paper was completed in May 2015.

In the early hours of the morning of May 17–18, 1977, when all doubt subsided regarding the Likud movement's victory, its leader, Menachem Begin, set out from his house for election headquarters in Tel Aviv where he made his first declaration as Prime Minister-designate. "This night," he began, "marks the beginning of a change in the history of the Jewish people and the Zionist movement."¹¹³⁸ Was his estimation right? Did the election results reflect a turnabout that was already occurring within the Israeli electorate, or, at least provide the parliamentary basis for the creation of a series of political, economic and social changes which, in retrospect, justify viewing them as a turning point? Was the policy of the Begin government based on that of preceding Israeli governments, thereby establishing a legitimizing image of continuity, while, in effect, substantially changing previous policies? This question guides the following article.

Begin attributed great historical significance to the first dramatic change of government in Israel's short electoral history. Ze'ev Jabotinsky established the Revisionist Party in 1925 as an oppositionist Zionist party. Fifty-two years passed until the ascension of the Begin-led Likud government and during almost this entire time, this movement, in various political configurations, stood in opposition to the Zionist leadership which had headed the Israeli state. In his inaugural victory speech, Begin referred to Jabotinsky and to the importance of democracy, thanked his wife and his political colleagues, quoted from President Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg address of a "government of the people, by the people, for the people" and took up the challenge to seek a just

peace both in the domestic and foreign arenas. He declared his intention to call upon the Ma'arach (the Labor party) to join his government, and later invited the presidents of Egypt and Syria and the king of Jordan to enter into negotiations leading to a peace treaty with Israel. Finally, he donned a black skullcap and read verses 8–9 from **chapter 28** of the Book of Psalms. It begins: “Blessed O Lord [...] Hear the voice of my supplications” and continues with a declaration of faith:

The Lord is my strength and my shield,
In Him hath my heart trusted,
And I am helped;
Therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth
And with my song will I praise Him [...]
Save Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance
And tend them, and carry them forever.

The combination of Lincoln, Jabotinsky and the Bible embraced Begin's values and its entire delivery was an exception in Israel's political history. None of the prime ministers who preceded him made utterances of this nature in which a religious and historical underpinning was attached to political aspirations. He continued to reinforce this public religious orientation when he received the letter of appointment from the president of the state to form a new government. From the presidential residence, he proceeded to the Western Wall, read from the Book of Psalms, and with a voice choked with tears, read from the traditional Jewish prayer for the dead (*Kaddish*) in memory of his family who perished in the Holocaust. Afterwards, he went to Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, the spiritual leader of the settlers in Judea and Samaria, to receive his blessing. A few days later he was invited to the dedication ceremony for the placement of a Torah scroll in the synagogue in the West Bank settlement of Kedumim. The previous government under Yitzhak Rabin had established the settlement of Kedumim within the perimeter of an army base in order to avoid any impression of officially recognizing the settlement as permanent. The settlers welcomed Begin with song and dance, and Begin promised them that many settlements would soon be established.¹¹³⁹

“A good Jewish style”

This brief description of several events during the second half of May 1977 illustrates one aspect of the many shifts that took place following the political upheaval, namely the strengthening of religion in the national arena. In response to a question posed during an Israeli television interview regarding the style in which state affairs would be run, Begin retorted: “A good Jewish style.”¹¹⁴⁰ This was not just a ceremonial ploy or the creation of a type of mood. In his rhetoric of faith Begin gave legitimacy to the deep undercurrents that began to influence Israeli society since its renewed encounter with the land of the Bible following the Six-Day War. National aspirations, which had been suppressed and concealed since the intensive debates over the first Partition Plan of the Royal Commission established by Britain (Peel Commission, 1937), burst forth and spread after thirty years, impacting on both the political Right and Left. Many voters were drawn away from the secular approach of the Labor movement and old-timers among them recoiled from the increasing secularization that was imposed upon them when they arrived in Israel during the 1950s under the guise of the “melting pot” policy instituted by Prime Minister Ben-Gurion. One cannot understand the gradual, yet continuous growth of Begin’s party and its political development from the 1950s – the Herut movement, the Liberal-Herut Bloc, and then the Likud – without taking into account the increasing growth in historical-spiritual consciousness of its voters. Begin gave legitimacy to what the Labor movement negated, especially since the Six-Day War, and via this he reinforced the loyalty of his voters to his party, and laid the foundation for the future rule of the Likud both after his retirement from politics and following his death.

Thus, when he was elected prime minister, he invited the ultra-Orthodox party, Agudat Israel, to join the government coalition. For many years this party had been in the parliamentary opposition. He granted students attending *yeshivot* (institutions of religious study) complete exemption from military service along with the granting of social security allowances even though they were not employed; and thus

contributed to the formation of a unique “learning community” that was supported both directly and indirectly by the state treasury. For the first time, a Knesset member from the National Religious Party (NRP) was appointed minister of education and culture, a position which granted him major influence over the public school curricula programs. Working permits on the Sabbath were significantly reduced (according to Israeli social legislation of former Labor governments employers were not allowed to operate their businesses on the Sabbath unless permitted by the government). On the other hand, the share of government participation in the budgets of the ultra-Orthodox educational institutions was substantially increased, and the actual impact of the coalition partners from the religious parties far surpassed their nominal strength, a factor which prevented the enactment of liberal legislation that was part of the Likud platform, such as the recognition of the reform stream of Judaism.

Begin also incorporated expressions of religious faith into his political activity, as indicated by the following passage from his inauguration speech in the Knesset on July 20, 1977:

Upon entering high office, the President of the United States, Mr. Carter, chose to quote from the prophet Micah: ‘It hath been told thee, O man, what is good, And what the Lord doth requireth of thee: only to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.’ [Micah 6:8] These words have served us in the past and will always be a guiding light. But Micah also bequeathed this to the end of the days. This inspirational message is startlingly similar, with certain differences, to the vision of Isaiah. The heart of every man seeking freedom, peace and justice, to this day pounds as he reads these everlasting words: ‘And they will turn their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, and nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.’ [Isaiah 2:4] Also in accord with this vision we shall go in faith and knowledge that this is one of the most lofty contributions of Hebrew thought to mankind and that the day will come in which wars between peoples will cease and deadly weapons will vanish and peace will reign both near and far. And in addition we will remember that after bringing forth this broad humanitarian vision Micah the Morashtite says: ‘For let all the peoples walk each one in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever.’ [Micah 4:5] By virtue of this ancestral tradition from thousands of years ago, I hereby declare that the Government of Israel will not request from any nation, near or far, great or small, to recognize our right to exist. [...] We received our right to exist from the God of our forefathers from the dawn of civilization nearly four thousand years ago. [...] We demand another type of recognition between us and our neighbors, recognition of sovereignty and the mutual need for a life of peace and understanding. This mutual recognition is what we hope for. For such a response we will make all possible effort.¹¹⁴¹

Beyond rhetoric, this passage contained fundamental ideological components. Begin did not ask Israel's neighbors to recognize its right to exist. He offered a theological reason – “we received our right to exist from the God of our forefathers at the dawn of civilization,” that is, the Covenant between the Parts (see Genesis 15:1–21) was an actual event in the framework of historical time, and from this Covenant the People of Israel derived their right to the Land of Israel. The conclusion drawn from this theological premise is the grounds for discarding any need of imposing a demand on Arab states which they undoubtedly would not accept, namely to recognize the right to existence of a Jewish state. There is only the need for the mutual recognition of sovereignty, of living in peace and understanding. Thus, this very political theology allowed Begin to skip over one of the difficult hurdles to peace making. And precisely because Carter used the vision of Micah in his inauguration speech could Begin seize these words and add to them the oath of allegiance to the God of Israel. In this manner he began to pave the way to the heart of the Evangelists in the United States, who in a short time would become the strongest advocates for Israel in American public opinion. He reiterated Israel's links to the Bible and pointed to contemporary history as a source for national rights; this position also served as a basis for rejecting the program for a political settlement put forward by President Ronald Reagan in September 1982. In a letter to President Reagan he wrote that he based his position on “a simple historical truth”:

There are cynics who ridicule history. They can continue to ridicule as much as they want, but I stick to the truth. And the truth is that several thousand years ago there was a Jewish Kingdom in Judea and Samaria where our kings bowed down to God, there our prophets envisaged an eternal peace, there we developed a rich culture, implanted it in our people, in our hearts and minds throughout our wanderings in the world for more than 1800 years, and returned with it to our homeland.¹¹⁴²

These pronouncements brought no change in the position of the United States with regard to the controversial future status of the territories conquered by Israel in the Six-Day War. However, they remained the basis for the position of the Likud even after Begin's retirement. By his policy and rhetoric, he laid foundations for the continuation of the preferential relations between Likud and the religious and ultra-Orthodox

parties. Since 1977, whenever they had opportunity to give the last winning vote in the Knesset to either a Likud or a Labor government, they preferred Likud in spite of their dovish attitude regarding an Israeli-Palestinian peace process. And Likud only twice abandoned for a short time the alliance with them, only because they could not form a coalition government unless leaving the religious parties aside. The political alliance between the Likud and the religious parties (“our natural partners”) replaced the “historical alliance” between the religious Zionists and the Labor movement, which had been in force from the 1930s to 1977.

The peace initiative

As noted above, in his victory speech, Begin called upon the presidents of Egypt, Syria and Lebanon, and the king of Jordan to meet with him to sign a peace treaty. The approach to King Hussein should especially be noted: in the past, Begin had rejected the legitimacy of the very existence of the Jordanian Kingdom and claimed that the Jewish people had a historical right to the territory east of the Jordan River. Gradually he shelved this claim even though he did not renege on the right, and his first step as Prime Minister-designate was tied to converting the ideological to a political approach. Two days only after the elections he announced to the United States that he would fulfill all the commitments of previous governments, even those to which he opposed. On a Roman legal maxim that *pacta sunt servanda* (‘agreements must be kept’) he justified his wish to enter into peace negotiations on the basis of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. Seven years earlier, in the summer of 1970, he had led his party out of the national unity government headed by Golda Meir because she was determined to accept Resolution 242 in which the foundation of peace was to be based on an Israeli “withdrawal from territories occupied” in the Six-Day War. By accepting Resolution 242 and by changing his attitude toward Jordan, Begin established continuity in Israel’s foreign policy, and thereby situated himself and his government at the center of the Israeli political spectrum, thus legitimizing the change

he made with regard to the future status of the territories in dispute.

Begin met President Carter within a month of his assuming office and laid before him his Egyptian and Syrian peace initiative based on mutual recognition, security arrangements, and Israeli withdrawal – “significant withdrawal” in the Sinai and partial withdrawal on the Golan Heights. Begin opposed “step by step” diplomacy put forward by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, which had been acceptable in the past to the governments of Golda Meir and Yitzhak Rabin. In place of a gradual approach aimed at partial arrangements and interim agreements, as accepted by Meir and Rabin, Begin demanded as opposition leader, that Israel enter directly into a peace treaty with the Arab governments. No more partial arrangements; only a final arrangement would suffice; no interim agreements, but rather a permanent arrangement. This was a substantial change in Israeli diplomacy, and alongside this he announced readiness to undertake procedural changes: he raised several procedural alternatives with Carter – revival of an International Conference at Geneva, direct negotiations in the Israeli and Arab capitals or negotiations through American mediation. He also expressed readiness to consider any other procedure that would advance the process toward a peace treaty. He directed his foreign minister, Moshe Dayan, to meet secretly with King Hussein in London, with the Shah of Iran in Teheran, and with Deputy Prime Minister of Egypt Hassan Tuhami in Morocco. The meetings with Hussein and Tuhami brought no agreements on procedure and substance, but they sent a signal on Israel’s readiness to negotiate. Begin himself met with Romanian President Ceausescu and convinced him that his Egyptian peace initiative was in earnest. These clear messages played a role in Egyptian President Anwar Sadat’s decision to come to Jerusalem and negotiate with Begin. Sadat surprised the world with his announcement that he was prepared to go to Jerusalem. Begin sent him a formal invitation and received him with warmth and friendship despite the differences of opinion between them.

Begin's strategic orientation was to remove Egypt from the cycle of war and thereby prevent the formation of an Arab coalition capable of forming an existential threat against Israel by conventional arms. To achieve this he was prepared to relinquish strategic advantages entailed in control of the Sinai Peninsula. In his offer to Egypt, Israel would withdraw its forces to the international border between the two states on condition that most of the desert area would be demilitarized. Begin thus changed the strategic conception of Israel over the last decade, namely, that even in peace with Egypt, Israel must hold the eastern part of the Sinai (a line running from El Arish to Ras Muhammed) in order to guarantee its defensive capability. In opposition to the opinion of general staff of the IDF and the minister of defense, Begin offered Egypt full return to the international border. The main obstacle was the future of Israeli settlements built in this eastern sector of Sinai over the ten-year period since the Six-Day War. Begin's suggestions were not acceptable to Sadat, and at the Camp David Peace Conference (1978) it was decided that Israel would relinquish all the settlements it built in the Sinai Peninsula. This was a dramatic change in a long-standing Israeli policy of not willingly relinquishing settlements. Examining this in depth, there is a connection between the Begin government's decision to evacuate the Sinai settlements and the ideological difference between the two central Zionist streams on settlement. Labor Zionists saw settlements as the very goal of Zionism, whereas the Revisionists placed politics as the governing paradigm and settlement was only a means of advancing national policy goals.

Preventing foreign sovereignty in territory west of the Jordan River

One of the reasons that led Begin to full withdrawal from Sinai was that he did not consider it part of the Land of Israel. The situation was different with regard to the West Bank – he always referred to this territory as “Judea and Samaria” in order to emphasize the biblical background of the territorial rights discourse – and, with regard to the Gaza Strip. These

areas were part of the historical Land of Israel, and Begin asserted that both from ideological and from national security perspectives Israel must prevent “foreign sovereignty” – that is, non-Israeli sovereignty – over the area west of the Jordan River. This was his minimalist ideological position. In order to achieve this, he operated on two parallel fronts: an offer of autonomy for the Palestinians and advancement of Jewish settlements wherever possible in accordance with legal interpretation and physical feasibility. The idea of autonomy in the context of settling the territorial dispute was based on three principles: suspension of the mutual claims to sovereignty over these territories; the transfer of self-administration to a Palestinian authority accompanied by the maintenance of Jordanian citizenship of the Palestinians (until 1988, the West Bank was part of Jordan and its citizens were Jordanian citizens), except for those who requested Israeli citizenship; leaving responsibility for security in Israeli hands. Like his predecessors, Begin also opposed the establishment of a Palestinian state west of the Jordan River, but by way of contrast put forward the idea of autonomy. At Camp David, he agreed to an expansion from administrative autonomy to full autonomy, as a temporary arrangement to be in effect for five years. At the end of this period, a permanent arrangement would be negotiated with the participation of Israel, Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority, “taking into consideration, as well, the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just requirements.”¹¹⁴³ All these elements differed from the preceding Labor governments. Even though negotiations to put into effect autonomy arrangements failed for various reasons, the basic orientation of establishing an autonomous Palestinian authority for an interim period guided the government of Yitzhak Rabin in agreements reached with the Palestinians between 1993 and 1995. However, there are substantive differences between them: Begin sought to establish, through autonomy, an alternative to the Palestine Liberation Organization, which he viewed as a murderous terrorist organization, whereas Rabin conducted negotiations and entered into an agreement with this organization. Begin insisted on the Palestinians maintaining a citizenship linkage with Jordan in order to prevent Palestinian autonomy from

becoming an incubator for the formation of a state. Rabin operated during a period in which there was no longer a citizenship linkage of the Palestinians to Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority that was established by virtue of these agreements with Israel was “a state in-the-making.” The framework of Camp David – autonomy for the Palestinians with the authority of self-governing administration for an interim period – was preserved, but the substantive content of the agreement was essentially changed, an example of the dialectic of change within continuity.

Begin’s settlement policy changed the map of the country beyond recognition. Labor governments advocated territorial compromise and thus limited the settlements beyond the ceasefire lines of 1949 to those areas that they thought should remain under Israeli sovereignty when peace comes. Because Begin rejected the idea of territorial compromise, he was not prepared to any policy limitations on settlements, provided that they were regarded as legal according to Israeli law and rulings of the High Court of Justice. This was a clear-cut example of change within the framework of policy continuity of the previous government. Labor governments held that erection of settlements beyond the “Green Line” (the ceasefire line of 1949) was admissible; but the locations of these settlements had to correspond with a future territorial compromise. On the other hand, Begin founded settlements designed to thwart territorial compromise. However, the disengagement from Gaza and the demolishing of all Israeli settlements there by the Ariel Sharon government in 2005, followed by a demolition of two settlements in northern Samaria, put the power of settlements policy to determine reality under a question mark.

Golan Heights Law

In December 1981, following a second Likud election victory, Begin decided to apply Israeli sovereignty to the Golan Heights, conquered from Syria in the Six-Day War. The Golan Heights legislation passed the Knesset four months before the

completion of Israeli military withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula. In an extraordinary cabinet meeting at his residence, Begin was authorized to put forward Knesset legislation that very day which would apply Israeli law over the Golan Heights, to be effective immediately. He enumerated legal and historical grounds for the legislation and pointed out possible objections of the United States, Egypt and Syria. He expected that the Americans would only criticize Israel and the Egyptians would not do anything in order not to endanger the peace agreement; the Syrians would not undertake military actions, which offered them no chance of victory, but just in case, he instructed the defense minister to place the IDF on alert.¹¹⁴⁴ Begin thought that applying sovereignty over the Golan would signal the world not to interpret the giving up of the Sinai as a readiness to give up all the territories taken in 1967. Indeed, the UN Security Council published a declaration of condemnation, which also stated that the law was invalid and had no force, but did not impose sanctions on Israel. The United States announced an abeyance in the implementation of a Memorandum of Understanding signed very recently between the two states, and Begin responded with the announcement that Israel regarded the suspension of the memorandum as in effect its cancellation. In addition, the Americans cancelled assistance for defense procurements in the amount of 300 million dollars. This aid, which constituted a subsidization of the American arms industry, was renewed about a month later. Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights is not recognized by the international community; in like manner, there was no international recognition of Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem which a national unity government under Labor Prime Minister Levi Eshkol enacted in 1967 immediately following the Six-Day War. And once more, in the matter of the Golan Heights, Begin changed the political and legal reality following a precedent set by the Eshkol government. Thus the Golan legislation also reflects the dialectic of change within continuity.

Since 1981, there have been three attempts to change the new status quo established by Begin. The first was labeled “Rabin’s deposit”: Rabin’s declaration to President Clinton in

1993 on his readiness to withdraw from the Golan if there was a full and final peace treaty between Israel and Syria. The second attempt occurred under the leadership of Benjamin Netanyahu during his first term of office (1996–1999), and the third attempt was under Prime Minister Ehud Barak in 2000. All these efforts failed. The focus of this essay does not allow for an examination of the question of who is responsible for the above-mentioned failures. The change initiated by Begin has continued to hold, and given the new geo-political reality in Syria today (2015), there is not likely to be any change in the foreseeable future.

Begin's doctrine

At twilight on June 7, 1981, eight F-16 fighter jets of the Israeli Air Force appeared over the nuclear reactor of Iraq situated south of the capital city of Baghdad and destroyed it. All the airplanes returned safely to Israel.

This operation was the grand finale in an extended effort to prevent Iraq from developing atomic weapons, an effort in various ways begun during the term of the first Rabin government. Begin did not stop there. He formulated a doctrine according to which Israel, a small and densely populated country, could not absorb a nuclear attack, and thus it must prevent an enemy state that aims to destroy Israel from becoming a nuclear power. Where diplomatic and other efforts fail, military force must be used. When it became apparent that all other efforts had exhausted themselves, Begin turned to the military option. After long-drawn-out discussions, the government decided to assign the mission to the air force. Addressing his ministers, Begin stated: "From the moment that I knew about the Iraqi intention, the matter gave me no rest." And he added, using a metaphor from one of the first books of Kazetnik, which described the horrors of the Holocaust:

A large clock hangs above our heads and it is ticking. Somewhere on the banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates reside people whose aim is to destroy us, and they prepare the tools to carry out their heinous scheme. Every passing day brings them closer to their goal. We must ask ourselves what it means when a state like Iraq manufactures nuclear weapons. The meaning is: the very life of every man, woman and child in Israel is endangered. In another five years,

perhaps only three years, the Iraqis will possess two or three atomic bombs, each one containing the power equivalent to that which laid waste Hiroshima. [...] If Iraq possesses weapons, one of two things will happen: either we will have to surrender to their demands, or run the risk of extermination. What a horrible choice!¹¹⁴⁵

After several delays, the action was successfully carried out. A short time before the decision to bomb the nuclear reactor, the Iranians, who were engaged in a military conflict with Iraq at the same time, tried to damage it and to a certain extent succeeded. The Iraqis began repairs, which led to a postponement of the Israeli mission, since foreign technicians were employed there and Begin did not want them to be harmed. Israel took advantage of the time delay to improve its preparations and training exercises. In the end, Begin created a historical precedent by destroying the nuclear reactor of an enemy state. The United States repeated this precedent in undertaking the Gulf War nearly a decade later.

Begin's doctrine meant that Israel must thwart every attempt by an enemy state to purchase or manufacture nuclear weapons. The doctrine withstood the test of time, according to foreign sources, when the Syrian military nuclear reactor was bombed in September 2007 on orders from Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. Since the beginning of his premiership, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has labored to put a stop to the military nuclear initiative of Iran. The transition from a sole reliance on diplomacy to a combination of diplomacy and military options in the management of the nuclear problem arising with enemy states is a strategic shift formulated by the Begin government, on the basis of a strategically offensive conception. This is an offensive doctrine of national self-defense, which justifies a preventive strike before the enemy has the chance to carry out its programs. This doctrine holds not only when there is a threat to national existence from nuclear weapons, but also when there is a conventional strategic threat. This is the essence of "a war of choice," which also propelled the war in Lebanon initiated by Israel in June 1982, a year after the destruction of the nuclear reactor in Iraq. The war in Lebanon was "a war of choice" as defined by Begin himself. It began with wide national approval, but as it expanded beyond the objectives determined at its inception, it

generated intense criticism, both in Israel and abroad. In the end, Begin could no longer continue in office, especially in light of the large number of casualties.

Despite the controversy stirred up by the term “a war of choice,” there were several military engagements before the Lebanese incursion of 1982 that could be conceived as preemptive strikes, among them the Sinai Campaign (1956) and the Six-Day War (1967). In this respect Begin continued the line of thought of David Ben-Gurion, Israel’s first prime minister; he continued it with a fundamental change, namely that a war might be justified even when the initiative was not taken by the enemy. The expansion of this outlook, more than the operative use to which it was put, was controversial and raised a furor which comprised both philosophical and political components.¹¹⁴⁶

The Jews of Ethiopia

At the beginning of Begin’s term of office as prime minister, he instructed Mossad chief, Major-General Yitzhak Hofi, to work toward bringing to Israel those Ethiopian Jews who so desired. In this matter as well, one can discern the dialectic of change within continuity: following doubts and hesitations, in March 1977, two months before the Knesset elections, the Rabin government applied the Law of Return to the Jews of Ethiopia. This meant application of the right to immigration and immediate citizenship on arrival. However, beyond this declaration and its legitimization, nothing was done because of the absence of normal relations between Israel and Ethiopia. For Begin, there was an opportunity to take the initiative in this matter: in July 1977, Somalia attacked Ethiopia, Israel provided military assistance to Ethiopia, and in return the latter allowed small groups of Ethiopian Jews (each group comprising several dozen individuals), to secretly immigrate. Within a short time, Ethiopia halted this emigration fearing that it would damage the country’s relations with Arab states. Because of domestic stress caused by the war, about a million and a half Ethiopians left their country and settled in refugee

camps in neighboring Sudan. Among them were several thousand Jews. The Mossad operated secretly to bring some of them to Israel via two main routes: directly via the Red Sea with the assistance of the Israeli navy, and indirectly, by air via Europe. At the same time, Begin worked through diplomatic channels and through the help of President Reagan's administration. Until Begin's retirement from office in 1983, 3,500 individuals arrived in Israel by various routes.¹¹⁴⁷ This was a breakthrough, and the flow of immigration from Ethiopia increased. Thirty years later, at the end of 2013 there were 135,500 Jews of Ethiopian origin; a third of them had already been born in Israel.¹¹⁴⁸ Even though they constitute less than 2% of Israel's population, they have representation in the Knesset and at various levels of government administration. Due to differences in culture and social structure, the absorption of these emigrants was not free of mistakes; but Israel has been the only country in the world to initiate emigration from Africa and to invest human, financial and secret services resources in the special operations needed for the success of this exodus.

The economic turnabout

Since the establishment of the state, the Herut movement and the Liberals have advocated reduced regulation and abolishment of the regime of economic oversight, including oversight on foreign currency that had been in effect since Israel's first government, and in fact had been instituted during the British Mandate. In accordance with the liberal school of economic thought which was also upheld by Begin and his Liberal Party colleagues, they supported free enterprise and removal of obstacles and bureaucratic barriers. In this spirit, Begin and Simha Erlich, minister of finance, brought a new economic policy, known as "the economic turnabout." Its guiding principles were reduction of government regulation over the economy, cancelation of most restrictions on holdings in foreign currency, changing the Israeli pound into a convertible currency, cancelation of most subsidies on basic goods, abolition of the travel tax, a rise in the value added tax,

and the awarding of special compensation to people eligible for social security benefits.¹¹⁴⁹ In Begin's view, the "economic turnabout" was the other side of the socioeconomic coin, of which one part was the initiative for physical and social renewal of distressed neighborhoods, which he named Project Renewal. It had a certain root in the previous government's policy; however, Begin changed its scope and made it a joint project of Israel and Jewish communities abroad. The combination of these two programs intended to ground social justice within a free economic framework, in accordance with his ideological vision he formulated at the beginning of the 1950s. However, because of the high inflation rate, the objectives of the program were not reached although some of them were delayed. In the end, after changes and adjustments, it was Benjamin Netanyahu, in his capacity as minister of finance in the government of Ariel Sharon, who in 2003 brought to fruition the liberalization program by pegging the shekel to freely convertible currency. Other components of the program were implemented earlier. In retrospect, one may say that the liberalization program that Begin and Erlich conceived was realized only after both of them had passed away.

Conclusion

During the six and a quarter years of Begin's term of office as prime minister, he initiated several historical transformations, which place him among the influential shapers of the image of Israel and its continuing history, second in historical impact only to David Ben-Gurion. His leadership rested upon a policy rooted in a formulated ideological position, a developed historical consciousness, exceptional rhetorical skill, and personal and political integrity. His ideology bore a nationalist-Jewish-liberal stamp in the spirit of the writings of Ze'ev Jabotinsky, with his own additions. Looking back, some of the turnabouts he initiated reflect two poles in his *Weltanschauung* and the policies of his government: peace with Egypt – the first peace treaty of the State of Israel with one of its neighbors – which entailed withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula and the demolishing of settlements that Israel

had established in conquered Egyptian territory; application of Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights; a program of autonomy for the Palestinians recognizing their “legitimate rights and just requirements” that would influence future permanent arrangements which Israel might reach with them; opening up of areas in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip to widespread urban and rural settlement, which was a purposeful political initiative – prevention of the possible partition of the Land of Israel. Begin also undertook peace initiatives and took a leading role in the decision to bomb the Iraqi nuclear reactor which formulated a new nuclear doctrine. He conducted an offensive policy against Palestinian terrorism both within the country and abroad, including the first Lebanese war, which he termed “a war of choice.” He launched Project Renewal for distressed neighborhoods thereby strengthening the component of social responsibility in government policy in tandem with liberalization of the economy, which had been badly damaged. He weakened the power of the Histadrut which had been under the aegis of the Labor party. He formed a political partnership with the ultra-Orthodox religious parties, cancelled the exemption quota for military service given to yeshiva students, strengthened the religious component in Israel’s national identity and changed Israel’s political style. The pre-state undergrounds of Etzel (the Irgun) and Lehi (Stern Group) and their heroes entered into the national pantheon from which they were excluded by David Ben-Gurion. Thus, when Begin resigned from office in the summer of 1983 he bequeathed to his successor, Yitzhak Shamir, a State of Israel different in its image, values and policies from the one he inherited from Yitzhak Rabin six and a quarter years earlier. The majority of the changes he brought about rested upon undertakings of his predecessors in government and thereby strengthened the legitimacy of his policies, which caused fundamental changes in the Israeli realm. This was done by a strategy of change through continuity.

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Endnotes

- 1 Katz 1960; Buber 1973; Avineri 1981; Eisenstadt 2000.
- 2 Quoted in Weinberg 2002.
- 3 Smith 1994; Dumont 1977.
- 4 Ben-Rafael 2002.
- 5 Krausz and Tulea 1998.
- 6 Katz 1960; Avineri 1981.
- 7 Gorny 1990.
- 8 Dawidowicz 1981; Friesel 1994.
- 9 Ben Amos and Beit El 1996; Friedman 1997.
- 10 Gorny 1998; Bar-On and Sela 1991.
- 11 Bachi 1956.
- 12 Chomsky 1957.
- 13 Glinert 1990.
- 14 Hofman and Fisherman 1972.
- 15 Rubinstein 1977, 1980.
- 16 Almog 1997.
- 17 Herman 1988.
- 18 Levy, Levinson, and Katz 1993, 1.
- 19 Chadwick 1990.
- 20 Kroeber 1952; Kroeber and Kluckhorn 1953.
- 21 Gombrich 1969.
- 22 On this subject there exists a broad body of literature. For a bird's-eye view, see Biale 2000, as well as our introduction to Volume 8 of *The Cambridge History of Judaism* (Shavit and Shavit, in press).
- 23 Shavit and Shavit 1998.
- 24 The question of the ideal cultural model has been a subject of disagreement, and several comprehensive models have been proposed. We are aware of only a few such debates within Arab society in Mandate Palestine and in Israel.
- 25 Even-Zohar 2008.
- 26 More precisely, some of its components can be part of the culture of Israeli Jews who have emigrated to other countries.
- 27 The use of the concepts of "Hebrew culture" and "Hebrewness," once common in public and political discourse, has almost vanished since the 1950s. Moreover, in the case of rhetoric that cites "the people of Israel," the reference is either to the Jewish population of Israel ("citizens of the State of Israel" are seldom addressed) or to Jews throughout the world – "the Jewish people." That "the people of Israel" or "the Jewish people" are commonly invoked, while "Jews" are not, reflects, we believe, a desire to highlight the ethnic and national dimension of Judaism. "Hebrewness" is used chiefly in reference to literary works written in the Hebrew language ("Hebrew literature"),

- while in contrast the theater in Israel is called “Israeli theater” even when its productions are staged in Hebrew.
- 28 In this – with the addition of the territorial aspect – the new Jewish culture of the Yishuv and in Israel is an offshoot and continuation of the modern Jewish revolution, but also distinct from its other branches (for example, Yiddish culture). See Harshav 2000.
- 29 Ibid., 14.
- 30 The same phenomenon occurred, of course, within the Jewish Diasporas from the late 18th century onward. Contrary to the prevailing consensus, Orthodoxy is not frozen or dogmatic but undergoes its own processes of adaptation and change.
- 31 Nachtomsky 2005, among others.
- 32 Israel’s ultra-Orthodox population does, however, make up part of its overall culture. Concerning Haredi culture in Israel and its various streams there is a substantial body of literature; see, for example, Zicherman 2014, 2–14.
- 33 See, for example, Luz 1985 and Schweid 1995.
- 34 Schweid 1995.
- 35 We believe the existing surveys on this and other subjects have been insufficient, as they neglect to examine in detail, for example, what “keeping the sanctity of the Sabbath” in fact involves – is it a matter of refraining from all work or, say, a more narrow set of restrictions such as not listening to the radio, abstaining from calling an elevator, etc.?
- 36 Shavit 2009.
- 37 Ben-Rafael and Ben-Chaim 2006.
- 38 Laskov 1990.
- 39 In 1925, the national poet Chaim Nachman Bialik wrote: “In the consciousness of the nation, the term culture, in its comprehensive and human sense, has replaced the theological term Torah,” while in 1920 the philosopher Achad Haam wrote, “One has only to utter from the podium the terrible word *kultura* – a word than which there is none more exalted and lofty in the entire human linguistic treasury – to arouse tremendous excitement on all sides as if the great Day of Judgment had arrived.” Bialik 1965; Achad Haam [1920] 1944.
- 40 Often in the attempt to prove that all these components of culture not only existed in the Torah world but also received legitimacy in it.
- 41 The question of a formal definition crops up only around the issue of conversion to Judaism.
- 42 Ben-Rafael 2001.
- 43 Harshav 2000.
- 44 Schweid 1979.
- 45 Shavit and Sitton 2004.
- 46 Shavit and Shavit 1998.
- 47 Shavit and Sitton 2004.
- 48 On the portrayal (and stereotype) of the Sabra, or native-born Israeli, see Almog 1997.
- 49 By this we mean adherence to some aspects of the Jewish tradition, such as observing the Sabbath, attending synagogue

on Jewish holidays, keeping kosher, and so forth.
50 Feiner 2012; Bar-Levav et al. 2013.
51 Katz 2011.
52 Bartal 2002.
53 This is the objective of one such group, “Bina,” which defines
itself as a *beit midrash* and claims to offer “Israeli *midrash* that
responds to questions of Jewish identity.” See also Katz 2014.
54 Primarily through the prohibition of public transport and open
business hours. A survey published in early 2014 shows that a
third of all Israelis keep the Sabbath.
55 An example is the initiative by the Religious Services Ministry in
September 2014 to establish “centers for Jewish identity,”
whose mission is to educate the public on “Jewish values,” as
well as study sessions on “the Jewish sources” and study groups
that encourage “creative efforts in various spheres, conducted in
the spirit of Judaism”; another example is a television campaign
advocating Sabbath eve family dinners.
56 Ben-Porat 2013.
57 Not all the literature we draw on is cited in the footnotes, and
thus is also not cited in the bibliography.
58 Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983.
59 Evron 1995.
60 Bar-Levav, Margolin, and Feiner 2013.
61 Ohana 2012.
62 Yovel 2007.
63 Kartun-Blum 1995, 201.
64 Ofrat 2004.
65 Laor 2013, 264–308.
66 Gouri 1972, 28.
67 Yizhar 1958.
68 Carmi 1968, 46.
69 Avidan 1964, 25.
70 Amichai 1971, 21.
71 Levine 1987, 92.
72 Abraham B. Yehoshua, *Haaretz*, April 23, 1971, quoted in Ofrat
2004, 124.
73 Omer 1974, 96.
74 Cassuto 1953, 92, 98–100.
75 Leibowitz 1977, 68.
76 Shevet 1998, 1–4.
77 Amir 1998.
78 Zissman 1996, 60–61.
79 Bereshit Rabba, section 38, sign 13.
80 Shapira 1992.
81 *Ibid.*, 9.
82 Breitberg-Semel 1988.
83 Tirosh 1994, 17–19.
84 Breitberg-Semel 1988.
85 Ofek 2001, 47.
86 Sgan-Cohen 1996.

- 87 Ofrat 1996; reprinted in idem 2004, 232–315.
- 88 Ben-Gurion 1980, 197.
- 89 Rosenberg and Mevorach 2013, 213.
- 90 Genesis 10:8–9.
- 91 Flavius 2015, 429.
- 92 Baba Batra, 4.
- 93 Allon 1958.
- 94 Shalit 1974.
- 95 Zeitlin 1963.
- 96 See “Herod, the Life and Death of the King of Judea,” special issue, *Metropolis* (March 2013): 62 (Hebrew).
- 97 Schwartz 2007.
- 98 Curran 2013.
- 99 Hasson 2013.
- 100 Sherwood 2013.
- 101 Rosner 2013.
- 102 Ohana 2010, 2012.
- 103 Feige and Shiloni 2008.
- 104 Gouri 1983.
- 105 The encounter of Israel with the Palestinian Arabs, and the larger Arab world, is of utmost importance in the shaping of its culture, in various ways. Yet in this all too short essay Arab culture in Israel is not covered except for some of its effects on Hebrew culture.
- 106 The most comprehensive single work on the development and transformation of Israeli culture is Regev 2003.
- 107 Berlovitz 2010.
- 108 Penslar 1991, 13–106.
- 109 Ben-Rafael 1994, 49–92.
- 110 Behar and Ben-Dor Benite 2013, xxi–xxxix.
- 111 Horowitz and Lissak 1978.
- 112 Gorny 1973; Sternhell 1998.
- 113 Peled 2002, 113–228; Shapira 1997.
- 114 Horowitz and Lissak 1978; Gertz 1988; Almog 2000, 73–137.
- 115 Giladi 1973.
- 116 Gelber 1990; Sela-Sheffy 2006.
- 117 Shavit and Bigger 2001, 293.
- 118 Azaryahu 2006, 27–78.
- 119 Helman 2007, 175.
- 120 Nitzan-Shiftan 2009.
- 121 Shavit and Bigger 2001, 42; Shavit 1998.
- 122 As for example Tsabar, Knispel, Gat, Schlos. See Donner 1989; Sela 2000; Heilbronner 2010; Zalmona 2010.
- 123 E.g., Breitberg-Semel 1986.
- 124 Nitzan-Shiftan 2007; Helman 2007, 20–27; Shavit and Bigger 2001, 192–253.
- 125 Rotbard 2015.
- 126 On social marginality in Mandatory Tel Aviv, see Bernstein 2008.
- 127 Gorny 1973, 66–113.

- 128 On the immigrants from the former USSR, see Lissak and Leshem 2006; Lerner and Feldhay 2013.
- 129 Khazzoom 2003.
- 130 On the Canaanite movement, see Shavit 1987; Ohana 2014.
- 131 Zalmona 2013, 117–129; Ohana 2014, 73–100.
- 132 On the Jews from Yemen in the Yishuv, see Nini 1996.
- 133 Firer 1985.
- 134 Swirski 1989, 1–90.
- 135 Meir-Glitzstein 2009.
- 136 Ram 1995, 23–46.
- 137 Swirski 1989, 1–90.
- 138 Shohat 1988.
- 139 Shenhav 2006; Hever, Shenhav, and Mutzafi-Haller 2002; Abutbul, Grinberg, and Mutzafi-Haller 2005.
- 140 Chetrit 2010, 72–304; Herzog 1986.
- 141 On Mizrahi and Mediterranean music in Israel, see Regev 2003; Regev and Seroussi 2004, 191–247; Horowitz 2010.
- 142 The first book about Mizrahim and Orientalism in Israeli cinema was Shohat 1989.
- 143 Talmon and Peleg 2011.
- 144 Alon 2011; Oppenheimer 2012; Snir 2013.
- 145 Ohana 2014, 182–221; Nocke 2009.
- 146 See Perlson 2006.
- 147 Horowitz and Lissak 1989, 32–97; Kimmerling 2004, 112–172; Ben-Rafael and Peres 2005.
- 148 On multiculturalism in Israel, see Yonah and Shenhav 2005.
- 149 Molcho 2005.
- 150 Israel Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Annual 2013*, Table 20: “Ownership of Durable Goods.” Accessed June 1, 2015, <http://www.cbs.gov.il/publications13/1517/pdf/t20.pdf>; see Caspi 2007; Sofer 2011.
- 151 All the figures in this paragraph are cited from Ram and Filc 2014.
- 152 Alfasi and Fenster 2005; Margalit 2013; Ram 2007.
- 153 First and Avraham 2009, 121.
- 154 On the Americanization of Israel, see Ram 2007.
- 155 Shafir and Peled 2002, 260–277.
- 156 Peri 2000.
- 157 First and Avraham 2009, 125.
- 158 Reinharz and Shavit 2006, 14.
- 159 Heart at East 2011; Swirski, Konor-Atias, and Ophir 2014.
- 160 Hermann and Yuchtman-Yaar 2013; Yuchtman-Yaar 2002.
- 161 For a detailed discussion see Manor 2005, 8–39.
- 162 See Levy 1996.
- 163 Rokem 1996, 51–84.
- 164 For a detailed discussion, see Nocke 2006.
- 165 Regev and Seroussi 2004, 16.
- 166 See Taha 2000.
- 167 See Gershenson 2005.

- 168 See Raz 2011.
- 169 See Stern 2013.
- 170 See Morley and Tapie de Celeyran 1968.
- 171 The Hebrew term *Yishuv* designates the Jewish sector in Palestine before the establishment of the State of Israel.
- 172 The Fifth Aliyah brought of 225,000 to 300,000 Jews from Central Europe to Palestine between 1932 and 1939.
- 173 Schiffman 1933, 287.
- 174 Sharon 1976, 46–48.
- 175 See *Habinyan*, 40.
- 176 Sharon 1976, 48.
- 177 Barkai and Posener 1937.
- 178 This article only focuses on the characteristics of the urban architecture.
- 179 For Le Corbusier’s influence, see Levin 1977; Epstein-Pliouchtch and Fainholtz 2010.
- 180 Heinze-Mühleib 1986; Nitzan-Shiftan 1996.
- 181 Levin 1984, 9.
- 182 Only five of them received a diploma (d): Leo Baumann, Shlomo Bernstein (d), Chanan Frenkel (d), Munio Gitai Weinraub, Edgar Hecht (d), Shmuel Mestechkin, Arie Sharon (d), Heinz Schwerin, and Selman Selmanagic (d), who was not Jewish.
- 183 Herbert and Heinze-Greenberg 1992.
- 184 Ingersoll 1994, 14–15.
- 185 Herbert and Heinze-Greenberg 1992, 154.
- 186 The Weissenhofsiedlung is considered one of the most important monuments of the “Neues Bauen” movement. It was created in 1927 as a building exhibition of Deutsche Werkbund, and comprised 33 houses built by 17 architects from Germany, France, Holland, Belgium and Austria.
- 187 Herbert and Sosnovsky 1993, 248–253.
- 188 Herbert 1995, 224–225.
- 189 Ratner 1933, 293, 296.
- 190 Herbert 1995, 227.
- 191 See Zion 2001.
- 192 Monk 1994, 2002.
- 193 See Rotbard 2003.
- 194 Azaryahu and Troen 2012.
- 195 Among others Druyanov 1939; Shva 1989; Schlör 1999.
- 196 Soskin 1926.
- 197 Azaryahu 2006; Mann 2006.
- 198 See Yekutieli-Cohen 1990.
- 199 Quote according to Szmuk 2004, 3.
- 200 Azaryahu 2006, 176.
- 201 See Welter 2009.
- 202 Gutmann 1959, Druyanov 1939.
- 203 See Mislin and Monke 1980.
- 204 Harlap 1982, 47.
- 205 Levin’s catalogue was extended by a second volume with photographs by Turner 1984. See also Levin 1984, and 1989, 55.

- 206 See the sculptor's website www.danikaravan.com.
- 207 Nerdinger 1993.
- 208 For Peres' opening statement, see Monk 1994, 95; Ingersoll 1995, 268.
- 209 Strubbe 1996.
- 210 www.bauhaus-center.com.
- 211 Yavin 2003.
- 212 Szmuk 1994; Metzger-Szmuk 2004.
- 213 Szmuk 2004.
- 214 Karavan 2004.
- 215 Studemund-Halevy 1990.
- 216 Nerdinger 1994, 8–15.
- 217 Rotbard 2005.
- 218 Segev 2005. Quote according to Oswald 2001, 22.
- 219 Epstein-Pliouchtch and Fuchs 2008, 111.
- 220 Rotbard 2011, 23.
- 221 LeVine 2005.
- 222 Rotbard 2011, 24.
- 223 Efrat 2011, 5.
- 224 See Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau 2012.
- 225 Oswald 2011, 3.
- 226 The conference was organized by the Heinrich Boell Foundation in cooperation with the Municipality of Tel Aviv and the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation, where participants and experts from Germany and Israel reflected on eco-friendly and culture-sensitive issues and energy-efficiency refurbishment solutions that take the cultural heritage of the buildings in the White City into account. The author was a contributor to this conference.
- 227 See Yaron, "Bauhaus in Tel Aviv – Eine Stadt kämpft um ihr Erbe," June 19, 2013, <http://www.boell.de/de/2013/06/19/bauhaus-tel-aviv-eine-stadt-kaempft-um-ihr-erbe>.
- 228 In the following the Hebrew term *Yam Tikhoniut* (*Yam ha-Tikhon* means the Mediterranean Sea, literally, 'sea of the middle') will be used as a synonym for "Mediterraneanism" or "Méditerranité."
- 229 Heb. 'Land of Israel': Until the foundation of the State of Israel, the term *Eretz Yisrael* was the official Hebrew expression to refer to the territory under British Mandate in Palestine.
- 230 The extensive literature substantiating the claim cannot be discussed here. Suffice it to say that leading Israeli academic journals such as the Hebrew *Zmanim* [*Times*], *Alpaim* [*Two Thousand*], and *Theoria ve-Bikoret* [*Theory and Criticism*], as well as *Israel Studies* and *Israel Affairs* (English) have published papers and special issues on Israeliness, collective identity, and collective memory. Researchers from diverse disciplines have also dedicated themselves to the subject of identity politics.
- 231 The classic study of the historico-cultural space of the Mediterranean in the second half of the 16th century by Fernand Braudel represents an impressive account of contacts among the Mediterranean states, the interlinking of European and

Mediterranean history, and the complicated processes of change in terms of geography, social structures, and political systems. The sea itself shifts to the center of attention and becomes the protagonist of this monumental work. Like no one else before, Braudel turned the Mediterranean into a historical concept and saw in it a broad arena of cultures with the far-reaching impact of ‘the long duration’ or ‘the long term’ – *la longue durée*, the slow rhythms of human transformations, and social and urban behavior patterns beyond the short-term developments in history and society. Braudel 1986.

- 232 A traditionally Arab dish consisting of cooked chickpeas pounded into a creamy paste with garlic and lemon juice, which is popular all over the Middle East. However, in view of the continuous fighting in Syria while writing this essay in August 2012, especially in Damascus and Aleppo, this slogan is barely conceivable.
- 233 Bar’el 2000.
- 234 Ohana 2011, 175.
- 235 Hochberg 2011, 52, 57.
- 236 For an in depth discussion of the subject, see Nocke 2009.
- 237 Malkin 1996.
- 238 See Del Sarto 2003.
- 239 Oz 1990.
- 240 Yehoshua 1995.
- 241 Shavit 1988, 96.
- 242 See also Malkin 2002.
- 243 Herbert 2008, 196.
- 244 For a comprehensive overview of those planning fantasies throughout the last century, see Allweil and Treitel 2004.
- 245 See, e.g., the international conference organized by the IEPN (Israeli European Policy Network) in Tel Aviv, July 2012: *Natural Gas in the Eastern Mediterranean: Casus Belli or Chance for Regional Cooperation?*, <http://www.iepn.org>.
- 246 Eliezer Ben-Rafael, *Jewish Identities: Fifty Intellectuals Answer Ben-Gurion* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2002).
- 247 Dov Halbertal, “Israel Must Separate Religion from Politics,” *Haaretz*, December 22, 2010.
- 248 Ibid.
- 249 Brown 2000.
- 250 Sivan 1994.
- 251 Friedman 1998.
- 252 Peres 2006; Ben-Rafael 2008.
- 253 Neugroschel 2001, 147.
- 254 Yosef 1999, 23.
- 255 Avot 5:18.
- 256 Makkot 3:17.
- 257 Yosef 1999, 23.
- 258 Ibid., 22.
- 259 Ibid., 23.
- 260 Leon 2008.
- 261 Abba Shaul 1999, 69.

- 262 Lau 2005, 11–23; Picard 2007, 11–16.
- 263 Bacon 1988.
- 264 Heilman and Friedman 1994.
- 265 Halevy 2011, 1–23.
- 266 Zohar 2001, 337–342.
- 267 Leon 2010, 197–204.
- 268 For a discussion on the Shalosh Hashvu'ot and its status through time, see Ravitzky 1994, 207–306.
- 269 Kook 1961, 44.
- 270 Ibid., 89.
- 271 For a detailed discussion on this religious ability, see Yaron 1985, 241–244; Ravitzky 1994, 156–157.
- 272 See Ben Shlomo 1989, 110–122; Ravitzky 1994, 141–149; Strassberg-Dayana 1995, 135–138.
- 273 See Rotenstreich 1996, 286–288.
- 274 Ravitzky 1994, 156.
- 275 Ibid., 156–158; Schweid 1990, 129.
- 276 Kook 1961, 135.
- 277 Ibid., 64.
- 278 See Strassberg-Dayana 1995, 134–135.
- 279 Kook 1961, 156.
- 280 For example, Kook 1961, 18.
- 281 For a detailed analysis of this passage, see Schweid 1990, 130–131.
- 282 See Ravitzky 1994, 156ff.
- 283 Kook 1961, 63. See also parallel thoughts in Ravitzky 1994, 345, footnote 148.
- 284 Kook 1985, 158.
- 285 Ibid., 82.
- 286 Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sotah 49b.
- 287 Kook 1983, 11; see also Yaron 1985, 254–256.
- 288 Kook 1983, 11.
- 289 For an in-depth discussion of this topic, see Ravitzky 1994, 161–162.
- 290 This approach had far-reaching consequences in politics in the 1970s and 1980s; see Ravitzky 1994, 181–196.
- 291 Kook 1985, 83.
- 292 Ravitzky 1994, 183–196.
- 293 Leibowitz 1980, 21ff.
- 294 Ibid., 21.
- 295 See also Hartman 1989, 107.
- 296 Kapach 1965, 204.
- 297 Ibid., 209.
- 298 For example, in his foreword to the commentaries on this chapter, Maimonides writes (Kapach 1965, 140) that the aim of the Yemot Hamashiach is not to enjoy an abundance of earthly pleasures but the wisdom of the righteous, and the honesty and wisdom of the people who will have come closer to their creator; the Olam Haba is the ultimate goal, its opposite is continuous efforts.

- 299 Ibid., 139–140.
- 300 On the role of the halakhot relating to the Messiah in the Mishneh Torah, see Ravitzky 1984, 203–220.
- 301 Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilkhhot Tshuva 9:8–10.
- 302 Hartman 1989, 111.
- 303 Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilkhhot Melakhim 11–12.
- 304 Ibid., Ch. 12, 4–5; see also Ravitzky 1984, 95–196.
- 305 Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, foreword to Perek Chelek, 125.
- 306 Ibid., Hilkhhot Melakhim, 11:3.
- 307 Ibid., 1.
- 308 Ibid., 3.
- 309 Twersky 1980, 336.
- 310 Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilkhhot Avoda Zara 1:3; Hilkhhot Melakhim 18:5.
- 311 Uziel 1953, vol. 1, 36–83, 84–189.
- 312 Ibid., 41–43.
- 313 Ibid., 43.
- 314 Ibid., 38.
- 315 Ibid., 39.
- 316 Ibid.
- 317 Ibid., 38.
- 318 Ibid.
- 319 Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilkhhot Tshuva 8.
- 320 Uziel 1953, vol. 1, 80.
- 321 Kapach 1965, 205.
- 322 Uziel 1953, vol. 1, 171–173.
- 323 Ibid., 175–177.
- 324 According to Dov Schwartz, Rabbi Uziel maintained the “apocalyptic layer” in his work, in relation to the change in the nature of creation, etc. See Schwartz 1999, 79–80, particularly note 46. The work of Rabbi Uziel reveals that he indeed believed that creation would change in the spirit of the classical messianic promises. At the same time, he explained that this change would take place in a totally natural way, rather than as a change in the nature of creation. For example, in Uziel 1953, 188, after having discussed the authentic nature of the animal, he concludes the discussion by stating that achieving wisdom and knowledge would revert the objects of creation to their original state, and this would certainly follow man’s achieving divine knowledge. In other words, there is no change in the nature of creation, but there is a return to its real nature, following man’s religious and moral growth in the spirit of the philosophy of Maimonides.
- 325 Uziel 1953, 183–188.
- 326 Ibid., 309.
- 327 Ibid.
- 328 Ibid., 12–13.
- 329 This historical-philosophical description is the object of the entire third part of *The Thought of Uziel* (94–189), which starts with a description of man as a creature of faith, and a description of Abraham as the founder of faith and father of the

- nation. It continues with a description of the life of Abraham and of his descendants until they form a nation; the book ends with the notions of *Tikkun Olam* and *Malkhut Shaddai*.
- 330 Schweid 1999, 171–173.
- 331 Uziel 1953, 169.
- 332 Ibid., 170.
- 333 Ibid., 97.
- 334 For example, in relation to the purpose of man’s life, Rabbi Uziel writes that a person’s certificate of humanity is to know that he can achieve and copy the way of the creator. In Uziel 1953, vol. 2, 140.
- 335 For a comprehensive description of Rabbi Yehuda Halevi’s views in relation to the gift of prophecy with which Am Yisrael was endowed, and its strong link with Eretz Yisrael, see Sirat 1975, 147–164.
- 336 Guttman 1963, 119.
- 337 Schwartz 1997, 56–62.
- 338 Guttman 1963, 120.
- 339 Wolfson 1978, 280; Schweid 1999, 228–229.
- 340 For an exhaustive description of Maimonides’s theory of prophecy, see Wolfson 1978, 275–282.
- 341 Guttman 1963, 159–164.
- 342 Levinger 1990, 88–89.
- 343 Uziel 1953, vol. 1, 100.
- 344 Genesis 18–19. Uziel 1953, vol. 1, 97.
- 345 Exodus 19:5–6.
- 346 Uziel 1953, vol. 1, 142.
- 347 Idem 1939, 1155.
- 348 Ibid.
- 349 Uziel 1953, vol. 2, 120. Nationalism and terms such as “the soul of the nation” are based on certain individuals. Nationalism is not an abstract entity made up of similar cells, but by a group of people expressing themselves in an original way through a unique type of literature and by following a certain way of life, while emotions are shared by all men. In other words, literary creation and the way of life are what determine and define the nation, rather than the organic aspects or even emotions, which are common to mankind as a whole.
- 350 Uziel 1939, 1157.
- 351 Idem 1953, vol. 1, 142.
- 352 Ibid., 94.
- 353 As Dov Schwartz indicates, Rabbi Uziel viewed the State of Israel as a stage in the messianic process; see Schwartz 1997, 225. However, Rabbi Uziel’s messianic vision is totally different from that of Rabbi Kook and his followers. Therefore, when discussing the link between Zionism and messianism, their views of Zionism should not appear together.
- 354 On the characteristics of this discourse, see Sagi 2014.
- 355 See Weiler 1988, ch. 1. Weiler concluded that the basis for the tension between religion and state in Israel lies in the contrast between theocracy and democracy, and his book is devoted to

- the demonstration of this thesis. See also de Spinoza 1905, ch. 17.
- 356 This issue is discussed at length in my book, *The Open Canon: On the Meaning of Halakhic Discourse* (London: Continuum, 2007).
- 357 de Spinoza 1905, 220.
- 358 Gavison 1996, 192.
- 359 On this issue, see Sagi 2007, 167–209. See also idem 2012.
- 360 Engel 1928, 78.
- 361 See Hazzan 1876, #16, 56b; #17, 64b–65b.
- 362 On Hazzan, see Sagi 1998, 317–334.
- 363 Hazzan 1876, #16, 56b.
- 364 Ibid., #17, 65a.
- 365 Ibid., #17, 64b.
- 366 For an extensive discussion of this issue, see Sagi 1998.
- 367 For a subtle and fascinating analysis of this question, see Hevlin 2001.
- 368 See Charmé 2000. For further discussion, see Sagi 2006, 208–245.
- 369 On various concepts of multiculturalism, see Kymlicka 1995, 1–26; Gutmann 1993. On the application of the “multiculturalism” category in Israel, see Mautner 2011, 181–222.
- 370 See Oz-Salzberger 2014.
- 371 Waldron 1993, 376.
- 372 Ibid., 379.
- 373 For a detailed discussion on the halakhic meaning of conversion, see Sagi and Zohar 2007.
- 374 Ibid., 219–264.
- 375 Ibid., 177–218.
- 376 On this distinction and its importance in the Israeli discourse, see Sagi 2009.
- 377 See Scharffs and Disparte 2010; Lerner 2014; Merin 2005.
- 378 For the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel, see <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/declaration%20of%20establishment%20of%20state%20of%20israel.aspx>, accessed December 5, 2014.
- 379 For the Law of Labor Hours and Rest (1951), see (in Hebrew) <http://www.moit.gov.il/NR/exeres/DB32620A-EAD8-4B73-BC90-A5AEE373AEEF.htm>, accessed December 5, 2014.
- 380 The Day of Remembrance for the Fallen Soldiers of Israel and Victims of Terrorism (this day of course does not relate to Jews only) and the Holocaust Memorial Day.
- 381 For the “Tikva” lyrics, see https://www.knesset.gov.il/holidays/eng/hatikva_eng.htm, accessed August 25, 2015.
- 382 Arabic is an official language as well.
- 383 Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty, and Basic Law: Freedom of Occupation. Both laws mention “the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state.”
- 384 A Jew is defined as a son or daughter to a Jewish mother or a person who converted to Judaism and is not a member of another religion.

- 385 Basic Law: The Knesset, paragraph 7A, see http://www.knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/basic2_eng.htm, accessed December 5, 2014.
- 386 The Foundations of Jurisprudence Law 1980, para. 1, see (in Hebrew) https://he.wikisource.org/wiki/%D7%97%D7%95%D7%A7_%D7%99%D7%A1%D7%95%D7%93%D7%95%D7%AA_%D7%94%D7%9E%D7%A9%D7%A4%D7%98, accessed December 5, 2014.
- 387 Merin 2005.
- 388 HCJ 3872/93 Meatrael v. The Prime Minister, IsrSC 47(5) 485.
- 389 HCJ 4676/94 Meatrael v. The Knesset, IsrSC 50(5).
- 390 HCJ 5016/96 Lior Horev v. The Minister of Transportation IsrSC 51 (4) 1 [1997].
- 391 Ibid., 15
- 392 Zilbershatz 1998.
- 393 Medzini 2010.
- 394 Barak-Erez 2010.
- 395 HCJ 10296/02 Secondary School Teachers Organization v. Minister of Education IsrSC. 59(3) 224 [2005].
- 396 HCJ 4805/07 The Ctr. for Jewish Pluralism – The Movement for Progressive Judaism in Isr. v. Ministry of Educ. (unreported).
- 397 Scoop and Kashti 2014.
- 398 Ettinger 2013.
- 399 Sharon 2014.
- 400 Kremnitzer 2014.
- 401 Kremnitzer and Krebs 2011.
- 402 Cinema Bill [amendment Loyalty Oath], 2010. See also Kremnitzer and Krebs 2011, 8–10.
- 403 Kremnitzer and Konfino 2009.
- 404 Schocken 2012.
- 405 Kremnitzer and Fuchs 2011.
- 406 For one of the versions of the bill, see [http://index.justice.gov.il/StateIdentity/InformationInEnglish/Documents/Basic%20Law%20110911%20\(1\).pdf](http://index.justice.gov.il/StateIdentity/InformationInEnglish/Documents/Basic%20Law%20110911%20(1).pdf), accessed December 5, 2014.
- 407 Through the addition of the word “clear,” to qualify as a legal source, the authors seek to restrict the courts’ ability to find a solution in the legal system itself before turning to the Jewish heritage.
- 408 The Democracy Index of 2013 shows that between 2009 and 2013 the total rate of respondents who thought that Jews are entitled for more rights than non-Jews citizens rose from 35% to 48%. See Hermann et al. 2013.
- 409 Schechter 2014.
- 410 Sterman 2014.
- 411 Arad 2014.
- 412 Hermann et al. 2014.
- 413 Ibid.
- 414 Gitelman 2001, 24.
- 415 Remennick 2015.
- 416 Ben-Rafael et al. 2006; Remennick 2007.

- 417 The mass arrival of ex-Soviet Olim in the 1990s compelled the government to limit its aid to a lump sum of money (the absorption basket) and some economic benefits for the initial 5 years (e.g., free Hebrew class, reduced taxes and mortgage rates). Smaller waves of Olim (or those deemed more dependent, like Ethiopian Jews) usually received a comprehensive institutional aid package including free/subsidized housing, aid in job placement, etc.
- 418 Leshem 2009; Gorodzeisky and Semyonov 2011.
- 419 Remennick 2007, 32.
- 420 Altshuler 1987; Gitelman 2001, 175.
- 421 Gitelman 2001, 95.
- 422 Cooper 2003.
- 423 Remennick and Prashizky 2012.
- 424 Tolts 2006.
- 425 Prashizky and Remennick 2015.
- 426 Raijman and Pinsky 2011; Ben-Rafael et al. 2006, 315.
- 427 Kravel-Tovi 2012.
- 428 Fialkova and Yelenevskaya 2007, 103. This book is a unique source on the everyday experiences, discourses and folklore of Russian Israelis.
- 429 Ben-Rafael et al. 2006, 21; Isurin 2011.
- 430 Remennick 2007, 19.
- 431 Fialkova and Yelenevskaya 2007, 89.
- 432 Ben-Rafael et al. 2006, 132; Leshem 2009, 72; Elias 2011.
- 433 Remennick 2007, 109; Elias 2011.
- 434 Ben-David and Lavee 1994.
- 435 Katz and Lowenstein 1999.
- 436 Remennick 2003.
- 437 Khvorostianov and Remennick 2015.
- 438 Remennick 2001.
- 439 Idem 2005; Prashizky and Remennick 2014.
- 440 Remennick 2012.
- 441 Sever 1997.
- 442 Eisikovits 2008.
- 443 Azarya and Kimmerling 1998.
- 444 Eisikovits 2006.
- 445 Some immigrant students receive tuition aid (if they start college soon upon arrival) but many others do not. Student loans are not common in Israel. Discharged soldiers can finance the initial 1–2 years of their degree with the army grant; other Olim volunteer for community service and have a 50% tuition cut (*Perah* program). Yet, most Russian students struggle financially through college, also because of high housing costs (few dorms are available in Israel).
- 446 STEM – science, technology, engineering, mathematics; ICT – information and communication technologies.
- 447 Admittedly, young professionals of Ethiopian origin have an even harder time landing white-collar jobs. I have a lot of anecdotal evidence but no published research to endorse this

- sad assertion. Young immigrants of either origin suffer from the same predicament of being visibly or audibly *others*.
- 448 Remennick 2013.
- 449 Fialkova and Yelenevskaya 2007, 37.
- 450 Remennick 2013.
- 451 Remennick and Prashizky 2012.
- 452 Prashizky and Remennick 2014.
- 453 Khanin 2011.
- 454 Gorodzeisky and Semyonov 2012.
- 455 Remennick 2004.
- 456 Lomsky-Feder and Leibovitz 2010.
- 457 Eisikovits 2014.
- 458 Fialkova and Yelenevskaya 2007, 135.
- 459 Gitelman 2001, Slezkine 2004.
- 460 Niznik 2011. An interesting representation of bi-cultural identity of this group is found in the activities of the *Fishka* social club in Tel-Aviv (www.fishka.org.il).
- 461 See Oudenhoven and Ward 2013.
- 462 Richmond 1988, 42.
- 463 Durham 1989, 139.
- 464 See Leman 1998.
- 465 Stephan and Stephan 2000, 25.
- 466 Ibid., 27.
- 467 Ibid.
- 468 See Olzak 2006.
- 469 Richmond 1988, 42.
- 470 See Brass 1985, 1991; Barany 1998.
- 471 Brass 1985, 27.
- 472 See Smith 2001.
- 473 Ibid., 124–125.
- 474 See Goldscheider 1992.
- 475 See Brass 1985; Nagel 1982; Nielsen 1985.
- 476 For a detailed discussion of these issues, see Al-Haj 2004.
- 477 Friedlander and Goldscheider 1979, 9; Levine 1983, 284; Avineri 1981.
- 478 Weingrod 1979, 55.
- 479 See Smootha 1978; Eisenstadt 1984; Weingrod 2006; Lewin-Epstein and Semyonov 1986; Schmelz et al. 1991; Ben-Rafael and Sharot 1991; Goldscheider 1992; Shenhav 2006.
- 480 See Smootha 1990.
- 481 This percentage relates to the Palestinian citizens within the pre-1967 borders; therefore it excludes Palestinians in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, which were occupied in 1967.
- 482 See Al-Haj 2004.
- 483 These percentages were calculated according to the official numbers of the *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2012*, 88, 235.
- 484 Al-Haj and Leshem 2000.
- 485 The fieldwork of the 1999 survey was conducted by the Geocartography Institutes headed by Professor Degani.

- 486 The maximal sampling error was $\pm 4.4\%$. The fieldwork of both surveys in 2010 was conducted by the Dahaf Institute headed by Dr. Mina Zemach.
- 487 See also Lustick 1999; Shumsky 2001.
- 488 See Al-Haj 2004.
- 489 For a detailed description of variables, see [Table A](#) (Appendix).
- 490 See Lustick 1999; Al-Haj and Leshem 2000; Sheleg 2004.
- 491 See Galili and Bronfman 2013.
- 492 See Al-Haj 2004.
- 493 See also Brass 1985.
- 494 See Smititski 1992, 62–63 (with thanks to Avraham Ziv Schwartz who drew my attention to this fascinating book).
- 495 The term comes from Chaim Nachman Bialik's poem, *Levadi* (1902): "Wind blew, light drew them all [...] scattered to the four winds of heaven; they are gone, and I am alone."
- 496 HaKohen 1893.
- 497 The concept *tachlit* (literally, 'purpose'; in Yiddish, *tachles*) means managing well in life, was commonly used by Eastern European Jews as the antithesis of devoting all one's time to Talmud studies and its interpreters who could not help support their families. See for example Kaufman 1956.
- 498 From Bialik's poem *Ha-matmid*.
- 499 On the concept of the scholar-society as characteristic of Haredi society, see Friedman 1991.
- 500 Berezovsky 1983. Rabbi Berezovsky (1911–2000) founded the Beit Avraham yeshiva in 1941 and rebuilt the shattered Slonim *hassidut* in Israel.
- 501 The Peel Commission recommended the partition of Eretz Yisrael (Palestine) and the establishing of a Jewish state.
- 502 The *Yevseksiya* was the Jewish Department of the Communist party in Soviet Russia, and it worked to close down Jewish educational institutions. Rabbi Elchanan's speech at the council of the *Gdolei Hatorah*, was later published in numerous forums. See Wassermann [1901] 2001, 159–161, and see also Friedman 1999. Rabbi Wassermann was murdered by the Nazis in 1941.
- 503 The article was published beneath an account of the funeral of Rabbi Yitzhak Izik Sher, head of the Slobodka yeshiva in Bnei Brak.
- 504 Neturei Karta is an extreme religious group that in the 1930s split from Agudat Israel, against the backdrop of the latter's increasing cooperation with the Zionist establishment.
- 505 The network of Beit Yaakov schools was founded after the First World War by Sarah Schenirer (1883–1935) as part of the Agudat Israel movement and catered to girls from Haredi homes. The network includes primary schools and teaching seminaries. See Weissman 1977 and 1994; and also Friedman 1988.
- 506 Until the 1950s, there were only a very few kollelim – (yeshivot for married students – known as *avrechim*) – chiefly due to budgetary problems. One of the better-known ones was Kollel Prushim in Kovna, founded with a bequest from Ovadiah Lachman from Berlin; see Etkes 1984, 285–295. One of the first

kollelim in Eretz Yisrael, which served as the prototype for later ones, was Kollel Chazon Ish, in Bnei Brak, founded in 1942. In the early 1930s, a higher beit midrash for Torah – Heichal HaTalmud – had been founded in Tel Aviv; however, it did not flourish, and the site, on Lilienblum Street, remained as a small yeshiva. See the article “On Heichal HaTalmud, in Honor of its 25th Anniversary,” 1957.

507 Schenfeld came to Israel in the mid-1930s. He joined a kibbutz of Aguda youth in Kfar Saba and was sent on its behalf to the Third Convention of Agudat Israel. In a speech there he encouraged group settlement of Aguda youth. He was one of the founders of Tzeirei Agudat Israel in 1943, and saw its mission as establishing a true Aguda kibbutz. He eventually fell out with his friends and settled in Petach Tikva. In 1965, he moved to Bnei Brak. In the 1940s, he became close to Rabbi Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz (Chazon Ish), and in the many articles he published, chiefly in *Digleinu*, set out his positions and ideas. His articles strongly influenced young Haredi men and women, who saw them as faithful reflections of Aguda ideology.

508 Schenfeld 1945.

509 Idem 1951.

510 Idem 1954.

511 The concept of a “total institution” is a key concept in modern sociology.

512 See Friedman 1991.

513 According to the midrash, Issachar dedicated his life to studying Torah and Zebulun agreed to support him and to share jointly with him, in the world to come, the compensation for performing the mitzvah. See Bereshit Rabba 99:9 (Albeck edition, 1281), and Tanchuma, Va-yechi 11; Rashi, Le-Bereshit 33. The principal of a Beit Yaakov seminar told me in an interview in 1988 about a meeting he had recently held, concerning a girl student who wanted to marry a yeshiva student who planned to continue his studies at a kollel; her parents requested the meeting, at which their daughter asked them: “Why do you want to deprive me of my compensation in the world to come for the mitzvah of learning Torah?”

514 See particularly Bar-Lev 1977.

515 See footnote 13 above.

516 Data on the increase in the numbers of Agudat Israel schools (and the “fourth stream”) from 1949 to 1953

Year	Number of students	% of increase	% of all people in the state
1949	10,000	100%	1.0%
1950	12,500	25%	1.25%
1951	16,250	65%	1.625%
1952	21,250	112.5%	2.125%
1953	28,750	187.5%	2.875%

Source: Agudat Israel 1954, 49–50.

517 Schenfeld 1954.

518 Berezovsky 1983.

519 Much has been written about the exemption from military service (or more accurately, deferment of service) of yeshiva students. See a critical summary in Cohen 1993, 50–52, and on the historical background, see Friedman 1993.

520 On the changing age of marriage in ultra-Orthodox society, see Shelhav and Friedman 1985, 50–52. According to their statistics, in 1952 the average of marriage age for Haredi men was 27.5, while in 1982, it was 21.5 for men, and 19.9 for women

- (Shelhav and Friedman 1985, 50, Table 1). An updated publication by Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics showed that in 2000, the average age of marriage for Haredi men was 21.3, and 19.9 for women. In certain Haredi groups, the average age of marriage is lower: for men 19.5, and for women 18.5. See Gurevich and Cohen-Castro 2004.
- 521 Gurevich and Cohen-Castro 2004, 39. According to this publication, the fertility rates of Haredi women (predicted for a woman throughout her lifetime) was 7.7 in 2001, while the general fertility rate in the Jewish population at that time was 2.6. In certain Haredi populations, the fertility rate was higher.
- 522 See Gurevich and Cohen-Castro 2004, 51. The average per capita income in Haredi areas in 1995 was almost a quarter of the national average. The average income per capita in Haredi areas in Jerusalem is even lower than in Bnei Brak – NIS 467 per capita as compared with NIS 633 per capita.
- 523 That was the principal reason why Agudat Israel joined the government coalition following the political turnabout in 1977.
- 524 See Gurevich and Cohen-Castro 2004, 33 and also 75–82. In the authors' opinion, the size of the Haredi population at the end of 2002 was "close to 550,000 people, plus/minus 100,000."
- 525 See Lupo 2003. And for an anthropological discussion on the same theme, see Hakak 2004.
- 526 Published in 2002. Previously published in Hebrew in 2000 as *Eretz Shessuah*.
- 527 Survey conducted by the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research on a representative sample of Israeli Jews (N. 1224) in September 1996.
- 528 Surveys conducted by Arian and Keissar-Sugarmen in 2009. See Arian and Keissar-Sugarmen 2009, 10 and 26.
- 529 This question was not asked in 1999.
- 530 Survey conducted by the Steinmetz Institute of Peace Research on a representative sample of Israeli Jews in the summer of 2014 (N. 505).
- 531 Based on the Tami Steinmetz survey of 1996 and also on an article by Almog and Paz from 2011.
- 532 See, for instance, Sheleg's analysis on the New Religious published in 2000, and my own analysis in *The Divided People*, published in 2002.
- 533 Based on the same, 1996, Tami Steinmetz survey.
- 534 See, for instance, the survey by Arian and Keissar-Sugarmen 2009, 14.
- 535 Based on the same, 1996, survey by the Tami Steinmetz Peace Research Center, in which, at my request, some questions on Israeli and Jewish identity were added.
- 536 Survey conducted by the Tami Steinmetz Peace Research Center in the summer of 2014. In this survey, once again, at my request, a question on Jewish identity was added.
- 537 See Almog and Paz 2011.
- 538 See *ibid*.
- 539 The survey was conducted by the religious organization Ne'emanei Torah Ve'avodah, and its results were published on

- its website.
- 540 See Almog and Paz 2011.
- 541 See Sheleg 2000; Almog and Paz 2011.
- 542 On both the latter categories, see Almog and Paz 2011.
- 543 See the above mentioned 2014 survey of the Tami Steinmetz Peace Research Center.
- 544 See Almog and Paz 2011.
- 545 See Schlesinger 2014.
- 546 The review of the various organizations is based on Sheleg's analyses of 2000 and 2010, on Arian's and Keissar-Sugarmen's analysis of 2009, and on information supplied by the organizations themselves on their respective websites.
- 547 See Schlesinger 2014.
- 548 A region of imperial Russia to which permanent residency by Jews was restricted. It included much of present-day Lithuania, Belarus, Poland, Moldova, Ukraine, and parts of western Russia.
- 549 Slezkine 2004, 367.
- 550 Mizrahi Jews: Jews hailing from Arab and Moslem lands. The Israel Central Bureau of Statistics does not use the category of "Mizrahi" but rather "Jews born in Asia or Africa" or, for the second generation, "Jews whose fathers were born in Asia or Africa."
- 551 Originally referring to Jewish residents of German lands (*Ashkenaz*), many of whom migrated to Eastern Europe in the late Middle Ages and formed there the single largest concentration of Jews world-wide. The Israel Central Bureau of Statistics does not use the category "Ashkenazi" but rather "Jews born in Europe or America" or, for the second generation, "Jews whose fathers were born in Europe or America."
- 552 Swirski, Konor-Attias, and Rapoport 2015.
- 553 Hebrew for the 'settlement'; the term used to refer to the Zionist community in Palestine up to 1948.
- 554 Though some of them, most prominently the Rothschilds, made generous contributions.
- 555 Bichler and Nitzan 2001, 76.
- 556 Ehrlich 1993.
- 557 It would take 35 years for the first Mizrahi chief of staff to be appointed, in 1983. Palestinian Israelis, with the exception of the Druze minority and a small number of volunteers, do not serve in the IDF.
- 558 Metzger and Kaplan 1990, 46, 115.
- 559 Polanyi 1957, 140.
- 560 Beckert uses the term to explain the rise of a particular manifestation of capitalism, connecting slavery, the cultivation of cotton and the industrial revolution, and involving expropriation of indigenous peoples, imperial expansion, and the assertion of sovereignty over people and land by entrepreneurs. Beckert 2014, xv.
- 561 Alcalay 1993, 20, 24.
- 562 Kazaz 1991, 319, Appendix A.
- 563 Professor Zimmermann referred to the contrast between

- German Jews and Polish and Russian Jews.
- 564 Hacoen 1994, 41–42.
- 565 Ibid., 212.
- 566 In some of the non-Arab Muslim countries that were not directly involved in the Palestinian conflict, such as Iran and Turkey, Jewish communities remained.
- 567 Tsur 1992, 117.
- 568 Meir 1993, 47.
- 569 Carmi and Rosenfeld. 1979.
- 570 A term I introduced in 1978, and now universally used, to refer to an ethno-class formed under the circumstances of life shared by most Jews who had come from Arab lands.
- 571 They were referred to as “families with many children,” at that time mainly Mizrahim and Arabs. But Arabs were not eligible for the full benefit until the 1990s, under the Rabin government.
- 572 Sharon 1988, 207.
- 573 Algarebly 1975.
- 574 Lustick 1980, chapter 5.
- 575 Rosenhek 1995, 185.
- 576 Syrquin 1989; Shalev 1992, 238.
- 577 Central Bureau of Statistics 1976, table 12/17.
- 578 Carmi and Rosenfeld 1979.
- 579 Yustman 2001, 568.
- 580 Senor and Singer 2009.
- 581 Ganon 2014.
- 582 Wealth-X and UBS, *World Ultra Wealth Report 2013*.
- 583 Swirski, Konor-Attias, and Ophir 2014.
- 584 The background to the Wadi Salib rioting is discussed in Yfaat Weiss’s monograph (2007). Erik Cohen wrote an early analysis of the Israeli Black Panthers (1972). The issues surrounding the “missing Yemenite children” is reviewed in Motti Inbari’s study of Uzi Meshulam and his followers (2001).
- 585 This is a subjective conclusion, mainly based upon media reports during the past several decades. Ethnic tensions tend to rise during election campaigns – the 1981 Knesset elections are the best example – but in recent years these too have been relatively muted.
- 586 This is, more or less, the present-day anthropological approach to “ethnicity.” See, among many others, Barth 1969, Cohen 1974, Eriksen 1993, and most recently Comaroff and Comaroff 2009.
- 587 “Russians” are a separate ethnic category, and they are positioned outside of the “ethnic problem” which is reserved for Ashkenazim and Mizrahim. The reasons for this probably are historical – the Russian immigration arrived long after the 1950s–1960s Ashkenazi-Mizrahi divide, and they have a kind of “neutral” position not associated with conflict or discrimination. “Russian” is a general category mainly referring to Russian-speaking immigrants, and it includes those whose origins are in Ukraine, Armenia and other regions of the former USSR. In addition, Ethiopian Jews are another separate category, not included within the Ashkenazi-Mizrahi divide. There are about

- 130,000 Ethiopian Jews in Israel, and they continue to suffer from racial discrimination.
- 588 See, among many others, Horowitz and Lissak 1989; Shafir and Peled 2002; Shenhav 2006; Eisenstadt 1954.
- 589 This early period is described in detail in Yaar and Shavit 2001.
- 590 Weingrod (1979) examines the emergence of the “Ashkenazi” category and the early formulation of a “Mizrahi” ethnic category. Shohat (1999) reviews the adoption of the “Mizrahi” terminology. For a certain time “Sephardi” and “Mizrahi” were used interchangeably. “Mizrahi” was finally adopted by the media as an ethnic label, while “Sephardi” primarily refers to religious traditions and state religious bureaucracies.
- 591 See Hacoen 1994 for a historical review, and ethnographies by Shokeid 1971, Willner 1968, and Weingrod 1966.
- 592 The original work was done by Giora Hanoch (1961), and the ethnic inequality “gaps” have been confirmed in a long list of continuing studies.
- 593 The rapid upward mobility of European-origin immigrants is described by Yinon Cohen and Yitzhak Haberfeld: “The social, economic and cultural assimilation of Western immigrants in Israeli society was fast and complete. By 1975 their schooling, occupations and earnings were no different from those of native-born Israelis or of veteran immigrants who arrived in Israel during the pre-state period.” Cohen and Haberfeld 1998, 508.
- 594 For an overview of growing income disparities see Shafir and Peled 2002, especially chapters 9 and 11.
- 595 The problematic character of “ethnic lists” are discussed in Herzog 1985.
- 596 Not surprisingly, educational levels varied considerably between the larger cities and the outlying small towns in the North and South. Schools in middle-class and upper middle-class neighborhoods generally had greater resources than schools in lower-income neighborhoods. Second-generation Ashkenazim typically studied in academic-oriented secondary schools, while many second-generation Mizrahim were tracked into vocational schools.
- 597 This table refers only to salaried workers, and the income differences would be greater if self-employed persons (such as lawyers, medical specialists, business men and women, and so forth) were included.
- 598 See, among many studies, Katz 1995, Lemann 1999, and Reardon 2011. For a contrary view, see Brown and Lauder 2010.
- 599 Israeli law prohibits discrimination against ethnic and racial groups. Although it is often difficult to prove acts of discrimination, cases are prosecuted by the state. Dahan estimates that ethnic discrimination may account for a small fraction of income inequality.
- 600 Haberfeld and Cohen 2007, 663.
- 601 Friedlander 2002, 143. This study also shows the strong positive effect of educational attainment across generations: “students with more highly educated parents have more than 75% greater

- odds of achievement” irrespective of their ethnic origin. Ibid., 145.
- 602 Dahan 2013.
- 603 “Mixed marriage” families compose a significant and growing category, and research indicates that their level of education and income is relatively high. Dahan explains that there are roughly the same proportion of males and females from both ethnic groups and that they therefore equalize each other.
- 604 Dahan 2013, 15.
- 605 See, among many others, Rycroft 2013, Shapiro and Oliver 1995.
- 606 Yaish 2001, 414.
- 607 Ibid., 418.
- 608 There are other groups in the lowest ranks of the socioeconomic system – particularly Palestinian workers from the West Bank, and migrant workers from Asian, African and European countries. Exploited and marginalized by both the state and their employers, members of both groups compete for unskilled low paying positions.
- 609 Yaish 2001, 419.
- 610 Okun 2001; Okun and Khait-Marely 2008.
- 611 Okun 2001, 63.
- 612 Ibid., 52.
- 613 Ibid., 63.
- 614 My thanks to Judah Matras for pointing out the importance of inter-ethnic marriages as a conduit for personal contacts between members of different ethnic groups.
- 615 Cohen 1972.
- 616 Goldberg 1978.
- 617 Levy 1997.
- 618 During the past 30 years the Holocaust became a major Israeli cultural-political focus. Secondary school students are organized into trips to Auschwitz, and “heritage tours” to Central and Eastern Europe became popular. See, in particular, Feldman 2010 on student trips to Nazi death camps.
- 619 There is little doubt that Israeli “public culture” focuses overwhelmingly upon Western and global cultural features. In fact, the clear supremacy of Euro-American cultural trends helps to explain the acceptance of “cultural pluralism” as exemplified by Mimouna and other related activities. With “Western culture” firmly established, the Ashkenazi-origin political-cultural elites had little reason to contest against Mizrahi cultural expressions.
- 620 There is a wide-ranging literature on “identity politics,” including a critique of gender-based and ethnic identifications. See, for examples, Calhoun 1994 and Alcoff et al. 2005.
- 621 Herzog 1985.
- 622 Understanding Shas’s success has been a topic of widespread interest, leading to a series of different interpretations. Yoav Peled argues that “the enigma of Shas” is essentially a class phenomenon, and that lower-class Mizrahi voters turned to Shas as a result of the economic uncertainties brought about by globalization; Aaron Willis takes the position that Shas is a kind

of “revitalization movement,” akin to “nativistic movements” that flame up to re-energize ethnic glories; Ella Shohat finds the obvious root cause in decades of ethnic prejudice that finally produced a reaction; Neri Horowitz traces Shas’s roots back to Sephardi yeshivot in the 1920s and 1930s; and Menachem Friedman, and to a lesser extent Shlomo Fisher and Zvi Beckerman, locate Shas’s success in an ultra-Orthodox leadership that is able to co-exist together with Mizrahi traditionalism.

- 623 Willis 1995; Leon 2010.
- 624 Shas has had some success in attracting support from secular Mizrahi activists. The election slogan “Mizrahim support Mizrahim” was advanced in the 2015 Knesset elections, and despite the fact that Shas is an ultra-Orthodox party some secular or “traditional” Mizrahim supported it.
- 625 Racist and “anti-state” political parties have been banned by law from taking part in national elections. Thus in the 1970s an Israeli Palestinian Party (*El-Ard*) was kept off of the ballot, and in the 1990s the *Kach* Party was also disqualified.
- 626 The continuing Israel-Palestine conflict may have contributed to the lessening of ethnic tensions among Israeli Jews. The “Jewish character” of the Israeli state and society has been much emphasized in recent years, and recurrent war and terror attacks is likely to increase solidarity among Israeli Jews.
- 627 The loss of Russian-origin electoral support was demonstrated in the 2015 Knesset elections in which Yisrael Beiteinu’s Knesset membership was cut in half. Some party leaders were embroiled in allegations of financial misconduct, and this also diminished their popularity.
- 628 Hansen 1938.
- 629 Gans 1979.
- 630 Leon 2010.
- 631 Regev 1996.
- 632 Oppenheimer 2014.
- 633 Following Al-Haj 2004, Peres and Ben-Rafael 2006, Lerner 2011 and others, we consider in this article the large-scale Russian-speaking immigration during the 1990s as a distinct group.
- 634 Over the years, there have been voices challenging this orientation, calling to draw Israel closer to the Middle East and cultivate a close affinity with its Arab neighbors (e.g., the Canaanite intellectual circle, the *Ha ‘Ivrim Ha’Zeirim* movement, led by poet Yonatan Ratosh, and the idea led by journalist and politician Uri Avnery of the “Semitic Space”). It is worth mentioning that while these endeavors were led mostly by Ashkenazi Israelis, more recently, several Mizrahi intellectuals, like authors Shimon Balass and Sammi Michael have argued that Israel would be better off by being geopolitically integrated into the countries of the Middle East.
- 635 See Hermann and Yuchtman-Yaar 2013.
- 636 The questions used to examine Israelis’ preferences for regional integration were formulated as follows: “In each of the following spheres – the political, the economic, and the cultural – are you

- interested in having Israel integrated into the Middle East or into Europe-America?"
- 637 Several recent TV programs stressed this division, in addition to occasional interviews with cultural creators.
- 638 See Dominguez 1989; Mautner, Sagi, and Shamir 1998; Yatziv 1999; Kimmerling 2001; Shafir and Peled 2002; Yaar and Shavit 2003a, 2003b; Dowty 2004; Kemp et al. 2004; Peres and Ben-Rafael 2005; Filc 2006; Ben-Porat et al. 2008; Ben-Porat and Turner 2011.
- 639 See Ben-Ari and Bilu 1997; Regev 2000; Aharon-Gutman 2008; Aharon 2010; Fischer 2013; Lerner 2011; Sasson-Levy, Ben-Porat, and Shavit 2013; Shoshana 2013. It should be noted that at least one of these cultural options which claim to be a cultural alternative – Mediterraneanism (*Yam-Tikhoniut*) – does not present itself as originating in marginal point of departure; see Nocke 2010; Hochberg 2011.
- 640 For a somewhat different assessment of the inter-ethnic cleavage within Israeli-Jewish society, see Yuchtman-Yaar 2005.
- 641 These two terms refer to several musical styles that share non-Western sources of influence, mainly from Mediterranean and Middle Eastern musical cultures. For definitions and analysis of this genre, see Halper 1989; Nocke 2006, 56–77; Regev and Seroussi 2004, 191–235.
- 642 These characteristics, and others that are close to them, can be easily judged as an expression of patronizing (as in other well-known ethnic images such as “Gentleman Jim”). It should be noted that there were Mizrahi respondents who used such characteristics in relation to Eastern culture.
- 643 This is a collective name for Jews who came from Middle Eastern and Mediterranean countries. Originally it referred to descendants of Middle-Ages prosperous Spanish Jewry, but along the years became a popular name given by Ashkenazi Jews to Jews who are not Ashkenazi in origin.
- 644 Kimmerling 2001.
- 645 Al-Haj and Ben-Eliezer 2006.
- 646 Shenhav argues that Jews from Islamic countries faced the problem of trying to enter Israeli Ashkenazi-ruled social collectivity or remain loyal to their cultural identity as Arab-Jews; see Shenhav 2003. Yuchtman-Yaar 2005.
- 647 Peres 1976.
- 648 Yaar and Shavit 2003a
- 649 Ibid.
- 650 Some evidence for the validity of this argument is provided by the findings of the present study, as can be seen from the chapter “Findings from the open-ended questions,” above.
- 651 Semyonov, Raijman, and Gorodzeisky 2006.
- 652 Pettigrew 1998; Fetzer 2000.
- 653 Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Raijman 2010.
- 654 Hoskin 1992; Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Raijman 2010.
- 655 Central Bureau of Statistics 2013, Table 2.8, 108.
- 656 See, e.g., Semyonov and Gorodzeisky 2012.

- 657 To these groups arriving since the 1990s we need to add a recent flow of African asylum-seekers crossing the Egyptian border since 2006.
- 658 See, e.g., Cohen 2005; Raijman and Pinsky 2013.
- 659 Raijman and Kemp 2002.
- 660 Yacoby 2010.
- 661 Kemp and Raijman 2008.
- 662 Idem 2014.
- 663 Ibid. Official recruitment of foreign workers also opened a “backdoor” to the inflow of undocumented migrants arriving mainly from Eastern Europe, South Asia, Africa and South America, who became employed primarily in the services sector. By the end of 2012, 95,000 undocumented foreign workers (who entered as tourists and remained in the country) and 14,000 labor migrants overstaying their visa resided in Israel, comprising 46% of the non-citizen population (see Table 1, bottom panel, first column).
- 664 Kemp and Raijman 2014.
- 665 Idem 2008.
- 666 The percentage of non-Jews entering under the Law of Return rose over time since the 1990s. For example, the number of non-Jews among immigrants from the FSU (the largest group arriving since the 1990s) increased from 6% in 1989 to 56.4% in 2006; see Raijman and Pinsky 2013.
- 667 Ibid.
- 668 Shafir and Peled 2002.
- 669 Raijman and Kemp 2010; Raijman 2010.
- 670 Shafir and Peled 2002; Kemp and Raijman 2008.
- 671 Raijman 2010.
- 672 Brubaker 1992; Joppke 1998.
- 673 Freeman 1986, 52.
- 674 Migdal 2006; Shafir and Peled 2002.
- 675 Freeman 1986, 53.
- 676 Migdal 2006; Shafir and Peled 2002; Raijman 2010.
- 677 Shafir and Peled 2002, 8.
- 678 Ibid.
- 679 Raijman 2010.
- 680 Gorodzeisky and Semyonov 2009; Pettigrew 1998; Scheepers, Gijsberts, and Coenders 2002; Raijman, Semyonov, and Schmidt 2003.
- 681 Gorodzeisky 2013.
- 682 Bauböck 2005; Brubaker 1989; Layton-Henry 1990.
- 683 Brubaker 1989.
- 684 Gorodzeisky 2013.
- 685 Raijman 2010.
- 686 Gorodzeisky 2013.
- 687 Bauböck 2005, 765.
- 688 Blumer 1958; Quillian 1995; Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Semyonov, Raijman, and Gorodzeisky 2006.
- 689 Schnapper 1994; Fetzer 2000; Raijman and Semyonov 2004.

- 690 Rajjman 2010.
- 691 In-depth interviews conducted by the authors suggest that in the veteran Jewish population there was a general feeling that non-Jewish olim came to Israel using the “Jewish ticket” they do not deserve, and they are utilizing and abusing state benefits that only Jews are entitled to. Non-Jewish olim are perceived as those who have faked a Jewish identity to obtain their tickets to the Jewish state. Therefore, non-Jews are perceived as having no “legitimate” right to equal rights upon arrival, in contrast to the Jewish olim.
- 692 As demonstrated by the situation of the Arab population in Israel (see Shafir and Peled 2002) and the exclusionary attitudes toward them (see Rajjman 2010).
- 693 Brubaker 1989.
- 694 Gorodzeisky 2013.
- 695 Joppke and Morawska 2003.
- 696 Gosta Esping-Andersen, *Why We Need a New Welfare State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
- 697 CSEC 2011.
- 698 Yonah and Spivak 2012.
- 699 Bareli and Kedar 2011, 101–110.
- 700 Giddens 1999.
- 701 Idem 2003, 5–6.
- 702 Eppler 2010, 25.
- 703 Ibid.
- 704 Yonah 2007.
- 705 Idem 2005, 30–35.
- 706 Sternhell 1995, 33, 68–69.
- 707 Peled 1993.
- 708 Drezon-Tepler 1990, 21.
- 709 See Peled 1993.
- 710 See Hellinger and Londin 2012; Weitmann 2014.
- 711 Swirski 2008; Gutwein 2004.
- 712 Wahl 2011, 33–35; Petras 2012.
- 713 Nozick 1974, ix.
- 714 Jessop 1997, 263.
- 715 Olssen et al. 2004, 136.
- 716 The Ministry of Education 2005, 55.
- 717 Orlozorove 2004.
- 718 Nitzan and Bichler 2009, 9–10, 391.
- 719 See chapter 6 “The Role of Government in Education,” in Friedman 1962, 85–107.
- 720 Foucault 2008.
- 721 Saporta and Yonah 2004.
- 722 Dahan and Yonah 2007.
- 723 Piketty 2014, 46, 348.
- 724 Dagan-Buzaglo and Konor-Atias 2013, 13.
- 725 Yonah and Spivak 2012, 122.
- 726 NIII 2013, 5.
- 727 Ibid., 20.

- 728 Yonah and Spivak 2012, 309.
729 Orlozorove 2013.
730 Yonah and Spivak 2012, 122.
731 Ibid., 247.
732 Central Bureau of Statistics 2013.
733 Detel 2014.
734 Ibid.
735 Yonah and Spivak 2012, 345.
736 Ibid., 346.
737 Shechter.
738 Yonah 2007, 240.
739 Keay 1987.
740 Tzsena et al. 2011.
741 Ibid.
742 CSEC 2011, 32.
743 Yonah and Spivak 2012, 18.
744 Zarchia 2013.
745 Rasmussen 2010, 21.
746 Ibid.
747 Rosenhek and Shalev 2013.
748 Yonah and Spivak 2012, 28.
749 Ram 2008.
750 Barak-Erez 1998.
751 For OECD data on Israel, see <http://www.oecd.org/israel/>;
useful information can be found on the websites of two Israeli
research centers: Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel,
see <http://taubcenter.org.il/>; and Adva Center for Information
on Equality and Social Justice in Israel, see <http://www.adva.org/default.asp?pageid=5>.
- 752 Koren 1994.
753 Schechter 2012.
754 Yonah 2015.
755 Gutwein 2012.
756 Harvey 2005, 64–86.
757 Gal 2004, 24–39.
758 Ben-Porat 1999, 163–170.
759 Asiskovitch 2011.
760 Eden 2012.
761 Peled 2001.
762 Ben-Rafael 2007.
763 Rekhess 2007.
764 Bishara 1996.
765 Gutwein 2004. For an English version, see <http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2006/gutwein160606.html>.
766 Maggor 2015.
767 Gutwein 2013.
768 Benish 2014.
769 Seidman 2010.
770 Gutwein 2001b.

- 771 Idem 1997.
- 772 Idem 2014a.
- 773 Idem 2009b.
- 774 Idem 2009a.
- 775 Perez 2013.
- 776 Gutwein 2003.
- 777 Idem 2001a.
- 778 See chapter 5 “Post-Zionism in the Religious-Zionist Camp,” in Inbari 2012, 81–108.
- 779 Gutwein 2014b.
- 780 Schama 1978, 57.
- 781 Ibid.
- 782 Ibid., 220.
- 783 Morris 2003, 108.
- 784 Schama 1978, 23.
- 785 A deficit of up to 3% is generally considered tolerable.
- 786 See Shayo and Zussman 2011.
- 787 See Cohen, Dehejia, and Romanov 2013.
- 788 Paltiel et al. 2012.
- 789 See, for example, Kimhi 2010.
- 790 For example Hesketh et al. 2011.
- 791 *Digital Journal* (Toronto), May 1, 2013.
- 792 Yinon, Haberfeld, and Kristal 2007.
- 793 Knesset member Zehava Galon of the leftist Meretz party recently introduced a bill that would require all proposals of new legislation in Israel to contain estimates of disparate impact. See *Haaretz* (Tel Aviv), April 17, 2014.
- 794 *Haaretz*, September 12, 2012.
- 795 *Haaretz*, June 23, and July 30, 2013; *The Jerusalem Post*, June 8, 2013.
- 796 Chapter 1, “The American Mosaic,” of Sowell 1981.
- 797 Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), “Projections of population in Israel for 2010–2025, by sex, age and population group”; idem 2008, 2.
- 798 CBS, “Economic Characteristics,” accessed December 19, 2013, http://www1.cbs.gov.il/reader/?MIval=cw_usr_view_SHTML&ID=405.
- 799 CBS 2012. Only people earning at least 100 NIS per month in salary are counted in the analysis below, with the others presumed to be absent from the labor force.
- 800 Percentages computed by author from data found here: CBS, “Income of Individuals (Income survey),” 2010, Table 25.
- 801 Shavit and Yuchtman-Yaar 2001.
- 802 *Haaretz*, June 23, 2013.
- 803 See, for example, “Israel Must End Discrimination against Arab College Graduates,” *Haaretz*, June 15, 2012.
- 804 Plaut and Plaut 2015.
- 805 *Panim Amityot: Pirakim Milayim*. August 22, 2013, Nana 10 website, <http://panim.nana10.co.il/Article/?ArticleID=995592&sid=267>.

- 806 See, for example, Lewin-Epstein and Semyonov 2003, 175–281,
and 1992; Smootha and Peres 1980.
- 807 Shenhav 2012.
- 808 “Hakeshet Hademocratit Hamizrahit” website, accessed
December 10, 2013.
- 809 For example Laor 2013.
- 810 Steiner 2003.
- 811 *Haaretz*, November 19, 2009; John Rosenberg, “Affirmative
Action ... In Israel.” *Discriminations Blog*, September 3, 2002;
Dagan-Buzaglo 2008.
- 812 Shahor 2010; Karsh 2013.
- 813 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, United Nations
General Assembly, New York, December 10, 1948, Art. 14.
- 26 The effects of isolated changes in individual factors while
holding all other factors constant. The “default” or base case
upon which the ethnic increments are computed is for “Foreign-
born Mizrahi Jews.” The figures in the table should be taken as
the best estimate for changes in earnings caused by isolated
changes in each individual explanatory factor (ethnicity, gender,
and so on) while holding all other factors constant. This shows
the isolated effect for Arabs, for example, on earnings while
holding schooling, age, and other factors constant. The
schooling variable is measured differently for the men-only
column (where the effects of achieving degrees are estimated)
than for the women-only column (where the effect of an
additional year of schooling is estimated). The estimates allow
us to see the “clean” effects or impacts of ethnicity and other
factors upon earnings in Israel because these effects are
statistically isolated from the many intermingled effects of the
other variables. Estimates taken from regression analysis
equations that are elaborated and appear in full in Plaut and
Plaut 2015.
- 814 Kandiyoti 1988, 4; Abu-Lughod 1985.
- 815 Dahan Kalev 2012.
- 816 Young activist Naomi Kiss met with Mizrahi juveniles and
together articulated the rebellion that led to the birth of the
Black Panthers Movement in Israel. See Dahan Kalev 1991.
- 817 Dahan Kalev 2009, 2001.
- 818 Seri 1983, 4.
- 819 Bagatz [Supreme Court Decision] 4541/94 Alice Miller vs. The
Minister of Defense 49(4) P.D. 94 (1994).
- 820 Dahan Kalev 2006.
- 821 *Idem* 2001.
- 822 hooks 1984.
- 823 Fair disclosure: I was one of the founders of the Mizrahi
feminist movement, Henriette Dahan Kalev.
- 824 Dahan Kalev 2007.
- 825 *Idem* 2001.
- 826 Hasan 2002.
- 827 Shalhoub Kevorkian 2004, 95.
- 828 Spector 2013.

- 829 Bagatz [Supreme Court Decision] 153/87 Shakdiel vs. The Minister for Religious Affairs 42(2) P.D. 221 (1988).
- 830 In 2011, Israel had 7,836,000 inhabitants – 75% Jews, 21% Palestinians (82% Muslims, 10% Christians, and 8% Druze), and about 4% identified as “without religious affiliation.” Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, 89, 91. Hussniya Jabara was the first (Muslim) Arab woman to become a Knesset member (MK), for Meretz (Zionist-Left), in 1999. Nadia Hilou, ([Zionist] Labor party), elected in 2006, was the second female (Christian) Arab MK. Haneen Zoabi is the third Arab woman elected to the Knesset. Fogiel-Bijaoui 2011, 157–204; for current Knesset members see https://www.knesset.gov.il/mk/eng/mkindex_current_eng.asp?view=3, accessed July 31, 2014.
- 831 The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is an international bill of rights for women. See <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>, accessed 30 July, 2014.
- 832 Pateman 1988; Connell 1990; Walby 2002; Paxton and Hughes 2014.
- 833 Crenshaw 1989; Yuval-Davis 2011.
- 834 Pateman 1988; Paxton and Hughes 2014; see also <http://www.unwomen.org/>, accessed August 13, 2014.
- 835 Merkl 2012.
- 836 Dahan Kalev 2001; Abu-Baker 2012; Abu-Rabia-Queder and Weiner-Levy 2013; Tzameret-Kertcher 2013, 49–57.
- 837 Herzog 2008, 2013; Fogiel-Bijaoui 2011, 157–204.
- 838 OECD, *OECD Health Statistics 2014*, 3.
- 839 Idem, *Education at a Glance 2013*, 40. In 2011–2012, women constituted 59% of the recipients of a first degree, 58.3% of the recipients of a second degree, and 51.9% of the recipients of a third degree, see Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, 466.
- 840 Sherif-Trask 2014.
- 841 OECD, *StatExtracts*.
- 842 Fogiel-Bijaoui 2011, 157–204; Kenig 2014, 183; Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Women in National Parliaments*.
- 843 For the list of current Knesset members, see https://www.knesset.gov.il/mk/eng/mkindex_current_eng.asp?view=3, accessed July 31, 2014.
- 844 Paxton and Hughes 2014, 66–238.
- 845 See Shdulat Haverot HaKnesset, <http://www.knesset.gov.il/lobby/heb/LobbyPage.asp?lobby=222>, accessed August 1, 2014.
- 846 Human Development Index, *Human Development Report*, 159–225.
- 847 Paxton and Hughes 2014.
- 848 UN Statistics Division 2010, 127–141.
- 849 WIZO 2013.
- 850 UN Statistics Division 2010, 127.
- 851 Wilmovski and Tamir 2012, 367–450.
- 852 Benjamin 2011.

- 853 Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, 561–568.
- 854 OECD 2010.
- 855 Idem, *Family Database*, 3.
- 856 Kenig 2014, 183.
- 857 The data are from Hadass Ben Elyahu, of the Center for the Advancement of Women in the Public Sphere (WIPS), at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. I thank her for her diligent help.
- 858 UN Statistics Division 2010, 112–119.
- 859 From 2010 on, the Spousal Covenant Act (*Brit HaZugiut*), made it possible for those “lacking religious affiliation” to have a civil marriage or divorce in Israel. That category comprises mainly the part of FSU immigrants who do not fit the Orthodox Jewish definition of Judaism. However, hardly any of these “new Israelis” make use of this stigmatizing law, and instead use established bypasses (marrying abroad or cohabitation), both of which are recognized by Israeli law. See Fogiel-Bijaoui 2013.
- 860 Abu-Baker 2012; Abu-Rabia-Queder and Weiner-Levy 2013; Fogiel-Bijaoui 2013.
- 861 Benjamin 2011, 395.
- 862 Central Bureau of Statistics, *Media Release, International Women’s Day*, 2014, 4.
- 863 Aharoni 2014, 6.
- 864 Sasson-Levy 2011. I do not mention the issues of military service by Arab citizens, men and women, nor the implications of the fact that only (part of the) Jewish women serve in the IDF. These are important issues I could not address in this paper.
- 865 Ben-Rafael 2008; Abu-Baker 2012; Abu-Rabia-Queder and Weiner-Levy 2013; Fogiel-Bijaoui 2013.
- 866 Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, 571.
- 867 The Bank of Israel 2013, 241.
- 868 Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute 2012, 12.
- 869 Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, 576.
- 870 Idem, *Men and Women in Israel*, 9.
- 871 Idem, *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, 200–201.
- 872 The Working Group on the Status of Palestinian Women Citizens of Israel 2010.
- 873 The Bank of Israel 2013, 241.
- 874 Dahan 2013, 40.
- 875 OECD, *Economic Surveys. Israel*, 1–39; Nagar-Ron 2014.
- 876 Kenig 2014, 184.
- 877 See note 28.
- 878 Herzog and Yahia-Younis 2007.
- 879 Herzog 2008; Herzog and Yahia-Younis 2007; Shamir and Gedalya-Lavie 2015.
- 880 Aharoni 2014.
- 881 Shamir and Gedalya-Lavie 2015.
- 882 Ibid.
- 883 Ibid.
- 884 OECD, *Economic Surveys. Israel*, 1–39.

- 885 Herzog 2013.
- 886 Shamir and Gedalya-Lavie 2015.
- 887 Remennick 2004.
- 888 Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute 2012.
- 889 Ben-Israel 2013.
- 890 See *Kolech*'s homepage, <http://www.kolech.org.il/?lang=en>.
- 891 The Working Group on the Status of Palestinian Women Citizens of Israel 2010.
- 892 Quotas for women at the local level were set recently, in summer 2014. Is it a new horizon?
- 893 According to Wikipedia, 38 movies were commercially released in Israel in 2014, 12 of them directed by women.
- 894 *Six Acts* was produced in 2012 and released in the course of 2013, but only reached Israeli cinemas in the course of 2014.
- 895 Shira Gefen's movie compares a Jewish Israeli woman's life to that of a Muslim Palestinian woman's. The scope of the chapter does not permit me to consider this movie and the important topic it raises. I therefore do not present it and merely mention it in the final section.
- 896 As this chapter was written in 2014, no academic analysis of any of these movies was available.
- 897 This is of course not the case for women who belong to cultural minorities that do not partake in the country's liberal norms. Most Palestinian Israeli women (like one of the two protagonists of *Self Made*), ultra-Orthodox Jewish women, Bedouin women, Druze women and Jewish women from the Caucasus are among those. This chapter focuses on the majority of Israeli women, who are, for the most part, Jewish, not ultra-Orthodox, of European, North-American or Middle Eastern origins.
- 898 For a detailed analysis (in Hebrew) of this movie, see Pavel Otin, August 22, 2014, http://srita.net/2014/08/22/that_lovely_girl_review/, accessed November 15, 2014.
- 899 Finkelhor 1994; Pereda et al. 2009; Lewis Herman and Hirschman 1981.
- 900 Van de Bongardt et al. 2014.
- 901 Mor 2001; Kamir 2003.
- 902 Izraeli 1997; Ben-Ari and Levy-Schreiber 2000; Ben-Ari 2001; Klein 2002; Sasson-Levy 2006.
- 903 Herbert 1998; Carreiras 2006.
- 904 Among them *Or (My Treasure)* directed by Keren Yedaya (Bizibi, Transfax Film Productions, Canal+, 2004); *Campfire*, directed by Joseph Cedar (Cinema Post Production Ltd., 2004); *Out of Sight*, directed by Daniel Sirkin (JCS Productions, the Israeli Film Fund, 2006); *Invisible*, directed by Michal Aviad (TAG/TRAUM Filmproduktion, 2011).
- 905 In 2004, Anat Zuria's *Sentenced to Marriage* was perhaps the first Israeli feminist documentary to depict the harsh reality of women's discrimination in rabbinical courts. The movie follows women's desperate attempts to receive a gett, and much of it is shot in the corridors of rabbinical courts.
- 906 Halperin-Kaddari 2004, 235.
- 907 *Ibid.*, 236.

- 908 Ibid.
- 909 Ibid., 237.
- 910 Ibid.
- 911 Ibid., 238.
- 912 Ibid.
- 913 Ibid., 239.
- 914 As mentioned above, *Self Made* treats the Jewish-Palestinian divide in Israel, but it too is set against the liberal Jewish-Israeli reality.
- 915 Shilo 1998.
- 916 The demand for reform in marriage and divorce law was always present, even in pre-state days, but never achieved mainstream status. For such pre-State feminist action, see Stern Margalit 2009.
- 917 I have been developing this line of argument in a long list of publications in Hebrew: Kamir 2004, 2007, 2008, 2011, 2014.
- 918 Mosse 1985 and 1996, 96–98; Gilman 1986, 1991, 1993; Biale 1986; Berkowitz 1993; Kornberg 1993; Boyarin 1997.
- 919 Kornberg 1993, 41–42.
- 920 Shilo 2007.
- 921 Swirski 1991; Shilo 2007.
- 922 Abu-Baker 2012.
- 923 Cheney, LaFrance, and Quinteros 2006.
- 924 Bronfenbrenner 1979.
- 925 Pappé 2006.
- 926 Rabinowitz and Abu-Baker 2005.
- 927 Knesset Israel, *Book of Statutes*, 2104, July 26, 2007.
- 928 Al-Haj 1995.
- 929 Podeh 2001; Rabinowitz and Abu-Baker 2005.
- 930 Al-Haj 1995.
- 931 CBS 2014, Table 8.72, population aged 15 and over, by population group, years of schooling, age and sex.
- 932 Abu-Baker 1998.
- 933 Smootha 2001.
- 934 Abu-Baker 1998.
- 935 Badran 1996.
- 936 Freire 1970.
- 937 Abu Alasal 2006.
- 938 Smootha 2001.
- 939 Abu Alasal 2006.
- 940 Knesset Israel, “Protocol 243, Meeting of Education Committee.” June 29, 2010, accessed October 24, 2014, <http://www.knesset.gov.il/protocols/data/html/chinuch/2010-06-29-02.html>.
- 941 Abu Alasal 2006.
- 942 Jebreel 2012; Samara 2006.
- 943 Al-Haj 1987; Abu-Baker 2012.
- 944 Pappé 2006.
- 945 Haidar 2005; Rosenfeld 1980.
- 946 Abu-Rabia-Queder 2004, 2012.

- 947 Abu-Baker 1998.
948 Haj Yehia Abu-Ahmad 2006; Abu-Baker 2010; Erdreich 2010.
949 Abu-Baker 2001, 2007a; Sa'ar 2012.
950 Jaraisse 1991; Haj-Yahia 1995.
951 Abu-Baker 2007b, 2008.
952 Sharabi 1999.
953 Haidar 2005; Khattab 2009.
954 Malchi 2013.
955 Almagor-Luten 2009.
956 CBS 2013.
957 Haidar 2005.
958 Alsheikh et al. 2012.
959 Abu-Baker 2003.
960 Weiner-Levi 2011.
961 Abu-Baker 2003.
962 Omari-Haider 2010.
963 Abu-Baker 1998.
964 Karkabi-Sabah 2014.
965 Abu-Baker 2007a.
966 Khattab 2009.
967 Karkabi-Sabah 2014.
968 Halihal 2008.
969 CBS 2013.
970 Abu-Baker 2010.
971 CBS, "Details of Marriages and Divorces in Israel."
972 Karkabi-Sabah 2014.
973 Halihal 2008.
974 Karkabi-Sabah 2014.
975 Halihal 2008.
976 Karkabi-Sabah 2014.
977 Abu-Baker 2012.
978 CBS 2013.
979 Abu-Baker 2015.
980 Idem 2003, 2007a.
981 Idem 2003, 2007a.
982 Idem 1998.
983 Ibid.
984 Khouri 2013; Bender, 2013; Shaa'lan 2013.
985 Abu-Oksa Daoud 2005; Hamid 2005.
986 Nohad and Gordoni 2009.
987 On realignments, see Key 1955, 1959. On cleavages, see Bartolini and Mair 1990; Deegan-Krause 2007.
988 Duverger 1964, 312.
989 Asher Arian initiated these pioneer surveys. For INES surveys since 1969 to date, see <http://www.ines.tau.ac.il/>.
990 To be discussed in the next section.
991 Lewis 2006, 477.
992 Since its organization in 1973 the Likud Alignment has made few changes in its organization and name. Nonetheless, if not

mentioned differently, the term Likud is used here as a general name to describe the Likud Alignment and its different developments as of 1973.

- 993 Arian and Barnes 1974.
994 Pempel 1990.
995 Brooks 2004.
996 Ware 1996.
997 Sartori 1976, 40.
998 Van de Walle and Butler 1999; Coleman 1960.
999 Blondel 1968.
1000 Sartori 1976.
1001 Blondel 1968.
1002 Pempel 1990.
1003 Duverger 1954.
1004 Almond 1960, 41.
1005 Nyblade 2004.
1006 Shapiro 1977, 47–191.
1007 Ibid., 18–25.
1008 Gorny 1973; Shapiro 1977, 25–34.
1009 Smootha 2008.
1010 Ibid., 1–27
1011 Greenberg 2004.
1012 Naor 2001.
1013 Shapiro 1989, 15–71.
1014 Goldstein and Shavit 1979.
1015 Wagner and Kafkafi 1982, 114–143.
1016 Shapiro 1989, 15–71.
1017 Ben-Rafael Galanti 2008.
1018 Knesset website, “History,” accessed April 10, 2015, <http://main.knesset.gov.il/About/History/Pages/default.aspx>.
1019 Shavit 1986.
1020 Don Yehiyeh 2011, 68.
1021 Ibid., 75.
1022 Grosbard 2006, 240.
1023 Bilski Ben-Hur 1988, 26–76; Naor 2006.
1024 Shavit 1986, 153–206.
1025 Hoffman 2014.
1026 Fuksman-Shaal 2008.
1027 Ben-Rafael Galanti 2008.
1028 Bilski Ben-Hur 1988, 155–194.
1029 Shavit 1986, 153–200.
1030 Ben-Rafael Galanti 1992, 95–100.
1031 Bar-Siman-Tov 2010.
1032 Lebel 2011.
1033 The authors who use this term in the present study are fully aware that it is to be taken in a metaphorical sense, to express the great political change the election wrought in Israel, and that “coup” is not the proper term for denoting a change that comes through a process of election.

- 1034 Fuksman-Shaal 2008, 24.
1035 Arian 1980, 9.
1036 Yizhar 2008, 75.
1037 Duverger 1964, 308–312.
1038 Shapiro 1980, 23–24.
1039 See Amara 2003, 170.
1040 Peled and Shafir 2005, 116–117.
1041 Ibid.
1042 Yizhar 2008, 76.
1043 Peled and Shafir 2005, 117.
1044 Ibid., 105.
1045 Cohen and Leon 2011, 9–10.
1046 Ibid., 10–11.
1047 Yizhar 2008, 77.
1048 Meir-Glitzstein 2009, 330–331.
1049 Volansky 2005, 131–133.
1050 Arian 1980, 9–10.
1051 Lebel 2007, 351–372.
1052 Leon 2009, 10–13.
1053 Tessler 2003, 33–34.
1054 Gorenberg 2006, 332–333.
1055 Sprintsak 1982, 22–23.
1056 Arieli 2010, 204.
1057 Roth 2005, 43–46.
1058 Amara and Mustafa 2013, 273–274.
1059 While most sources state that military rule was abolished in 1966, Baumel (2007) shows, by means of archive documents, that it was only in 1968 that military rule was lifted from the last Arab region; see Baumel 2007, 310.
- 1060 Lustick 1980, 77–90.
1061 Ibid., 155–157.
1062 Korn 2000, 574.
1063 Peleg and Waxman 2011, 1–16.
1064 Ghanem and Mustafa 2011, 177.
1065 Amara and Mustafa 2013, 280.
1066 That was when confrontations occurred between Arab protesters in Arab cities and towns and the Israeli police. The protests erupted following Ariel Sharon’s visit to the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. Dozens of Palestinians in Jerusalem were killed. This was followed by the Al-Aqsa Intifada, the Second Intifada in the West Bank, in the wake of the confrontations within the Green Line between Arab citizens and the police, in which twelve Arab citizens were killed by police bullets.
- 1067 Rekhess 1993, 77–78.
1068 Amara and Mustafa 2013, 281–283.
1069 Rekhess 1989, 337.
1070 Idem 1993, 219–229.
1071 Neuberger 1993, 149.
1072 Smootha 1992, 216.
1073 Ghanem and Mustafa 2009, 158–164.

- 1074 Sheila 1982, 9–10; Sahliyah 1994, 85.
- 1075 Ghanem and Mustafa 2009, 268–278.
- 1076 Bishara 1998, 77.
- 1077 The Congress of Arab Public, Haifa, Document of June 6, 1980, 1, accessed October 26, 2014, <http://www.baqoon.com/w10/6.htm>.
- 1078 Ibid., 2.
- 1079 Pappé 2011, 151.
- 1080 Ghanem and Mustafa 2009, 71–78.
- 1081 Pappé 2011, 141.
- 1082 Zureik 1979, 4–5.
- 1083 Lustick 1980, 42–45.
- 1084 Mar'i 1978, 5–7.
- 1085 Agbaria and Mustafa 2012, 718.
- 1086 Jamal 2008, 3–4.
- 1087 Ghanem and Mustafa 2009, 38.
- 1088 Mustafa and Ghanem 2010, 25.
- 1089 Camp David Accords, September 17, 1978.
- 1090 Ben-Porath 1982.
- 1091 Schiff and Ya'ari 1984.
- 1092 Sewell 1996; Tilly 1995.
- 1093 Horowitz and Lissak 1978; Shapiro 1977.
- 1094 Shafir 1989; Kimmerling 1982.
- 1095 Eisenstadt 1967; Horowitz and Lissak 1978.
- 1096 Shapiro 1976, 1977.
- 1097 Shafir 1989; Kimmerling 1982, 1983.
- 1098 Horowitz and Lissak 1978; Shapiro 1977; Medding 1972.
- 1099 Ze'ev Jabotinsky, "Ya Brecken," *Hayint*, November 4, 1932.
- 1100 Shapiro 1991.
- 1101 Etzel was the military underground of the Revisionist Party, commanded by Menachem Begin. It stands for National Military Organization (Irgun Tzvai Leumi).
- 1102 Lehi, Israel Liberation Warriors (Lohamei Herut Israel) was an autonomous military underground, and Palmach, (Plugot Machatz, 'Crushing Squads') was mainly ruled by the Kibbutz movement and the Zionist leftist party Mapam.
- 1103 Peri 1983; Lustick 1980.
- 1104 Medding 1972; Shapiro 1977.
- 1105 Grinberg 1993a.
- 1106 Friedman 1963; Shalev 1992; Klinov-Malul and Halevy 1968.
- 1107 Shalev 1984.
- 1108 Grinberg 1993a.
- 1109 I have shown in my own research that this common misinterpretation was intentionally created by all sides in the "Affaire" in order to prevent an open public debate. Grinberg 1993b.
- 1110 The Hebrew name of the pro-state reformists was "mamlachtiim," while the conservative pro-Histadrut faction was called "tnuatiim."
- 1111 Shalev 1984; Grinberg 1993b.

- 1112 Shalev 1992, Ben-Porath 1986; Grinberg 1991, 1993b.
1113 Grinberg 1993a.
1114 Bernstein 1976; Chetrit 2004.
1115 Shapiro 1991; Shafir and Peled 2002.
1116 Hofnung 2006; Ben-Porath 1986.
1117 Shapiro 1991.
1118 Reshef 1996.
1119 Grinberg 1991.
1120 In the Histadrut elections the Alignment got 57% of the electorate, and a total of 530,000 votes, in the Knesset the Alignment got 430,000 votes, representing 24% of the electorate.
- 1121 See Quandt 1986, 376–381.
1122 Schiff and Ya'ari 1984.
1123 Ibid.; Helman 1999; Golani 2002.
1124 Grinberg 1991, 1993b.
1125 For a detailed description of these events, see Grinberg 1991, 77–79. This impossible situation continued, as we will see here, until October 1980.
- 1126 Interview with Horowitz in Grinberg 1991, 90–92.
1127 Ibid., 92–94.
1128 Arian and Shamir 1995.
1129 In a very revealing debate in the Cabinet on the budget, on November 1967, Treasury Minister Pinhas Sapir argued that the recession policy should continue, but the majority supported an expansionist economic policy, see Lavon Institute Archives, 15.10.1967, IV-104-5 67.
- 1130 Rosolio 1999.
1131 Bruno and Piterman 1988.
1132 Maman and Rosenhek 2011.
1133 Williamson 1994.
1134 Quandt 1986.
1135 Nassar and Heacock 1990; Kimmerling and Migdal 2003.
1136 Ezrachi 1997; Grinberg 2013.
1137 Grinberg 2010.
1138 Begin's remarks cited in Naor and Lammfromm 2014, 286.
1139 Ibid., 287.
1140 *Mabat*, Israeli Television, 20 June 1977.
1141 "Statement by Prime Minister Menachem Begin to the Knesset upon the Presentation of His Government, Jerusalem, June 20, 1977," 14–15; Naor and Lammfromm 2014, 289–290.
- 1142 Prime Minister Begin to US President Reagan, 5.9.1982, State Archive 4342/7-A.
1143 For the text of the Camp David Accords, see www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/documents/campdavid/, accessed May 12, 2015.
1144 Naor and Lammfromm 2014, 523–524.
1145 Ibid., 486.
1146 See Shapira 2012, 380.
1147 Naor and Lammfromm 2014, 521.
1148 The Central Bureau of Statistics 2014.

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Handbook of Israel: Major Debates

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Volume 2

Part B: The Challenge of Post-Zionism

Part C: Israel Outward

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The project "Handbook of Israel: Major Debates" has been generously funded by the Moses Mendelssohn Foundation, Erlangen/Berlin.

ISBN 978-3-11-035160-6

e-ISBN (PDF) 978-3-11-035163-7

e-ISBN (EPUB) 978-3-11-038338-6

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A CIP catalog record for this book has been applied for at the Library of Congress.

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.dnb.de> abrufbar.

© 2016 Walter de Gruyter GmbH, Berlin/Boston

Cover image: thinkstock, alexdndz

Typesetting: bsix information exchange GmbH, Braunschweig

www.degruyter.com

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Topic VIII: Militarism?

Introduction

Israel was born in war, after decades of tensions and small-scale belligerence, and its further existence was also fraught with numerous military confrontations. These circumstances widely explain why the regime presents military power as an essential guarantee for the vital interests of the state; many Israelis indeed perceive it as such.

It is in this context that military service is prolonged and compulsory in Israel for Jewish and Druze young men and Jewish young women, and that these youngsters will afterwards also serve in the reserve army. Another major aspect of the importance of the military and national security consists of the place and weight of related industries in the economy – from weaponry to high-tech programs and research and development projects – which employ tens of thousands of people. The cultural and educational impact of these efforts is unquestionable. Youngsters know that civilian and independent life does not begin with the end of secondary education, and many cultural and linguistic patterns that tend to prevail in the army are disseminated throughout society as a whole. Directness, even brusqueness, in social relations and a tendency to disregard “unnecessary” politeness often characterize Israeli youngsters and may persist during adulthood. One more important consequence is the frequent manifestations of machoism by men, deriving from the emphasis on attributes of masculinity in the army.

On the other hand, there is the exposure of the military to civilian society as well as the relatively short military career of senior officers (at around 45–50, senior officers are expected to leave the army) whose ambitions to eventually join nonmilitary frameworks create a basic dependence on civilian society. That very pattern, however, conjunctively helps in forming networks of former military officers and employees of security agencies operating in the civil sector, in politics and in the economy, that are likely to co-opt their former colleagues.

It is in this context that protracted polemics have developed divergent interpretations by researchers regarding the definition of the military's relationship with society and the state. Hence it is unsurprising that a major question addressed by participants in this debate is: Is Israel militaristic?

For **Moshe Lissak**, depicting Israel as a militaristic society is a fallacy that does not take into consideration that possible militaristic tendencies appearing here and there are counterbalanced by major "antibodies." Hence, the military establishment by no means serves as a source of inspiration and authority for political decision-makers. Moreover, there is a potent "antibody" that works against militarization – the involvement of civilians and civilian agencies in the IDF's endeavors. Even if it aspired to do so, the IDF is unable to act as a regulator of civilian ways of life. In political dialogues – including those concerning matters of national security – pluralism splits society, and permeates the ranks of the military. Moreover, the army itself is unable to consolidate any set of political convictions of its own.

According to **Yoram Peri**, Israeli researchers are grouped into two approaches in terms of how the media refers to the military. One approach insists on the influence of the media and civil society. This is explained by the army's dwindling role outside the military area itself, and the growing power of the civilian mechanisms overseeing it. The second approach, which Peri tends to endorse, contends that the basic pattern of the military establishment's dominance has remained the same even though the media have unquestionably gained in strength. Actually, the media, like other socialization agents, fundamentally act to inculcate the army's centrality, contributing thereby to the very construction of Israeli militarism.

Gabriel Sheffer and Oren Barak critically examine prevailing approaches, drawing particular attention to Israel's "security networks" and their informal intertwining that are tremendously influential not only on Israeli defense affairs, but also on matters that are not purely "defense." They distinguish between the traditional, the critical, and the so-called new approaches.

Baruch Kimmerling emphasizes, for his part, that a whole body of scholarship has endeavored to rid Israel of the stigma of militarism. Analyses show, however, that militarism does exist in this society and has assumed a variety of forms. As a rule, it is expressed in the army's role as one of society's organizing principles. This phenomenon arose as a response to the ongoing protracted conflict, and became a taken-for-granted reality and culture. All in all, militarism is not only a function of the military's role in society, but also the outcome of a condition where war preparation is central to daily life, and effected through the operation of non-military institutions.

In brief, for Moshe Lissak, Israel by no means qualifies for the definition of a militaristic society: the military is important in this society, but it is widely kept "civil" by multiple structural features and antibodies. For Yoram Peri, to define Israel as a non-militaristic society requires complex conceptualizations and in some ways Israel does display militaristic aspects. Gabriel Sheffer and Oren Barak are not far from the approach of Yoram Peri, and focus on a perspective that evinces the question of "policy networks" and "security networks." They assert that the military and other security agencies constitute powerful social, economic, and political actors. Baruch Kimmerling goes several steps further: militarism, he says, can take on different forms and patterns and in fact some of these forms do respond to what Israel illustrates.

33. Israel: A Militaristic Society?

Moshe Lissak

This paper was completed in December 2014.

The myth of Israeli society's militarization

Israel's distinctive security-political culture had already crystallized in the first years after statehood, and the way it took shape after the Six-Day War resulted in attempts to portray Israeli society as militaristic. Ben-Eliezer's words encapsulate the arguments of those believing this; he maintained that the concept "a nation in uniform" is simply camouflaged "militarism."¹ A nation in uniform, he wrote, is a cultural means that military and political elites apply to justify political objectives and recruit the entire population for war. The "nation in uniform" perception is based on the blurred boundaries between the individual, the family, society, and the state; on creating a militaristic culture for an entire society, not only the army; and on designing a reality that eradicates distinctions between wartime and peacetime. Blurring the boundaries renders war legitimate. The origins of that culture, according to Ben-Eliezer, lie in the Yishuv period, and the Palmach was particularly involved in nurturing it. It crystallized and institutionalized soon after statehood. Significant expressions of that hegemonic culture are, he contends, glorification of the army and war, demonization of the enemy, and banalization of the conflict, compounded by phenomena such as nationalism, machismo, ritualism around the fallen, and industries commemorating those who perished in Israel's wars. Ben-Eliezer compares it to cultures which once characterized Japan, Prussia, Jacobin France, and Tsarist Russia. Kimmerling² subscribes to that approach, and also classes militarism as cognitive militarism – that is, a situation in which military considerations almost inevitably supersede political, economic, or ideological ones. The general public accepts this military mindset as a given, without pondering its

far-reaching implications too deeply. And yet only a few conclusions have been made which ascribe to Israeli society significant qualities of a militaristic society and several flaws are discernible in their perceptual structure.³ The primary error in those sociologists' approach is their disregard of a central trait of a militarist society. In this context, we should distinguish between *indispensable* conditions, without which it will be hard to define any society as militaristic, and *sufficient* conditions. When sufficient conditions are present, *as well as* indispensable ones, one can offer a more or less reliable opinion concerning a society's militaristic nature. Among the indispensable conditions is the presence of an aggressive security doctrine – a military doctrine which is a facet of overall security policy – whose foundation is the conscious desire for territorial expansion unconnected to self-defense, and the tactical or strategic need to inflict a surprise attack. At the same time, that sort of policy, even if it is persistent, is not evidence of uncompromising militarism of the society under discussion. It must also be accompanied by normative-ideological justifications and ethos that are to a great extent detached from the reality of objective strategic data concerning the state. Those justifications have to be only very slightly connected to tangible threats from a defined enemy whose intentions to destroy the state are undisguised.

Even when all those conditions exist, sufficing with this aspect alone reflects a one-dimensional, narrow-minded perspective. A broader outlook requires examining whether another vital indispensable condition exists – a situation in which the military establishment serves (officially and unofficially) as a source of inspiration and authority for political-decision-makers. And more importantly, the army has to act as a comprehensive reference group for society as a whole, or at least for major streams within it.

In a militaristic society, there tend to be generous doses of glorification of war, heroism, and extreme chauvinism. In other words, in that case the army is the supreme shaper and regulator of the societal norms of most institutional spheres – the political, the economic and particularly the cultural sphere and lifestyle: a one-directional route. Moreover, there would

be very few strong counter-cultures in civil society – an extremely rare sort of regulation which was found in Imperial Japan and Prussia to a great extent. It is noteworthy that there can be regulation of only one or two spheres, usually the party-political sphere where various manipulations, including internal, external, and military policy, are performed. Such a situation does not require considerable spillover into other spheres, such as the economic, cultural and social spheres, which continue functioning more or less autonomously, according to their own normative and operative principles. When that is the case, it is highly doubtful whether we could define that society as militaristic.

Equally noteworthy in this context is that some blurring of the boundaries between military and civil systems in Western democracies is not uncommon, and it existed in different historical contexts.⁴ It is also present in modern societies, particularly since the Second World War. The old formal distinctions that sought, for instance, to distinguish between civil and military executive authorities do not always meet reality's test. That is the situation in Israel. The fact that the boundaries are blurred does not constitute the formation of militarism. As noted, it depends on the intensiveness of the army's regulating, and on other characteristics such as the kinds of social networks.

Besides their typical ignoring of that pivotal trait, studies which class Israeli society as militaristic have other weaknesses, the most important being their insufficient historical perspective and the failure to identify the pendulum movement between militaristic trends and totally inverse trends. Another lacuna displayed by those researchers is their failure to make a comparative examination with other factors that could well have an impact – beyond the society-military relationship – on shaping civil society, such as the data for emigration/ immigration, economic growth or decline, changes in the different political cultures, and so forth.

The general conclusions arising from these comments are: first, that it is not enough to analyze only foreign and security policy, and moreover in the Israeli case policy has not been uniform or consistent throughout every era; second, even if

there is a certain “militarization” in the political sphere, it does not imply a constant and wide-scale spillover into other spheres; third, the military elite is not a single entity. Scholars must examine and explore all the various shades of opinion it contains. It is a fact that on retiring from the IDF, senior officers take their places on the length and breadth of the political spectrum, from the far right to the far left. And all this leads us to the conclusion that Israeli society has potent “antibodies” which work covertly or openly against its militarization.

Anyone exploring the indispensable and sufficient conditions for any society’s being militaristic would conclude after a cursory glance – even if he is untainted by prior ideological assumptions – that Israel does display symptoms of a militaristic society. I would like to argue that even those phenomena should not be overlooked, for a scrupulous examination of the symptoms usually reveals cases which, in the best case, concern optical errors and inaccurate interpretations. In the more grave case, those arguments are a significant part of the publicly waged ideological battles that have seeped into the Israeli academy as well.

As for the optical errors, the most important of them is arguably the connection between the IDF and the “constructing of the Israeli people.” It is often said that in its formative years, the IDF played a key role though not a crucial one, both in structuring the country’s security ethos, and in forging nascent Israeli society into a “fighting nation” and a “people in uniform.” The IDF indeed engaged in clearly civilian activities – education, higher education, helping recent immigrants, entertainment, nurturing popular culture and so on⁵ – and it would be mistaken to overlook those activities or downplay their importance. Moreover, Ben-Gurion sought to transform the IDF (including the Gadna) into a pivotal agent of education for all youngsters, but most especially for young new immigrants. This is a double optical error, however. First, the initiative for that whole culture of roles derived unequivocally from the civilian side. The political elite more or less determined the guiding principles, granting the chief of staff a degree of autonomy in carrying out their guidelines,

including how they would be performed. Second, Ben-Gurion's attempts at transforming the IDF into a substitute for civic systems in the field of education, particularly normative education that complied with the statist ideology, were only partial successes. Among others, that was because of vociferous objections by civil political circles, on the right and left.⁶ The IDF was itself not over-enthused by Ben-Gurion's policy. It continued operating in those areas, but has long been forced to compete – as an equal among equals, and perhaps also as the lower-status partner – with civil social education systems, a trend that has intensified over time.

The turning point came with the Yom Kippur War. The growing number of IDF foul-ups that surfaced, particularly those concerning commander-soldier relationships, exacerbated distrust in the military as an educational framework. In turn, this led to greater involvement by civilians in the IDF's endeavors in the human relations sphere (such as parental involvement during basic training). This is a significant example of the IDF's "civilianization, rather than society's militarization."⁷ More recently, the IDF is on the defensive regarding the human relations prevailing within its ranks. Criticism of the IDF is even broader, and it is tied to the deep ideological-political rift that is a defining trait of Israeli society, in terms of resolving the Israeli-Arab conflict in general and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict more specifically. In such conditions, the IDF does not want to – and cannot, even if it did want to – act as the supreme regulator of civilian ways of life, that aspires to unilaterally instill the security ethos into civil society.

What is termed "the centrality of the security theme" is another symptom, linked to the previous one and considered by some as the most significant evidence of Israel's being a militarist society. Undoubtedly, in a society in an unending conflict which every so often has to confront emergency situations, terrorist attacks and wars, questions of personal and collective security, "ongoing" and "basic security" become central to the public and private discourse. Furthermore, it is more than simply a discourse, for there are tangible impacts on people's lives (reserve duty, fatalities, injuries, and illness) and

on the collective (raising economic resources which in the short- and medium-term adversely affect economic growth and development). Phrased otherwise, the boundaries between the military and the civil system were never totally impermeable. There was reciprocal input, though each system ranged along different trajectories with only partial interdependence – parenthetically, a fact that led researchers to the general conclusion that there has never been a “civil society” in Israel, at least not in the sense customary in Western democratic societies.⁸ Researchers also found corroboration for this outlook in other phenomena, such as the failure to separate religion from state. This is not the place to embark on a conceptual and pragmatic discussion about civil society’s existence or non-existence in Israel. Two questions are relevant to our discussion: first, if security is the center, what is the periphery or what are the peripheral themes? Second, is it a case of a stable, unchanging situation, or are there ups and downs in the “centrality” of security, or in the “peripheral” nature of other factors?

It is vital, in this context, to measure the impact of the security factor on Israeli society, in comparison with the impact of the immigration waves or, alternatively, that of economic growth or recession which are not inevitably connected to the security situation. It would not be an ungrounded assumption to say that the social structure of the 1950s immigrants and of the “Russian” immigrations in the 1970s and 1990s had a no less major influence on certain aspects of institutional activity in the political, societal, and cultural spheres than in the security sphere. The history of the Yishuv and the State of Israel is more than a chronicle of wars. A division into periods by violent events and battles is not the only one that can be envisaged, and Israel has a rich social and cultural history that does not always overlap with political and security history, and thus requires a different division into eras.

Unwilling to engage in wide-ranging research from this perspective, researchers have made do with analyzing militarization by seeking different indices, but without noting if they should be considered indispensable or sufficient conditions. Some of those indices are public-opinion surveys

which reveal different degrees of “cognitive militarism,” including perceptions of the Arab-Jewish conflict;⁹ the negative influence of the political-military relationship on Israel’s democratic system; the existence of a war-based economy;¹⁰ and the fact that the IDF system is one of the most influential systems during the formative period when self-identity crystallizes among young Israelis.

Although all these examples are symptoms of a militarist mindset which is uncommon in democratic societies that are not in a state of prolonged conflict, they are not enough to constitute sufficient conditions: their intensity and importance change occasionally, both absolutely and also in comparison with other factors that have shaped Israeli society’s profile. One cannot, furthermore, obtain a full and reliable picture without addressing the very existence and capacities of the “antibodies” which can neutralize harmful impacts of that kind.

The most important antibody originates, paradoxically, in the political dialogues which typify Israeli society – the pluralism which is almost unparalleled even when it concerns only the Jewish population, and even more when we factor in the Arab population, which is also substantially split. Ideological divides in themselves are not necessarily antibodies which protect against militarism’s development. It is important to understand who are the parties in the conflict and what they are conflicted about, and it is even more important to analyze the structure of the rifts. Is it a dichotomous, polarized rift between two camps with completely different political cultures, between which transition is almost impossible – psychologically, culturally, and socially? Such a situation is charged with dynamite, liable to explode in acts of violence and anarchy. The armed forces’ involvement in these cases is a very real option. Contrastingly, when the divide is dichotomous or polarized, the prospects for military intervention are much lower, even when there are displays of strong verbal violence, or even physical violence. Structurally, a non-polar divide implies that though there are extreme camps on the left and right, there are also several intermediate gradations that partially overlap¹¹ on the

ideological-political map. In other words, the political-ideological distance between the political camps and between the radical groups is not immense. There are good prospects in such a case for dialogue and compliance with agreed on game-rules. When the intermediate camps form the majority in the population, the prospects for it are much better.

This is in fact the prevalent situation in Israel, at least since the 1977 turnabout. Beforehand, the question of the political-ideological divide was less intransigent since there was a political hegemony formed by a single large party – *Mapai* – which was the axial party without which no alternative government could be formed.¹² With the return to power of the Labor party in 1992, it seemed that the political-ideological divide which focused on the Oslo Peace Accords would develop symptoms of an unbridgeable dichotomous divide. In the event, it did not happen, apparently because of Yitzhak Rabin's assassination, which created anxiety in the political community – apart from extreme groups like the *Kach* party, *Kahane Chai*, and messianic and kabbalistic circles – over future verbal and physical violence. And so the fundamental conditions for dragging the army into strident public disputes did not materialize. Israeli society continues functioning according to the previous format; that is, Israel has a diverse political map of partial overlaps between some of its camps. The balance of power of the coalition forces, moreover, has forced every government to set up coalition governments. In terms of the matter at hand, the implication is that, at least since 1967, there was no close agreement in Israeli society on matters of national security. The number of security perspectives and ethoses, and the way they were applied in the public discourse, almost equals the number of political parties and ideological streams.

Another antibody – connected to the first and thus no less important – is the pluralism prevailing in the IDF itself, chiefly among the top echelons of officers. A situation of this kind did not exist in the 1950s and 1960s. It developed in later years and there does not seem to be a retreat from the heterogeneous trend in the IDF concerning ways to resolve the Jewish-Arab conflict. True, that heterogeneity among senior officers does

not exactly reflect the heterogeneity in the civilian public, but it is broad enough so that the General Staff and high-ranking officers do not have a uniform position on any substantive strategic-military subject. There is a myriad of examples; it is enough to cite the conflicting opinions articulated by senior officer on how to run the war in Lebanon (1982–1985), and also on solutions for the conflict with the Palestinians and Syria. Also notable is the fact that officers who left the IDF and launched political careers are located on every point along the political spectrum. We can summarize the question by stating that there has never been a military caste with a discrete political-security doctrine.¹³ And in other words, the army has not become the supreme regulator of Israel's "set of beliefs," since it does not have its own consolidated set of beliefs.¹⁴

It is highly likely that the non-emergence of those trends is connected to another phenomenon, the many cases of encounters between the IDF and civilian systems. Every society has those encounters, but they are particularly notable in Israel and some of them are unique to it. First of all, they are very numerous; second, some of them are institutionalized, and others not; and third, they can be found at the highest levels of the hierarchies – military and civil alike.¹⁵

In our case, this situation does not evidence, as certain researchers believe, a symbiosis between the IDF and the political elite, with a uniform outlook that is militaristic in nature. It is a different and more nuanced situation: in situations of encounter there is dialogue, frequently harmonious, but too often there are acrimonious disagreements as well – resolved in almost every case according to the wishes of the prime minister and the government. A notable case was the criticism leveled in late 1996 by major political figures, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, around IDF generals' excessive intervention in the diplomatic process. Criticism peaked with denunciation of some generals' connections with opposition leaders.

Encounters in the political realm are not the only situations characterizing army-society-politics relations in Israel. There

are situations of encounter in the cognitive-cultural-values realm.¹⁶ Even if we occasionally identify in Israel's sociocultural history a not inconsiderable degree of uniformity and identification with the security perception (especially in periods of euphoria following military victories), still, the trend that is constantly growing is very different from what characterizes euphoric periods. Instead of harmony, we can see more cases of conflicted encounters, both over political themes (such as, the settlers versus the IDF) and also over matters of human relationships or handling personnel (for example, soldiers' parents versus the IDF's judicial system). Arguably, one of the most significant expressions in this context is related to certain changes in young people's levels of motivation for IDF service.

The examples presented here do not form the whole list of antibodies which help counterbalance specific symptoms of militarization. We will cite a few more of them in short. One is the growing decline of the industrial-military structure that was put in place during the 1970s, and became one of the most influential factors in Israel's economy in terms of the scope of human resources¹⁷ which it employed, its contribution to exports,¹⁸ and of course in terms of the heavy investments made in it.¹⁹ That huge structure in turn created security-economic pressure groups which seemed to exercise some influence over the shaping of security policy.²⁰ Anyone intent on defining Israel's militaristic character can easily indicate that symptom. But even in the glory days of that structure, no serious attempts were made on its behalf, certainly not publicly, to translate its economic power into tangible electoral political objectives. More importantly, the potential of the industrial-military structure to apply some kind of scheme weakened tremendously with the dwindling of budgets allocated to that sector of the national economy.

A very different sort of antibody that can only be guessed at is the relationship between Israel and Jews elsewhere, particularly in the USA. Here too there has been an interesting development, though in another direction. America's Jewish community, excluding its Haredi wing and some members of

the Presidents Committee, belong to the most liberal-democratic wing of the nation's political map.²¹ There are many roots to that community's support and identification with Israel – religious, cultural, the annihilation of Europe's Jews, and others. Yet there is no doubt that the democratic political culture which developed in Israel was a source of pride and identification for the community's members. It can be assumed that if America's Jewish community (or Western Europe's) saw Israel as a militaristic society, much of its intellectual elite and also heads of Jewish organizations would come up against an embarrassing, frustrating situation on matters of their relationship with Israel. Some would certainly sever their relationships with Israel's political establishment. In any event, those hoping to maintain positive Israel-diaspora interactions must take into account the Jewish communities' position on every action liable to cause a grave divergence from democratic processes in Israeli society. And finally one should add that considerations of that kind are also relevant to Israel's relationships with democratic nations around the world.

The Israeli case from a comparative perspective

The tension between “civic” values that democratic societies uphold, and “militaristic” values with a hierarchic-operative nature, is practically unavoidable. Democratic societies deal variously with that inherent tension. The alternative options can be analyzed in this context by using the concepts of *convergence* and *divergence* between the military sector and the civilian, or by means of the concepts of *permeable boundaries* and *integral boundaries* between the two sectors.²² There is in fact a connection between the degree of institutional “closedness” among the elites (the military and civilian) and the kind of boundaries dividing them. Integral boundaries are related to processes of distancing between the two elites, while permeable ones may attest to fewer social and value-oriented differences between the elites. We can thus distinguish between two trends inherent in the models

representing two “ideal types”: “the closed military caste” and the “nation in uniform.” The former is based on the assumption that differences between the civilian sector and the military sector, especially in democratic societies, can rarely be bridged. It is a situation permitting the army to close itself off and to foster its values, at least as long as it refrains from trying to influence society as a whole. This model is grounded generally on a professional army, without compulsory mobilization. That kind of army poses no threat to the political system, as long as wider society does not foresee an external threat, and as long as the army receives a reasonable level of resources to perform its security tasks. The latter model – “the nation in uniform” – is underpinned by the desire to reduce the gaps between the two sectors in social and value-based matters. This model is structured on the existence of permeable borders between them, which enable a two-way influence.²³ Typifying this model is an army composed of a core of professional soldiers serving in the standing army, as well as recruits, and an extensive structure of reservists. A condition for this kind of model to grow is consensus over a threat to the state’s existence, which also entails an allocation of resources to the security system, and also partnership – though limited – in political decision-making processes.

Both these models, as mentioned, are extreme ideal types, which are usually not found in democratic states. All democratic states are situated somewhere along the continuum stretching between those two extreme poles. The UK is relatively closer than other democratic states to the end of the continuum that represents the military caste, while Israel is closer than any democratic state to the model of a “nation in uniform.”²⁴ In both models the army receives civil authority. It finds expression in diverse ways. In the model of the caste-like army, clear lines demarcate the civilian sector and the military sector subordinate to it, while in the “nation in uniform” model there are quite flexible game-rules. The rules stipulate the areas where there is room for the military to intervene in decision-making processes that have political and diplomatic aspects. On one hand, the game-rules also define areas where the army may not intervene. On the other hand, there are areas

offering plentiful room for civilian intervention in military affairs, such as education and commander-soldier relations. This model thus assumes the existence of varied contacts between the sectors. Furthermore, there are situations of institutional encounters in which contacts between the security system and certain civilian sectors is very extensive. The military industries, which report to the security system or are at least directed by it, constitute an example of this.²⁵

Neither of these models is capable of abating the inherent tension between the different perspectives of the two sectors, although where the military sector is distinct from civil society, it tends to nurture its own values. In extreme cases, that phenomenon is liable to encourage the tendency among high-ranking officers to take the reins of government in unlawful ways. At the same time, the model of the “nation in uniform,” that is characterized by branched contacts between the sectors, is liable to engender several opportunities for maneuvers targeting the political elite, and vice versa. Though the Israeli state is in a prolonged conflict, it does not behave like a state under siege. Its democratic rule is usually very far from the mentality that defines such states. Israel has not become a “barracks state,” a contemporary Sparta ruled by “experts in violence” where everything is subject to the need to cope with external threats. We can argue paradoxically in this context, that the military’s involvement in questions of national security has allowed Israel, to no small degree, to preserve its democratic regime and civilian life-patterns. The tendency of both sectors to develop a certain amount of mutual resemblance by the partial “militarization” of civilian endeavors and the partial “civilianization” of the army prevented the army from becoming a military caste, separate and alienated from civil society. And yet, exactly that quality, which greatly distanced the likelihood of a military overthrow in Israel, is also what allowed the political elite some degree of manipulation of the security system, or of certain parts of it. The obscure nature of the mechanisms meant to oversee the army, the contradiction between demands to tighten supervision of the army’s activities, and the army’s aspiration to be admitted of operative flexibility, create conditions that

army commanders and the security system may exploit in order to exert a not insignificant influence on the political elite's decision-making processes. The possible outcome of those sorts of maneuvers, as experiences during the Lebanon War revealed, is not only the disruption of the government's diplomatic objectives, but also the erosion of the national consensus, at least when escalation results from those maneuvers.

All the same, the norms and game-rules that took shape over years have brought Israel closer to the model of Athens than to that of Sparta. Those norms still withstand the burden of national security needs. The capacity of a democratic Israel to withstand those needs over years strongly depends on its willingness to continue bearing that burden, if peace processes with Syria and the Palestinians are not concluded.

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34. Are Israel's Media Critical of the IDF and the Security Culture?

Yoram Peri

This paper originally appeared in Hebrew as "Does the Israeli Media Criticize the Military and the Security Culture?," in *An Army That Has a State?*, edited by Gabriel Sheffer, Oren Barak, and Amiram Oren, 195–217. Jerusalem: Carmel Publishers, 2008.

From a post-militaristic society to an embattled society

Growing recognition of the media's weight in contemporary society has attracted significant attention from scholars of civil-military relations in Israel regarding the interaction between the media and the military, war, and the security sphere, or what are defined as "military affairs."²⁶ Researchers are aware of the rapid changes that have unfolded in Israel's media since the early 1990s: among others, the broadening of the field, the growing number of news outlets, the media's transformation into a "business" driven overwhelmingly by considerations of profit, the globalization processes they have undergone, as well as changes in modes of behavior and professional culture.

Scholars are equally aware of the changes that have occurred in the media's attitude to military matters, including the media's penetration into elite units of the security establishment, including the General Security Services (GSS), the Mossad, the Air Force, and even the nuclear sphere; the declining status of military correspondents, once the main channel through which military-media relations were conducted; and most of all the intensifying criticism of the military by the various media channels.

Though there is no dispute that those changes have occurred, scholars are grouped in two opposing approaches in terms of how they construe the changes. One maintains that in

the late 20th century the media's power increased, it was freed from the constraints formerly fettering its freedom of action (the weakening position of the military censor, for example), and the adoption of a critical approach to the security establishment – to the extent of “slaughtering the sacred cow” of security. All these reflect the military's dwindling roles and the growing power of the civilian mechanisms overseeing them.²⁷

Scholars of the first school of thought attribute these phenomena to structural and functional changes in the institution of the media.²⁸ A broader explanation links

them to a decrease in stateness, that is, the state's declining status, role, and traditional authority among the various social organizations.²⁹ In confronting that process, they argue, Israeli society has seen both the strengthening of civil society and individualization processes mirrored in civilians' demands for greater participation in determining their destiny – which includes the security sphere as well.³⁰

Scholars identified with the second group contend that while the media's relations with security have undergone changes, the basic pattern remains fundamentally the same. By the 1990s the Israeli media had become more diverse than that of the 1950s – more investigative, more suspicious of the political and military establishments – but they had not become representatives of citizens vis-à-vis government. Barzilai comments that the state uses the media to approach its citizens more than the media represent society toward the state.³¹ The Israeli media has served in that role since Zionist ideology first crystallized, and they continue to disseminate the national narrative³² and to act as a socialization agent for the political-military elite. Like education and other socialization agents, the media fundamentally act to inculcate the centrality of the military and of war, addressing them as givens, inseparable aspects of life, and therefore justifiable. Thus the media help in the construction of Israeli militarism.³³

The distinction between these two schools on the issue of the media and security expresses the basic division between

radical paradigms and the traditional ones in social science in general, and in media studies more particularly. But even among those who do not adhere to the critical approach – whether post-Marxist, post-structuralist, or post-colonialist – some maintain that the changes which have occurred in media-security relations are no more than cosmetic changes and do not attest to a substantive transformation.

Which of those two schools describes more accurately the deeper processes in Israeli society? Do those indisputable changes indeed express a fundamental and substantive change? Or are they superficial changes only, which conceal more sophisticated means of control, used to restrict, monitor and supervise the media's endeavors, as in the past? For example, the current widespread use of gag orders, and the Attorney-General's use of Article 113 of the Penal Code of 1977, which deals with "major espionage"; are they not aimed at continuing restrictions on journalists' efforts, following the military censor's weakening role, and thus a form of "substitute censorship"?³⁴

Two distinctions are needed to answer this question. First, one cannot address the past two decades as a single unit of time, and they must be divided into two distinct periods. Second, one needs a more complex conceptualization of patterns of civilian supervision over the sphere of security. In order to describe media-security relations better, we must distinguish between two types of supervision – instrumental and substantive. The concept of "relative autonomy" that Poulantzas coined is most useful here.³⁵ Let's start with the first point.

The new security discourse at the beginning of the 21st century

A dramatic change occurred in Israeli society in September 2000. The collapse of the Camp David peace conference and the outbreak of the Second Intifada concluded a decade in which it seemed that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, by then almost a century long, was about to end. Israeli society considered the peace process, as heralding a new era. Concepts

drawn from conflict resolution theories dominated the public discourse. The top military brass held deliberations regarding the new roles of the military in the postwar era; sociologists employed American concept of the postwar society, a society where the military ethos was losing its central position. Ben-Eliezer defined it as depreciation “in the model of a nation-state in uniform.”³⁶

There is also another possible explanation, with a contrary causal direction. It contends that a decline in militarism – as a consequence of globalization and ruling groups’ interests in the new economy – is what led to the drive to end the conflict.³⁷ Whatever the case, according to that perception the peace process entailed a decline in “securitarianism” (*bitchonism*)³⁸ and a process of “demilitarization”:³⁹ the security ethos began to erode and a new set of values started competing with it.

The failure of the Camp David peace talks – and for our purpose it makes no difference whether the party responsible for the failure was solely Arafat, Israel, or, to a lesser degree, the American “honest broker” – meant more than a temporary halt to the Oslo process. The eighth war in Israel’s history, which erupted immediately afterwards, reinstated Israel’s security discourse, but in a new version. The initial perception adopted was that of a low-intensity conflict – a departure from the IDF’s traditional security doctrine. By the third year of the Intifada, the belief that military measures would eradicate Palestinian resistance had been proven wrong, so a new conceptual framework was designed, holding that Israel’s destiny is to be an *embattled society*.

It was Chief of Staff Moshe Ya’alon who coined this term. Its implication is that the Israeli-Arab conflict has no solution, and Israelis are doomed, in this generation at least and perhaps even later, to live by the sword. What can be done is to lower the level of the conflict, reduce the conflagration, and learn to live with it. There cannot be a sharper contrast between this perspective and the one which had characterized the previous decade namely, the dream of a postwar society.

Ya'alon, whose approach to the conflict is closer to the historical Ahdut Ha'avoda school, was articulating ideas which had been proposed as early as the 1960s by Yigal Allon, one of the party's leaders, and among the first architects of Israel's security doctrine. The Arab rulers' objective, he wrote, is the "eradication of the state, the destruction of the Jewish people in Israel, and the removal of any hope for its future survival as a nation"; in other words, "the destruction of the Third Temple, the end of the state's existence, the loss of the Jewish people's independence, and its physical annihilation."⁴⁰

And yet the new perception was not a complete return to the one that had prevailed since 1967. In contrast with the security perception, ever since Israel occupied the West Bank, many Israelis have realized that a continuing presence in many areas, the Gaza Strip for example, is a weakness not an advantage. Paradoxically the perspective that there are no partners for negotiations, that the Palestinian people "is not ripe" for historical compromise and that thus the conflict will continue, led to the realization that unilateral steps should be taken to minimize friction with the Palestinians, even at the price of territorial concessions. This was the origin of the "disengagement" policy of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, and the *hitkansut* (realignment plan) that his successor, Ehud Olmert, proposed.

So significant was this new ideological approach that it unravelled for the first time the tie between the "land for peace" and the "peace for peace" concepts, which since 1974 had led to political stalemate. A new political party – Kadima – formed around the new ideology of proactive, even unilateral, retreat from the occupied territories. Its success in the elections for the 17th Knesset, held in March 2006, heralded a significant change in Israel's party map, and the transition from a two-party competitive structure, to a three-party or three-camp structure.

That is why relations between Israel's media and its security establishment since 2000 should not be portrayed in terms of the decade preceding it. What happened in Israel over two decades reflected a global process. The attacks on the USA on September 11, 2001 launched a new era in

international relations. In the late 20th century the Cold War ended and the democratization process got underway across the world. Contrastingly, the new century's first decade saw a return to a war-driven era, which Western thinkers defined as a war on "world terrorism," if not as an Huntingtonian concept of "clash of civilizations." It would be easy to envisage a new round of war between the Palestinians and Israel as part of a global system, with Israel on the frontline of Western culture under attack by radical Islam.

"When a nation is at war, many things that might be said in time of peace are such a hindrance to its effort that their utterance will not be endured so long as men fight, and that no Court could regard them as protected by any constitutional right." This statement by Supreme Court judge Oliver Wendell Holmes in "Schenck vs. United States" (1919) was widely invoked in the United States with the outbreak of war in Iraq.⁴

¹ Indeed, the first casualties of democracy in wartime are always freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and the public's right to information. This is even truer in a war that is not conducted thousands of miles away, but close to home, in the main streets of cities, in cafés and shopping centers on the home front.

So it is unsurprising that every research study performed on this question in Israel since 1967 has elicited the finding that when security needs are juxtaposed with freedom of expression, a not inconsiderable number of Israelis inevitably prefer the first option.⁴²

The media as agents of socialization in a prolonged conflict

The Israeli public's willingness to compromise other values for the sake of security makes it easy for journalists, who are the most significant agents of socialization in contemporary societies, to perform their role in the special case of a society in an unending state of war, and to serve as "engineers" of its symbols. Sociologists have dealt extensively with the question how the media helped Israelis become accustomed to the

conflict, but have engaged less with another question; namely, how the media fostered the security ethos, “securitarianism,” and the military mind, as ingredients of the Israeli collective consciousness.

In Israel’s earliest years, the media assumed that task as a “mobilized press,” that was meant to assist the political-military elite achieve the national goals. Later too, when the press changed its approach and grew more critical, even disputatious, it continued with its task of the political socialization of the masses. This time it did so less out of necessity and more unconsciously. Not always overtly, but generally in a concealed way. Not grossly, but with a more sophisticated style. Before we ask why, let us first see how it was carried out.

The IDF’s monopoly in the security sphere

Unlike other social spheres, there is a monopoly of information in the security sphere. In education, economics, culture, or even politics, journalists in democratic societies enjoy access to a multiplicity of sources. In the security field, however, information sources are few, and access to them is controlled. In Israel, in spite of the changes that have occurred in the media field, the security establishment preserved to a great extent its monopolistic position as the provider of information. Some of the means it uses have already been discussed in the literature: they include a paucity of information sources on security matters; the inability, or at least difficulty, for journalists to approach military sources other than via the IDF spokesperson; conditioning publication on prior arrangements like censorship, presence of an escort officer when journalists meet with a military source, or presenting the story to military officials before publication.⁴³ These measures represent only some of the media management techniques used by the military. There are also less-known arrangements, such as leaking information to the Israeli general media as a form of psychological warfare.

A particularly interesting control technique is the way military correspondents are appointed by their editors. A

military correspondent is the only journalist who, before starting his job, must obtain consent from the entity he is about to cover. No editor would allow an education minister to decide which journalist will be responsible for covering education matters. In every other field, the editor is the sole authority. And yet, until the mid-1990s, not a single editor objected to this practice in the coverage of military and security affairs. The IDF argued that it was a necessary demand, since military correspondents are privy to security secrets; but surely that arrangement allows the military to control critical military correspondents. Despite some liberalization of military affairs' coverage, the military is still allowed to decide arbitrarily what may not be covered.

During the long years of the war in South Lebanon until 2000, the military deployed only conscripts in the fighting and avoided mobilizing reservists. One reason for this was its desire to isolate the battlefield from civil gaze. For precisely that purpose, the military systematically barred journalists from first-hand coverage of events in South Lebanon, without the public ever knowing about that policy. The military and the media colluded in this silence, and it was only in 2005 that a senior northern command officer publicly admitted how the military manipulated the media; for example, by using embedded journalists who they knew would express support for the military establishment.⁴⁴

The military as a source of information about the Arab world

For Israelis, the media constitute a significant and pivotal agent in matters pertaining to the Arab world. But which information sources do the media draw on in that context, and who shapes their outlook on such a vital question for the existence of Israeli society? For many years the IDF and the security forces were the principal source of information for the Israeli press. Over the first twenty years following statehood, access to information from the Arab world was limited and slow. The IDF provided journalists in Israel with information

gleaned from items in the Arab media, collected by *Hatzav* – the military agency for open-source intelligence (OSINT).

Post-1967, and even after the revolution in telecommunications, the burgeoning media outlets, the internet, etc., intelligence corps officers continued their role as regular interpreters of events in the Arab world. Not a few of the journalists who covered Arab affairs had previously served in the intelligence corps or other security agencies. This state of affairs was particularly notable with regard to Palestinians. Despite the physical proximity and everyday contacts with people in the occupied territories, much of the information the Israeli public received stemmed from military sources. Danny Rubinstein, a senior journalist covering Palestinian society for many years, attests that “there is a huge (military) intelligence system supplying information on what’s happening in Palestinian society, and no one can compete with it.”⁴⁵

Pack journalism

The military’s impact on the construction of Israelis’ attitudes to questions of space, war, and international relations is powerful because of the pack journalism which typifies the Israeli media. There are tight relationships between journalists who belong to the various journalists’ associations – that of the military correspondents, the political journalists, and the Arab affairs journalists – which create pressures toward the harmonization of products published across the whole range of media channels by members of each association.

The general public is familiar with journalists’ aspirations for scoops and exclusives. Yet there is an inverse phenomenon – the tendency to publish news or commentary that does not diverge from those published in other media channels. It is motivated by the desire to reduce the probability of mistakes and criticism from one’s editor or colleagues, and helps journalists in the arduous effort of working under conditions of uncertainty.⁴⁶ In a small society with powerful pressures for uniformity and conformity, group thinking of that kind can have disastrous results. That was the case with the *Konzeptzia* (conception) in the years leading up to the Yom Kippur War

that Egypt would not dare launch a war against Israel. It was also present in South Lebanon, where the IDF vigorously objected for years to suggestions to abandon the “security zone,” maintaining that retreat would affect its ability to protect Israeli localities in the North.

The press in uniform

Israeli journalists, like citizens with other roles, also serve in the reserve forces, and some of them previously served in the IDF spokesperson’s unit. The fact that a journalist serves as a PR officer for the military is bound to impact his relations with security topics once his reserve duty ends and he returns to work on his newspaper. Ido Dissentchik, a former editor of *Ma’ariv*, summed this up well after the first Gulf War in 1991, noting: “First of all I’m an Israeli and a reserve officer in the IDF, and a newspaper editor only afterwards.”

In previous wars, the IDF spokesperson mobilized authors and university faculty for reserve duties. Their wartime experiences, in the Six-Day War for example, influenced their portrayals of the battles and shaped their political stances on issues of policy to which that war gave rise. Many of those who had been critical of governmental policies before the war were captivated by the thrilling historical events in which they had participated, were swept along with the national pathos, and supported nationalist positions after the victory.⁴⁷

A tight social network

The IDF’s impact on the Israeli media also derives from its role as a training institution for young journalists. For many years, *Galei Tzahal* – the IDF radio station – was Israel’s largest and most productive school of electronic media, followed by the *Bamahaneh* magazine. Dozens of journalists, editors, and radio anchors, who eventually attained top positions in the Israeli media in all news organizations, had done their compulsory military service in the military’s media. Following their release, they continued to serve in the military as reservists and maintained working and social relations with

their colleagues in uniform. The impact of the old boys' network thus persisted for years. One must add to them those who underwent their entire socialization in military media organizations and later filled important positions in cultural, public, and political spheres.⁴⁸

Means of influence

The security/military establishment uses various mechanisms to harness the media in fostering securitarianism. For its part, the media apply both direct indoctrination efforts and some more subtle methods, the most notable of which are listed below.

1. *Concealment*: Israeli journalists are most significant keepers of secrets in cooperation with government officials, as compared to their colleagues in other open societies; there has always been a gap between what they knew and what they wrote. Following the first studies by Goren and Negbi, many researchers have found proof of this in the "Editors Committee": in exchange for knowledge of state secrets, newspaper editors agreed to withhold their publication and thus compromise press freedom.⁴⁹ Though since the 1980s the Committee has lost its status and importance, other mechanisms persist, less overt and less well known; the main one being the fact that frequently journalists do not report information they possess on external and security matters, but not necessarily due to censorship restrictions. Some significant examples follow.

Immediately after the Six-Day War, Defense Minister Moshe Dayan declared that he was "waiting for a phone call from Amman," implying that if King Hussein of Jordan were interested in negotiating with Israel over a peace agreement in return for land, there would be attentive ears in Jerusalem. For years the Israeli press cited that statement, implying that the King had remained silent, and in fact concealed the truth. King Hussein was not silent at all. His representatives were involved in ongoing deliberations with Israeli officials, and later he himself met with Israeli cabinet ministers and prime ministers, and expressed his willingness to sign a peace

agreement in return for Israel's withdrawal from the West Bank. It was Israel who objected to this. On June 19, 1967 the government already decided it was prepared to leave the territories it had captured from Egypt and Syria in return for a peace agreement, but refrained from a similar decision regarding the West Bank. And yet the media continued disseminating reports that Israel was awaiting a phone call from King Hussein.

Ten years later, when peace negotiations with Egypt began, Defense Minister Ezer Weizman requested Chief of Staff Motta Gur to draft a peace map for Israel, which eventually expressed Israel's willingness to withdraw from the territories. Gur took issue with this, despite having received an explicit instruction from the minister, and replied "I will not draw any such map and I'd recommend not drafting any map of peace borders. We must not present a map of peace borders to the US Secretary of State who requested one, and we shouldn't submit one at the Geneva conference." Furthermore, Gur believed there was no need at all for peace at that moment in Israel's history:

The goal of the State of Israel and of world Zionism was and remains concentrating the majority of the Jewish people in the State of Israel. For this purpose we must continue building an infrastructure for settlement, industry, governance, and the military in all areas we consider vital for Zionism's fulfilment. The better the infrastructure that we lay down, so will the final borders be established and acceptable to all parties to the conflict, through agreements or by constraint.⁵⁰

The chief of staff had other grounds against peace. In a discussion with the defense minister on December 17, he remarked that "[a]s long as war and tension continue, the social melting-pot in Israel will persist. Once they disappear, the melting-pot will do the same. In my opinion, if there is peace now, the melting-pot will end too early. [We could] still build much more and only later define the final borders and our relations with the Arabs."⁵¹ Journalists were aware of Gur's worldview, but could not imagine sharing that information with their readers. Instead they continued presenting a stance purporting to show that the IDF was not involved in politics, that the Arabs were not interested in any agreement, and that Israel had no partner for negotiations.

A comparative analysis of the coverage of the First Intifada on Israeli TV compared with that on international television networks reveals that the Israeli media avoided publishing basic information about what was happening in the territories.

2. *Silencing*: Graver than concealment were the active efforts to deliberately silence voices emanating from elsewhere, considered subversive and “undesirable.” The latter became public in 2005 when a senior journalist, Amnon Abramowitz, suggested to his colleagues that they avoid criticizing Prime Minister Sharon for anything whatsoever, including the corruption cases he was involved in. This was because Sharon was implementing the “desirable” policy of disengagement from the Gaza Strip. The affair sparked public debate, because a journalist publicly recommended using the silencing method for political purposes, something which had not been publicly done before. In most cases the policy was never revealed, and often it is not even a conscious decision.

3. *The language laundry*: A no less effective mechanism than concealment and silencing is the use of the language laundry: the non-critical acceptance of military language and the use of euphemisms aimed at prettifying the grim reality. Very often Israeli journalists and editors use words with the aim of softening, assuaging, neutralizing, and in fact twisting the real significance of reports on security matters. It is most powerfully seen in coverage of events in the occupied territories. When an IDF soldier kills a Palestinian, the incident is softened by use of the passive: “the man found his death”; when an item concerns the injury caused to a child under the age of 12 years, the deed is moderated by describing him as a “youth.” In contrast, IDF soldiers are described as “boys”; when the IDF demolishes houses and uproots trees in order to improve the troops’ field of vision it is described as *chisuf* (literally, ‘levelling’), and so forth. In other cases, the use of language is perhaps unconscious but helps to shape a single truth – the one that the military-security establishment is interested in.

For many years after 1967, while the Labor governments were still in power, it was impossible to use the term

“Palestine” in publications. When a journalist used the expression “the Palestinian mayor,” the text was rewritten to read “the Arab mayor.” In 1985 there was a denial of the existence of the Palestinian people at the legal level too – by the legal banning of contacts with members of the PLO. Journalists were banned from interviewing Palestinians. Danny Rubinstein commented: “Not long ago I witnessed the uprooting of a large orchard near Beit Hanoun. Afterwards I heard the IDF spokesperson report that the IDF cleared away vegetation that served as a hiding place for terrorists. ‘Cleared away vegetation’? You might think they had placed a bunch of trees to conceal terrorists. Simply a corruption of the language; a corruption of consciousness.”⁵²

Occasionally it is the authorities that enforce the language laundry, but in many cases it stems from the editors as well as journalists themselves, who adopt terms and patterns of speech used in the IDF and other security forces. In the early 21st century, Israeli media positioned themselves together with the government, and engaged in disseminating the Israeli narrative vis-à-vis the Palestinian one.

Yet at the same time, articles and programs that criticize the military and military matters are constantly being published and screened. Since about the third year of the Second Intifada (2003), there has been an increase in publications criticizing the military’s conduct in the territories, military decisions, and operations by military units. Some were highly critical, such as of IDF soldiers abusing the corpses of Palestinians and the growing numbers of Palestinian children killed, in addition to criticism levelled at other aspects of the security establishment’s comportment.

So how can we reconcile the coexistence of these two antithetical trends: on the one hand loyally gathering round the flag, and on the other, the highly critical material being published? How can the media declare loyalty to their role as the government’s watchdog, and at the same time serve it so faithfully? There is a possible solution to that dilemma if we distinguish between two types of civilian control and supervision: namely, instrumental and substantive. The first examines “from within” how the security system operates,

while the second examines it from outside. In the first, the media are part of the existing social order, while in the second they seem to stand outside and examine it. The first applies considerations of efficiency, while the second applies a normative code, where fundamental assumptions of the security doctrine are analyzed, such as the use of force, the perception of a just war, and so forth.

Media scholars, such as Daniel Hallin and Lance W. Bennett who have dealt with the question of media criticism in wartime, have developed the indexing model. They contend that when the media apply a critical stance, the degree of freedom they permit themselves reflects the spectrum of opinions that exist among decision-makers, and in any event they do not diverge from the range of the dominant ideology.⁵³

This explanation minimizes the importance of evaluating the autonomy which the media enjoy in polyarchic regimes. The journalistic vocation has two faces. On one hand, the journalist's role resembles the intellectual's – he or she is meant to be a prophet of doom who discloses the truth and speaks for justice. The second face is antithetical to the first; the journalist performs a social mission on behalf and in the name of the collective, and represents the supreme political authority – the state. As such, the journalist has a socializing, educating, and mobilizing role; acting on behalf of the hegemon, the sovereign. His objective is to help achieve social solidarity and support the existing order – to create consensus. The second face is found particularly in social movements battling for national independence, at early stages of nation-building and state-building, or when the collective faces external and internal risks to its existence.

After the First World War, disillusionment set in over dashed expectations that intellectuals would play their expected roles. Benda published a work on the “treason of intellectuals,” depicting how they abandoned their autonomous status and harnessed themselves to the authority of brutal and racist nationalism. The same thing recurred later with greater impact (Martin Heidegger working for the Nazis, the French intellectuals helping the Vichy regime) ending the belief that intellectuals could fulfill the expectations held of them, if they

ever did so in the past. Accordingly the perception took root that they were simply the regime's agents.

Is there a difference between intellectuals in totalitarian regimes, where they act as full-scale agents, and their counterparts in polyarchic systems where intellectuals seem to have a certain degree of autonomy? Poulantzas answers this by proposing a distinction between autonomy and partial autonomy,⁵⁴ contending that even state institutions, including ideological political institutions, are likely to retain a certain degree of independence or autonomy from the control of the ruling class. It grants them autonomy, so that they can be considered free and are able to shore up the basis of legitimation needed to ensure their credibility.

Without fully adopting Poulantzas's perspective – for example, his class-based analysis – we can embrace the concept of partial autonomy and identify the conditions in which autonomy of intellectuals, like that of other agents of meaning, flourishes or declines. Clearly, a threat to the collective's existence or its inner solidarity will create a decline. Poulantzas's concept of relative autonomy can help explain what happened in Israel in the transition from the 20th to the 21st century.

Toward the end of the century, when Israel's sense of existential security was strengthening, the uniform and homogeneous character of the hegemonic ideology was shattered, and awareness of alternative narratives intensified. Though it remained hegemonic among the community of agents of meaning, its degree of exclusiveness as compared to other narratives was weakening. This situation allowed the media a more diverse space for opinions and interpretation. Secondly, there were alternative opinions, with critical conclusions about Israeli securitarianism, Zionism, Ashkenazi dominance, and Israeli ethno-nationalism; they had always existed to a certain degree, at society's margins, but in the 1990s they shifted toward the center and were legitimized to some extent among non-peripheral groups as well.

These developments were reflected in the media. Unlike in the past, it now also mirrors civil society and individuals, but

its autonomy is relative. Its supervision is instrumental, not substantive. Articles, features, and commentaries on military matters level criticism at the efficiency and functioning of the military system. The media examine to what degree the military achieves its stated objectives, and whether there are foul-ups, flaws, or shortcomings. In contrast, there is hardly any significant criticism of the military's role in Israeli society, the basic assumptions of security policy, the principles of military doctrine, the quality of security decisions, the weapons systems, or on the purpose of its existence.

In a situation of relative autonomy, the effectiveness of the existing system is explored, while substantive control raises questions on the nature of the political and social order. It examines the character of security arrangements, the basic assumptions on which the security outlook is grounded, the fundamental principles of the military, options for a political solution to the conflict, and the place of power-driven options in foreign policy.

Substantive criticism would have been directed first and foremost at the fundamental problem of Israeli society since 1967 – the continuing occupation of the West Bank territories. Paradoxically, the Intifada that broke out in 2000 shored up the fundamental assumption of Israel's political-military elites, contending that the conflict with the Palestinians is an existential one, and therefore there was no need to enquire too much into evaluating the occupation's impact on the continuing conflict. That assumption was ostensibly backed up in 2006 with the victory of Hamas in the legislative elections for the Palestinian Authority. The rise of Hamas contributed to perceiving the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians as one single continuing war that broke out two generations ago or, as Moshe Ya'alon defined it, "the war for the home" or "the continuing of the War of Independence."

Even those who reject the Palestinian interpretation of the conflict must discern that it is being conducted on two levels, that two struggles are being waged in tandem. One is the Palestinian struggle which denies the very existence of the Zionist entity in the heart of Moslem Arab space. In that struggle, the Palestinians are undeterred from employing

terrorism. Simultaneously though, there is a Palestinian struggle for national liberation, for self-determination and coexistence alongside the State of Israel. This results in a dual image: on the one hand, Israel is conducting a counter-insurgency, it has to defend itself against a revolutionary war that is using terrorism; yet on the other hand, Israel is fighting a colonialist war, aimed at broadening its geographical space so that any future settlement will leave it with as much territory as possible. The Palestinian struggle against the Israeli state's very existence lacks international legitimacy, and so among Palestinians who rule out Israel's existence, some try to present their struggle as solely aimed at freeing themselves from the occupation. Equally, there is no international legitimacy for Israel's war aimed at territorial expansion. It is thus convenient to present the war as being of one kind only – entailing self-defense against terrorism aimed at destroying it.

Since the Second Intifada erupted, the media joined in efforts to present the war as having one aspect only – the struggle for Israel's very existence, or the “struggle for the homeland.” For that reason, images showing the colonialist aspect of Israeli's presence in the territories rarely reached the TV screen – the settlers' behavior, the military efforts, and the suffering of the Palestinians. That is why the means of concealment, disregard, distortion, and the language laundry have to be employed. Anyone who nonetheless tries to train the spotlights on events in the territories is perceived as damaging the national narrative, subverting national resilience – a “hater of Israel.”

An example of this is the perceived sense of Israel as a victim, the passive cause of the conflict, while the Palestinians are the ones who launch attacks. They are violating the existing order, while Israel's violent deeds are explained as self-defense, a justified response to the Palestinians' aggressive initiatives. For their part, the Palestinians see the status quo as a situation of continuous proactive Israeli violence, and their own actions as a reaction against Israeli initiatives. Of course, the question is not who is right “objectively” in this squabble, but how the media construct the

narrative. The argument presented here is that the Israeli media almost exclusively present the Israeli side, and disregard, conceal, and also deny the other narrative's existence.

In the 1990s there was hardly any criticism in Israeli media of the hegemonic security conception. The central media outlets, the three TV channels, radio broadcasts by *The Voice of Israel* and *Galei Tzahal*, and the two tabloid newspapers primarily reflected the hegemonic perception. The other approach could be found in alternative outlets – local newspapers, certain political magazines, and internet sites. Criticism on the national channels was solely instrumental, not substantive. The existence of instrumental criticism paradoxically strengthened the legitimacy of the national media outlets, because, in an era of critical media, an approach totally devoid of criticism would have harmed the status of the media in the public's eyes.

The case of the daily *Haaretz* is a fascinating one. It was the only national media outlet in which substantive criticism was regularly featured throughout the Intifada years. The internal debate within the editorial board of the newspaper during that period was riveting. The editors – who should have expressed as much autonomy as possible in their aspiration to assume the intellectual role of social critics – tried instead to moderate the newspaper's critical line and narrow the divide between the editorial desk's positions and those of the government and the defense establishment. In contrast, the publisher – who should have been concerned by falling revenues and subscription figures, and should have asked his journalists to align themselves with the public opinion and express the dominant values – supported the critical line.

Why did the editors cling to circulation considerations and fear deviating from the mainstream line? The only possible ground for this was the need for legitimacy. Since they wanted to preserve the paper's status as the central platform of Israeli society, they tried to take the readers' positions into account. It was not the economic losses stemming from the cancelled subscriptions of some thousands of readers that disturbed them, but rather the damage to the newspaper's legitimacy. Phrased differently, the degree of autonomy that the means of

communication possesses is not only the result of pressures from either the political and military establishment, but also from consumers – not economic considerations, but considerations of legitimacy.

The range of legitimate criticism does not depend, as the theory of indexing maintains, on the space for criticism found among the elite, but also on the scope of opinion prevalent among the public. And because that scope is significantly reduced in emergencies, it also impacts the newspaper's room for opinions and reduces its autonomy, which a priori is instrumental, not substantive, autonomy.

The second Lebanon War in the summer of 2006 again illustrated, even more strongly, the partial and limited nature of civil supervision that the media exercised over military and security matters. When the war broke out, the media rallied around the flag and unhesitatingly supported the national leadership and the course of the war. When it seemed it would be a short and very successful war, the media were enthusiastic, nationalistic, and jingoistic. But when it became clear that the war was not going to be short, that civilians in northern Israel were suffering, and that the war's management was far from successful, criticism was voiced, though, once again, it was instrumental, not substantive criticism.

The media did not criticize the policy of the policy-setters, but rather how it was implemented. Not the actual decision to go to war, but how the war was conducted. Yet when criticism grew more strident – for example on *Channel 10* or by certain correspondents in the written and broadcast press – the public also reacted angrily, accusing the media of not fulfilling its role in emergency, undermining national unity, damaging national morale, and even assisting the enemy.

The Israeli media's conduct during the second Lebanon War requires a detailed and systematic exploration, but even a preliminary examination of its comportment presents an explicit pattern of oversight by the Israeli media on the military and security – a pattern of instrumental, partial, but never substantive oversight.

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35. Militarism and Civil-Military Relations in Israel: A New Approach

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This paper was completed in October 2014.

Introduction

Because of their theoretical and practical significance and implications, the issue of militarism and civil-military relations in Israel has been the focus of research and extended debates among researchers and analysts from various academic disciplines.⁵⁵ This is the case since its establishment: Israel's democracy has faced problems, since it lacks clearly defined and internationally recognized borders; since its society is changing; since it is still engaged in an unending conflict with its Arab neighbors and the Palestinians; since many of its citizens continue to believe that it is facing existential threats; and since its security sector,⁵⁶ and especially the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), play major roles in almost all social, political and economic aspects.

In view of the questions and quandaries raised concerning these issues, the purpose of this article is fourfold: first, to critically examine the three major existing approaches to the study of the relationship between Israel's security sector, on the one hand, and the country's various civilian spheres – cultural, social, political and economic – on the other hand. These approaches are the “Traditional Approach,” the “Critical Approach,” and the “New Critical Approach”; second, to draw attention to the theoretical and empirical “gaps” that exist among these approaches; third, to analyze the more comprehensive, deeper and essentially informal aspects that exist in this sphere; finally, to suggest ways to overcome the lack of adequate treatment of these highly informal

intertwining relationships and exchanges that have tremendous influences on Israeli defense matters. We suggest that our approach can be accomplished by employing insights from the literature on “policy networks,” defined as “clusters of actors, each of which has an interest, or ‘stake’ in a given policy making sector [...]”⁵⁷

The article has three parts. First, we look at the main aspects of each of the three approaches to the Israeli case. We then analyze these characteristics, compare them, and emphasize the questions that should be raised concerning their treatment of this issue. Finally, we present our own approach and explain how it enhances the understanding of the Israeli case and contributes to the study of civil-military relations in general.

Existing approaches to the Israeli case

The first approach to the study of the relationship between Israel’s civil and military sectors, the “Traditional Approach,” has focused on institutional and formal aspects of the relationship. This approach has drawn on traditional theories of civil-military relations, and especially on the works of Janowitz⁵⁸ and Luckham.⁵⁹ The perspective adopted by this school has been the examination of the structural and functional features of what they regarded as two clearly distinctive civilian and military sectors. Thus, the emphasis in these studies about the Israeli case was on the nature of formal institutions, functions, and policymaking, and on the consequent relations between two essentially separate systems according to this approach – the civilian and the military.⁶⁰ More particularly, according to the adherents of this approach, from the social and political points of view the civilian was the senior among the two systems and politically and socially more powerful than the military.⁶¹ However, they have argued that especially because of the military’s significant role in the essential realm of national security, the boundaries between these two systems became somewhat “fragmented.” This fragmentation allowed interaction between the two systems, which mainly meant that the military was able to engage in

civilian tasks, for example, settlement in the West Bank and education and participation in policy-making in the area of national security, but without undermining civilian superiority and control.⁶² These writers have deduced such conclusions not only from the IDF's purported continuous dependency on the civilian sector for essential financial and manpower resources, but also from the dominance of Israel's civilian political leaders.⁶³

To explain the endurance of Israel's democratic regime despite its preoccupation with security issues, the argument of this school has been that while the IDF and secret services have acquired a de facto monopoly over most matters pertaining to Israel's national security, they have generally abided by the civilian norms.⁶⁴ If one accepts this analysis, the conclusion is that Israel has completed the process of state formation⁶⁵ and social integration, including the differentiation of its civil and military realms and the imposition of effective control of the latter by the former.⁶⁶ We contend that this is not an adequate depiction of the Israeli case especially since 1967.

The second – the “Critical Approach” – has been part of a general trend in the Israeli social sciences beginning in the 1980s and 1990s to present more critical examinations of Israel, including the societal and political arrangements that influenced the relations of the state's civilian and security sectors and their policymaking roles. However, the adherents to this approach also regarded the civilian and military as two clearly distinguishable sectors. Similarly to the first approach, they also focused on the formal institutional relations between the two sectors, while paying some, but not sufficient, attention to “softer” behavioral and informal aspects and factors.

Like the first school, the Critical Approach also followed formal institutional-organizational theories but did so in a more critical fashion. Its major departures from the previous paradigm are the depiction of both civilian and military systems as essentially *heterogeneous* entities, and that the location of the boundary between these spheres “is not fixed,

but shifts according to the interaction between the military and civil sub-systems.”⁶⁷

From this standpoint these analysts have argued that the security sector *intruded* more into certain civilian spheres. Concomitantly, “rivalries between political groups [were] reflected inside the military establishment,”⁶⁸ and the policymaking process has witnessed the participation of “a coalition of officers and politicians versus another coalition of officers and politicians.”⁶⁹

Like the adherents to the first approach, the writers of this second school argued that civil-military relations in Israel have been characterized by a “political-military partnership” between its separate military and civilian elites. This pattern, which prevailed in most periods in Israel’s history, has in fact *prevented* the full imposition of civilian control of the military.⁷⁰ The continuous involvement of the leaders of political parties in running the IDF since 1948 has been stressed, like the military’s own growing intervention in politics in later periods, especially since 1967.⁷¹ They have also attached importance to the IDF’s expanded control over the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip (until Israeli withdrawal from Gaza).⁷²

Unlike the first approach, which focused on the military’s reservists and their role in its continuously being “civilianized,” this approach has argued that such a view “tends to obscure the equally important facts that, in order to maintain such an army, it is also necessary to have a core of long-service professionals to ensure its capability between military campaigns, and that this puts them in a position to play a major role in influencing such highly important matters as the size of the military’s budget and even, on occasions, the resort to war itself.”⁷³

The third factor that this approach brought up is the ways in which Israel’s political sector has turned into a lodestone for retired security officials.⁷⁴ However, this approach is still far from offering a coherent explanation for the continued predominance of serving and retired security officials and their

substantial impact on numerous aspects of Israeli culture, politics, society and economy.

The adherents of the third approach – the “New Critical Approach” – who are influenced by postmodernist views in the social sciences, pay a great deal of attention to abstract cultural aspects of Israeli society, and they are highly critical of the powerlessness of Israeli civil society, which allows its security sector to play an almost hegemonic role in shaping the state’s behavior.

Unlike the first two approaches, this approach has not followed civil-military relations theories.⁷⁵ But according to them, that is not the only drawback of previous studies on the Israeli case: earlier writers have “endeavored to rid Israel of the stigma of militarism” by defining it as a “nation-in-arms,” a term with positive connotations, instead of a “garrison state” a term that is more pertinent to its true nature.⁷⁶ From this perspective, even the term “military democracy,”⁷⁷ coined by an author from the Critical Approach was totally rejected. Some authors within this third approach have criticized other works for not trying “to ascertain whether civility as such even exists in Israel; and if so, what its essence and character might be.”⁷⁸ Their conclusion was that Israeli society had clear “militaristic” attributes, which have impinged on its democratic character.⁷⁹ Yet, other writers of this school suggested that the “militarization” of politics and society in Israel did, in fact, allow its civilian institutions to establish mechanisms for control over the army by making it “dependent on the state’s resources.”⁸⁰ As noted, this dependence is also stressed by the first approach. Still others identified “agreement and cooperation among the military, the political elites, and the citizenry” in Israel which precluded military intervention in its politics.⁸¹

Comparison of the three approaches

In this section we address in a comparative manner nine issues dealt with by these three approaches, identify the gaps in their

treatment of the Israeli case, and suggest what should be done in order to grasp the Israeli case more fully and deeply.

The theoretical perspective

Generally speaking, the Traditional Approach has adopted a formal-structural-institutional viewpoint which regards the relationship between Israel's civil and military systems as a relationship between two separate sectors that perform their expected formal roles in a fundamentally democratic fashion. The main perspective of the Critical Approach is also formal-institutional, but some writers who belong to this school have correctly given attention to certain informal aspects that they thought characterized the relations between the two systems. The main emphasis of the New Critical Approach is on abstract aspects of the relationships between the two spheres, i.e., on highly informal exchanges.

The main contribution of the Critical Approach and the New Critical Approach is that these have gradually moved away from the emphasis of the Traditional Approach on formal-structural-institutional aspects of the Israeli case, calling attention to its highly significant informal aspects. While the Critical Approach has been interested in highlighting the informal political and social relationships between actors within the civilian and military spheres, the New Critical Approach has stressed the abstract cultural dimensions of this interface as well as the disagreements and debates concerning values, ideologies and positions regarding the solution of the conflicts in which the Israelis and Israel have been involved.

We agree that in order to fully understand the power and roles of the security sector in Israel, the deeper and continuous connections between serving IDF officers and officials in the security sector, on the one hand, and actors operating in the civilian sector, on the other hand, are more meaningful than the formal aspects of their relationship. However, we contend that these informal exchanges, which concern various patterns of public policy making and behavior, are by no means

occasional and haphazard, but are deeply routinized and have assumed a continuous nature.

What it still lacking, however, is a more systematic inquiry of informal factors. As we suggest, the literature on “policy networks” can be employed to elucidate and conceptualize the relationships between these closely linked individuals and groups in Israel.

While some authors have written about a “partnership” between Israel’s distinguishable civil and military subsystems or of a “connection” between its military and political elites,⁸² others have identified something resembling a “military-industrial complex.”⁸³ But no attempt has been made to broaden this characterization to deal with the complex informal networks that emerged within Israel’s security sector, on the one hand, and its political, social, economic, and cultural spheres on the other, which substantially influence policymaking and major policies. We will elaborate on this significant factor.

The models for the analysis of the Israeli case

Despite certain disagreements, the Traditional Approach and the Critical Approach were influenced by existing analytical models of civil-military relations that were developed in and applied to established Western democracies.⁸⁴ The New Critical Approach, which was informed by more critical assessments of the processes of states’ activities, rejected the paradigm of civil-military relations, which was “based on the desire to protect democracy and to sustain the stability of regimes” and “neglected the relations between external conflicts [...] and domestic social and political arrangements.”⁸⁵ Instead, this approach emphasized Israel’s separate civilian and military realms. While some writers who belong to the New Critical Approach did compare Israel to Western democracies in periods of severe domestic crisis (e.g., France during the Algerian War)⁸⁶ no attempt was made to compare Israel to non-Western democratic and democratizing states.⁸⁷

We believe that the use of Western models of civil-military relations for analyzing the Israeli case, which was problematic from the outset, became particularly unhelpful since 1967. One reason for this is the considerable expansion of Israel's "Security Networks" – the informal and hybrid policy networks in the realm of the state's national security – and their significant impact over the entire Israeli scene; and the unsolved question whether militarism exists in Israel. It could thus be concluded that the Critical Approach and the New Critical Approach, despite their attempts to present an alternative reading of the Israeli case, did not pay enough attention to the wider aspects and implications of the position and activities of the Security Networks.

Our suggestion in this respect is twofold. First, thinking in terms of "policy networks" would result in a much better understanding of the informal aspects of the various roles of Israel's security sector in politics, society, economy and culture. More specifically, there is a need for a systematic examination of the various impacts of Israel's Security Network on the state's behavior.

Characterization of the Israeli case

The Traditional Approach has characterized Israel as a "nation-in-arms," or as a "civilianized military in a partially militarized society."⁸⁸ The Critical Approach, while also using the notion of a "nation-in-arms," spoke of a "partnership" between some members of the security and civilian sectors and claimed that in the earlier decades after Israel's establishment, the pattern of civil-military relations in the state was characterized by "apparat control" by Ben-Gurion's Mapai over the security sector.⁸⁹ Finally, the New Critical Approach questioned the traditional concept of Israel as a "nation-in-arms" and portrayed it as a "garrison state" or as a "praetorian state" that is imbued with militarism. Some writers regarded Israel as being dominated by a "military-industrial complex."

It appears, then, that the Critical Approach and the New Critical Approach represent a far less idealistic image of Israel than the Traditional Approach. However, their

conceptualization of the Israeli case is problematic, too. The Critical Approach, consistent with its emphasis on the treatment of both the political and military spheres as essentially unconnected, draws attention to the informal linkages between the military and the political parties. However, its notion of “apart political control” is with regard to the earlier decades of Israel’s independence questionable in view of heightened role of the security sector in Israel’s early period as well, though it could be argued that the latter’s dominant position in later decades was related to the *absence* of one hegemonic party that controlled all aspects of life in Israel. The New Critical Approach, for its part, seems to have replaced one blurred concept “nation-in-arms” with another, “militarism.”

Therefore, we suggest that there is a need for an approach that would emphasize the dynamic processes occurring in Israeli politics, society, economy and culture. This observation also applies to the relationship between security officials and actors operating within the abovementioned spheres. Again, we suggest that the most beneficial way of analyzing the Israeli case is by thinking in terms of the existence of a highly variegated and changing Security Network whose members are very deeply involved in most aspects of public life in Israel, which does not mean militarism.

The structure of the two sectors and their relationships

The Traditional Approach posits that there are homogeneous, autonomous and separate civilian and security sectors and that basically the boundaries between them have been, and continue to exist but they are fragmented. The view of the Critical Approach is that while there are indeed two separate sectors, each is heterogeneous, a fact that allows for different types of boundaries and interdependence. The New Critical Approach maintains that the question of structure and relationship is meaningless because a civilian sector virtually does not exist in Israel or lacks substantial coherence and power.

The valuable analytical insights that the Critical Approach and the New Critical Approach have provided are their criticism of the widely accepted traditional depictions of the structural homogeneity and hierarchical relationship between the civilian and military sectors. In fact, these two approaches regard these spheres as made up of various actors that pursue quite different types of ideas and actions. From a theoretical perspective, this represents a break from traditional theories of civil-military relations concerning such structures and interactions, which are not applicable to the Israeli case.

Our approach is to view each of these sectors as consisting of various senior actors that intermingle very closely and form highly informal “policy networks” – the Security Networks. This analytical and theoretical approach takes into consideration the increased penetration of active and retired personnel of the security sector into most of the civilian sphere, which has no parallel in effective democratic states, and which, moreover, is not balanced by the political control over the state’s security sector. The result of this process is that in Israel there is little civilian influence over the military, but, rather, the other way around: military values penetrate and influence most civilian spheres. It is also clear that Huntington’s “political approach,” which prescribed a professional army separated from society by clearly defined borders that are supervised by civilian institutions, cannot be applied to Israel due to the weakness of its political society.⁹⁰ In sum, Western “ideal-types” of civil-military relations are inapplicable to Israel since they presuppose the predominance of the civilian sector. What is needed, hence, is a more realistic approach that would start from the premise that the civilian sector in Israel is weak compared to its security counterpart and to explain the causes for this situation, its various manifestations, and the ways in which it could be reversed.

The power of the civilian sector

Also concerning the power of the civilian sector there is disagreement between the three approaches. The proponents of the Traditional Approach argue that the political and social

power of the civilian sector in Israel is substantively superseding that of the security sector. However, the Critical Approach contends that the power of the civilian sector has been on the decline, especially since 1967.

Basically we agree with the view expressed by the Critical Approach that there have occurred clear processes whereby the actual civilian sector in Israel has been weakened through the years, especially since 1967. At the same time, and unlike the New Critical Approach, we suggest that it is impossible to totally discard the capabilities of the civilian sphere in Israel. While one should wonder about the existence of truly civilian values among the state's intertwined political and military elites, as well as among the general public, at least some civilian values surely exist and have some impact on Israeli politics, though it is difficult to articulate and detect these values. Nevertheless, one could mention the views expressed by peace movements, by civil rights organizations, by anti-corruption movements, by environmental organizations, and even by individual "whistle-blowers." Hence, it can be argued that while the civilian sphere in Israel is generally and relatively weak – part of this weakness should be attributed to its considerable fragmentation, manifested in the decline of political parties, the failings of the Knesset and to an extent also of the Israeli courts – and has to share power with the security sector especially in matters concerning national security, sometimes it is capable of asserting itself and influencing public policy.

Civilian control of the military in Israel

The Traditional Approach suggests that the civilian control over the military in Israel is firm. The Critical Approach maintains that the scope and level of control is insufficient, especially during what is generally viewed as security emergencies. And the New Critical Approach argues that because of the inherent weakness of the civilian sector in Israel any form of civilian control is impossible.

The valuable contributions of the Critical Approach and the New Critical Approach are, again, their reconsideration of

the relationship between Israel's civilian and military realms. Their works suggest a very problematic civilian control over the military and that, in fact, the security sector wields considerable influence over the civilian spheres.

We argue that in view of the accumulated power of the Security Networks, the perceived continuous existential threats to Israel, the incomplete process of state formation and the militancy, rather than militarism, in Israel, civilian control of the military and the other security agencies is indeed weak and problematic. It seems, moreover, that attempts to impose civilian control without solving Israel's cardinal actual problems are ineffective, and could even backfire, like in the US, where the "postmodern army" envisaged by some authors,⁹¹ has been largely reversed following the events of September 11, 2001.

The interests and powers of the security sector in Israel

Concerning the interests of Israel's security sector, the Traditional Approach does not identify any particular interests of the security sector, and especially the IDF, and argues that its goals have been determined by the predominant civilian sector. The Critical Approach, for its part, emphasizes the influence of class, ethnic, and educational relations in Israeli society on shaping the military's interests.⁹² Only the New Critical Approach tries to deal to an extent with the corporate interests of the security sector. We concur that these interests, especially those of the IDF, are essentially similar to those of military institutions elsewhere.⁹³ However, and due to structural factors, especially the chronic weakness of the civilian sector in Israel, these interests have gradually come to be shaped by a complex game between the various components of the country's more extensive Security Networks.

The positions of the three approaches concerning the relative powers and influences of the two sectors are also different. The Traditional Approach suggests that the power of

the security sector is far from being substantial and claims that it gains its strength from the reserve system and from the social contacts between its officials and the civilian policymakers. The Critical Approach argues, by contrast, that the power of the security sector has been increasing since 1967, especially due to the upsurge in size and budgets of the IDF and the penetration of senior army officers into politics and social affairs. The New Critical Approach maintains that because of the continuous weakness of the civilian sector the military is powerful in public spheres.

Though they do not elaborate on this aspect, the important contributions of the Critical Approach and the New Critical Approach in this connection are their emphases on the considerable strengthening of the security sector since 1967, and especially the growing penetration of senior security officials into Israel's political system. Our own empirical findings reaffirm this trend.⁹⁴

The Critical Approach is attentive to the corporate interests of the military, and has differentiated between the regular army, which has long-standing and long-range interests and considerations, and the reservists and conscripts who are effectively under the latter's control and influence – the IDF can place them where it desires. The New Critical Approach, for its part, is right when emphasizing the hegemonic power of the security sector in Israel, yet it raises the question whether this supremacy represents a continuous phenomenon or one that could be accelerated by dramatic events such as the wars of 1967, 1973, and 1982. Our findings show that during and after each of these clashes, both the number of retired security officials in the Israeli cabinet and the functions they assumed had shown a marked increase.⁹⁵

We suggest that on most occasions the security sector, especially the IDF, gets its way through the existing Security Network and takes the lead in policymaking in matters of national security especially during periods of crisis. This observation raises the question whether and to what extent it is in the military's interest to initiate and perpetuate such crises

in order to further empower itself or maintain its power. We will return to this issue below.

The relationships between the two spheres in a historical perspective

As could have been expected, the three approaches offer differing perspectives on the historical pattern of the relationship between Israel's civilian and military spheres. The Traditional Approach argues that the civilian sector has been strengthened over time and its control over the security sphere has increased. Thus the proponents of this approach maintain that over the years the military has withdrawn from civilian areas, such as education and absorption of Jewish immigrants to Israel, where it had been active, and civilian control over its activities has intensified, especially through the judicial system and the media. The Critical Approach maintains that the process was impacted by the unending and repetitive crises facing Israel, especially since 1967. This approach presents evidence showing that while in the early decades after its establishment Israel witnessed a substantial penetration of party politics into the military, this process was later reversed and it is the army that has become increasingly involved in politics. The New Critical approach stresses that militarism is intrinsic to Zionism and that the ongoing nature of militarism in Israel "tends to serve as one of the *organizational principles* of the society"⁹⁶ (emphasis in text), or, alternatively, traces a process whereby militarization, has led to the imposition of civilian control of the military.⁹⁷

The problem with the attitude of the Critical Approach concerning this issue is its emphasis on crises while avoiding the structural problems that underpin them. In other words, the "crises" are the symptoms of the disease rather than its causes. In some of its assertions, the New Critical Approach is insensitive to changes and transformations that have occurred in this sphere, as evinced by the diametrically opposing outcomes that it ascribes to Israel's militarism.

Unlike these approaches, we maintain that what have actually happened were growing mutual suspicions and

competition over resources and policymaking between civilian and security actors, which reached their pinnacle in 1967, and the ascendance of the Security Network to a strong position in the country ever since.⁹⁸

The process of state formation in Israel

Although the Traditional Approach attributes some significance to the impact of the 1967 War on the development of the Israeli state, mainly because of the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and thus the de facto expansion of Israel's borders, it does suggest that basically the process of state formation has been completed and that consequently one can speak of two distinct stable spheres in this state: one "civilian" and the other "military." Therefore the adherents to this approach can define the relative positions of each of the two sectors and their interactions. Contrarily, the Critical Approach and the New Critical Approach – explicitly and implicitly – assert that Israel's state formation process is still underway. Yet, all three approaches more or less assume that there have been no major changes in the relations between the various sectors in the Israel society and politics. This means that these approaches demonstrate a rather static conception concerning the dual processes of state formation and social integration in Israel since its establishment in the late 1940s.

Still, the implicit or explicit acceptance by the second and third approaches of the continuing process of state formation in Israel is important because it makes this state comparable to other "new states" in the Third World that are engaged in building the various systems of governance, and not only to established states in the West. This has implications for the application of Western theories and models of civil-military relations to the Israeli case.

We suggest that a conception and analysis based on the notion of stability is inappropriate for the study of the Israeli case. This is because the security sector, and its relationship with the relevant civilian spheres, changes over time. Thus, a more penetrating discussion of the Israeli dynamic and changing case should focus on the more relevant factors. We

regard that process as a chaotic transformation of many factors, aspects and characteristics of the Israeli state. We presume that this is a continuous process, but one that is not necessarily linear. For example, 1967 was a step backwards in the process.

We argue that the chaotic process of state formation in Israel, which, among other things, impinged on its democratic character, has produced only nominal separation between its national-security realm and each of its cultural, political, social and economic spheres.

From the empirical viewpoint we suggest that after six decades of independence, this complex and informal Security Network has acquired a predominant status in major areas of public life and public policy in Israel. Although the security sector is, of course, an actor with its own corporate interests, various elements within it have gradually become intertwined with influential actors in Israel's civilian spheres. As we demonstrate elsewhere,⁹⁹ Israel's Security Network, which had existed in an embryonic form since 1948, has been strongly influenced – and to a large extent transformed – by the 1967, 1973, and 1982 wars and by later events such as the two Palestinian Intifadas of 1987 and 2000.

Our new approach to the Israeli case

Now it is adequate to specify some of our general views concerning the study of the position, power and role in policymaking of Israel's Security Networks.

First, let us clarify what we mean by the term “Security Networks” and what differentiates it from a “political-military partnership,”¹⁰⁰ or, alternatively, from the military's “role expansion” and “role contraction,”¹⁰¹ terms used by proponents of the other approaches. These later terms imply the existence of at least two clearly delineated and stable subsystems that are more or less equal in strength and that interact voluntarily.

What has emerged in this case are, in effect, tightly knit policy networks characterized by intimate ties between acting

or retired security officials (including officers who serve in the army's reserves), politicians on the national and local levels, civilian bureaucrats, private entrepreneurs, and journalists. We regard the Security Networks as informal hybrid arrangement involving a range of different actors, including some representing nongovernmental institutions and firms that are inherently involved in public policymaking and implementation.

Our concept of Israel's Security Networks thus connotes a complex and fluid type of relationships between security and civilian actors, but one that is ultimately capable of shaping the policymaking process as well as concrete policies. The boundaries between these actors are utterly blurred, significant overlapping areas are created, and the civilian actors are equal in their power to the security actors and are therefore unable to exercise effective control over them or significantly reduce their impact on policymaking. In addition, movement between the defense establishment and each of the civilian spheres remains frequent, if not "natural." Probably most important, actors from both realms that are members of the network share values, interests, goals, discipline and behavioral patterns.

Hence, and in contrast to the ideas of "fragmented boundaries" between autonomous security and civil sectors, Israel's Security Networks in fact work against systemic differentiation of the military and the other security agencies as well as against efficiency in them and in the relevant civilian spheres. Instead, there has been a high level of interdependence between the two sectors. The persistence of this dynamic state of affairs renders the notion of the military's "role expansion" or "role contraction" inapplicable; the same pertains to the notion of a "crisis" in civil-military relations in Israel.¹⁰²

In a much wider sense, but still somewhat resembling the "military-industrial complex" concept, the Security Networks connote a highly potent fusion of security and civilian interests that comes at the expense of the interests and needs of the Israeli public. Our approach underscores the relationship between actors within the state's security sector and a large number of civilian actors (including many senior reservists),

the unremitting flow of security personnel into utterly civilian spheres, and the ways all these affect policymaking and concrete policies.

The continued existence of the Security Networks in Israel, especially since 1967, has prevented the emergence of more differentiated civilian and military spheres. Indeed, unlike the notion of “partnership,” which has a positive connotation, the notion of Security Networks reflects a critical appraisal of the current situation in Israel. Finally, the focus on Security Networks reflects the emphasis on informal aspects of the relationship between security and civilian actors.

As we have suggested elsewhere,¹⁰³ Israel’s Security Networks stem not from the “militaristic” nature of Zionism and Israeli politics, as claimed by the New Critical Approach, but rather from the particular power structure established by the state’s founding fathers and their successors, who sought to use the security sector, and especially the IDF, not only for defensive needs but also to promote the processes of state formation and social integration. Yet, in their quest to guarantee the corporate interests of their institutions, actors from within the security sector later cast a shadow on the civilian leaders and as an informal collective entity became influential political actors in Israel. The boundaries between the state’s security and civilian spheres, which are deliberately kept porous, allowed these security officials to penetrate utterly civilian realms and forge alliances with influential actors within them, thus enhancing the mutual links between these spheres.

Our re-conceptualization of the highly complex relationship between actors within Israel’s security sector, on the one hand, and influential actors within the state’s cultural political, social and economic spheres, on the other hand, is aimed at explaining the current situation, filling in the gaps in and between previous analyses, and laying the basis for a new theoretical approach to this issue in Israel and in similar cases, not necessarily in the West.

Conclusions

In this essay we have discussed the major existing approaches to the study of the relationship between Israel's civilian and security sectors and presented the main features of our own approach, which focuses on what we have termed the Security Networks.

There are some questions related to Israel's Security Networks that warrant further investigation. There is a need for more in-depth studies of Israel's security elite, the informal interactions between its members and actors from the country's civilian spheres, and an inquiry into those areas where its activities have become institutionalized. One study has traced the informal networks between Middle East specialists that include members of the security sector and scholars who teach and do research at Israel's leading universities and discusses their cumulative impact on how Israelis have come to view their Arab neighbors.¹⁰⁴

The second area that needs to be further addressed is the values and perceptions that are shared by members of Israel's Security Networks and how they have shaped the worldview of other Israelis. In our view, the discussion of these issues could be significantly enhanced by referring to recent theoretical advances in the field of International Relations. These comprise works, including our last book, that suggest that the definition of "security" ought to be expanded to include economic, environmental, and cultural threats, and that "security" itself should be treated not as an *objective* condition but, rather, as the outcome of a specific social process whereby certain issues are "securitized."¹⁰⁵ A second pertinent area is the expanding discussion of "communities of practice," and particularly the notion of "epistemic communities" which are networks of experts who share a common understanding of the scientific and political nature of particular problems (in our case, security-related issues) and whose influence on policymaking, especially under conditions of uncertainty – including the existence of imagined existential threats – stems from the fact that they are considered to be authorities in their areas of specialization.¹⁰⁶ It would be interesting to ask, for instance, how both critical *and* mundane issues and areas in Israel have become "securitized," and whether its Security

Networks have, in fact, become a type of “epistemic community.”

Finally, there are the sources of the networks’ power and the resources available to its members. Here one could mention “external” factors such as the generous American military aid to Israel, which enhances the domestic stance of its security sector, and the Arab-Israeli conflict, which “justifies” its continued preeminence. A second set of factors, which can be termed “internal/external,” are Israel’s blurred boundaries with its neighbors, the Arab territories that have been, or still are, under Israeli occupation (these are administered only by the security sector), and the massive fortifications built by Israel in and around these areas, including the current “Security Fence.” The third set of factors, which are domestic in nature, include the continued state of emergency in Israel and the various exemptions granted to the security sector in the areas of planning, safety, taxes, etc., which, too, serve to legitimize its role in the country. Current debates on the “state of exception” in democratic regimes¹⁰⁷ can help elucidate these aspects of the Israeli case, which, like the other factors mentioned heretofore, have not been adequately addressed.

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36. Patterns of Militarism in Israel

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This paper originally appeared as "Patterns of Militarism in Israel," *European Journal of Sociology* 34, no. 2 (1993): 196–223.

Most of the subjects concerned with Israel, such as the location of the military and militaristic culture, are heavily distorted in comparison to other themes prevalent in the discourse and the debates in the social sciences, very much like the other issues linked with the Jewish-Arab conflict and Jewish-Arab relations.¹⁰⁸ Ideological and value loaded considerations blur the issue, making even the usage of the term "militarism" in the canonical textbooks a taboo in Israel. The main purpose of this paper is three-fold: 1) to present a brief survey of the present state of the literature on so-called "civil-military relations" in Israel, from which 2) a revision can be made of the overall impact of the Jewish-Arab conflict and the militarization of Israeli society. This will be followed by 3) a reformulation of the effect of militarization on the institutional and value spheres of the Israeli collectivity.

The favorite "puzzle" that appeals most to social science researchers who deal with Israeli society centers around one research question: as Israel harbors so much military strength, and its military force constitutes such a central part of its society and is essential to its survival, why has the state not become militarist?¹⁰⁹ Given the facts that in Israel military elite soldiers enjoy such prestige, the military budget claims about a fourth of the state's expenses, and a kind of military industrial complex has emerged within the country and accumulated powers of its own,¹¹⁰ how can it be that Israel has not developed a militarist society and not become a modern Sparta? Answers given to this question generally relate to a combination of primary variables which include 1) the stability of the political structure and the democratic political culture;¹¹¹ 2) the "people's army" nature of the Israeli armed forces (or as they are called officially – the "Israel Defense

Forces,” with the initials, IDF). Israel’s military is perceived of as a “popular army” that has undergone a process of “routinization” – that is, the armed forces are built in the main upon civilian reserve units, and they pass through a process of “civilization,”¹¹² by which it is unable to attain a military status detached from the rest of society and beholden to their own, independent interests; similarly, such researchers claim that a kind of mental and institutional compartmentalization between civilian and military spheres obtains in Israel;¹¹³ 3) a military which is obliged to tend to “real” security needs in a constant, intensive fashion has neither the ability nor the resolve to develop a truly militarist character; finally, 4) the armed forces’ high-ranking officers have become “partners” in the social elite which formulates national decisions and allocates resources – and thus, owing to this constructive partnership,¹¹⁴ the military has no incentive to intervene in political and social matters in a manner pernicious to democratic norms. Whenever the military has interloped in civilian spheres, this has been perceived as “positive intervention.”

Such intervention is seen as “role expansion” by which the military contributes to the education of deprived population sectors,¹¹⁵ to settlement activities in the country,¹¹⁶ to the absorption of immigrants¹¹⁷ and to the development of a consensus culture based upon universal conscription.¹¹⁸ In view of such an analysis, researchers have tended to define Israel positively as a “nation-in-arms,” a country in which civilians serve as soldiers whenever necessary so as to defend their homeland, and then take off their uniforms when the danger has passed; in a “nation-in-arms,” such obligatory military service does not encourage the armed forces to acquire more than minimal, unavoidable influence in political, economic and cultural spheres.¹¹⁹ This classification is opposed to the “garrison state” model proposed by Harold Laswell in 1941 – a state run by managers of violence whose existence, given the hostile outlying environment, is dependent upon developing the military means of warding off dangers. Israel has also not been regarded as a “praetorian state” – a state in which the military complex wields decisive powers in

the political process because of the weakness of the political institutions themselves;¹²⁰ in such a praetorian state, the state might be given directly to military rule and martial law, or the political institutions might be co-opted entirely in a manner that conforms to David Rapoport's model (1962).

A considerable body of scholarship, then, has endeavored to rid Israel of the stigma of militarism. Lately, however, a number of Israeli researchers¹²¹ have tended to characterize Israel as a militarist society. This definition has supplemented other claims about the society, such as the chauvinistic nature of Israeli nationalism, and the workers party's (Mapai, the ancestor of the Labor party) "betrayal" of socialism. They view the turn to militarism as a consequence of the establishment of the state in 1948 and of Israel's incorporation in the "Western bloc." In this view, rather than solving the Arab (Palestinian) problem via a peace process, it was in Israel's perceived interest to "externalize" the conflict and transform it into a dispute between states, if only to forestall the return of the refugees. Venturing quite a different analysis, Ben-Eliezer¹²² reached a similar conclusion. In his view, the roots of militarism in Israeli society reach back to the Jewish political community (the *Yishuv*) which developed in colonial or Mandatory Palestine. In this period, the conclusion that only force resolved the Jewish-Arab conflict was conclusively adopted – and this conclusion has remained operative ever since. As a result of this social construction of reality, an elite has emerged in Jewish society whose crucial social role derives from its military or "security" functions. Barzilai¹²³ using a much more "soft" term of "combatant community," found the "permanent siege" costly in terms of some civil rights which were considered inferior to "security needs."

Both in institutional and conceptual senses, the concept of "security" in Israel is far more wide sweeping than the term military; at the same time, the ever-expansive boundaries of "security" are loosely denned, and almost any sphere or subject can be connected expediently to "security" – for instance, the economy, industry, settlement, as well as elementary school, high-school and higher education structures are often incorporated in security-related spheres.

Yet if the institutional boundaries of what is called the “security network” are mapped somewhat more formally, they would appear to include the following elements: the armed forces, the intelligence network and General Security Services, the civil and military administration of the occupied territories, the defense ministry and its governmental bureaucracy, the Knesset (Israeli parliament) “Foreign Affairs and Security Committee,” the government’s (not permanent) security cabinet, the many-branched military industry which includes R&D sectors (these branches are either government owned, public or private), and, finally, various lobby groups of the branches mentioned above.

Despite these recent findings, analyses, insights and hypotheses, the tendency of social science researchers who address Israeli society is to resist any classification of Israel as a militarist state or society. Assuming that Israel is not militarist, an analytic riddle indeed remains: how has the state retained an essentially non-militaristic nature, if objective conditions that urge militarism are constantly at play in Israel, and signs of militant character appear in many of its public spheres?

This debate is, perhaps, not entirely semantic. In fact, the central claims of the present article are as follows: in contrast to most of the approaches in social science research of Israel, which abjure the state’s militarist character, it seems reasonable to argue that militarism has developed in great measure in Israel. While such militarism has varied from time to time in character and potency, Israeli militarism tends to serve as one of the *central organizational principles* of the society. This phenomenon arises mainly as a response to the situation of protracted conflict that has dominated the Zionist settlement movement since its inception in a Palestine¹²⁴ setting where surrounding Arab populations are hostile to this movement’s perceived colonial aims.¹²⁵ Militarism became a factor in Israel’s society when arms and the management of violence came to be perceived as routine, self-evident and integral parts of the Israeli-Jewish culture, as a state of nature that could never be changed. Such militarism developed a distinctive character over time; after 1977, it declined, yet at

the beginning of the current decade it appears to be taking shape once again. But as Shaw put it, “militarism and militarization do not depend simply or directly on the role of the military in society [...] but, to the extent that war preparation becomes central to it, it may become effective through other [societal] institutions.”¹²⁶ To this, one might add the extent to which the state and society is organized institutionally as well culturally around the management of a protracted external conflict.

Patterns of militarism

Militarism has three main dimensions. Each dimension can exist separately as an expression of a specific kind of militarism; or, a dimension may co-exist in some combination with one or both of the other dimensions. Each combination provides another pattern of militarism; it bears mention, of course, that these are ideal types (in the Weberian sense of the term), and in empirical reality not all the possible combinations of militarism can be found, and when they appear they vary in scope and extent. The first dimension can be called the violent-force dimension; the second is a cultural dimension; the third is a cognitive dimension.

The force dimension takes shape when military rule directly or indirectly is established and imposed for a length of time – military rule comes about when generals or colonels take power (even when they take off their uniforms so as to create a facade of civilian rule). This rule is exclusively based upon the coercive force of the armed forces’ bayonets and its loyalty to the military leadership. In this eventuality, military officers become power brokers; they determine the public agenda, regulate the allocation of resources for the good of the military, and reward the ethnic or national class or group from which they themselves have emerged. This process of military rule is exemplified by regimes that were established in Africa¹²⁷ and Latin America from 1970–1990.¹²⁸

The force dimension is assured by evident social mechanisms: it arises when significant civilian portions of the state accept military rule as a self-evident truth – as happened

historically, for instance, in revolutionary stages in the establishment of Latin American regimes, when the armed forces became the flag-bearing, liberating element that assured the overthrow of colonialism,¹²⁹ and when the civilian politicians are perceived as being inferior in terms of efficient management of the state, incorruptibility, patriotism and the representation of the “real interest” of the citizens of the motherland. In other words, this type of militarism occurs when the perception of the military regime as a self-evident entity penetrates the collectivity’s cognitive map. In this way, the military rule imposed by force acquires a type of legitimacy, as its very existence is not considered by many strata of the population to be problematic or a subject for political bargaining. It bears mention that when such legitimation and hegemony arises, the phenomenon should be classified as a comprehensive military regime, rather than transient military rule.

At the same time, this type of militarism is not yet accompanied by a vast ceremonial expression (except perhaps some personal-cult of a “leader”); and the armed forces are, in the final analysis, perceived to be politically instrumental means. In such situations, the military amplifies its powers to include exigencies of constabulary control for internal security needs, and to the defense of interests connected directly to it, as well as to ethnic, class and other groups that draw their strength from the armed forces and from which they derive their legitimacy. In some cases, such as Lebanon, Somalia, Nigeria, Zaire or Congo, the military becomes embroiled in civil war. At first glance, it would seem that there is not, nor has there ever been, militarism of this type in Israel; such a claim, however, depends upon the way definitions are set, and the manner in which the boundaries of the Israeli collectivity are determined. When, as is done by most social scientists who study Israel,¹³⁰ the collectivity is defined as being basically Jewish, and is defined as being within the “Green-line” borders (1949 ceasefire lines), then Israel can be perceived as a democratic society – at least in terms of these parameters.

On the other hand, when the collectivity’s boundaries are extended to comprise areas that have fallen under Israel’s

authority since 1967 – i.e., the conquered territories of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip or the “Security Zone” established by Israel in Southern Lebanon, regions that represent a kind of settlement and security frontier for the Jewish populations and areas in which 1.8 million Palestinians have lived under a conquest regime for a generation – the role of the Israeli military in the control network receives an utterly different cast. Such surveillance conducted by the armed forces (and an auxiliary force of Arab mercenaries) – an army which ministers policing activities aimed at pacifying a nationally conscious people, and which strives to stifle a popular uprising that broke out in 1989 and has continued ever since – transforms the very nature not only of the Israeli military but also of the entire Israeli state.¹³¹ In this context, the military becomes a main agent in the attempt to assure internal security and surveillance. When the boundaries of the Israeli collectivity are marked in this way,¹³² it taxes credulity to define the state as a “democratic” entity in the accepted usage of the term; instead, Israel becomes what can be termed a *Herrenvolk* democracy, and its military is essentially the same as “tribal” armies in various African states, that assure the hegemony of one part of a collectivity’s population and the subjugation of all its other parts. By this, at least in the Israeli case, Giddens’¹³³ major distinction between internal and external aspects of “pacification” and militarization of the nation-state cannot be applied. The same social institutions, with the same ideologies, operate both internally and externally.

Cultural militarism

Another possible dimension of militarism is the cultural facet; this type can be interwoven with the first form of political militarism. When militarism is confined essentially to this cultural form, it lacks the coercive power to regulate internal affairs, and can thus be termed cultural militarism. Prussian militarism serves as the prototype of this form, a type of militarism Vagts¹³⁴ terms as “militarism by civilians” (as opposed to “militarism of soldiers”). This form of militarism

reached its zenith, as it were, with the Nazi regime. It bears mention that here the military does not control the decision-making process, as that process is governed by a political-ideological elite (this elite might sometimes spruce itself up by donning the dress of generals and marshals). Cultural militarism obtains when the armed forces become essential to the social experience and collective identity, when they rank as one of the collectivity's central symbols and the very embodiment of patriotism. Here public experience is enveloped in ceremonial endeavor dominated by soldiering and military professionals, and by para-militarist groups (such as youth movements which emphasize expressions of power, discipline and military appearance); it is also the case that the main thrust of the collectivity's goals and orientations are defined in terms of war-making, preparations for wars, "wars-for-peace," and "wars for the prevention of wars."

In such political cultures, wars are perceived to be the nation's essence and calling, and this attitude is reinforced as the soldiers march to battle in patriotic war, to the sound of thunderous war plans, that are formulated by ruling civilian elites. Soldiers of all ranks are objects of permanent indoctrination and control by professional political supervisors in uniforms (so-called *politruks*). Victories are commemorated by an elaborate array of monuments, songs of glory and cinema and television film, and a significant portion of private and public discourse applies itself to military matters. Monuments to commemorate warriors and war dead,¹³⁵ memorial days¹³⁶ and the bestowal of decorative medals for war heroism become manifest in the public realm. Indeed, they become an integral part of the culture and the public identity.

In states given to cultural militarism, wars are perceived as necessary and unavoidable societal processes – with respect both to internal and foreign affairs. Each major societal goal – education, industry, technological advance, science, the arts or even leisure – are perceived to be enlisted to serve the "homeland"; and the military is viewed as the purest and most conspicuous embodiment of the "motherland." In such cases, the military tends to be forced to be "apolitical" and ruled by professional criteria; the armed forces are autonomous only as

concerns their own internal matters, and with respect to the implementation of decisions in logistical and tactical areas – and it is not always independent even in these areas. The boundary between the military institutions and political institutions is “integral” in Luckham’s¹³⁷ terms, whereas the boundaries between the military and the cultural sphere are “permeable”; that is to say, all told, the overall boundaries between the army and the society are fragmentary. Military professionals receive esteem and prestige; yet they are not granted political power.¹³⁸ This political power resides precisely in the hands of extra-military (primarily political) institutions which exploit the military, its symbols and the whole realm of “national-security” discourse in order to model the social and political framework – to set the rules of the game, the norms of public behavior, and the priorities in the allocation of societal resources – and even to amplify their own powers.

A certain measure of cultural militarism can be found in the early periods following the establishment of the Israeli state; today some residual elements of this militarism remain. Thus, for example, in the northern metropolitan city of Haifa, at the beginning of the 1950s a military parade was arranged to commemorate the nation’s Independence Day. Marchers set out hoisting the following slogan: “Israel trusts the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] – it is your defender and saviour.”¹³⁹ A similar slogan that was quite current in the 1950s and 1960s was “The guardian of Israel neither sleeps nor slumbers.” It is superfluous to point out that such expressions were known both to religious and secular Jews; here, in a very palpable sense, the military replaced God. These catch-all expressions well reflected the spirit of the time. Jews had attained independence, and were expressing a sense that their existence and security were not now dependent upon the will of God, fate or the (British) colonial superpower. Instead, the collectivity’s existence and progress were assured by a “new muscular Jew,” his army and soldiers.

Indeed, this attitude toward military institutions and toward militarism represents a central, determinative element in the social nexus – at the same time, the collectivity

excluded the adoption of such emotive and practical self-definitions as “militarism,” as the concept had a stigmatic connotation, and was considered to be “not appropriate for Jews.”¹⁴⁰ This is an inclusive militarism; it embraces everything. At the very least, the phenomenon applies to the main, non-marginal, elements of the collectivity; and military mores are presented here as being universal for the time and place.¹⁴¹

A different aspect of cultural militarism is created by a thin, exclusive stratum of civilian as well as military elite groups which rank military knowledge and norms as classified, esoteric material. In so doing, they endeavor to maintain hegemonic control over the collectivity, excluding all “others” who do not possess access to this knowledge and “skills.” In Israel, expressions of this trend appeared whenever the public agenda and the political discourse devoted to subjects defined as “national security interest” was closed and manipulated by such a small elite circle.¹⁴² Even when the security discourse operated in a relatively public manner, it was characterized by the deployment of codes that divided the collectivity into two parts – a small group that “knows the secret” and the vast majority that both accepts the “security-language” to be comprised of self-evident yet recondite and unknown “truths,” or is totally alienated from the discourse. Such social division of labor in the security realm proceeds due to a prevailing assumption that as security matters must remain classified, those who settle affairs in the secret security realm possess extraordinary security-military talents. Such a convention was rehearsed to reinforce a perception that, in contrast to mundane operations in political, social and economic spheres, the decision-makers in these sensitive security fields possess exceptional or extraordinary qualifications. Despite the fact that since the badly managed 1973 War and even more the 1982 War in Lebanon, the prestige of military and armed forces in Israel is continuously decreasing, the institutional and cultural centrality of the security realm remains the same as before.

Praetorian militarism

The type of militarism that corresponds most faithfully to the “classic” notion is praetorian militarism. This type of militarism is comprised of all three elements: coercive-force, cultural-ceremonial and cognitive dimensions. Alfred Vagts defines this militarism as the antithesis of the regular “military-way,” which is

[...] marked by a primary concentration of men and materials on winning specific objectives of power with utmost efficiency, that is with the least expenditure of blood and treasure. It is limited in scope, confined to one function, and scientific in its essential qualities. Militarism, on the other hand, presents a vast array of customs, interests, prestige, actions, and thought associated with armies and wars and yet transcending true military purposes [...]. Its influence is unlimited in scope. It may permeate all society and become dominant over all industry and arts.¹⁴³

This is also a political situation wherein the military represents the governing factor in the state; the armed forces penetrate all social and state networks, such as bureaucracy, economy, education and culture. This occurs when political and civilian institutions are weak and perceived as lacking legitimacy,¹⁴⁴ as in Japan (before World War II) and the Latin American states of the 60s and 70s,¹⁴⁵ as well as some of the African states, and the Bedouin army of Jordan that rules over the Palestinian majority in the Hashemite Jordan state.¹⁴⁶ The military prohibits the existence of an autonomous civilian society; no autonomous public activities are conducted outside of its purview. The armed forces, the state and the economy are all inter-woven. Also, on the cognitive level, no process of differentiation arises between these spheres; the phenomenon is not limited to the institutional level, as C. Wright Mills¹⁴⁷ theorized, but verges toward the military-industrial state envisioned by Giddens.¹⁴⁸

Civilian militarism

The third dimension of militarism is cognitive. Once militarism penetrates this third dimension, the result is that it suffuses both the structural and cultural state of mind of the collectivity. This situation is liable to be reflected by full or partial institutional or cultural expressions; yet the main expression is a *latent state-of-mind*. The situation arises when

the civilian leaders and the led both regard the primary military and strategic considerations as being self-evidently the only or the predominant considerations in most of the societal and political decisions or priority ordering. Usually such an acceptance is unconscious. This militarism is what Lukes¹⁴⁹ used to characterize as the “third dimension of power.” In such a situation, the entire social nexus, both in institutional senses (economic, industrial, legislative) and mental senses, is oriented toward permanent war preparation – of course in order to defend the collectivity’s very existence. Such preparation becomes part of the social routine; it is far from being an issue for public discussion, debates or political struggle.¹⁵⁰ Even when military performance or other measures taken by the armed forces are publicly criticized, as often occurred in Israel, this criticism is made through “military experts” and does not challenge but reinforces the militaristic orientations and discourse. It may be seen as a “total militarism,” mainly because it encompasses most of Israel’s social institutions, and because of the perception that all of the people participate in war preparations, possess military expertise, and a majority is involved in active combat.

Such militarism can be termed *civilian militarism*, as its main bearers and implementers are the social center, the civil government, civil elites and all or most of the members of the collectivity. With respect to this type of militarism, it is not necessary that the military, as an institutional structure, governs in the political sphere; nor is the army necessarily stationed at the center of a statist cult. In contrast, the civilian militarism, or what might be called the military mind, is systematically internalized by most statesmen, politicians and the general public to be a self-evident reality whose imperatives transcend partisan party or social allegiances. The gist of civilian militarism is that military considerations, as well as matters that are defined as “national-security” issues,¹⁵
¹ almost always receive higher priority than political, economic and ideological problems.

Military and national security considerations will constitute part of the central organizing principles of the collectivity. In fact, any nonmilitary consideration is liable to

be subordinate to “national security” rationale and discourse.¹⁵

² Thus, for example, Ben-Gurion (Prime Minister and Minister of Defense) once explained to Moshe Sharett (the Foreign Minister) that “the task of the Ministry of Security is to set security policies, whereas the task of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is to explain them.”

Israel serves as a clear example of this type of militarism. This characterization is amply underscored by the evident and latent social significance that is attributed to military service,¹⁵
³ and by the way in which the whole society orients itself toward constant preparation for war, and by what Ross¹⁵⁴ coined as “militarism of the mind.” The socio-political boundaries of the collectivity are determined and maintained by participation in military service, its manipulation, and sacrifice to support spheres that are classified as “national security.”¹⁵⁵

The legacy of the early period of statehood is mixed, and it is perhaps hyperbolic to argue that trends of cultural militarism were entirely dominant. The identity of the state was, indeed, tied in large part to the military, and the armed forces represented a central element in the whole complex of “sacred” secular aims, achievements and symbols associated with the new state, very much as an inversion of Charles Tilly’s phrase, “wars made states and states made war.” Yet this militarism was not the exclusive nexus of myths and imperatives connected to the state; opposed to it there were symbols of other national imperatives and values: statehood, Judaism as a secularized nationalist creed, social-democracy, the flowering of the wasteland, and the “building of the motherland.” In the 1950s, the armed forces themselves were, on the one hand, an elitist organization that had yet to undergo processes of professionalization and rationalization of the chain of command.¹⁵⁶ On the other hand, at least symbolically, its tasks were “widened” and the mission of building the state was ascribed to it.¹⁵⁷ The results of this amplification of powers were interesting: the process did not, as Horowitz¹⁵⁸ expected, enhance the civilianization of the military; instead, as Janowitz¹⁵⁹ analyzed in his review of the limits of the

civilianization of professional officers and the military in general, this widening of tasks encouraged a trend by which more and more social domains and subjects were perceived to belong to the realm of national security.

Social construction of Arab-Jewish conflict

A major social process that arose in Israel was the translation of the Jewish-Arab conflict (or the Jewish Israeli-Arab Palestinian conflict) in terms of a particular social construction of reality;¹⁶⁰ a particular version of this dispute came to be accepted as a routine, immutable and uncontrollable given. One important aspect of this process involved the encouragement of the perception that the Jewish-Arab Palestinian conflict must be “eternal.” It was interpreted as fate, or a kind of Greek tragedy, to which the two peoples were beholden. Striking up this general theme, Moshe Dayan’s famous eulogy paid tribute to an Israeli soldier (Roi Rotberg) who was killed in May, 1956:

We are a generation of settlers, yet without a helmet or a gun barrel we will be unable to plant a tree or build a house. Let us not be afraid to perceive the enmity that consumes the lives of hundreds of thousands of Arabs around us. Let us not avert our gaze, for it will weaken our hands. This is the fate of our generation. The only choice we have is to be armed, strong and resolute or else our sword will fall from our hands and the thread of our lives will be severed.¹

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These words were uttered by a professional soldier; yet they reflected, and in some measure continue to express, a basic element of Israeli culture. It is therefore no wonder that Dayan’s eulogy was branded on the nation’s collective memory. This process of the routinization of conflict and war, a trend especially potent on the institutional level¹⁶² which was reinforced by the accumulated experience of combat and war, turned Israeli society into a polity that can mobilize itself in a very short time for the advance of two, inter-connected, goals: first, the enlistment of reserve soldiers (who serve along with regular conscripts and army career professionals) to effect a rapid military advantage, and wield a force that is roughly equivalent to that of a middle-sized superpower (about 500,000 men with 4,000 tanks and 600 combat aircraft).

Second, the efficient mobilization of the “home front” in a manner that compensates for the enlistment and departure of the vast majority of adult males, and this home front perpetuates the operation of the domestic social economy (though the level of social performance drops, and the execution of many broad social services is deferred) and so enables the most rapid-possible restoration of a social order ensuant to the end of the general call-up. But this process did not terminate with the absorption of the conflict as part of the institutional construction of the society. As suggested, the conflict became a determinative factor that shaped a fair measure of the social structure and the collective identity of Israel.

The political structure

The political sphere tends to lose its autonomy as “national security” considerations, representatives and interpreters encroach. Civilian militarism represents, in the final analysis, the supreme expression of the attainment of a hegemony: the society and the state become subordinate to the military and national security considerations. Lissak, in an analysis which refers especially to contacts between elites, remarks in somewhat restrained idiom that “there are no really integral boundaries between the defense and civilian sectors.”¹⁶³ This form of militarism is related to Gramsci’s (1973) approach, by which hegemony is defined as the struggle over monopolistic control of a set of ideas that excludes all other possible rival conceptions and approaches to society and state power, and which supports the domination of the ruling social groups. Such ideas may come not only to comprise an entire ideological network that regulates the collectivity’s behavior, the rules of the game in the society and even the perceived “cosmological order” that governs the “world.” More than this, such ideas may be expressed in terms of institutional and behavioral arrangements that determine the collectivity’s structure and its boundaries.

A necessary but not sufficient condition to the ascendance of hegemonic civil militarism, as well as all other types of

militarism, is the turn to the use of force as the preferred means of solving foreign policy problems (the distinction between foreign and domestic, of course, is often blurred). The important determinant factor here is whether or not the military mind turns into an organizing principle in ideological, political and institutional state realms, and whether or not strategic considerations (defined as “necessities” to actual physical survival) become ascendant at the expense of all other considerations – Moshe Dayan summarized this situation with a turn of phrase when he explained at the start of the 1970s that “it is impossible to bear two banners at the same time” – the reference is to the “security banner” as opposed to the banner of social-welfare and other societal goals.¹⁶⁴ It is not so much that the militarist approach gave priority to security as opposed to other social objectives;¹⁶⁵ it is rather that this approach strengthened the perception that *there are no alternatives* in the political and social worlds to the military approach, an approach which is termed “pragmatic,” thought to accord with a given socio-political “reality,” and meant to represent an issue of physical survival.

In general, the military military-mind (in contrast to the “civilian military-mind”), is a kind of Weberian ideal type comprised of 1) the perception of humankind (especially a perceived “enemy”) as being an essentially bad, selfish and irrational actor capable of understanding only the “language of force”; 2) the view that allocative or value-centered conflicts can be adjudicated only by the use of violent force, or (on the international level) by means of war; 3) the idea that instability and uncertainty rules the international order; the actors in this order are nation-states, and the conflicts between them lead invariably to regional wars, or yet more expansive war (only the nuclear balance and deterrence threat reduced this instability to some extent); 4) the view that the supreme duty of army regulars and professionals (as well as those actors who deal with “national security”) is to remain constantly vigilant, as they provide security against the potential advent of total war; 5) the theory that the security threat to the survival of the state is real, tangible and immediate; as it is hard to analyze the probability that certain potential threats

will turn into actual violence, any danger is automatically perceived in terms of a “worst case analysis”; 6) the view that while this situation necessitates the constant investment of social resources (material and human) in the security realm, the dividends reaped by this allocation never suffice, and it is always necessary (and desirable!) to escalate such investments to promote a higher level of security; 7) the idea that the professional military is necessarily subordinate to the “civilian echelon”; at the same time, it is assumed that politicians are typically unable to distinguish between social aims that are desirable and undesirable. For instance, war itself – if it is not imposed upon the country – is not desirable; unnecessary war, or war waged at the wrong moment, merely weakens the state’s power and level of security. The military is not supposed to intervene outright in politics; yet it is supposed to put forward professional opinions for the consideration of statesmen, and to war against impulsive policies and aggressiveness that is not warranted by circumstances. Only when it is absolutely necessary, will recommendations for “preventive war” be made; 8) the elements which glorify war are civilians who have never had first-hand experience of its ardor, tolls and horror; these include statesmen, philosophers, poets, writers, journalists, social-scientists, natural-scientists, etc. – a group of amateurs which is contrasted to a nearly scientific military profession.

Such a description of the military mind emerges in particular from Huntington’s¹⁶⁶ analysis. In contrast, Janowitz¹⁶⁷ argues that professionalization is actually liable to turn the military into an element less responsive to civilian control; the armed forces will develop an ethos described as “the politics of wanting to be above politics.” When civilians come to adopt these orientations, they take them without the self-constraints that the military-ethos imposes on the armed forces. As civilians, they can allow themselves to be more “militaristic” than the military.

The economic structure

The situation becomes yet more evident when the economic structure is examined. From war to war, and especially since 1967, the Israeli economy has undergone an accelerated process of militarization. As a response to the arms shipment embargo enforced against Israel (which started in 1948), the theory of the necessity of autarchy and non-dependence upon foreign elements in the supply of security materials emerged. Thus, Israel manufactures today almost all of its arms, beginning with semi-automatic rifles, sub-machine guns, sophisticated tanks, all kinds of ballistic missiles, self-automated planes, and ending with observation satellites, and missile carriers and warheads.¹⁶⁸ As Israel's economy is too limited to cover the costs of the development and production of a military arms industry on the scale of a middle-ranking superpower, there arose the necessity of turning to a vast program of export of the products of the Israeli arms industry. In this way, Israel became one of the largest arms exporters in the world, trailing only the great superpowers. Other sectors in the military economy were financed by American aid and government domestic subsidies. When Israel is compared to other states in terms of indicators of expenditures for security and material costs, even in current years when these expenditures were drastically cut-off, the Israeli state still has one of the highest "destructive capacities" of resources turned to security.¹⁶⁹

Such circumstances bred the establishment of a military-industrial complex in the pure meaning of the term. The regulation of military production schedules, and the scope and character of military expenditures is governed by elite state bureaucratic groups, forces in the private economy (Israeli and multi-nationals) and the armed forces.¹⁷⁰ In a pioneering study, Bichler¹⁷¹ found that between 1966 and 1986 security expenditures and the conversion of the economy for security production brought about wide-ranging changes in Israel's economic structure, and favored in particular a trend of concentration centered around large holding groups. When in 1985 cuts in internal security consumption were made, and the international market was bogged by crisis, the arms economy entered a period of deep crisis; it was found that it was

virtually impossible to convert production for security needs to production for civilian necessities.¹⁷² For our purposes, Mintz's remark is even more compelling:

[...] public opinion in Israel generally views the activities of the complex with favor and support, often considering them to be essential. Because of the centrality and importance of the security conception in Israel and the broad consensus regarding a tangible danger to Israel's security, expressions such as 'military-industrial complex,' 'new state managers,' or 'national security managers' do not have the same negative connotation which they are accorded in Western countries [...]. Defense production and development is viewed with pride in the ability of and technological might of the small developing state and the 'Jewish genius' dwelling therein.¹⁷³

However, since the mid-1980s, almost all the economic indicators for defense consumption were in a sharp decline (as major societal resources were allocated to the settlement regions of the frontier territories of the West Bank and Gaza). For example the defense consumption as a percentage of gross national income decreased from 20.2% in 1980 to 11.7% in 1991, and the domestic defense consumption from 14 to 8.9 billion shekels.¹⁷⁴

The legislative and judicial structure

After the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948, the provisional state council declared a state of emergency; through to the present day, this declaration has not been annulled, revised or limited. This declaration provides the constitutional basis for emergency legislation and for the implementation of emergency administration; in theory, such laws and powers enforced by the government can suspend or abridge all civil and human rights in the state. Thus, according to clause 9(a) in the Code of Law and Order "the government retains the authority to oblige the will of the prime minister or any other minister and enforce regulations for a state of emergency." Beyond this, a portion of the emergency laws that applied in the period of the British colonial state (and even throughout the previous era of Ottoman rule) remained valid in Israel. A series of new Israeli emergency laws was added to them. If this is not enough, it is also the case that the legislative branch can enact regulations for a state of emergency applicable to a period of three months, with an

option to prolong this period without parliamentary approval. Such broad powers are founded upon a specific legal doctrine: Israel is perceived as facing a constant state of emergency, and a threat to its very survival is understood to hover incessantly around it. The existence of this threat sanctions, whenever necessary, the annulment or suspension of legislation connected to the welfare or political and civil rights of all persons in the state; the justification for such curtailments is, of course, the situation of “state emergency.” Such broad powers invariably tempt abuse.¹⁷⁵ Thus, in recent years, a number of new laws have been appended to the emergency law code; such laws purport to fortify state security – but, arguably, they have really been enacted to prohibit political activity that is normally considered to be legitimate.¹⁷⁶

Such broad-sweeping emergency legislation is liable to seep through all social and political spheres. Thus, for example, between November 1975 and October 1977 regulations governing rates of exchange of Israeli currency were renewed 22 times; each time, the justification was a perceived state of emergency. Later, in July 1985, in order to force through an “economic [policy] program,” the government appealed once again to state of emergency regulations; its purpose this time was to enforce price ceilings, to constrain wage negotiations between workers and employers, and even to intervene in private agreements (such as rents for housing and service payments). Historically, the judicial branch in Israel, including the nation’s highest court, has demonstrated its friendliness toward suspensions of rights and liberties couched in arguments about “national security”; the courts generally rely upon the counsel provided by representatives of the state and its military and security experts. At play here is an implicit or explicit assumption that provisions for the very survival of Israel are preconditions that enable the demotion of all other rights; rarely is there any serious public meditation about the logical inverse of this social proposition – to wit, what is the point of the survival of the state entity, if basic human and civil rights are not guaranteed by its existence?

Hofnung¹⁷⁷ has completed the most comprehensive analysis of the relation between views of “state security” in Israel and legislation and adjudication in the state. His conclusions are as follows: a) legislation for state of emergency can potentially disrupt altogether, or suspend, civil and human rights in Israel; b) during the first two decades of Israeli statehood, government authorities exercised restraint in connection to the application of regulations for states of emergency (especially as regards liberties and protections afforded to Jewish citizens); in the 1970s and 1980s, such restraint started to erode; c) the onus of such legislation and the use of security arguments is selective; Jews are less seldom subjected to such regulations, and suffer their burdens less than Arabs; most particularly, Palestinians in the occupied territories are exposed regularly to the arbitrariness of such administrative legislation; d) mechanisms of control evolved in Israel which assure in some measure a democratic regime and the rule of law (with respect to Jews) – for example, the Supreme Court, legislative committees, the institution of the State Comptroller, the Public Ombudsman, electronic and print media, associations for the protection of civil rights, the protection of the right of assembly, and more. Yet, the interesting point in this context is the very perpetuation of so-called “temporary” emergency regulations, and a broad constitutional sanction for their enactment which makes no particular reference to ruling parties or coalitions, or to the nature of perceived dangers. In fact, the political culture of Israel is characterized in part by the broad social endorsement given to broad emergency powers; despite the acute criticism raised against the prevailing situation by many jurists, the majority of the public, some portion of the elite groups, and the ruling authorities¹⁷⁸ sanction this emergency code. There can be no doubt that this virtual *carte-blanche* to the imposition of martial law represents one of the clear expressions of civilian-militarism in Israel.

Machism culture and gender domination

Since the beginning of the Zionist venture in Palestine and until now, one of the weakest points of the Israeli nation-

building process was the state's great "demographic inferiority" (in Palestine, and later in the whole region). This inferiority was translated in "security" and "military-power balance" terms. In order to improve the "numbers," the two sources of population increase – immigration and internal birth rate – were sanctified. Alongside immigration, the encouragement of birth became a major societal goal, and women were perceived as the "nation's womb." Since the first years of the establishment of the sovereign Israeli state, considerable material incentives were granted to Jewish women and families through the social security system, and a special, high material prize was granted for the birth of the 12th child.¹⁷⁹

Despite the myth of equality for women, even in the *kibbutz* (communal settlement) movement, this equality was never really implemented.¹⁸⁰ During active wars society is divided basically into two major cultures – one, the "warrior society" of males, and the other the "home front," basically women's society. During these brief periods of "interruption," women take over a great deal of the males' roles and positions in society; however when the "boys come home," women do not take advantage of "war profits," and in most cases have to forfeit newly won positions to the males. Gender mobility following wars is prohibited.¹⁸¹ Young women, like men, are drafted to Israeli military service, but the length of such service is shorter, and usually women are not called to reserves. No combat service positions are open to women, and most of the complex and prestigious military occupations exclude them.¹⁸² Most of the young women fill secretarial or other auxiliary roles, and the vast majority of them are under the command of authoritative, older and higher ranked men. Thus, in fact, within the military, the traditional marginality of women and the stereotypical, gender conditioned division of labor in society is reinforced. The military itself is basically a machoistic and male-oriented subculture.¹⁸³ One of the results of this marginality of Jewish-Israeli women in the most important Israeli cultural and power institution – the military – is not only the reinforcement of the women's marginality in society, but also their exclusion from the most important

societal discourse, that of “national security”; recall the cultural convention by which individuals or groups who do not serve in the military, or who serve in peripheral positions (not in elite units, or not as officers) have no “right” or “expertise” to participate in the security-dialogue.¹⁸⁴ The case of Israeli women demonstrates another consequence of Israeli militarism, and the complex relationship between the institutionalization of the conflict and the distribution of power in this society.

Political culture with primordial tendencies

Rather far-reaching changes in Israel’s political culture ensued between 1977 and 1992, the period that begins with the Likud Party’s rise to power, and the formation of a Likud-led nationalist-religious ruling coalition. New models came to challenge the old civilian militarism, which had been built upon a “national security religion” and cult. In this new period, there appeared competing perceptions of “territorial nationalism” and “religious nationalism” (which became aligned to a manifest destiny type expansionist policy in favor of a “Greater Israel”). The common denominator between the new orientations was the emergence of primordial principles.¹⁸

⁵ Such elements were extant in the socio-political military establishment beforehand; yet in the new Likud-led era, their potency increased. The major difference between the national-religious culture and national security culture was not a question of fundamental ruling assumptions; instead, it was a matter of emphasis. The new orientation viewed “Eretz Yisrael” (a designation for Israel that resounded with Biblical connotations) as a territory rife with holy and national significance. Arguably, this perception endorsed the development of a new national moral agenda to which “regular” conceptions of rational politics and human rights were sometimes extraneous, and thus the new orientation spawned fringe variants that favored the expulsion of the entire non-Jewish population of the territories either immediately or as a result of a deliberate program that would create circumstances favorable to such dispersion (for

example, war on a local-regional scale). Jewish settlements were established feverishly in regions of the occupied territories densely populated by Palestinians so as to guarantee control over the whole conquered area, and create “irreversible” *fait accompli*. The geographical thrust of the new militarist orientation is instructive; the same movement that aimed ardently at the consolidation of control over “Greater Israel” was willing to relinquish control of the Sinai peninsula (territory that was “holy” from the point of view of the competing “national security” culture).

Another modification wrought by the national-religious political culture was the amplification of the ideological-political sphere by virtue of the abandonment of national-security considerations which seemed “too narrow.” This emphasis upon political-ideological motivations brought about a change in the measure of freedom and autonomy attributed to the political center; the most evident expression of the new powers subsumed by this center was the recognition that the state could now wage a “war of choice” – even in rhetorical terms, war was no longer perceived to be a last resort.¹⁸⁶

In actual fact, Menachem Begin’s endeavor at the time of the 1982 War to deploy the military to attain patently political objectives – that is, his overt denial of the rhetorical commitment made by the previous culture of civilian militarism by which the “people’s army” was to be enlisted in wars where there was perceived to be “no choice” but to fight – split the national consensus that had evolved concerning the conducting of war. Begin’s claim was that a war can be waged “by choice,” and at the same time be considered to be *jus ad bellum* (a just war). Yet, for the first time in the history of the state, a significant, *bona fide* protest movement, coupled with suggestions of possible mass resistance to an affirmation of the elective use of war violence, emerged in response to the costly prices of the government’s policy, and its inability to conclude its operations in a time perceived to be reasonably short; this nascent resistance included expressions of dissent within the military itself. Until Begin’s affirmation of the legitimacy of “war by choice,” each war waged by Israel (including, in its formative phase, the Lebanon War) had been defined as a “war

of no choice.” Begin’s claim about the right of the state to venture wars so as to attain political and ideological objectives, as well as his affirmation of the right of the political echelon to make the relevant decisions to this end, helped rupture the constructed reality which had defined *each* war as a “war of no choice.”

The results of an analysis of the behavior and attitudes of the hard core of resistance to the Lebanon War are not surprising. Soldiers who refused to serve in the war (this dissent being a new phenomenon in Israel’s political culture) continue to perceive military service as a civil duty.¹⁸⁷ They view military service as a central “Israeli experience” and as an integral part of their national identity. Their act of resistance is interpreted as dissent from a deviation of the pure model of “military behavior,” and from the goals the state is supposed to attain by the deployment of violent force, enforced by national security policy makers.¹⁸⁸ This dissent, in other words, must be seen as a desperate attempt to “correct the use of the military”; in no way was it a pacifist-minded endeavor to defy any resort to the military option. A similar emergence of dissent is not easily found among soldiers who continued to carry out police and internal-security functions among the Palestinian populations of the occupied territories during the period of the Palestinian popular uprising that had broken out.¹⁸⁹ The armed forces have obliged the orders given by the political establishment, and they accept a definition of the situation as a type of “war of no choice,” emphasizing professionalism, “military-skills” and performance. Thus, even when it was challenged by a political (though not cultural) turnabout (mainly between 1977 to 1992), civilian militarism in Israel ministered the approach most acceptable to the majority in the Jewish collectivity, this civilian militarism remained dominant, though not hegemonic, and continued to contest the competing national religious and pure chauvinistic approaches.

Conclusion

Political culture in Israel varies from period to period; yet some parts of its hard core remain immutable. These unchanging components derive from a construction of reality that includes the collectivity's demand in favor of total mobilization – institutional and mental – and continual preparation for war. Historically, this military preparedness has verged precariously toward self-fulfilling prophecy. This political culture developed a latent and hegemonic cast of militarism; the evident manifestations of this militarism even ebbed slightly, as there emerged cognitive processes by which militarism was sublimated. This civilian militarism was expressed in the main by the circumstance that the political establishment has not been accorded practical or conceptual autonomy – alternative options in the administration of domestic or foreign policies have been blocked many times, and special social realities and exclusionary discourses have been constructed. This approach represents a part of the political culture that is governed by military-minded civilians. Yet this type of civilian militarism in Israel is challenged by emulous political and ideological orientations, and it would seem that its hegemony has been broken.

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Topic IX: A Democracy?

Introduction

This topic focuses on another hotly debated issue regarding Israeli society, namely, its political regime. The 1948 Declaration of Independence states, with the same emphasis, that Israel is the state of the Jewish people and that it ensures complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants, irrespective of religion, race or sex. The wording of the declaration clearly states the aspiration of the Israeli regime: that is, to be a liberal democracy. In other words, a political regime ruled by democratically elected bodies that will operate in the spirit of full respect for minorities and for individual freedoms.

From a more sociological point of view, however, democracy signifies keeping to a reasonable degree what Talcott Parsons once defined as the “inflation of power.” This notion refers to the fact that in democracy, representatives of the majority are endorsed with the power and authority to rule over the entire population, notwithstanding the eventual presence of large numbers of opponents. It is this discrepancy between inclusive authority over and partial support from the population that Parsons called inflation of power.¹⁹⁰

The condition for democracy to remain efficient in the sense of representativeness is, of course, that all or most groups in the population have a fair chance of succeeding in elections and winning power, so that for some parties, the absence at a given moment of direct control over policy-making would be compensated by prospects of future success. This supposes that some of the public, at least, consists of floating voters likely to swing between leaders and change their political orientations.

However, in this respect democratic systems may differ from each other regarding their efficiency. Paradoxically enough, a system grounded in maximum representativeness of the opinions current in the public, that is, a purely

representative-proportional system, may grant factions at mid-distance from the major contenders – such as left and right – a bargaining position well beyond their importance in the public, if their support conditions who will be able to form a ruling coalition. This may result in the divergence of rulers' programs from their original political intention, in favor of small factions' interests sharing strategic advantages by their mere location between the principal forces involved.

On the other hand, democracy will also display inefficiency when, for some structural reasons, a given group of some numerical importance is in a situation where it can never be taken into consideration for government, and will remain permanently in the opposition. The frustration of such a party and of the population it represents, may lead to forms of protest beyond legal frameworks and norms. The resulting frustration could be particularly acute when it concerns people who share, on religious, ethnic, or cultural grounds, self-images of dignity, even superiority, vis-à-vis the majority. This conflictedness is still sharper when the interests represented by that permanent opposition address major essential societal problematics, and even more so when they are linked, in one way or another, to a national conflict with the environment.

Regarding Israel, one easily recognizes here several cases of cleavages crosscutting this society, such as the ultra-Orthodox minority and the national-religious population. The aggravated condition of permanent minority especially fits the case of the Arab minority. Both cases, but the second more particularly, have been the topic of a broad spectrum of approaches among analysts.

Commentators point here to the endemic tension between two elements, anchored in the social order. The first is the assessment of Israel as a Jewish state favoring Jewish symbols, laws and practices, and the second is the regime's self-presentation as a democracy that should protect the rights of minorities and provide equal rights to its non-Jewish, mainly Arab, citizens. This tension stands at the heart of the scholarly debate about the character of Israel's political regime. The spectrum of views ranges from those defining that

regime as a kind of democracy (liberal or ethnic) up to those who argue that Israel is better depicted as an ethnocracy.

Oren Yiftachel subscribes to the view that in Israel there is a clear supremacy of one ethnic group, the Jews, over the non-Jews (mainly Arabs), and he concludes from this that Israel is not a democracy but rather an ethnocracy. He contends that three main forces shape the polity: the establishment of a settler society, the mobilizing force of ethno-nationalism, and the logic of capital. The fusion of these forces has created a regime that privileges *ethnos* over *demos* in a contested territory seized by a dominant group, and that sustains the *Judaization* of the land and the continuing incorporation of external Jewish organizations into the government system – not to speak of the military rule over the Palestinian Territories.

Sammy Smooha agrees with Yiftachel about the structural supremacy of the Jews. However, he also maintains that Israel can still be seen as a democracy, though of an inferior type, i.e., an “ethnic democracy.” Although Israel extends group rights to its non-assimilating minorities (national-religious Jews, ultra-Orthodox Jews, and Arabs), it is not really a consociational democracy. Smooha attempts to capture Israel’s duality of Jewishness and democracy, criticizing the manner in which individual and collective rights are extended to citizens.

Despite all these analyses, **Alain Dieckhoff** argues that Israel is a democracy even though it differs from the Western model. He asserts that Israel is a vibrant parliamentary democracy with a regular, open, and pluralist electoral system. The results are all the more flattering when the region’s geopolitical development is taken into account, as well as the fact that the country is surrounded by authoritarian states with which it has been engaged in confrontation for years. However, this is only part of the picture. Israel has many features that distinguish it from Western states. First, it defines itself as a Jewish state, and this has consequences for its non-Jewish citizens. Secondly, it is a polity whose borders are fuzzy. Some of these borders have been stabilized following the peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan, but nothing is settled with Lebanon and Syria. Moreover, Israel is still considering

the West Bank as a disputed territory. Thirdly, since its creation Israel is a country at war, where national security plays a key role. Hence, the military has a space for action that weighs heavily on decision-makers.

Benyamin Neuberger maintains that Israel is an ordinary liberal democracy where, however, one can note the absence of a constitution and the existence of several antidemocratic laws accounted for by the state of belligerence. In addition, the status quo with regard to the relationship between religion and state is rooted in both the bargaining power of religious parties and the inherent difficulty of defining a Jewish state without any reference to religion. The problematic status of the Arab minority is another flaw of the democratic regime, and it is strongly influenced by the state's relations with its environment and the minority's identification with the Palestinian entity. Finally, another difficulty resides in the status of the West Bank and the civil rights of its inhabitants, that strongly depend on the evolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Ruth Gavison contends that the relationship between the Jewish dimension and the democratic nature of Israel are neither a contradiction nor a zero-sum game. In fact, the two components reinforce each other. The Jewishness of the state neither entails nor justifies discrimination of non-Jews or limitation of freedom of religion and freedom from religion. All citizens enjoy full civil and political rights. Thus, Israel is a democracy despite the fact that it is also the nation-state of Jews. It seeks to deal effectively with the tensions between the components of its identity so that democracy, minority rights, freedom of and from religion, and Jewish self-determination may all be respected.

Alan Dowty maintains that classifications of Israel as a non-democratic state rely on definitions of democracy that differ widely from the prevailing criteria used by scholars. The status of Palestinian Arabs in Israel is not equal in law or practice, but the inequality of minorities is an issue with which democracies have long contended in both theory and practice. The existence of a dominant ethnicity tied to the state's identity does not in itself invalidate its status as a democracy;

no state exists in an ethnic or cultural vacuum. Dowty emphasizes that as far as the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are concerned, they were never a part of Israel's political system. In any event, since the establishment of the Palestinian Authority and the withdrawal of Israeli troops and settlers from Gaza in 2005, only a small percentage of West Bank Palestinians resides in areas under Israeli administration.

These texts do not cover the whole gamut of approaches toward the question of the Israeli regime, but still they show the span of divergences and the issues that are under debate. For Oren Yiftachel, Israel is not a democracy, but rather an ethnocracy which is a special type of a non-democratic regime. Less categorically, for Sammy Smooha, Israel is an ethnic democracy that compares with the newly sovereign states of the Baltic: it is an inferior type of democracy that endorses the predominance of one ethnic group over the other. Alain Dieckhoff asserts that Israel is a genuine democracy that, however, is at war and faces constraints which harm its democratic character and distinguish it from Western democracies. Benyamin Neuberger maintains that Israel is a liberal democracy that suffers several flaws. According to Ruth Gavison, Israel is a democracy despite the fact that it is also the nation-state of Jews. For Alan Dowty, Israel is a democracy, and classifying Israel as a non-democratic state relies on definitions of democracy that differ widely from prevailing criteria in common usage.

37. “Ethnocracy”: The Politics of Judaizing Israel/ Palestine

Oren Yiftachel

This paper was written during 1998, and appeared as Oren Yiftachel, “Ethnocracy’: the Politics of Judaizing Israel/Palestine,” *Constellations: International Journal of Critical and Democratic Theory* 6, no. 3 (1998): 364–390.

During Israel’s fiftieth year of independence (1997–1998), the country’s High Court of Justice was grappling with an appeal known as Qa’adan vs. Katzir. It was lodged by a Palestinian-Arab citizen who was prevented from leasing state land in the suburban locality of Katzir – built entirely on state lands – on grounds of not being a Jew.¹⁹¹ The court deferred decision on the case as much as it could. Its president, Justice Aharon Barak, known widely as a champion of civil rights, noted that this case has been among the most strenuous in his legal career, and pressured the sides to settle out of court. In March 2000 the court ruled in favor of Qa’adan, and noted that Israel’s policies toward the Arab minority were discriminatory and illegal. Yet, the court did not issue an order to Katzir to let Qa’adan lease the land, and was very careful to limit the ruling to this specific case, so as not to create a precedent. In addition, the local Jewish community continued to raise administrative and social obstacles and frustrate Qa’adan’s plans to join the locality. By mid-2005 the family has not moved as yet to Katzir.

The fact that in Israel’s fiftieth year, the state’s highest legal authority still finds it difficult to protect a basic civil right such as equal access of all citizens to state land, provides a telling starting point for pursuing the goals of this paper. In the pages below I wish to offer a new conceptual prism through which the formation of Israel’s regime and its ethnic relations can be explained. A theoretical and empirical examination of the Israeli regime leads me to argue that it should be classified as an “ethnocracy.”

The paper begins with a theoretical account of ethnocratic regimes, which are neither authoritarian nor democratic. Such regimes are states that maintain a relatively open government, yet facilitate a non-democratic seizure of the country and polity by one ethnic group. A key conceptual distinction is elaborated in the paper between ethnocratic and democratic regimes. Ethnocracies, despite exhibiting several democratic features, lack a democratic structure. As such, they tend to breach key democratic tenets, such as equal citizenship, the existence of a territorial political community (*demos*), universal suffrage, and protection against the tyranny of the majority.

Following the theoretical discussion, the paper traces the making of the Israeli ethnocracy, focusing on the major Zionist project of *Judaizing* Israel/Palestine. The predominance of the Judaization project has spawned an institutional and political structure that undermines the common perception that Israel is both Jewish and democratic.¹⁹² The Judaization process is also a major axis along which relations between various Jewish and Arab ethno-classes can be explained. The empirical sections of the paper elaborate on the consequences of the ethnocratic Judaization project on three major Israeli societal cleavages: Arab-Jewish, Ashkenazi-Mizrahi,¹⁹³ and secular-Orthodox.

The analysis below places particular emphasis on Israel's political geography. This perspective draws attention to the material context of geographical change, holding that discourse and space constitute one another in a ceaseless process of social construction.¹⁹⁴ The critical political-geographical perspective problematizes issues often taken for granted among analysts of Israel, such as settlement, segregation, borders, and sovereignty. As such it aims to complement other critical analyses of Israeli society.

Theorizing ethnocracy

The theorization of ethnocracy draws on the main political and historical forces that have shaped the politics and territory of this regime. It focuses on three major political-historical processes: (a) the formation of a (colonial) settler society; (b)

the mobilizing power of ethno-nationalism; and (c) the “ethnic logic” of capital. The fusion of the three key forces in Israel/Palestine has resulted in the establishment of the Israeli ethnocracy and determined its specific features. But the formation of ethnocracy is not unique to Israel. It is found in other settings where one ethno-nation attempts to extend or preserve its disproportional control over contested territories and rival nation(s). This political system also typically results in the creation of stratified ethno-classes within each nation. Other notable cases include Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Estonia, Latvia, Northern Ireland (pre-1972), and Serbia. Let us turn now in brief to the three structural forces identified above.

A settler society

Settler societies, such as the Jewish community in Israel/Palestine, pursue a deliberate strategy of ethnic migration and settlement that aims to alter the country’s ethnic structure. Colonial settler societies have traditionally facilitated European migration into other continents, and legitimized the exploitation of indigenous land, labor, and natural resources. Other settler societies, mainly non-European, create internal migration and resettlement in order to change the demographic balance of specific regions. In all types of settler societies a “frontier culture” develops, glorifying and augmenting the settlement and expanding the control of the dominant group into neighboring regions.¹⁹⁵

One common type of colonial settler society has been described as the “pure settlement colony,” which has been shown to be most appropriate to the Israeli-Zionist case.¹⁹⁶ Further studies have shown that “pure” settler societies are generally marked by a broad stratification into three main ethno-classes: (a) a founding charter group, such as Protestant-Anglos in North America and Australia; (b) a group of later migrants, such as southern Europeans in North America; and (c) dispossessed indigenous groups, such as the Aborigines in Australia, Maoris in New Zealand, Amerindians in North America, and Palestinians in Israel/Palestine.¹⁹⁷ The charter group establishes the state in its “own vision,” institutionalizes

its dominance, and creates a system which segregates it from the other ethno-classes. But the pattern of control and segregation is not even, as immigrants are gradually assimilated into the charter group in a process described by Soysal as “uneven incorporation.”¹⁹⁸ Such a system generally reproduces the dominance of the charter group for generations to come. The establishment of “pure” settler societies highlights the political and economic importance of extra-territorial ethnic links that are crucial for the success of most colonial projects. The links typically connect the settler society to a co-ethnic metropolitan state or to supportive ethnic diasporas. As elaborated below, extraterritorial ethnic links are a defining characteristic of ethnocracies. These regimes rely heavily on support and immigration from external ethnic sources as a key mechanism in maintaining their dominance over minority groups.

Ethno-nationalism

Ethno-nationalism, as a set of ideas and practices, constitutes one of the most powerful forces to have shaped the world’s political geography in general, and that of Israel/Palestine in particular. Ethno-nationalism is a political movement which struggles to achieve or preserve ethnic statehood. It fuses two principles of political order: the post-Westphalian division of the world into sovereign states, and the principle of ethnic self-determination.¹⁹⁹ The combined application of these two political principles created the nation-state as the main pillar of today’s world political order. Although the nation-state concept is rarely matched by political reality (as nations and states rarely overlap), it has become a dominant global model due to a dual moral basis: popular sovereignty (after centuries of despotic and/or religious regimes) and ethnic self-determination.

The principle of self-determination is central for our purposes here. In its simplest form, as enshrined in the 1945 United Nations Charter, it states that “every people has the right for self-determination.” This principle has formed the political and moral foundation for the establishment of popular

sovereignty and democratic government. Yet most international declarations, including the United Nations Charter, leave vague the definition of a “people” and the meaning of “self-determination,” although in contemporary political culture it is commonly accepted as independence in the group’s “own” homeland state. Once such a state is created, the principle is reified, and issues such as territory and national survival become inseparable from ethno-national history and culture. This possesses powerful implications for other facets of social life, most notably male dominance, militarism and the strategic role of ethnic-religions, although a full discussion of these important topics must await another paper.

The dominance of the ethno-national concept generates forms of ethnic territoriality which view control over state territory and its defense as central to the survival of the group in question, often based on selective and highly strategic historical, cultural, or religious interpretations. As I argue below, the application of this principle has been a major bone of contention in the struggle between Jews and Palestinians and in the formation of the Israeli ethnocracy, which attempted to Judaize the land in the name of Jewish self-determination.

The global dominance of ethno-nationalism and the nation-state order has prompted Billig to consider national identities as “banal.”²⁰⁰ But despite its dominance, the political geography of nation-states is far from stable, as a pervasive nation-building discourse and material reality continuously remolds the collective identity of homeland ethnic minorities. Such minorities often develop a national consciousness of their own that destabilizes political structures with campaigns for autonomy, regionalism, or sovereignty.²⁰¹

The ethnic logic of capital

A third structural force to shape the political geography of Israel/ Palestine and the nature of its regime has been associated with the onset of capitalism, and its ethnic and social consequences. Here the settings of a settler society and ethno-nationalism combine to create a specific logic of capital

flow, development and class formation on two main levels. First, labor markets and development are ethnically segmented, thereby creating an ethno-class structure that tends to accord with the charter immigrant-indigenous hierarchy noted above. Typically, the founding charter group occupies privileged niches within the labor market, while migrants are marginalized, at least initially, from the centers of economic power, and thus occupy the working and petit bourgeois classes. Indigenous people are typically excluded from access to capital or mobility within the labor market, and thus virtually “trapped” as an underclass.²⁰²

Second, the accelerating globalization of markets and capital has weakened the state’s economic power. This went accompanied by the adoption of neo-liberal policies and the subsequent deregulation of economic activities and privatization of many state functions. Generally, these forces have widened the socioeconomic gaps between the charter, immigrant, and indigenous ethno-classes. Yet, in the setting of militant ethno-nationalism, as prevalent in Israel/Palestine, the globalization of capital, and the associated establishment of supra-national trade organizations, may also subdue ethno-nationalism and expansionism, previously fuelled by territorial ethnic rivalries. Particularly significant in this process is the globalization of the leading classes among the dominant ethno-nation, which increasingly search for opportunities and mobility within a more open and accessible regional and global economy. A conspicuous tension between the global and the local thus surfaces, with a potential to intensify intra-national tensions, but at the same time also to ease international conflicts, as has recently been illustrated in South Africa, Spain, and Northern Ireland.²⁰³

Ethnocracy

The fusion of the three forces – settler society, ethno-nationalism, and the ethnic logic of capital – creates a regime-type I have called “ethnocracy.”²⁰⁴ An ethnocracy is a non-democratic regime that attempts to extend or preserve disproportional ethnic control over a contested multi-ethnic

territory. Ethnocracy develops chiefly when control over territory is challenged and when a dominant group is powerful enough to determine unilaterally the nature of the state. Ethnocracy is thus an unstable regime, with opposite forces of expansionism and resistance in constant conflict.²⁰⁵ An ethnocratic regime is characterized by several key principles:

- (a) Despite several democratic features, ethnicity (and not territorial citizenship) determines the allocation of rights and privileges; a constant democratic ethnocratic tension characterizes politics.
- (b) State borders and political boundaries are fuzzy: there is no identifiable *demos*, mainly due to the role of ethnic diasporas inside the polity and the inferior position of ethnic minorities.
- (c) A dominant “charter” ethnic group appropriates the state apparatus, determines most public policies, and segregates itself from other groups.
- (d) Political, residential, and economic segregation and stratification occur on two main levels: ethno-nations and ethno-classes.
- (e) The constitutive logic of ethno-national segregation is diffused, enhancing a process of political ethnicization among sub-groups within each ethno-nation.
- (f) Significant – though partial – civil and political rights are extended to members of the minority ethno-nation, distinguishing ethnocracies from *Herrenvolk* democracies or authoritarian regimes.

Ethnocratic regimes are usually supported by a cultural and ideological apparatus that legitimizes and reinforces the uneven reality. This is achieved by constructing a historical narrative that proclaims the dominant ethno-nation as the rightful owner of the territory in question. Such a narrative degrades all other contenders as historically not entitled, or culturally unworthy, to control the land or achieve political equality.

A further legitimizing apparatus is the maintenance of *selective openness*. Internally, the introduction of democratic institutions is common, especially in settling societies, as it adds legitimacy to the entire settling project, to the leadership of the charter ethno-class, and to the incorporation of groups of later immigrants. But these democratic institutions commonly exclude indigenous or rival minorities. This is achieved either formally, as was the case in Australia until 1967, or more subtly, by leaving such groups outside decision-making circles, as is the case in Sri Lanka.²⁰⁶ Externally, selective openness is established as a principle of foreign relations and membership in international organizations. This has become particularly important with the increasing opening of the world economy and the establishment of supranational organizations, such as the EU and NAFTA. Membership in such organizations often requires at least the appearance of open regimes, and most ethnocracies comply with this requirement.

Given these powerful legitimizing forces, ethnocratic projects usually enjoy a hegemonic status that originates among the charter group and is successfully diffused among the populace. The hegemonic moment, as convincingly formulated by Gramsci, is marked by a distorted but widely accepted fusion of a given set of principles and practices. It is an order in which a certain social structure is dominant, with its own concept of reality determining most tastes, morality, customs, and political principles. Given the economic, political, and cultural power of the elites, a hegemonic order is likely to be reproduced unless severe contradictions with “stubborn realities” generate counter-hegemonic mobilizations.²⁰⁷

Ethnocracy in the making: the Judaization of Israel/Palestine

The analysis of the Israeli regime in this paper covers the entire territory and population under Israeli rule. Prior to 1967, then, it is limited to the area within the Green Line (the 1949 armistice lines), but after that date it covers all of Israel/

Palestine, or what Kimmerling has called the “Israeli control system.”²⁰⁸ While the Occupied Territories are often treated in studies of Israel as an external and temporary aberration, they are considered here as an integral part of the Israeli regime, simply because Israel governs these areas. This appears to be the situation even following the 1993 Oslo Agreement, because the areas under limited Palestinian self-rule are still under overall Jewish control.²⁰⁹ The appropriate political geographical framework for the analysis of Israel/Palestine since 1967 is thus: *one ethnocracy, two ethno-nations, and several Jewish and Palestinian ethno-classes*. Jews make up about 80% of Israel’s 5.9 million citizens and Palestinian-Arabs about 17% (the rest being neither Jewish nor Arab). An additional 2.7 million Palestinians reside in the Occupied Territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Hence, the population of the entire contested “Land of Israel” (Palestine) is roughly 55% Jewish and 43% Palestinian-Arab.²¹⁰

Ethnic and religious division is also marked within each national community. About 41% of Jews are Ashkenazi and about 43% Mizrahi. The rest are mainly recent Russian-speaking immigrants, mostly of European origin, who form a distinct ethno-cultural group, at least in the short-term. Of the Palestinian-Arabs in Israel, 77% are Muslims (a fifth of whom are Bedouin), 13% are Christian, and 10% Druze. In the Occupied Territories, 95% are Muslim and 4% Christian. In both the Jewish and Muslim communities, a major cultural division has also developed between Orthodox and secular groups. About 20% of Jews are Orthodox, as are about 30% of Muslims on both sides of the Green Line.²¹¹

Zionism has been a settler movement, and Israel a settler state, whose territory was previously inhabited by Palestinian-Arabs. Despite notable differences with other colonial movements, the actual process of European settlement classifies Zionism (both before and after 1948) as a “pure” colonial settler movement.²¹² After Israel’s independence in 1948 and following the mass entry of Jewish refugees and migrants, conspicuous social stratification emerged. In broad terms, the Ashkenazim have constituted the charter group and

have occupied the upper echelons of society in most spheres, including politics, the military, the labor market, and culture. The Mizrahim have been the main group of later immigrants, recently accompanied by a group of Russian-speakers and a small group of Ethiopian Jews. These groups are placed in a middle position, lagging behind the Ashkenazim, but above the indigenous Palestinian-Arabs. Strikingly, and despite an official ideology of integration and equality towards the Mizrahim, a persistent socioeconomic gap has remained between them and the Ashkenazi group.²¹³

As is typical in settler societies, Israel's indigenous Arab minority has occupied from the outset the lowest strata in most spheres of Israeli life, and has been virtually excluded from the political, cultural and economic centers of society. Following the conquest of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, their Palestinian residents became partially incorporated into Israeli economy, mainly as day-laborers, but were denied political and civil rights.²¹⁴

A Jewish state

With its Declaration of Independence, in 1948, Israel announced itself as a "Jewish state." In some ways, the Declaration of Independence was quite liberal, promising non-Jews "full and equal citizenship" and banning discrimination on grounds of religion, ethnic origin, gender or creed. The central political institutions of the new state were established as democratic, including a representative parliament (the Knesset), periodic elections, an independent judiciary, and relatively free media.

During the following years, however, a series of incremental laws enshrined the ethnic and partially religious Jewish character of the state (rather than its *Israeli* character, as accepted international standards of self-determination would have required). Chief among these have been the state's immigration statutes (Laws of Return and Citizenship), which made every Jew in the world a potential citizen, while denying this possibility to many Palestinians born in the country. Other laws further anchored the Jewish character of the state not

only in the symbolic realm, but also as a concrete and *deepening* reality, covering areas such as citizenship, education, communication and land ownership. As the Israeli High Court declared in 1964 – in what became known as the Yerdor case – “the Jewishness of Israel is a constitutional given.”²¹⁵ In 1985, revisions made to the Basic Law on the Knesset added that no party would be allowed to run if it rejected Israel’s definition as a state of the Jewish people.²¹⁶ The combination of these laws created a structure nearly immune against democratic attempts to change its Zionist character.

During the early 1990s two Knesset basic laws defined the state as “Jewish and democratic,” thereby further enshrining the state’s Jewish character, but also coupling it with a democratic commitment. As argued below, this coupling is problematic not as an abstract principle, but against the ongoing reality of Judaization, which has unilaterally restructured the nature of the state through immigration and land policies. This transformation was supported by the uni-ethnic arms of the state, including army, police, courts, economic institutions, development agencies, and most decision-making forums.

Hence, a main obstacle to Israeli democracy does not necessarily lie in the declaration of Israel as “Jewish,” which may be akin to the legal status of Finland as a “Lutheran state” or England as “Anglican.” The main problem lies in the mirror processes of *Judaization* and *de-Arabization* (that is, the dispossession of Palestinian-Arabs) facilitated and legitimized by the declaration of Israel as “Jewish,” and by the ethnocratic legal and political structures resulting from this declaration.²¹⁷ Let us now explore in some detail the dynamic political geography behind the establishment of the Israeli ethnocracy.

Judaizing the homeland

Following independence, Israel entered a radical stage of territorial restructuring. Some policies and initiatives were an extension of earlier Jewish approaches, but the tactics, strategies, and ethnocentric cultural construction of the *Yishuv*

– the pre-1948 Jewish community in Palestine – were significantly intensified. This was enabled with the aid of the newly acquired state apparatus, armed forces, and the international legitimacy attached to national sovereignty.

The territorial restructuring of the land has centered on a combined and expansionist *Judaization* and *de-Arabization* program adopted by the nascent Israeli state. This began with the expulsion and flight of approximately 750,000 Palestinians during the 1948 War. Israel prevented the return of the refugees to their villages, which it rapidly demolished.²¹⁸ The authorities were quick to fill the “gaps” created by this forced exodus with settlements inhabited by Jewish migrants and refugees who entered the country *en masse* during the late 1940s and early 1950s.

The Judaization program was premised on a hegemonic myth cultivated since the rise of Zionism, namely that ‘the land’ (*ha’aretz*) belongs to the Jewish people, and only to the Jewish people. An exclusive form of settling ethno-nationalism developed in order quickly to “indigenize” immigrant Jews, and to conceal, trivialize, or marginalize the Palestinian past. The “frontier” became a central icon, and its settlement was considered one of the highest achievements of any Zionist. The frontier *kibbutzim* (collective rural settlements) provided a model, and the reviving Hebrew language was filled with positive images such as *aliyah lakarka* (literally ‘ascent to the land,’ i.e., settlement), *geulat hakarka* (‘land redemption’), *hityashvut*, *hitnahalut* (positive biblical terms for Jewish settlement), *kibbush hashmama* (conquest of the desert), and *hagshama* (literally ‘fulfillment,’ but denoting the settling of the frontier). The glorification of the frontier thus assisted both in the construction of national-Jewish identity, and in capturing physical space on which this identity could be territorially constructed. Such sentiments were translated into a pervasive program of Jewish-Zionist territorial socialization, expressed in school curricula, literature, political speech, popular music, and other spheres of public discourse. Settlement thus continued to be a cornerstone of Zionist nation-building, even after the establishment of a sovereign Jewish state. To be sure, the “return” of Jews to their

ancestors' mythical land and the perception of this land as a safe haven after generations of persecution had a powerful liberating meaning. Yet, the darker sides of this project were nearly totally absent from the construction of an unproblematic "return" of Jews to their biblical promised land. Very few dissenting voices were heard against these Judaizing discourses, policies or practices. If such dissent did emerge, the national-Jewish elites found effective ways to marginalize, co-opt, or gag most challengers.²¹⁹ Therefore, 1948 should be regarded as a major political turning point, not only due to the establishment of a state pronouncing a democratic regime, but also as the beginning of a state-orchestrated, and essentially non-democratic Judaization project.

Two parallel processes have thus developed on the same land: the visible establishment of democratic institutions and procedures, and a more concealed, yet systematic and coercive, seizure of the territory by the dominant ethnic group. The contradiction between the two processes casts doubt on the pervasive classification of Israel in the academic literature as a democracy, a point to which we return later.

The perception of the land as only Jewish was premised on a distorted national discourse of a "forced exile" and subsequent "return."²²⁰ A parallel discourse developed in reaction to the Arab-Jewish conflict (and Arab rejectionism), elevating the exigencies of national security onto a level of unquestioned gospel. These discourses have blinded most Jews to a range of discriminatory policies imposed against the state's Palestinian citizens, including the imposition of military rule, lack of economic or social development, political surveillance and under-representation, and – most important for this essay – large-scale confiscation of Palestinian land.²²¹ Prior to 1948, only about 7–8% of the country was in Jewish hands, and about 10% was vested with the representative of the British Mandate. The Israeli state, however, quickly expanded its land holdings and it currently owns or controls 93% of the area within the Green Line. The lion's share of this land transfer consisted in expropriating Palestinian refugee property, but about two-thirds of the land belonging to Palestinians who remained and became Israeli citizens were

also expropriated. At present, Palestinian-Arabs, who constitute around 17% of Israel's population, own only around 3% of its land, while their local government areas cover 2.5% of the country.

A central aspect of land transfer was its legal *unidirectionality*. Israel created an institutional and legal land system under which confiscated land could not be sold. Further, such land did not merely become state land, but a joint possession of the state and the entire Jewish people. This was achieved by granting extraterritorial organizations, such as the Jewish National Fund, the Jewish Agency, and the Zionist Federation, a share of the state's sovereign powers and significant authority in the areas of land, development and settlement. The transfer of land to the hands of unaccountable bodies representing the "Jewish people" can be likened to a "black hole," into which Arab land enters but can never be retrieved. This structure ensures the unidirectional character of all land transfers: from Palestinians to Jewish hands, and never vice versa. A stark expression of this legal and institutional setting is that Israel's Arab citizens are currently prevented from purchasing, leasing or using land in around 80% of the country.²²² It can be reasonably assumed that the constitutions of most democratic countries would make such a blatant breach of equal civil rights illegal. But Israel's character as a Judaizing state has so far prevented the enactment of a constitution which would guarantee such rights.

During the 1950s and 1960s, and following the transfer of land to the state, over 600 Jewish settlements were constructed in all parts of the land. This created the infrastructure for the housing of Jewish refugees and immigrants who continued to pour into the country. The upshot was the penetration of Jews into most Arab areas, the encirclement of most Arab villages by exclusively Jewish settlements – where non-Jews are not permitted to purchase housing – and the virtual *ghettoization* of the Arab minority.

Settlement and intra-Jewish segregation

Let us turn now to the issue of ethno-classes. Beyond the obvious consequences of the Jewish settlement project on the ethno-national level, it also caused processes of segregation and stratification between Jewish ethno-classes. This aspect is central for the understanding of relations between the various Jewish ethno-classes, and especially Ashkenazim and Mizrahim. Notably, it is not argued that relations between Jewish ethnic groups are non-democratic, but rather that the ethnocentric-settling nature of Jewish-Palestinian relations has adversely affected intra-Jewish relations. To illustrate the geography of these processes, let us outline in more detail the social and ethnic nature of the Jewish settlement project, which advanced in three main waves.

During the first wave, between 1949 and 1952, some 240 communal villages (*kibbutzim* and *moshavim*) were built, mainly along the Green Line. During the second wave, from the early 1950s to the mid-1960s, 27 “development towns” and a further 56 villages were built. These were mainly populated – usually through coercion – by Jewish immigrants and refugees from North Africa. During the same period large groups of Mizrahim were also housed in “frontier” urban neighborhoods, which were either previously Palestinian or adjacent to Palestinian areas. Given the low socioeconomic resources of most Mizrahim, their mainly Arab culture – now affiliated with “the enemy” – and lack of ties to Israeli elites, the development towns and “the neighborhoods” quickly became – and have remained to date – distinct concentrations of segregated, poor, and deprived Mizrahi populations.²²³ This geography of dependence, achieved in the name of Judaizing the country, has underlain the evolution of Ashkenazi-Mizrahi relations to the present day. The third wave, during the last two decades, saw the establishment of over 150 small non-urban settlements known as “community” or “private” settlements (*yeshuvim kehilatiyim*). These are small suburban-like neighborhoods, located in the heart of areas on both sides of the Green Line. Their establishment was presented to the public as a renewed effort to Judaize Israel’s hostile frontiers, using the typical rhetoric of national security, the Arab threat to state lands, or the possible emergence of Arab secessionism.

In the Occupied Territories, additional rationales for Jewish settlement referred to the return of Jews to ancient biblical sites, and to the creation of “strategic depth.” But, despite the continuation of a similar Zionist discourse, a major difference characterized these settlements – they ruptured, for the first time, Israel’s internationally recognized borders, a point to which I return below. From a social perspective, the people migrating into most of these high quality residential localities were mainly middle-class Ashkenazi suburbanites, seeking to improve their housing and social status. In recent years, urban Jewish settlement in the West Bank accompanied the on-going construction and expansion of small *kehilati* settlements. These towns have increasingly accommodated religious-national and ultra-Orthodox Jews.²²⁴

Notably, the different waves of settlement were marked by social and institutional *segregation* sanctioned and augmented by state policies. A whole range of mechanisms was devised and implemented not only to maintain nearly impregnable patterns of segregation between Arabs and Jews, but also to erect fairly rigid lines of separation between various Jewish ethno-classes. Segregation mechanisms included the demarcation of local government and education district boundaries, the provision of separate and unequal government services (especially education and housing), the development of largely separate economies, the organization of different types of localities in different state-wide “settlement movements,” and the uneven allocation of land on a sectoral basis.²²⁵ As a result, “layered” and differentiated Jewish spaces were created, with low levels of contact between the various ethno-classes. This has worked to reproduce inequalities and competing collective identities. Movement across boundaries has been restricted as most new Jewish settlements (built on state land!) are allowed to screen their residents through tests of “resident suitability.” This practice has predictably produced communities dominated by middle-class Ashkenazim. At least part of the ethno-class fragmentation and hostility currently evident in Israeli society can thus be traced to the Judaizing settlement system and its institutionalized segregation. In this process we can also note

the working of the ethnic logic of capital I singled out earlier as a major force shaping social relations in ethnocracies. Development closely followed the ethno-class pattern prevalent in Israeli society. This created spatial circumstances for the *reproduction* of the “ethnic gap” between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim, through location-based mechanisms such as education, land control, housing, social networks, local stigmas, and accessibility to facilities and opportunities.

Democracy or ethnocracy?

As we have seen, the politico-geographic analysis of Jewish land and settlement policies highlights three key factors, often neglected in other interpretations of Israeli society: (a) The Israeli regime has facilitated a constant process of expanding Jewish control over the territory of Israel/Palestine. (b) Israel is a state and polity without clear borders. (c) The country’s organization of social space is based on pervasive and uneven ethnic segregation. An elaboration of these assertions leads me to question the taken-for-granted notion that Israel is a democracy.²²⁶ Instead, I would argue that the polity is governed by an ethnocratic regime, as defined earlier. It is a rule for and by an expanding ethnic group, within the state and beyond its boundaries, which is neither democratic nor authoritarian.²²⁷

Democracy, on the other hand, is a regime which follows several main principles, including equal and substantial civil rights, inclusive citizenship, periodic and free elections, universal suffrage, separation between arms of government, protection of individuals and minorities against the majority, and an appropriate level of government openness and public ethics.²²⁸ A factor often taken for granted by regime analysts – but far from obvious in the Israeli case – is the existence of clear boundaries to state territory and its political community. The establishment of a state as a territorial-legal entity is premised on the existence of such boundaries, without which the law of the land and the activity of democratic institutions cannot be imposed universally, thus undermining the operation of inclusive and equal democratic procedures.

This brings us back to the question of Israeli boundaries and borders. As shown above, the Jewish system of land ownership and development, as well as the geography of frontier settlement, have undermined the territorial-legal nature of the state. Organizations based in the Jewish Diaspora possess statutory powers within Israel/Palestine. World Jewry is also involved in Israeli politics in other significant ways, including major donations to Jewish parties and politicians, open and public influence over policy-making and agenda-setting, as well as lobbying on behalf of Israeli politicians in international fora, especially in the United States.²²⁹ Hence, extraterritorial (non-citizen) Jewish groups have amassed political power in Israel to an extent unmatched by any democratic state. This is an undemocratic structural factor consistent with the properties of ethnocratic regimes.

As mentioned, Jewish settlement in the Occupied Territories has also ruptured the Green Line (Israel's pre-1967 internationally recognized borders) as a meaningful border. At the time of writing, some 340,000 Israeli Jews resided in the territories (including al-Quds, or East Jerusalem), and Israeli law has been unilaterally extended to each of these settlements.²³⁰ The Green Line has been transformed into a geographical mechanism of separating (citizen from non-citizen) Palestinians, but not Jews.²³¹

The combination of the two factors means that "Israel," as a definable democratic-political entity, simply *does not exist*. The legal and political power of extraterritorial (Jewish) bodies and the breaching of state borders empty the notion of Israel from the broadly accepted meaning of a state as a territorial-legal institution. Hence, the unproblematic acceptance of "Israel proper" in most social science writings (including some of my own previous work) and in the public media has been based on a misnomer.²³²

Given this reality, Israel simply does not comply with a basic requirement of democracy – the existence of a *demos*. As defined in ancient Greece, *demos* denotes an inclusive body of citizens within given borders. It is a competing organizing principle to the *ethnos*, which denotes common origin. The

term “democracy” therefore means the rule of the *demos*, and its modern application points to an overlap between permanent residency in the polity and equal political rights as a *necessary democratic condition*.

As we have seen, Israel’s political structure and settlement activity have ruled out the relevance of such boundaries, and in effect undermined the existence of universal suffrage (as Jewish settlers in the Occupied Territories can vote to the parliament that governs them, but their Palestinian neighbors cannot). The significance of this observation is clear from Israel’s 1996 elections: counting only the results within “Israel proper,” Shimon Peres would have beaten Benjamin Netanyahu by a margin of over 5%. Netanyahu’s victory was thus based on the votes of Jews in the Occupied Territories (that is, outside “Israel proper”), as were the previous successes of the Likud camp in 1981, 1984 and 1988. The involvement of the settlers in Israeli politics is of course far deeper than simply electoral. They are represented (1998) by 18 Knesset members (out of 120), four government ministers, and hold a host of key positions in politics, the armed forces, and academia. Hence, a basic requirement for the democratization of the Israeli polity is not only to turn it into a state of all its citizens (as most non-Zionist groups demand), but to *a state of all its resident-citizens, and only them*. This is the only way to ensure that extra-territorial and politically unaccountable bodies, such as the Jewish Agency, the Jewish National Fund, and Jewish settlers in Occupied Territories, do not unduly affect the state’s sovereign territory. And it is only this principle that can lay the appropriate foundations for democratic rule, for and by the state’s political *demos*.

Beyond the critical issue of borders, several other major impediments to the establishment of sound democratic regime have existed throughout Israel’s political history. These have included a very high level of regime centrality, relative lack of political accountability, weakness of judiciary, pervasive militarism, male dominance and associated discrimination against women in most walks of life and the inseparability of religion and state. Lack of space prevents discussion on all but the last of these issues, to which we now turn.

Ethnocracy or theocracy?

Some scholars claim that a growing influence of Orthodox Jewish groups on Israeli politics is leading Israel towards theocratic – and not ethnocratic – rule.²³³ Yet the Orthodox agenda appears compatible with the Jewish ethnocratic project, as Orthodox groups take the rule of the Jewish *ethnos* as a given point of departure, and chiefly aim to deepen its religiosity. As such, their campaign is geared to change the nature of the Israeli ethnocracy without challenging its very existence or the ethnic boundaries of its membership.

Still, the Orthodox agenda in Israeli politics is significant in another way, as it, too, challenges the prevalent perception of Israel as “Jewish and democratic.” Despite important differences, all Orthodox parties support the increasing imposition of religious rule in Israel (*Halakha*), as stated by the late leader of the National Religious Party, Z. Hammer, who was considered a moderate: “I genuinely wish that Israel would be shaped according to the spirit of Torah and Halakha [...] the democratic system is not sacred for me [...]”²³⁴ Likewise, one of the leaders of Shas, often considered a relatively moderate Orthodox party, declared not so long ago: “We work for creating a *Halakha* state [...] such as state would guarantee religious freedom, but the courts will enforce Jewish law [...] we have the sacred Torah which has a moral set of laws, why should anyone be worried?”²³⁵ Although the initiatives these bodies have taken in recent times attempt to mainly influence the character of public (and not private) spheres, there exists a fundamental contradiction between the Orthodox agenda and several basic features of democracy, such as the rule of law, individual liberty and autonomy, civil equality, and popular sovereignty.²³⁶

This challenge is somewhat obscured by the duality in the interpretation of Judaism as ethnic and/ or religious. The secular interpretation treats Judaism as mainly ethnic or cultural, while Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox groups interpret it as an inseparable whole (that is, *both* ethnicity and religion). This unresolved duality is at the heart of the tension between

the secular and Orthodox Jewish camps: if the meaning of “Jewish” is unresolved, how can the nature of the “Jewish state” be determined?

The challenge to democracy from the Orthodox agenda has become more acute because the Orthodox political camp has grown stronger in Israeli politics over the last decade. In the 1996–1999 period it held 28 of the Knesset’s 120 seats (with Orthodox parties holding 23 and the rest being Orthodox members of other parties). The Orthodox camp has held the parliamentary balance of power for most of Israel’s history.

Notably for this paper, the rising power of Orthodox sectors in Israel is closely linked to the state’s political-geography, and to the Zionist project of Judaizing the country. There are four main grounds for this. First, all religious movements in Israel, and most conspicuously Gush Emunim (‘Loyalty Bloc,’ the main Jewish religious organization to settle the West Bank), fully support the settling of Jews in occupied Palestinian territories and the violent military occupation of these areas. This is often asserted as part of a divine imperative, based on the eternal Jewish right and duty to settle all parts of the “promised land.” Such settlement is to be achieved while ignoring the aspirations of Palestinians in these territories for self-determination or equal civil rights. Needless to say, this agenda undermines even the possibility of democratic rule in Israel, and has already caused several waves of intra-Jewish religious-secular violence, including the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin in 1995.

Second, repeated surveys show that the religious public in Israel is the most intransigent in its opposition to granting civil equality to Israel’s Arab citizens. This does not mean that the entire Orthodox public opposes democratic rule, or that it is homogenous in its political views. But nearly all opinion studies, as well as the platforms of main religious political organizations, rank democratic values lower than the Jewishness of the state or Jewish control over the entire territory that is Palestine.²³⁷

Third, there is a discernible link between the rising power of Orthodox bodies and the rupturing of Israel’s borders.

Political analyses and surveys show that as the Judaization of the Occupied Territories deepened, so have the Jewish elements in the collective identity of Israeli-Jews at the expense of Israeli components.²³⁸ This trend stems from the confusion in the meaning of “Israeli,” when both state borders and boundaries of the Israeli polity are blurred. In other words, the breaching of Israeli borders with settlement activity and the involvement of world Jewry in internal politics have eroded the territorial and civil meaning of the term “Israeli,” and simultaneously strengthened the (non-territorial and ethno-religious) Jewish collective identity. This process has grave implications for democracy, principally because it bypasses the institution of territorial citizenship, on which a democratic state must be founded. In the Israeli context it legitimizes the stratification between Jews (with full rights) and Arabs (second-class citizens), thus denying Arabs much of the status attached to their “Israeli” affiliation. Only the demarcation of clear Israeli borders, and the subsequent creation of a territorial political community, can halt the undemocratic ascendancy of Judaism over Israeliness.

Finally, the Judaization project is perceived by many in the Orthodox camp not only as ethnic-territorial, but also as deepening the religiosity of Israeli Jews. This is based on interpretation of a central percept: “all Jews are guarantors for one another.” Here “guarantee” entails “returning” all “straying” non-believers to God’s way. This mission legitimizes the repeated – if often unsuccessful – attempts to strengthen the religious character of laws and public spaces. The state’s religious character is already anchored in a variety of areas: the Jewish Sabbath is the official Israeli day of rest; public institutions only serve kosher food; no import of pork is allowed; all personal laws are governed with the national rabbinate (which prohibits civil marriage); and most archaeological digs need approval from religious authorities.

Orthodox parties justify the imposition of these regulations on the secular public by asserting that they ensure the state’s ethnic-cultural character for future generations. As such, this would prevent the incorporation of non-Jews and create a state which “deserves to be called Israeli [...] and Jewish.”²³⁹

Accordingly, the theocracy sought by religious parties already presupposes a Jewish ethnic state (ethnocracy). Their agenda is simply to transform it into a *religious ethnocracy*.²⁴⁰ In this light, we should note not only the conflict between Orthodox and secular Jews, but also their long-standing *cooperation* in the project of establishing a Jewish ethnocracy. Hence, the religious challenge to the democratization of Israel and the relations between Orthodox and secular elements in Israeli society cannot be separated from the political geography of a *Jewish* and *Judaizing* state. The leading Israeli discourse in politics, academia, and the general public tends to treat separately Arab-Jewish and religious-secular issues. But, as shown above, the conflicts and agreements between secular and Orthodox Jews cannot be isolated from the concerns, struggles and rights of Palestinian-Arabs. This is mainly because at the very heart of the tension between Orthodox and secular Jews lie the drive of Israel's Palestinian citizens to see the state transformed from ethnocracy to democracy, and to halt and even reverse the ethnocratic Judaization project.

A segregative settling ethnocracy

As we have seen, the project of Judaizing the state, spearheaded by Jewish immigration and settlement, and buttressed by a set of constitutional laws and a broad consensus among the Jewish public, has been a major (indeed constitutive) feature of the Israeli regime. Israel thus fits well the model of an ethnocratic regime presented earlier in the paper. More specifically, and given the importance of settlement, it should be called a *settling ethnocracy*. But beyond regime definitions, and beyond the fundamental chasm between Palestinians and Jews, the fusion of ethnocentric principles and the dynamics of immigration, settlement, and class formation created uneven and segregated patterns among Jews. This was exacerbated by the geographic nature of the Jewish settlement project, which was based on the principal unit of the locality (*Yishuv*). The Jewish settlement project advanced by building localities which were usually ethnically homogeneous, and thus created from the outset a segregated pattern of development. As noted, this geography still stands

behind much of the remaining tension between Mizrahim and Ashkenazim in Israel.²⁴¹ The political, legal, and cultural mechanisms introduced for the purpose of segregating Jews from Arabs were thus also used to segregate Jewish elites from other ethno-classes, thereby reinforcing the process of “ethnicization” typical of ethno-cratic regimes.

To be sure, these mechanisms were used differently, and more subtly, among Jews, but the persistent gap between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim cannot be understood without accounting for the geography of intra-Jewish relations. In the main, Mizrahim were spatially marginalized by the Israeli settlement project, whether in the isolated periphery or in poor and stigmatized neighborhoods of Israel’s major cities. This has limited their potential economic, social, and cultural participation.

There is a clear nexus connecting the de-Arabization of the country with the marginalization of the Mizrahim, who – culturally and geographically – have been positioned between Arab and Jew, between Israel and its hostile neighbors, between a “backward” Eastern past and a “progressive” Western future. But, we should remember, the depth and extent of discrimination against Palestinians and Mizrahim has been quite different, with the latter included in Jewish-Israeli nation-building project as active participants in the oppression of the former.

A similar segregationist logic was also used to legitimize the creation of segregated neighborhoods and localities for ultra-Orthodox and Orthodox Jews, the more recent Russian immigrants, and Palestinian-Arabs. In other words, the uneven segregationist logic of the ethno-cratic regime has been infused into spatial and cultural practices, which have worked to further ethnicize Israeli society. Of course, not all ethnic separation is negative, and voluntary separation between groups can at times function to reduce ethnic conflict. But in a society which has declared the “gathering and integration of the exiles” (*mizug galuyot*) a major national goal, levels of segregation and stratification between Jewish ethno-classes have remained remarkably high. Referring back to our theoretical framework, we can note the fusion of settler-

society mechanisms (conquest, immigration, and settlement) with the power of ethno-nationalism (segregating Jews from Arabs) and the logic of ethnic capital (distancing upper and lower ethno-classes) in the creation of Israel's conflict-riddled contemporary human geography.

This process, however, is not unidimensional, and must be weighed against counter-trends, such as growing levels of assimilation between Mizrahim and Ashkenazim, and increasing formal equality in social rights among all groups. In addition, solidarity among Jews in the face of a common enemy has often eased internal tensions and segregation, especially between Mizrahim and Ashkenazim, as both have merged into a broadening Israel middle class. Here we can also note that the original Ashkenazi charter group has broadened to incorporate the Mizrahim, especially among the assimilated middle and upper classes.²⁴² Yet, the ethnicization trend has also been powerful, as illustrated by the growing tendency of political entrepreneurs to exploit "ethnic capital" and draw on ethno-class-religious affiliations as a source of political support. In the 1996 elections such sectoral parties increased their power by 40%, and for the first time in Israel's history overshadowed the largest two parties, Labor and Likud, which have traditionally been the most ethnically heterogeneous.

Moreover, the situation has not been static. The strategy of Judaization and population dispersal has recently slowed, responding to the new neo-liberal agendas of many Israeli elites.²⁴³ It has also encountered growing Palestinian-Arab resistance and Mizrahi grievances, which in turn have reshaped some of the strategies, mechanisms, and manifestations of Israel's territorial, planning, and development policies. Both Arabs and Mizrahim have seen a rise in their absolute (if not relative) socioeconomic standards, partially due to Israel's development policies. Likewise, Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation and oppression, culminating in the First Intifada that broke out in the Occupied Territories in December 1987, worked to slow Jewish expansion in several regions, brought about the 1993 Oslo Agreement, and achieved a measure of limited Palestinian

self-rule.²⁴⁴ But these changes, important as they were, still occurred within the firm boundaries of the dominant, ethnocentric Zionist discourse, where Jewish settlement and control and the territorial containment of the Arab population, are undisputed Jewish national goals both within the Green Line and in large parts of the Occupied Territories, as the outbreak of the Second Intifada in September 2000 has made so abundantly clear.²⁴⁵

Conclusion: the enigma of distorted structures

In the foregoing I have attempted to probe the nature of the Israeli regime from a political-geographic perspective. I have showed that three main forces have shaped the Israeli polity – the establishment of a settler society, the mobilizing force of ethnonationalism, and the ethnic logic of capital. The fusion of these forces has created a regime I have termed ethnocracy, which privileges *ethnos* over *demos* in a contested territory seized by a dominant group. Ethnic relations in Israel are thus comparable to other ethnocracies, such as Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Serbia, or Estonia, but not to Western liberal democracies, as commonly suggested in scholarly literature or popular discourse.²⁴⁶

More specifically to Israel, I have shown that the Israeli regime has been significantly shaped by the ethnocentric project of *Judaizing* the Land of Israel/Palestine. This has been legitimized by the need to “indigenize” “deterritorialized” Jews in order to fulfill a claim for territorial self-determination. The momentum of the Judaization project has subsequently led to the rupture of the state’s borders, the continuing incorporation of extra-territorial Jewish organizations into the Israeli government system, the persistent and violent military rule over the Palestinian Occupied Territories, and the subsequent undermining of equal citizenship. As shown above, the Judaization project provides a “genetic core” for understanding the Israeli polity because it did not only shape the Jewish-Palestinian conflict, but also the relations between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim as well as between secular and Orthodox Jews.²⁴⁷

A key factor in understanding the Israeli regime thus lies in uncovering the sophisticated institutional setting that presents itself as democratic, but at the same time facilitates the continuing immigration of Jews – and only Jews – to Israel, and the uni-directional transfer of land from Arab to Jewish hands. Here we can observe that the legal and political foundations of the Jewish state have created a distorted structure that ensured a continuing uni-ethnic seizure of a bi-ethnic state. Once in place, this structure has become self-referential, reifying and reinforcing its own logic. But the dominant view unequivocally treats Israel as a democracy.²⁴⁸ This view is augmented by the durable operation of many important democratic *features* – as distinct from *structures* – especially competitive politics, generous civil rights, an autonomous judiciary, and free media. In particular, Israel’s democratic image has also been promoted in the Israeli academy by nearly all scholars in the social sciences and humanities.

Israeli scholars use a range of definitions for the Israeli regime, including liberal democracy,²⁴⁹ constitutional democracy,²⁵⁰ consociational democracy,²⁵¹ and ethnic democracy.²⁵² The enactment of two new basic laws during the 1990s has prompted a wave of writing hailing the “constitutional revolution” as a major move toward legal liberalism.²⁵³ Even critical writers such as Azmi Bishara, Shlomo Swirski, Uri Ram, Yoav Peled, Yonathan Shapiro and Uri Ben-Eliezer still treat “Israel Proper” (the imaginary unit within the Green Line) as a democratic – albeit seriously flawed – regime.²⁵⁴ Most Palestinian writers have refrained from analyzing the specific nature of the Israeli regime, although here a number of significant challenges to the common democratic definition of Israel began to appear, most notably by Elia Zureik,²⁵⁵ As’ad Ghanem and Nadim Rouhana, with the latter two defining Israel as a non-democratic “ethnic state.”²⁵⁶

Yet, none of these works has incorporated seriously the two principal political geographical processes shaping the Israeli polity: the ongoing Judaization of the country, and the

vagueness of its political borders. Even critical writers tend to ignore the incongruity between the definition of Israel within the Green Line, and the residence of people considered as full Israelis in occupied territories beyond the state's boundaries. This is not a minor aberration, but rather a structural condition that undermines the claim for a democratic regime. "Israel Proper" is a political and territorial entity which has long ceased to exist, and hence cannot provide an appropriate spatial unit for analyzing the nature of the polity.

In many ways, the situation resembles the hegemonic moment observed by Gramsci, when a dominant truth is diffused by powerful elites to all corners of society, preventing the raising of alternative voices and reproducing prevailing social and power relations. From the above it appears that this hegemony has reached even the most enlightened and putatively democratic realms of Israeli-Jewish society.

How can this enigma be explained? How can enlightened circles that declare themselves to be democratic square the "Jewish and democratic" account with the continuing process of Judaization? I suggest here a metaphor in which Israeli-Jewish discourse is analogous to a tilted tower, such as the Tower of Pisa. Once one enters the tower, it appears straight, since its internal structural grid is perfectly perpendicular and parallel. Similarly, the introverted discourse about the Jewish and democratic state: once inside this discourse, most Jews accept the Jewish character of the state as an unproblematic point of departure, much like the floor of the tilted tower. From that perspective, Judaization appears natural and justified – or perhaps does not appear at all.²⁵⁷

On the basis of this tilted foundation, Israel has added laws and policies over the years that can be likened to the tower's walls. Given the tilted foundation, these walls could only be built on an angle, yet they appear straight to those observing from the inside. One needs to step outside and away from the tilted building and measure its coordinates against truly vertical buildings in order to discern the distortion. In the Israeli case, then, scholars are urged to step outside the internal Jewish-Israeli discourse and analyze the Israeli regime

systematically against the “straight” principles of a democratic state.²⁵⁸

In this vein, let us explore briefly the principle of self-determination, which forms the basis of popular sovereignty and thus of democracy itself. Because the modern state is a legal-territorial entity, and because the fullest expression of self-determination is the governance of a state, it must be exercised on a territorial basis.

But Israel maintains a placeless entity (the Jewish people) as the source of its self-determination, and thus defines the state as “the state of the Jewish people.” This non-territorial definition presents two serious problems for democratic rule: (a) it prevents the full political inclusion of non-Jews by degrading the status of (territorial) state citizenship,²⁵⁹ and (b) it reinforces Judaization through the role of world Jewry in immigration and land transfer.

Returning to the case of Finland may help illustrate the problem: while that state is declared to be Lutheran, it is also defined as a (territorial) *Finnish* political community. As such, it allows non-Lutheran minorities to fully identify as Finnish. But because the State of Israel is defined (non-territorially) as Jewish, and Arabs can never become Jewish, their right to equal citizenship is structurally denied. Hence, a democratic state requires a *territorial* form of self-determination that enables the equal inclusion of minorities into the state’s civil society.²⁶⁰ This recognition casts doubt over the validity of one of the most significant statements made by the Israeli High Court, which declared in 1988, that “Israel’s definition as the state of the Jewish people does not negate its democratic character, in the same way that the Frenchness of France does not negate its democratic character.”²⁶¹ This statement harbors a conceptual distortion: if France is French, Israel should be *Israeli* (and not Jewish).

Hence, stepping outside the internal Israeli-Jewish discourse reveals that the maintenance of a non-territorial (Jewish) form of self-determination structurally breaches central tenets of democracy. It constitutes, instead, the foundation of the Israeli-Jewish ethocracy.

Epilogue: ethnocracy and Negev lands

To conclude, let us return once again to the “coal face” of land control issues in Israel. Since September 1997, the Israeli government has announced on several occasions the introduction of new strategies to block the “Arab invasion” into state lands within the Green Line, and to curtail “illegal” Bedouin dwellings, construction and grazing. In most cases, “illegal dwellings” and “Arab invasion” are code terms for Bedouin residence on traditional tribal land and resistance to involuntary concentration in a small number of towns designated by the state in the Negev and Galilee.²⁶² The recently announced strategy would combine the development of small Jewish settlements (mainly in the Negev’s north-eastern hills), the establishment of single family Jewish farms, the sale of Negev land to the Jewish Agency and diaspora Jews, and the application of greater pressure on Bedouins to migrate to the state-planned towns. The initiator of the policy was the (then) director of the Prime Minister’s office, Avigdor Liberman, an immigrant from the Former Soviet Union and a resident of a Jewish settlement in the Occupied Territories. A closer look at this latest land control strategy raises several hard questions about its basic assumptions: if the Bedouin-Arabs were Israeli citizens – which they are – why would their use of state land be considered an “invasion”? How do other sectors of Israeli society, such as moshavim and kibbutzim, which regularly build without planning permission, escape treatment as “invaders”? Given that the initiator of the policy is a West Bank settler (illegal according to international law), who is actually the invader here? How can a recent immigrant to the country campaign to evacuate residents who have been on the land for several generations, since well before the state was established? How can the state lease large tracts of land to non-citizen (Jewish) organizations and continue to block its own (Arab) citizens from using it for residential purposes?²⁶³

At the end of its first jubilee, then, Israel’s *ethnocratic* features keep surfacing: the ongoing Judaization project, the stratification of ethnic rights, the fuzziness of geographical and political boundaries, and the legal and material involvement of

extra-territorial Jewish organizations. Against this reality, scholars, students, and activists are called upon to help dislodge the hegemonic Jewish discourse of a “Jewish and democratic state,” and participate in the task of transforming Israel from ethnocracy to democracy.

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38. Israeli Democracy: Civic and Ethnonational Components

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This paper was completed in June 2015.

Introduction

A broad conception of democracy, which can be termed “substantive democracy,” can enrich the comparative study of contemporary modern states. It conceives of democracy as a multi-layer and multi-form political system. It rests on procedural democracy, consisting of the necessary requirements for democracy’s very existence, from citizenship rights to civilian control of the military. The quality of democracy is assayed by the degree of equality, dignity, freedom and justice, and the grant of collective rights. Realization of these additional values and rights creates diverse forms of democracy; the foremost are liberal democracy, consociational democracy, ethnic democracy and social democracy.

Democracy is particularly problematic in deeply divided societies. These are made up of ethnic or national groups split by language, culture, religion and identity; separate in residence, institutions, politics and civil society; sharply disputed on future vision and basic ideology; and substantially unequal in resources and opportunities. They are vulnerable to the “tyranny of the majority.” Invoking majority rule, the majority might exploit its numerical preponderance to make fateful unilateral decisions, ignore the minority’s aspirations and needs, and practice institutional discrimination and exclusion. The depth of intergroup divergence in such societies often leads to political instability and violence. The question is how such states maintain stability and tranquility and what type of democracy can serve them best.²⁶⁴

Substantive democracy faces several structural obstacles in Israel. The deep divisions between Arab and Jewish citizens and between religious and secular Jews are inimical to stable democracy. The intractable Israeli-Arab conflict engenders national security threats whose containment does not resonate with first-rate democracy. The prolonged occupation of the West Bank and the indirect control of the Gaza Strip leave four and a half million Palestinians stateless and disenfranchised, raising doubts about the very existence of democracy within and across the Green Line. The strength of religion in Israel's public life is another serious hindrance. Furthermore, the hegemonic idea of a Jewish and democratic state is a minefield of inherent contradictions and conflicts that compromise democracy.

I now review and critique each of the forms of democracy attributed to Israel, to show the mix of high resilience and low quality of Israeli democracy.²⁶⁵

Israel as a procedural democracy

Procedural democracy is the minimal definition and the basis of any type of democracy. It is a set of procedures and basic rights for choosing and installing a ruling majority for a certain period (usually through elections to parliament every four years). The main elements of procedural democracy are civil rights for all, separation of powers, rule of law, a multi-party system, regular and fair elections, change of governments, free mass media, an independent judiciary, and national security services under civilian control.

The common claim that Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East refers to Israel as a procedural democracy. Israel certainly qualifies as such, displaying all the foregoing features. How the system works in Israel can be demonstrated in several ways. All inhabitants within the pre-1967 borders, including the Arabs of 1948, are citizens enjoying all the fundamental rights: speech, movement, association, vote, representation, and protest. The 307,000 Palestinians in East Jerusalem and 23,000 Druze on the Golan Heights in 2015 became permanent residents after the application of Israeli law

to these areas, and they are entitled to apply for Israeli citizenship. In addition to the Law of Return for Jews, Israel has entry, immigration and naturalization laws for non-Jews. The exclusive proportional representation method of elections, with a low threshold,²⁶⁶ and the state financing of political parties and elections enable even small groups to win seats in the Knesset. It creates a multi-party system and coalition governments, enhancing representativeness at the expense of governability. The courts are impartial and Supreme Court rulings are binding and implemented. The military is the largest, strongest and most influential institution, but is formally and practically controlled by the Israeli government,²⁶⁷ and the secret services are under the prime minister's direct authority.

Crucial evidence for the prevalence of procedural democracy in Israel is the inclusion of Palestinian-Arabs as citizens in the system despite their affiliation with an active enemy (the Palestinian people) and rejection of Zionism (Israel's de facto state ideology). Three all-Arab national political parties (Ra'am, Ta'al and Balad) and one Arab-Jewish party (Hadash) won 75% of the Arab vote in 2013. For the elections in 2015 together they formed a joint list, which received 82% of the Arab vote.²⁶⁸ In addition to their right to form their own parties and to vote for the Knesset the Arabs enjoy the right to protest in Israel (including holding frequent general strikes) and abroad. In 2006–2007 Arab academics and public figures issued the "Future Vision Documents" presenting Israel as a non-democratic and colonial state, and demanded it be turned into a binational and democratic state. The state has taken no action against them.²⁶⁹

Several scholars object to the characterization of Israel as a procedural democracy. They argue that Israel is an ethnocracy (a non-democracy, to be discussed below) because it rejects the principle of equality of all its citizens and subdues a large stateless and non-citizen population in the occupied territories.²⁷⁰

Israel as a liberal democracy

In addition to democratic procedures, liberal democracy has a set of the absolute values of equality, liberty, dignity, respect, justice and fairness. These values enable individuals to obtain self-autonomy and self-fulfillment and provide individuals and minorities protection against majority rule irrespective of who governs. Their aim is to prevent majority rule from turning into a “tyranny of the majority.” While procedural democracy furnishes freedom of choice of a ruling majority, liberal democracy is a tool to effectively contain the majority by constitutional individual rights and to prevent it from abusing power.

Israel boasts of being a liberal democracy and this self-appraisal is widely accepted by the international community and in the social sciences.²⁷¹ The reality is more complex and less bright, however. Three structural constraints weigh down on Israel’s liberalism: permanent threats to national security impose restrictions on rights and freedoms; the authorization of religion to regulate personal status engenders religious coercion and gender inequality; and the Jewish and Zionist character of the state compromises the full citizenship and rights of non-Jewish citizens and precludes Israel from being and becoming an open society and state. These impediments to liberal democracy are further exacerbated by Israel’s nature as a deeply divided society in which ultra-Orthodox Jews and Arabs constitute dissident and non-assimilable minorities. Because the conflict with the Palestinians, the thorny issue of religion, and the divisive identity of the state are “wicked problems,” namely hard to resolve, the chances of maintaining good quality liberal democracy are not high, as elaborated next.

First, citizenship rights are non-constitutional and fragile because Israel lacks a constitution. The Knesset failed to enact a constitution after the proclamation of the state because it could not reach agreement on religious matters, and David Ben-Gurion, Israel’s founding prime minister, countenanced no restriction on his duty to ensure national security and to make fateful decisions. In the 2000s serious efforts were made outside and inside the Knesset to build a national consensus on a constitution but these could not overcome the resistance of

the religious parties and other forces.²⁷² Arab agreement was not pursued in earnest because it was and is considered virtually impossible. The moot question of state boundaries has been another hurdle. In the absence of a constitution, the Knesset has absolute power to legislate any law by a simple majority. A partial corrective is the legislation of a dozen “basic laws,” of which only two make a difference. These are “Basic Law: Freedom of Occupation” and “Basic Law: Human Dignity and Freedom.” Under the presidency of Aharon Barak, the Supreme Court seized upon these two laws of 1992 to challenge some discriminatory Knesset laws, to the dismay of illiberal national-religious, ultra-Orthodox and right-wing Jews. This so-called “constitutional revolution” is nevertheless shaky because there is no constitution and these two basic laws do not even entail the fundamental tenet of equality. Moreover, unlike Great Britain, Israel does not have a centuries-old democratic tradition that functions as a substitute for a liberal constitution.

The lack of a constitution enables various deviations from liberal democracy. To illustrate, in Israel a permit is required for a demonstration to be held and for a newspaper to be published. Anyone who denies Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people may not establish a political party and run for the Knesset. A series of legislations were enacted since 2000 to limit basic freedoms and rights. The most blatant among them are the amended Entry Law (banning from Israel families with a spouse from an enemy area), the Boycott Law (enabling the civil prosecution of anyone calling for a boycott of Israeli or Israeli-associated persons or institutions, including Jewish settlements on the West Bank), the Nakba Law (penalizing the commemoration of the Palestinian disaster of 1948), the Admission Committees Law (authorizing communal villages to reject candidates for membership on “unfitness” grounds), the NGO Law (requiring voluntary associations in meeting with public officials to disclose their funding if they receive over half of their monies from foreign governments), and the Dismissal Law (of a Knesset member who is charged of support of terrorism or incitement for racism). While these restrictions on liberties hurt all Israeli citizens and human

rights organizations, the Arabs suffer disproportionately because they are more likely to dissent and to pose an ostensible threat to the state's security and character. The Supreme Court is not dependable in providing sufficient protection in this regard.

Secondly, Emergency Regulations have been in force uninterruptedly since 1948. They provide the authorities with vast powers such as press censorship, administrative detention, banning of organizations, land expropriations and many more. The state considers itself a *defensive democracy*, needing special powers to fight wars, terrorism and internal and external enemies. The Terror Prevention Law was used in 1994 to outlaw the Kahane-led Kach Party. Emergency Regulations were employed to detain and to restrict dissidents' right to movement. They were widely utilized in the past against Arab citizens but since the 1990s they have served mostly as a deterrent against Arab activists. Graver still is the amendment to the above-mentioned Entry Law, passed in 2003. It authorizes the government to ban entry into Israel of a spouse originating from an enemy area. In practice this legal provision prohibits an Israeli Arab citizen and a spouse from the West Bank or Gaza from living together in Israel. To date, all the appeals to the Supreme Court to repeal this law, which limits the universal right to marriage and family union, have failed.

Thirdly, the Millet system is a structural impediment to liberal democracy. This is an old Muslim system which still prevails in contemporary Muslim countries as well as in Israel. It divides Israeli citizens into religious communities (*millets*) and entrusts them with the administration of marriage, divorce, custody of children, provision of religious services and burials. A person is forbidden to leave the system and can only switch affiliation by religious conversion. All Western countries have a law of civil marriage and divorce, but Israel does not. While in pre-modern times the Millet system promoted religious tolerance (because it grants legitimacy and autonomy to the Christian and Jewish minorities in the Muslim world), in modern liberal democracies it is a means of religious coercion. But religious coercion does not stop there. Israeli citizens

suffer from infraction of the right to marry and divorce (adversely affecting thousands of Jewish women), denial of access to public transportation and businesses on Jewish days of rest, and more generally inhibition of a fully secular way of life. Although both Arabs and Jews are subject to the same burdens, the Arabs feel less religious coercion because they are much less secular than the Jews. However, the main function of the Millet system is to frame Israelis' status in religious and ethnonational terms, institutionalize internal divisions, consolidate the current non-assimilability and separation of Arabs and Jews, and discourage the creation of a common civic identity, a common civic nation, and a shared society.²⁷³

Fourthly, the state's exclusive ethnonational character also diminishes Israel's liberal democracy. Its Jewishness is not the real barrier because it was founded and is internationally accepted as a Jewish state. As such, Israel legitimately has a Jewish majority, a dominant Hebrew language (Arabic is also an official language but the state is run in Hebrew), a Jewish culture, a Jewish calendar, a Jewish symbolic system, and Jewish control of all branches of government, the security forces, foreign affairs, immigration, acquisition of citizenship, land allocation and the economy. This holds true for all democratic nation-states in which ethnic majorities rule and determine the state's character and mission. But problematic in Israel is Jewish exclusivity: Israel's immigration law is hardly applied to non-Jews, no asylum law exists, non-Jewish state symbols are practically absent, and non-Jews are excluded from the national power structure.

Fifthly, the most formidable stumbling block for the democratization of Israel is the Zionist, rather than the Jewish, nature of the state. According to common wisdom and the Zionists' credo, Zionism has a strong commitment to democracy and Israel officially stands for a Jewish and democratic state. It is hard, however, to reconcile these beliefs with the basic tenets and actual practices of Zionism.²⁷⁴ Zionist Israel declares itself and in fact is the homeland of all Jews in the world (of whom 57% in 2015 are Diaspora Jews who are neither citizens nor residents of Israel), rather than the

state of its citizens. It turns non-Jews, Arab citizens in particular, into some sort of outsiders. The Law of Return is extreme in according free entry and instant citizenship to Jews, unlike the much more limited laws of return in existence in some European countries (e.g., Germany, Greece, Hungary, Estonia). Equally extreme is the total denial to Palestinian-Arab refugees of the right of repatriation. A related violation of Arab rights is the above-mentioned restriction on Arab family unification. The grant of special status and delegation of certain state functions to the Jewish Agency and the Jewish National Fund, which serve only Jews, are also discriminatory. Settlement and land policies are clearly designed to ensure a Jewish majority both nationally and locally, and to guarantee maximal Jewish landownership. If we add the secular Zionist claim that all the land from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea belongs to the Jews and the religious Zionist claim that Jews' control and settlement of the Land of Israel are redemptive and messianic, the exclusion and inferior status of Arab citizens is even more excessive. Israel's Zionist ideology, policies and practices aim to perpetuate the divide between Jews and non-Jews and to prevent the formation of a common Israeli civic nation that includes, and freely mixes and unifies, all the inhabitants in the state regardless of religion and ethnicity. Furthermore, Zionism assigns the State of Israel the role of keeping itself Jewish and fulfilling Zionist goals for an indefinite period of time by using its laws and policies. Israel as a Jewish state, a Jewish society and a Jewish culture is an intractable system, not open for change of character even by a democratic and peaceful struggle. It is hence clear that the core of liberal democracy that characterizes the West is strikingly missing in Israel.

And sixthly, Israel's control of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (despite the withdrawal from Gaza in 2005) has been in effect since 1967. This is a clear-cut violation of the basic values of liberal democracy because the Palestinians across the Green Line have been denied human, civil and political rights for a long time, and Israel's right-wing governments neither have plans for ending occupation nor come up with peace initiatives to settle the Palestinian question.²⁷⁵ The protracted

conflict with the Arab world generally and the occupation of the Palestinian territories particularly prioritize national security and cultivate a militaristic culture, and both militate against democratic values.²⁷⁶ Occupation also puts Arab citizens, a significant segment of Israel's population, in an awkward position, torn between their loyalty to their state and their people, and suspected of potential disloyalty by all sides.

The Israeli-Arab conflict hits the Arab citizens hard. They are willy-nilly part of an active enemy, and due to their Arab and Palestinian affiliation and identity they are suspected of subversion by the State of Israel and the Jewish majority.²⁷⁷ Under these conditions, Israeli liberal democracy cannot function properly and Arabs cannot be treated equally. Arabs and Jews agree on the exemption of the Arabs from military service but this exemption denies the Arabs full citizenship. Their association with the enemy and rejection of Zionism are used as grounds for discrimination and exclusion. Israel's excessive security concerns, exclusive Jewish character and firm commitment to Zionism make Arabs vulnerable.

Israel as a consociational democracy

A consociational democracy is a political system that accords collective as well as individual rights to minorities. The minority is recognized as such by the state, and its fundamental right to be different without paying a heavy price is respected. Full group rights include state recognition of the minority, bilingualism and biculturalism if appropriate, proportionality in allocation of resources (budget, appointments), self-rule (institutional autonomy), power sharing, politics of compromise and consensus-building, and veto power. When the constituent groups are ethnic or cultural, consociationalism takes the form of multiculturalism which is an ideology that celebrates and upholds multiplicity of cultures. But when the groups are national in nature, they have the right to self-determination which can take the form of binationalism. Most Western countries are liberal democracies and only a small number of them are consociational democracies, including Belgium, Switzerland, Canada and

New Zealand, and to some extent Spain and Great Britain. Consociational democracies are less stable than liberal democracies because quite often one of the national units is driven to pursue cession and sovereignty.

Zionism rejects consociationalism. Its goal is to create a new Jew, a new living Hebrew language, a new Hebrew culture, a new Jewish nation, and a new Jewish state. It seeks uniformity, not diversity. It sees its production of new Jewish entities superior to the Diaspora Jewish heritage that Jews arriving in Eretz Yisrael or the State of Israel bring with them. They are supposed to abandon their Diaspora legacies and become new liberated Jews. Early in the 20th century the Second Aliyah already laid the foundations for a new Jewish society, as widely separate as possible from the Arabs of Palestine. The new Yishuv and the State of Israel were created and dominated by the founding group of East Europeans. The question is how this Zionist dominant group, well represented by the ruling Labor political party Mapai, handled Jewish immigrants from Muslim countries (Mizrahim), national-religious Jews, ultra-Orthodox Jews and Palestinian Arabs, the population groups that appreciably differed from the mainstream at the time of their incorporation into Israeli society.

The policy on Mizrahi immigrants, when they arrived en masse in the 1950s, may be labeled positively melting-pot amalgamation or Israelization, and pejoratively cultural repression.²⁷⁸ Their Judeo-Arab cultures were feared and despised, and rigorous steps were taken to eradicate them. This state endeavor succeeded. Mizrahim lost their cultures of origin, adopted the dominant Hebrew culture, and developed Israeli-Mizrahi subcultures. Since the 1980s Israel has embraced the ideology and policy of multiculturalism in its mild Western-liberal form. Mizrahi subcultures are tolerated because they are no longer a threat to national culture. In the 1990s this policy of multi-subculturalism was extended to Ethiopian and Russian-speaking immigrants as well. None of these groups of immigrants is granted a separate school system, which is a necessary condition for intergenerational retention of culture and full-fledged ethnicity.

National-religious Jews have been treated differently. Semi-consociational democracy was utilized for handling them until the 1980s.²⁷⁹ Under the auspices of the dominant Labor party, the state recognized their distinct way of life and brand of Zionism, fully funded their separate state religious schools, supported their separate religious civil society, and included their National Religious Party (“Mafdal”) as a junior partner in Labor coalition governments. These consociational arrangements collapsed in the late 1970s when national-religious Jews radicalized, pioneered Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, joined the right-wing political bloc, and vied for the country’s top leadership and elites. Their mixed strategy of integration and separation has weakened the limited consociationalism they enjoyed for decades.

In contrast to national-religious Jews, ultra-Orthodox Jews pursue separation. They were outside the new Jewish society during the pre-state period but were forcibly incorporated into the new State of Israel. For years the state has tolerated their rejection of modernity and Zionism, funded their schools despite the absence of core subjects from the curriculum, exempted the men from the draft and let them study in yeshivot until age 45, built new towns for them, and helped them in other ways. Ultra-Orthodox Jews have increased their political power due to a phenomenal birthrate and the formation of the Sephardic Shas party in 1984 in addition to the Ashkenazi Yahadut Hatorah party, and by the eagerness of these right-wing parties to join any right and left coalition government. These consociational arrangements declined in the 2000s because of growing opposition by the general public, backed by the Supreme Court, to the exemption from military service and the increasing burden on the state of supporting large families whose menfolk study in the yeshiva instead of going to work.

While Israel utilizes certain components of consociational democracy to accommodate the national-religious and ultra-Orthodox minorities, it is less forthcoming in this regard toward the Arab minority, who seeks full consociational democracy. The Arabs are an indigenous, national, and linguistically, culturally and religiously distinct minority. They

are a non-assimilable minority and Jews are a non-assimilating majority. For Arabs in Israel assimilation is not a legitimate and real option. Both Palestinian nationalism and Zionism negate intermarriage, loss of identity and culture, and free mixing and amalgamation between Arabs and Jews.

So the Arabs in Israel are left with a choice of integration or separation, although either is restricted. Israel's official state policy is integration of Arabs in all walks of life while allowing them to keep their language, culture and identity. This precisely is integration without assimilation. To this end the state grants Arabs generous ethnic collective rights, including recognition of Arabic as an official language, state-funded education in Arabic, religious courts, and support for Arab religious and cultural activities. This lavish bestowal of rights positions Israeli democracy above the lower standards prevalent in most Western and East European democracies, where minority group rights are much more limited. Nevertheless, Arab integration in Israel is far from satisfactory because actual Arab access to Jewish neighborhoods, schools and civil society organizations is restricted. Most importantly, Arab political parties are barred from and do not seek participation in coalition governments, resulting in their exclusion from national decision-making.

The alternative option of separation is even more limited. In Arab eyes, the full exercise of this option requires a grant of *national collective rights* in addition to ethnic collective rights. Israel denies Arabs national collective rights. It does not recognize them as a national Palestinian minority, does not respect their Palestinian identity and ties with the Palestinian people, does not acknowledge their representative leaders, and does not grant them the right to administer their own institutions. Furthermore, separate Arab institutions do not receive the same state support given to parallel Jewish institutions. In other words, for Arabs in Israel separate is neither equal nor autonomous.

Arab elites go even a step farther in their separatist demands. For them ethnic and national collective rights are not sufficient. They call for Israel's transformation into a binational state like Belgium and Canada. In such a state

Arabs and Jews will be fully equal individually and collectively, there will be no special status for Jews and the terms “minority” and “majority” will lose their meaning.²⁸⁰ For Jews this means the end of Zionism and the loss of the Jewish state.

While the Israeli-Arab vision of turning pre-1967 Israel into a consociational democracy (a binational state) is simply ignored by Jews, the possibility that Greater Israel will evolve to a binational (federal) state is on the Jewish agenda. The political stalemate and continued building and expansion of Jewish settlements in the West Bank decrease the chances of the solution of two states for two peoples, and raise the issue of a single binational state. The left warns that the alternative to partition is one binational state. The pro-settlement political right insists on keeping Israel Jewish even in Greater Israel and leaves the question of democracy open. Both sides accept Jewishness of the state as an incontestable principle but differ on its democracy. The right is ready to compromise democracy if necessary while the left strives for a balance between the Jewishness and democracy of the state.²⁸¹ That is why the Zionist left totally rejects a binational state for either Smaller or Greater Israel.²⁸²

Several scholars are dissatisfied with the application to Israel of the current mainstream models of political systems (procedural, liberal and consociational democracy) and have drawn on the Israeli case to formulate two new models to which I turn now.

Israel as an ethnocracy

Ethnocracy is a political system that has a thin façade of procedural democracy but is in fact firmly controlled by and run for the benefit of the ruling ethnic group. This hegemonic group monopolizes the entire state apparatus (administration of national security and foreign relations, immigration, lands, symbols, and many other state matters) and the economy, making them subservient to its own interests. The society is deeply divided into “ethno-classes” and the capitalist drive persistently increases the exploitation of the non-dominant

“ethno-classes.” Ethnocratic regimes are inherently unstable because the subordinate ethnic group is bound to resist and to undermine the undemocratic order. Contemporary ethnocracies include Estonia, Latvia, Croatia, Serbia, Malaysia, and Sri Lanka.

According to several scholars, Israel is a prototype of ethnocracy.²⁸³ It is a colonial-settler area where Jews dispossessed the indigenous Palestinian population. After establishing the State of Israel, the Jews appropriated and managed Israel for their own sake. In order to legitimize the regime, Jews institute procedures that look democratic but defy the most fundamental principles of a true democracy: equality and change. In Israeli “democracy” the Palestinian-Arab minority is not only unequal but also denied the possibility to affect change of its subordinate status and the nature of the state. As a result a conflict between the Arab minority with the state and the Jewish majority is unavoidable; it will either produce unrest and virulent violence, or topple ethnocracy and transform Israel into a genuine democracy.

Proponents of this view also claim that the ethnocratic character of Israel is further exacerbated by Israel’s expansion in 1967 to the West Bank and Gaza. The longterm occupation erased the Green Line, making Greater Israel the only viable entity. Creeping apartheid is the new regime in the occupied territories. If Israel in its pre-1967 borders is not a democracy, all the more so is Israel/ Palestine from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea. Instability and warfare abound (two Intifadas, rampant terrorism and numerous Israeli military operations).

This radical portrait of Israel was developed in reaction to the model of ethnic democracy. It is rejected not only by mainstream and critical social scientists but also by most radical scholars.²⁸⁴ I will discuss its flaws after introducing ethnic democracy.

Israel as an ethnic democracy

Ethnic democracy is a political system in which citizenship rights are extended to all, but the ethnic majority (“core group”) has institutionalized control over it. It is a procedural democracy for everyone but is controlled by the core group that formed and harnesses the state, primarily to advance its own interests. The ethnic state is seen as a necessary apparatus to protect the majority against internal and external threats. A contradiction inheres in ethnic democracy between democracy and ethnic domination; the outcomes of the conflict are not predetermined or predictable because both organizing principles are genuine and potent. The system can be stable if the core group keeps its demographic majority and continues to feel threatened, if the state is flexible in its policies on the ethnic minority, and if the minority struggle affects piecemeal change.

Some scholars describe Israel as an ethnic democracy; Israel’s self-image as a Jewish and democratic state clearly resonates with this form.²⁸⁵ Israel is a procedural democracy and a state that promotes the safety, wellbeing, numerical majority, language, culture and interests of Jews. The state is considered a required tool to fulfill the Jewish people’s right to self-determination in its ancestral land, to protect Israeli Jews against threats from the Arab world and the Arabs within, and to secure the survival of the Jewish Diaspora against the perils of antisemitism and assimilation. In spite the contradiction between Israel’s Jewish character and its democratic regime, ethnic democracy is viable and stable because Jews in Israel maintain a solid and permanent majority and continue to feel the need for an ethnic state in order to weather the threats against them and their brethren abroad. And most importantly, Israel, in its pre-1967 borders, enjoys international legitimacy and Zionism is widely accepted as a just Jewish nationalism.²⁸

6

Of all the classifications of the Israeli regime, ethnic democracy generates the most heated debates because it criticizes mainstream and radical approaches alike. Scholars, who see Israel as a liberal democracy, albeit with some weaknesses, reject the self-contradictions attributed to it by ethnic democracy. Critics who regard Israel as an ethnocracy

criticize ethnic democracy as a model that legitimizes an illegitimate and unviable regime.

According to the ethnic democracy model, Israel is an ethnic rather than a liberal democracy for several reasons. It institutionalizes Jewish rule, gives preferential treatment to Jews, defines the state as the homeland of all Jews in the world rather than the state of its citizens, does not create a civic nation of all its citizens, grants the Arabs ethnic group rights in addition to individual rights, and rejects assimilation of non-Jews.²⁸⁷

Although some of these ideas about Israel as an ethnic democracy square with the ethnocracy model, the two are markedly dissimilar. Israel is not an ethnocracy because it is a true procedural democracy (not a thin façade), enjoys international legitimacy as a Jewish state and feels strongly that its Jewish nature is essential to protect Israeli and Diaspora Jewries; it treats Arabs within the pre-1967 borders as citizens and distinguishes them from non-citizen Palestinians under occupation, accords them cultural group rights, allows them to wage an intense democratic struggle without having to face repression, and reacts to their struggle by making some favorable change in policies and practices.²⁸⁸ These features impart vitality to Israel's ethnic democracy, in contrast to the fragility and instability attributed to it by the ethnocracy model.

Israel as a social democracy

Social democracy is a system geared to secure for all its members a decent standard of living, to protect them against the harms of the free market, globalization and plutocracy, and to reduce socioeconomic inequality. As a middle-way system between socialism and capitalism, it posits that a necessary condition for political democracy is a significant measure of material equality. It endorses government intervention in the economy, puts more emphasis on economic distribution than growth, promotes unionized work, and supports higher direct taxes and government spending. Social democracy counteracts the plutocratic tendencies of capitalism.

Social democracy provides social and economic rights and services, including employment, a minimum wage, housing, education, healthcare, sustainable environment, family allowances, disability benefits, old-age pensions, and living stipends to students in higher education. These social-democratic rights depend on the country's wealth and its social ethos. Usually they are not made constitutional, even in rich Western countries like the United States, France and Germany. They are largely supplied through a good welfare-state system. The practices of social democracy are especially vital for the lower strata and the economically underprivileged minorities. The Scandinavian countries are the best contemporary social democracies.

Israel is a post-industrial society. It has substantial high technology, employs three quarters of its labor force in services, scores highly on the UN indicators of human development and belongs to the category of high-income states. It is a welfare state that furnishes its inhabitants with basic services (including a good health-care) and social security benefits.

Still, Israel falls short of the high standards of Western European social democracies.²⁸⁹ Israel's so-called "constitutional revolution" did not encompass social-democratic elements.²⁹⁰ A substantial part of the state budget and around 5% of the GNP are allocated to national security and to investments in the Jewish settlements on the West Bank, reducing appreciably the resources available to social services in Israel proper. Growing globalization since 1985 has steadily increased income inequality to nearly the top level in the West. The most disadvantaged Israelis depend on the traditional, low-tech branches of the economy. Less than a third of hired employees are unionized. The average wage in Israel is half the average Western wage and about half of the employed do not pay income tax because they do not earn enough. The cost of living is higher than in the West (e.g., the cost of an average three-bedroom apartment totals the sum of 135 average monthly net salaries) due to deficient economic competition, high customs and mismanagement. Poverty rates are staggering: 20% of families, 25% of individuals and 33%

of children are officially below the poverty line. Half of the Arabs and half of the ultra-Orthodox are poor. Among the reasons for their poverty is the lower participation in the civilian labor force of ultra-Orthodox men and Muslim women. State services are also in decline because of the right-wing government policies of privatization and deregulation, and the rejection of reduction of income inequality as a national goal. The neo-liberal ideology, widespread among Israel's political and economic elites, legitimizes these policies despite the preference of the Israeli public, including constituents of right-wing parties, for social democracy and a mixed economy rather than a capitalistic free market.²⁹¹

In response to a severe economic crisis, the Israeli government launched the Economic Stabilization Plan on July 1, 1985. This grand program successfully stabilized the economy but also tilted it to the free market. Privatization substituted private monopolies for government monopolies, resulting in astounding wealth concentration in a handful of families. Monopolism raised the cost of living and deregulation exposed the public to the ills of the free market.²⁹

² Some critics invoke the spectacle of the gradual formation of plutocracy in Israel which uses war and peace for profit.²⁹³

In summer 2011 a mass protest movement for social justice emerged, calling for lowering the high cost of living and strengthening various aspects of social democracy.²⁹⁴ While it has succeeded in putting social demands on the national agenda,²⁹⁵ and effecting some change, it has failed to make Israel's democracy socially strong.

Conclusion

Democracy is not just a set of procedures, institutions and basic citizenship rights for electing the ruling majority for a given term. Deeply divided societies with only procedural democracy run the risk of a tyranny of the majority. In addition to this baseline procedural democracy, an advanced model of "substantive democracy" would also entail liberal democracy, consociational democracy and social democracy,

which together accord full and equal individual rights and freedoms, constitutional protection against abuse of power by the majority, collective rights to nonassimilable minorities and various devices to provide a fair standard of living for everyone and to limit socioeconomic inequality. In assessing democracy of a country we must examine the degree to which the various facets of democracy (procedural, liberal, consociational and social) exist. Another way to evaluate the quality and performance of democracy is by applying several criteria, above all representativeness, equality, tolerance, governability and resilience.

A mixed picture emerges from the application of the different components of substantive democracy to Israel. Contrary to the harsh criticism leveled by some scholars who downgrade Israel to an ethnocracy, Israel is certainly a true procedural democracy. It also has additional important democratic elements, but it is by no means on a par with first-rate Western democracies. The quality of Israel's liberal democracy is degraded by the absence of a constitution, the permanence of emergency regulations, religious coercion, and the pivotal Zionist idea that Israel belongs to all Jews in the world and not to its citizens and its nature as a Jewish state is a permanent and unchangeable system.²⁹⁶ Although Israel grants certain collective rights to its non-assimilable minorities (national-religious Jews, ultra-Orthodox Jews, Arabs), it falls appreciably short of consociational democracy. Dominant Israeli Zionism is incompatible with multiculturalism and binationalism. Israel is a second-rate social democracy because it lacks the necessary resources, and its welfare-state system is gradually and steadily downsized by neo-liberal policies and practices.

Israeli democracy is doing well on representativeness and resilience. Its method of election to the Knesset (proportional representation with a 3.25% threshold) and state funding of political parties and election campaigns give all minorities a fair chance of being represented. Its coalition governments guarantee power-sharing to many groups in society except Arabs. Israeli democracy is very resilient and stable. It has withstood many critical crises and divisive wars (especially

the prelude to the Six-Day War, the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War and the rift surrounding the First Lebanon War). All changeovers of governments have been orderly.

But Israeli democracy is not doing well on equality, tolerance and governability. There is no equality law. “Basic Law: Freedom of Occupation” and “Basic Law: Dignity and Freedom” exclude equality by design. Equality is embedded in some regular laws (e.g., in employment) and in Supreme Court rulings, but is less binding than a constitutional equality. The omission of equality is meant to prevent challenges to the legal inequality between men and women and between Jews and Arabs, and to other manifestations of religious coercion. Political and social tolerance of ideological, cultural and national minorities is also low in Israel, and the educational system does not seriously promote it. The Israeli regime is representative and stable, but governments are not stable and are ineffective because they are coalitions reflecting the deep divisions in society and the heated dispute over the Palestinian question.

How has Israeli democracy done over time? Without doubt, democratization has been the historical trend of change since 1948. All components of democracy were weak in the 1950s and improved over the years. To illustrate, until 1977 Israeli democracy was a dominant party system, changing into a bi-bloc system thereafter; the military government in Israeli-Arab areas was lifted in 1966; and the Supreme Court performed “a constitutional revolution” in 1992. Some analysts argue that dedemocratization has been taking place since the eruption of the Second Intifada in October 2000 with the growth of the radical right,²⁹⁷ the rise of religion,²⁹⁸ and the legislation to contain the political activities of human rights organizations and Arab activists.²⁹⁹ However, these developments are the regular ups and downs of a viable second-rate democracy like Israel.

If the structural constraints on Israeli democracy – the protracted state of belligerency, ethnonational Zionism, the state-religion symbiosis, and the existence of a dissident and enemy-affiliated Arab minority – are taken into account, it

functions not badly. But as long as they do not subside or disappear, Israeli democracy is not and cannot become first-rate.

There is, however, ample room for improvement in various areas even under the current constraints. Some examples will suffice. While it is too revolutionary for Israel to abolish the Millet system, it is possible to make it more flexible by introducing a choice of opting out, civil marriage and divorce, and civic education to cultivate tolerance of the other, common Israeliness and shared society. Reduction of religious coercion would promote liberal democracy in Israel. Israel can also become more democratic by renouncing its Jewish exclusivity without losing its Jewish identity. To be more liberal and democratic, Israel can soften its Zionist features: lands can be allocated according to needs, not ethnonational descent; the special status of the Jewish Agency and the Jewish National Fund can be rescinded; and Arab families with a spouse from an enemy area can be allowed to live in Israel.

Ending occupation and securing peace would contribute greatly to the normalization of both Israeli democracy and the status of Arabs who can become trustworthy citizens and serve as a political lobby for the Palestinian people and the future Palestinian state. Until a final-status agreement with the Palestinians is reached, however, Israel can cease its humiliating policy of ethnic profiling in the security checks in border crossings and firmly combat discrimination and exclusion of Arabs on grounds of their exemption from military service. Similarly, Arab leaders can stop their campaign against the state program of allowing Arab youth to volunteer for civic service and to receive all the benefits granted to army veterans. While binationalism is improper in Jewish eyes, Israel can meet most Arab demands by providing Arabs with cultural autonomy and by stopping institutional discrimination. Israel can let Arabs enjoy their right to self-determination as a national minority through a non-territorial autonomy and identification and ties with a future Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

But these and other potential reforms are the battleground for the fight between the left and the right in Israel. The two

Jewish political camps embrace Zionism and concur on Israel as a Jewish and democratic state, but disagree on the definition of these constituent state components and on the balance between them. The left (with its supporters – the secular, the better off, Ashkenazim, and the Arabs) feels that Israel is biased toward Jewishness and Judaism and wishes to make it more “democratic” and secular, while the right (with its supporters – the religious, the worse off, and the Mizrahim) feels that Israel is biased toward democracy and secularism and wishes to make it more “Jewish” and more religious. The Jewish left leans toward making Israel a predominantly liberal democracy, the right a predominantly ethnic democracy, and the Arabs a consociational (binational) democracy.³⁰⁰

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39. What Kind of Democracy Is Israel?

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This paper was completed in December 2015.

Among the successes Israeli leaders pride themselves of having achieved is the fact that they have established in the Middle East the only genuine democracy which has worked without an interruption since more than 65 years. When they went to the polls for the 20th time since 1948, in March 2015, to choose 120 deputies from 10 parties, among a record 26 lists, Israeli citizens proved certainly that Israel is a vibrant parliamentary democracy with a regular, open and pluralist electoral race. Electoral choices were made following lively public debate, relayed by an independent press, under the vigilant control of a Supreme Court that for the last two decades has been especially attentive to the respect for public freedoms. The results are all the more flattering when the geopolitical situation of the region is taken into account. Indeed, this democracy has functioned uninterruptedly despite the fact that the country was surrounded by authoritarian states with which it has been engaged in a full confrontation for 30 years up until the signing of the peace agreement with Egypt in 1979.

However, this is only part of the picture. Indeed, regularly a heated debate resurfaces among scholars working on Israel centered on the quality of its democracy. The rationale behind this debate is perfectly understandable. Indeed, if elections are regularly taking place in Israel and basic freedoms are protected, Israel has undoubtedly many features which distinguishes it from Western democratic states alongside which its leaders list their country routinely. Three features stand out quite clearly. First, Israel defines itself as a Jewish state, i.e., a state which promotes overtly a specific Jewish collective identity. This structural link cannot but have consequences first for the non-Jewish citizens (mainly Arabs)

who cannot be part of this core identity but also for the Jewish majority which has to abide by certain rules (as for example for Jewish marriage and divorce on which there is rabbinical monopoly). Secondly, Israel is a polity whose borders are fuzzy. The 159 states which maintain diplomatic relations with Israel acknowledge the “1949 borders” which are partly the former borders between Mandate Palestine and the neighboring countries and partly the 1949 armistices lines (with the exception of Jerusalem which is legally treated by the international community as subjected to the international regime foreseen by the UN 1947 Partition Plan). Some of these borders have been stabilized following the peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan, but nothing is settled with Lebanon and Syria. What is more Israel is still considering the West Bank as a disputed territory which it controls in various ways, including militarily. 350,000 Israeli citizens live in settlements in the West Bank and coexist with 2.5 million Palestinians who do not partake to the same citizenship regime. Partly indeterminate and insecure borders lead to a situation in which 7% of Israelis live with full citizenship rights, outside the boundaries of the state recognized internationally,³⁰¹ while Palestinians are subjected to a complex regime mixing self-rule (via the Palestinian Authority) and occupation. Thirdly, Israel is since its creation a country at war where national security plays a key role. This situation has two consequences quite unique in comparison with Western democracies. While subordinated to political authorities, the military institution has a room of action which is by no means insignificant and weighs heavily on democratically elected decision-makers. War has also led to the persistence in Israel of a legal state of emergency. Never revoked since 1948, the state of emergency gives in principle a wide range of action to the executive to use exceptional powers to suspend and limit public freedoms. Luckily this was rarely the case within Israel for two reasons. Firstly, the emergency powers were largely used with caution by state institutions; secondly, all of the measures adopted within this framework were subject to the control of the judge who thereby played the role of guaranteeing the fundamental principles of democracy. However, the liberticidal potential of

the state of emergency remains and stresses that Israel remains, contrary to Western states, a democracy at war.

The state of the debate about Israeli democracy

It is precisely the hybrid nature of Israel where democratic standard features (separation of powers, competitive political pluralism, recognition of popular sovereignty and fundamental freedoms, etc.) coexist with idiosyncratic characteristics (Jewishness of the state, lack of clear territorial/political borders, war context) which has led to a recurring debate on the nature of Israeli democracy. In fact the answer provided by each one follows largely from the weight given to each of the two dimensions of the state: those who look mainly or exclusively at the standard democratic features of Israel will set indisputably Israel in the democratic camp; those who favor the exceptional features of Israel will relativize the democratic credentials of the country or dismiss them altogether. Thus we end up with two extreme positions: the first claims that Israel is purely and simply a liberal democracy,³⁰² the other that it is a “*Herrenvolk* (‘master race’) democracy” (as apartheid South Africa) where power is confiscated by the politically dominant group.³⁰³ From the outset, it is obvious that the first position cannot be sustained. Just take one point: the institutional link between Judaism and the state. It has clearly negative repercussions on the rights of individuals. The rabbinic monopoly on the marriage of Jews legally prevents the conclusion of any union between Jews and non-Jews in Israel.³⁰⁴ The application of Halakha also has particularly negative effects on women in terms of divorce since women cannot take the initiative to dissolve a marriage. To require all Israeli citizens, including non-Jews,³⁰⁵ to celebrate their unions on the basis of religious law limits both freedom of conscience and the contractual freedom of marriage and is hardly compatible with liberal democracy. In fact, those who stick to conjoin liberalism and democracy in the Israeli case have to grant so many deviations from the norm that they are emptying the very meaning of liberalism of

any content. Thus, Benjamin Neuberger analyses Israel as a liberal democracy with “four flaws”: lack of a written constitution, specific relationship between religion and state, subordinated status of Israel’s Arab citizens, and continuous occupation of Palestinian territories.³⁰⁶ These are no more flaws, but big holes which can only lead to the logical conclusion that Israel is surely not a liberal democracy.

What about the opposite position taken by those who claim that Israel is a “master’s” democracy? To begin with the expression itself is conceptually contradictory: if, indeed, only part of the population has civil and political rights, it is no more a democracy, but an oligarchy. Beyond that, such an approach takes for granted that the appropriate unit of analysis should not be Israel within its pre-1967 borders but the whole area “from the sea to the river” where a system of control is at work which, although with different tools, is systematically discriminating against the Arabs whatever their legal status. For this reason, at the end of the day, Israel cannot pretend being a democracy at all, it is an ethnocracy where power is held by the dominant group in order to keep control over contested territory.³⁰⁷

Such a perspective raises a “big question.” Is the obliteration of the Green Line between Israel itself and the territories occupied in 1967 warranted? The answer is no. The State of Israel always claimed that it held the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (till 2005), within the framework of international law, under belligerent occupation. We may dispute the genuine respect by Israel of the Law of Armed Conflict as Israel transferred part of its population in territories occupied in 1967, a practice which is forbidden by the Fourth Geneva Convention. However, the fact remains: with the exception of East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights which were annexed by Israel, the West Bank (and the Gaza Strip till 2005) were subjected to a military government. The consequence is crystal clear: Israel does not apply democratic rules in these territories and never pretended it did. If, as claimed by scholars defending the idea of ethnocracy, the Green Line is completely erased, Israel should treat its Arab citizens in the Galilee and the Negev exactly the same way it

treats the Palestinians in Nablus and Hebron. Obviously, it is not the case which means that, despite its shortcomings, citizenship matters: it protects, at least partially, the Arabs within Israel from major encroachments from the state. This means that the distinction between Israel proper and the occupied territories has to be kept because in sovereign Israel democratic processes, even imperfect, are still working. In fact, the followers of the “ethnocracy model” cannot stick to it completely: they have to admit that Israel has important democratic features (political competition, significant civil rights, free media, etc.), even if they deny the existence of a democratic state structure.³⁰⁸ By doing so they acknowledge that Israel proper is indeed a democracy, even if it is a defective one.

If Israel is neither a liberal democracy, nor a “Herrenvolk” democracy, what is Israel? Israel qualifies certainly as a political democracy because it meets the standard features generally used to build the democratic model (competitive political pluralism, fairness of elections, freedom of expression, etc.). Not surprisingly, political scientists dealing with democracy have always ranked Israel among the democratic countries.³⁰⁹

However, beyond the general idea that, in Israel, “the government of the people, by the people, for the people” is respected, it is necessary to dwell on the political practices developed within the Israeli polity in order to really assess how democracy works. Indeed, democracy is above all an experience which takes place differently in various societies which are themselves the product of historical processes. Rather than speak of democracy in general it is more heuristic to look at the forms taken by democracy in different countries. Even if they share common features, French democracy is different from British democracy which is itself different from German democracy. The same with Israel: democracy has to be assessed not by measuring its degree of conformity with an abstract model but by studying it as an evolving practice over the last 65 years.

The infancy of Israeli democracy

The first 20 years were those of the *mamlakhtiut* (literally, 'statism'), associated most closely with Ben-Gurion. It was a matter of consolidating the state as the supreme authority, the guarantor of the general interest, and this manifested in the transfer of the public sector and the monopolization by the state of areas of activities that had until then been solely the jurisdiction of political groups (defense, education, employment). As the privileged object of political allegiance, the state was also the motor behind national integration (absorption of immigrants, socialization through schools and the army). At first sight, democracy seems well established: parties, from different political trends, compete; the Knesset elections are held regularly every four years; a court system is set up, etc. However, the absolute priority granted to reinforcing the state tempered somewhat the democratic modes of expression. As the dominant party until 1977, the socialist Mapai party – later on the Labor party – dominated the political game. In order to secure their authority and promote their projects, its leaders did not hesitate to justify certain infringements of the rule of law.³¹⁰ The Histadrut, which was linked to Mapai, functioned more as its partner than as a union defending the rights of workers before the state, which was then omnipresent in the economy. Likewise many newspapers were structurally linked to the party in power or to semi-public bodies, while the radio, which was directly associated with the council's presidency in many ways acted as the government mouthpiece. The content of the news was, in addition, subjected to a strict censorship, especially in matters affecting the security of the state, in accordance with the British Emergency Regulations of 1945, incorporated into Israeli law. However, the main infringement of democracy had to do with the status of the Arab minority (160,000 people in 1949). From 1948 to 1966, it was subjected to a military administration that severely restricted the exercise of its civil liberties. There were frequent house arrests, administrative detentions, and censorship of the Arab press. The freedom to political assembly was itself subject to innumerable restrictions. While some measures applied to the Arab population certainly responded to security needs (espionage prevention, fight against terrorism), their generalized

application over a long period, and in a collective fashion, amounted to a veritable control regime.³¹¹ They facilitated, in particular, the pursuit of an eminently political objective: the massive transfer of Arab land. At the time when it came into being, the State of Israel was in the highly unusual situation of exercising political sovereignty over a country in which Jews owned only 9% of the land.³¹² As a successor state, Israel naturally took possession of all public land, as well as land that was considered without owner, but a third of the land nevertheless remained legally Arab private property. The emergency legislation enabled the appropriation not only of the land and buildings of Palestinian refugees, but also of half of the land belonging to Israeli Arabs. The security rationale therefore in fact served as a useful pretext for acquiring the majority of privately owned Arab land. The net result is that Arabs now own nothing but 3.5% of the surface area of the country, while the state controls 93% (the rest belongs to private Jewish landowners).

The existence of this exceptional arrangement in regard to Arab citizens emphasizes the extremely ethnic character of the Israeli polity in its early stages. The citizenship status granted to Arabs certainly allowed them to vote – within the framework of a relatively controlled electoral race – but it did not guarantee full respect for their fundamental rights, including freedom of movement and the right to own property.

Through the clearly subordinated status of the Arabs, it is indisputable that an analytical distinction should be made between the political community (comprising all citizens) and the national community (restricted to the Jews), the first being the legal community, the second the legitimate community.

Further evidence of the saliency of the dividing line between Jews and non-Jews is shown by the fact that democracy was based, in the Jewish camp, on a very broad consensual basis. Mapai never got, alone, an absolute majority (due to proportional representation) and therefore it had to come to terms with smaller parties (liberals, religious parties, leftist Mapam). However, its parliamentary basis usually exceeded by far what simple arithmetic would have required

as if the dominant party wanted to have the broadest political support possible. This strategy was largely successful because there was indeed a strong national consensus around the defense of Zionist values (Jewish patriotism, conquest of the land, ingathering of the exiles, etc.). Even Ben-Gurion's most consistent opponent, Menachem Begin, took part in this general consensus. Undoubtedly, the two men differed on their approach, more pragmatic for the Labor leader who was mindful of the international context, more ideological for the Herut leader who was convinced that the use of military force was entirely legitimate to recover all of Eretz Yisrael (West Bank and Jordan), but they shared a common vision of national restoration. The exclusion of the right from the various Labor coalitions was the outcome of a deep political enmity, and in particular, the stubborn refusal of Begin to accept, not the authority of the head of government, but the hegemony of Mapai upon the state. This political exclusion was different from the stigma associated with Maki (the Communist Party): the latter was illegitimate – while operating legally – because it did not share the Zionist state ideology which explains that its electorate was more and more made up of Arab citizens; Herut was only removed from power as a political rival.

National intransigence and democratic ripening

With the Six-Day War came the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip which opened a political debate on the future of these territories. While the Labor party adopted the principle of territorial compromise (with Jordan), the right boosted by the “liberation of Judea-Samaria” became the advocate of a strident nationalism tinted with religious messianism. Two divided political camps gradually crystallized: the uncompromising nationalists (gathered around Likud) and the moderate nationalists (around Labor).

The first got a more and more larger following to the detriment of the later which were weakened by being in power for too long. Finally, in 1977 Likud won the general elections:

it was the first political changeover, an event that is known as *Mahapach* (literally, ‘reversal’) and which attested to the institutional consolidation of democracy. An authentic democracy in fact assumes “a system of electoral change of political specialists in which some are endowed with the highest responsibilities while others find themselves thanked by the electorate while they retain the high probability of returning to power in a future election.”³¹³

This changeover of political power was made possible by the mobilization of Sephardic Jews who turned away from the Labor party which had maintained them in a state of paternalistic dependency. By offering the majority of their votes to the “pariah” of Israeli political life, Menachem Begin, they asserted themselves as autonomous agents. In parallel, the victory of Likud also marked the true entry into politics of another group that had previously been on the periphery of the political system, the ultra-Orthodox Jews (the famous “men in black”). From then on, by participating in different governments, ultra-Orthodox Jews contributed to the functioning of the Zionist state they had for so long denounced. The 1977 power changeover is thus an indication of the integrating force of Israeli democracy. Yet the paradox remains: this full and complete insertion into politics rallied around the right, which defended a strong nationalism which is hard to reconcile with a democratic ethos. In fact, the mainstream rightist trend represented by Likud never advocated the establishment of an authoritarian regime or rejected outright democracy. However, if one scratches the surface, it appears that the acceptance of democracy is tempered. Ariel Sharon said once: “Our ancestors and our parents did not come to establish democracy even if it’s a good thing that democracy has been established, but they came to create a Jewish state.”³¹⁴ The message is clear: the Zionist goals (freedom of Jewish immigration, integrity of the land, etc.) have the upper hand and cannot, therefore, be challenged, even by a democratically elected majority. It is precisely in the name of these “higher values” that the right denounced the 1993 Oslo Accords: although they were backed by a majority of Knesset members, they were not backed by a Jewish

majority as the supporters of Oslo included Arab MKs of non-Zionist parties. The challenge to democracy is even more blatant among the far-right which emerged at the end of the 1970s. At best, its supporters have a conditional acceptance of democracy. Thus, the National Religious Party was won over by messianic Zionism which clearly legitimized resistance to the state authorities as soon as they took decisions deemed in contradiction with the process of messianic redemption (as territorial withdrawal). Heteronomy, i.e., the existence of a religious commandment seen as superior to human law makes it impossible to recognize democracy as a principle of universal validity.

This relativization of democracy is also apparent from various opinion polls from the 1980s. Although the overall support for democratic values (recognition of equal rights, freedom of conscience, etc.) was high (70%–85%), it is a very different picture if we look at attitudes. Thus, 42% of those polled said they were in favor of a strong leadership able to impose order without having to depend on elections or the parliament. 34% were also of the opinion that even a minor threat to state security warranted serious restrictions on democracy.³¹⁵ These non-democratic attitudes were clearly far more pronounced in two categories, the religious and Sephardic people, in other words, in the social groups that supported the “nationalist camp.” In both cases, the religious variable is the determining factor. Since levels of religious practice tend to go hand in hand with more ethnocentric behavior, the Sephardim, who are generally more religious than the Ashkenazim, adhere to a strong collective identity and are more inclined to believe that its preservation justifies, if necessary, limitations to the application of democratic rules.

The consolidation of an intransigent nationalism during the 1970s did not, however, prevent a parallel strengthening of the rule of law through the activism of the Supreme Court and the consolidation of a more professional bureaucratic class, implementing a “legal-rational” authority that treats citizens in an impersonal fashion according to universally applicable rules. Although during the early period, society had largely been organized by a mobilizing state according to the

imperatives of nation building, it gradually gained autonomy. One illustration is the increase in protest movements, which usually took the form of demonstrations. From 1948 to 1955, there were less than 50 demonstrations a year; in the early 1980s, there were four times as many. This protest activism shows that, as in other countries, there was a crisis in political mediation but that it found compensation in the emergence of a “participatory democracy.”³¹⁶

Between liberalization and “identity politics”

In the 1990s Israeli democracy entered a new phase that showed an increase in elements of liberalism without putting into question the ethno-national dimension of the state. The fact that the liberal aspect of Israeli democracy shone all the brighter is shown by the 1992 adoption of two Basic Laws (on freedom of occupation and on human dignity and liberty) that protected certain public freedoms on a constitutional basis. This promotion of universally applicable rights emphasizes a fundamental trend in Israeli society that cannot be denied despite the presence of nationalist-religious groups: the growth of individualism and a self-based culture. This concept of individualized identity is a major break from the communitarian ethos, shared in various forms by all Zionist movements (religious, socialist, nationalist right) that systematically valorized the collective at the expense of the individual.³¹⁷ The reinforcement of subjectivity is a sign of a deep cultural transformation, even if it is not generalized, since it affects primarily Mediterranean and lay Israel. Moreover, this faithfulness to the self is expressed not only at a strictly individual level, for in some cases it is also expressed by individuals voluntarily joining identity based groups. In other words, individuals today may choose to situate themselves in identity groups (religious, cultural, sexual) in the name of respect for their own subjectivity. Unlike traditional communities (that were essentially religious) in which the individual is entirely submerged by the collective, “new communities” (ethnic groups, gays, women) are constructed by individuals. The concomitance between individual affirmation and communitarian developments is thus not a

coincidence. In many respects, it can be claimed that Israeli society has become authentically plural, and thus also more democratic, in as much as it explicitly recognizes its internal diversity. Although the ideology of the *melting pot* that sought to create a standard *homo israelicus* was abandoned in the mid-1960s, the dominant norm of conformity to the sociocultural model forged by the Russian and Polish pioneers continued to influence Israeli society for a long time. This became no longer true during the 1990s when acceptance of the multicultural nature of society is a reality. This community pluralism should not, however, be seen as an “isolation strategy” from the surrounding society. Whether it is called for by Sephardic Jews or new “Russian” immigrants, ethnicity is used as a resource to gain recognition and concessions from the political center in order to achieve social progress, rather than a withdrawal into the self.

Even the Arab citizens of Israel seemed on the verge of becoming more integrated in the political and social fabric of the country. Politically, although the number of seats obtained by the Arab parties in the Knesset (Hadash, Arab Democratic Party, Progressive List for Peace) remained stable at the beginning of the 1990s, what changed was their bargaining power. Indeed, the two main parties, Likud and Labor, contending for the constitution of a parliamentary coalition, were neck and neck: after the 1988 elections, the results were so tight that they had no choice but to form a unity government. In such a context, small parties had a disproportionate weight as they could have a decisive contribution in building a coalition. It was particularly obvious in 1992 when the Labor party headed by Yitzhak Rabin was clearly ahead but had not many partners to form a government coalition: it needed absolutely the support of the Arab parties and their five seats.³¹⁸ This parliamentary backing – without ministerial participation in the government – became even more crucial after Rabin took the bold decision of starting negotiations with the PLO. Of course, this support was not for free: they asked for a betterment of their lot which translated for instance in the rescission of the discriminatory law subjecting the receipt of some family subsidies to the

completion of military service (the Arabs are not called up), a halt in the confiscations of land in Arab areas and an increase in the representation of Arabs in the higher ranks of public administration.³¹⁹ This political integration went with a growing presence of Arabs in everyday life.

Legally, things seemed also on the right track with the Qa'adan decision taken by the Supreme Court in 2000. In that ruling, Israel's highest judicial authority stated that it was illegal to refuse to lease land to the Qa'adans, an Israeli Arab couple, on the pretence that the "community settlement" of Katzir was created by the Jewish Agency which works for the sole benefit of Jews. For the court, the state cannot discriminate between its Arab and Jewish citizens in the allocation of land even if it is done through a proxy like the Jewish Agency. Even if the decision concerned only the Qa'adans, it signaled a breach in the public land management which clearly favors Jews.

However, the hope that an inexorable liberalizing trend was underway in Israel was shattered precisely the same year the Supreme Court took its bold decision. Late September 2000, the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada which opened a vicious circle of Palestinian suicide attacks in the heart of Israeli cities and of military incursions into Palestinians cities had profound negative consequences for Israel's democracy.

The partial deliberalization of Israel

The indiscriminate violence against Israeli civilians between 2000 and 2004 led to a clear right turn in the elections: since 2001 the Labor party was not once the first party in electoral terms and thus was unable to build a sustainable left coalition till today. The former dominant party of the early years became sometimes an additional force for another party (Likud, Kadima) or remained in the opposition. However, it would be a mistake to understand this extended shift to the right only as an outcome of the insecurity which was genuine in the "Intifada years" and even beyond. Indeed, the firing of rockets both by Hezbollah in the north and by Hamas in the south, although it was less dreadful than the suicide attacks,

entertained the feeling that Israel was surrounded by enemies and that the tough policy advocated by the right was the only avenue.

Two deep sociological trends have also to be taken into account to explain the political domination of the right. The first is the massive influx of Russian-speaking Jews which constitute about 20% of the Jewish population. Although they are overwhelmingly secular, they are not, on the whole, politically liberal, but deeply nationalist. They are committed to the fact that Israel is only the state of the Jews and that the Palestinian citizens of Israel are here on sufferance. With Avigdor Liberman, the leader of Yisrael Beiteinu, they have found their hero. The second noticeable trend is the fact that Israel has become more religious. More people are defining themselves as Orthodox: in 1999, 15% did so, ten years later there were 22%. Both trends are leading in the same direction: assertion of a strong identity (national or religious) which goes with a clear relativization of democracy. Thus, various surveys have shown that FSU immigrants have more authoritarian and intolerant attitudes. Support for a strong leader is higher than among old-timers (74% vs. 60%). Support for encouraging Arab emigration from Israel is impressive (77% vs. 47%).³²⁰

As for religious Jews, another survey stressed that only 14% of those who define themselves as Orthodox and 6% of the ultra-Orthodox think that democratic principles should take precedence if they are in contradiction with Halakha. Conversely, 84% of the secular anti-religious and 65% of the secular not anti-religious favor democratic principles over religious law. The divide is wide and shows clearly that democracy is not valued by religious and secular people the same way which is problematic for rooting a democratic culture.³²¹

The outburst of violence in 2000 was not only a turning point for the Jews, it was also a major rupture point for the Arab citizens of Israel. Indeed, their demonstrations of solidarity with fellow Palestinians, sometimes marred by violence against properties, was harshly repressed by the police leaving 13 people dead. It was a shock for the Arab

community which could not imagine that another Land Day was possible: in fact the October 2000 events were worse than the March 30, 1976 Land Day when six people were killed. The widespread feeling within the Arab public was that a genuine integration in a Jewish state was just impossible and that they would never get more than a hollow citizenship.³²² The first direct consequence was a sharp drop in the voting rate of Arabs: in the 1999 elections, 75% had participated; in the 2013 elections they were only 56%. Such a level of abstention, concentrated within a large minority, is bad for democracy because it sets the minority group on the margins of the system. Unfortunately, the situation of insularity has only grown. A dangerous dialectics evolved. As the elites of the Arab community (MKs, mayors, professionals, academics, etc.) were convinced that there was no future for the Arabs in the present State of Israel they made extensive proposals to transform Israel in a binational democratic state (alongside a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip). Those proposals were presented in three so-called “Vision Documents” published in 2006–2007 which caused an uproar among the Jewish public as they denied the right of self-determination to the Jews.³²³ They bolstered a trend toward the strengthening of Israel’s Jewish national identity which took especially the form of illiberal laws adopted by the Knesset. In 2011, the Parliament adopted the Nakba Law which allows the ministry of finance to cut financial support to every institution that support events “threatening the existence of Israel as a Jewish and democratic State, desecrates the State symbols or commemorates the birth of Israel as a day of mourning.” The law targets clearly the annual commemoration by the Arabs of their uprooting from Palestine in 1948. The same year the “Admissions Committee Law” was passed: it allows small towns in the Negev and Galilee to reject would-be residents based on their social “unsuitability” – a cover word used to bar mainly Arabs from living in those communities. This law is a weapon to counter the Qa’adan jurisprudence. But Arab citizens are not the only one to be targeted, so are NGOs which are part of a vibrant civil society. Thus, the law on “Funding from State Entities” requires that NGOs which get money from foreign states should make it

public. If the law was driven by the need for transparency, it would be acceptable. However the aim is quite different: to brand human rights organizations, which get steady financial support from the EU, as “unpatriotic” and delegitimize their actions. Interestingly, organizations which support for instance settlements in the West Bank will not be hit as they get money from private donors (mainly Americans).

All those laws – and other bills under discussion – are highly problematic.³²⁴ First, they have clearly political aims whereas the law should set forth general principles. Secondly, they undermine democratic culture by discriminating among citizens and infringing on basic rights (freedom of speech, protest, etc.). Ironically, Israeli democracy is undermined by those who are its representatives.

It is now time to come back to the initial question: what kind of democracy is Israel? How can we describe a polity which has at the same time accepted the principle of citizenship on an individual basis and set up preferential links between one ethnic group (the Jews) and the state? The answer given by the sociologist Sammy Smooha, 25 years ago, seems to me still valid: it is an “ethnic democracy” where political sovereignty belongs to the Israeli citizens as a whole (and only to them), but where the state is that of the Jewish people.³²⁵ Such a patchwork is bound to be precarious, since the preponderance of the main group frequently clashes with equality of all citizens. Sometimes, the balance swings in the direction of democracy, as was the case in the 1990s when liberalization trends grew; sometimes, the balance swings in the other direction and the core Jewish collective identity is reasserted as was the case in the last decade. A strong caution should be uttered here: ethnicity cannot override some important democratic principles, one being the respect of minority rights. A parliamentary political majority cannot use its privileged position to disenfranchise in one way or the other the minority and enhance the status of the dominant ethnic group. Having a political majority does not mean having a free hand to impose the tyranny of the majority over the minority. So far, the worst has been avoided due to the activism of the Supreme Court and to the resilience of civil

society. But an extreme vigilance is required: democracy is, by definition, fragile.

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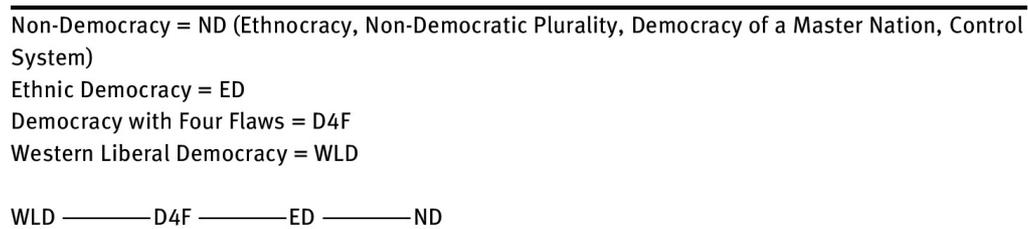
40. From Liberal Democracy to Ethnocracy: Different Conceptions of Israel's Democracy

Benyamin Neuberger

This paper was completed in December 2015.

There are two polar conceptions of Israeli democracy: one that holds that Israel is not a democracy at all, and another that holds that Israel is in every way a Western liberal democracy. On the conceptual scale between these two poles, Israel has also been conceived as an “ethnic democracy” – a different and inferior kind of democracy, but a democracy nonetheless – and, alternatively, as a “democracy with four flaws,” a conception of democracy that will be discussed below in a separate section. The abovementioned concepts are displayed below on a spectrum reflecting the quality of democracy in Israel (from Western Liberal Democracy to Non-Democracy):

Fig. 1: Quality of democracy spectrum



Israel as a non-democracy

The term ethnocracy is used repeatedly by scholars who do not regard Israel as a democracy. This concept is perhaps best associated with Oren Yiftachel, Yoav Peled, and Aeyal Gross (for the years 1948–1966), as well as Nadim Rouhana, As'ad Ghanem, Amal Jamal, and the authors of *The Future Vision Papers of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel*, published in 2006.³²

⁶ Israel, as they see it, is neither simply another kind of

democracy nor a democracy with flaws: it is not a democracy at all. These scholars are, however, hesitant to label Israel a dictatorship, as they too identify certain democratic attributes of the Israeli system, such as elections and an elected parliament, a competitive political system, broad civil rights, a free media, and an autonomous judiciary. Despite these features, it is Israel's antidemocratic attributes – its compulsive systematic seizure of land by the majority ethnic group and its failure to safeguard minority rights – that, in their eyes, determine Israel's overall antidemocratic nature. As such, it is similar to former colonial states (such as the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa), which were democratic for their immigrant populations, but denied equal rights to their native and slave populations.

Proponents of the concept of ethnocracy maintain that Israel's occupied territories (the West Bank and the Gaza Strip) have for all intents and purposes been annexed to Israel and that the country therefore should be viewed as one political unit in which a large portion of the population lacks basic civil rights, such as the right to vote and to be elected. They also maintain that the Jewish settlements in the territories are a built-in element of the state, which therefore cannot be considered a democracy. According to this approach, a democracy must have a *demos*, the sovereign people constituting the inhabitants of the state (with the exception of a negligible number of foreign inhabitants), which is something that Israel, when considered in conjunction with its occupied territories, does not have. Israel's true sovereign, they posit, is the Jewish *ethnos*, or ethnic group (thus yielding the term *ethnocracy*, or rule of the *ethnos*). Their claim is that the Israeli state is Jewish – the state of the Jewish people – and that world Jewry is also partner to its governing regime. In this context, in which Israel is governed by a ruling *ethnos* comprised of Jewish citizens and non-citizens (from around the world), thus excluding Arab non-Jewish citizens of the state, and in which political power and economic resources (primarily land) are distributed, not according to citizenship but along ethnic lines, advocates of the concept of ethnocracy maintain that there can be no equal citizenship. According to their approach, the fact that the state is meant for Jews alone is

also manifested in sacred symbolic expressions such as “return” and “land redemption.” In response to the assertion by others (including proponents of the concept of “ethnic democracy”) that Arab citizens of Israel (but not of the occupied territories) *do* possess full individual rights, though perhaps not full collective rights, advocates of the concept of ethnocracy argue that in the absence of collective rights, there can be no full individual rights.

Yiftachel stresses that the Israeli state is characterized by a dynamic process of Judaization which, due to mass expulsions, prevention of repatriation, and massive land expropriations, is non-democratic by its very nature. Additional contributing elements noted by Yiftachel include the state’s systematic discrimination by means of the *Law of Return* (which is applicable to Jews only), the *Citizenship Law* (which facilitates preferential treatment for Jews), and the *Defense (Emergency) Regulations* (which are used primarily against Arabs), as well as the status of the “Land of the Jewish Nation,” building restrictions, the failure to build even a single new Arab settlement since the establishment of the state (with the exception of Bedouin townships in southern Israel, which were established for the purpose of concentrating the Bedouin population and clearing the land), and the absence of proportional representation in most state institutions. Peled argues that during the period 1948–1966, when a military government ruled over Israel’s Arab population, their right to vote was fictitious. Yiftachel and Amal Jamal maintain that ethnocracy is structural and cannot be changed by democratic means, since Arabs cannot become Jews (Yiftachel), and since legislative amendments – namely the 1985 amendment to *Basic Law: The Knesset*, which permits the disqualification from parliamentary elections of any party that fails to recognize Israel “as the state of the Jewish People,” and the more recent 2002 amendment that requires a commitment to a “*Jewish* and democratic” state – of necessity prevent the establishment of a Knesset majority that would favor fundamental change of the ethnocratic system.

A number of other models that are similar in spirit to ethnocracy have also been suggested. The most extreme

concept advanced in this context thus far has been “democracy of a master nation,” as Meron Benvenisti classifies an Israel stretching between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. Another is that of “non-democratic plurality,” which Peled and Navot use to define Israel following the unrest of October 2000. Still another model, advanced in the 1980s by American political scientist Ian Lustick, classifies Israeli rule over the Arabs within Green Line Israel as a “control system.”³²⁷ This model was also applied to Israel, but this time including the occupied territories, by Israeli sociologist Baruch Kimmerling.³²⁸

Whereas most scholars who classify Israel as an ethnocracy highlight the state’s treatment of its Arab minority and the role of the occupied territories, Shulamit Aloni frequently characterized Israel as a non-democratic ethnocracy, primarily in connection with the issue of religion, as manifested in the rule of the Jewish ethnic group defined by religious Orthodoxy, the use of religious coercion, the connection between religious Jewishness and the state, the status quo regarding religious issues, and most prominently the laws relating to marriage and divorce. These elements, she maintains, make Israel a patently “ethnocratic state” of Orthodox Jewish character.³²⁹

Ethnic democracy

The model of ethnic democracy differs fundamentally from ethnocracy and other similar models in that it regards Israel as a democratic regime, but maintains that unlike liberal democracies (in which all individuals are equal in principle) and multicultural democracies (in which all cultural, ethnic, national, and religious groups are equal in principle), ethnic democracies are not neutral. As a result, in Israel, non-Jewish groups and individuals are not equal to Jewish groups and individuals. Advocates of the concept of ethnic democracy include scholars from Israel, such as Sammy Smooha,³³⁰ Gershon Shafir, Yoav Peled and Doron Navot (for the period 1966–1990), as well as non-Israeli scholars, such as the German scholar Theodor Hanf, and Pierre van den Berghe of

South Africa. Yiftachel concurs with the concept's applicability to other countries, but argues that it cannot be applied to ethno-cratic Israel. Other countries also classified by these scholars as ethnic democracies include interwar Poland, Northern Ireland between 1921 and 1971, Slovakia, Estonia, Malaysia, and Georgia.

Smootha defines ethnic democracy "as a political system that combines the extension of civil and political rights to individuals and some collective rights to minorities," but that is also characterized by the "institutionalization of the control of one ethnic group over the state." Peled uses slightly different wording, defining it as "a democracy characterized by the institutionalized control of one ethnic group." According to Smootha, ethnic democracy is "a low quality" or "second class democracy suffering from conspicuous shortcomings," but a democracy (not an ethnocracy) nonetheless.³³¹

Below is a list of typical attributes of ethnic democracies:

Democratic attributes

- Universal human and civil rights
- Universal suffrage
- An elected parliament and government
- An independent judiciary
- The legitimacy of struggles to change the nature of the government (and not just its composition) in accordance with the law and with the rules of democracy

Ethnic attributes

- The state's identification with a "core ethnic nation"
- Dominance of a core ethnic nation
- Manifestation of this dominance in state legislation, policy, and symbols
- Equation of the good of the state with that of the core ethnic nation

- Ethnic stratification of citizenship and the division of society into “ethno-classes”
- Absence of significant collective rights for ethnonational minorities

Smootha and his supporters characterize Israel as a typical ethnic democracy; the model itself appears to be based on careful observation of the Israeli political system. Advocates of this model hold that a Jewish consensus exists in Israel regarding the desirability of ethnic democracy, that is to say, regarding the desirability of Israel’s character as a Jewish state and a democracy, resulting in a broad consensus regarding Israel’s character as a “Jewish democratic state,” with its various interpretations. The exception is a small post-Zionist minority calling for the institution of a liberal democracy of all its citizens or a multicultural democracy of all its nationalities. They also emphasize the fact that all citizens in Israel enjoy political and civil rights, including the right to vote and to be elected, and that every struggle for change, whether parliamentary or extra-parliamentary – based on non-violent demonstrations and a free press – is legitimate.

This description of the ethnic side of Israeli ethnic democracy is not fundamentally different from the conception of ethnocracy, but proponents of ethnic democracy reject the ethnocratic assertion that the occupied territories are in fact part of Israel.

The main ethnic attributes of ethnic democracy in Israel are as follows:

- Jewish-Zionist character of the state
- Conception of Israel as a state *of* the Jews and *for* the Jews (“the state of the Jewish people” or “the state of the Jews”)
- Distinctively Jewish state goals, such as the state’s Jewish character, a Jewish majority, *aliyah* (Jewish immigration to Israel), the “ingathering of the exiles,” control over most of the country’s land, and the allocation of resources (for instance to localities, industry, agriculture) in line with Zionist aims

- Jewish dominance and measures to ensure Jewish dominance in the future (by means of the Law of Return and the Citizenship Law)
- Law of Return: affords preferential treatment to Jews, maintains their demographic supremacy in the country, and impairs equality
- Clear distinction between the core ethnic nation (Jews in Israel and the Diaspora) and state citizens that are not part of the core nation (the Arab minority)
- Lack of recognition of the Palestinians as a national minority
- Legal-statutory status of Jewish-Zionist institutions (the Jewish Agency, the World Zionist Organization, the Jewish National Fund, and the Chief Rabbinate)
- Jewish-Zionist state symbols (such as the flag, the national anthem, the emblem of the state, official holidays, and sites of national memory)
- Basic Law: The Knesset, which allows the disqualification of parliamentary election lists that do not recognize Israel as a Jewish and democratic state (which has resulted in recurring efforts to disqualify Arab parties)
- Second-class citizenship, stemming from limited access to the army, the security services, and security institutions, resulting in discrimination in allocations related to military service (such as child benefits, mortgages, and university scholarships)
- Discriminatory application of laws such as the Defense (Emergency) Regulations, which facilitate the closure of newspapers, the declaration of military zones, and the prohibition of organizations, demonstrations, and processions
- Failure to incorporate Arab parties into governments and governing coalitions

Proponents of the ethnic democracy model agree that because Israel has undergone major changes since 1948, it cannot be

classified as one kind of ethnic democracy throughout. The following table represents the varying approaches of Smooha and Peled on this issue:

Tab. 1: Smooha’s vs. Peled’s approaches

	1950s–1960s	1970s–1980s	1990s–	2000s
Smooha	“strict ethnic democracy” – stringent restrictions on the Arab minority (military government)	“standard ethnic democracy”	“improved ethnic democracy” – significant improvement in the rights of the Arab minority	“improved ethnic democracy” – significant improvement in the rights of the Arab minority
Peled	non-democratic ethnocracy	ethnic democracy	democracy	non-democratic majoritarianism

Israel as a “normal” Western liberal democracy

The conception of Israel as a normal Western democracy also has many advocates. Supporters of this approach at times acknowledge the shortcomings of Israeli democracy, but hold that all democracies suffer from such shortcomings and that Israel is not exceptional in this sense. As they see it, Israel meets all the conditions of a functioning democracy. In Israel proper there are regular free elections based on a multiparty system, and power is transferred peacefully through elections. In addition, as in any democracy, there is nearly always a strong opposition. The Israeli system is also characterized by the limitation of government power, the division and decentralization of political power, a free press, the protection of minorities, the rule of law and equality before the law, an autonomous judiciary, and a vibrant civil society. Proponents of this approach also point out that the Israeli system safeguards individual freedoms and civil rights, such as freedom of religion, belief, and worship; freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and freedom to demonstrate; freedom to strike; freedom of movement; and freedom to vote and to be elected.

Criticism of the conception of Israel as a non-democracy

Those who view the Israeli political system as an ethnocracy or a system of control do not refer to Israel as a democracy. Although there are different types of democracies (“thin” and “thick,” parliamentary and presidential, consociational and multicultural) and a variety of types of dictatorships (authoritarian and totalitarian, military and single-party, monarchical, and republican), a fundamental distinction can be drawn between democracies and dictatorships, and every state must be either one or the other. There are no dictatorships with free elections, ballot-based transfer of power, limited government, rule of law, respect of most human and civil rights, autonomous media, and an independent judiciary.

The conception of Israel as a “democracy with four flaws” regards the continuation of Israel’s non-democratic military rule over the occupied territories as a fundamental flaw of, or stain on, Israeli democracy. However, it rejects the conception held by advocates of the ethnocratic model that the territories are actually part of the State of Israel and that Israel is therefore a state that stretches from the Mediterranean to the Jordan and deprives a substantial portion of its population of civil rights, including the right to vote and to be elected. There is a fundamental difference between the rights of Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel, who can vote and be elected to the Knesset, and the Palestinians of the West Bank, who live under direct or indirect Israeli military rule and are deprived of all democratic rights. The conception of Israel as a democracy (with or without flaws) also rejects the assertion that Israel is controlled by the Jewish ethnos (Jewish citizens and Diaspora Jewish non-citizens) and not the Israeli demos (Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel). Diaspora Jews have only marginal influence on the regime, the government, and the policies of Israel and enjoy representation in neither the Knesset nor the government. Arab citizens of Israel, in contrast, are not as marginal as the advocates of the ethnocratic approach would have us believe. Without the votes of Arab Knesset members neither Chaim Herzog nor Ezer Weizman would have been elected to the presidency, the Oslo Accords would not have gained Knesset approval, and Israel would not have carried out its disengagement from the Gaza Strip in 2005. The Arab vote has also been a deciding factor on an additional number of

Jewish issues (such as the “Who is a Jew?” question and the military enlistment of ultra-Orthodox yeshiva students). The establishment of the governments of Rabin (1992), Peres (1995), and Olmert (2006) (as alternatives to right-wing governments in those years) was facilitated by a parliamentary left-center bloc of which the Arab parties were an integral part, capable of defeating all opposition of the right. Such a parliamentary bloc nearly played a key role in the process of government formation that followed the elections for the 19th and the 20th Knesset (2013, 2015), as the center-left bloc, assisted by the Arab parties, was just one seat short of being able to form a parliamentary block that could have facilitated the replacement of the government. In other words, the Arab electorate in Israel (which in 2013 accounted for 15% of the Israeli electorate) possesses great potential electoral power that can help decide elections in favor of one camp or another. The only possible conclusion we can draw from this fact is that there is a *demos* in Israeli democracy, even if there is not full equality between its Jewish and Arab members.

Yiftachel regards the dynamic process of Judaization in the Land of Israel as a fundamental component of Israel’s non-democratic nature. The term Judaization is used to refer primarily to the expulsion of Arabs and the prevention of their repatriation, and the massive expropriation of land from Arabs in the country. It is true that part of the Arabs living in the territory that was ultimately incorporated into the State of Israel in 1948–1949 were subject to mass expulsion during and following Israel’s War of Independence. However, without detracting from the severity of these actions, they must be understood within the context in which they took place: a bloody war for survival fought just a few years after the Holocaust. Following World War II, some 15 million Germans were also expelled from countries in Europe, mostly from Poland and Czechoslovakia and a smaller number from Hungary and the Soviet Union (Russia, Ukraine, and the Baltic States). Yet, no one today points to these actions as an indication that Poland, Czechoslovakia, or Hungary are not democracies. In these cases too, the “right of return” was ruled out as unworkable in light of all that had happened. Furthermore, although massive land expropriations do still

take place in the occupied territories, no substantial expropriations have been conducted within Green Line Israel in the Arab-populated regions of the Galilee and the Triangle since the expropriations of 1976 (remembered as *yom ha'adama*, or the 'day of the land,' Land Day). An important exception is the southern Negev region, where Israel has carried out large-scale expropriations of grazing land (of disputed ownership) and some of the region's Bedouin population was resettled in new townships (such as Rahat, Lakiya, and Segev Shalom).

Other ethnocratic attributes of the state, highlighted by proponents of the conception of Israel as a non-democracy (such as its self-definition as a Jewish state, the Law of Return, state symbols, the state's relationship with the Jewish Diaspora, and attempts to maintain the Jewish majority using legitimate measures) are accepted by those who conceive of Israel as a democracy as facets that do not negate its overall democratic character. After all, they maintain, many democratic nation-states have laws comparable to the Law of Return and give preferential treatment to members of the dominant national group returning to their homeland (not only Bulgaria, Armenia, and the Baltic States, but also Germany, Italy, Greece, Britain, Finland, and Holland). The same is true of the relationship with a national diaspora (as in the case of the close, formal statute-based connection between Hungary and the Hungarian minority in Romania, Slovakia, and Serbia). There is no denying that Israel deviates from the Western liberal model, but it is extremely doubtful that these deviations (or "flaws") are of such a scale as to justify the state's classification as a non-democracy.

Rejection of the conception of Israel as an ethnic democracy

I am also unable to accept the fundamental theoretical conception of ethnic democracy because I see no significant difference between nation-states with national minorities (such as Spain, Italy, Sweden, Finland, France, Holland, and Germany, not to mention states such as Slovakia, Serbia, and

Malaysia) and ethnic states with ethnonational minorities. Indeed, while many Western liberal democracies are nation-states, this is not understood as impairing their democratic essence. Although a “pure” liberal democracy must in theory be a state that is indifferent (or neutral) with regard to all national and ethnic distinctions, such an ideal model simply does not exist in reality. States based on an ethnocultural nation (such as Germany, Poland, Hungary, Greece, Italy, Spain, and Ireland) maintain a symbolic legal preference for the dominant ethnocultural nation (manifested in the name of the state, the status of the majority religion, the dominant culture, and the language of the dominant national group). States based on civic nationalism, which emphasizes the importance of civic national identity and the country’s constitution, laws, and borders (such as the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Australia) are also based on preferences that are both official (such as the status of the English language in the United States and Australia, the status of the French language in France, and the status of the Anglican Church in England) and unofficial (Christianity in the United States and all European countries) in nature. It would therefore be inaccurate to suggest that only ethnic democracies exercise a preference for a dominant national or ethnic group. This dynamic is also manifested in immigration laws that give preferential treatment to members of the dominant national group, not only in countries such as Georgia, Armenia, and Hungary, but also in Germany, Britain, Holland, and Italy. Indeed, we can also assume that the immigration law of the future Palestinian state will extend preferential treatment to immigrants returning from the Palestinian diaspora. Maintaining ties with a diaspora is also recognized as legitimate in the democratic world, as reflected in the European Council’s recognition of “kin-states” with relationships with “kin-minorities” in other countries.³³² The UN resolution on the partition of Palestine also spoke of the establishment of two democratic nation-states within the territory of the British Mandate: a Jewish state and an Arab state (which today would be referred to as Palestine).

In actuality, the civic democracies that ignore national and ethnic minorities are increasingly coming to be considered illiberal today. One example is France, which maintains a policy of “one language, one culture, one identity,” and has been criticized for its lack of consideration for its Basque, Catalan, Provençal, Breton, Flemish, German, and Corsican minorities.³³³

The model of ethnic democracy appears to have been formulated for the purpose of explaining the character of the State of Israel, and it is no coincidence that the most prominent scholar in this field is Israeli sociologist Sammy Smooha. Although the model has also been applied to a number of other countries such as Slovakia, Serbia, and Estonia (once again, primarily by Israelis), it is unclear why these cases could not have been analyzed using the existing democratic models while pointing out their deviations. It becomes somewhat problematic when every deviation from an existing model leads to the formulation of a new one. Due to the fundamental flaws of the ethnic democracy model, it is unnecessary to ask whether it is applicable to Israel. However, as many scholars accept the model, let us assume momentarily that it is sound and assess its applicability to Israel.

First of all, it is important to emphasize once again that the proponents of the ethnic democracy model do not see eye to eye regarding the historical periods for which it is important to understand the Israeli regime (Smooha maintains that it is applicable to Israel from its establishment up to the present, whereas Peled and Navot apply it only to the period between 1966 and 1990). Another criticism of the ethnic democracy model and its application in the Israeli context – criticism which is common to all three other approaches (Israel as a non-democracy, Israel as a democracy with four flaws, and Israel as a Western democracy) – is the manner in which it serves to justify deviations from the norms of Western liberal democracy by simply presenting these divergences as attributes of a different type of democracy. Smooha’s claim that ethnic democracy is an empirical model (i.e., of what exists) and not a normative model (i.e., of what is desirable) has also been disputed, as Smooha himself sometimes

expresses the view that the ethnic-democratic regime type is appropriate for Israel.³³⁴ Another response to Smooha might be that the reasons for formulating the model are irrelevant and that what is important is its ultimate result: the legitimization of deviations from the Western model.

The attributes of Israeli ethnic democracy, as presented by the model's proponents, can be broken down into two categories. The first contains attributes that can be reconciled with normal Western democracy, including Israel's nature as a nation-state (like Germany, Holland, and Sweden), the absence of legal recognition of its national minority (as in the case of France), state symbols closely associated with the dominant national group or religion (as in Britain, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark), and discrimination in the application of compulsory military service (which may not amount to discrimination at all, as the Arab minority itself is not interested in compulsory service and the exemption does not appear to impact its position negatively). Other attributes of the Israeli ethnic democracy – such as Basic Law: The Knesset (which facilitates the disqualification of any electoral list that does not recognize Israel as a Jewish and democratic state), the status of National Land, and the preferential treatment of Jewish religious institutions over the institutions of other religions – are indeed problematic, and constitute the “flaws” of Israeli democracy.

A democracy with four flaws

“There are those who see everything through rose-colored glasses...”

The State of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. (From the *Declaration of Independence*)

The goal of state education is to base education on the values of Jewish culture and the achievements of science, on love of the homeland and loyalty to the state and the Jewish people, on practice in agricultural work and handicraft, on pioneer training and on striving for a society built on freedom, equality, tolerance, mutual assistance, and love of mankind. (From the *State Education Law*)

The purpose of this Basic Law is to protect human dignity and liberty, in order to establish in a Basic Law the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. (From *Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty*)

There can be no doubt that the ideological principles on which the State of Israel was founded were democratic. The Declaration of Independence, which expresses Israel's fundamental credo regarding the character of the state, explicitly stipulates that the country will be "based on freedom, justice, and peace," and that its political system will be founded on "*complete equality* of social and political rights to *all* its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex" and on "*freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture*" (emphasis mine).

As any democracy, Israel too is the site of constant competition between ruling and opposition parties. Israel, moreover, represents an extreme multiparty model, as the Israeli Knesset typically contains more than ten parliamentary factions – some in the governing coalition, others in the opposition. Such a large number of parliamentary factions can be found in only a few other democracies, since the number of parties represented in typical democratic parliaments ranges between two or three (in the United States, New Zealand, Britain, Canada, Australia, and Ireland) and four or five (in Germany, Austria, France, Japan, and Sweden). From this perspective, Israel has an especially vibrant multiparty system, and the Israeli voter has more diverse voting options than those of their American, British, or Swedish counterparts.

Elections are a cornerstone of democracy. All Western democracies hold regular elections, the results of which determine who will serve as president (in a presidential systems) or who will lead the government (in a parliamentary systems), who will enjoy a majority in the parliament and who will remain in the minority, and what will be the state's political direction in terms of foreign affairs, security, the economy, and social issues. When it comes to the holding of

free and regular elections, Israel is no different from other Western democracies around the world. Between 1949 and 2015, Israel held 21 elections. Every Israeli citizen is eligible by law to vote and to be elected to office, and all votes are of equal value (“one man, one vote”), in accordance with the legal specification that elections in Israel are to be general and equal. The secrecy of the voting process ensures the voter’s freedom to choose in practice. As elections in Israel are general, secret, and equal, leaders must take into consideration the interests of large sectors of the population and the diverse opinions they reflect. In democracies, the transition of power between ruling parties occurs without violence and in accordance with known and agreed upon rules and procedures. In some countries, such transitions take place relatively frequently (for example, in the United States and Britain) whereas in some other countries decades may pass before the government changes hands (as has at times been the case in Sweden, West Germany, India, Japan, and Italy after World War II). In any event, in every democracy, change of government must be possible through elections. The Israeli democracy has passed the supreme test of orderly change of government six times – in 1977, 1992, 1996, 1999, 2001, and 2009 – each time in accordance with the law, standard procedure, and the results of free elections (the elections of 1984 marked a partial government “turnover,” since the parity between the two parliamentary blocs ultimately resulted in the establishment of a national unity government). This is no small achievement and must be compared with the less successful experience of many other new democracies that were established in Asia and Africa following post-World War II decolonization.

A liberal democratic regime is by its very essence a limited government, and its primary limitation is the product of its obligation to recognize and its willingness to respect fundamental individual freedoms. For example, a democratic government is not permitted to restrict the freedom of assembly or the freedom of expression of its citizens. It may also not force them to accept specific views and beliefs. An absolutist or totalitarian regime, on the other hand, can do whatever it pleases, disregarding the multiplicity of views in

society and making decisions that are arbitrary and uncompromising in nature. As a regime that is neither all-powerful nor can aspire to be so, liberal democracy requires a moderate and calculated use of government power. Unions, opposition parties, a free press, and numerous other organizations and institutions, which operate with broad freedom of action and, to some extent, have potential or actual political sway, also serve to prevent the concentration of excessive power in the hands of the government.

Government in Israel is truly limited in the liberal democratic sense of the word. The freedom of action of governments in Israel has always been subject to limitations and constraints, primarily because the dominant parliamentary faction at any given time has never won a majority in the Knesset and, as a result, has always been compelled to rely on coalition partners.³³⁵ For this reason, for example, Mapai under David Ben-Gurion never succeeded in changing the electoral system and was forced to compromise with its coalition partners in the religious parties on issues of religion and state. As a ruling party, the Likud, too, has had limited power regarding foreign policy and religious, social, and economic issues. For example, after 1977, the Likud was unable to annex the West Bank and the Gaza Strip or break the power of the Histadrut (the Israeli Trade Union). Moreover, institutions such as the Jewish Agency, the local municipalities, the rabbinical establishment, and other strong interest groups (e.g., the Histadrut, the Kibbutz and Moshav movements, the country's transportation cooperatives, the Manufacturers Association of Israel, the banks, and the Israeli Teachers' Union) have for years undermined central government power in Israel. Public opinion, based on a free press, autonomous universities, and a community of critical intellectuals with a strong political consciousness, has also placed a limit on the power of all Israeli governments. Furthermore, Israeli society's heterogeneity, with its various intersecting divisions, also curbs the ability of ambitious Israeli governments to operate without restraint.

The Israeli state is also limited by the existence of a strong and independent judiciary, whose operation is dependent on

the rule of law. Overall, in a democracy everyone is equally subject to the law, including presidents, government ministers (including the prime minister), and all members of parliament. Only in democracies can senior political officials be tried in court, not because of defeat in a struggle for power, as occurs frequently in dictatorships, but because they have violated the law. Indeed, numerous members of the Israeli governing elite have personally experienced the power of the law in this respect. This includes Yitzhak Rabin, who was forced to resign from the post of prime minister in 1977 due to a violation of the country's foreign currency regulations, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, who resigned in 2009 after being accused of multiple counts of corruption, and President Moshe Katsav, who resigned on allegations of rape and was subsequently indicted and convicted of the crime. Several government ministers have been forced to resign due to violations of the law.³³⁶ Over the years, Israeli national commissions of inquiry have also led to the dismissal of the IDF chief of staff (the Agranat Commission), the minister of defense (the Kahan Commission),³³⁷ and the senior management of Israel's banks (the Beisky Commission).

In fundamental rulings, Israel's High Court of Justice (HCJ) has ruled that government authorities do not have the right to infringe upon individual freedoms and are not permitted to deviate from the authorities granted to them by the laws of the Knesset. In these cases, the HCJ has ruled in accordance with British legal tradition, which regards it as the role of the High Court to protect the individual from the state's infringement on his or her rights. Individuals who have sought the assistance of the HCJ and have had their petitions granted over the years include the editors of the Hebrew language Communist newspaper *Kol Ha'am* and its Arabic language counterpart *al-Ittihad*, who sought to annul orders for their closure; secular citizens who compelled the Israel Broadcast Authority to transmit television broadcasts on Friday evenings (the Jewish Sabbath); Reform Jews fighting for their right to public worship; and Arab farmers protesting against the expropriation of their land. Another HCJ petitioner, in 1950, was former *Lehi* commander Dr. Israel Scheib (subsequently

Eldad), who sought legal assistance against the Israeli defense minister, who had prohibited him from teaching in an Israeli high school, based on charges of incitement and agitation against the IDF. In its ruling, the High Court found that in this instance, the defense minister's actions were arbitrary and legally unfounded and therefore constituted a serious infringement on the rights of the individual.

In 1984, the High Court of Justice reaffirmed the principle that individuals should not be subjected to restrictions that are not based on law when it annulled the Central Election Committee's decision to disqualify the Kach party list from the upcoming Knesset elections. The HCJ overturned this decision because, at the time, there was no law empowering the Election Committee to limit, for any reason, the fundamental right to be elected to the Knesset. "The Kach list may not be disqualified," the Court ruled, "not because it was not proved that its character and its aims constitute a threat to the foundations of democracy based on all standards, but because it has no legal authority to do so."³³⁸

Although the literal meaning of the word "democracy" is "rule by the people," history teaches that even those ruling in the name of the people are capable of carrying out arbitrary arrests of critics of the government, imposing prayer requirements on non-believers, deporting national minorities, and shutting down newspapers that are critical of the ruling regime. "Rule by the people," then, can sometimes trample the rights of the individual. However, when it does so, it is no longer a true democracy. It is not enough that the government be elected by the people and represent them: one necessary condition for the existence of a democracy is respect of basic freedoms. The most important basic freedoms that a democracy must respect are freedom from arbitrary arrest, freedom of thought and opinion, freedom of speech and publication, freedom of assembly and political organization, freedom of religion, conscience, and worship, freedom of the press, freedom of movement, and freedom to demonstrate and to strike. Also critical are the individual's rights to vote and to be elected, to legal defense, to physical security, to privacy, and to the receipt of reliable information pertaining to public

affairs. The safeguarding of basic freedoms holds significance primarily for those whose views are not shared by the majority or run counter to the national consensus, or whose actions are a thorn in the side of the government.

Overall, Israel's achievements in the realm of human rights and fundamental liberties have been quite good, especially when taking into consideration the fact that the country has no constitution, bill of rights, or basic law itemizing the freedoms of the individual and protecting them from arbitrary infringement by the government. As we have seen, some liberties have already been established by the HCJ in its fundamental rulings and have become basic constitutional principles of the State of Israel. For example, the abovementioned 1953 landmark ruling by the HCJ established freedom of the press and freedom of expression when it approved two newspaper petitions to prevent the minister of the interior from shutting them down. This and similar HCJ decisions are based on the Declaration of Independence, on British and American legal principles, legal rulings in other democratic countries, the writings of classic political thinkers, and international conventions pertaining to human rights.³³⁹

Despite the security censorship and the legal situation in Israel, which allows the government to infringe upon freedom of expression and publication, the Israeli press enjoys substantial freedom. It is important to remember that security censorship during wartime is customary even in the most enlightened democracies. During World War II, for example, such censorship was practiced in the United States and Britain. Nonetheless, at some stage questions inevitably arise regarding the precise location of the thin line between security, on the one hand, and politics, on the other, and whether the censors have exceeded their authority on a specific issue. In order to avoid the need to impose unilateral censorship in Israel under the authority of the Defense (Emergency) Regulations, a voluntary agreement was signed between the Editors Committee of Israel's daily newspapers and the IDF general staff. The initial incarnation of this arrangement took shape during the Mandate period, when the editors of the Hebrew newspapers in Palestine accepted the authority of the

Jewish national institutions regarding political issues that were not the subject of inter-party disagreement. According to the arrangement, the leaders of the Jewish national institutions would provide the editors with confidential information on issues they sought to avoid exposing in public in order to persuade them of the need to refrain from publicizing it. The arrangement in modern-day Israel is a continuation of the tradition of voluntary censorship practiced in the pre-state Jewish *yishuv* in Palestine. This explains why the government has been required to exercise censorship under the Defense Regulations in relatively few cases, typically vis-à-vis newspapers that were not represented by the Editors Committee, as illustrated in the *Bul* Affair,³⁴⁰ and the *Hadashot* Affair.³⁴¹

Censorship of the media has been exercised not only with regard to military and security matters, but to a number of other sensitive issues as well. For example, in 1959, the Penal (State Security) Law of 1957 was amended to stipulate that “matters of *Aliyah* [Jewish immigration to Israel] are hereby confidential [...] in the event that they have not been publicized in Israel by the government or in its behalf.”³⁴² In this manner, the authorities sought to prevent damaging exposure of secret operations to rescue Jewish immigrants from Arab or Communist countries, which could be disrupted by premature publication. Another instance occurred in 1970, when the authorities issued an order declaring information regarding the movement of oil tankers in ports a state secret, the publication of which required the authorization of the finance minister. This order was meant to prevent leaks regarding the sources of the state’s fuel supply, as some suppliers were only willing to sell fuel to Israel on the condition that the transaction remain a tightly guarded secret. A final example is *Basic Law: The Government*, which stipulates that meetings of the Israeli government and government committees discussing issues of foreign affairs and security, and all other issues regarded as confidential, are secret. With the authorization of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Security Committee, the government can determine that a

specific issue remain secret, and that revealing it would be considered an act of espionage or treason.

Freedom of worship in Israel was subject to a legal test in 1962, when the Kfar Shmaryahu Local Council attempted to prevent the local Reform Jewish congregation from renting a public hall to hold prayer services due to the opposition of the town's Orthodox population. At the time, the HCJ ruled unequivocally that the actions of the local council infringed upon the individual's right to freedom of religion and freedom of worship, which is "one of the basic freedoms guaranteed by every enlightened democracy."³⁴³ Since this legal ruling, no other challenges have been mounted against the freedom of religion in Israel.

The HCJ has also issued a fundamental ruling on the citizens' right to receive reliable information on social and political matters. In this context, the Court annulled a ban issued by the Council for the Review of Films and Plays on the screening of a newsreel showing a violent altercation between Israeli policemen and residents of a poor neighborhood in Tel Aviv.³⁴⁴ The following is an excerpt from the Court's ruling.

The citizen's right to disseminate and receive information regarding the events taking place around him, both within and without the borders of the country in which he lives, is closely linked to the right to freedom of expression. For this reason, it too belongs to the set of fundamental rights 'that are not on the books' but stem directly from this country's nature as a freedom-advocating democratic state [...]. A government that assumes the authority to determine what is good for the citizen to know is destined to determine what is good for the citizen to think, and nothing could be a greater contradiction to true democracy that is not 'guided' from above [...]. Issuing correct information about events taking place in the country – all the events, even things that are negative – serves an important public purpose.³⁴⁵

The freedom to demonstrate is another important aspect of freedom of expression that is customarily protected in democratic states. In the absence of a written constitution, the HCJ was the authority that determined constitutional law on this issue as well. In a decision pertaining to the request of a group of young couples lacking housing to hold a demonstration in the streets of Jerusalem, Justice Aharon Barak ruled as follows:

It is common knowledge that the law of the State of Israel recognizes the fundamental human liberties that are customary in enlightened countries. These liberties also include the freedom to assemble and the freedom of procession. Regardless of whether we regard these liberties as freedoms in their own right – and there is no need here to decide this question – they are of great importance in shaping the character of our democratic political system. Assembly and procession is one means at the disposal of members of the public to express their views on the affairs of the state, a means that is sometimes more effective and more substantive than other means of expression.³⁴⁶

Since the Yom Kippur War of 1973, many more Israeli citizens have utilized their democratic right to demonstrate than ever before. The protest movements established in the wake of this war resulted in the resignation of Prime Minister Golda Meir and the severe tarnishing of the reputation of Defense Minister Moshe Dayan. Almost a decade later, in September 1982, hundreds of thousands of Israelis again took part in mass demonstrations, this time demanding a commission of inquiry into the massacre at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Lebanon. According to the law in force in Israel (The Police Ordinance of 1926), a demonstration taking the form of a “procession” (a march of 50 people or more from one place to another) or an “assembly” (a gathering of 50 people or more at which speeches are delivered) requires a license from the police. Nonetheless, a number of fundamental HCJ rulings have established that the police do not have the right to refuse to grant such licenses except in the event of serious concern that public disorder will result. The court has also ruled that the police are obligated to protect demonstrators from hostile counter protesters seeking to do them harm and that they are not permitted to use threats to harm protestors as a pretext for refusing to license a protest demonstration. In most cases, the HCJ stipulated, the police may refuse to grant a license for a demonstration only if it believes that the demonstrators themselves (and not their adversaries) may riot and use the demonstration itself as a scene of violence. When the risk of violence is posed not by the demonstrators but by their opponents, the police are authorized to deny a license to demonstrate only in the extreme and exceptional event of serious concern regarding possible bloodshed.

Israel’s High Court of Justice has also established important norms regarding freedom of movement within the

country and the freedom to exit the country, as reflected in the words of Supreme Court justices in rulings on issues such as those considered in *al-Khoury v. Chief of Staff*,³⁴⁷ and *Aslan et al. v. the Military Governor of the Galilee*.³⁴⁸ In *al-Khoury v. Chief of Staff*, Justice Agranat ruled as follows:

English common law teaches that all people are free: they are free to move about the country, and, for this reason, the authorities are prohibited from detaining an individual without a court order, except in the instances enumerated by the legislators [...]. Under Section 46 of the Palestine Order in Council, this major rule is also applicable to Israel, as it not only does not contradict local conditions but is also consistent with the spirit pervading the Declaration of Independence, which as we know proclaims that the State of Israel will be based (among other things) on the foundations of freedom.³⁴⁹

As we have seen, many democratic foundations in Israel have received the recognition and protection of the Supreme Court. Some, however, are based on explicit Knesset legislation. The principle of gender equality was established in the *Women's Equal Rights Law* of 1951, which stipulates "one law applies to men and women in all legal actions." Academic freedom was ensured in the *Council for Higher Education Law* of 1958, which sets up a council that "is authorized to recognize institutions as institutions of higher education based on rules it will establish for the recognition of institutions of higher education, as well as the requirement of an appropriate scientific level, provided that these rules do not limit freedom of opinion or freedom of conscience." The pluralistic-democratic character of Israel's Broadcasting Authority is enshrined in the *Broadcasting Authority Law* of 1965, which specifies that "the Authority will ensure that its broadcasts provide space for the appropriate expression of the different views and opinions prevalent throughout the public and that reliable information is broadcast." Freedom of association is ensured in the *Associations Law* of 1980, which holds that "two or more people are permitted to found an association." And the individual's right to privacy is ensured in the *Protection of Privacy Law* of 1981, which states that "no person shall infringe upon the privacy of another without his consent."

The enactment of two basic laws that also deal with civil liberties in Israel was witnessed in 1992: the *Basic Law*:

Freedom of Occupation (reenacted in 1994), which specifies that “every Israel national or resident has the right to engage in any occupation, profession or trade”; and the *Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty*, which, for the first time ever, provided protection under law for a number of important freedoms. The main provisions of Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty are as follows:

- There shall be no violation of the life, body or dignity of any person as such.
- There shall be no violation of the property of a person.
- All persons are entitled to protection of their life, body, and dignity.
- There shall be no deprivation or restriction of the liberty of a person by imprisonment, arrest, extradition, or otherwise.
- All persons are free to leave Israel. Every Israel national has the right of entry into Israel from abroad.
- All persons have the right to privacy and to intimacy. There shall be no entry into the private premises of a person who has not consented thereto. No search shall be conducted on the private premises of a person, nor in the body or personal effects. There shall be no violation of the confidentiality of conversation, or of the writings or records of a person.

With regard to the freedom to strike, a distinction must be made between the right to strike in the public vs. the private sector. The right of employees to strike in the private sector is undisputed, but Israelis also enjoy the right to strike against public employers (the central government, municipalities, the Jewish Agency, etc.). Some have proposed limiting this right in the public sector when it involves essential services (such as health services, water supply, and city sanitation) and subjecting such labor disputes to compulsory arbitration as an alternative to the right to strike, although this idea was ultimately not accepted. As a result, strikes in Israel are frequent in the education system, hospitals, seaports and airports, and the Israeli Electric Corporation, although in

extreme cases restraining orders enjoining strikes have been issued to groups of employees of essential services (flight supervisors, doctors, nurses, and Electric Corporation personnel). Overall, Israel has demonstrated no less of a commitment to the freedom to strike and protection of the right to strike than any other liberal democracy.

Democracy, however, means more than just institutions, rules, elections, and protected freedoms. Democracy is also a way of life, a set of values, and a political culture. There can be no democracy without a democratic way of life, a citizenry that is open and democratic in character, and a belief, on the part of at least a substantial portion of its citizens, in democracy's advantages over other systems of government – a belief summed up by Winston Churchill's witty assessment "that democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried." Democracy means a political culture that rejects violence with the aim of resolving disputes through peaceful means. It requires the willingness for gradual change without violent confrontations and in accordance with accepted rules. Democracy's non-violent approach to government is rooted in the fundamental recognition of the right of people to hold different opinions and join together in different political parties that exist simultaneously with one another, and in the emotional and rational willingness to "lose" and to accept the outcome when the competing opinion or the rival party emerges victorious. Tolerance finds expression in free debate, based on the consensus that disagreements are permitted and acceptable and that, to use the imagery of A. D. Lindsay, counting heads is preferable to breaking them.

Non-violent decisions are necessarily based on compromise and not on one view's total "victory" over another. Democracy, therefore, is a governing system that rests on mutual concessions between and within political parties, and between and within the majority and the minority. Although the minority must come to terms with its defeat, the majority must take the minority into account in order to ensure the latter's acceptance of the outcome. In this context, too, the foundations of democratic political culture are alive and well in Israel, as most disagreements were resolved by peaceful

means such as negotiation, persuasion, and compromise. Israeli governments are based on broad coalitions: labor disputes are typically resolved without physical violence, and even the ethnic gap is increasingly disappearing with the gradual integration of *Mizrahim* into the existing political parties.

“There are those who see everything as a gloomy darkness”

Israeli legal scholar Ruth Gavison maintains that violations of human rights in Israel are rooted in three areas: security problems, the presence of an Arab minority within a Jewish nation-state, and Israel’s definition as a “Jewish state” (from a religious perspective), which stands in contradiction to its existence as a secular liberal democratic state.³⁵⁰

I prefer to speak of four flaws of Israeli democracy: 1) the absence of a constitution and the existence of several antidemocratic laws, 2) the status quo with regard to the relationship between religion and state, 3) the status of Israel’s Arab minority, 4) and the status of the West Bank and the civil rights of its inhabitants.

The absence of a constitution and the existence of specific antidemocratic laws

As we know, a written constitution is an extremely important instrument for restraining government rule and a component of government shared by all Western democracies, except Britain and Israel. A constitution plays a critical role in protecting basic freedoms, as it possesses a special, higher status than regular laws and can be invoked in petitions to the courts to annul laws that infringe upon the basic freedoms they guarantee. In most democratic countries, amendment of the constitution cannot be achieved through a simple majority in parliament but rather requires a special majority. The stipulation that there be a special majority for every constitutional amendment – that is, more than just a simple majority and in some cases even more than two-thirds of the

members of the legislature – is intended to prevent any given administration from abusing its term in office for its own benefit, and from doing injury to the rule of law and individual freedoms. The purpose of a democratic constitution is therefore to limit and restrain the majority and the elected government, based on the premise that the tyranny of the majority is as dangerous to freedom as a dictatorship of the minority.

Despite the fact that, aside from Britain, Israel is the only democracy without a written constitution, comparing Israel to Britain, though flattering for Israel, is both misleading and based on misinformation. After all, Britain has a long democratic tradition and has a de facto unwritten constitution, based on customs and legal precedents. Britain has no pressing need for a written constitution, due to its broad, deeply rooted consensus within the general public and the political elite regarding its democratic form of government. Moreover, in 1953 Britain signed the *European Convention on Human Rights*, so that every British citizen who regards him- or herself as having suffered injury at the hands of the British government in this realm can appeal to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) based in Strasbourg.³⁵¹ The governing authorities in Britain have to honor the rulings of the ECHR.

In Israel, on the other hand, a constitution has yet to be drawn up due to a lack of agreement regarding the principles of the Israeli political system, particularly on the issue of the relationship between religion and state. The enactment of a basic law on civil rights has been repeatedly rejected because of the fundamental contradiction between a liberal bill of rights and the religious status quo. Sections of a draft *Basic Law: Civil Rights* were enacted as individual basic laws in 1992 (*Basic Law: Freedom of Occupation* and *Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty*). However, despite their importance, these sections cannot serve as an alternative to a comprehensive law, as they fail to ensure most of the traditional democratic freedoms. As a result, Israel has neither “basic laws,” nor, in fact, regular laws to protect freedom of expression or freedom of the press, freedom of worship or freedom of religion, freedom of political association, the

freedom to demonstrate, and the freedom to strike. The Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty lacks a section on equality to protect the equality of women, Arabs, and other groups. Israel has even refrained from ratifying the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*³⁵² because of the inherent contradiction between some of its own laws and the content of the declaration. Basic Law: The Knesset contains a clause that is extremely problematic from a democratic perspective in that it permits revoking the right of a political party to take part in a Knesset election if it fails to recognize Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. If the clause were to address only the democratic nature of the state, the provision could be acceptable as an element of a self-defending democracy. However, as it currently stands, the clause would be unacceptable in any democratic country.

Gavison points out that “Israel has no law or document whatsoever that establishes that a person in the country enjoys the right to freedom of speech or expression.”³⁵³ The British Mandate era *Press Ordinance* of 1933, which is still in force in Israel, stipulates that a license is required to publish a newspaper in the country. Section 19 of the same ordinance empowers the minister of the interior to shut down any newspaper deemed to be a threat to “public order.”³⁵⁴ Only the 1953 HCJ ruling (*Kol Ha’am*), which required a “clear and present danger” as a condition for the closure of a newspaper seen as a threat to public order, has mitigated this undemocratic legal situation. A main editorial published in the Israeli daily newspaper *Maariv* on March 27, 1988 describes the British Press Ordinance as a “contemptible” and “colonial” ordinance requiring the registration of a newspaper’s publisher or editor, which is unheard of in proper democratic countries. The *Defense (Emergency) Regulations* of 1945 allow the authorities to revoke a permit to publish a newspaper, shut down a newspaper, and apply censorship on almost every subject – and not just on matters of security. On this legal state of affairs, Dr. Yehoshua Rottenstreich, a prominent lawyer in Israel, once stated that “should, God forbid, a dictatorship ever arise in Israel, it will not need to change many of the existing laws to completely abolish the freedom to publish.”³⁵⁵ As the

limitations on freedom of the press that reach back to the Mandate period were never amended and are still in force, neither the freedom nor the independence of the press in Israel is anchored in law.³⁵⁶

Another piece of colonial legislation that is still in force in Israel enables the authorities to try someone for “rebellion,” the definition of which is extremely unclear. It refers in general terms to disloyalty to the state, incitement of the population, and the creation of conflicts between various sections of the population. It is so ambiguous that it can easily be misused.³⁵⁷ Its phrasing can be used to facilitate the trial of almost any person with views that are critical of or opposed to the Israeli government.

Tab. 2: Prominent cases of newspaper closures (by order of the interior minister or the censor), 1953–2003

Newspaper	Year	Rationale for Closure
Kol Ha'am	1953	threat to public welfare
Al-Ittihad	1953	threat to public welfare
Al-Fajr	1981	threat to public welfare
Al-Shira'a	1983	funded by a terrorist organization
Hadashot	1984	censorship violation
Al-Ahad	1986	funded by a terrorist organization
Al-Mithak	1986	funded by a terrorist organization
Al-Bayan	1994	funded by a terrorist organization

Indeed, international studies have awarded Israel relatively low assessments with regard to freedom of the press. For example, an international comparative study awarded it a ranking of 69 (out of 100), situating it behind countries such as Norway, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, the United States, New Zealand, Canada, the Czech Republic, Britain, Japan, Spain, France, and Greece (but before Italy, Hungary, India, Brazil, Argentina, and Turkey).³⁵⁸ A survey conducted by Reporters Without Borders in 2002 ranked Israel 92nd for freedom of the press, behind not only all Western countries (including Italy), but Morocco and South Africa as well. The following year, the same survey ranked Israel 44th out of 166 countries surveyed, after the introduction of a distinction between freedom of the press within Green Line Israel and within the occupied territories (where it was ranked 146th).³⁵⁹

The constant legal threat to freedom of the press in Israel and to civil liberties in the country as a whole (including the occupied territories) is that posed by the British *Defense (Emergency) Regulations* of 1945. These regulations, which are still in force, empower the authorities to take various measures for “security reasons,” such as conducting administrative detentions, imposing curfews, shutting down newspapers, restricting freedom of movement, issuing restraining orders prohibiting strikes, confiscating the property of suspects who have not yet been tried, opening and confiscating mail, disbanding youth movements and political organizations, prohibiting gatherings, and prohibiting the printing, distribution, and possession of books deemed dangerous by the authorities.

These regulations allowed the authorities to disregard existing laws intended to protect basic freedoms and therefore served the British Mandate authorities in Palestine in their struggle against the Jewish underground groups toward the end of the pre-state era. For this reason, a gathering of the Jewish Lawyers Association, held on February 7, 1946 in

protest of the regulations, announced: “The powers given to the ruling authority in the emergency regulations deny the inhabitants of Palestine their basic human rights. These regulations undermine the foundation of law and justice, they constitute a serious danger to individual freedom, and they institute a regime of arbitrariness without any judicial supervision.”³⁶⁰ In a debate held in the first Knesset on the continued use of the regulations in Israel, Menachem Begin, leader of the Herut party at the time and a former commander of the *Etzel* Jewish underground, which had been pursued by the British in pre-state Palestine under the authority of the regulations, argued that “if these laws of terror of an oppressive regime remain in force in the State of Israel, we will reach a point at which not a group will remain that has not been injured by them, and the identity of the injured party is of no importance. Maintaining these emergency laws is a disgrace, and applying them is evil.”³⁶¹

Despite the June 1951 Knesset decision recognizing that the regulations contradict the spirit of democracy and charging the Knesset Committee on Constitution, Law, and Justice with proposing legislation to bring about their annulment, the regulations remain on the books today (except for Section 111, which was annulled, and Section 112, which was amended in 1979). As courts typically refrain from interfering with the considerations of the state security authorities, it is not difficult to understand why the Israeli legal system has not always managed to protect individual freedoms and prevent their infringement in the name of security. The Landau Commission, which inquired into the methods of operation of the General Security Services (GSS, 1987) in the wake of the Bus 300 affair, found that Israeli courts tended not to doubt the statements of GSS personnel and had therefore for years accepted their testimonies at face value, when in some cases they were actually totally fabricated.

Overall, the Israeli government has displayed a fair amount of moderation and restraint in using the powers granted to it under the Defense (Emergency) Regulations. Still, their use has frequently sparked fierce criticism. Such was the case in 1982, when they were misused to impose a blockade on the

Druze villages of the Golan Heights in an attempt to force their residents to accept Israeli identity cards, which they had hitherto refused to do in protest of the territory's annexation. The blockade included prohibiting entry into and exit from the villages, disconnecting the residents' telephone service, reducing the villages' water supply, administrative detentions, and prohibiting the entry of journalists into the area. In the opinion of many legal experts, it was a clear case of abuse of the Defense Regulations, as they were initially intended to allow the authorities to impose certain measures to contend with true threats to security, and not to force the public to identify with the state. Legal scholar Baruch Bracha expressed a clear and levelheaded view of the regulations' continued use in Israel:

It must not be forgotten that Israel was born during war, and it was therefore necessary to grant the authorities far-reaching powers in order to contend with the circumstances. This is customary in every democratic country. However, the sad outcome is that these regulations, which may have been justified when the state was established, have become permanent arrangements that are unflattering to Israeli society and its legal system.³⁶²

In summary, most individual freedoms are protected in Israel. However, they are not afforded true constitutional protection, and honoring them is dependent to a large extent on the restraint, moderation, and dedication to democracy of the Knesset majority and the government authorities. For this reason, there is a real danger that an incidental parliamentary majority or a government that is not sufficiently sensitive to infringements on these freedoms could easily make use of the laws in existence to do damage to the freedom to publish, freedom of demonstration, freedom of assembly, freedom of expression, freedom of movement, and other basic democratic freedoms. Antidemocratic legislative initiatives in the years 2009–2014 are clear evidence that this danger is not purely theoretical, but very real.

Religion and state

Contrary to prevalent belief, the liberal-democratic model does not dictate a clear separation between religion and state. Indeed, typical liberal democracies, such as Britain, Sweden,

Belgium, and Germany, did not adopt the American approach of severing the country's political system from its religious system. England and Norway have "state churches": the Anglican Church (Church of England), headed by the Queen of England, and the Lutheran Church of Norway, headed by the King of Norway. Belgium and Germany recognize the state's obligation to provide its citizens with religious services. What liberal democracies appear to have in common, therefore, is not the separation of religion and state but rather the right of their citizens to not only freedom of religion but also freedom *from* religion.³⁶³ In Israel, freedom of religion – the individual's freedom to worship his or her God as he or she chooses, in private and in public – is grounded in the *King's Order in Council* of 1922, a British Mandate ordinance that specifies that "all persons in Palestine shall enjoy full liberty of conscience, and the free exercise of their forms of worship, subject only to the maintenance of public order and morals."³⁶

⁴ However, with regard to the right to freedom *from* religion – meaning, the individual's right to choose to be non-religious, to not engage in religious practices, not be subjected to religious laws and commandments, and not to require the services of the religious authorities when exercising one's basic rights and freedoms (such as the right to marry and divorce) – Israel is not in line with other Western democracies and does not operate in accordance with its own Declaration of Independence.

According to Israeli law, all citizens of the state are subject to the authority of the religious establishment (in the Jewish case, the Orthodox Rabbinate) with regard to marriage and divorce, which is a situation that is inconsistent with the liberal model of democracy and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Unlike the pre-state period, when joining the Jewish national institutions in Palestine was voluntary, once Israel became a sovereign democratic state, which one might expect to place greater emphasis on the rights of the individual, the *Rabbinical Courts Law (Marriage and Divorce)* of 1953 was applied to every Jewish citizen, regardless of his or her personal desire to be subject to it, and in accordance with "the rule of Jewish law."³⁶⁵ Chief Justice Moshe Landau issued a

ruling explicitly stating that religious restrictions on matters of marriage and divorce rooted in religious law and based on the authority of rabbinical jurisdiction is inconsistent with “freedom of conscience and the freedom of action it entails.”³⁶

⁶ For example, in Israel, it is theoretically impossible for a couple to marry in a civil ceremony. Every couple in Israel seeking to wed legally must do so by means of a religious ceremony conducted by a representative of a religious authority in accordance with the laws of their religion. Without a doubt, this state of affairs is a serious infringement on the freedom of conscience of those who harbor no religious beliefs.

The religious “status quo,” as the compromise reached by the political and religious establishments in Israel during the initial years of statehood is widely known, also does injury to other basic liberties. For instance, Israeli law does not permit marriage between members of different religions and does not stipulate suitable matrimonial procedures for individuals lacking a religious status under the law (for example, a person with a Jewish father and a Muslim mother is Muslim according to Jewish religious law and Jewish according to Islamic law, and is therefore officially neither). An equally sensitive and politically volatile issue is the prohibition, rooted in Jewish law, that Israeli law imposes on the marriage of *psulei hitun* (those disqualified by Jewish religious law as marriage partners), as in the case of a “Cohen” (i.e., “a priest,” in effect of priestly origin, going back to biblical times) and a divorced woman. The prohibitions run contrary to both liberal-democratic norms and to Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which stipulates that “men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family.”³⁶⁷ These official-legal religious prohibitions infringe not only on the universal freedom of marriage, but also on the principle of equality before the law, as a person whom the law prohibits from marrying is being discriminated against in comparison to a citizen to whom this prohibition does not apply.

The democratic principle of equality before the law of all religions and religious currents is also infringed upon by the Orthodox Rabbinate's exclusive control over matters of Jewish religion in Israel, and by the state's refusal to grant the Conservative³⁶⁸ and Reform³⁶⁹ Rabbinate a status that is equal to that of the Orthodox Rabbinate. In Israel, Reform and Conservative rabbis are not authorized to conduct marriage ceremonies, are not represented on the Rabbinical Courts, and are also not permitted to serve as military rabbis. For this reason, Jews belonging to these religious currents (like those who harbor no religious beliefs) are forced to entrust their personal status matters to Orthodox courts and judges, who rule according to Orthodox Jewish law, which the former do not accept.

Another example of infringement on the principle of freedom *from* religion is the General Staff's order requiring all IDF units to conduct an "Awakening Campaign" leading up to the Jewish High Holidays every autumn, in which every soldier is *required*, under order, to take part (General Staff Order 34.0202). The Orthodox establishment's exclusive control over the provision of burial services (by the quasi-official *Khevrá Kadisha*) is also incompatible with the liberal principle of pluralism and the freedom of choice (slow change on this issue has been underway since the mid-1990s).³⁷⁰

Changing the status quo in the relationship between religion and state in a liberal-democratic direction would undoubtedly spark dispute between Orthodox Jews and others, and some believe that this goes against the national interest. However, maintaining the current situation also extorts a significant price, as it involves "arrangements that have infringed upon civil rights, the rule of law, and proper democratic governance."³⁷¹

The status of the Arab minority

As we have seen, liberal democracy sanctifies the rights of minorities, even the smallest among them. As a result, their protection is no less important, and perhaps even more important, than the majority's right to rule. Therefore, a truly

democratic regime cannot exist in Israel unless the Jewish majority grants full political rights to the Arab minority. Although Israeli Arabs, like other citizens, enjoy the right to vote and to be elected to the Knesset and since 1949 have enjoyed representation in the Israeli legislature (albeit representation that is small in proportion to the community's percentage in the population), they do not enjoy full and equal rights in a number of important areas. For example, the Jewish Agency and the Jewish National Fund – which are not official state bodies, but nonetheless hold wide-ranging powers in the realm of land and settlement policy – work only with and for Jewish settlements. This necessarily results in discrimination against Arab citizens of Israel, as, in practice, these agencies implement state policy with regard to the establishment of new settlements. Indications of discrimination are also clearly visible in the Israel Land Administration's regulations pertaining to land acquisition. The same is true with regard to government policy on the expropriation of private land for public purposes, as most expropriated land was previously owned by Arabs and was acquired to facilitate the establishment of Jewish settlements. Israeli land policy has resulted in a serious land shortage in the Arab sector. The massive expropriations have created an absurd state of affairs in which Jewish settlements that are relatively small in relation to neighboring Arab villages or towns control much larger land reserves (some of which were expropriated from the Arab villages themselves).

State policy regarding National Insurance and Interior Ministry allocations to local municipalities also discriminates against the Arab sector. A further example is the Israeli law that specifies military service as a necessary condition for receiving stipends for discharged soldiers. In practice, the authorities go to great lengths to find ways to also grant the stipend to Jews who did not serve in the IDF. No such efforts, however, are made to find comparable solutions for Arab citizens, and they are therefore ineligible to receive this stipend. The discrimination between Jews and Arabs regarding monthly child benefits was terminated in the 1990s, but resurfaced in a different form in 2002 by means of a directive

in the *Emergency Economic Program Law* of 2002.³⁷² The refusal to grant most Arab settlements “development town” status, which brings with it certain economic incentives, is also evidence of discrimination against Arabs within Israel. In 2005, the government decided to grant benefits with regard to income tax, land acquisition, grants for purchasing apartments, and incentives for teachers and others in the field of education in national preference zones in the Galilee. All the benefits, however, were granted only to discharged soldiers (that is to say, almost none to Muslim and Christian Arabs). Another program, known as “The Galilee is close to you,” granted benefits for the purchase of land in small settlements in the Galilee (up to 90% of the cost of the land). The program was implemented in 104 settlements, of which only four were Arab. In another example, the government decided in 2007 to extend special assistance to twelve underprivileged settlements (as part of the Neighborhood Rehabilitation Project), none of which were Arab. Harsh discrimination has also been the lot of the Bedouin of southern Israel, the majority of whose settlements remain unrecognized by the authorities and who have therefore suffered discrimination in areas such as the supply of water and electricity, connection to the national telephone system, accessibility by means of roads and public transportation, the provision of medical services, and implementation of the Compulsory Education Law.³⁷³ Blatant discrimination also exists in the budgets of government ministries, as in the case of the religious services budget, of which Muslim and Christian Arabs receive only 2%, despite the fact that they currently account for approximately 20% of the population.³⁷⁴ Arabs are also underrepresented in managerial positions in the government, state companies, the business sector, and the Histadrut administration. Although this phenomenon is not the result of legislation or regulatory measures and stems at least partially from a lower level of modernization in the Arab sector, it also undoubtedly reflects a significant element of discrimination.

Not all instances of Jewish-Arab inequality run counter to the principles of liberal democracy. While the tension that exists between Israel’s definition as a “Jewish state” and the

ideal of equal citizenship is not something that should be ignored, it does not mean that there is necessarily a contradiction between these two fundamental principles. The Law of Return,³⁷⁵ for example, discriminates in favor of Jews who wish to immigrate to Israel and become citizens of the country by ensuring them automatic citizenship upon arrival. In this way, it has a selective influence on the terms of immigration. The law, however, does not fundamentally harm the democratic nature of the Israeli regime, as no Western democracy permits free entry to all: when it comes to immigration, even clearly democratic countries such as Britain and Germany offer preferential treatment to their kith and kin. Most democracies are nation-states with minorities that enjoy full civil rights. Virtually all of these countries place special emphasis on the national-cultural-historical heritage of the dominant national group. For example, France is clearly the state of the French people, although the minorities living within its borders (Basque, Breton, Provençal, Corsican, Alsatian, and Jewish) enjoy full civil rights. The same is true of the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland, the Danish minority in Germany, the Slovenian minority in Austria, the Catalan and Basque minorities in Spain, the German-Austrian minority in Italy, and the Sami minority in Finland, Norway, and Sweden.

The exemption from military service extended to Arabs is based on security considerations and cannot necessarily be considered discrimination or a non-democratic arrangement, as it does not deprive the Arab minority of any right, but rather exempts them from a civic duty. Moreover, various surveys indicate that the vast majority of Israeli Arabs prefer not to serve in the military in order not to take up arms against Arabs across the border. From this perspective, the current situation may be regarded as an arrangement that is acceptable to both the Jewish majority and the Arab minority, at least until peace is reached.

The status of the Arab citizens of Israel is necessarily influenced by the state of warfare that still prevails between Israel and part of the Arab world, and by the Arab minority's cultural, religious, linguistic, and emotional belonging to the

Palestinian people and to the Arab majority in the Middle East. The state's attitude toward the Arabs therefore reflects the situation of the Jews as both a majority (in Israel) and as a minority facing danger (in the Middle East as whole). Israeli policy toward its Arab population is more lenient than the Soviet policy toward its citizens of German origin during World War II, and US policy toward its citizens of Japanese origin between 1941 and 1945. This, however, does not negate the fact that Arabs in Israel do not have the levels of equal rights enjoyed by national minorities in present-day Western democracies, such as the Welsh in Britain, the Jews in the United States, the Bretons in France, and the Québécois in Canada.

“The territories” and the Israeli political system

“It is impossible, at least without a dictatorship, to maintain two peoples who hate one another within the framework of one state,” said Dr. Yosef Burg, former leader of the National Religious Party.³⁷⁶

In addition to the “Arab problem” within Green Line Israel, it is also impossible to ignore the status of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, despite the de-facto independence of the Gaza Strip since Israel's unilateral disengagement in 2005 and the partial autonomy enjoyed by the villages and towns of the West Bank since 1995. These areas were subject to complete military rule for approximately three decades (1967–1995), and partial military rule has continued throughout most of the West Bank since 1995. This situation means that Israel controls the lives of millions of people who, in clear contradiction of the principle of representation, do not hold Israeli citizenship, are not represented in the Knesset, and do not possess full democratic rights. In this context, it should be noted that Jewish settlers living across the Green Line enjoy all the democratic freedoms, including the right to vote and to be elected to the Knesset. Israeli citizens and residents who are eligible for citizenship under the Law of Return are included in the Israeli civil registry and are subject to Israeli law for all

intents and purposes, even if their place of residence is in the West Bank. The true distinction between civil liberties in the West Bank is therefore not territorial – that is, between Israel within its June 4, 1967 borders and the territories that have been in Israeli control since the Six-Day War – but rather national, between Jews and Arabs.³⁷⁷ The Palestinian autonomy established in the West Bank in 1994–1995 does not provide a full democratic solution to the problem of the occupied territories. A democratic solution can take only one of two forms: either annexation of the territories and the provision of Israeli citizenship to all of its inhabitants (including the right to vote and to be elected to the Knesset), or turning the Palestinian autonomy into sovereign Palestinian territory (which, as already noted, occurred de facto in the Gaza Strip following Israel’s withdrawal, or “disengagement,” from the territory in 2005). These are the only two ways in which Israel can meet the democratic requirement of extending full citizenship to all the inhabitants of the state.

Some also believe that the military government in the territories, which is in essence non-democratic, poses a danger to democracy within the Green Line, as Israel’s non-democratic practices in the territories may spill over across the border into the State of Israel. According to Israeli political scientist Shlomo Avineri, this process has already started:

We cannot ignore the fact that Israeli democracy is currently facing complex challenges, resulting from two primary factors. The first is the fact that Israel’s more than four decades of control of an occupied population has created models of behavior that threaten to spill over into Israel. It is not only a matter of the corruptive influence of the occupation, but the fact that those who have grown accustomed to controlling the territories with non-democratic tools are also beginning to behave in this manner in Israel. This phenomenon is noticeable in the behavior of groups of settlers, security personnel, and the general public. The daily reports testify to a dangerous spillover and to the fact that, when push comes to shove, one cannot be both an occupier and a democrat.³⁷⁸

But even if this danger does not come to pass, Israel’s “deviation” from the democratic model will continue to manifest itself in the fact that the territory under Israel’s control is split into territorial units: the pre-1967 State of Israel, which is democratic and protects human rights, and the occupied territories, which are governed by military rule.³⁷⁹

The territories have poisoned the public sphere in Israel and indirectly resulted in the murder of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995. Calls for the expulsion of Arabs and for injury to their dignity, property, and human rights, as well as antidemocratic terrorist activity in the form of the murder of students, attacks on mayors, setting fire to mosques and cars, and the destruction of olive groves, also bear testimony to the extent to which Israeli control of the territories stains Israeli democracy.

This fourth flaw of Israeli democracy is brought into sharp relief not only through a comparison between the democracy within Green Line Israel and the discriminatory military regime in the territories, but also a comparison between Jewish settlement in pre-1948 Palestine and Jewish settlement in the territories. Jewish settlement in pre-state Palestine resulted in the establishment of a Jewish state with a Jewish majority that extended democratic rights to its Arab minority. The post-1967 settlement in the occupied territories has imposed the Jewish minority's control by a Jewish minority over an Arab majority that has no democratic rights.

Someone tried to scrub the stain off the wall.

But the stain was too dark (or conversely – too bright).

At any rate – the stain remained on the wall.

(David Avidan, “The Stain Remained on the Wall”)

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41. Israel's Vision: Jewish and Democratic

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This paper was completed in June 2014. I thank Meital Aviad Ben-Ami for her assistance.

Background

Most comparative analyses of modern states classify Israel as a democracy from its inception in 1948.³⁸⁰ In fact, on most dimensions of democracy, Israel scores higher on democratic indexes than it had in earlier periods of its existence.³⁸¹ It is usually ranked in the top 10% of democracies in the world, and its ranking is three times as strong as the average democratic index of the region of which it is a part.³⁸² Against this background, the persistence of the debate in these terms is intriguing.³⁸³

Is Israel a democracy? Probably, the debate is in part inspired by the wish to highlight the relationships between two components of the self-identity of Israel: its being a democracy and its being a Jewish state. The duality is anything but new. It is reflected in the history of Israel and in its constitutive Declaration of Independence. The state was in fact founded on the basis of a UN resolution to partition mandatory Palestine into two democratic states – a Jewish state and an Arab state – after efforts to end the mandate and give both peoples national self-determination in one state have failed. Nonetheless, some scholars and public activists point to a contradiction, or at least tensions, between these two dimensions of Israel's identity. For them, the Jewish dimension in Israel's identity means that Israel either cannot be a full democracy or that its democratic nature must be seriously flawed. To become a more robust democracy, they imply, Israel must give up, or at least mitigate, its Jewish distinction. Others vehemently deny all such challenges. They

see Israel as a liberal democracy with some unique features, which is struggling with problems which are much greater than those faced by other democracies, and is doing very well under the circumstances.³⁸⁴

There are two major divides that affect Israeli society: the one between the Jewish majority and the Palestinian-Arab minority, and the internal Jewish debate about whether the animus and the energy driving the collective that is struggling for self-determination in Israel is a matter of the ancient religious covenant between Jews and God or a matter of national self-determination for a people once defined by religion but now forming a modern people, not exclusively defined by religion. Both divides have implications to the strength and fullness of democracy in Israel. Critics stressing tensions between Jews and Arabs are the ones describing Israel as either an ethnic democracy,³⁸⁵ or as an ethnocracy.³⁸⁶ Critics stressing the ramifications of the struggle about the role of religion in Israel say that Israel fails in being a full democracy because it has (growing) theocratic elements. Some in fact suggest that Israel can hardly be a democracy at all, because of the combination of theocratic and ethnocratic elements, and suggest that the two are in fact either connected or even necessarily related. They claim Israel is, and possibly must be, discriminatory against non-Jews in ways inconsistent with democracy, and violates rights to freedom of and from religion, because it is governed or affected by religious Jewish law.³⁸⁷

My thesis is that while there are concerns in Israel on both the status of the Arab minority in the country and the role of religion in Israel's public life, which should be taken seriously and addressed, the relationships between the Jewish dimension and the democratic nature of the regime are complex. They are neither a contradiction nor a zero-sum game. In fact, the test of democracy in Israel is precisely in the way it facilitates addressing these concerns and negotiating these tensions. On this task, Israel's record is mixed. The status of the Arab citizens in Israel should be improved, and the role of religion in Israel should be revisited so that religious coercion is banned. Yet, it is imperative that these improvements be

reached via Israel's dynamic democracy and not in other ways. True, the Jewish specificity of Israel means that the state cannot be a neutral civic state, privatizing all the non-civic dimensions of its population. But not all democracies must be such states. Democracy constrains, and should constrain, what Israel can do to promote its Jewishness. These constraints should be recognized and strengthened. Yet there is plenty that Israel may do, within democracy, to promote its Jewishness. The complexity of Israel's identity between Jewishness and democracy is not the primary challenge to its being democratic.

Basic concepts

Both the conceptual ambiguities and the opposing political agendas that perpetuate this debate are structural and immanent. They are part of the background of the discussion. However, the controversies are political and ideological; they are not about concepts or even about facts.³⁸⁸ We should therefore prefer definitions that highlight and help frame the controversies over ones that make one's preferred position a matter of conceptual analysis. In this section I will clarify what sense of "democracy" and "Jewishness" I am using.³⁸⁹

Democracy

A rules-of-the-game, procedural conception

I use a primarily *procedural* conception of democracy. Democracy is based on the idea that the power to rule is vested in the *demos*, usually through its elected representatives. Citizens should be free to form opinions and create political associations (civil rights) and should have the right to vote and to be elected (political rights). These rights should be given to them equally. One person should have one vote.

Disagreements within democratic societies should be resolved by the authorized powers, under law. People and groups must have rights to protest and make their views known and felt so that they are taken into account in such decisions. Decisions may be constrained by an entrenched

constitution and requirements of special procedures for laws that are constitutive or affect human rights. But representation is determined by majority voting, and majority voting is the typical principle of decision-making in democracy. This principle is in fact required by equality.³⁹⁰ The power of the government must be limited, and officials as well as citizens should abide by the rule of law. An independent judiciary resolves controversies, including those between citizens and the government.

Democracy, liberalism as neutrality, and human rights

Some wish to make the definition of democracy thicker. One candidate for inclusion in the definition of democracy is liberal *human rights*. Others go further and include within the concept of democracy the requirement that states be neutral among the conceptions of the good of their citizens, and that this should be achieved by the privatization of all non-civic aspects of their identities.

I propose that we should reject both extensions. We should adopt the common distinction between democracy-related human rights (rights to vote and be elected and rights connected to exercising such rights effectively), whose protection is required for democracy to obtain, and other rights, which are an independent ideal.³⁹¹ The reason is that there may be significant tensions between human rights – whose protection is a desirable product of all political regimes – and democratic rules of the game. I also suggest that we should reject neutrality as a necessary (or even desirable and fully possible) ingredient of (liberal) democracy.

Human rights base their claim of validity and force on universal considerations. One of their main goals is to limit the power of majorities to violate human rights. Democracy, however, is rooted in a specific *demos* and its specific decision-making processes, affected by its history and culture.³⁹² There may be tensions between the arrangements adopted by a given political community and the interpretation of what is required by human rights given by philosophers, UN bodies or the international community. If human rights are

not part of the definition of democracy, this common fact may be presented as a tension between the ideals of democracy and human rights. If human rights are a part of democracy, the debate is one within democracy itself. I prefer the first description. Under the second description, the “good guys” are for democracy and human rights. The others, even a large majority of the population, who may argue in terms of their own conception of the good life, which to them is consistent with both democracy and human rights, are presented not only as political adversaries but as enemies of democracy and human rights as well.³⁹³ Such descriptions, I believe, in fact tend to weaken democracy rather than strengthen it.

Institutional implications

A critical aspect of democracy, especially a rifted and polarized democracy, is therefore the identity of the institutions and processes dealing with controversies and authorized within the system to interpret the implications of the rule of law, democracy and human rights. While all democracies give the prime of place, by definition, to the *demos* and their representatives (the political branches), some argue that all democracies must have constitutions, bills of rights, and judicial review of primary legislation. Others argue that regimes that have all of these are in fact potentially not democracies but juristocracies. I reject both claims. Democracies may have bills of rights and judicial review, but they do not have to have them. However, this debate does highlight the complex relationships between democracy and human rights.³⁹⁴

When a society is homogenous in attitudes and values, the institutional question of who decides and in what kind of process may be less important, since most decision-makers and processes are likely to generate similar results. This is of course not the case in divided societies. In such societies, the challenge for any regime, but particularly for democracies, is more complex. A balance needs to be drawn between civic patriotism, hopefully shared by all members of the *demos*, seeking to enhance the public good, on the one hand, and the

natural wish to promote the interests and ideals of one's own sector or group. In such circumstances, a main question is what "the nation" is and especially who speaks for it.

In such cases, neutrality – the state as an arbiter between conceptions of the good, without giving priority to any specific attitude, and maintaining only the shared ideals – is at best problematic. In all states ideals and conceptions of the good are in part shared and in part specific to certain groups. In deeply divided societies the shared ideals may not be robust enough to maintain and support social and political life, with the measure of solidarity and commitment that they take. An effective state must therefore seek the arrangements that can provide, for it, the right, dynamic balance between representativeness and effectiveness, so that it avoids paralysis and maintains a government that is fair to all, especially minorities. Such government cannot respect only the elusive, possibly non-existent, neutral "shared public interest."

In such societies, neutrality cannot be seen as a realistic ideal for the political branches. They must make ideological and political decisions, and these should be evaluated as such rather than as legal or constitutional questions to be decided by impartial judges. Moreover, courts themselves should respect this distinction between questions of policy and questions of human rights, and not impose a duty of neutrality on the political branches.³⁹⁵

Jewishness

I take the Jewishness of Israel to reflect the fact that Israel is the one place in the world where Jews are a majority and can exercise political self-determination.³⁹⁶ Other features of life in Israel are Jewish only because of this basic fact. Jews are entitled to state-level self-determination exactly so that they can develop and protect aspects of their physical and cultural welfare in ways not always open to minorities living within other societies.

The key to this characterization is the interests and rights of Jews who see their Jewishness as an important part of their

identity, and who wish to maintain it and pass it on. My definition of “Jews” is inclusive: all those who see themselves as Jews.³⁹⁷ The right to self-determination belongs both to peoples and to their individual members. It is in this case the right of Jews and of the Jewish people.³⁹⁸

The Jewishness of the state is not civic. There are Israelis who are not Jews. Not all Jews are Israelis. It is also not religious (the “Jewish state” is not analogous to a “Christian state” or a “Moslem state”; rather, it is analogous to an “Arab state” or a “German state”). More relevant to our purposes, the Jewishness of Israel is not exclusive. Israel is committed, in both declaration and constitutional and social reality, to civic equality for all, Jews and non-Jews alike.

Relationships between Jewishness and democracy

We can now return to the Jewish-and-democratic definition.³⁹⁹ We saw that allegations that Israel is not a democracy or has a flawed democracy stem mainly from its Jewishness. In this section I will discuss the vision of Israel as both Jewish and democratic, and argue that this vision is in fact more adequate than all other proposed alternatives for Israel. Moreover, this characterization is more democratic as well. First, it does reflect the wishes and preferences of the majority. More important, it appears as if many of the minority members prefer their life in Israel over other plausible alternatives, despite their criticism of Israel.

Israel as both Jewish and democratic

I contend, with the majority among Jews and the international community, that both democracy and the Jewish distinctness of the state are recognized and important values, and that both are part of the normative vision of the state. I concede that Palestinian Arabs, both within Israel and outside it, cannot be expected to fully endorse this vision.⁴⁰⁰ Other things being equal, they would much rather live as a part of the majority in their country. But this is not the reality. They are citizens of

Israel. They justly demand that their rights, individual as well as collective, be respected. Their preference to be members of the majority, however, is not enough to challenge the validity of the vision of Israel as a democratic nation-state of Jews, especially against the background of their actual conditions of life in Israel, and the plausible alternatives had Israel not existed for both Jews and themselves. They should thus concede that the vision of Israel as a democratic state in which Jews exercise national self-determination is not only a matter of the brute force of Jews, but also an arrangement that enjoys legitimacy within the international community and by international law and morality.

My claim, that both the democratic nature of Israel *and* its Jewish particularism are values, is not a mere assertion based on moral reasons supporting self-determination for communities.⁴⁰¹ Normatively, it is anchored in the recognition of the international community of the principle of self-determination of peoples, which is in fact incorporated as the opening statement in both the ICCPR and the ICSECR. Moreover, in the specific context of Israel it is reflected in a long and consistent series of international determinations.⁴⁰²

These two values (as well as the independent value of human rights) do have different structures. Both values have internal tensions as well. Together, these tensions between and within the two values are the framework within which Israel has to negotiate its identity. For democracy, civic cohesion and equality is a key. Jewish self-determination in Israel requires deviation from this equality at the group level, and in the reality and history of Israel it is also translated into discrimination and gaps. However, discrimination and gaps – against individuals and groups – can be found in all democracies. One should struggle to minimize them. Israel offers many venues for such struggles. Jewish self-determination is supported by the fact that Jews are a substantial and stable majority within Israel.

Those who want Israel to become more democratic want more equality between Jews and Arabs and less religious coercion in Israel. This ideal can be achieved to a large extent

within Israel as Jewish and democratic. Those who challenge this vision advocate, in terms of ideal types, either a liberal neutral state privatizing all the non-civic identities of their population, so that civic equality is the only official policy; or a state where there is separation of state and religion; or a binational multi-religious state.

I argue that implementation of all these alternatives will generate a worse reality for all, Jews and Arabs alike. Moreover, these alternatives are in an important sense less democratic than the uneasy balance that Israel has adopted as its complex vision. We should seek to strengthen both components of the vision rather than seek to abolish or seriously mitigate either of them.

Israel cannot be a “state of all its citizens”

A fully privatized neutral democracy indeed cannot be defined officially as a Jewish (or Moslem, or Arab) state. However, not all democracies must choose this route, and many Western democracies have not. Israel is the culmination of Zionism, a movement of Jewish national self-determination. The UN recognized it as such. What is the basis of the expectation that once established it will make itself into a neutral state? Moreover, many democracies maintain to this day special official affiliations with national or religious traditions, and this in itself does not affect their democratic credentials so long as the legal and social realities within them do not discriminate on the basis of ethnic or religious identity.⁴⁰³

So the claim of conceptual contradiction must fail. Yet, as I have argued above, the neutral theory of liberal democracy is in fact an inadequate theory of society and of democracy, at least in societies in which individuals value their group affiliations. Such societies need to enforce civic equality across the groups, but at the same time to enlist the energies and the commitments of solidarity which are encouraged and developed within the different identity groups. Such societies build on having a core community which does have a very strong sense of natural solidarity, which can then be extended to include other groups within the civic nation.

In Israel, this group is clearly the Jewish Zionist majority, the group that has fought for national self-determination for Jews in their ancient homeland.⁴⁰⁴ Its material and spiritual resources are required to make the state work. If it had tried to be a neutral state of all its citizens it would not have been established; many of its citizens would have left; and a lot of the energies on which it is built, for the benefit of all its citizens, would have been absent. This group is there because Israel is a Jewish state and the group makes it a Jewish state. It also is the group that makes it a democratic state.

Yes, there are important tensions between the nature of Israel as the locus of Jewish self-determination and democracy. But they definitely do not generate a zero-sum game.

More important and telling is the fact that the representatives of the Arab minority do not seek a neutral state that regards them as individuals only.⁴⁰⁵ They, just as Jews, see their non-civic identity as more important than their civic one. They do not want to live in a state that privatizes their national and religious identities.

Therefore, the vision of Israel as a “state of all its citizens” is endorsed neither by most of the Jewish majority nor by most of the Arab minority. An attempt to move Israel in this direction is thus bound to fail. Furthermore, for our purposes we must stress that it cannot be advocated in the name of democracy itself. Democracy does not require that Israel becomes a neutral civic state, privatizing the non-civic identities of all its citizens.

Israel need not adopt US-style separation of state and religion

Israel has a state-religion arrangement that is unique among Western democracies. It includes a very visible role for religions in public life, including religious education that is publicly financed as well as publicly recognized and financed religious services, including a religious monopoly over matters of personal status for all the population. Most of these

elements were inherited by Israel from the Ottoman *millet* system, which had been adopted by the British mandatory authorities at the request of the local population. So this reality was not even created as part of the establishment of the Jewish state at all.⁴⁰⁶

The struggle to abolish the public, official, Orthodox monopoly over marriage and divorce and the resulting state-determination of who is a Jew, as well as debates about the definition of a “Jew” and the scope of immigration privileges under the Law of Return, is primarily conducted by Jews, in Israel and abroad. Many of them see this struggle as a matter of both Jewishness and democracy. They want Jewish society in Israel to remain distinctively Jewish,⁴⁰⁷ but resent the demands made by the Orthodox establishment.⁴⁰⁸

I believe the personal status Orthodox religious monopoly is bad for a variety of reasons.⁴⁰⁹ It violates human rights to freedom of religion and from religion, and has implications for gender equality. I similarly object to the fact that the definition of a “Jew” in the Law of Return is almost fully halakhic,⁴¹⁰ and that the state does not recognize fully the pluralism in Jewish identities, both religious and cultural. However, I do not accept that this situation is antidemocratic. Rather, I prefer to say that this legal situation is unjustified, and there seems to be a majority against it, but that it is the democratic process itself that prevents changing it (although the social reality is much freer and more nuanced). Democracies at times exhibit an inability to make desired choices because of political constraints. This does not mean that the entrenched arrangements, which cannot be changed, are antidemocratic.⁴¹

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But is separation of state and religion (or religious establishments) the desirable arrangement for Israel? I do not think so. Separation of state and religion may be a response to religious pluralism, especially if it may be violent; or to a struggle between religious and secular forces within society; or to both. In Israel, all these dimensions are present. Here, too, we need to adapt the legal and political regime to the

social reality. This is why democracy generates different arrangements in different societies.⁴¹²

Israel cannot have a regime of separation between state and religion for at least two reasons. One is related to the Jewishness of the state. While a majority of Jews supports a cultural-national Jewish particularism, as self-determination for Jews, many of whom are not religious, the internal Jewish debate about the relations between religion and culture in Judaism is still raging. The relative growth of religious communities in Israel, including messianic ones, has obvious political implications for both the state-religion divide and the Jewish-Palestinian divide. In democracy, numbers matter. Members of religious Jewish communities see Judaism as either totally religious or as a combination of religion and peoplehood. Moreover, among their leadership, many of the Zionist religious voices stress Jewish peoplehood more than religion, accepting that it is critical to form Jewish solidarity across various attitudes to Jewish religious law.

The result of this struggle is mixed and dynamic. And it tends to different and opposing directions. Israeli Jewish cities are much freer on Saturdays than they had been. There are many social ways of avoiding the harshest practical implications of religious monopolies. Many of these mechanisms are vindicated by state authorities and the courts.⁴
¹³ At the same time, ultra-religious norms, especially those of separation between men and women, become more visible in the shared public sphere as this community is growing and becoming more integrated into general Israeli society.⁴¹⁴

Interestingly and importantly, most of those on the radical right who are considering not obeying a possible order to evacuate West Bank Jewish settlements support their positions by invoking beliefs about the interests of the state, the meaning of Zionism, and even the democratic deficit of such decisions, rather than the reasons of obedience to higher religious law.⁴¹⁵ So even for them, Jewish and democracy must go together. Separating Judaism and the state is thus not a matter of separating religion and state.

But in terms of democracy, the second reason why Israel will not have a separation between state and religion is related to all its population, Jewish and non-Jewish alike. Ironically, if there is a bill in the Knesset to abolish the religious monopoly over matters of personal status, it may well be defeated by a coalition of religious Jews and Arab MPs of all religious persuasions. Tensions among the Arab population between different religions, and between traditional religious forces and modern secular ones tend to be downplayed in the public sphere so as not to harm cohesiveness vis-à-vis the Jews and the Jewish state.⁴¹⁶ Moslem society is on the whole more traditional than the Jewish one, but the majorities of both communities in Israel are traditional, and want to maintain their distinctive identities. These identities are connected to religious tradition even for those who do not observe. They want to negotiate a public sphere in which there is a distinctive culture without religious coercion. Again, the struggle about the details of these arrangements should be conducted within the democratic framework. It is not a struggle about democracy itself.⁴¹⁷

Israel should not be a binational state

Indeed, political leaders of both Jews and Arabs do not want Israel to be a state privatizing all the non-civic features of the population. Those who argue that Israel is an ethnocracy usually claim that Israel cannot be a full democracy unless Israel itself becomes a binational, multi-religious state.⁴¹⁸

The claim that the correct arrangement for the region is one binational state in all of mandatory Palestine is outside the confines of this paper. Within Israel proper, however, I see no justification and no stability in advocating a binational state. This “solution” undermines the rationale of the partition which is the basis of the establishment of the state. That decision was based on conditions that related to both the rights of self-determination and practical political realities. Both reasons are as powerful now as they had been then.⁴¹⁹

Yes, there should be more equality than there is now in individual rights, and the recognition of group rights to religion and culture and some autonomy should be strengthened. However, robust protection of minority rights as required by international documents is fully compatible with Israel's description as a Jewish and democratic state.

Some illustrations

I have argued that democracy and Jewishness in Israel are not contradictory or zero-sum-game attributes, but a set of two separate ideals, one inclusive of the *demos* (but not universal as human rights) and one specific to Jews, with tensions and mutual reinforcement. Let me illustrate the general point by two specific cases that are often brought up as a cause for concern.

The future of the Occupied Territories

The Israeli occupation of the West Bank since 1967 is clearly one of the strongest causes of criticism of Israel and challenges to its legitimacy (and democracy).⁴²⁰ Indeed, the fact that Palestinians live under Israeli control but do not enjoy civil and political rights and do not belong to the Israeli *demos* is critical. However, after 1993, Palestinians are allowed to hold their own elections, they are ruled by the Palestinian Authority, and efforts to end the occupation have been conducted all the time. In principle, the West Bank is not seen as part of Israel, and Palestinians are intentionally not seen as a part of the Israeli *demos*.

Is the fact that the occupation has not yet ended a flaw in Israel's democracy? Some say that what stops Israel from coming to an agreement with its neighbors that will end the occupation is the rise of messianic Jewish expansionism. For them, the continuation of the occupation, and especially the settlements, are a matter of the Jewishness of Israel. However, those among the Jews who argue for an agreement mostly invoke the need to keep Israel as both Jewish and democratic by guaranteeing a stable Jewish majority in it. And some anti-

occupation activists, in Israel and abroad, come to this struggle from their interpretation of Jewish law and traditions. A majority among Israeli Jews supports the two-states-for-two-peoples arrangement. Thus, the fact that this has not been translated into an agreement is not necessarily a simple flaw of Israeli democracy.⁴²¹ It probably reflects the fact that Israel and the Palestinians simply cannot reach an agreement. Because they do not belong in one state, democracy does not give them a framework for reaching decisions without agreement. Some argue that the parties need to be “pressured” to make an agreement if they are unable to do so unaided. But forcing an agreement (if possible at all) is clearly not a matter of democracy.

Constitutional identity and protection of minority rights

Some argue that the absence of constitutional protection of the rights of the minority is a flaw in Israeli democracy.⁴²² In principle, the relationship between an entrenched bill of rights with judicial review and the reality of minority protection is not simple. However, Israel does not have a full constitution for a variety of reasons, and the issue of minority rights is not the most central among them. The level of protection of human rights in Israel is considered more than acceptable, and it improved after the enactment of the 1992 laws. Human rights are well protected in other countries without a full bill of rights and judicial review, like Holland and Switzerland. Ironically, though, the parties that objected to attempts to complete Israel’s constitution in recent years were two minorities: ultra-religious Jews and the Arabs! Religious Jews who fought against a constitution feared a more secularist definition of the state and a stronger court which might limit their power to negotiate within coalition agreements and may erode the religious status-quo. They also had an ideological objection to the Jewish state enacting a constitution while it had the most ancient one available – religious law. The Arabs, however, opposed any constitution, no matter how strong its protection of the rights of the minority, and how strong its

commitment to democracy and judicial review, if it included in its preamble – as all drafts did – some affirmation of Israel as the locus of Jewish self-determination.

Conclusions

Improving Israeli democracy does not require giving up its unique connections to the Jewish people. Rather, it requires a careful analysis of the special features of Israeli society and its challenges, and an evaluation of the conditions which may promote the ability of the state to perform its tasks: provide all its citizens with security, freedom, dignity and human rights; guarantee the conditions required so that Jews can continue to exercise self-determination in Israel and beyond; and maintain robust and effective democratic institutions.

So, is Israel a democracy? I have explained why I share the view that the strength of Israel's democratic elements creates a presumption in favor of seeing it as a democracy, and that this strong presumption has not been rebutted by critics.

There are additional reasons for an affirmative answer. Clearly, those who want to describe Israel as a non-democracy are the ones who are most interested in changing its arrangements. Presumably, they want to change it so that it is a democracy (or a stronger democracy). But in a democracy, change must be made through persuasion, via the democratic processes themselves. Democratic change is on the whole preferable to revolutions. Israeli Jews are more likely to concede to the demands of the Arabs, and religious establishments are more likely to allow liberalization of state-religion arrangements, if these changes enjoy strong democratic legitimacy. Using descriptions of Israel as a colonialist ethnocracy or a Jewish theocracy are likely to generate polarization and resistance rather than accommodation. The record of progress through democracy in Israel is much better than attempts at delegitimizing it.

I repeat: democracy and Jewish self-determination are both of value. Democracy does constrain what Israel can do to promote Jewish self-determination, as do the values of human rights. Promoting the conditions required for Jewish self-

determination does not justify discrimination or religious coercion. But Israel as the locus of Jewish self-determination requires neither discrimination nor a violation of freedom of religion and freedom from religion.

A framing recommendation is required here, however. Until now, Israel has handled the sources of tensions between Jewishness and democracy – Jewish-Arab and internal Jewish – separately and in different ways. This is a mistake. Both should be seen as a part of the basic “social covenant” that should constitute Israel’s democracy. Tensions between *demos* and various *ethnos* groups, and between state and religion, exist in most democracies. Democracy requires that they are not allowed to harm the underlying sense of equal citizenship shared by all citizens. This equal citizenship need not be sameness. It does not even require an agreement on values or shared conceptions of the good (although convergence on these may help a lot). But it does require an agreement to a set of political institutions and decision-making procedures that will be seen by all citizens as legitimate and binding. The provision of this framework is in fact the essence of democracy. Under present and foreseeable conditions, it will generate Israel as a democratic nation-state of Jews.

Israel should maintain and strengthen its democratic institutions. It should actively seek to strengthen Israeli citizenship and the civic identity shared by all its citizens. At the same time it should continue to recognize and respect non-civic elements in the identities of these citizens. What Israel needs to do – and can do if it works wisely within democratic rules – is to reach an agreement on how to negotiate these disagreements so that the legal arrangements, and the social realities, do not exclude non-Jews, and do not privilege one conception of Judaism or one conception of Jewish life. Again, this is not democracy against Jewishness, but using democracy to allow social forces to strike dynamic balances without attempting to “decide,” once and for all, the ideological issues involved.

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42. Is Israel a Democracy?

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This paper was completed in July 2014.

Is Israel democratic? Any serious debate over this polemicized issue ought to begin with a clear definition of “democracy,” though this caveat has all too often been ignored in practice. Many contributors to this debate, academics as well as polemicists, seem to assume that a concept as widely deployed as “democracy” is intuitively obvious and requires little or no further specification. They have paid little attention to the fact that political scientists who have focused on the analytical issues of democracy have produced an extensive literature that elucidates the problems of defining and applying the concept but also lays out some fairly clear guidelines for classifying states as democratic or non-democratic.

The need for clear operational definitions is fundamental to any serious scholarly debate, not just those on controversial Middle East political issues. A few years back, astronomers had to decide whether to continue classifying Pluto as a “planet,” or to redefine it as a “trans-Neptunian object.” The scientists involved did not disagree over the actual nature of Pluto itself; they agreed that it was smaller than the eight other planets, that it was composed mainly of ice, and that it had an unusual elliptical orbit. The question was whether to define the concept of “planet” broadly enough to include such an object, while still excluding various other objects that also orbit the sun. For those involved this was largely arbitrary, since nothing inherent to the term “planet” (original meaning: “a wanderer”) furnished operational guidelines for such distinctions.

Similarly, scholars who label Israel as a democracy, and those who consider it undemocratic, disagree less over the actual substance of Israeli politics than one might think. To take the major issue, there is general recognition of the fundamental problem in practice with the status and rights of

the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel. Most scholars, on both sides of the debate, would probably agree with a leading critic's conclusion that "minorities are treated as second-class citizens, feared as a threat, excluded from the national power structure, and placed under some control," while "at the same time [they] are allowed to conduct a democratic and peaceful struggle that yields incremental improvement in their status."⁴²

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Does this disqualify Israel as a democracy? The answer obviously depends on the definition that is used. The word "democracy," like the word "planet," does not have an inherent and precise delimitation that is fixed for all time and is intuitively obvious in its application to specific cases. Standard dictionary definitions as "government by the people" or "majority rule" do not take us very far. We must operationalize the concept for it to be useful empirically, and the specific criteria we choose will always be arbitrary and arguable. We usually ask only that the analyst be clear about the definition being used in order to avoid unproductive debate over semantics, and that it be applied equally to all cases; that is, that all states be judged by the same standard. It is, however, useful to remember that definitions deviating widely from conventional usage, no matter how precise, will invite misunderstanding.

Like nearly all other studies of Israel government, this article deals only with the territory that is juridically part of Israel. It does not deal with the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Palestinian territories occupied by Israel in 1967 and administered under the international law of belligerent occupation. The "occupied territories" were never a part of Israel's political system, nor was there ever any pretense of democracy there. In any event, since the establishment of the Palestinian Authority during the 1990s and the withdrawal of Israeli troops and settlers from Gaza in 2005, only a small percentage of West Bank Palestinians remain in areas under Israeli administration. It has been argued that Israel and the territories it controls in the West Bank (which include the Jewish settlements there) should be analyzed as a single

“control system,” but the stark differences in the two situations require different frameworks of analysis.⁴²⁴

Israel as a non-democratic state

The polemical literature on Israeli-Palestinian issues has generated countless characterizations of Israel as not only non-democratic but much worse. The discussion here is limited to academic works that have provided clear criteria and reasoned argument in arriving at the conclusion that Israel does not in fact qualify to be included in a list of democratic states. Perhaps the most serious contribution along these lines is that of As'ad Ghanem, Nadim Rouhana, and Oren Yiftachel, who proposed the following definition: “We perceive [democracy] as a system of government based on several key principles: (a) equal and inclusive citizenship and civil rights; (b) popular sovereignty and universal suffrage; (c) protection of minorities; and (d) periodic, universal and free elections.”⁴²⁵ To this the authors later add a *de facto* fifth requirement: a democracy must have clear borders. This is because it must have a *demos*, defined in ancient Greece as “an inclusive body of empowered citizens within a given territory.” This clearly implies, they argue, clear and permanent borders: “the state should belong to *all* its citizens and *only* to those citizens.”⁴²⁶

Though they sound intuitive, these are tough standards. How many nations can lay claim to complete equality of all groups within their borders? This definition does however indeed give us fairly precise and measurable criteria for differentiating between a “democracy” and a “non-democracy.” And if we apply it rigorously, it provides ample grounds for classifying Israel as a non-democracy. It is difficult to argue that Palestinian Arabs in Israel enjoy full equality with Jews either *de jure* (that is, in terms of constitutional and legal structures) or *de facto*.⁴²⁷ As a minority, Arabs are systematically excluded from important areas of Israeli life. The lack of clear borders is expressed in the citizenship extended to Jewish settlers (but not Palestinians) living beyond the Green Line and in the ambiguous relationship of Israel to Jewish diasporas around

the world. The State of Israel is established explicitly on an ethnic basis, and by the above criteria an ethnic democracy is, indeed, a contradiction in terms (like “hot ice,” as the authors put it). Israel is not, therefore, a democracy; it is, rather, an “ethnocracy,” a concept developed much more fully later by Yiftachel.⁴²⁸

This definition of Israel as ethnocratic rather than democratic carried over into the “Vision Documents,” a series of four important policy statements issued by leaders in the Palestinian Arab community in Israel in 2006–2007. At the outset, it is stated that “Israel cannot be defined as a democratic state. It can be defined as an ethnocratic state [...]”⁴²⁹

Baruch Kimmerling begins a discussion of the same issue by recognizing that “the term ‘democracy’ has not one conclusive theoretical definition or even agreed-upon set of empirical manifestations.” He also states that there are no “pure” democracies and that in the real world nations are on a continuum between the poles of democracy and non-democracy. But he then asserts a list of necessary conditions, practically identical to those of Ghanem, Rouhana, and Yiftachel, for a nation to be classified as “democratic,” and concludes that “only one of the necessary conditions for considering Israel a democracy is present.”⁴³⁰

It is remarkable, however, that in the extensive academic literature critical of Israeli political institutions and policies – much of it contributed by Israelis – there are relatively few such frontal attacks on the definition of Israel as a democracy. Yiftachel, in his own work, does provide a roster of “critical scholars” who have emerged “to challenge Israel’s democratic definition.”⁴³¹ The works cited do include some very trenchant critiques of Israeli politics, and in particular of the status of Palestinian Arab citizens, but apart from those cited above, none in fact set out a clear set of criteria for defining democracy and a clear conclusion placing Israel on the negative side of the ledger.

What is notable about the works that do define Israel as non-democratic is not only the positing of tough intuitive

standards, not derived from any empirical groundwork, but also the absence of any systematic effort to extend the same standards cross-nationally with the same rigor. The implications of any given set of criteria would become much clearer if we could see what patterns emerge when they are applied across the board to other states – including whether the criteria are workable on a broad comparative scale.

What would these standards say about the United States, to take another nation generally ranked as a democracy? Even leaving aside past history of African-American slavery and Native American dispossession, minorities today have yet to achieve full equality. In fact, most US states are now involved in thinly-disguised efforts to make it more difficult for minority voters, in particular, to participate in elections – in a nation where participation in voting is already scandalously low. In reaction to the increase of the Latino population, many states have also declared English as their “official language” and passed other laws designed to deter Spanish-speaking immigrants. The House of Representatives, thanks to extensive gerrymandering, returned a Republican majority in 2012 even though there were more votes for Democratic candidates. Is this a democratic regime? Not according to some of the criteria that have been applied to Israel.

The scholars involved in these evaluations are, with minor exceptions, focused on Israel/Palestine, which is perfectly legitimate. But if they are to draw conclusions about a concept that has engaged legions of political scientists since the discipline emerged, they might at least consult some of the more important findings of these colleagues.

Israel in cross-national classifications

There is, indeed, an immense literature, theoretical and empirical, on the classification of governments by regime type. To conduct a debate on the democratic character of Israel’s regime, or that of any other state, without consulting the experts who have plumbed these depths, is to challenge the very idea of cumulative wisdom in human inquiry. Whether one agrees or disagrees with these experts – who often

disagree among themselves – they surely deserve to be taken into account.

The fact is that researchers in comparative politics who work empirically on democracy, and apply a uniform definition to all nations, have employed less restrictive criteria than those posited above by analysts looking only at Israel. Dankwart Rustow, in 1967, applied the following four criteria:

1. The free flow of information and the free expression of opinion
2. The competition of party programs and candidates for electoral approval
3. The control of the government by elected representatives
4. Either (a) periodic changes in the composition of the ruling majority or (b) representation of all major electoral trends within it

Application of these criteria to contemporary states led to a list of 31 democracies, Israel being one of them.⁴³²

Robert Dahl, in 1971, suggested a set of eight requirements for democracy (which he termed “polyarchy” in order “to maintain the distinction between democracy as an ideal system and the institutional arrangements that have come to be regarded as a kind of imperfect approximation of an ideal”):

1. Freedom to form and join organizations
2. Freedom of expression
3. Right to vote
4. Eligibility for public office
5. Right of political leaders to compete for support and votes
6. Alternative sources of information
7. Free and fair elections
8. Institutions for making government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference

Consequently Dahl classified 26 states, circa 1969, as “fully inclusive polyarchies,” Israel being one of them.⁴³³

Tatu Vanhanen used two quantitative measures to represent the two dimensions of Dahl’s criteria (contestation and participation), and ranked Israel 11th of 147 nations on an “Index of Democratization” for 1980.⁴³⁴ Michael Coppedge and Wolfgang Reinecke, in 1991, developed a “polyarchy scale” based on Dahl’s criteria, and updated the data to 1988. Israel was ranked in the second highest of ten groups of states on the polyarchy scale.⁴³⁵ Finally, Arend Lijphart, in 1984 and 1994, also using Dahl’s criteria, identified 23 nations that had been continuously democratic since the immediate post-World II period – Israel being one of them.⁴³⁶

G. Bingham Powell, in 1982, established five criteria for democracy:

1. The legitimacy of the government rests on a claim to represent the desires of its citizens.
2. The organized arrangement that regulates this bargain of legitimacy is the competitive political election.
3. Most adults can participate in the electoral process, both as voters and as candidates for important political office.
4. Citizens’ votes are secret and not coerced.
5. Citizens and leaders enjoy basic freedom of speech, press, assembly, and organization.

Powell concluded that 20 nations had continuous democratic regimes from 1958 to 1976, Israel being one of them.⁴³⁷

A team of scholars led by Adam Przeworski, in 2000, posited a set of four rules for a state to qualify as a democracy:

1. The chief executive must be elected.
2. The legislature must be elected.
3. There must be more than one party.
4. The incumbents must have lost at least one election.

Using these rules, all nations were classified by regime type for the 1950–1990 period, with Israel classified as a parliamentary democracy for the entire period.⁴³⁸

Of course many researchers dealing with the empirical study of democracy pointed out that it was misleading to force states into a dichotomous, either-or framework. No state, perhaps, achieved the pure ideal of democracy; all could be ranked somewhere on the scale between perfect democracy and its perfect opposite, whatever that might be.

One of the earliest surveys to rank states on a scale was the annual *Freedom in the World*, published by Freedom House since 1973. The 2006–2014 editions gave Israel its highest ranking on political rights and its second-highest ranking on civil liberties, citing “deficiencies in a few aspects” (both rankings were on a scale of 1–7).⁴³⁹

One widely-used measure of democracy is the Polity IV series issued annually by the Center for Systemic Peace, which ranks political systems on a scale from -10 for fully institutionalized autocracy to +10 for fully institutionalized democracy. The principal criteria are the ways executive power is acquired and transferred, how political power is exercised and constrained, how social order is defined and maintained, and how much influence public interests and opinion have on the decision making process. On this scale Israel has been ranked between +6 to +9, qualifying as an institutionalized democracy.⁴⁴⁰

Given the proliferation of attempts to measure democracy, one team of scholars has devised “Unified Democracy Scores,” which synthesize ten different democracy scales into a single scale. On this scale, which ranges from -2.5 to +3.5, Israel ranked 50th of 205 different states in 2010, with a score just above +1.0 (the highest ranking was just above +2.0).⁴⁴¹

One of the more interesting and exhaustive measures of democracy is the *Democracy Index* developed by the Economist Intelligence Unit, using a battery of no fewer than 60 indicators of democracy along five dimensions: electoral process and pluralism, functioning of government, political

participation, democratic political culture, and civil liberties. Scores on these indicators are converted to a scale of 0–10, with nations above 8 arbitrarily classified as full democracies and those between 6–8 as flawed democracies. Israel, with a score of 7.53 in the latest published index, falls just below the line in the flawed democracy category (the United States, at 8.11, barely qualifies as a full democracy).⁴⁴² The idea of Israel as a “flawed democracy” is consistent with the position of many critics of Israeli politics who underline its weaknesses but stop short of denying its essentially democratic character by usual standards.⁴⁴³

In sum, it would appear that none of the general efforts to classify nations as democratic or non-democratic, using generally accepted operational criteria applied equally to all states, have put Israel in the non-democratic category.

None of these operational definitions, it should be noted, require complete equality among all citizens or the absence of any discrimination against minorities. Researchers in the field recognize democracy as an ideal that states in practice may approach but never quite attain in its pure form; all have imperfections. In particular, deficiencies in the treatment of minorities would hardly surprise any of the classical theorists of democracy, who underlined the problematic implications of majority rule for those not in the majority. The concern about “tyranny of the majority” in a democracy goes back to the Greeks who gave this form of government a name, running from Plato and Aristotle through Federalist No. 10, Alexis de Tocqueville, and Lord Acton.

The claim is made that “several key principles have emerged in the literature as consensual foundations for achieving the main tenants of democracy – equality and liberty. These include equal citizenship; protection of individuals and minorities against the tyranny of states, majorities, or churches; and a range of civil, political, and social rights.”⁴⁴⁴ As we have just seen, this claim is not supported by a survey of the literature.

The “consensual foundations” of the scholarly work on democracy simply do not require complete equality and non-

discrimination as a definitional *sine qua non*.

Other scholars are of course free to argue that a definition of democracy ought to include minority rights, and to apply such a definition to Israel. But it would be reasonable to ask that they show how and why they choose to differ from the usage generally accepted in the field, and to offer some idea of what their definition would imply for other states that are classified as democratic by commonly accepted standards. Judging a single state in isolation from others runs an inherent risk of a de facto double standard.

This is more than a semantic scholarly quibble. When a word that is in common usage is defined differently for academic purposes, it invites misunderstanding. It is only common sense to consider what the person in the street generally understands by “democracy.” One indication of this is a survey of Palestinians in which 75% rated the status of democracy and human rights in Israel as either “good” or “very good,” against 67% for the United States, 55% for France, and 32% for the Palestinian Authority.⁴⁴⁵

Democracy in deeply-divided societies

Such problems as minority rights in a conflict situation, security pressures on civil liberties, the role of religion in politics, and overwhelming pressures on available resources can be fully evaluated only by comparing the Israeli case to others, similar and dissimilar. Can any nation with ethnic problems – meaning most nations in the world today – pass muster regarding equality and non-exclusion of minorities in law and in practice?

One point on which Israel is vulnerable is the existence of formal structures that legitimize this discrimination: the *Law of Return* and other legislation privileging Jews and Jewish values, quasi-governmental bodies such as the Jewish Agency or the Jewish National Fund that exclude non-Jews, etc.⁴⁴⁶ But there are problems with an exclusive focus on formal structures. In the first place, it is not clear that even by this criteria most presumed democracies are free of sin. Mention

has been made above of state laws in the United States declaring English as the “official language”; admittedly this had little if any practical impact, but a native Spanish-speaker would see this, quite correctly, as an insult and even as a discriminatory act. It certainly is not an ethnically- and culturally-neutral law. Many states in modern world have adopted policies to “protect” their cultures against alien influences; are they beyond the pale?

Most importantly, actual practice is at least as important, if not more important, than official structures. Judged by its official constitution and laws, the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin was one of the most democratic polities in human history. An analysis limited to formal structures would be very uninformative in most cases, like a furniture inventory that says nothing about a family that slouches in its chairs and snores in its beds.

Looking at both law and practice, any comparison must begin with a recognition of the general tenuousness of democracy. Democracy is a relatively recent and still far-from-universal human achievement; by Lijphart’s criteria there were no democracies at all until the early 20th century (because women did not have the vote), and only 23 states have been continuously democratic since the immediate post-World War II period. All of these are relatively well-developed, prosperous nations; all but Israel, India, Costa Rica, and Japan are in Western Europe, North America, or the British Commonwealth.⁴⁴⁷

Israel often appears in the literature as one of the major case studies of democracy in a deeply-divided society. Ethnic and religious cleavages clearly make the achievement of democracy more difficult; analysts point to a strong correlation between homogeneity and political democracy.⁴⁴⁸ Generally, only a handful of states with deep and numerically significant ethnic divisions have maintained stable democracies by standard criteria: Switzerland, Belgium, Canada, arguably India – and Israel. Thus it is not too surprising that one of the weaker aspects of Israeli democracy is minority rights. Political scientists consider “consociational”

democracy, in which power is shared among major groups (Switzerland is the classic example), to be more suitable to deeply-divided societies than simple majoritarian democracy in which nothing dilutes majority rule. A strong case can be made that Israeli politics is basically consociational within the Jewish community, but not in dealing with the Jewish-Arab division.⁴⁴⁹

The critics are therefore on solid ground in posing Jewish-Arab relations within Israel as the acid test of Israeli democracy. The “Vision Documents,” cited above, give voice to legitimate grievances and demands of Arab citizens that justify far-reaching reform, and even restructuring, of the state. Posing this in stark “either-or” terms, however, obscures the reality that all nation-states must in some fashion balance the demands of cultural, ethnic, and historical particularity against universalistic principles. Israel is hardly the only state facing this dilemma. Few states in the world have the ethnic homogeneity of, say, Denmark. Is the ethnic element in the Israeli polity so strong as to constitute a difference in kind, and not just a difference in degree?

The fact is that the basic concept of an ethnic state comes suggestively close to the classic definition of a nation-state. A “nation” is typically defined as “a people connected by supposed ties of blood generally manifested by community of language, religion, and customs, and by a sense of common interest and interrelation.”⁴⁵⁰ This differs little, if at all, from most notions of ethnicity. As the idea became prevalent that every nation had a right of self-determination, the dominant political model in the world became the nation-state: “A state organized for the government of a ‘nation’ whose territory is determined by national boundaries, and whose law is determined, at least in part, by national customs and expectations.”⁴⁵¹

Since ethnic borders seldom correspond perfectly to political borders, the “national” majority in any given state constitutes a dominant ethnic group with respect to minorities not identified with that nationhood, no matter how democratic the procedures. All nationalisms have a potential problem with

minority rights, as Jewish history demonstrates only too well. Furthermore, a hostile majority can suppress a minority by democratic as well as non-democratic means (as democracy is usually defined). The critical question is how far ethnonational identity is intertwined with the very definition of the state, and this is a matter of degree.

In theory liberal democracy is indifferent to distinctions among citizens. But no political system exists in a social, cultural, linguistic, and historical vacuum; even the most liberal regime is shaped by its particular context. A nation-state, formed around a central “nation” however defined, bears some particularistic features. This imprint will be lighter where the prevailing model of nationality is assimilative and where it corresponds to the concept of citizenship. *In this “New World” model, state forms nation:* there is a territorial focus, citizenship is extended to those born within its borders (*jus solis*), and naturalization is not tied to ethnicity, culture, or descent. Such a pattern predominates not only in New World nations formed by immigration, but also in some states with natural borders (e. g., islands), in some older states where borders shaped identity (France, Britain), and in newly emerging states where “artificial” borders are beginning to shape identity. Even here, however, a sense of particularity – Americanness, Japanness, Frenchness – remains and may be a strong political factor.

Clearly this sense is stronger in the “*Old World*” model where nation forms state: there is an ethnic focus with citizenship distinguished from nationality and often extended on grounds of descent (*jus sanguinis*), while naturalization is more difficult since it is tied to ethnicity, culture, or language. This pattern predominates in some areas with well-defined historical nations (Central and Eastern Europe, Asia), in newer states formed when the concept of nation-state was at its peak (post-World War I), and in some situations where the mismatch between ethnic and political borders is especially dramatic (Vietnam, Korea, Bangladesh, Yugoslavia).

As a product of the nation-state idea at its most intense, Israel belongs to the “Old World” model and ranks toward the more ethnic end of this continuum. It is not, however, in a

category by itself; there are many other states in which ethnicity is likewise closely intertwined with the definition of the state. Many states, for example, confer citizenship by descent and/or ethnicity to those who can establish an ancestral link.⁴⁵²

The Israeli Law of Return is an unusual case of *jus sanguinis* in that it recognizes an ancestral link over two millennia, but other states have similar policies. Germany, which generally follows the concept of a community of descent, has as part of its 1949 Basic Law a provision granting the right of “return” to refugees of German ethnic stock, which led to a massive influx of “Germans” from Eastern Europe whose ancestral link was measured in centuries.⁴⁵³ The Soviet Union, following World War II, adopted similar “laws of return” for persons of Armenian, Russian, Ukrainian, or Byelorussian national origin who wished to enter the Soviet Union and receive Soviet citizenship. During the decolonization process the imperial powers (Britain, France, Netherlands, Italy, Belgium) readmitted “nationals” who were generations removed from the home country.⁴⁵⁴

Israel’s link to ethnicity is not unique. But the Law of Return and other explicitly Jewish features do place it among the more ethnic nation-states, and thus among the more problematic in terms of ethnic minorities. How many states actually have significant ethnic minorities, and how do they fare in democratic terms? In 2012 there were 29 states, including Israel, that had ethnic minorities, defined by language, of over 5%, and that were classified as democratic by the Economist Intelligence Unit.

From Israel’s perspective an important question is how many of these 29 states practice some form of ethnic power-sharing and how many did not, and whether this is related to the size of minorities. Arend Lijphart’s four basic characteristics of consociational power-sharing are 1) participation in the governing coalition or executive, 2) a high degree of group autonomy, 3) proportionality in representation and allocation, and 4) a formal or informal minority veto on matters of fundamental importance.⁴⁵⁵

Addressing only *ethnic divisions*, nine of the 29 states (not including Israel) met at least three of these four conditions.

Tab. 1: Ethnic democracies with minorities larger than 5% (2012)

<i>No Ethnic Power-Sharing</i>			<i>Ethnic Power-Sharing</i>		
	Size Dominant Ethnic Group (%)	Sizes Minorities (%)		Size Dominant Ethnic Group (%)	Sizes Minorities (%)
Botswana	79	11	Belgium	58	31
Bulgaria	84	9, 5	Canada	59	22
Cape Verde	71	28	Finland	93	6
Croatia	90	5	Macedonia	64	25
Cyprus	77	18	Malaysia	50	24, 11, 7
Estonia	69	26	Mauritius	68	27
Israel	76	20	South Africa	79	10, 9
Latvia	59	28	Spain	74	17, 7
Lithuania	84	6, 5	Switzerland	65	18, 10
Moldova	78	8, 6			
Mongolia	95	5			
Montenegro	75	5, 5			
New Zealand	67	7			
Peru	84	13			
Romania	90	7			
Slovakia	86	10			
Slovenia	88	8			
Sri Lanka	74	18			
Thailand	75	14			
United States	82	11			

Sources: Economist Intelligence Unit, *Democracy Index 2011*; Central Intelligence Agency, *World Factbook*; Minority Rights Group International, *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous People*; Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2011*; United States Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 2010.

There was a clear correlation between power-sharing and the size of the minority. Only two of the 18 democratic states with linguistic minorities of less than 20% (Finland and South Africa) used power-sharing techniques in its ethnic relations (and South Africa should be considered a deeply-divided society, whatever the numbers). But seven of the 11 democratic states with minorities above 20% did so. Clearly accommodation of ethnic groups above this threshold, in a democracy, ordinarily involves the use of explicit power-sharing techniques that by their nature dilute the prevailing ethnicity of the state. With an Arab minority of about 20%, Israel stands near the fulcrum: close to the upper limit on the size of minorities that states have generally been able to

incorporate successfully into functioning majoritarian democracies, and beyond which most have found consociationalism more applicable. To judge by experience elsewhere, it would appear that Israel *might* be able to integrate this minority without wide use of power-sharing techniques, but that such techniques are clearly preferable and perhaps even essential.

Ethnicity and power-sharing

Of what, minimally, does the “Jewishness” of the Jewish state consist? The Israeli Supreme Court, in dealing with the eligibility of parties to participate in elections, has tried to answer this question. Acceptance of Israel “as a Jewish state,” the Court ruled, means at least (1) maintenance of a Jewish majority, (2) the right of Jews to immigrate, and (3) ties with Jewish communities outside Israel.⁴⁵⁶ None of these features are inherently inconsistent with democracy as usually defined, and none of them are unique to Israel. The nation-state, based on the principle of the sovereignty for a particular ethnonational community, is the prevailing form of political organization in international relations. Most states, including most democracies, claim some kind of ethnic component in their identity, and none exist in a cultural vacuum. A large number of states grant citizenship on the basis of ethnic identity of descent. Nor is the existence of a dispersion peculiar to the Jewish people, save perhaps in duration and extent, and the growth of sentiment for “normalizing” Israel-Diaspora relations could lessen any remaining differences (by limiting the Law of Return, reducing the role of world Jewry in Israel, or even reversing the flow of influence as Israel becomes the dominant force in the Jewish world).

Israel is a democracy, by the usual standards, in which power-sharing techniques have functioned fairly effectively among Jewish groups, but from which the Palestinian Arab minority has been excluded. Given the depth of the ethnic division, lessons from experience elsewhere, and the particular strengths of Israeli politics, the extension of power-sharing – consociational democracy – to Palestinians within Israel is

clearly the preferred option. Israeli Jews wish to remain Jewish: that, after all, was the basic idea of Zionism. By the same token, Israeli Arabs are a non-assimilating minority with their own culture, language, and identity. Democratic governments – and even many non-democratic regimes – usually achieve long-term stability in such cases by power-sharing based on the explicit recognition of two or more ethnic communities.

Introduction of power-sharing would be eased by the fact that it already works on the Jewish side. Power-sharing among Jewish groups – messy and contentious yet effective – already serves as a model of independent organization, collective bargaining, and direct action within the framework of law. On the municipal level, a “system of elite consultations” kept Arab-Jewish peace in Jerusalem over the decades, providing another model.⁴⁵⁷

Whether conceived as consociationalism or not, specific proposals for Jewish-Arab accommodation tend to be similar. Most involve explicit recognition of Israeli Arabs as a national minority with rights as a group, such as an act of the Knesset affirming that the Arab minority in Israel is an integral part of the Jewish state and is entitled to full recognition of its specificity. Recognition of Arabs as a minority could involve making state symbols and practices more inclusive; for example, by having “Israeli” holidays that draw in both communities.

Secondly, following from such recognition would be group autonomy in cultural and educational affairs, with election of a representative body for the purpose, and possibly including establishment of an Arab-language university. Functional autonomy in these areas may be necessary to counter the growth of support for territorial autonomy or total separation.

Finally, inter-ethnic consociationalism will get a tremendous boost when Arab parties that accept the framework of a Jewish state are brought into government coalitions. Nothing else would provide as clear an index of the extension of Israeli power-sharing to the Arab community. It is extremely important that Palestinians participate directly in the

decision-making process themselves, rather than having these issues handled as an internal debate among Jewish Israelis.

This is in addition, of course, to a fair allocation of resources and equality before the law. Nothing in the “Jewish” nature of the state inherently compels discrimination in local government budgets, health and welfare services, education, economic opportunities, or treatment in the courts. In fact all of the above measures could be implemented without renouncing the essential Jewishness of Israel as a nation-state. What they involve is some dilution of the relationship between ethnicity and statehood, moving Israel more toward the center of the spectrum on this dimension. There always remains some sense in which an ethnic minority “does not fully belong” in a nation-state with a dominant ethnic group, but Israel would become more of a “normal” nation-state with “normal” minority problems. Successful integration of the Palestinian Arab community is the ultimate challenge to Israeli democracy. But in approaching this challenge, it is essential to preserve a sense of perspective. It is through already existing democratic institutions that this accommodation will take place.

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Topic X: Debating Post-Zionism

Introduction

This section focuses on the heated debates taking place over views expressed by scholars from the “post-Zionist” revisionist stream, who challenge prevailing approaches to Zionism in history and sociology. The core of the debates revolves around the question of whether Israel should be seen as exemplifying 19th-century European colonialism or, in a less stigmatizing tone, as displaying a colonization pattern. Linked to this discussion one witnesses passionate exchanges over the extent to which Israel’s occupation of the West Bank and the settling of Jews in that space can be portrayed as colonialism, even as a form of apartheid. Underlying that debate is a conceptual argument over the definition of what colonialism means, and whether there is or should be any distinction between colonialism and colonization. The last two chapters of this section present two contradictory overviews and evaluations of a variety of views of post-Zionism.

All in all, the issues discussed in these pages have shone light on in-depth discussions of Israel as a Jewish state and its approach to the Palestinians – inside and outside Israel. In these debates, one observes interpretations and re-interpretations of the Jewish-Arab conflict and its history.

As’ad Ghanem considers Jewish-Arab relations in Israel as irremediably doomed to inherent contradiction, in the context of Israel’s definition as the State of the Jews. He sees here the background of permanent crisis directly influenced by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The author examines the Zionist ideology of land and space, and the prospects for an indigenous minority to preserve a political, social and cultural uniqueness. On a larger scale, he links the Israeli-Palestinian experience to the general framework of colonialist movements and colonial experiences, challenging the view of Israel as representing a liberal democracy.

Gershon Shafir sees Israel as a unique case of settler colonialism. According to him, Israel, begotten through

colonization, was a priori fashioned as a colonial project. In this, Israel is not different from Australia, Argentina, the United States, and South Africa. What makes Israel unique is that it is a belated, 19th-century, settler colony and even more so, that its colonization continues into the 20th and 21st centuries. Since the 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, Israel creates, reproduces, and implements ongoing colonization and represses Palestinian resistance.

Julius H. Schoeps contends that one of the Zionists' great misconceptions was the idea that the Jewish resettlement of Palestine would not meet resistance. This is true today more than ever in the West Bank. Settlers there are radically and religiously motivated and set obstacles in the way to the only possible solution: that Jews and Arabs live in a halfway, conflict-free, and secure future. This calls for the Palestinians to recognize the right of the State of Israel to exist, and Israel to recognize the Palestinians' claim to sovereignty.

Yitzhak Sternberg contends that a theoretical criticism of Rodinson, Shafir, and other supporters of the colonialism thesis indicates their tendency to use the concepts of colonialism and colonization interchangeably. Colonization is a phenomenon whose essence is immigration and the establishment of settlements in a new land; colonialism involves domination of a territory and/or a population by people from the outside. There is no necessary identity or overlap between the two phenomena. From here follows the invalidation of the contention that there cannot be colonization without colonialism. The author also argues that the settler colonialism perspective, generally and regarding Israel particularly, is too deterministic.

For **Tuvia Friling**, identifying Zionism as colonialism places the legitimacy of Israel in question. For the anti-Zionists, Zionism is a negative force to be dismantled. A pivotal charge is that it excludes Arabs from the nation. He points out different aspects that contradict portrayals of Israel as colonial. However, ever since the Six-Day War, the rise of Gush Emunim, and the Intifadas, this debate has regained acuity. The bizarre alliance of anti-Zionists and rightist nationalists views settlements in the West Bank as the

continuation of the Zionist project, in opposition to mainstream Zionism that is committed to the “Jewish and democratic state” principle.

Amal Jamal examines post-Zionism as a trend that has recently become prominent in the Israeli academia. For him, this orientation challenges the moral and political foundations of the Zionist movement, and the State of Israel, its Jewishness, and its meaning for non-Jews in the region. This reflection includes questions of legitimacy and security, since post-Zionists argue that force does not guarantee the security of Jews and cannot legitimize their rights. Post-Zionists do not make do with an instrumental utilitarian argument, but also seek to establish a positive moral assessment that does not sacrifice all that has been achieved so far, and call for its transformation in order to reconcile it with universal human values.

Anita Shapira’s point is that the New Historians started – against dominant approaches – from the mythical assertion that the 1948 Arab refugee problem was a preplanned Israeli operation. This view brought about the Palestinians’ rejection of Jewish nationalism. As a religion, Judaism, assumedly, cannot claim the status of a nation nor a historical connection with the land. However, in the contemporary atmosphere, the debate seems detached from reality while, paradoxically, the success and propagation of studies of Israel in the world is an outcome of it.

All in all, these contradictory texts explore the roots of Israel’s very nature by questioning whether Zionism and Israel can be seen as exemplifying colonialism, and whether there is room to distinguish this notion from colonization.

43. Understanding the Divide: Arabs and Jews in Israel

As'ad Ghanem

This paper was completed in February 2014.

The political context

The relations between the Arab minority on the one hand and the state and the Jewish majority on the other during the first six decades of Israel's existence have been portrayed as a perpetual crisis.⁴⁵⁸ The crisis intensified following the failure of the peace process between Israel and the Palestinian national movement and the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada in 2000. The latter deepened the estrangement of the minority from the majority by amplifying the nationalist discourse among Jews and the sense of marginalization and alienation among the Arabs.

The issue of the Jewishness of the state has been at the crux of the conflict and debate between the Arabs and the Jews over the last decade. The Arabs linked the Jewish character with their own status as a national minority, while the Jews understand it as connected with their legitimate right to self-determination in the state. In the light of this debate, the issue of Palestinian nationalism has become a codeword for the status of the Arab minority. Some have begun to link the two topics, that is altering the Jewish character of the state and Palestinian nationalism, and have proposed the establishment of binational state in historical Palestine.⁴⁵⁹ Some admit that Israeli democracy is locked in a permanent conflict with the Jewish character of the state.⁴⁶⁰

Within the maelstrom of the debate over the Jewish character of the state the Jewish elite feels the need to stress this character by creating a wall-to-wall Jewish-Zionist consensus on this issue. These efforts culminated in the

Kinneret Covenant,⁴⁶¹ which reflects the Jewish national consensus regarding the Jewishness of the state while stressing the deplorable condition of Arabs in Israel. The deliberations about the *Kinneret Covenant* were conducted exclusively within the Jewish elite, with no attempt to include others – the Arabs who live in Israel – in the discussion. Thus a document that claims to faithfully represent the situation of the country excludes Arabs and Arab elites a priori, for Jewish-nationalist reasons.

Alongside the *Kinneret Covenant* there were several inclusive joint initiatives by Jews and Arabs to formulate theoretical academic alternatives regarding the status of Arabs in Israel.⁴⁶² Continuing these initiatives, a group of Arabs and Jews, mostly from academia, came together at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute to draw up a joint document. The group of 20 Arab and Jewish academics met 17 times during 1999–2001 to discuss the matter. The participants reached agreement on civil equality, but steadfastly differed about the question of the Jewish character of the state. Neither side was willing to even discuss the matter, so the Arab members consequently rejected the proposed document, whose aim had been to confer joint legitimacy on a “constitution by consensus.” Journalist Uzi Benziman edited the group’s discussions into a book entitled *Whose Land Is It? A Quest for Jewish-Arab Compact in Israel*.⁴⁶³

In addition to the *Kinneret Covenant*, the Israel Democracy Institute has drafted and circulated a draft document for a “constitution by consensus,” which underscores the Jewishness of the state from a symbolic, legal, and practical standpoint. The Knesset Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee had been basing its deliberations on a national constitution on this document. Intensive legislative efforts and sensitive legal activity have been and still are being conducted to confer internal legal content on the Jewishness of the state and the fact that the state is the “state of the Jewish people.” This process has culminated in the effort to formulate an Israeli constitution.⁴⁶⁴ The proposed constitution proclaims that Israel is a “democratic Jewish state” and emphasizes this character from a legal standpoint. The first article of the first

section of the constitution, which is entitled “Fundamentals,” states that the name of the country is “Israel.” The second article begins, “Israel is a Jewish and democratic state.”⁴⁶⁵ The various articles of the constitution stress the Jewish character of the state with regard to the Law of Return, citizenship, and state symbols. These matters are clearly explicated in the constitution, while the Jewish character of the state is emphasized.⁴⁶⁶ A series of Israeli laws guarantee the official privileges enjoyed by the Jewish majority in a number of areas. It has been asserted that a majority of Arabs polled by the Israel Democracy Institute support this version of the constitution and the Jewish identity of the state, but other surveys contradict this claim.⁴⁶⁷

In light of these developments in the positions of the state and the Jewish majority on the status of the Arabs in Israel, the minority took a number of steps in its turn. This new proactive approach was a sign of increased confidence on the part of the Arabs, who were ready to take action to achieve equality and terminate the Jewish character of Israel. During the Al-Aqsa Intifada in late September and early October 2000, hundreds of Arab citizens of Israel took to the streets to protest Israel’s policies toward their Palestinian brothers in the occupied territories and to express their demand for equality. The events illustrated the Arabs’ new willingness to take effective action to change their status.⁴⁶⁸ The killing of 12 Arab citizens by the Israeli security forces in clashes with the demonstrators sparked an unprecedented deterioration in relations between the Arab minority and the state, and intensified the estrangement between Arabs and Jews in Israel.

Over time, Arab citizens’ trust in state institutions has declined,⁴⁶⁹ because of these institutions’ ethnic approach and exclusion of Arabs. The most striking expression of the Arabs’ loss of confidence in the Israeli system is the significant increase in the number of Arabs who boycott national elections. Political scientists stress the connection between the form and substance of a democratic regime and the rate of political participation.

Over the last decade the trend in Arab political behavior has been to stay away from the polls. The participation of Palestinians in Knesset elections is declining. In the elections for the 17th Knesset (2006), the boycott rate reached a high of 44%, compared with 38% in the 16th Knesset election in 2003.⁴⁷⁰ The low turnout of Palestinians in Israel in the elections for the 17th, 18th and 19th Knessets indicates a continuing trend of boycotting elections. This means primarily that most Arabs in Israel have despaired of achieving anything through the Knesset. The structural obstacles to Palestinian citizens erected by the Israeli regime as an ethnocracy fuel the Arab minority's sense of impotence with regard to collective rights as well as daily life.⁴⁷¹ Some Arab citizens of Israel are organizing extra-parliamentary political activity, which Arab society finds to be more effective than parliamentary activity. Some examples are the extra-parliamentary "Islamic Movement," the "Sons of the Land,"⁴⁷² and various civil-society organizations.⁴⁷³

As an expression of the processes of internal empowerment and the increased frustration with official policy, the National Committee of Arab Local-Council Heads issued a basic document, *The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel*.⁴⁷⁴

The document's writers demand the implementation of a consociational system/binational state in Israel. This would replace the existing liberal system that is exploited automatically by the Jewish majority and that, indeed, constitutes a "tyranny of the majority" in which, in the name of liberal democracy, that majority takes draconian steps against the Palestinian minority and its fundamental rights.

Understanding the divide – the major debates

Political studies concerning the status of the Arabs in Israel have tended to rely primarily on political and socio-political developments and their relationship with the state, and with the majority, on theoretical formulas derived from the basic

concept that the Arabs in Israel are a minority inside a “normal democratic state.”

A great number of Israeli researchers have used the term “Modernization Theory” or “modernity” to bring about an understanding of the development of the Arabs in Israel. These methods rely on the basic premise that the “Arab minority,” due to it being a “different” ethnic group and a part of the East – a hemisphere that remains in a process of political development – has developed politically, socially, culturally and economically through modernization. It is a process of great fortune for a minority interacting with the “modern and advanced” majority as is the case with regard to the politics undertaken by the state in order to “modernize” said minority.

The most pronounced models in this theoretical framework come from the Israeli sociologist Shmuel Eisenstadt and historians, Jacob Landau and Elie Rekhess. The modernity theory appears in the works and publications of Rekhess,⁴⁷⁵ Landau,⁴⁷⁶ Cohen,⁴⁷⁷ all of whom believe that the Arab minority in Israel underwent a rapid modernization process. That hypothesis, they explain, is supported by the rise in the standard of living and the standard of education, in turn leading to higher expectations. The Arab society evaluates its status according to the following criteria: the extent of development and the Jewish majority’s degree of accomplishment in the state; the existence of gaps between the two groups in various arenas, including industrialization of the Arab village, housing young couples, rationing water for agriculture, assimilation and immersion in the Israeli economy. These factors and others have led to a condition of depression and bitterness in the ranks of Arabs in Israel – feelings that have pushed them to take on radical positions and radical political traits. This experience originally started after the June War of 1967. Up until then, due to isolation from the Arab world and the fierce scrutiny imposed by military rule, an “even balance” was kept between the various circles of affiliation of Arabs in Israel.

Antipodal to the “modernization” approach, the political sociologist Sammy Smooha put forth the theoretical

framework “Pluralism and Conflict” according to which the Arabs in Israel started understanding more than ever the rules of the game in the Israeli political system. They did so by molding their collective identity and nurturing the components of this identity; the national-Palestinian and the civil-Israeli. This process received a boost as a result of their interaction with the Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza after the War of 1967. This model, particularly Smootha’s, relies – as it does with Lustick⁴⁷⁸ – on the theoretical approach referred to as “Pluralism and Conflict.” This approach claims that there is a pluralistic society in Israel, divided along religious lines (religious vs. secular), sectarian lines (Ashkenazi vs. Eastern Jews) and national (Jews vs. Palestinian Arabs). Within the framework of national pluralism, the Arabs in Israel are undergoing a complex process of politicization comprised of three main parts: first, Israelization, meaning the intensive assimilation of the Palestinian minority into Israeli society in all aspects, including the values and traditions prevalent among Jews. The second part is internal divisions. This refers to the internal pluralistic condition undergone by the Palestinians in Israel which has led to their division into four ideological political segments: the Accommodationists, the Reservationists, the Oppositionists and the Rejectionists.⁴⁷⁹ The third part is militancy. According to this process, the Arabs in Israel embrace the Palestinian national identity and exhibit solidarity with the idea of resolving the Palestinian case through the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel. The process would further encompass an enhanced struggle in an effort to establish a Palestinian state and improve their status within the State of Israel.

A process of politicization has taken place in light of democratic transformations within Israeli society, a diminishing Arab-Israeli conflict, in general, and a diminishing Palestinian-Israeli conflict, in particular. Majid Al-Haj⁴⁸⁰ has used this model to explain the political status of Arabs in Israel. He believes that “the Palestinians in Israel have developed over time a special adaptation strategy as a result of contextual circumstances related to their position in the State of Israel and related to changes in various aspects of

life, a process that started during the establishment of the state.”⁴⁸¹

Among those strategies, in his opinion, this matter includes adopting legal methods of struggle by Palestinians. Al-Haj concludes that although the solidarity of Arabs in Israel with the Palestinian struggle in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip intensified during the First Intifada (1987–1992), their demands for equality in the Israeli framework increased, as well. In the same study, Al-Haj proposed a new idea of “Double Periphery.” According to this idea, Arabs in Israel were pushed to the margins after the Intifada. Marginalization took two forms: in Israel they were marginalized for their support of the Intifada and other associated actions; within the Palestinian national movement they were marginalized due to their lack of active participation in the Intifada, a struggle that represented a step toward Palestinian national liberation. According to Al-Haj, these forms of marginalization complicated the status of Arabs in Israel more than ever.

The model of politicization claims that Arabs in Israel accept the founding of the state and the reality of being a minority in it. But, in contrast, they reject the Jewish Zionist character of the state and the consequent discrimination against them, including the majority’s view on resolving the Palestinian case. As a means to achieving favorable changes in their status, they employ a legal struggle, both parliamentary and non-parliamentary. Evidence of those claims is found, according to Smooha, in voting patterns to the Knesset and to Jewish Zionist parties, as well as to non-Jewish parties. In addition, there is a widespread network of independent political organizations and movements that participate in extra-parliamentary politics through demonstrations, protests and strikes.⁴⁸²

Against the backdrop of the studies conducted by the previously mentioned group of researchers, the Palestinian sociologist, Elia Zureik, has used the “Internal Colonialism” model borrowed from Hechter’s, the English sociologist’s, theory. This model analyzes the development of the minority by explaining the relationships between economic, social and

cultural affiliations imposed on the minority by the majority. These relationships are primarily directed at maintaining the superiority of the majority and the subordination and inferiority of the minority.

The “Internal Colonialism” model appears in Zureik’s and Nakhleh’s publications. In their attempts to prove the colonial characteristic of the State of Israel, they revert to analyzing the status of Palestinians and Jews before the founding of the State of Israel. This, they assert, will prove the colonial roots of Jewish settlement in this land. Following the same path, they analyze the interactions between Jews and Palestinians and the role the state plays in its interaction with Arab citizens.⁴⁸³ Zureik asserts that the Zionist movement had invested extensive efforts prior to 1948 to strip Palestinians of their lands and to build Jewish settlements on those lands, all the while enjoying Britain’s support and assistance along with those of other imperial powers. He further explains that since 1948, and as a result of the *Nakba*, a Palestinian minority remained in Israel and was dominated by a Jewish majority. This minority constitutes a cheap labor force employed to serve the Jewish financial elite.

This model rests primarily on governmental policies toward Arabs in Israel. Their political development will not be treated directly. According to this approach, the political development in question was a reaction to the policies of land appropriation and the subjugation that Israel practiced against its Arab citizens. From the previously mentioned studies, one would conclude that the Arabs in Israel developed “Palestinian” approaches and the practical application of those approaches – up to and including armed conflict – in response to the policies directed at them. If these methods have yet to be utilized, the assertion is that it is merely the result of pressure and intensive monitoring directed against them.

Lustick introduced the “Control Model” as a foundation to understanding the development of “the Arab minority in the Jewish state” arguing that the majority, under the current conditions of ethnic separation in Israel, achieves complete control over the minority. It also controls the pace of that

minority's development. In Lustick's study⁴⁸⁴ he claims that despite the reality of a divided society in Israel, comprised of a Jewish majority and a hostile Arab minority, the majority merely needs to implement a monitoring system to police and control that minority. Lustick explains that there are three components to this control apparatus: separation, dependency and cooptation. Separation is achieved by way of separating the Arab minority from the Jewish majority and simultaneously employing policies of divide-and-control against that minority. Dependency is manifested in heightening the Arab minority's dependency on the Jewish majority. This way, the minority is prevented from reaching the political and economic resources available to other citizens. Cooptation is manifested through a vast system of privileges that are offered to the Arab elite (bribes) as a mechanism for containing their protest.⁴⁸⁵

As is the case with Internal Colonialism, the Control Model resorts primarily to Israeli state policies toward the Arab citizens of the state. However, due to this monitoring policy political participation of Arabs in Israel is limited. One can say that following this approach, and particularly as a result of restrictions placed on political activity, the Arabs in Israel could very well adopt methods of struggle similar to the methods utilized by the Palestinians in the occupied territories and the diaspora against Israel during the 1970s and 1980s.

The "control" approach has been implemented in both the public and the planning spheres. In his research, the geographer Oren Yiftachel argues that the State of Israel aims at controlling lands through Jewish representatives working in planning institutions which intentionally develop plans that perpetuate Jewish control and deprive Palestinians in Israel from benefitting from those lands. Such state sanctioned practices result in an increase in Arab Palestinian political dissent. Occasionally, the protests end in violent confrontations, however. Intervention by the State of Israel through its control of Arab land and the Judaization of said land could lead to an escalation in relations between Palestinians in Israel and Jews and a future polarization of society.⁴⁸⁶

Another illustration of that “domination” model is found in the Arab education system in Israel. Al-Haj, in his earlier studies of the Arab education system in Israel, used the “domination” model. In recent years Al-Haj has suggested multiculturalism as a theoretical framework to understanding Israeli society and other subordinate multicultural groups, in an effort to understand the development of Palestinians in Israel. The majority of studies on the Arabs in Israel have based their analysis on minorities in democratic states. The failure of these approaches to explain the complex situation of Arabs in Israel has prompted scholars to seek alternative theoretical models, such as those used in the analysis of conflicts between indigenous communities and colonial powers.⁴⁸⁷

The contradiction between indigenous minority and colonial presence

In contrast to the theoretical framework about minorities in segregated societies, we see that Palestinian-in-Israel relations with the Jewish majority and the state are inseparable from the general framework of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This allows us to understand the success experienced by a European colonialist movement in occupying a region of the Third World. It did so via various bodies and managed to defeat the indigenous people there. Here, one must explain colonialism and explain the Jewish exclusivity in Palestine as a colonial project on the one hand, and clarify the defeat of the indigenous people and their inability to oust colonialism despite the ongoing conflict, on the other hand.

It is important to point to numerous studies conducted by several sociologists, Palestinians in particular. These studies emphasized the use of a theoretical framework related to analyzing societies that succumbed to colonial control in order to understand what befell the Palestinians in the last century.⁴⁸

⁸ These scholars, however, like many others, did not study the Palestinian Arabs in Israel, their struggle or the development of their society from an independent theoretical perspective. I suggest resuming the research on Arabs in Israel by reiterating

the theoretical framework that will enable us to understand what befell the Arabs in Israel.

The main hurdle facing the Arabs in Israel arises from the absence of a collective status. This issue affects their situation and their rights on two levels: the national level as a group and the individual level as citizens. Clarifying and defining the status is the most important step in establishing the options available to a minority (including indigenes) for the development and cultivation of a positive relationship with the state and with the majority.⁴⁸⁹ In the case of the Arabs in Israel, their rights and their circumstances do not depend on citizenship; instead they rely on the diametric relationship between the native minority and the colonial entity. Thus, the theoretical framework must be revised in accordance with the following two debates: the indigenous minority, the colonial framework and said framework's relationship with the native people of this land.

1. *The indigenous minority*: In some instances, the term "minority" is synonymously used with "national, ethnic, racial and religious groups." According to the definition of the Sub-Commission for Human Rights and the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, a "minority" is a governed group, with citizenship from the state in which it lives. Its unique ethnic, religious and linguistic attributes separate it from the rest of the people in the nation in which it lives. The term "indigenous minority" is considered a new political term. It refers to the remaining minority of a group that resides in its own homeland, despite other immigrant groups occupying it or founding a new state on its ruins. Such a minority often becomes a political and numerical minority.⁴⁹⁰

The Arab minority in Israel is classified as an indigenous one by way of definition and composition.⁴⁹¹ The Arab minority in Israel meets most of the criteria to be considered indigenous. These criteria were enumerated by the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. The criteria are: early presence, voluntary conservation of cultural uniqueness, self-definition

as an indigenous people, refusal to be subjugated, trivialized, marginalized, expelled or discriminated against by the hegemonic society. Additionally, indigenusness emerges from a conditional relationship between the presence of a group of people as a society, and their attachment to a specific area.⁴⁹²

Our main concern within the context of this discussion is the ability of the indigenous minority to preserve its political, social and cultural uniqueness. This ability is part of its collective right to remain distinct from the hegemonic majority. International declarations have affirmed the rights of indigenous groups. For example, Agreement Nr. 169 on behalf of indigenous and tribal nations in independent countries affirms in the second section of Article 2, “encouragement of full actualization of cultural, social and economic rights of these nations in all matters related to their cultural and social identity, as well as their traditions, norms and institutions.” In the second section of Article 3 it reads, “[i]t is prohibited to exercise any form of power or intimidation as such acts constitute an infringement on human rights and the basic rights of the affected people.” The first section of Article 5 states: “Social, cultural, religious and spiritual practices and values are recognized and protected. Taking into consideration the nature of the problems facing these groups, whether as collectives or as individuals.”⁴⁹³ The first section of the declaration on persons belonging to national or ethnic minorities, or those belonging to religious and linguistic minorities reads: “States must each protect minorities, their national or ethnic identity and their linguistic, cultural and religious identity. States must also lay the groundwork to facilitate the cultivation of the various identities.”⁴⁹⁴

These declarations and others state that it is the right of an indigenous people to preserve their culture and identity. They also have the right to refuse any policies that threaten their identity and culture. These rights form the foundation for fair relationships between the minorities of the world, especially indigenous ones, and the respective states in which they live.⁴⁹

2. *The colonial framework*: The theoretical framework is derived from the assumption that Israel is a colonial state. This topic raised great academic debate in Israeli academia. The Israeli researcher Gershon Shafir published his book about the colonial attributes of the Zionist project in Palestine. Shafir and Peled consider colonialism to be the theoretical framework that is capable of explaining and analyzing the development of Israeli society from 1881 until now. Other researchers consider the colonial character of Israel key to understanding Israeli society, which carried out the “destruction of another people.”⁴⁹⁶

Three cases can help in illustrating the relationship between the indigenous local community and the settler society. First, exterminating the indigenous local population and settling in its place after gaining control over the area (as was the case in the US and Australia). Second, blending the settler society in with the indigenous population and creating one society (South America). Third – this case applies to the Israeli-Zionist case – establishing a settler society alongside the local indigenous population wherein the region is divided among the two groups. In this case, the settler society can be distinguished by its expansionist policies while gradually confining the indigenous population.⁴⁹⁷

In regard to Zionism, separating the territory from the ideology is an intricate task as the two exist in a symbiotic relationship. The truth is that the diversity of the modes of settlement and control over a land, have always had ideological motives. Linking ideology to settlement, control over an area and its subsequent Judaization, is the essence of Zionism, a colonial settlement movement. Zionist ideology has defined the instrument of settlement and its objectives. Thus, understanding the ideology requires an explanation of settlement. The Zionist project relied on a connection with the land, while the land was connected to the ideology. This gave Zionism the intellectual and political legitimacy it sought. The process of rescuing or redeeming the land, *Geulat Hakarka*, is one of the three intellectual foundations on which Zionist thought relies. The second foundation is working the land and

finally building on the land. Using these three strategies, the process of land Judaization is complete.⁴⁹⁸

The foundation of the Judaization idea is far from being an integral part of the democratic system. Oren Yiftachel calls these practices “ethnocracy,” therefore, the ethnocratic regime is founded on a national project that imposes ethnic national hegemony on the domain through the processes of expansion and settlement. In the case of Zionism, the Judaization of the domain and the land produces an ethnocratic regime. Spatial control is one of the important pillars of the ethnocratic regime. Its goal is the “creation of a new ethno-political geography.” The process of “ethnicizing” a disputed region evolves in the following stages: separation of settlements is used to propagate the control of the majority over the land. In this process the minority is labeled a threat to the ethnic control of land. Subsequently, land planning – which enables the ethnic control of the land. Finally, structural discrimination against the minority, denying it access to development projects and access to the distribution of resources.⁴⁹⁹

Israel has been presented usually by the Israeli and Western academia as a state that was founded in response to Jewish (Zionist) nationalist calls demanding self-determination. This view has found support in the international community through the United Nations Partition Plan and through direct support from various countries around the globe. Additionally, this view is supported by public opinion and the political elite in Israel and even by some Arab elites in Israel. Furthermore, the Israeli regime is often presented as a stable “democracy,” containing the primary elements of a Western political democracy. However, it is possible to analyze these main components using theories that have been developed in the West and have been explicitly developed to provide an understanding of state-building processes and the dynamics that underlie them. Other scholars believe that the Israeli system belongs to a long list of liberal systems in the world. Such theories are often used to refute contradictory views.⁵⁰⁰

Israeli society's behavior in regard to the absorption of Jewish immigration has been the foundation upon which sociologists in Israel develop their theories about the nature of the Israeli system. Their efforts have focused on presenting Israel as a liberal democratic system based on its policies toward the absorption of immigration, policies similar to those of liberal democratic states in Europe, the United States of America and Canada. Accordingly, Israel is presented as a member of those "enlightened" states which include the above mentioned states.⁵⁰¹

In contrast to those theories, another group of scholars has developed an approach which argues that Israel has been founded on the principles of colonialism and has maintained a bi-ethnic system, one that favors the interests of the founding ethnic group. Among those scholars are Zureik and Nakhleh,⁵⁰² who have published a series of studies that show that Israel is, in fact, the typical manifestation of classical colonialism. Furthermore, they add that internal contradictions in Israel are typical to colonial experiences elsewhere. Simultaneously, another group of scholars has studied the stratification of Israeli society and its relationship to ethnic groups in the state. Ghanem has argued that the system in Israel has the characteristics of tyranny of the majority. Later, Ghanem and Yiftachel developed an alternative theoretical model to enable an understanding of Israel's ethnocratic nature and other cases around the globe.⁵⁰³

Our starting point for understanding the relationship between Israel and the indigenous population in Palestine is based on several principles. First, our analysis is comprehensive and discusses the Palestinian-Arab case in Israel while looking at Israel as a whole including Jews and Palestinians. Second, we analyze Israel by looking at the extent of its political control which is not limited to areas within the Green Line, but includes the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Third, our assumption is that historical processes are determined by interests, values and social criteria. Fourth, the reality on the ground determines the nature of analysis, not the intentions of political leaders or the documented ideas of the elite in the state.

In conclusion, two claims are linked together as a result of two historical processes. These processes determine the two principles upon which state policy and its relationship with Arab citizens is based on. First, Israel has emerged as a colonial settler society aiming at displacing the indigenous population and replacing it with Jewish and non-Jewish immigrants. Through this process of colonial settler enterprise, the indigenous population is removed from its land. Second, Israel has been shaped and is still in the process of being shaped as an ethnic society where the state aims to maintain the Jewish ethnic superiority, therefore the claim that the regime in Israel is based on the contradictions and balance between the two elements “Jewish – democratic” has no basis in reality. In fact, the state still promotes the character and content of its ethnic Jewish nature.⁵⁰⁴

This article argues that the colonial model and the various applications of it in the colonized region might serve as a framework to understanding what happened to Arabs in Israel and their relationship with the majority. This understanding deals with the way the Arabs in Israel are being treated as a continuation of the general trend of how the Palestinians in general have been treated under this colonial system. This model claims that the Zionist movement as both an entity and an ideology that has been – and still is – implementing various colonial methods against its own citizens.

Israel’s treatment of the Arab minority after 1948 is not characteristic of any democratic principles. It merely amounts to a colonial experience. The system in which the Arabs in Israel found themselves has led to their marginalization. At the core of this system is the discourse of citizenship as it is evident in the Arab education system which is aimed at perfecting control over Arabs. Similarly, the Israeli political apparatus has been aiming at distancing the Arabs from both the process of decision making and the process of national resource distribution. In fact, Arab participation in the Israeli economy remains marginalized with no prospect of developing an independent economy. However, in light of a few changes that started in the late 1990s and peaked during the Al-Aqsa Intifada in October 2000, Arabs in Israel have set out in search

of alternative political means and a new discourse with which to end their decades-long proverbial ignition stage and move toward the launching stage. A stage manifested through specialized collective agenda and new methods of political activism aimed at redefining the concept of citizenship.

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44. Is Israel a Colonial State?

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This paper was completed in July 2014.

The purpose of colonial expansion (also called empire building) is the projection of military power or the control of trade routes and the amassing of overseas resources, whereas the aim of settler colonialism is the creation of a permanent home in which newly arrived settlers enjoy privileges and standards of living withheld from the indigenous population. Settler colonialism requires active repossession of land and its repopulation, most commonly by white immigrants from Europe, through the exclusion, expulsion, or elimination of native peoples. Colonization, the creation of new settlements, over and against the wishes of native peoples, gives settler colonialism its distinct character.⁵⁰⁵

Colonization then is a project with a distinct aim – the formation of a new society – by changing the ownership and control of a territory. And yet without being able to rely on the means of violence of a colonial *metropole*, the settlers would no more be able to colonize a foreign land than it is possible to have fish without water or rain without clouds. There can be colonialism without colonization, but not colonization without colonialism. Israel, begotten through colonization, consequently, was fashioned as a colonial project. In this, Israel is not different from Australia, Argentina, the United States or South Africa. What makes Israel unique is that it is a belated, 19th-century, settler colony and even more so, that it continues the colonization through which it was formed into the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

In current research on empires and settler colonies, the traditional emphasis on territory has equal billing with subjecthood or citizenship and, therefore, with political sovereignty.⁵⁰⁶ On this view, the colonial territory itself is constituted not as a unitary whole but rather as a patchwork

reflecting differentiated subjects and legal zones.⁵⁰⁷ Though some of this work is historical in nature, the patterns recognized, I shall argue, continue exercising their hold on a wide range of colonial and settler-colonial enterprises.

European empires from the 15th century on were constituted by two simple legal principles derived from the interaction of imperial and settler colonists in deploying European practices in their new land: to constitute portable settler subject-hood and to legally delegate colonial sovereignty. These legal practices, however, run up against constraints imposed by the need to come to terms with native peoples. Colonization by colonial great powers, therefore, was beset by a fundamental contradiction: on the one hand, they sought to export their legal frameworks in order to protect their settler-citizens and expand the umbrella of a European cultural mission to all and, on the other hand, not wishing to extend citizenship to all inhabitants they desisted from completely annexing the same colonial territories and bringing them under full imperial sovereignty.⁵⁰⁸ Consequently, Lauren Benton concluded that imperial sovereignty is characterized by a range of uneven legal geographies meaning that different populations in the colonies lived under differentiated legal frameworks. Sovereignty in colonies, therefore, is incomplete, elastic, open, and when it is denied to the indigenous population it remains unsettled, or contested. Palestine was in such a legal conundrum until 1948 and the West Bank still is.

Given their legal privileges, settlers in colonies, in Lorenzo Veracini's formulation, "see themselves as founders of political orders [and] interpret their collective efforts in terms of an inherent sovereignty claim that travels with them and is ultimately, if not immediately, autonomous from the colonizing metropole."⁵⁰⁹ As carriers of sovereignty, settler colonies, not just Jewish settlers in Palestine but elsewhere, were regularly engaged in state-building and eventually sought independence.

Before 1948, Palestine was a mandate under British tutelage which never expected to make its indigenous inhabitants sovereign. The 1917 Balfour Declaration expressed

the British government support for “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people,” in effect endowing the Zionist movement with a sovereignty-carrying capacity, while affording only civil and religious rights to the non-Jewish communities of Palestine. This sovereignty gap – the differential deployment of the rights of political citizenship – is the vital precondition that enabled Zionist colonization to take place under British colonial tutelage.

Since the 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, Israel serves as the colonial state that creates, reproduces, and implements the circumstances of ongoing colonization and has repressed Palestinian resistance to it. In effect, Israel combines the two roles, becoming both the sponsoring colonial great power and the purveyor of colonization; the latter always depending on the former.

Israel’s ability to colonize the West Bank (and until 2005 also Gaza) depends on a unique legal setup. The controlling legal framework in the occupied territories is international humanitarian law (also called the law of armed conflict), anchored in the 1907 Hague Regulation and 1949 Geneva Conventions, which regulate belligerent occupation. Within this framework, occupation signals the suspension of sovereignty but protects the rights of the ousted state and dovetails with the UN Convention’s prohibition of territorial acquisition by force. International humanitarian law holds the inhabitants to be a protected population, though affords the occupying military the freedom to undertake actions to protect itself. The Hague Regulation prohibits the occupying power from effecting permanent changes in the occupied areas that do not benefit the residents and Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention and also forbids the transfer of the occupying state’s population into the occupied territory. Even so, the suspended sovereignty of military occupation, which is temporary by definition though without any end date, affords an open-ended opportunity for the entry of sovereignty carrying settlers and, therefore, for Israeli colonization.

It is this sovereignty vacuum in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), control by the Israeli military and government, the colonial treatment of the native population,

the absence of the Palestinian inhabitants' political franchise in contrast to the full political representation of Israeli settlers, the layered legal patchwork, the weak oversight by international and national courts, the high level of lawlessness perpetrated as much by individual settlers as by the Israeli state apparatus itself, and the openly declared and relentlessly pursued aim of making as much of the West Bank into bona fide Israeli territory as possible, that explains the dynamic of the ongoing and ever accelerating Israeli colonization.

Part one: till 1948

Zionism diverged from the top down Western European state-building through the integration of outlying areas into core regions and the homogenization of the population through bureaucratic measures by emerging absolutism. Nor did it fully emulate the Eastern European method, which relied on nationalist mobilization from below for secession from the multi-ethnic Habsburg, Romanov and Ottoman Empires. At the outset, Zionism was a variety of Eastern European nationalism, namely an ethnic movement in search of a state. But at the other end of the journey it is seen more fruitfully as a late instance of European colonial expansion.⁵¹⁰ European colonial powers created a range of colonial types. The history of the Yishuv and the State of Israel is best understood as a transition from one colonial model to another.

The dilemma facing the early Zionist immigrants in Palestine was whether to aim for an *ethnic plantation colony*, namely settler control of land to be worked by native-born laborers, or for a *pure or homogeneous settlement colony*, that is settler control of land combined, in Fredrickson's description, with "an economy based on white labor" which, combined with the forcible removal or the destruction of the native population, allows settlers "to regain the sense of cultural and ethnic homogeneity that is identified with a European concept of nationality."⁵¹¹

The former, the ethnic plantation colony, was the dominant colonization model of the First Aliyah (1882–1903), in which low-paid Palestinians served as a lower caste in the settler colony. The latter, the pure settlement colony of the Second Aliyah (1904–1914), which worked toward excluding Palestinians from the new society and its labor market, eventually predominated. The Second Aliyah's revolution against the First Aliyah did not originate from opposition to colonialism as such, but out of frustration with the inability of the ethnic plantation colony model to provide sufficient employment for Jewish workers, i.e., from opposition to the particular form of their predecessor's colonization. The

Second Aliyah's own method of settlement, and subsequently the dominant Zionist method, was but another type of European overseas colonization – the *pure settlement colony*, also found in Australia, the northern USA, and elsewhere. Its threefold aim was control of land, massive immigration, and employment that ensured a European standard of living.

The World Zionist Organization's (WZO) practical colonization work in Palestine began under Otto Warburg and Arthur Ruppin, the directors of the WZO's Palestine Land Development Company (PLDC), in emulation of the Prussian government's "internal colonization" model of pure settlement to create a German majority in its eastern, Polish marches.⁵¹² It was this Prussian state-initiated, rather than market-based, colonization, motivated by nationalist considerations, which found its way into Zionism. This form of pure settlement rested on two exclusivist pillars: the WZO's Jewish National Fund (JNF) and the organized Jewish workers' umbrella organization – the Histadrut. The aims of the JNF and the Histadrut were the removal of land and labor from the market, respectively, thus closing them off to Palestinian Arabs.⁵¹³

Already in 1901, the WZO set up its Jewish National Fund to nationalize land in Palestine. Land purchased by the JNF from Palestinian and other landowners became the perpetual and collective property of the Jewish people. It could only be sublet, and then only to Jews. In 1908, the WZO adopted the plan of the German Jewish sociologist Franz Oppenheimer, which combined several aims: internal colonization, land nationalization, and co-operation, and resolved to establish in Palestine "settlement-cooperatives." This plan inspired the PLDC's support for the organizational experiments that ultimately led to the kibbutz.⁵¹⁴ Since most kibbutzim were built on nationalized land provided by the JNF, no Palestinians could be employed by them. Competition was done away with, so was exploitation, and a homogenous Jewish economic sector was created. The kibbutz became the cornerstone of a vertically and horizontally integrated network of Jewish-owned and Jewish-operated economic co-operatives and social institutions that were centralized in 1920 under the

institutional umbrella of the Histadrut – a part trade-union, part employer, for all practical purposes a state-in-the-making.

The exclusivism of the Labor Settlement Movement (*hityashvut ovedet*), however, remained partial. Since the organized workers wished for a homogenous Jewish economy, they prioritized demography over territory, the reverse of which remained the hallmark of maximalist right-wing strands within Zionism. Though initially Zionists were, one and all, territorial maximalists, in 1937, and again in 1948, a growing segment within the Labor Settlement Movement expressed its willingness to accept the partition of Palestine between a Jewish and a Palestinian, or preferably a Transjordanian state. The partition was acceded to precisely because it would reduce the obstacles posed by Palestinian demographic preponderance to Jewish employment and immigration. In order to increase the ratio of Jewish population to unit of land, the leaders of the Labor Settlement Movement recognized that the territory taken possession by Jews would have to be limited.⁵¹⁵

Zionism and Labor Settlement Zionism have been interpreted, even by those who recognize their similarities with other movements of colonization, as standing apart due to their unique characteristics. Admittedly, all historical phenomena are unique, but are commonly composed of a combination of available elements. Let me dispel three common views of the exceptionalism of Zionist colonization.

First, Zionism is claimed to be a movement of return, driven by cultural and religious motives, whereas other colonization movements were alleged to having been driven by a search for social mobility and new opportunities. Most settler colonies, however, were not ragtag collections of settler-immigrants, but rather “settlers [who] sought to construct communities bounded by ties of ethnicity and faith,”⁵¹⁶ or on the basis of color bars and frequently whiteness. There are intriguing glimpses of the search for such purity in many settler colonies – for example, the “White Australia” policy, the congressionally-approved Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 or the adamant opposition of the Baron Hugh Delamere, the leader of the English settlers of the White

Highlands of Kenya to the British government's 1903 Uganda Plan to create a Jewish refuge there. Given the oft-repeated emphasis on the desire to create in Palestine a Jewish state it is eye opening to see that the Yishuv was less exceptional in coalescing around a distinct identity than many historians and social scientists make it out to be.

Second, the universalist-socialist ideologies of the settlers' mainstream during the Yishuv are presented as an impediment to any potential or lingering colonial characteristics in Zionist settlement. But as noted by Baruch Kimmerling, and can also be found in Elkins and Pedersen's comparative study of settler colonialism, the high coincidence of settler privilege and progressive settler ideologies is a likely result of settler desire to enhance their autonomy vis-à-vis their metropolis. For the *pieds noirs* or Southern Rhodesian secessionist farmers and, for that matter for the American founding fathers, "democratic or republican ideologies" were a means to enhance their autonomy and privilege, to assert themselves as sovereignty-carriers, rather than restrain the exploitation of native or imported laborers. The socialist values of the Labor Settlement Movement, which were equally at the service of their nationalistic interest, appear to be anything but atypical.⁵¹⁷

Third, Zionism is frequently described as an immigration movement, but settlers, to recap Mahmoud Mamdani's terse summary, "are made by conquest, not just immigration."⁵¹⁸ Settler colonies rarely own up to their dynamic. Rather, they commonly "possess a recurrent need to disavow" their character. Settlers sometimes hide behind the metropolitan great power, at other times "behind the persecuted, the migrant, even the refugee [...] behind his labor and hardship." The ruthless ethnic cleanser is commonly hidden behind the peaceful settler who arrived in an "empty land" to start a new life. As observed by Veracini, "settler colonialism obscures the conditions of its own production."⁵¹⁹ Israel is again no different from many of its counterparts.

Before moving forward chronologically, I wish to emphasize that when it comes to colonization, there is a remarkable degree of institutional continuity between the post-

1967 era and the pre-1948 years. Even with the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948, the many colonizatory bodies of the Yishuv years, the World Zionist Organization, its Settlement Department, the Jewish National Fund, the kibbutz movements, etc. were not disestablished. These very bodies still play a central role, side by side with Israeli ministries and the military, in carrying out settlement activities within the OPT, in large part because they lay outside the state apparatus and their actives can be disavowed or hidden.

Part two: 1967 and on

Following the 1967 War, Israeli colonization shifted to the West Bank and Gaza, at first haltingly, then with ever growing appetite. Israeli governments extended their jurisdiction only to East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, but not to the West Bank and Gaza. Even so, Israel colonized them all. The centrality of colonization to Israeli state-building is most clearly highlighted in the adoption of this Labor Settlement Movement strategy by the Likud party that used to oppose it as being too slow and piecemeal during the Yishuv. In the following pages I will focus on both the complex regime of Israeli land accumulation and on the privileges enjoyed by sovereignty-carrying Israeli settlers.

In 1903, Menachem Ussishkin listed three methods of possible colonization: forceful acquisition – in his view a “totally ungodly” approach; expropriation via governmental authority – for which Jews at the time were too weak; and purchase – his favored method.⁵²⁰ No longer dependent on Great Britain, no longer needing to accumulate land exclusively through purchase, and no longer imposing territorial self-limitation due to the constraints of uneven labor market competition with Palestinians, post-1967 Israeli colonization shed its idiosyncratic characteristics and even more clearly resembles other colonization drives, in particular in relying on forceful acquisition and expropriation.

Soon after the occupation of the West Bank, Israel froze the ongoing Jordanian land registration in the West Bank on the grounds that it wished to protect the rights of, now absentee, Jordanian citizens. In effect, far from protecting the rights of the Jordanian government and of absentee landowner, the military commander’s 1967 Order Regarding Government Property (Judea and Samaria) from the 1968 Order Regarding the Arrangement of Land and Water (Judea and Samaria) threw open all unregistered land to Israeli confiscation.⁵²¹

The preoccupation of all Israeli governments, both Labor and Likud-led, with extending its settler colonialism into the

West Bank, is revealed most clearly by the fact that all aspects of the enormously complex legal-bureaucratic land regime it created serve the single purpose of expanding colonization.⁵²² Altogether, Israeli governments apply and support four major methods for transferring the West Bank into Israeli hands. Practically, all these methods are undertaken by the government: the requisition of land for “essential and urgent military needs,” the declaration of land as abandoned property, and the expropriation of land for public need. The most far-reaching method has been the declaration of coveted areas as “state land.” All these legal schemes, however, have a single aim as can be seen, for example, from the combination of land acquired by military requisition, declaration as state land, and seizure for public need, for the sole purpose of establishing the settlement of Shilo in 1985.⁵²³

The first and earliest land seizure method adopted by Israel was the seizure of private land for military needs under authority granted to military commanders. Though the goal was ostensibly security-related, Qiryat Arba, Efrat, Har Gilo, and another ten settlements were established on such land. In some cases settlements were initially constructed as Nahal army bases, but were later turned over to civilians.⁵²⁴

Indeed, military seizures were officially accepted as a conduit of colonization. The Israeli Supreme Court, which asserted its jurisdiction over the Occupied Palestinian Territories, has itself gone as far as linking military needs and colonization. In 1972, it chose to accept the premise of General Tal’s affidavit to the Court in the *Rafiah Salient* case that the establishment of a Jewish settlement on land from which its Bedouin residents were evicted is an effective method to create a protected buffer zone.⁵²⁵ The Court’s decision to incorporate the history of Israeli state-building through colonization into security policy has had three major consequences. First, a military is permitted under international humanitarian law to protect its troops, but by allowing settler civilians to be substituted for soldiers, the Court rendered the Hague Regulation and Geneva Conventions complicit in the colonization project.

Second, the imbrication of settlements with military needs creates a vicious cycle which justifies endless expansion: as a first step the settlements are accepted as instruments of security, in the next step they are in need of security themselves. Once settlements are built, the hostility they evoke provides justification for the further requisition of land by military orders, for example to build bypass roads for settler traffic, for the Separation Barrier to keep settlements on its Israeli side, and for “special security areas” around settlements.⁵²⁶

Third, there is one aspect of the combination of settler colonial and military needs that leaves open the exercise of judicial discretion, but its application demonstrates the twisted ways in which international humanitarian law is interpreted in Israel. In 1979, in the famous *Elon Moreh* case, the Supreme Court rejected the use of military requisition of private Palestinian land for the purpose of settlement building. The Court concluded that since it came to its attention that the aim of this particular settlement was political and permanent and, therefore, expected to remain even after the termination of Israeli military rule, international humanitarian law’s requirement that military requisition be temporary was violated.⁵²⁷ But in Israel the horizon of temporariness is unlimited, and Israeli government statements which they pledge land acquisition as temporary are accepted at face value by the Supreme Court even in the fourth decade of the occupation. Nor has the Supreme Court ever ruled on the very legality of establishing colonies in the OPT.

The effect of the *Elon Moreh* decision remained limited. Without skipping a beat, the new Likud government adopted a second, new and even more sweeping method of land acquisition, the declaration of West Bank land as “state land.”⁵²⁸ While until 1979 only about 47,000 dunams were requisitioned for ostensibly military purposes and 600,000 dunams classified earlier as state land by the British Mandate and Jordan were now subsumed as Israeli state land, now another 913,000 dunams were declared as state land, transferring possession of over a quarter of the West Bank into Israel hands. Most of this land mass was declared and

registered as state property between 1980 and 1984. In fact, state land, under the authority of the Custodian for State Property, “comprises 75 percent of the settlements’ municipal area and 66 percent of their built-up area.”⁵²⁹

As part of its new legal strategy of land acquisition, Israel dialed the legal-administrative clock back to Ottoman times. Under the 1858 Ottoman Land Code, agricultural land that had not been under cultivation for three consecutive years and land that had not been cultivated for a decade and thus no ownership rights been secured in it by the cultivator, reverted to the state. The Israeli interpretation of Ottoman precedent and earlier British judgments opt for particularly harsh tests of cultivation, based on legal precedents established in the prior seizure of Palestinian owned land in the Galilee. In an additional Orwellian twist, when Palestinian owners were denied access to their plots that were confiscated for military needs, the absence of cultivation served as justification for land seizures.⁵³⁰

The legal framework for asserting Palestinian ownership of land has been eviscerated by the occupation authorities. The burden of the proof is on Palestinian cultivators to petition a Military Appeals Committee to reverse the Custodian’s decision, but this quasi-judicial body is appointed by and dependent on the very military which issues land-seizure orders. The Appeals Committee is exempt from following rules of evidence, its decisions only have the power of recommendations to the regional military commander, and there is no further instance of appeal to its decisions. Furthermore, applicants have only 45 days to petition the Appeals Committee subsequent to the declaration of state land, but they commonly discover that their land had been alienated only when settlement building commences.⁵³¹

A third Israeli method for seizing Palestinian land is its declaration as abandoned property. Property belonging to owners who left the West Bank before, during, or after the 1967 War falls into this category and has yielded about 430,000 dunams and 11,000 buildings to the inventory available for colonization. There are three legal-bureaucratic

ways in which Israel creates this stock. First, by forbidding the return of refugees to the West Bank it forestalls the restitution of their land. Second, by having unified the Custodian for Abandoned Property, whose ostensible aim is the protection of unclaimed property on behalf of their owners, with the Custodian for Government Property, it has placed Israeli government interests above the trustee role of the Custodian. Third, whenever it is discovered through judicial proceedings that land had not, in fact, been abandoned and the owner still resides in the West Bank, the transfer of the land by the Custodian to colonizing bodies was determined to be irreversible if it was done “in good faith,” giving an altogether unsavory meaning to the expression.⁵³²

A fourth method for acquiring Palestinian land for Jewish colonization is its expropriation for public need. This method is used less extensively, yielding only around 100,000 dunams, because it raises the awkward question of just which public’s benefit is being served when Palestinian land is being expropriated. This measure has mostly served to construct roads that by-pass Palestinian villages and connect settlements to one another and to Israel.⁵³³ There is one location, however, in which private land expropriation for public need has played a major colonizatory role. The dozen neighborhoods built in East Jerusalem were constructed on expropriated land that serves Jews only as part of the policy to maintain a Jewish majority in the city, though the government had claimed that it was for the benefit of Jews and Arabs alike.⁵³⁴

From time to time additional methods are added, such as permission to buy land on the open market, though to protect the identity of private Palestinian sellers the whole method of ascertaining ownership and, consequently, the legality of the transaction itself has been gutted, and the allocation of “survey land,” whose ownership has not been finalized, to settlements construction.⁵³⁵

One of the major characteristics of the multi-faceted Israeli land seizure approach is the extent to which it is ridden with haste, confusion, and illegality. The cavalier attitude to private property and the accommodating judicial approach all indicate

that the West Bank is not an occupied territory administered according to the requirements of international humanitarian law, but rather an occupational regime serving as a tool of colonization. Israel, which had adopted in the 1950s and 1960s a comprehensive and efficient state-centric master planning in building the country's physical environment,⁵³⁶ has engaged since 1967 in a single-minded but organizationally haphazard colonization process of catch-as-you-can.

The construction of the so-call "outposts" (*ma'achazim*) illustrates most clearly the semi-officially sanctioned illegal characteristics of the colonization enterprise. After the Oslo process began, Israel pledged to build no new settlements but starting in 1996, new settlements, the outposts, apparently undertaken spontaneously by settlers without government authorization, commenced. The fact that within some three years not just a few but more than one hundred such settlements proliferated, initially just a few caravans placed by settlers on land they claimed as their own, soon to become beneficiaries of government provided services, electrical lines, paved roads, etc. indicate that being "unauthorized" did not mean that these colonies were viewed by the responsible state authorities as any less legal than those established by government decree.

In 2004, under US pressure Prime Minister Sharon commissioned Talia Sasson, from the Ministry of Justice, to investigate the outposts' legal status. About the same time, he also tasked Brigadier General Baruch Spiegel, to prepare a database to chart the outer construction line of existing settlements, to allow for a settlement freeze to take place. Sasson implicated the full range of authorities, military and civilian, in breaking the law, and pointed to the Civil Administration of the OPT as the hub of illegality. The purported goal of the Civil Administration, under international humanitarian law, was to ensure the well-being of the "protected" Palestinian population, but in fact it has become the main body enabling the settlement process and ensuring the settlers' access to government resources in tandem with other bodies. Sasson's conclusions concerning the outposts in the West Bank were sweeping:

[...] the violation of the law became institutionalized. We face not a felon or a group of felons violating the law. The big picture is a bold violation of laws by certain state authorities, public authorities, regional councils in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza and settlers, while falsely presenting an organized legal system [...]. The establishment of unauthorized outposts violates standard procedure, good governing rules, and [constitutes] an especially bold and ongoing violation of law.⁵³⁷ (Sasson, retranslated)

It would be misleading to conclude on the basis of the Sasson Report that only unauthorized settlements benefitted from lax legal enforcement. The broader picture is revealed by Spiegel's unassuming database. Even authorized settlements profited from widespread illegality since the overall framework of Israeli colonization in the West Bank teeters on the verge of unlawful and wrongful practices. One observer explains the implications of the database: "Everyone is talking about the 107 outposts, but that is small change. The really big picture is the older settlements, the 'legal' ones. The construction there has been ongoing for years in blatant violation of the law and the regulations of proper governance."⁵³⁸

Spiegel's database uncovered that between 30 and 51 settlements were constructed not only on officially seized land, but also on privately owned Palestinian land that lay outside the settlement's jurisdiction.⁵³⁹ A sample survey of the State Comptroller in 2000–2003 found at least 14 cases of illegal construction on Palestinian private land, financed by the Housing Ministry. "Illegal construction," as reported by B'Tselem, an Israeli human rights organization, "encompasses enormous swaths of land. It spans, for example, almost all the built-up area in each of the settlements Itamar, Beit-El, Hemdat, Yitav, Ofra, and all the southern neighborhoods of Modi'in Illit."⁵⁴⁰ Building violations were classified a criminal offense in the West Bank (as they are in Israel) only in 2007, but no settlers have been prosecuted for engaging in such unlawful activities even after that date. The Civil Administration only demolished 3% of the building violations it investigated.⁵⁴¹ When the Bil'in Village Council petitioned the Supreme Court to stop the construction of apartments in Modi'in Illit on land owned by its residents, the Court rejected the petition because the reversal of the construction would

have constituted a “disproportionate sanction” against the purchasers.

The evident conclusion is that notwithstanding the Supreme Court’s *Elon Moreh* decision, prohibiting the requisition of private Palestinian land for settlement construction as an alleged security measure, privately owned Palestinian land has continued to be seized illegally to further Israeli colonization. It is particularly notable that such blatant illegality is carried out by Israeli government agencies and receives legal cover from the Supreme Court. In Kretzmer’s conclusion, the reasons appear straightforward: “[...] military occupation is a function of conflict. Involving a domestic court in adjudicating disputes between military authorities and residents of the occupied territory assumes an element of neutrality between the parties that cannot exist in such a situation.”⁵⁴² When it comes to colonization, the Israeli state acts as a traditional colonial power, underwrites the plunder of the native population.

Israeli governments have also acted with a measure of defiance and deceptiveness in the international arena in regard to settlement construction. In 1992, the Israeli government decided to confine additional construction to natural growth within the boundaries of existing settlements, but in 1996 dramatically expanded those very lines, only to reassert again in 2003 its promise to stay within them.⁵⁴³ As part of its participation in the Road Map, Israel again promised to freeze settlement construction, including construction due to natural growth.⁵⁴⁴ In May 2003, Israel promised President George W. Bush at the Aqaba Summit that all of the unauthorized outposts built after Sharon became prime minister – that is, about half of the over 100 outposts – would be dismantled.⁵⁴⁵ In November 2009, Israel decided on freezing all public and private construction for a period of ten months.⁵⁴⁶ None of these promises were kept, and throughout settlement construction, land expropriation, and in the case of the 2009 freeze, construction of already authorized housing continued.⁵⁴

⁷ A clear air of deception hangs over decisions to stop the juggernaut of Israeli colonization in the West Bank.

As of 2012, the size of the Jewish settler population in the West Bank reached upwards of 530,000, about 190,000 of them in a dozen newly-built Jerusalem neighborhoods, 340,000 in 125 settlements, and over one hundred illegal outposts (*ma'achaz*, pl. *ma'achazim*). These settlements collectively possess half of the West Bank's landmass, excluding East Jerusalem.⁵⁴⁸

It is time to complement the analysis of the legal-administrative methods of land appropriation with the role of the sovereignty-carrying settlers in the West Bank. By linking the settlements with Israeli institutions and placing them under Israeli law, Israel has effectively extended its sovereignty into the OPT.

By issuing military orders that incorporate Israeli settlements according to Israeli municipal law and later on by Knesset legislation which empowers the government to make such authorities liable to laws such as the Development Towns and Areas Laws, Israel created extra-territorial enclaves for its settlers.⁵⁴⁹ In 1996, the department of the Civil Administration that supervises settlements was transferred into the Ministry of the Interior and, likewise, the Ministry of Education placed the educational institutions of the settlements under its direct authority. For purposes of investment and benefits, the settlements are considered "development regions" within Israel and receive the same preferential treatment.⁵⁵⁰

Already from 1967, Israeli citizens who committed an offense in the OPT were tried in courts within Israel. In 1969, Israeli courts were also authorized to adjudicate civil matters between settlers or between settlers and Palestinians.⁵⁵¹ These regulations removed Israelis from the jurisdiction of military law which prevails in the OPT and grants them extra-territorial rights. Since 1984, settlers have been under a wide range of Israeli laws, from social security through income tax to military service. The clearest example of the sovereignty wielded by settlers is that Israeli citizens residing in the OPT maintain their right to vote in Israeli national elections.

Conversely, labor contracts between Israeli employers and Palestinian workers, whether in the territories or *within* Israel,

are governed by the laws of Jordan or Gaza. In consequence, social benefits payable to Palestinian workers are kept in Israel and handed over to the Israeli Treasury.⁵⁵²

As part of the so-called peace process, Israel divided the West Bank into three types of enclaves: Area A, that is 11% of the West Bank, is under Palestinian military and civilian control, 28% as Area B under Israeli military and Palestinian civilian control, and 61% as Area C, where the majority of settlers reside, is under both Israeli military and civilian control, thus creating an uneven legal geography. Hebron itself, due to enclave of Jewish settlers inside the city, is similarly divided between areas under Palestinian and Israeli control. There appears to be a “consensus” in Israel, namely agreement between Likud and the Labor parties, that Area C should eventually be annexed to Israel, though there is strong pressure on the part of the Jewish Home Party to do so forthwith, whereas others wish to do so as part of an Israel-Palestinian peace agreement. On its part, the PLO and the Palestinian Authority which it predominates, as well as the international community that views Israeli colonies as illegal under international humanitarian law, insist on basing such an accord on the pre-1967 occupation boundaries, with possible territorial exchanges.

The colonization process and the extension of Israeli citizenship rights to settlers is a precursor to annexation of the territories settled by them and bringing them under Israeli sovereignty. When the legal protections due to the occupied Palestinian population under international humanitarian law are violated and the status of belligerent occupation is utilized for the purposes of colonization, it is not surprising that Israeli occupation is so riddled with illegal practices. Colonization since 1967, just as before 1948, aims at state-building and is beholden to colonial power and methods.

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45. Is There Still a Future for Settlements in Zionist Ideology?

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This paper was completed in September 2014.

One of the great illusions and misconceptions of the early Zionist movement was the idea that the Jewish resettlement of Palestine would not meet with any serious resistance. A harmonious coexistence between Muslims and Jews, or “Mohamme-deans” and Jews, as Theodor Herzl romanticized in his novel *Altneuland* [Old New Land], has remained only a pious hope until today. The (re-)settlement of the Ottoman Province and later British Mandate of Palestine has not occurred without conflict, but rather has continued to create serious problems up to now, in particular by the current Jewish settlement of the West Bank which Israel has occupied since the Six-Day War in 1967.

Without question, the modern Jewish settlers in the West Bank, who tend to be motivated by religion, are radically different from their predecessors. These were those Zionist pioneers who, prior to the founding of the State of Israel, in returning to, settling and cultivating Jewish land mainly hoped to be able to liberate themselves. This founding generation was not establishing and constructing settlements in a vacuum, but rather with their settlement concept they were building on the myths of the past. At least they included them in their visions and ideas of the national liberation of the Jewish people.

The Jewish nation-state has come into being, and Jews from all over the world have found refuge, a safe haven, between Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea. However, the debate about Zionism, its essence, its realization and its possible transformation continues undiminished. Whoever wishes to have a reasonable grasp on the motivation behind the settlement policy of the State of Israel and in particular the

motivation behind the contemporary settlers in the West Bank and the areas around Jerusalem cannot avoid taking a closer look at the religious tradition and the historical roots of the Jewish state.

The Zionist pioneers

When the attempt is made to uncover these historical roots, ideological pioneers of the Zionist movement quickly come to the fore, such as Moses Hess, Leon Pinsker, Isaak Rülff,⁵⁵³ and not to forget also Theodor Herzl,⁵⁵⁴ the founder of political Zionism. For all of them, the desired return to *Eretz Yisrael* was closely bound to the demand to settle and cultivate the land, albeit to varying degrees.

International research of the last few decades has extensively dealt with the question of how the settlement idea came into being.⁵⁵⁵ The topic is subject to extremely controversial debates; however, several basic principles have emerged. In the current context, for example, the question is continually being asked as to whether the modern settler movement (Gush Emunim, etc.) has a salvation history dimension or not.

Similarly, the question also arises, if ideas from the early period of the Zionist movement continue to have an effect on Israeli politics. There are several indications that this is the case, particularly the fact that religious-messianic ideals indirectly determine current settlement activist policy and that of their supporters. These ideals may not always be apparent at first sight, but can be detected in some of the statements being made.

It is undisputed that visionary thinkers such as Moses Hess, Leon Pinsker, Isaak Rülff and other early Zionists had vehemently urged the colonization and settlement of Palestine, already in the mid to late 19th century. Only the motivation behind their efforts remains at issue. Were they mainly motivated by religious considerations? Or did other, completely different, deliberations play a role?

The generation of early Zionists, predecessors and associates of Theodor Herzl, doubtless had dreamed of a more just world, a world which allowed Jews to go through life with their heads held high, just like everyone else. The creation of socialist settlement cooperative societies and the support of the *Halutzim*, the worker-pioneers, who had already set out in the early 1880s to create a series of agricultural colonies, meant that at the beginning the settlement of Palestine was seen not only as a social responsibility, but also as a moral obligation.

When taking a look at the writings, speeches and correspondence of the early Zionists, it becomes clear that they were not so much driven by religious motivations, but that they were mainly interested in creating a halfway secure refuge for Jews from persecution and the pogroms in Eastern Europe. This would be in Palestine, or if need be, in some other territory somewhere in the world.

The conviction that it was necessary to help is what drove activists of the caliber of a Paul Friedmann (1840–after 1911), who thought of settling Jews on the Arabian Peninsula, in the area of the former Biblical Midian.⁵⁵⁶ This was similarly true for the early American Zionist Adam Rosenberg (1858–1928). Almost forgotten today, he also set out in 1891 like Friedmann, although not to the Arabian Peninsula, but to Palestine, belonging at that time to the Ottoman Empire, where he bought up land he deemed suitable for colonization on behalf of the Hibbat Zion movement.⁵⁵⁷

Friedmann as well as Rosenberg, typical protagonists of the pre-Herzl era, were completely convinced that if it were to be possible to change the living conditions and circumstances for Jews from the ground up, to settle them somewhere, then there could be a more just and humane future for the Jewish people, as well. This did not have to remain a pipe dream according to Friedmann and Rosenberg. The one indispensable precondition was that the Jewish people learn to help themselves. It would be necessary for them to take up the spade and plow their own land.

The settlement idea, connected to the notion that it is the duty of the Jewish people to make *Eretz Yisrael* arable, was

already central to early Zionist goals. These were, however, mainly political considerations with the underlying notion of securing the refuge of Palestine through settlements. To what extent traditional biblical promises played a role in early Zionist thought remains open for debate. However, it can be assumed that they did to some degree.

There are around 50 known places in the Bible which all talk about promises of land. According to them, God had promised Canaan to the Jews as their “everlasting covenant”: “To you I will give the land of Canaan as the portion you will inherit” (Psalms 105:11). This is also proclaimed in the book of Genesis where it says that God appeared to Abraham and said to him: “Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you” (Genesis 13:14–17).

The earliest activists certainly were aware of the perceived ties binding the Jews to the “Holy Land,” even if they did not want to have God’s command to Abraham taken literally: “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you” (Genesis 12:1). However, opinions vary as to whether they actually felt themselves to be tools and ambassadors of God to speed up the messianic process, as some modern settlers do today.

What is undisputed is that there were numerous Zionist intellectuals both predating and surrounding Theodor Herzl who were utterly convinced that the history of the Jewish people was not any normal kind of history, but a history of salvation. Some of these theoreticians were practically obsessed by this idea and believed that by composing programmatic writings, they were making an important contribution to the achievement of the hotly anticipated event of salvation.

At least in the case of Theodor Herzl we know that while he did not view himself as the Messiah, he certainly did see himself as someone who could be given the role of liberator, be it from his people, or from history. The mission that he

believed he must accomplish met with widespread approval, and thus some contemporaries were convinced that the Messiah had indeed appeared in his person. This was rarely seen as clearly as in his staged appearance at the Zionist Congress in Basel 1897.⁵⁵⁸

When Herzl approached the podium for the first time there, he was met with boundless enthusiasm. People were clapping their hands, stomping their feet and waving handkerchiefs. Shouts of “Yechi Hamelech! Long live the king!” filled the air. A sense of the excitement can still be felt from some of the eyewitness reports: “It is no longer the elegant Dr. Herzl from Vienna,” wrote, for example, the writer Mordechai Ben Ami, “it is a royal descendant of David arisen from the grave who appears before us, shrouded in the greatness and beauty of fantasy and legend.”⁵⁵⁹

Mayer Ebner from Czernowitz, another participant at the Congress, was so overwhelmed by Herzl’s appearance in Basel that even years later he could not shake the idea that the Messiah himself had personally appeared before him: “When I saw him in his perfect beauty, when I looked into his eyes which seemed to me to hide a mystical secret, then I felt it in my soul: It is HE, the most longed for, the deeply loved, the Lord’s anointed, the Messiah.”⁵⁶⁰

Through Herzl and his contemporaries the idea of repossessing *Eretz Yisrael*, the land of the fathers, through settlement became a central component of Zionist ideology. Yet how much of this has been – and is still – due to rational thought and how much due to a religious sense of mission? Is it possible that the one has taken the place of the other, been substituted for it? In any case, since the 1970s, the new settler groups like Gush Emunim (‘Bloc of the Faithful’),⁵⁶¹ whose spiritual fathers are Rabbi Abraham Kook (1865–1935) and his son Zvi Yehuda Hacoen Kook (1891–1982), see themselves as a religious-Zionist revival movement. This phenomenon is met with a curious indifference from Israeli society on the whole.

Biblical promises

This new type of settler, who views it more or less as a religious duty to live in the West Bank or in a settlement around Jerusalem, sees the founding of Israel as part of a salvation process which specifically includes the occupation and settlement of all of *Eretz Yisrael*. These convictions are based on Messianism, the sacredness of the people of Israel, the sacredness of the land and the sacredness of the Torah. The founding of the Jewish state, the settling of the West Bank is understood as the first sign of the salvation process now beginning.

The Rabbi and politician Yehuda Amital, who is more of a moderate himself, characterized this almost complete transformation in the following words: “This Zionism isn’t trying to solve the problems of the Jews by founding a Jewish State, rather it is an instrument in the hands of the Almighty who is preparing the people of Israel for their salvation.”⁵⁶²

Let us take a closer look at whether the visions and aims of contemporary religious settlers relate back to the pioneers of early Zionism. At least here there is room for serious doubt. In the programmatic works by Hess, Pinsker and Herzl there are no such explicitly religiously-based ideas of salvation to be found. Biblical references are made, but these do not allow for further implications.

Moses Hess, for example, talks about the Holy Land and the return to ancestral soil, but in *Rom und Jerusalem*⁵⁶³ mainly takes the view that what he terms “colonization,” meaning settlements, should not take place out of mere enthusiasm for an idea, but that there must be a clear underlying need for it. This need is not religious, but socioeconomic. It is necessary for the Jewish people to realize and accept this. According to Hess, only then would they be ready to emigrate to the land of their forefathers.

The question of whether the Jewish people are able to derive a legitimate claim to the Holy Land was answered with a resounding “yes” by the majority of early and Herzl-era Zionists. This was also the reason why they became active and supported the settlement of Palestine. This was not due to religious considerations, but mainly political and social ones.

Their activism was mostly a reaction to the bloody pogroms in Eastern Europe and the palpable collective rejection of Jews in Western Europe.

The earliest Zionists dreamt of a sovereign Jewish state, by which they meant a free society in which Jews could live among others as equals. To give these dreams shape, to reinforce the Jewish people's right to the land between Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea, they used biblical images and visions, just as Theodor Herzl did at the second Zionist Congress in 1898: "If there is any legitimate claim to a piece of land on this earth at all," he exclaimed to the delegates' prolonged shouts and applause, "then all people who believe in the Bible must recognize the right of the Jews."⁵⁶⁴

The term *Eretz Yisrael*, which had become a permanent fixture in the Zionist vocabulary, underwent a perceptible change in meaning over time. Increasingly, it was no longer used to mean the Holy Land, the ancestral soil praised in prayer, but rather the Promised Land. This is a significant difference and clearly shows that, for many Zionists, Palestine is more than just a territory to be settled.

The term in its new meaning was apparently not only understood as a promise, but as a concrete hope that the re-settlement of Palestine would be one step toward messianic salvation. For many Eastern European Jews, this was probably the real reason why they followed Herzl's call and joined the Zionist movement already in his lifetime.

It is striking that most of the settlers, then as well as now, have not developed a precise idea of the borders of the land they feel at one with and that they settled in the past or hope to in the future. Generally they refer to Numbers (34:1–12) and Ezekiel (47:13–20) to justify the settlement; accordingly not a person, but God lay down the borders of Israel. The territory concerned lies between the Euphrates and the Nile. These are the "promised" borders, but they are not borders that could be given legitimacy by international law today.

Still, up to now at least those Israelis belonging to the national-religious camp feel that the territories occupied in the Six-Day War are not territories conquered in war, but

“liberated land” (Judea and Samaria). With the occupation of these territories, God’s will is being done and the process of messianic salvation begun. Therefore, the most religious among the settler movement categorically reject giving up the conquered territory, as that would contradict God’s will in their view. In this way, the modern settler’s movement embodies the messianic dream awaiting its historical fulfillment.

Assuming that the settler’s movement has religious roots at its core, then the question arises whether the modern settlement activities in “Judea and Samaria” are not really a “revival movement of classical Zionism.”⁵⁶⁵ This hypothesis, which presumes a causal nexus between the promises of the Bible and modern settlement activities, receives plausibility from the fact that the settlement projects around Jerusalem and in the West Bank are obviously oriented on biblical ideas.

Zionism and the “Arab question”

There is no question today that each new Jewish settlement in the West Bank or the area around Jerusalem adds more “fuel to the fire” in the Israeli-Palestinian-Arab conflict and aggravates the already difficult peace efforts. This raises the question whether the settlement ideology might not have to be regarded as a kind of flaw in the inception of Zionism. We ask ourselves if the settlement ideology is not perhaps the real obstacle preventing a peaceful co-existence among the people in the region?

A look at the historical sources shows that this problem was by all means acknowledged in the early days of the Zionist movement. Even then settlement activities caused conflicts which made it more difficult for the emigrants to live alongside the Palestinian Arabs. Particularly those emigrants who were secular and not religious recognized the problems appearing on the horizon.

One of those who warned of possible mistakes in the settlement of Palestine early on was the philosopher and journalist Asher Ginsberg (Achad Haam). Hovevei Zion sent

him to Palestine twice, in 1890 and 1893. Afterwards he published two essays in *Hameliz*,⁵⁶⁶ in which he pointed out that every person who wished to buy land or a property there could do so to their heart's content, but that there were Arabs who were living on said land.

In one of the essays Ginsberg commented that the local large property owners and farmers living in Palestine were not particularly interested in selling their land to the newcomers. In his report "Die Wahrheit aus Palästina" [The truth from Palestine] he concluded: "We here abroad tend to believe that the Arabs are all wild, on the same level as animals and do not understand what is going on around them. This is, however, a big mistake."⁵⁶⁷

Asher Ginsberg proved to be much more prescient about the "Arab question" in Palestine than most of the other Zionist pioneers. He foresaw the time, "when the life of our people in Palestine will be so far developed," that the Arab-Palestinian rural population would rebel and turn against the newcomers. In his view, the question of land would inflame conflict.

The early pioneers of Zionism might have been able to reach an understanding with the Arab population living in Palestine at the time if, it must be conceded, they had actually seen the necessity of reaching such an agreement. Conflicts could possibly have been avoided and, therefore, some of the problems which seem insurmountable in the Israeli-Arab-Palestinian conflict today could possibly have been eliminated even before 1948.

However, the Zionist leadership, most of whom came from Central Europe, lived in the illusory belief that they were acting in a political vacuum, which is unfortunately too often overlooked in the current debates. It never even occurred to most of them that, along with Jews and Christians, Muslims could also be living in Palestine. A statement of Max Nordau to Herzl is reported by Amos Elon and is telling: "There are Arabs in Palestine! I did not know that! Then we are committing an injustice!"⁵⁶⁸

This story might not be true, but it does basically characterize the attitude of the Zionist leadership who thought that Palestine was an empty country just waiting to be colonized and cultivated by Jewish settlers. In any case, there was no consideration of the possibility that there could be local opposition. There is scant mention of this problem in the letters and writings of the early Zionists such as Hess, Kalischer, Pinsker, Rülff, and others; if so then only in vague allusions to it. Concrete opinions on the problem are not expressed, and anything like a possible solution not offered.

When the talk does turn to the Palestinian Arabs, then it is not about their historical claims or their right to live in Palestine. The assessment of a critical thinker like Nahum Goldmann, one of the most important men in modern Jewish history, is therefore not completely unjustified when he pointed out that it was, “one of the greatest historical mistakes in Zionist thought that the Arab aspect was not taken into consideration seriously enough in the founding of the Jewish homeland.”⁵⁶⁹

The current conflict between Israelis and Palestinians undoubtedly has its roots in the beginnings of the Zionist settlement of the country. A solution to this conflict was not reached in the decades before the founding of the state or afterward. However, continual attempts were made, such as the Brit Shalom idea in the mid-1920s. It favored the creation of a bi-national state,⁵⁷⁰ but was not politically viable at the time. The necessary majority needed to carry out this proposal could not be found on either the Jewish or the Arab side.

Occupied, disputed, liberated?

Since the founding of the State of Israel, and particularly since the Six-Day War in 1967, the problems have become even more aggravated. Since then, there are clearly two diametrically opposed positions in Israel. The hawks (i.e., the supporters of a hardline position) are not prepared to vacate the occupied territories due to security and ideological concerns. The doves (the moderates), on the other hand, under the preservation of certain security interests, continue to

support a wide pull-out from the occupied territories if this would enable an agreement for a peaceful co-existence for Palestinians and Jewish Israelis.

The stances of both groups hardened in 1977 from the moment that Israel's hawks took over power in the government in Jerusalem and began to set different priorities in their policies than their predecessors. Visions of a Greater Israel began to appear more often in party programs and campaign platforms. Likud politicians promised the indivisibility of the country and declared that there would be no other sovereign power in the land between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea than the Jewish one.

In political discourse, such terms as the continually used *Eretz Yisrael* and *Eretz Yisrael HaShlema* ('the whole land of Israel') have become well-established. These terms and their current use in politics show that the demand to hold on to the occupied territories is beginning to become state doctrine. For decades, these terms have impaired joint regulations as to how the territories occupied in the Six-Day War should be dealt with. Misinterpretations and misunderstandings are the order of the day.

Concerning settlement policy and its practical implementation, the right-wing parties (such as Likud), which have dominated the government in Jerusalem since 1977, have developed a series of new strategies which are all more or less intended to define the territory captured in the Six-Day War as liberated land rightfully gained. Therefore, the settlement of this area is not only legitimate, but also legal. No Israeli government has been prepared to completely give up all of the territories captured in 1967. Most of them have been and remain willing to accept only smaller adjustments.

In the current official Israeli interpretation, the territories occupied in the Six-Day War are not referred to as the West Bank, as is otherwise international convention, but rather as Judea and Samaria. Their current legal status remains subject to debate as it is seen differently depending on one's point of view. For the Palestinians it is "occupied" and for the Israelis it is "disputed" territory.

To further complicate matters, the settlement activities in the West Bank, at least according to the general tenor of international opinion, are taking place without a legal framework. Most countries outside of Israel find this incomprehensible, particularly because, as was mentioned before, these activities are not occurring according to internationally recognized regulations, but more or less arbitrarily. Up to now, this has not much bothered the settlement ideologues, as they view the settlement of the biblical land as their obligation, a religious duty that God enjoined upon the Jewish people.

This kind of thinking, at times eschatological, can be found in a particularly condensed version in the ideology and platform of Gush Emunim. This extra-parliamentary group was founded in 1974 and feels its calling is to promote more Jewish settlement of the West Bank. For the supporters of this movement, religious-fundamentalist at its core, the occupation of *Eretz Yisrael* and expanding sovereignty to the areas west of the River Jordan are a duty ordained by God which must be fulfilled.

This duty is the equivalent of a religious commandment, if you will. According to the settlers' movement, at least to some representatives of Orthodox groups, it is seen as the foundation for the national revival of the Jewish people. From the point of view of several Gush Emunim ideologists, the national revival, understood as a revitalization, will also provide a "cure" for all other diagnosed conditions. This is a wording which immediately brings to mind the early Zionist Isaak Rülff, who, in his treatise *Aruchas Bas Ammi*, propagated "a remedy for Israel."⁵⁷¹

To what extent the settlement projects in the West Bank over the last decades are legally permissible is subject to controversy. The UN Security Council, for example, has called the construction of settlements illegal in numerous resolutions. On the other hand, Israel has taken the position that the West Bank and the Gaza Strip have never been a part of a sovereign state since the end of the Ottoman Empire, so that "Jewish" settlement of these areas is legitimate.

Since the 1970s, the Palestinian reply to the Jewish settlement of the West Bank – and of the Gaza Strip for a long time – has been massive protests, political demonstrations, but also terrorism in various forms. The situation has not improved, but has rather become worse. Measures taken by Israel such as the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, the release of killers from Israeli jails, both of which were meant to be pacifying gestures, have proven to be ineffective and basically generated no response from the opposing side.

The dilemma which Israel and its politicians have been maneuvering themselves into since the 1970s is that by now there are around 300,000 Jewish Israelis living in about 200 settlements and 150 so-called outposts in the areas occupied in the Six-Day War. Finding an adequate solution to this situation that is mutually acceptable for both Palestinians and Jewish Israelis to the same degree, appears to be almost impossible in the present circumstances.

Political challenges

Then what can be done? There can be only losers in the current entanglement in which Israelis and Palestinians find themselves. It is therefore necessary that both sides begin to negotiate as equal partners and attempt to make concessions in their maximal demands. The Israelis would no longer be able to ignore the Palestinians' national claims. For their part, the Palestinians, to the extent that organizations such as Fatah and the Hamas could reach an agreement on this issue, would have to bring themselves to recognize the State of Israel's right to exist.

Recognition of the "Jewish" state's right to exist also means that the Palestinians would have to ensure that there would be no further terrorist attacks against individuals or Jewish institutions both inside and outside Israel in the future. In return, pending acceptance among the Jewish population of Israel, Israel could recognize a sovereign Palestinian state.

One fundamental problem will not be able to be overcome so quickly. Both sides, Palestinians as well as Jewish Israelis, lay historical claim to one and the same territory. This makes it

difficult to agree on the formulation of a compromise which would be just to the claims of both sides. One thing is certain: after all that has happened, the model of a binational state such as envisioned by Martin Buber with Brit Shalom in the 1920s is no longer a realistic option.

If, however, the Israeli side wants to reach a solution as to how to deal with the existing settlements in the West Bank accepted by the majority of the Jewish population, then it is necessary that the positions taken up to now undergo a fundamental re-evaluation. This will likely require more than a return to the ideas of the founding fathers of Zionism, particularly when talking about the final setting of the borders or whether or not to allow the construction of new settlements.

It will no longer suffice to invoke the Torah to provide legitimacy for pending political measures. Although this will continue to take place in the future, doing so aggravates all attempts to establish peace in the region. Intellectuals such as Amnon Rubinstein or Gershom Gorenberg, who considers himself to be an Orthodox leftist Zionist, also fear that if the current developments continue unchanged and unabated, and if the relationship between religion and state continues to be unclear, then sooner or later the Jewish state could be in danger of developing into a Jewish ethnocracy,⁵⁷² in which the rules of democracy are suspended and the equality of its inhabitants no longer guaranteed.⁵⁷³

The historians and sociologists who are now referred to as post-Zionists, such as Avi Shlaim, Tom Segev, or Shlomo Sand, argue that Israel must re-evaluate its historical self-image.⁵⁷⁴ According to them, Zionism as Herzl envisioned, is no longer in the position to provide adequate solutions to the pressing political questions of today. However, they are also unable to provide realistic suggestions as to what this kind of new orientation would look like, or how exactly the conflict with the Palestinians and the surrounding countries could be resolved.

Jewish Israeli society must become willing to look for new, i.e., secular, political justifications for possible further settlement activities. Admittedly, this will not be easy.

However, if this is not done, then it is to be feared that there will be not only an increase in inner-Jewish disputes, but that the conflict with the Palestinians and the neighboring countries will worsen and continue to erupt in ever new bloody confrontations and armed clashes.

For there to be peace in the region, all aspects of the current settlement policy and its goals must be thoroughly re-examined. Continued settlement is conceivable, but must take place on the basis of international law and the justification for doing so must be different. This is theoretically possible, but would have as a consequence that we would be dealing with a new variety of Zionism. It would be radically different from the concept people like Theodor Herzl had at the beginning of the 20th century.

In reality, this kind of “gutted” Zionism would be extremely difficult to convey to the traditionalists. Practically speaking, a direct consequence of this would ultimately imply a renunciation of the biblical promises, which would in turn entail having to accept a purely secular version of Zionism. Although Israel would remain a safe haven for Jews from around the world, it would no longer be the Promised Land.

Even if the settlements in the West Bank and around Jerusalem were relinquished in the near future, the controversial questions would still not be answered. The actual complications do not have so much to do with a possible partial pull-out as with an unswerving adherence to traditional national-religious ideas. These ideas have ossified into a doctrine, which not only exacerbates the possibility of compromise, but at present seems to counteract and make it impossible to reach one.

Nonetheless, if despite this there is the willingness to reach a compromise, it would make sense for the Jewish Israeli side to meet the political challenges proactively. Being proactive here would mean that extremists from every faction become aware of the absurdity of their positions and that the politicians attempt to solve problems before conflicts arise. Israelis and Palestinians would then have the chance to become the “avant-garde of a new world order”⁵⁷⁵; at least

they could contribute to solving the problems in the Middle East.

If the conflict is to be resolved, it will be necessary for everyone to give up the argument structures and justifications for actions used until now, as they form the basis for the cycle of violence and retaliatory violence in the Middle East. This means that both Jewish Israelis and Palestinians reject their internalized roles as victims, the idea that each group has that they, and only they, have been the ones to suffer – the Jews as the victims of the Holocaust and the Palestinians as the victims of the Zionist land acquisition.

It is only through dialogue, by reaching out to the other not distracted by any other considerations, that the conflict parties in the region will be able to come to a rapprochement. It is only through dialogue in the sense of Martin Buber, the attempt at understanding the other with all their hopes and fears that creates the opportunity to bridge the divide that has arisen over the last few decades. However, to repeat, this would require that all parties, the Palestinians as well as the Israelis, reevaluate and rethink their positions.

Regardless of which party is in power in Jerusalem, it will not be able to avoid making a public declaration of which political strategic goals it has set to follow and what it actually hopes to achieve. As previously mentioned, in certain situations it will no longer be sufficient to simply invoke those security measures the population has come to expect. Moreover, it will also be necessary for every government to suggest how they propose to reach an agreement with the Palestinians.

If they wish to live in a halfway conflict-free and secure future, the citizens of the State of Israel, Jews and non-Jews alike, will have to start seeing themselves as members of a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society, more so than they have up to now. Jewish Israelis will have to learn to accept Palestinians as Palestinians, who in turn must accept Israelis, Jews and non-Jews, as Israelis. For this to be achieved there must be a fundamental change in attitudes.

However, we should not stop there. There needs to be a clear paradigm change if a mutually acceptable resolution to the decades-long conflict is to be reached. Such a paradigm change requires that the conflict parties be open and willing to compromise: the Palestinians must recognize the right of the State of Israel to exist and Israel, or the Jewish Israeli population, must show its willingness to accept the Palestinians' claim to their own sovereign nation-state.

At present, this kind of paradigm change seems to be in the distant future. However, Israelis and Palestinians are aware that they must take a decision. At some point, when a compromise is being formulated, they will have to accept themselves as belonging to a multi-ethnic and a multi-religious society, a society in which Jews and non-Jews alike live side by side with the same rights and obligations. If this is not possible, then it is to be feared that the military exchange of blows with missiles, bombs and tanks will become the permanent condition in the Middle East.

The Jewish Israeli side will not necessarily be required to completely and radically reject the original idea of Zionism. However, changes are needed. For example, the objectives must be different in the future. The aims of Zionism as envisaged by Herzl, insofar as they have even remained relevant, will have to be more directly concerned with the political demands of the present. This program, whether it is called post-Zionism or something else, must be newly defined and make the Palestinians' concerns its own.

However, whether the founding of a sovereign Palestinian state will lead to the establishment of peace in the region remains a matter of speculation. The conflict cannot be resolved without the resolute will from both sides to do so. This requires an acuity which obviously does not exist yet. However, this is the precondition, or to be more precise the prerequisite to remove the existing mental obstacles and blockades. This is the only way to put an end to the spiral of violence and find a solution to the conflict in the foreseeable future. This is not an impossible undertaking. As previously explained Israelis as well as Palestinians will need not only a change in paradigm, but a change in consciousness for the

future. For the Jewish Israeli side this also means that in the future the settlement of, or let us rather say the attempt to take over and cultivate so-called biblical land will require a different, more topical justification, more oriented toward the political situation and circumstances. It will no longer be enough to invoke the Zionist pioneer ideology and the biblical promises as before. Those are the ideas of yesterday that admittedly had a liberating function in their day, but no longer fit our time.

If serious progress is to be made in reaching a compromise with the Palestinians, the religious character of settlement policy will have to be modified. If this problem is not recognized as such, if settlement projects continue unabated in the West Bank with the justification that the Jews not only have a moral but a legal claim to the land, then it is to be feared that the Zionist movement, which once emerged as a national liberation movement, is in danger of ending in a catastrophe of apocalyptic proportions. And no one can seriously want that.

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46. The Colonialism/Colonization Perspective on Zionism/Israel

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This paper was completed in March 2016.

Introduction

One of the most furious academic and public debates about Zionism and Israel is the dispute concerning the legitimacy and adequacy of using the notion colonialism for describing Zionism, the *Yishuv*, and Israel. The public debate that has accompanied Zionism almost since it appeared as an ideology and a political and settlement movement has turned, especially in the last decades, into a scholarly and academic one. Because the connotation of the term colonialism has grown increasingly negative since the appearance of Zionism and the *Yishuv*, it is very difficult to conduct this debate “purely” on academic, theoretical, and analytical levels without political and ideological – and hence emotional – involvement.

In this chapter I will (1) try to understand the colonialism and/or colonization perspective on Zionism, the *Yishuv*, and Israel from a wide diachronic and synchronic comparative framework; (2) present and discuss major approaches, argumentations and counter-arguments of participants in the debate; and (3) summarize my conclusions.

A wide comparative framework

Adherents of the colonialism or colonization perspective indicate the importance of using a comparative outlook in order to adequately understand Zionism, the *Yishuv*, and Israel. However, the colonialism or colonization perspective can be viewed as only one possibility of a far wider diachronic and synchronic comparative framework for understanding Zionism, the *Yishuv*, and Israel. Hence, the colonialism or

colonization perspective is only one dimension or aspect – whose weight may vary according to interpretation, period, and circumstances – of this wider framework. How can we describe the specific case of the Yishuv – which can be seen as the foundation and the beginning of Israeli society – and Israel? I suggest this possible interpretation: *immigration of Jews* (with *national* orientations), mainly from *Europe* (Eastern Europe) and *settlement in Eretz Yisrael* (the Land of Israel or Palestine), in the “*Non-European*” *World* while establishing a *new society*.

As a result of this possible description, one can portray the main comparative horizons or possibilities and outline a general – broad but not exhaustive – comparative framework. Each such comparison can shed light on a certain facet or aspect of the Yishuv or Israeli society and contribute to their understanding. The wide comparative perspective is presented in order to offer a different view from those suggested till now, in the relevant literature, regarding the location of the colonialism or colonization debate in socio-historical studies and analyses of Israeli society. Locating this debate in such a framework enables one to see that a variety of scholars from various disciplines and schools of thought, Zionists and non-Zionists alike, have contributed to the study and understanding of Zionism, the Yishuv, and Israeli society.

Similarity versus difference

First, this specific case can be compared to the following phenomena: (a) *nationalism* (in general, and Jewish or European, in particular); (b) *colonization* (in general, and Jewish or European, in particular); or *colonialism* (in general, and European in particular); (c) *immigration to Eretz Yisrael or colonization (settlement) in Eretz Yisrael* (of Jews and Europeans).

In that respect, one can emphasize the aspect of *nationalism* and argue that we have here mainly the case of a *national movement* with unique features that are manifested, among other things, in immigration from Europe and settlement in the “*Non-European*” *World*. Or, one may

emphasize the *immigration* or *colonization* aspect and argue that we have here mainly a case of immigration or colonization with a unique feature that is manifested in the fact that the immigration or colonization is done by a *national movement*.

Let us focus on the *New Yishuv*, a term that serves to describe the new Jewish settlement in Eretz Yisrael or Palestine by Jewish immigrants (from the 1880s), as the founding community of the new society that would later become the State of Israel.

Generally, regarding the New Yishuv in order to grasp its characteristics and uniqueness, one can make the following comparisons:

1. Of the *New Yishuv* with:
 - (a) Other groups in Eretz Yisrael or Palestine: such as the local Arabs, the Jewish ultra-Orthodox *Old Yishuv*, and the Mizrahim (“Oriental” Jews).
 - (b) Other Jewish groups in the Diaspora such as:
 - (1) Jewish immigrants and settlers: for example, in the USA and Argentina.⁵⁷⁶
 - (2) Jewish groups that represent the “Yiddish culture,” such as the “Bund.”⁵⁷⁷
 - (3) Other Jewish groups in the Diaspora.
 - (c) Europeans (immigrants, settlers etc.) that immigrated to or settled in Eretz Yisrael: such as the “Templers”⁵⁷⁸ or the “crusaders.”⁵⁷⁹
 - (d) Europeans (immigrants, settlers, missionaries etc.) who immigrated to or settled in the “Non-European” world.
 - (e) Various European groups in Europe, such as nationalist or socialist movements.
2. Between different groups in the *New Yishuv*: such as between the “founders” of the New Yishuv, and the *Sabras* (those born in Eretz Yisrael).

Another interesting comparison is between the New Yishuv and what Benyamin Neuberger⁵⁸⁰ calls *Black Zionism* and the establishment of Liberia.⁵⁸¹ Such comparisons deal with similarities and differences of the New Yishuv with regard to these societies and groups.

Continuity versus change

An additional and complementary comparative strategy depicts several major general formative influences on society. Thus, in the case of the New Yishuv, the following influences or factors can be mentioned: (a) *external factors* – influences emanating from the immigrants-settlers' place of origin – that can be divided into Jewish and European influences; and (b) *local factors* or *conditions* – influences stemming from the nature and features of the immigrants-settlers' place of settlement. These local influences include such features and conditions as: the availability of land; the amount and dispersal of the local indigenous population; the nature of the local population (nomadic or permanent settlements; their military strength and willingness to fight against the settlers); the condition of the labor market; the climate etc. Hence, we have here three major general influences: *Jewish*, *European*, and *local* (Eretz Yisraeli).

Scholars disagree firstly, with regard to the weight that should be given to each of those three influences and secondly, with respect to the weight that should be given to various aspects or components within each of these influences. These different aspects can be divided into influences that are manifested in *ideas* or *orientations* (such as messianism, nationalism, liberalism, socialism) and *practices* (economic, political, military, cultural, and technological). Thus, from the point of view of a Jewish diachronic comparative perspective, Eric Hobsbawm commented long ago that the creation of the State of Israel can be seen as a passage from *shtetl* to “*statl*.”

From a comparative perspective of nationalism, various scholars discussed the unique features of Zionism while making comparisons with other, European and Jewish, national movements. Anthony Smith, for example, sees in

Zionism an exemplary case of *Diaspora nationalism*; a specific type of nationalism similar to Armenian and Greek nationalisms.⁵⁸² Whereas, according to Jacob Katz the uniqueness of Zionist Jewish nationalism is manifested by the relative great emphasis given to messianic orientations.⁵⁸³

Moreover, in comprehending and analyzing the Yishuv, various scholars are divided in terms of the importance they attach to external or local influences on shaping this community. Another distinction between scholars, that is not necessarily identical with the one mentioned above, is according to the relative weight given to orientations or to practices. Thus, for example, Jacob Katz emphasizes ideas and external influences, while Michael Shalev emphasizes practices and local conditions.⁵⁸⁴

The colonialism or colonization perspective opens new comparative possibilities and widens the comparative horizons for understanding both Zionism and Israel. In understanding Zionism, for example, it indicates that it is not enough to understand just the main causes and factors that had an impact on the creation and the first stages of development of Zionism. It is also important to study its wide and long-range consequences for and impact on various groups and societies, not only for Jews.

Generally, diachronic and synchronic comparisons are important aspects of the discussions and literature devoted to colonialism and colonization in general, as well as to European colonialism and colonization. In discussing these topics, scholars are also distinguished by the explanatory power and importance awarded to external or internal factors. Louis Hartz and Frederick Jackson Turner can be cited as representatives of this scholarly divide and hence of two distinct schools. Louis Hartz emphasizes external influences, and in that respect particularly the ideologies that the settlers brought with them from their place of origin (from Europe) at the initial stage of the colonization.⁵⁸⁵ This stage, according to Hartz, is also the formative period of the new settler society. Moreover, each such new society or “fragment” of Europe continues to develop mainly according to the contours which

were formulated and crystallized in its formative period, while Europe itself was developing in a different course and trajectory. According to Hartz, this explains both major differences between Europe and its “fragments” as well as between the various fragments. Thus, for example, the different ideologies brought by the settlers in the formative initial stages of the settlement explain major differences between Latin America, the USA, and Australia (whose colonization started at different periods of time). In Latin America, the settlers brought with them feudal ideology in the formative initial stage and therefore one finds there until now, more than in Europe or any other “fragment” of Europe, elements and influences of feudalism. In Australia the settlers brought with them socialist ideology, while in the USA, in the formative initial stage (when socialism had not yet developed in Europe), the settlers brought with them capitalist ideology; and this difference explains, mainly, why the influence of socialist ideas and politics are much greater in Australia than in the USA.

Frederick Jackson Turner, in his “Frontier Thesis,” represents an opposite view by emphasizing the importance of local conditions or factors for the development of America’s institutions and ethos.⁵⁸⁶ The importance Turner attaches to the frontier and the movement westward on shaping the nature of American society is exemplified in his words: “The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development. [...] Moving westward, the frontier became more and more American. [...] Thus the advance of the frontier has meant a steady movement away from the influence of Europe, a steady growth of independence on American lines.”⁵⁸⁷

Approaches à la Turner rely mainly on differences in local conditions facing the settlers to explain major differences between settler communities and societies.

The colonialism debate

In the debate about the legitimacy and adequacy of using the notion colonialism for describing Zionism, the Yishuv and Israel, one can distinguish between scholars according to the importance they attach to external or local factors. Thus, for example Baruch Kimmerling, following Turner, tends to emphasize the local conditions facing the Jewish colonists in Eretz Yisrael/Palestine, especially the availability of free land, and therefore defines this developing settler society as a “settler society without a frontier.”⁵⁸⁸ This unique feature, that distinguishes the Yishuv from other settler societies and especially from the United States explains, according to Kimmerling, the collectivist nature of the Zionist colonization enterprise which differs from the individualistic nature of the American colonization project. Whereas other commentators tend to explain the collectivist nature of the Zionist colonization project mainly by ideas and orientations which the colonists brought with them from Eastern Europe.

At the center of the colonialism debate are certain major theoretical and ideological issues. Some of the main scholarly and theoretical issues are: (1) the definition of colonialism. Here, a major dispute is between adherents of a “narrow” and a “broad” definition of colonialism. According to the narrow definition, one can speak of colonialism only when (a) there is “domination” over and/ or “exploitation” of local resources and the population by “outsiders”; and (b) when this is backed by the “outsiders”’ mother-country or metropolis. According to the “broad” definition, one can speak of colonialism not only when there is “domination” or “exploitation,” but also when there is a “dispossession” and displacement of the local population by the “outsiders.” Or in other words, one can speak of colonialism whenever there is a situation of “outsiders” who enter an already populated “country” with the aim of settling there or becoming the dominant group. This debate concerns what can be considered as the essential features and characteristics of colonialism. (2) The need to distinguish between colonialism and colonization. Is there such a theoretical or analytical need? Hence, this debate also concerns the definition of colonization and its essential characteristics. (3) Continuity versus discontinuity. How much

continuity or discontinuity? Does 1967 represent a major qualitative discontinuity in that respect? This issue is related to the general discussion about an adequate periodization of the Yishuv and Israeli society.

The academic discussion about Zionism, the Yishuv, and Israel from the perspective of colonization or colonialism was not initiated by the scholars who are labeled as “new historians,” “critical sociologists,” or “post-Zionists.” Among the contributors to this academic literature were Zionists and non-Zionists, as well as anti-Zionists. Thus, for example, already in 1958 the Israeli Zionist sociologist Arieh Tartakower wrote a book in Hebrew, entitled *The Scroll of Settlement*, dedicated to the history of colonization or settlement across the world, in which he offers a typology of various kinds of colonization.⁵⁸⁹ In that respect he portrayed the Zionist settlement in Eretz Yisrael as a special case of *national colonization*. It is worth mentioning that the main participants in the more recent discussions of the topic tend to ignore this work. Moreover, a whole edited volume in Hebrew, with the participation of various, mainly Zionist, scholars, which was published in 1982, was dedicated to immigration and colonization as manifested by Jews as well as by other nations in various locations and historical periods.⁵⁹⁰ In the late 1960s the French non-Zionist, or even anti-Zionist, scholar, Maxime Rodinson, published a work that was translated as *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?*⁵⁹¹ One can already find in this work many, perhaps even the principal, arguments and counter-arguments raised by each side taking part in the debate. One may add here that also in Sammy Smooha’s first book on Israel, published in 1978, there are several pages that are dedicated to “the colonial perspective.”⁵

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The deterministic approach: Zionism, the Yishuv, and Israel are colonialist

In the relevant academic literature, what are the main arguments that are raised in supporting the use of the term colonialism in the case of Zionism, the Yishuv, and Israel? The

crucial points are that we have here a case of (1) a group which is coming from outside and settling in a country/territory already inhabited by another group or population, and of (2) the “forced” dispossession and displacement of the indigenous population by the immigrant-settlers who become the dominant majority group. These are the main points that are supplanted, sometimes, by additional, less crucial, arguments.

An illustration of these points is given in the following words of Gershon Shafir:

At the outset, Zionism was a variety of Eastern European nationalism; that is, an ethnic movement in search of a state. But at the other end of the journey, I argued, it may fruitfully be seen as a late instance of European overseas colonialism. What, after all, should we call transplanting one group into land inhabited by another that was followed by the displacement of part of the latter group? Why is it that displacement and expulsion [*nishul*] are less characteristic of colonial movements than exploitation [*nitzul*]?⁵⁹³

In his work Rodinson suggests several arguments as a justification for connecting Zionism and Israel to colonialism, and while doing so he attempts to address critical counter-arguments that appeared, and are still appearing, in the colonialism debate. The main points of Rodinson’s arguments are “classical” in the sense that they still today appear in writings and speeches by supporters of the thesis that sees Zionism and Israel as connected to colonialism, or as colonialist. According to Rodinson, the creation of the State of Israel on Palestinian soil is the culmination of a process that fits into the great European-American expansion in the 19th and 20th centuries, whose aim was to settle new inhabitants among other peoples and/or to dominate them economically and politically. Moreover, the Zionist/Israeli case is a colonial process with unique characteristics. However, these special characteristics do not imply that the nature of the whole process is not a colonial one. A similar argument, by principle, was forwarded years later by Gershon Shafir.⁵⁹⁴ Rodinson mentions some distinct characteristics of the Zionist/Israeli case. Thus, it is a case of settlement of colonists, unlike cases that did not evince European settlers and settlements, such as those of India and Greenland, for example. Another uniqueness is that the (Jewish) colonists did not come from the

mother-country (which was Great Britain according to Rodinson). However, a similarity can be found in that respect with the European colonists in the island of Mauritius. Moreover, a major part of the native indigenous population was displaced, as in the case of the Indians in New England. Furthermore, those who remained inside Israel had to accept a situation of becoming politically dependent and dominated by the Jews. According to Rodinson, the Arabs in Israel, like the Palestinian Arabs who fled Israel, are in a situation that they have not accepted, and that the Yishuv imposed upon them by force. After citing the French sociologist Maunier⁵⁹⁵ who noted that “[o]ne can speak of colonization [colonialism] when there is, and by the very fact that there is, *occupation with domination*; when there is, and by the very fact that there is, emigration with legislation,” Rodinson passes his verdict: “The Jews attracted by Zionism emigrated to Palestine, and then they dominated it. They occupied it in deed and then adopted legislation to justify this occupation by law.”⁵⁹⁶ Hence, according to Rodinson, all the criteria for colonialism that Maunier mentions are present in the Zionist/ Israeli case.

Rodinson was however aware of a possible substantive criticism against his arguments that in the Zionist case, as distinct from other cases of colonialism, there was no mother-country. Such an argument remains still today one of the major points raised against the colonialist thesis. His response to this criticism was to maintain that Great Britain served as the mother-country of the Zionist settlers in Palestine in spite of the fact that very few Jewish settlers had migrated from Great Britain to Eretz Yisrael/Palestine. According to Rodinson, Great Britain had protected the formation and growth of the Yishuv, especially in its early crucial stages, as it had protected in the past British colonization in North America, and as France had protected French colonization in Algeria. Great Britain enabled the development of an adequate base. Elsewhere Rodinson mentions Europe as a whole as fulfilling the historical role of mother-country for the Yishuv, while others attach that role to the Jewish people or Diaspora as a whole. These multiple options for fulfilling the mother-country’s role point to a theoretical problem that supporters of

the colonialism thesis have with prevalent “classical” definitions of colonialism, and especially with a major and crucial criterion in these definitions – which is the existence of a mother-country or metropolis.

How then can one explain the anti-British struggle of the Yishuv? According to Rodinson, it must be seen as a revolt by a community of colonists against a mother-country whose goals started to diverge from its own, a revolt facilitated by the fact that the colonists did not belong to the same people as the mother-country. Moreover, the classical pattern in such situations is that tensions often arise between mother-country and colony. Even Rodinson had to admit, though, contrary to what was argued above, that the relations between Great Britain and the Zionist settlers in Eretz Yisrael/Palestine were not completely similar to those, for example, between France and the *Pieds Noirs* in Algeria. He concludes, in this respect, that “[t]he fact that the Jewish Palestinian colonists had not come from the British population at all, and the fact that their means for applying pressure on the British government, while real, were far fewer than those the *Pieds Noirs* were able to use on the French government, for example, only made London more inclined to sacrifice them.”⁵⁹⁷

One additional point made by supporters of the thesis that Zionism, as well as Israel is colonialist, is that Zionism was influenced by the *zeitgeist* prevailing in Europe with regard to the non-European world and the East in the last decades of the 19th century and first decades of the 20th century, that are sometimes labeled as the era of “high imperialism” in which European colonialism was at its peak. European supremacy had planted in the minds the idea that any territory outside Europe was open to European occupation or settlement. There was a rush and competition to find such a territory. Adherents of the colonialism thesis argued that the Zionists were influenced not only by European nationalism or socialism, but also by the “colonialist” state of mind which prevailed in Europe at that time. When discussing the aspirations of East-European Jews regarding Eretz Yisrael/Palestine in the final decades of the 19th century, Rodinson explains what in his view makes it possible to connect these aspirations to

imperialism, a term that he uses interchangeably with the term colonialism:

There was not necessarily any colonialist or imperialist orientation per se in the motivations underlying this choice. The element that made it possible to connect these aspirations of Jewish shopkeepers, peddlers, craftsman, and intellectuals in Russia and elsewhere to the conceptual orbit of imperialism was one small detail that seemed to be of no importance: Palestine was inhabited by another people.⁵⁹⁸

Rodinson develops this argument further, by stating that

[...] there can be no doubt that if the ancestral homeland had been occupied by one of the well-established industrialized nations that ruled the world at the time, one that had thoroughly settled down in the territory it had infused with a powerful national consciousness, then the problem of displacing German, French, or English inhabitants and introducing a new, nationally coherent element into the middle of their homeland would have been in the forefront of the consciousness of even the most ignorant and destitute Zionists.⁵⁹⁹

One can see here the importance that Rodinson attaches in his argumentation, and in defining colonialist or imperialist orientations, to the fact that a territory is already inhabited but is seen by Europeans as a legitimate and adequate place for their settlement. This view, as well as other views characterizing the heyday of European colonialism, was prevalent among Europeans, and was part of the *zeitgeist* in Europe at that period.⁶⁰⁰

A sophisticated recent contribution to the thesis combining Zionism and Israel with colonialism is the work of Gershon Shafir.⁶⁰¹ Following Fieldhouse⁶⁰² and Fredrickson,⁶⁰³ Shafir offers a general socio-historical typology, which includes five types, of European colonies: The *occupation colony* which is a non-settler colony and consists only of European military and administrative personnel, and four types of settler colonies. The first of the four settler colonies is the *plantation colony* in which the settlers acquired land directly and imported a non-free labor force as in the case of the South in the USA. The second type was the *mixed colony*, where the native indigenous population was the working force; it was characterized by miscegenation between the Europeans and the natives, as in South America. The third type is the *pure settlement colony* in which the entire work force is a European one, as in Australia and the North in the USA. According to Shafir, the pure, or homogeneous, settlement colony had the

largest settler populations and they sought to become the majority in the land they settled. The fourth type, the *ethnic plantation colony* is based on European control of land and the employment of local native labor as well as occasionally European labor, as in Algeria.

Shafir maintains that after various unsuccessful attempts, the type that became dominant among the early Zionist immigrants was the *communal pure settlement*. Although acknowledging differences between Zionism and other settlement or colonization movements, Shafir concludes that these differences have not eliminated Zionism's fundamental similarity with other pure settlement colonies. He argues that the dominant Zionist method was the pure settlement colony based on separation from the Palestinians. This form of pure settlement rested on two exclusivist pillars: on the Jewish National Fund (JNF) and the Histadrut. The aims of the JNF and the Histadrut were the removal of land and labor from the market, respectively, thus closing them off to Palestinian Arabs. Hence, according to Shafir, the threefold aim of Zionist colonization in Eretz Yisrael/Palestine was control of land, employment that ensured the Jewish immigrants and settlers a European standard of living, and massive immigration of Jews.⁶⁰⁴ He maintains that colonization is the phenomenon that links all the sub-periods of the Yishuv and Israel's history. Colonization was always prominent in this history and major developments in the Yishuv and Israel can be interpreted as a transformation from one type of colonization to another type. Even the stances in the public debate after the 1967 War can be understood in terms of a dispute between supporters of a limited pure settlement, namely a Jewish majority in part of the land, and a total pure settlement, namely a Jewish majority all over the land. Hence, according to Shafir the Yishuv was formed by a colonialist movement (Zionism) and Israel is a colonial state.

Moreover, according to Shafir

[a] colonial society [...] is any new society created through the combination, to various degrees, of military control, colonization, territorial dispossession, and the exploitation of native groups that are justified by claims of paramount right or superior culture. Colonialism usually goes beyond the practice of empire-building in its practice of dispossession. [...] In fact, the impact of

colonial projects that went beyond economic exploitation and involved colonization and dispossession was by far more far-reaching and destructive for native populations. This difference explains why parties to conflicts generated by colonization were usually so very intransigent.⁶⁰⁵

One should notice that Shafir is not providing here, or elsewhere, an explicit and clear definition of colonialism, as well as of colonization, and focuses on defining a “colonial society.” Yet although he does not provide such explicit definitions, it is possible to understand, from his work, what is included or excluded in his understandings and interpretations of these notions. Thus, it is discernible that Shafir distinguishes between two types of colonialism: one based on exploitation of resources and population, and the other on territorial dispossession and the colonization or settlement of immigrant populations. Shafir contends that exploitation is only optional and not essential for the definition of colonialism, and domination is totally excluded from the definition. One should also notice that a mother-country or metropolis is not mentioned at all and hence not an essential or sufficient component of the definition.

Although both Rodinson and Shafir do not see exploitation as a crucial and indispensable component in defining colonialism, there are also important differences between them in this respect. Two major aspects distinguish between Rodinson and Shafir regarding their understanding and definition of colonialism. Rodinson’s definition attaches great importance to the existence of a mother-country and to domination, and by doing so he is following the prevalent “classical” understandings and definitions of colonialism.⁶⁰⁶ In other words, Rodinson’s definition of colonialism is a “narrow” one. As already noted, Shafir excludes both the existence of a mother-country and of domination as necessary and crucial components of a definition of colonialism. Shafir also suggests widening the definition, and including in colonialism also cases of dispossession, displacement and expulsion of the local population by settlers. In other words, Shafir’s definition is a “broad” definition of colonialism.

However, there is an important similarity in the views of Rodinson and Shafir. They share the view that both Zionism

and the State of Israel are colonial phenomena. Zionism is seen as a colonialist movement, and Israel as a colonial state. Moreover, they share a deterministic view: Israel, as a colonial state, is seen as a quite necessary outcome of the Yishuv and of the Zionist movement. Colonialism, and its features, is the chief phenomenon linking Zionism, the Yishuv and the State of Israel; it draws together all the sub-periods of the Yishuv and Israel's history.

Such a deterministic view – regarding certain settler societies as well as with respect to Zionism, the Yishuv, and Israel – also appears in the recent literature on *settler colonialism*, in general and in its application to the Yishuv and Israel.⁶⁰⁷ Patrick Wolfe is considered by many as a major figure and theoretician of the settler colonialism theory.⁶⁰⁸ According to Wolfe

[i]n contrast to the kind of colonial formation that Cabral or Fanon confronted, settler colonies were not primarily established to extract surplus value from indigenous labour. Rather, they are premised on displacing indigenes from (or replacing them on) the land. [...] Settler colonies were (are) premised on the elimination of native societies. The split tensing reflects a determinate feature of settler colonization. The colonizers come to stay – invasion is a structure not an event.⁶⁰⁹

Wolfe thus maintains that the bulk of colonialist, and especially post-colonialist, theorization and discourse⁶¹⁰ “is disabled by an oddly monolithic, and surprisingly unexamined, notion of colonialism.”⁶¹¹

There are scholars who attempt to apply the notion of settler colonialism to the Yishuv and Israel and see the latter as manifestations of this phenomenon. If indeed the Yishuv and Israel can be considered instances of settler colonialism, and following Wolfe's words on post-colonial theorizing, this should raise doubt regarding the applicability and relevance of post-colonial theorizing to the Israeli case,⁶¹² and especially so to the Yishuv.

However, there are theoretical problems regarding the notion settler colonialism itself as well as with its application to the Yishuv and Israel. As to the notion itself, there is considerable confusion and inconsistency concerning the societies that should be seen as manifesting settler colonialism.

Hence for Wolfe the notion applies only to *pure settlement colonies* (according to Shafir's typology),⁶¹³ whereas according to Gabriel Piterberg it should apply to all *settlement colonies* (according to Shafir's typology).⁶¹⁴ Prochaska uses this notion when describing the situation of the French colonists in Algeria,⁶¹⁵ while Elkins and Pedersen use the notion widely and include in it not only the case of Algeria, but also various types of settlement colonies.⁶¹⁶ Another theoretical problem with the notion itself is that scholars that did not use explicitly the notion settler colonialism are presented as forerunners of the theorization based on this concept.⁶¹⁷ Thus, for example, Donald Denoon⁶¹⁸ and other scholars who wrote on *settler societies* are depicted as forerunners of the *settler colonialism* theory. Moreover, no clear distinction is made between various cases of colonization such as settler communities, settler societies and settler colonialism. Another problem stems from the fact that some scholars, like Wolfe and Piterberg, understand and define settler colonialism as being a certain unique type of colonialism, whereas Veracini defines it as a phenomenon totally distinct from colonialism. Regarding Veracini's understanding and definition of the notion, one may question the use of the term colonialism, in the notion *settler colonialism*, in order to depict a phenomenon which is totally distinct from colonialism. From all the above, it can be concluded that there is substantial confusion and non-clarity among scholars regarding the use and applicability of the notion settler colonialism, in general; it thus raises serious questions regarding its applicability to understanding the Yishuv and Israel.

Furthermore, the approach that views the Israeli case as resembling those of the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand is ignoring the fact that, contrary to these other cases, in the Israeli case one cannot witness a clear victory of the settlers over the indigenous population.⁶¹⁹

One should also mention that even critics of the deterministic approach acknowledge the importance of a comparative outlook on Israeli society, as well as the

legitimacy of the colonialism or colonization comparative perspective.⁶²⁰

A “colonial situation”

There are scholars, mainly Zionists, who participate in the colonialism debate but are less deterministic than Rodinson, Shafir, and supporters of the settler colonialism theory. These scholars see 1967 (and the settlement project in the West Bank which is increasingly supported by the state) as a major turning-point in Israel’s history. According to these observers, Zionism is not a colonialist movement and the Yishuv and the State of Israel, until 1967, were not colonial. However, according to Emmanuel Sivan, following “unintended consequences,” a “colonial situation” has developed in Israel since 1967 and the situation in the occupied territories has come to resemble more and more the “colonial situation” in French Algeria.⁶²¹ According to Sivan a “colonial situation” is a situation in which one society (that is usually determined by a similar ethnicity) dominates politically, militarily and economically another society within the same territory. Moreover, such a situation is characterized by social, physical, occupational, and status segregation between members of the two societies.⁶²²

Those scholars maintain, therefore, that the settlement project in the West Bank is a colonial enterprise, which is increasingly supported by the state, and Israel can now be seen as a colonial state. And yet, even a scholar like Meron Benvenisti, who is highly critical toward Israel’s policies and settlement project in the West Bank, rejects the “colonial situation” approach.⁶²³ Benvenisti maintains that the border line between Israel and the West Bank is based on a too short time-period and therefore cannot serve as an appropriate psychological effective barrier, such as the Strait of Gibraltar between France and Algeria. It is moreover problematic to speak of colonialism when part of the capital city, Jerusalem, belongs to the mother-country and another part to the “colony.”⁶²⁴

Reservations and criticisms

Many reservations have been raised against depictions of Zionism, the Yishuv, or Israel as manifestations of colonialism. A great deal of these reservations are based on citing differences between a certain image or definition of colonialism, that are based on some specific cases, and the Zionist or Israeli case. However, because of the great variety and facets of colonialism, in many instances it is also possible to present alternative cases, resembling the Zionist or Israeli one, and thus refute this kind of criticism which is based on the existence of alleged important differences between colonialism and the Zionist/Israeli case. Several themes of this dispute have already appeared in Rodinson's work.⁶²⁵

I will present several such reservations as well as possible counter-arguments. One such reservation is that – contrary to the arguments presented by those who equate Zionism with colonialism, which focus on Jewish expropriation of land, and on dispossessing the native Palestinian Arabs – Zionism operated quite differently from colonial movements on this score. Zionists purchased land rather than seizing it, at least until a certain period.⁶²⁶ Rodinson, who already addressed that issue, holds that brutal confiscation of land is by no means a fundamental characteristic of colonialism or colonization. He argues that throughout the world, lands that were colonized by Europeans were acquired much less often through the use of direct force, than through seemingly legal deals. In British Africa, for example, confiscation of land was quite an exceptional phenomenon.⁶²⁷ Yet in all of these cases, no one hesitates to speak of colonialism. Rodinson believes that the legal correctness of the land purchases made by Zionists can thus in no way be considered an argument against the colonial character of the Yishuv. He adds that land confiscations have taken place on a vast scale since 1948.⁶²⁸ One should also recall here that Manhattan was purchased by the French from the Indians⁶²⁹ and purchasing land was also practiced in certain places by Japanese colonization in Asia.⁶³⁰

Another reservation concerns the issue of the absence of exploitation in the Zionist case.⁶³¹ According to Rodinson, direct exploitation of the native population frequently occurs in the colonial world, but is not necessarily always an essential characteristic of it.⁶³² It was an exception to the rule for the English colonists settling the territory that would become the United States to have native Indians working for them. The English in the East Indies were not landowners who exploited peasants, any more than they were, for example, in Australia or New Zealand. And Rodinson concludes by asking: does it mean that British expansion into all these territories was not colonial in nature?

Another argument is that the very idea of competition for jobs between European settlers and natives, which occurred in Eretz Yisrael/Palestine, is inconceivable in colonial situations.⁶³³ However, there is evidence that competition of that kind existed in certain colonial settings.⁶³⁴

Colonialism or colonization?

A more principled and theoretical criticism that was and can still be raised against Rodinson, Shafir and other supporters of the thesis linking Zionism and Israel with colonialism, is that they tend to use the terms colonialism and colonization interchangeably, thus failing to distinguish properly between the two. It is also argued that theoretically it is important to distinguish between these two terms that represent distinct phenomena, and that such an analytical and theoretical distinction has its merits and can add accuracy and subtlety to the analysis.⁶³⁵

Thus, for example, Bernard Avishai⁶³⁶ in an article published in 1975, entitled “Zionist Colonialism: Myth and Dilemma,” criticized Rodinson for not distinguishing between *colonization* and *colonialism*. Avishai asserts that colonization is not the same as colonialism, and Rodinson is stretching the term colonialism and by doing so he destroys its descriptive value. According to Avishai the Zionists did not come in order to dominate the inhabitants of Palestine but to control

sufficient land for the creation of a Jewish society where the Jews would be a majority. Hence, he maintains, the Pilgrim colonists in America and Zionist settlers were not “colonialists.” It should be mentioned here that the phenomenon of domination is an important and crucial component in prevalent “classical” definitions of colonialism.⁶

³⁷ One may add that, from a perspective that distinguishes between colonialism and colonization, a theoretical problem may be evidenced already in the term “colonial-settler” which appears in the title of Rodinson’s translated work as indicating that the two terms colonial and settler cannot be contradictory or distinguishable.

In that respect, Ran Aaronsohn, despite some weaknesses in his argumentation, is offering a criticism of the supporters of the Zionist/Israeli colonialism thesis as well as a typology of possible connections between colonialism and colonization that can be fruitful in analyzing developments and periodizations in Israeli society.⁶³⁸ Aaronsohn suggests drawing a distinction between concepts expressing two distinct phenomena and kinds of activity: *colonization* and *colonialism*. As he remarks

whereas colonization is a fundamentally geographic phenomenon – whose essence is immigration and the establishment of immigrant settlements in a new land that are distinctive from older traditional settlements – colonialism is a political and economic phenomenon, characterized by the forcible dominion and exploitation of a state over territory and population beyond its own borders. Whereas the former found expression in the establishment of a colony in the sense of a settlement generally similar to a European village, the latter phenomenon was expressed in transforming the conquered territory into a colony in the sense of a country under the rule of a European power.⁶³⁹

Moreover, there is no identity or structural overlap between these two concepts, and he therefore proposes four possible connections between colonialism and colonization. The first one is *colonization without colonialism*, as in the case of migration of Jews from Eastern Europe to Argentina and the establishment of settlements there. It is noteworthy that a similar terminology appears in the work of Jürgen Osterhammel, who contends that there are *colonies without colonialism* (or the “New England” type).⁶⁴⁰ They occurred, historically, in colonial societies without indigenous

population majorities, that were homogeneously “white.” According to Osterhammel, because “native” subjects were lacking, these societies could not construct a system of domination, which is a basic component of colonialism. Furthermore, these societies were therefore not “decolonized” by stripping the colonists of their power and driving them out, as was the case in Algeria. The second type, according to Aaronsohn, is *colonialism without colonization*, as in the case of Belgian rule and involvement in the Congo, of the British in Sudan, or of the French in Morocco. In none of these instances was a network of settlements or “colonies” created within the countries. There may also be *colonization within colonialism*, as in the settling of German groups in Australia, of Ukrainians in Canada, or of the Dutch in South Africa, who migrated to these crown “colonies” in order to establish settlement-colonies without the backing of the British rulers. Finally, there may be *colonization by colonialism*, as in the settling of the French in Algeria after it had been conquered by France, of the Italians in Italian-occupied Libya, or of the Germans in the annexed areas of Poland, in all of which the process of populating the conquered areas served as an instrument of foreign rule. Aaronsohn maintains that the Jewish settlements in Eretz Yisrael/Palestine until the Mandate period constituted a case of *colonization without colonialism*. This type is also appropriate to describe the settlement enterprise of the German Templers in Eretz Yisrael/Palestine, which also did not benefit from the support of the German authorities or institutions.

According to Aaronsohn, Zionist settlement during the British Mandate bore the characteristics of *colonization within colonialism*, and hence in his opinion, until the State of Israel’s establishing, Jewish settlement in Eretz Yisrael/Palestine should be described as a case of colonization rather than colonialism.

In spite of the potential merits of Aaronsohn’s typology, I would also like to mention some of what seem to me are his weak points. First, he over-emphasizes the importance of disciplinary boundaries by presenting a supposedly distinct terminology, discourse, and knowledge of “historical geography.” Second, he argues that colonization is

fundamentally a geographical phenomenon; the scope should be wider and include other spheres of human activity when dealing with colonization such as economics, politics, culture and so on.⁶⁴¹ This is a narrow understanding of and view on colonization. Hence, the cases to which he compares the Yishuv, as well as his other exemplary cases, do not include cases of colonization where European settlers became the dominant majority group and the founders of a new society and state (like in the USA, Canada, Australia). This is problematic, because he mentions and puts forward only cases from the same period of the early stages of the Yishuv, whereas he wrote his paper already with knowledge of the long-term outcomes and developments of this Yishuv (the Jewish settlers becoming the majority dominant group and founding a new society and state) which differ enormously from the outcomes and developments of those other cases. Third, he discusses mainly the initial period of the New Yishuv and the Mandate period, and applies his typology only till 1948.

In defining colonialism Aaronsohn emphasizes the role of a state, which is absent from Shafir's considerations and definitions. Hence, while Shafir's typology and analysis may suggest new insights regarding phenomena and developments in the pre-state period, its analytical and theoretical strengths diminish when he analyzes phenomena and developments during the state period (from 1948 onwards). In that respect Aaronsohn's typology and model, after making some amendments necessary to eliminate the weak aspects mentioned, can provide us with tools and notions for analyzing the post-1967 situation (with the state's growing involvement in the settlement project in the West Bank, for example). Those cannot be adequately or satisfactorily provided by Shafir's model and typology (which, unlike Aaronsohn's model and typology, are not attentive to differences between colonizations and situations according to the involvement or non-involvement of the state). Thus, for example, by using Aaronsohn's definitions and typology, the situation after 1967 can be described as *colonization by colonialism*.⁶⁴² It is doubtful however whether exploitation should be a necessary,

crucial and indispensable aspect of the definition of colonialism as Aaronsohn and other observers have suggested.

In criticizing Aaronsohn, Peled and Shafir argue that “colonization without colonialism can occur only when the territory in which it is made is not populated.”⁶⁴³ Colonization is however a much broader phenomenon than the one depicted by those words.⁶⁴⁴ Peled and Shafir’s argument is a problematic one, and it leads to a theoretical weakness of defining *a priori* any settlement of “outsiders” in a populated country or territory as colonialism irrespective of its outcomes and further developments. One can provide more than one illustration of cases that can be depicted as *colonization without colonialism* even in an already populated country or territory. Among such examples are the Jewish settlements in Argentina;⁶⁴⁵ utopian socialist settlements such as *New Harmony*, or those established by followers of Charles Fourier;⁶⁴⁶ and settlements of religious factions like the Mennonites and the Doukhobors.⁶⁴⁷ Peled and Shafir thus present, from quite an opposite angle of Aaronsohn’s, a narrow definition of colonization.

It is also problematic of course to include the above mentioned cases of *colonization without colonialism* as well as Aaronsohn’s examples of colonization, in the same category as Zionist colonization in Eretz Yisrael/Palestine. New and additional typologies of colonization are needed beyond those known and suggested thus far. A distinction should be made between different types of colonization according to their outcomes: between a colonization in which the settlers became the dominant majority group, and the founders of a new society or state while dispossessing and/ or displacing the local indigenous population (like the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand): a *displacing and a new society or state founding colonization*; and all other cases of colonization or settlements that do not have such outcomes: a *community founding colonization*. This distinction just focuses on the different outcomes of colonization without declaring that the settlers (and not the indigenous population) bear the main responsibility for the displacement; or determining whether it

was done intentionally or as an outcome of “unintended consequences.”

It should also be mentioned that almost all criticisms raised against the colonialism thesis focus on the definition of colonialism and its compatibility with Zionism, the Yishuv, and Israel: they leave almost unaddressed the main substantial argument of the supporters of the colonialism thesis regarding the dispossession and displacement of the local indigenous population by the settlers. The debate is thus more semantic than substantive.

Conclusion

Two major approaches are discernible in the colonialism debate on Zionism, the Yishuv and Israel: a deterministic approach and a non-deterministic approach. The former argues that Zionism is a colonialist movement, and Israel a colonial state. Moreover, Israel, as a colonial state, is seen as quite a necessary outcome of the Yishuv and of the Zionist movement. Colonialism, and its features, is the main phenomenon that links Zionism, the Yishuv, and the State of Israel, and it links together all the sub-periods of the Yishuv and Israel's history. The main arguments raised in supporting the use of the term colonialism in the case of Zionism, the Yishuv, and Israel are that we have here a case of (1) a group which is coming from outside and is settling in a country/territory already inhabited by another group or population, and of (2) the “forced” dispossession and displacement of the indigenous population by the immigrant-settlers who become the dominant majority group.

Supporters of the non-deterministic approach see in 1967 (and the settlement project in the West Bank which the state is increasingly supporting) a major turning-point in Israel's history. Those observers contend that Zionism is not a colonialist movement and that until 1967, the Yishuv and the State of Israel were not colonial. However, supporters of that approach argue that the West Bank settlement project is a colonial enterprise, increasingly supported by the state, and Israel can be seen now as a colonial state. Meron Benvenisti

rejects the “colonial situation” approach, and asserts that the border separating Israel and the West Bank is based on too short a time-period, and therefore cannot serve as an appropriate psychological effective barrier such as the Gibraltar Strait between France and Algeria. Moreover, it is problematic to speak of colonialism when part of the capital city, Jerusalem, belongs to the mother-country, and another part to the “colony.”

A major shortcoming of the interpretations of Rodinson, Shafir and the settler colonialism theory is that they are too rigid and deterministic. There is substantial confusion and non-clarity among scholars regarding the use and applicability of the notion settler colonialism, in general, and it thus raises serious questions as to its applicability for understanding the Yishuv and Israel. The approach that sees the Israeli case as similar to those of the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand is ignoring the fact that, contrary to those cases, in the Israeli case one does not witness a clear victory of the settlers over the indigenous population. However, one should also mention that even critics of the deterministic approach acknowledge the importance of a comparative outlook on Israeli society, as well as the legitimacy of the colonialism or colonization comparative perspective.

Two important aspects distinguish between Rodinson and Shafir regarding their understanding and definition of colonialism. Rodinson’s definition attaches great importance to the existence of a mother-country and to domination, and by doing so he is following the prevalent “classical” understandings and definitions of colonialism. His definition, in other words, is a “narrow” definition of colonialism. Shafir excludes both the existence of a mother-country and of domination as necessary and crucial components of the definition of colonialism. Shafir also suggests widening the definition and including in colonialism also cases of dispossession, displacement, and expulsion of the local population by settlers. In other words, Shafir’s definition is a “broad” definition of colonialism.

A principled and theoretical criticism that was and can be raised against Rodinson, Shafir and other supporters of the

thesis linking Zionism and Israel with colonialism is that they tend to use the terms colonialism and colonization interchangeably, and hence do not distinguish properly between the two. It is also argued that theoretically it is important to distinguish between those two terms, that represent distinct phenomena, and that such an analytical and theoretical distinction has its merits and can add accuracy and subtlety to the analysis.

In defining colonialism Aaronsohn emphasizes the role of a state, which is absent from Shafir's considerations and definitions. Hence, while Shafir's typology and analysis may suggest new insights regarding phenomena and developments in the pre-state period, its analytical and theoretical strengths are diminishing in analyzing phenomena and developments in the state period (from 1948 onwards). In that respect, Aaronsohn's typology and model, after making some amendments which are needed to eliminate its weak aspects, can provide us with tools and notions for analyzing the post-1967 situation (with the growing involvement of the state in the West Bank settlement project, for example). Those cannot be adequately or satisfactorily provided by Shafir's model and typology (which, contrary to Aaronsohn's model and typology, are not attentive to differences between colonizations and situations according to the state's involvement or non-involvement).

Aaronsohn's understanding and definition of both colonialism and colonization is a "narrow" one, whereas Shafir's understanding and definition of colonialism is a "broad" one and of colonization a "narrow" one. The cases to which Aaronsohn compares the Yishuv, as well as his other exemplary cases, do not include those cases of colonization where European settlers became the dominant majority group and the founders of a new society and state (like in the USA, Canada, Australia). Shafir presents, from an almost opposite angle to Aaronsohn's, a narrow definition of colonization. New and additional typologies of colonization are needed, beyond those known and suggested thus far. A distinction is suggested between two different types of colonization according to their outcomes: a *displacing* and a *new society or*

state founding colonization and a community founding colonization.

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47. What Do Those Who Claim Zionism Is Colonialism Overlook?

Tuvia Friling

This paper was completed in September 2014. This article is based mainly on Friling 2003 and its participating scholars.

The historical, methodological, ideological, and political background

The debate over whether the Zionist movement is just one more incarnation of colonialism comes down to a polemic between the so-called “new historians” and “critical sociologists” on the one hand and the “establishment historians and sociologists” on the other. The debate, pursued in both public and scholarly forums, largely reduces to arguing the extent to which the Zionist revolution has clean hands, the legitimacy of the State of Israel, and the ways in which the revolution was implemented in practice. It is a tense and potent clash involving not just historians and sociologists but also literary figures and journalists, both those with academic positions and those outside the academy. The group I will call the “affirming post-Zionists” argue that Zionism played a vital role in the Jewish people’s history, but that it has nearly achieved its goals, or has already,⁶⁴⁸ and has thus become redundant.⁶⁴⁹ The anti-Zionists, or what I will call “denying post-Zionists,” maintain that Zionism has been a negative force in Jewish history, the State of Israel, and the Middle East. That being the case, it would have been better had Zionism never been born. But, since what is done is hard to undo, the State of Israel needs to be dismantled as quickly as possible, or at the very least decent people should divest themselves of it. In the opinion of this faction, Israel, Zionism’s principle product, does not stand up to scholarly and moral criticism, and it is thus imperative that it vanish, just as

has happened with malign regimes and political and social entities such as South African apartheid.⁶⁵⁰ Those who reject this comparison note that the denying post-Zionists disregard the costs paid by other peoples, even the best of them, in the process of nation and society-building. Furthermore, they overlook the opposition of a majority of the Zionist camp, throughout its spectrum, to viewing the concepts of *jus sanguinis* – the right of blood – and *jus soli* – right of soil as absolute, excluding all other claims to the land. With this more malleable and relative perspective on the Jewish claim to the Land of Israel, the Zionist mainstream, whatever its disagreements, could lend its support to all the proposals raised from time to time to partition Palestine into a Jewish and Arab state.⁶⁵¹ Some of the participants in the debate are politicians. Others are scholars who are also political activists, while yet others are scholars who claim to perform real research and journalists with pretensions to scholarship.

Such a dense and charged fabric of ideological, historical, and methodological threads keep this public and academic debate alive, and in varying proportions also fuel the debate on which this article will focus – the question of whether, and to what extent, Zionism is colonialism.⁶⁵²

What is colonialism?

The source of the concept “colonialism” comes from the Latin word *colonia*, ‘settlement’ or ‘colony.’ In the 18th and 19th centuries the term came to designate the process by which an industrial, developed, and militarily powerful state seized control of a part or all of another state by dispatching settlers from the home country or empire to its colony. While there was colonialism in the ancient world, the concept is largely used to designate a phenomenon that began in the 16th century and took on new meaning in the 19th. Industrialization and the emergence of capitalist societies produced a need for new markets, raw materials, and cheap labor, all of which could be found in colonies. In many cases settlers were sent to them or went of their own volition to foster these new markets, extract raw materials, and exploit or export cheap labor (in the form

of slaves or servants). These colonists buttressed the control of their home countries and economies over the colonies' economic and other resources. The process of colonial takeover was massive, sometimes violent, and often accompanied by contention or war between rival powers vying for territories in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Countries such as Britain, France, Holland, Portugal, Germany, India, China, Japan, Turkey, and Russia became colonial powers. At the end of the 19th and through the 20th century, colonialism and imperialism became a central component of international politics and relations. When the United States and Soviet Union joined the imperial club decades later, these powers ruled over most of the world's territory. Arab countries were also colonial, battling each other over a reallocation of spheres of influence in the world, power bases, and industrial and economic circles of influence, using their political, military, economic, and social power.

Colonialism took different forms. In some places the mother country or power took full control of a weaker territory. In other places the colonial country established more limited control over a vassal state. In some places the colonial country wielded, for the most part, only economic power, whereas in others it assumed military and political control as well. In certain places colonialism included the settlement of population from the home country in the colony, often to relieve the pressure on home economies where there was not sufficient employment for the population. In some cases the power or mother country allowed only its own citizens to settle in the colony. In others it permitted the settlement of people from other countries in its sphere of influence.

Colonial powers also treated natives in different ways. In some places, the new settlers murdered the local population en masse, expropriating their lands and property. In other places, settlers did not kill the natives, but denied them their human and political rights. In still others, the natives were left largely untouched. There were even places in which emissaries from the foreign power helped reinforce internal stability and avert civil wars between communities, tribes, and religious sects. In these latter cases, the indigenous population was not harmed

so long as they evinced no opposition to the new settlers and to the rule of the country that sent them. In many cases, these different approaches operated side by side. In some lands, colonial states catalyzed modernization, developing physical infrastructure, expanding education and health systems; establishing rules and regulations governing religious sites, observances, and minorities; and instituting other important services.

Some colonial countries and powers presented ideological justifications for their colonial enterprises. Some proclaimed the principle of “might makes right,” that strong nations had a natural right to rule over weak ones. Others proclaimed that they were taking up the “white man’s burden” by bringing civilization to primitive peoples. In this view, the colonialists’ mission was to educate the natives and endow them with modernity, democracy, or Communism, or other gospels, or to bring them the ostensibly true religion, or a truer and better form of the religion they already practiced. The “white man’s burden” approach implied that colonial powers had not only the right but also the duty to rule other lands. It goes without saying that this way of thinking incorporated a belief that the colonizing power was superior to other nations, and that its presence in other lands was important to and of great benefit to the subject peoples.⁶⁵³

What are the principle claims of those who argue that Zionism is colonialism?

When the new order in the Middle East came into being following World War I, the Palestinian national movement presented itself as a national liberation movement battling a Zionist movement that operated, as the Palestinians perceived it, in the service of and as part of the European colonialist invasion of the region. That incursion began, in the Palestinian view, in the 1880s under the aegis of the waning Ottoman Empire, and continued when the Zionists and British allied in pursuit of their mutual interests. This view was voiced as early as the first Palestinian National Congress, convened in Jerusalem at the beginning of 1919. At this time, however,

colonialism was still considered legitimate. As such, their claims struck no chord and most of the international public viewed the Arab issue as marginal in comparison with the plight of the Jews, even before the Holocaust, and all the more so afterward.⁶⁵⁴

Concisely, here are some of the claims and arguments for what is termed “Zionist colonialism”:

– The essence of Zionism is the immigration to and settlement of Palestine by a foreign population. In this they were no different from the Spanish conquistadors in South America and Mexico, the European pioneers in North America, and the Europeans who conquered Southeast Asia, Australia, and Africa.⁶⁵⁵

– While the plight of the Jews in other lands certainly spurred them to emigrate and seek another home, Zionism inevitably negates the Palestinian relationship with their native land, and thus the political aspirations of the Palestinian Arab population that was already living there. It has deprived them of their human rights, expelled them from their homes, confiscated their property, and settled Jews on their land.⁶⁵⁶

– The Balfour Declaration of 1917,⁶⁵⁷ one of the conditions attached to the mandate that the British received from the League of Nations in 1920 to rule in Palestine, for all intents and purposes stripped the Palestinians of their political rights. By making one of the purposes and goals of the British Mandate the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine, the colonial regime rejected the national and political desires of the indigenous population, denying independence to the population that constituted a large majority in the territory at that time. It did so while promising independence to a different nation, one that was meant to immigrate to Palestine. During the 1920s and the first half of the 1930s the British pursued a manifestly pro-Zionist policy that permitted free Jewish immigration and furthered massive Jewish settlement. Neither did they restrict the flow of Jewish capital into Palestine, or make any effort to pursue equality for the Arab population. Resistance activities by the Arabs were suppressed harshly and violently by the British authorities.⁶⁵⁸

– The Zionist movement conditioned any agreement with the Arabs on full realization of Zionist goals. It made no real effort to compromise. Most of the leaders of the Yishuv – the Jewish community in Palestine – either treated the Arabs, their leaders, and their natural rights dismissively or recognized that there were fundamental contradictions between the interests of the two parties. The latter view led to the belief that the Yishuv could protect itself and further its national goals only by force. Both approaches were clearly colonial. The few voices that rejected these approaches and demanded that Zionism pursue a different, anti-colonial policy were marginal and did not succeed in gaining any real political support in the Yishuv. Such was the case, for example, with Brit Shalom, which in the 1920s proposed a binational Jewish-Arab state.⁶⁵⁹

– While the British from time to time placed restrictions on the Yishuv's conduct and growth (beginning with the immigration limits included in the Passfield White Paper of 1930), the Jews generally managed to get them revoked. In 1936 the manifestly anti-colonialist Arab Revolt broke out, with the goal of national liberation from British rule and an end to the Jewish national home policy that allowed massive Jewish immigration. The British, however, repressed the revolt and its failure was emblematic of the failure of the Palestinian national movement as a whole.⁶⁶⁰

– The Zionist settlers dispossessed and ejected the Palestinian natives from their lands and their country. Their settlement in Israel is like that of the Boers in South Africa. The Zionists claim that they fairly purchased land in Palestine, but this was no different from the purchase by the United States of the Louisiana Territory from France in 1803, and its purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867. The Zionist plan was, in fact, to ethnically cleanse the country, the Zionist ethos being based on a rejection of the other. True, some Zionists arrived in Palestine with a certain European-style romantic yearning for the Orient, but they too exhibited a sense of superiority and cultural arrogance. Furthermore, Israel's melting pot policy following independence, aimed at oppressing the Jews who arrived in the country from the Muslim world, was part of the same colonialist spirit.⁶⁶¹

– The Zionist settlers robbed the Palestinian natives of their livelihoods. The Jewish farmer who settled in Rosh Pina and the socialist pioneer who joined the Degania commune were no different from the Dutch settler in Indonesia or the French settler in Algeria – all of them robbed the natives of their jobs. The Jewish treatment of Arab sharecroppers was no different than the way American settlers treated the Hispanic population in Texas. The colonial aspect of Zionist settlement was already in place from its earliest beginnings, during the First Aliyah that began in 1882. Those Jewish settlements depended largely on money from Europe – from Baron Rothschild specifically – and were founded on the employment of cheap local Arab labor. During the Second Aliyah, in which many Jewish immigrants arrived intending to put socialist principles into practice, a different but no less insidious model of colonial settlement and expropriation was put into place. This could be called the “pure settlement colony,” in which both the employers and employees came from the settler society. This model served Zionist demographic interests, enabling large-scale Jewish immigration, on a foundation of manifest discrimination against the native Arab population. While this approach differed from the classic colonialist model, which was based on exploiting native labor, it would be a mistake to think that Zionism was not colonialist. After all, the purpose of this model was to further full Jewish control of the country, and to serve as a basis for the establishment of a Zionist political structure.⁶⁶²

– Like all colonialist settlers of that time, Zionist settlers relied on an imperialist power, Great Britain. Even socialist Zionism, which led the society and state-building process that brought about the creation of the Israeli state, ultimately served British imperialist interests, the culmination of which was the Sinai Campaign of 1956, in which Israel joined forces with the British and French to maintain colonial control over the Suez Canal. The 1967 War was simply a continuation of the Sinai Campaign – the first sought to defeat Gamal Abdel Nasser’s anti-colonial Arab nationalist project, and the second achieved that goal. In short, colonialism was part and parcel of

Zionism during the Yishuv period, and the regime that came to power with the establishment of the state took full advantage of the country's colonial nature to pursue an evil militaristic policy.⁶⁶³

– Theodor Herzl, the father of political Zionism, viewed the exodus of Jews from Europe as a way for them to adhere to European culture. He aspired to a Jewish state of an entirely Western cast, established under the sponsorship and with the consent of the imperialist powers. The Jewish state would not only save the Jews from physical danger, but would also serve as a white, European beachhead in the Orient. It would be an extension of Western civilization that would educate the indigenous Arab population and lead it out of backwardness. The Arabs could therefore only be grateful for the benefits that Zionism would bring them. Chaim Weizmann, the leading Zionist figure in the generation that followed Herzl, aspired to “an imperialist synthesis between England and Judaism, [which] would be the greatest thing one could imagine.”⁶⁶⁴

– Zionism's starting point, as formulated by Israel Zangwill,⁶⁶⁵ was that Zionism was the national liberation movement of a “people without a land” settling in a “land without a people.” Even after Zionists came to recognize that there was, in fact, a native population, it gave little regard to Arab demands and made no real effort to recognize Arab rights. While there were Zionist thinkers who already at an early stage took up the issue of the Arab population, but they did not take Arab desires and demands into account in fashioning their political programs. Zionism aimed to achieve Jewish sovereignty in all or part of Palestine, a goal that clashed with the desire of the Arabs who lived in the country and made it impossible to bridge between the most basic demands of the two groups.⁶⁶⁶

– Zionist historiography separates Zionist history into two ostensibly separate subjects. The first is Zionist settlement in Palestine, which assumes that the country was empty. The second is the history of the Jewish-Arab conflict, which is portrayed as detached from the subject and nature of Zionist settlement. This creates a distorted picture of both. European

culture's crises cannot serve as a sweeping justification for disregard of the implications of the Zionist movement's actions for the Palestinian population. From the point of view of the latter, Zionism constituted the settlement of Europeans in their land, under European protection, at their expense and without any consultation.⁶⁶⁷

– Signally, the language used by Zionist settlers to portray their settlement project was manifestly colonialist. Zionist settlements were called *moshavot*, the Hebrew word for 'colonies,' and the organization that took over the funding of the settlement enterprise from Baron Rothschild was the Jewish Colonization Association, the name of which clearly expresses the legitimacy of colonialism. Zionist terminology was also full of terms expressing force and victory, speaking as it did of the "conquest of the desert," the "conquest of labor," and the "conquest of guarding." Is it not astounding, the critics of Zionism note, that the first word that a Zionist said when he arrived in Palestine was "conquest," or in its more modern translation, "occupation"?⁶⁶⁸

– The Zionist movement established administrative, financial, labor, and military bodies charged with taking control of Palestine's governance, economy, job market, and land. For example, the National Council assumed self-governing powers over the Yishuv, Keren Kayemet Le'Yisrael (Jewish National Fund) was charged with purchasing land for settlement, the Histadrut promoted Jewish labor at the expense of Arab workers, and the Hagana (the Yishuv's militia) wielded military force to promote Zionist rule.⁶⁶⁹

– The historiographic project pursued by the Yishuv following the Balfour Declaration and World War I aimed to exclude the Arabs from the country's history. The land was portrayed as having been continually Jewish, on the grounds of continuous Jewish habitation, or on the grounds of a continuous Jewish attachment to the land, manifested in longing and repeated waves of immigration. The emphasis on continuity and attachment was aimed at reinforcing the Jewish right to the land. Historiography as enlisted in the Zionist movement's political activity. Biased and enlisted portrayals of

the past served as a basis for the Zionist demand that British policy in Palestine disregard the national feelings of the majority of the country's population, and reject their right to a state or other sort of political entity of their own.⁶⁷⁰

– Those who had trouble or did not want to recognize Zionism's colonial nature before the Six-Day War were compelled to do so by the Greater Israel that emerged following 1967. The Israeli occupation of the territories it captured in that year turned into "Israel's Vietnam." Israel's failure to live up to the moral promise of Zionism disappointed and disgusted many of its young people.⁶⁷¹

What do those who see Zionism as colonialism ignore?

Those who reject the claim that Zionism is nothing but a Hebrew incarnation of colonialism explain that the use of that term to describe, analyze, and evaluate Zionism does not arise from the need for a sharp, productive, and objective theoretical tool that can be used to analyze and explain the building of the Israeli nation and society and the price that its citizens and neighbors in the region had to pay. The fact is that since the 1950s and early 1960s, which saw the "decolonization" of the Third World, the term ceased to be merely a scholarly label used to denote a historical phenomenon composed of an entire range of associated material phenomena – geographical, political, economic, and social – as well as psychological and ideological manifestations. Instead, outrage and disgust at the phenomenon has welled up, overflowed, and adhered to a formerly neutral concept.

It has thus become a concept that contains an explicit and a priori moral condemnation of Zionism and the State of Israel. As such, its adoption and use by scholars who identify Zionism and colonialism are no coincidence. Post-colonial guilt feelings, which in the 1960s could be found primarily in the French and British left, later reached the United States, where they were channeled and pasted on the Zionist movement and the State of Israel, so as to tag them with a

tainted phenomenon that declared that its birth and future were illegitimate.

A long list of injustices committed by the colonial West (and who said only the West?) has been invoked and used to enumerate the sins and crimes of Zionism: the slave trade, the extermination and economic exploitation of indigenous peoples, the shattering of local identities and cultures, and the denial of political rights, including the right to independence and self-determination. History, mobilized first to pass judgment on the West and its colonial past, was then applied in the same way to the Zionist project and the harm it has done to its “peaceful” neighbors in the Middle East.

This unholy alliance between the post-Zionists and anti-Zionists serves them both. Together they depict the Palestinians as the victims of Western imperialism and colonialism, via the West’s Zionist agents. Together they claim that these “new Crusaders” are doomed. Almost all other national liberation movements, the posts and the antis point out, have achieved their aims and ejected foreign colonial invaders. The Palestinians will be no different. The paradigm of a an underdog Palestinian national liberation movement battling the forces of powerful oppressive Zionist colonialism perfectly fits the prejudices of those who prefer, both methodologically and politically, to look at history as a heroic saga rather than to delve into its complexity.⁶⁷²

Many of the advocates of this thesis admit either explicitly or implicitly that, in fact, Zionism exhibits only some of the characteristic traits of colonialism, and that the Israeli state founded in 1948 did not develop into a colonialist entity. Yet they continue to trumpet the comparison, knowing that the very fact of making it delegitimizes Israel no matter what the facts of the case. They thus deliberately disregard the truths concisely offered below.

What was the “colonialist” Zionist community, really?

Comparative study of processes, phenomena, countries, societies, movements, and institutions can be fruitful in historical and sociological research so long as its practitioners remain aware of the methodological and other problems it involves. Such comparative study also requires expertise in the fields being compared. In the case before us, it requires thorough knowledge of the history of Zionism, the Yishuv, and the State of Israel, as well as the history of at least one example of colonialism. A scholar with such expertise would realize that there is a problem with pinpointing and defining what precisely constituted Yishuv society in its early stages. During most of the relevant period the Yishuv was an embryonic entity, difficult to define, still in the process of formation, crystallization, and fulfillment. Its original kernel was the tiny Jewish community, the Old Yishuv, which existed in Palestine prior to the onset of Zionist immigration. It was an insular community with a primarily religious sense of mission, living off charity from Jewish communities overseas, with good relations with its Muslim neighbors. Most of its members shared few of the intentions and hopes of the Zionist camp.⁶⁷³

Around this community other blooms sprouted, coming from innumerable directions, a plethora of cultures and languages, which joined and integrated into the existing community during the process of building Zionist society and culture, with nearly every new wave of immigration having its own special impact on the existing Yishuv society.

This community, the object of the debate over “Zionist colonialism,” numbered, prior to World War I, 26,000 Jews of the Old Yishuv and 64,000 Jews who had arrived during the First and Second Aliyot, for a total of 90,000. By the end of World War II there were 475,000 Jews living in Palestine, and just after Israel’s declaration of independence in 1948 they numbered 700,000. This was the result of five or six waves of immigration over the course of half a century, in a process spurred by attraction and slowed by repulsion. It came from the dreams of generations, religious and messianic longings, economic distress and repression in the countries where Jews lived, the rise of modern national movements and Herzl’s vision and activism, the work of other Yishuv leaders and the

movements, institutions, and organizations that stood behind them. The Jews who arrived were immigrants inasmuch as they were motivated by their economic plight or the lack of any other destination. But the motivation that impelled most of them to the Land of Israel was ideological – as evidenced by the fact that, in Hebrew, they called themselves *olim*, ‘ascenders,’ a word with religious and ancient historical roots adopted by Zionism.⁶⁷⁴

Britain’s and America’s blunt bayonets

The immigration, or Aliyah, that the post- and anti-Zionists claim was the product of “Zionist colonialism supported by the bayonets of British imperialism” was, in fact, hedged in by the British as early as the 1920s (first by Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill’s White Paper of 1922, then by Lord Passfield’s White Paper of 1930). In other words, the ink on the Balfour Declaration was barely dry when Jewish immigration had to fit into the parameters set by the British – which were meant, when all is said and done, to keep the Arabs a majority and ensure their rights. Immigration was further restricted during the Arab Rebellion of 1936–1939, after which the White Paper of May 1939 cut it to 75,000 over five years, only 15,000 a year. The years were further divided into sub-periods of three or four months, so that the number of Jews who were found to have entered without permission could be subtracted from the next sub-period’s share. All this was done to ensure that each year’s and the full five-year quota would not be exceeded.

Immigration ceased almost entirely during World War II. This happened as the Yishuv, as part of the anti-Nazi, anti-Fascist democratic West worked with the British, overtly and covertly, to defeat Hitler. Despite this cooperation, the British leadership hardly danced to the Zionist tune. We now know that both the Americans and the British secretly conditioned their participation in the Evian Conference, convened in July 1938 by the Western powers to find a solution to the European refugee problem, on the elimination of two subjects from the agenda – British immigration policy in Palestine and

American immigration policy to its own shores. These conditions were imposed by two great powers that supposedly sided unreservedly with Zionism. In fact, they stripped the conference of any real significance. The Bermuda Conference convened in April 1943, also by the democratic Allies, came to an end without making any practical and meaningful decisions regarding the refugees. This failure came when the world already knew what the fate of the Jews trapped in Europe would be if they were not allowed to flee. American refugee policy did not change during the war, nor after President Franklin Roosevelt's establishment of the War Refugee Board in January 1944, which was charged with examining ideas for rescuing the remnants of European Jewry that remained in danger areas. The Jewish Agency Executive sent Shalom Adler-Rudel to neutral Sweden twice, in March–October 1943 and the summer of 1944, so as to promote a plan to save Jews, but both missions failed because the Western Allies would not provide Sweden with guarantees that they would provide financial support for Jewish children it allowed onto its territory, and to remove these children from Swedish territory after the war.⁶⁷⁵

At the end of the war, following the accession of Clement Atlee's Labor government in Britain, in which Ernest Bevin served as foreign secretary, Britain made no change in its immigration policy in Palestine. The operation to bring rescue to Jews from Europe and bring them to Palestine despite British restrictions was a direct result of this policy by the ostensibly "pro-Zionist" Labor party, on the bayonets of which, so the anti-Zionists and post-Zionists argue, the Zionists came to Palestine.⁶⁷⁶

The Zionist movement in fact benefited from a pro-Zionist British policy for only 15 years, from 1920 to 1935. During this period the British granted legal backing for the establishment of the Yishuv's institutions, and during periods of economic crisis, such as the Third and Fourth Aliyot, also provided financial assistance, assisting in the creation of the central political, socioeconomic, and cultural frameworks that enabled the establishment of Jewish autonomy in Palestine. Yet they did so while restricting immigration. After that time,

which included the tenures of high commissioners that were hostile to Zionism, the British continued to restrict immigration, claiming that they had already carried out the promise of the Balfour Declaration.

As the post- and anti-Zionists would have it, the Zionists operated in a vacuum, free to dispossess and expel the Arabs, without any constraints. Such a view has no basis in the real world. In fact, the Zionists operated in an arena in which many forces were at work, including the Palestinians, their leaders, and their supporters, who strove, with considerable assistance from the British Colonial Office and other forces in the government, army, and British public, to constrict the Zionists' freedom of action. They had considerable success. When the Arab Revolt broke out and the Palestinian leadership sought to establish political and ideological connections with Italian Fascism and Nazism so as to fight both the British and the Zionists, the British suppressed the rebellion with an iron fist. But at the same time they sought to pacify the Arabs via the White Paper and its far-reaching concessions to Arab interests at the expense of the Jews.⁶⁷⁷

The British searched for and confiscated Jewish arms and instituted emergency regulations that enabled it to restrict Jewish freedom and arrest its leaders before, during and after World War II. Two Jewish militias, Lehi and Etzel, fought the British, and after the war were joined by the mainstream Yishuv defense force, the Hagana. The British captured and imprisoned much of the Zionist leadership in Operation Agatha of June 1946, called the Black Sabbath in Zionist parlance, causing the Hagana and Aliyah Bet – the operation to bring Jewish refugees into Palestine despite the British restrictions – to relocate their headquarters to Paris. The British captured and diverted ships bringing Jews to Palestine, sometimes violently, as in the case of the “Exodus.”⁶⁷⁸ The claim that the Zionist movement served as an arm of British imperialism and that enjoyed the automatic support and backing of British governments is thus disproved by an entire list of events and phenomena.

Space is too limited here to list all the hostile acts the British committed against the Zionists during Israel's War of Independence and in the country's early years. Suffice it to mention that the British energetically sought an Arab ally to invade Israel, and thus to stymie UN General Assembly Resolution 181 of November 29, 1947, which partitioned Palestine into Jewish and Arab states. It did so even though such an invasion meant putting an end to any hope of an independent Palestinian Arab state. The Alpha Plan, an American and British initiative that proposed an Israel-Arab peace treaty involving Israeli territorial concessions, shows that, in the early 1950s, neither of these countries considered Israel a natural and automatic ally. If Britain had a puppet in the region at the time, it was King Abdullah of Jordan, whose regime was founded on the Arab Legion, which operated in every way as an arm of the British military.⁶⁷⁹

Neither does the claim – made both explicitly and implicitly – that the United States, the leading symbol of imperialism, manipulated Zionism for its own purposes in the region accord with the facts. The efforts made by Ben-Gurion and his colleagues in the Yishuv's intelligence services surrounding the Biltmore Conference of May 1942 to persuade American intelligence agencies that the Zionist movement could be a valuable partner in the anti-Nazi effort in Europe, as well as in the Middle East, Asia, and North Africa, ended with an American shrug. They were not persuaded by what Ben-Gurion and his associates told them about Jewish communities around the world, the Israel offices in Europe, the Zionist cells in occupied Europe, and the common Zionist and American interest in defeating Hitler. For years thereafter the Americans continued to see Ben-Gurion as an extreme socialist with sympathies for the Soviet Union and Menachem Begin, commandant of Etzel and later leader of Israel's opposition and then prime minister, as a terrorist. The establishment of the Sonneborn Institute and other elements of the covert Zionist weapons procurement operation following World War II and prior to Israeli independence show that the United States did not permit the Zionist movement to ship American arms to the Middle East.⁶⁸⁰ Furthermore, the staff of the State

Department opposed any open support for Israeli independence, both in the run-up and as part of the UN General Assembly debate that led to the partition resolution, even after the British evacuated Palestine. The State Department did not simply express polite diplomatic opposition to the idea. It warned, openly and behind the scenes, that if its proposal for an extension of the Mandate in the form of a “trusteeship” were rejected, the US would not come to the aid of the Yishuv if and when the Arab states invaded.

Israel’s tilt toward France during its early years was the product of the explicit American refusal to arm it. The American arms embargo was enforced at the same time that the Soviet Union, via its Czechoslovakian vassal, was supplying Egypt with large quantities of high-quality arms that were changing the balance of power in the region. The charge that Israel joined an imperialist-colonialist plot against Gamal Abdel Nasser on the eve of the Sinai Campaign shows itself in a new light given studies that have concluded that the principal cause of Ben-Gurion’s willingness to join an alliance with Britain and France, other than opening up the Red Sea straits that Nasser had closed, reopening the Suez Canal, thwarting guerrilla attacks against Israel, and dealing with the Egyptian military threat created by the Czechoslovakian arms deal was France’s promise to provide Israel with the necessary knowledge, technology, and components for gaining nuclear capability. The purpose was to ensure that Israel would be able to survive in this hostile region, without having to depend on strategic depth that would require control over territories densely populated with Arabs. Israel’s desire was not for territory or rule over Arabs. On the contrary, it wanted a deterrent that would enable Israel to live securely within its post-1948 borders without having to rule over a foreign people.⁶⁸¹

Ben-Gurion, the Zionist leadership, and the Jewish people had learned this lesson during World War II, just as great democratic leaders like Roosevelt and Churchill had. During the darkest moments of the war, which took a bloody and expensive toll on their own countries, they only naturally

sought, first and foremost, to act in the interests of their own peoples and nations. Clearly it was not advisable, then, for a nation constructing a picture of its future and considering its chances of survival in periods of trial and serious crisis to depend on the willingness of large countries – no matter how enlightened and democratic they were – to come to its aid whenever needed, in all circumstances, no matter what the price. Ben-Gurion thus did not place his own and Israel's future in the hands of the Allies. He chose the opposite strategy, one tailored for dark days. Since Israel could not be assured of assistance when it needed it, it had to make appropriate arrangements.

At least until the mid-1960s, then, the reigning great imperialist power displayed no interest in embracing and empowering the country that was supposedly its client in the Middle East. Ben-Gurion's trips over the Atlantic in an attempt to gain the US as an ally were fruitless. His turn to France, as well as to the "new" Germany with all the bitter connotations that held, were thus not a product of an inborn tendency to zigzag or a misunderstanding of Germany's historical responsibility. In contrast with the way colonial theorists would have it, none of the powers viewed the Yishuv and State of Israel as a natural client state, the only one available to it in the Middle East. On the contrary, the Zionist leadership had to beg and plead to gain such support, so as to enable it to overcome its difficulties and gain a nation-state for the Jewish people in Israel, and to enable it to ensure that that state would not be lost soon after its creation.

Land theft

Another argument made by those who equate Zionism with colonialism focuses on Jewish expropriation of land, dispossessing the native Palestinian Arabs. But a close examination of this issue shows that Zionism operated quite differently from colonial movements on this score. Zionists purchased land rather than seizing it, at least until 1948. All the most respected clans of the Palestinian elite – the Hussayni, Nashashibi, Abd al-Hadi, al-Alami, Tabari, al-

Shawa, Shukeiri families, and many others – sold land to the Zionists. They might have fiercely opposed the Jewish national movement, but they could not refuse the temptation of selling the Jews land as prices rose thanks to Zionist demand.⁶
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Land can only be purchased with the consent of the sellers and by obtaining the money needed to buy it. Had the Zionists not had to depend on land they purchased, presumably settlement could have proceeded at a more rapid pace – but even then it would not have resembled standard colonial practice, which was to seize for settlers and colonial enterprises whatever land the invading power desired.⁶⁸³

Up until 1948 the Zionist movement and its agents purchased land from everyone who was willing to sell it. When Israel declared its independence and war broke out, circumstances changed. The state took possession of land, villages, and property belonging to Arabs who fled or were expelled. Public lands were nationalized and, at times, private lands were expropriated. Private landowners were compensated by the state – a practice that is hardly typical of a colonial power. Land purchases continued after the establishment of the state, extending into Judea and Samaria after 1967. Arab land sellers could always be found, even during the tensest and most acrimonious periods of the conflict. Some of the transactions were done covertly, and in some cases, especially in recent decades, they involved forgery and fraud. The Palestinian Arab leadership sought to thwart such deals, using violence and even murder to do so, but these measures did not succeed in halting land sales, which continue to this day.⁶⁸⁴

The nature of Zionist settlement and Jewish-Arab competition in the labor market

Another central charge in the indictment of Zionism as colonialism focuses on the labor market. The charge is flawed in at least two respects. First, it exaggerates the real extent of such competition by disconnecting the economics of the

subject from its demographic, political, military, and chronological contexts. Competition in the local labor market in a country in which there are 90,000 Jewish settlers is in no way like the competition when the Yishuv numbered half a million. Also important to keep in mind is that between these two periods changes occurred in the type of settlement and the ideologies on which they were based. On this point, and on others, those who claim that Zionism is colonialism have refused to consider data that does not support their argument.

The socialist Zionists, or at least for the great majority of them, were not interested in depriving Arabs of their jobs, nor were they interested in using the Arabs as cheap labor. These Zionists rather sought to upend what they saw as the traditional Jewish class pyramid, in which few Jews engaged in productive labor and many made their livings as speculators, middlemen, and merchants. The point was to make the Jews more productive.

The Arab laborer did not suddenly become expendable, despite the socialist Zionist campaign for an autonomous Jewish economy. There was no competition because of structural facts that were not necessarily dependent on or connected to Zionist desires and plans.

The economy of Palestine during the Mandate was indeed divided on a national basis. Each people was characterized by a different set of occupations, but the link between this and the kinds of markets characteristic of colonial societies was weak and largely coincidental. Furthermore, and this is no small thing, the very idea of competition for jobs between “whites” and “natives” could not even be conceived of by the rulers of colonialist societies and countries.⁶⁸⁵

“A land of milk and honey”

The Zionist enterprise differed from typical cases of immigration also in that the target country, despite being referred to in the Bible as “a land of milk and honey,” was in fact a poor country of few resources, undeveloped, flowing with neither milk nor honey. The Europeans who settled in

lands rich in natural resources and poor in laborers knew how to exploit their resources. In contrast, the Jews immigrated to Palestine, a land too poor to support even its original population.

The Jewish settlement of Palestine moved capital in the opposite direction from that characteristic of colonial projects. It invested Jewish capital in the country, and did not extract resources and profits so as to send them elsewhere, to empires or outside investors, private and institutional. Zionism was not an effort to enrich the country that sent the immigration, nor did its settlers seek to get rich. For a long time it was not even profitable. The imperial powers generally exploited their colonies in order to enrich their home countries and did not invest in their colonies more than what was needed to take advantage of them. The flow of Zionist capital into Palestine was one-way, and the great amount of capital invested there compensated for the lack of natural resources and accelerated modernization processes that had begun at the end of the Ottoman period and continued through the British Mandate. Except in cases where settlers were motivated by missionary ideals, ideology did not play a role in colonial projects, nor was capital invested in colonies to expand their own economies. Yet both these were the very essence of Zionism.⁶⁸

6

Unlike European settlers in other places, the Jews who settled in Palestine generally cut their ties to their home countries and their cultures. They revived ancient Hebrew and used it as a foundation for the creation of a modern national language spoken by Israel's inhabitants. They laid the foundations of a new, rich, and flourishing culture. While the Hebrew revival began in Eastern Europe and preceded Zionism, the Zionist movement and the Yishuv brought it to fruition. Colonial settlers generally fled miserable lives or sought to make their fortunes. The Jews who came to Palestine also had such motives, but they also had another one that distinguished them from colonial movements – they sought to revive an ancient national heritage. This, too, erodes the comparison between Zionism and its implementation and European settlement in colonies.⁶⁸⁷

The Jewish-Arab conflict and its affect on Yishuv society

Another issue that plays a large role in this debate is the claim that, despite its socialist ideology, the labor movement had little regard for the Arabs. This camp, with all the influence it wielded over a century of Zionist settlement, let – so the critics charge – nationalism blind it with regard to the harsh social, national, and moral injustices that Zionist settlement inflicted on the Arabs of Palestine. Some mainstream Zionist scholars, the charge goes, have also been contaminated by their Zionism and thus deliberately disregard the Peel Commission’s conclusion that, as one study put it, “the time has indeed come to recognize that the true nature of Palestinian citizenship is a legal formality devoid of any moral content.”⁶⁸⁸

The wealth of documentation regarding the conflict, as well as the many studies it has produced, offer a different picture. True, right-wing Zionists invoked the Jews’ historical right to the Land of Israel and secure borders. But all other Zionist leaders, from the center and leftward, each in his own way, accepted the need for compromise and peaceful coexistence with the Palestinian Arabs. This was true even of those who did not cast off their belief that, in principal, the Jews had a right to all parts of the Land of Israel.

Senior Zionist leaders made a plethora of statements about compromise as a plan of action, but nothing of this appears in the writings of those who view Zionism as colonialism. Yet the evidence indicates that the majority in the Zionist movement made a strategic decision to accept a two-state solution, one based on a separation of populations and partition. This was the consistent position of the labor movement – a movement that, it must be remembered, was manifestly anti-colonialist. The claim that the labor movement, which bore the banner of settlement, was a vanguard of Zionist colonialism has no foundation.⁶⁸⁹

The idea of two states side-by-side emerged from the labor Zionist desire to shape a new Jewish identity. It was an ideology that sought to create in the Land of Israel not just a

democratic and egalitarian society, but also, as noticed, a social structure that would invert the Jewish class pyramid. The goal was for Jews to engage in all occupations, including manual labor.⁶⁹⁰ The socialist Zionists sought to build a broad base of Jewish workers in all economic sectors, as opposed to European societies in which the Jews were a minority that worked primarily in trade. One of the sacred values of the labor movement drew its inspiration from both nationalism and socialism – without a working class, an independent Jewish society could not arise. Furthermore, from the socialist point of view the proletariat represented the class of the future, which would guide the revolution and establish a classless society. Until then, it was the chosen class, the creator of assets through its labor, and free of exploitation of the labor of others.⁶⁹¹ The upshot was the need to consolidate an autonomous Jewish class structure alongside that of the Arab population. This would create a situation in which goods, capital, and labor could be exchanged by two separate economic and political structures, even if only in a limited way, without glaring exploitation and without aggression on either side.⁶⁹²

This was one classic and central strategic decision, as the Yishuv had other options. The first of these was a policy of full subjugation of an Arab population that would be stripped of political rights. The second was a policy of displacement, that is of forcing the Arabs out. A third was the creation of a binational state. The first was not realistic during the Yishuv period, even if some extreme right-wing Zionist groups aspired to it. Most scholars agree today that some Arabs were expelled by Zionist forces during the War of Independence, in addition to those that fled of their own volition. But the questions of the number of deportees, and of whether the expulsion had been planned in advance, are still under debate. Even those who claim that the Jewish forces deliberately sought to get rid of the Arab population by spurring flight and active expulsion agree that these operations were of limited scope and geographic extent, and thus were not an overall policy.⁶⁹³ The third option, proposed as early as the 1920s by Brit Shalom and its supporters, had also come up in the

framework of the partition plans proposed in the latter part of the 1930s, and was even discussed in the context of the Biltmore Program. The Socialist-Zionist Hashomer Hatzair movement supported it on the eve of the War of Independence. While the first two were theoretical possibilities until 1967, the majority of Jews in the Yishuv and the State of Israel did not see them as consistent with their view of Zionism.⁶⁹⁴

Unlike white societies in former British dominions, Zionism put limits on itself by adopting democratic principles of self-determination. This was why it sought to achieve a Jewish majority in Palestine before taking on self-rule and sovereignty. In fact, it viewed a Jewish majority as a condition of sovereignty and believed that it could and should be achieved through immigration, not expulsion or murder, as settlers in the United States did with the Native Americans and those in Australia with the Aborigines. Unlike the Spanish and their heirs in the Americas and other continents, Jewish immigrants to Palestine did not arrive armed to the teeth in order to take the land by force from its inhabitants. The normalization of the Jews and the construction of their new identity were viewed by the early waves of immigration as first of all a return to manual labor, not to militarism. Up until World War I few Zionists aspired to the establishment of a military force, and even toward the end of that war enlistment in the Hebrew Battalions was controversial among the young Zionist pioneers.⁶⁹⁵

The claim that Zionist parlance was replete with terms of aggression, militarism, and conquest, and thus another example of Zionist-colonialist discourse, turns out to be tenuous when the terms are placed in historical context. For example, up until 1948 the Hebrew term *kibush*, ‘conquest’ or ‘occupation,’ was applied to the desert, to manual labor, and to grazing. Its most military use was to advocate that Jewish guards should be responsible for the protection of Jewish settlements. Military terms such as “battalion” and “company” were used for labor teams, not army units.⁶⁹⁶

The exclusion of the Palestinians from the Israeli narrative

Another charge made by those who seek to equate Zionism and colonialism is that history as written by Zionists and their sympathizers following the Balfour Declaration sought deliberately to exclude the Arabs from the history of the Land of Israel. Such writers have sought to portray the land as having been Jewish from ancient times, and that Jews have continuously inhabited it. Such continuity, along with constant Jewish longing for the land and immigration to it, is meant to support the Jewish claim to the land. There is by all means some truth to this claim about how Zionists have written history. But no matter how concerted the Zionist historiographic effort was, it seems unlikely that Herzl, Weizmann, Jabotinsky, and Ben-Gurion waited around for scholars to complete their studies and formulate their conclusion. It is even more doubtful whether British statesmen and officials read any of the works this scholarly project produced when they made their decisions.⁶⁹⁷ Long before the Zionist project began, and certainly before it was completed, these leaders argued that the Jewish people were inseparably linked to the Land of Israel. They did so in and outside the Yishuv, in Zionist and Jewish forums and also in international ones. They conducted a titanic political and public relations effort to persuade everyone whose support for the Zionist enterprise was considered important.⁶⁹⁸

Ben-Gurion himself, whether in his appearances before the Peel Commission or the later Anglo-American Commission, as well as in other arenas in the Yishuv and elsewhere, hardly waited for Zionist historical findings to mature. Instead, he evoked the Bible. There he also found the question that stood, and continues to stand, at the foundation of Zionism. Why did Abraham leave a fertile and rich land of high culture such as Mesopotamia for a poorer and more backward place like Canaan? He supplied the answer – unlike the standard colonialist project, Zionism did not steal from or take from the land. Quite the opposite – it gave to and invested in the land it settled.⁶⁹⁹

Ben-Gurion and other Zionist leaders thus did not use Zionist historiography and did not wait for its major practitioner, Ben-Zion Dinur,⁷⁰⁰ to declare the Jewish people's right to the Land of Israel. It was Jewish history, not Zionist history that provided the basis for the Zionist claim to the land. Zionist diplomacy preceded by a generation the writing of Zionist history and it influenced the historians more than it was influenced by them. For example, Dinur's articles on the Jewish connection to the land and to Jerusalem were based on documents submitted by the Jewish Agency to British commissions of inquiry that visited Palestine, rather than the opposite. Zionist historiography was not meant "to persuade the British," who in any case did not read it.⁷⁰¹

The Six-Day War – the watershed

Following the Six-Day War of 1967, Israeli public and scholarly discourse grew heated over issues of ideology, principle, and morality. The debate was a response to the rise of the Gush Emunim settlement movement and the establishment of Israeli settlements in Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip, and to the First and Second Intifadas. These debates enlisted new scholarly works on colonialism. I will conclude with the Six-Day War, which was a watershed in Israeli history.

Israel's presence in the territories it took control of in 1967 was called "occupation" by one side of the debate and "the liberation of historic parts of the Land of Israel" by the other. Israel's establishment of civilian settlements in these territories was viewed by one side as the logical and necessary continuation of the Zionist project by one side, while the other side, in particular the Zionist left, saw it as a moral deviation, a betrayal of core principles of democratic Zionism. The left failed to stop the occupation and the construction of ever more settlements. In fact, some of its representatives in government played a central role in the settlement project. The result was that disappointed leftists began to see rejection of Zionism as an attractive emotional and scholarly response.

As the settlement project expanded and the voice of its supporters became more prominent, and as tensions between the settlers and the Palestinian population in the territories increased, the left found it more and more difficult to identify with and adhere to the Israeli-Zionist nationalism that it had previously advocated. As national symbols were misused to justify what they saw as an ongoing infringement of human rights, as, in their view, Israeli nationalism became sullied by the occupation, and as Gush Emunim's members seemed ever more like fanatic nationalists disconnected from reality, nationalism became repugnant and more difficult for the left to integrate with its advocacy of democracy and universal rights. The Zionist left was thus placed in a complicated position. Those who remained Zionists had to make it clear that Jewish nationalism based on occupation and settlement of the territories was not their sort of nationalism. They proclaimed their loyalty to the Jewish state within its 1967 borders but not to a Greater Israel that encompassed the territories. The anti-Zionist left rejected all these "buts." Nationalism of all kinds was the root of all evil, and the proper response was to uproot it.

The Six-Day War was a golden opportunity for scholars, both opponents of Zionism and right-wingers. For anti-Zionists it was an opportunity to consolidate an ideological, and political alternative research agenda that could clarify the roots of Zionism and the State of Israel. It centered on the question to what extent the two were a type of Western colonialism in the Middle East. As part of this, the settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were presented as a manifestation of the settlement ethos that had been central to Zionism from its inception. That claim was easier to make because it was proclaimed explicitly by Gush Emunim, which called the settlement project "true Zionism," a natural extension of the establishment of kibbutzim and other settlements in the pre-state period, of Jewish settlement in Haifa and Jaffa, and of the foundation of the first Hebrew city, Tel Aviv.

The reason the right made this connection was to legitimize Jewish settlement in the territories. Opponents of

Zionism and advocates of the “Zionism is colonialism” claim also harked to the past, connecting the aftermath of 1967 to the dawn of Zionist settlement in the early 20th century, and to Zionism’s and Israel’s founding fathers and mothers, so as to delegitimize Israel from the start. Both sides make the same connection between past and present.⁷⁰²

The crafters of the post-Zionist view pounced on this reductive view of Zionism, realizing just how well it served their purposes. They conveniently disregarded the fact that the Zionist mainstream has always maintained that the moral basis of the Jewish national movement was from the start the universal right of all peoples to self-determination. Instead, both the nationalist right and the anti-Zionist left claim that the founding principle of Zionism was a claim of an exclusive Jewish right to the Land of Israel. Yet the Zionist mainstream remains committed to the principle that the Jewish state must be a democratic state (despite the inevitable tension between the commitment to a Jewish state and a democratic one). This means that the Jewish claim to the Land of Israel must be subordinated to the universal right of self-determination. The labor movement, representing the vast majority of Zionists in the Yishuv and during the first three decades of the State of Israel, rejected nationalism based on blood and land and always accepted the principle of partition and compromise. Hence the bizarre alliance between those who charge that Zionism is colonialism and the current settler movement. Both camps have taken a principle that was never a central tenet of the Zionist movement and made it into the core of their versions of Zionism. The alliance has served as fertile ground of the creation of two contradictory schools of history, each tailored to the needs of its advocates’ politics.⁷⁰³

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48. Post-Zionism and Its Moral and Political Ramifications

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This paper was completed in March 2015.

Introduction

This paper seeks to examine the meaning of post-Zionism and explore the foundation of a trend that became very prominent in the Israeli academic and political scene over the last two decades. This paper argues that post-Zionism is an incoherent intellectual orientation that challenges the moral and political foundations of the Zionist movement and the State of Israel, its Jewishness and its meaning for Jews and non-Jews in the surrounding environment. This reflection on the rise of the Zionist movement and its practices pose questions regarding the consistency between the moral and political discourse of the movement and its practices. These reflections were extended to include questions of legitimacy and security since post-Zionists, who provided very basic research in the fields of history, morality, sociology and politics, argue that warfare and force do not guarantee the security of Jews and cannot legitimize their rights. Thus their own criticism undermines mainstream Zionism that intermingles might and right. Self-reflection, it is argued, is a precondition for improving Jewish reality and closing the gap between the rights of Jews for security and self-determination and the universal ideals of equality and sovereignty. Therefore, post-Zionists do not stop at this instrumental utilitarian point but seek to establish a positive moral argument that does not sacrifice all that has been achieved so far, and calls for its transformation under certain circumstances in order to reconcile it with universal human values.

This paper addresses the necessary discrepancies in post-Zionist and Zionist discourse by characterizing the former

through an exploration of their greatest points of contention – their respective orientations toward time, space and morality. Zionist thought is inclusive of a number of dimensions – moral, ontological, epistemological, etc. Over time, it sought to justify itself in each of these domains largely through posturing that aligned with mainstream intellectual trends. This ongoing adaptation therefore resulted in highly sophisticated approaches to Jewish historiography and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which enabled itself to transcend empirical discussion and facilitate its physical and metaphysical expansion.

The following analysis is also a modest attempt to reconcile post-Zionism's various dimensions and interpretations by exploring its epistemological, ontological and normative foundations, while contrasting it with mainstream Zionism. The paper proceeds by laying out the dominant depictions of the post-Zionist trend in Israeli academic discourse, demonstrating the ways in which it is analyzed and characterized and whether it co-opts parts of it into mainstream Zionism or delegitimizes other parts by arguing that it is not intellectually coherent. After that the paper clarifies the basic pillars of the post-Zionist trend and demonstrates its fundamental break with mainstream Zionism. The paper ends with an exploration of the implications of post-Zionist arguments for the future of the relationship of Jews with their Middle Eastern surroundings.

Zionist views of post-Zionism: between cooptation and delegitimation

Since its emergence in the late 19th century, Zionism has undergone a series of reinventions in response to its various historical contexts. From political Zionism at the state's inception, cultural Zionism in the initial years of the Israeli state, post-Zionism in the last two decades to the emergence of its countering force, neo-Zionism, "mainstream" Zionism has taken many forms. Mainstream Zionism is a philosophical, moral and ideological trend that dominates the central institutions of the Zionist movement and the Israeli state.

Despite the fact that this is neither a consistent nor a coherent trend, mainstream Zionism has been able to continually define its ideological and political environment and classify itself based on its own conception of reality.

The literature dealing with Zionism speaks usually of two main types of classical Zionism – political Zionism and cultural Zionism – which are distinguished based on their orientations toward the “territory” of Greater Israel and the meaning of Jewish sovereignty.⁷⁰⁴ At the state’s inception, political Zionism, the purest and most positivistic form, derived legitimacy for the State of Israel based on its biblical connection to the land and, as a result of historical events, such as the Holocaust, necessitated its establishment as a haven for Jews.⁷⁰⁵ The impetus of the political Zionist project was to eradicate antisemitism and its effects on the Jewish people through the establishment of a legitimate state. A major feature of political Zionism, as opposed to any subsequent form, is the emigration of Jews from the Diaspora to the Land of Israel and the establishment of Jewish sovereignty, in which Jews finally live based on their own collective will.⁷⁰⁶

As the socioeconomic status of diasporic Jews began to rise – particularly those in Western Europe and the United States – many of the elements of political Zionism lost their salience in Jewish society. Antisemitism was not a matter of rule but an exception. Younger generations of Jews no longer had personal references to the Holocaust, experiences of antisemitism or a desire to return to their putative homeland.⁷⁰

⁷ Thus, cultural Zionism was reborn. Cultural Zionism has been for a long period of time a minor trend within the Zionist movement. Since Achad Haam in the early 20th century until today there have been voices that questioned the Jews’ need for sovereignty and viewed the State of Israel as a cultural center, whose main legitimacy is based on its ability to foster Jewish culture, thought and tradition. Cultural Zionism reemerged in recent years and no longer utilized this positivistic narrative, but an ontological one, justifying the state based on the necessity of a “spiritual center” for Jews in order to protect Jewish history.⁷⁰⁸ Cultural Zionists established

their arguments based on two fundamental conditions. First, they argued that political sovereignty should be no longer a primary element of Zionist discourse, since sovereignty has been achieved and secured. Second, the positivist orientation toward the land is no longer essential, since the legitimacy of the state and its continued expansion are justified and energies should be devoted to its cultural and moral character. Accordingly, the major focus of Jewish life should be measured by its development of Jewish culture and its capacity to provide answers to dilemmas that Jewish sovereignty raise vis-à-vis Jews and non-Jews.⁷⁰⁹

With the passage of the Oslo Accords came greater reflection of the Jewish people on the meaning of their Jewishness and its connection to Israel's borders, security and statehood.⁷¹⁰ Sociologists and historians began to re-conceptualize the identity of the state as one which had achieved its mission – ensuring the safety of its citizens and culture – and attempted to review foreign and domestic policy in an attempt to reconcile their existence with those living within and around Israel.⁷¹¹

As part of the internal debate about the identity, goals and practices of the Jewish state, new voices began to rise, questioning the foundation of the debate between political and cultural Zionism and expanding the realm of the dispute to new historical, moral and ideological levels. Post-Zionists questioned the official narrative of the Zionist movement and the collective memory of the Jewish public in Israel and sought to rewrite major parts of its history. These efforts have led to what could be depicted as *Historikerstreit*. Post-Zionists also questioned the moral foundations of Zionism and Israeli sovereignty and practices. They shifted their focus from territorial gains to issues of human rights, freedom of religion and association, and the right to security.⁷¹²

The recognition of competing national narratives poses a significant challenge to the identity of the state and its potential for reconciliation. Historical revisionists and critical sociologists have grown to prominence in modern academic literature since the 1970s and 1980s. Famous post-Zionists,

particularly in the West, emerged in historical and sociological domains, such as Hans Kohn, Elie Kedouri, Eric Hobsbawm, and Ernest Gellner.⁷¹³ Due to the recent opening of Israeli archival material, a strand of Jewish post-Zionist political journalists and academics have emerged as today's foremost historical revisionists, greatly surpassing the number of Arab or Palestinian post-Zionists and historians: Tom Segev (1984, 1986), Simha Flapan (1988), Benny Morris (1986, 1987, 2004), Avi Schlaim (1988), Ilan Pappé (1992, 1999, 2006, 2010), etc. This emerging criticism is more than a singular trend or short-term phenomenon. Despite the major differences between them, both Zionist and post-Zionist scholars have identified the construction of Zionism over time as a reflection of the political and nationalistic character of the time.⁷¹⁴

The reaction of mainstream Zionist intellectuals to the post-Zionist challenge was very critical. Many journal articles, books and monographs were published in order to argue against the post-Zionist critique of Zionism and Israel. Most post-Zionist thought was judged based on its measure of affinity with and loyalty to classical Zionist thought. Zionist thinkers wrote massive critiques on intellectuals that questioned the basic ideas of Zionism, arguing that such critiques should be judged based on the measure of legitimacy it grants to classical Zionism.⁷¹⁵ Hevda Ben-Israel mirrors mainstream Zionist view of post-Zionism, identifying three academic waves of post-nationalistic and post-Zionist discourse. Literary expressions question moral, political, spiritual and democratic implications of nationalism in the context of modern-day Israel.⁷¹⁶ The social sciences have witnessed an increase in publications on the social construction of Jewish nationalism, emptying it of its value and painting it a product of social, economic and material conditions.⁷¹⁷ Finally, post-Zionist narrative has evolved most problematically for Zionists, which are depicted as a tool for the elite in order to analyze history and exert control over its land and its citizens.⁷¹⁸ Tuvia Friling claims that post-Zionism is “a critique of what Zionism wanted to be but did not turn to be, of what Zionism turned [out] to be despite that it did not want to be what it became to be; it is a critique of a national

movement and a historical phenomenon that was sinfully born and constituted that is historically redundant and its future behind it.”⁷¹⁹ For Friling, post-Zionism means dismantling the current manifestations of Jewish nationalism and calling for just a normal state, disconnected from its traditional past and giving up on messianic aspirations and images.⁷²⁰ Accordingly, Zionist critique of post-Zionists could be summed up through the classification of post-Zionism into two strains of thought defined by the former as “positive post-Zionism” and “negative post-Zionism.”⁷²¹

According to this classification, those who did not oppose the historical Zionist movement – political or cultural – but believed its goals had been achieved with statehood and the passage of time were viewed as positive post-Zionists.⁷²² These individuals do not necessarily question the moral foundations or the legitimacy of Zionism, but seek to improve the quality of Israeli reality by introducing ideas based on liberal and democratic values. In contrast, those who are viewed as rejecting Jewish nationalism in all of its forms and believed the Zionist project to be inherently racist and colonialist were classified as negative post-Zionists.⁷²³ The positive post-Zionist movement has been viewed as one that raises legitimate debates because it does not question the morality of the Zionist movement and the legitimacy of the State of Israel. Because these are deemed legitimate, they can be incorporated into and remain within the realm of mainstream Zionist debate. In contrast, negative post-Zionists were delegitimized since they questioned Zionist historiography and its ideological assumptions and challenged them with empirical facts surrounding the Palestinian national narrative, positing that the State of Israel was founded on immoral grounds.⁷²⁴ In contrast, positive post-Zionism not only criticizes the post-Zionist critique and accuses it of either disloyalty or illusion, it also opens avenues of communication in order to verify the similarities and the differences between narratives and reach mutual understanding and common grounds.

The differentiation between positive and negative post-Zionism is a continuation of the epistemic orientation of mainstream Zionists to divide the world into friends and foes and manipulate reality in ways that match their worldview. It is based on modernist assumptions of the binary dichotomies of good and evil that work to establish its legitimacy by delegitimizing alternatives. It is important to clarify that Zionist and what they view as positive post-Zionist discourse place similar and great significance in the Jewish historical narrative as a legitimizing agent for the State of Israel and its domestic and foreign policies toward Palestinians. Both leverage biblical and Holocaust stories for the purposes of territorial expansion elevate the Zionist project to the level of universal, moral values.⁷²⁵ Similarly, both mainstream Zionists and positive post-Zionists, in an effort to reconcile the present with the past, came to view the Bible not as a map of Israel but of Judaism.⁷²⁶ While both streams support Jewish culture as central to the national ethos, mainstream Zionists criticize positive post-Zionists for emphasizing Israel's primary commitment to protect its citizenry, which is inclusive of Arabs, rather than focusing only on Jewish interests.⁷²⁷

In contrast, mainstream Zionists dismiss what they depict as negative post-Zionist views, based on the latter's orientation toward space. Negative post-Zionist's conception of space, more precisely the homeland is accused to be a result of competing equal narratives of history, thereby granting the Palestinian narrative full and equal status to that of Zionism. According to mainstream Zionists, negative post-Zionists not only dispute Zionist historiography, but emphasize its incongruity with modern ideological assumptions and their link to the land, referencing pluralism, equal citizenship statuses and integration, as opposed to isolationist policies.⁷²⁸

The substantive meaning of post-Zionism

Post-Zionists, by definition, are people who grew up in the Zionist movement or were educated in the Zionism system, but through exposure to competing historical narratives or personal observations of inequality or injustice, rendered

Zionist ideology as incongruent with their personal conceptions of morality or truth. They are influenced by the rise of postmodern thought, a mistrust of stable epistemological categories, and their differentiation between the view of reality and reality itself. They are not a homogenous group of intellectuals that can be categorized based on unified criteria.

The subsequent divisions, “positive post-Zionist” and “negative post-Zionist” have prevailed in Israeli discourse, largely because both Zionist and post-Zionist discourses have all been dominated by Israeli-Jewish, Zionist or former Zionist historians.⁷²⁹ In an effort to address Zionist criticism and so as not to lose its relevance in modern Israeli discourse, “positive post-Zionism” was born. This conceptualization enabled Zionist ideology to include, pervade and therefore protect itself from the impact of the growing post-Zionist movement by locating itself within the Zionist ideology. Positive post-Zionism, a more moderate and generous take on Zionism did not challenge the political or moral foundations of Zionism and was therefore looked upon favorably or “positively” by Zionists.

However, post-Zionism is, by nature, “negative” in the sense that it challenges and essentially negates the foundations of modern-day Zionism. The distinction between positive and negative, made by Zionists, was pursued in an effort to marginalize the harsher and more “problematic” strand of Zionist criticism, which highlighted the historic wrongdoings of Israel as the impetus of the Zionist project.

By making this distinction, the goals of Zionism, whether they were met, and the future of the movement were therefore established as internal arguments among the Zionist movement, as negative post-Zionists were effectively “othered” in the discussion.

These distinctions, favored in Israel’s modern, hegemonic society, effectively derail the ability for scholars and politicians to cooperate or reach agreements as to the present and future State of Israel. Neither group possesses a common framework on which it can base discussion. Jews are focused

on symbolic, religious and Jewish history in their existentialist reality and post-Zionists highlight territorial, empirical and Palestinian history. Recognizing positive post-Zionism as Zionism, one and the same, enables us to simplify the discussion, wherein negative post-Zionists (hereafter simply, post-Zionists) act as a “mirror” of the Zionist movement. By reflecting the empirical realities of Zionism, past and present, post-Zionists enable Zionists to see themselves and come to grips with the realities of their own history and its effects on others. Therefore post-Zionists enable Zionism to meet its own promises and the realities it created as a result of its constitutive foundations. Post-Zionists expose the gaps between what has been assumed and promised and the manipulations and interests that were behind such assumptions and promises. This deconstructive move renders Zionism empty of its romanticism and therefore it resembles any other nationalist colonial movement. The national narrative, the moral foundations of the collective presence and the practices of the state are analyzed through philosophical and theoretical tools that demonstrate their contradictions and lack of coherence. Such a move shakes the basic foundations of Zionists’ individual and collective selves and seeks to offer alternatives that meet universal ideals and values that guarantee a better type of salvation. Post-Zionism is not an alternative model of the current immoral reality, but a deconstructive effort that places Zionists in a labyrinth and demands serious treatment of the prevalent situation. This means that post-Zionism is not a mere political position or a methodological stance on history or politics. It is a deep philosophical movement that could be better understood when viewed from three interrelated avenues; namely its epistemological foundations, its ontological assumptions and its normative underpinnings.

The three dimensions

By redefining post-Zionism and locating Zionist history within the post-Zionist movement, three dimensions of post-Zionism can be derived from its orientations toward time, space and morality.

Epistemological

Post-Zionism's epistemic foundations are postmodern, in the sense that they adopt deconstructive analytical tools in order to reread Zionism and all of its related issues, such as the history of the Jewish people, the history and morality of the Zionist movement, the history and demography of the Land of Israel, the history of the Israeli wars and demographic policies, and the moral justifications of Zionism and Israeli policies toward Palestinians, whether under occupation or as citizens of the state.

Post-Zionism deconstructs the current establishment of the State of Israel as a Jewish entity, based on its various dichotomies asserted both within and beyond its borders. Post-Zionist academics and philosophers demonstrate how Zionism promotes social, historical, moral and cultural dichotomies as the major prisms for viewing the world, which both justify its existence and blinds itself to the realities of "others." Post-Zionists attempt to break down these dichotomies, demonstrating their self-construction and their justifications that legitimate its presence in an exclusive particular form; they also demonstrate Zionism's elevation of a Western self-image vis-à-vis the Orient, against Jews of Arab origin or Palestinians. Post-Zionists reflect on the patterns by which Zionism champions the division of the world into salvation and destruction, holy and secular, Jews and non-Jews, friends and foes, good and bad, moral and immoral, modern and primitive, and enlightened and terroristic seeking to paint itself the better of these combinations. Post-Zionists demonstrate how the construction of the Zionist narrative is based on these static dichotomies that depict Zionism as authentic and loyal vis-à-vis non-Jews, who may be partners, but can never become of equal footing.⁷³⁰

Another dichotomy deals with classical Zionism's metaphysical construction of reality based on a historical model of Israel that existed thousands of years ago, assuming that the establishment of the State of Israel is the re-building of its fallen temple, as though it is a matter of fact. This line of thinking as well as the assumption of a linear relationship

between biblical Jews that lived in Palestine 2,000 years ago and Jews that came from Europe, is committed to a modernist view of history as progressive and linear. In this view, the collective self plays the role of a historical agent and fights against different types of locks – human, psychological and cultural – that suppress its freedom and self-realization. The meta-historical narrative, in which one unified Jewish nation that undergoes a process of awakening and return to its authentic homeland, is deconstructed in order to demonstrate the gaps between the invented myths that have no empirical support – such as the Kingdom of David and Shlomo – and the political use of such myths, in order to provide an answer to people that face different forms of suppression and violence.

Post-Zionists deconstruct also the assumed superior, Western morality and the form of methodological nationalism that justifies its racial and territorial policies toward the Palestinian inhabitants of what is constructed as the Jewish homeland. This line of thinking, which divides the world and the land based on national affiliation – and Israel’s inherent status as a nation – elevates the rights and status of Jews at the expense of Arabs. The resulting backlash – antisemitism – is not viewed as a result of real racial and suppressive policies or behaviors, but because of inherent and essential antisemitic sentiments that build on the fact that Jews dared to assert their statehood. Post-Zionists deconstruct the essentialist nature of antisemitism that is embedded in the Zionist narrative and demonstrate why it is utilized in order to promote its claim that “the whole world is against us.”

An important epistemological contribution of post-Zionist thought is its clarification and falsification of the metaphysical foundations of Zionist thought by objecting to its assumed coherence between ideas and perceptions on the one hand and experience and practice on the other.

Post-Zionists introduce post-metaphysical philosophical foundations based on the claim that human perceptions of reality are a consequence of human communication and agreement rather than a strict analogy between perceptions and a real world. Analogical thinking, whether theological or national, is deconstructed, demonstrating the gaps between

what is perceived and experienced in the real world and patterns of political construction of a match between the imagined and the real, which is imagined but posed as real. Such a post-Zionist philosophical move demonstrates the power structure embedded in Zionist thought and its ability to turn images into reality and construct a collective consciousness that perceives invented myths as part and parcel of reality. Post-Zionists demonstrate that Zionism is based on magical thinking that seeks to intimate a productive relationship with a reality that was promised by a supernatural power and relies on faith to affirm basic unprovable assumptions, such as divine promise, the will of God. This magical thinking leaves no space for communication with those who do not accept its basic assumptions. The latter becomes a distorted experience that could and should be overcome in order to facilitate a connection between idea and experience. The analogy between the idea and the experience demands devoting energies, intellectual and material in order to maintain it as the logical and the major rational behind the self. In this context Zionist thinkers attempt to defend not the match between idea and experience, since there is not, but the effort to make this match the major parameter by which the real is examined. The domination of the tools and parameters of judging the analogy and the intimation between a productive relation and a supernatural reality is what is revealed by post-Zionist critique of Zionism, leading to the introduction of various analytical tools that defend this pattern of power.

Ontological

One of the most important contributions of post-Zionist thought is that it reveals the ontological commitments of Zionist thought. This contribution could be demonstrated by pinpointing three central Zionist commitments. The first has to do with the commitment to the idea of the Jewish people as a given classification. A major critique of such commitment is revealed in the theory of the “invention of the Jewish people,” in which the major contribution is not a lack of common origin for the Jewish people as conceived by Zionism, but the way in

which Zionist historiography managed to hide such a well-established notion and establish the common image of a coherent transhistorical nation returning to history after hundreds of years of being prevented from realizing its homeland.⁷³¹ According to post-Zionism, Zionism as a political theory could not have had any logical, empirical or moral standing if it were not committed to the existence of an entity that is identified as the Jewish people, as a coherent category. The Jewish people as an entity must exist and any doubt as to its coherence had to be omitted in order for the theory of return to hold water. Zionist thought argues that the empirical differences between different Jewish communities are a result of the dispersal of the people by force and the suppressive policies taken against these communities by various historical enemies. Zionism, therefore, is a theory of liberation that leads to the integration of exiles and the reunification of the nation, based on common values and a coherent connection to Jews in the past, enabling Jewish people to manifest themselves again in the current stage of human history. The commitment to the existence of the Jewish people as a coherent entity is deconstructed by post-Zionist thought, thereby making the entire Zionist movement questionable and its political justifications that emerge from this ontological commitment doubtful.

Another ontological commitment embedded in Zionist thought is that of the Land of Israel. This commitment is also a necessary condition in order for Zionist theory to make sense. If the commitment to the Jewish people brings certain challenges, the commitment to the Land of Israel as a physical space that is defined by the Bible introduces much more complex challenges and questions. The major challenge that is presented in post-Zionist critique are the borders of the land and whether the difference in their treatment is a matter of power or of principle. The relationship between the Promised Land and the evidence that exists as to Jewish presence on the land in the past becomes a serious challenge. What defines the land out of these two incongruent options, the Promised Land, the land ruled by Jews in the past or the land that could have been seized in the 1948 War becomes a very serious question.

Post-Zionists explore the contradictions between these various levels demonstrating the commitments of Zionist thought to an incoherent perception of the land that does not justify its ideological and political foundations. Another challenge posed by post-Zionist thought as to the Zionist commitment to the Land of Israel addresses the human presence on the land. It is well known that the Promised Land has never been empty of human presence. Non-Jews inhabited the land for hundreds of years, creating a certain bond that cannot be dismissed or belittled. A major post-Zionist critique of the Zionist commitment to the entity of the Land of Israel deals with the status of the demographic presence of non-Jews on the land and its impact on its nature. Zionist thought demonstrates awareness as to the presence of non-Jews in the Promised Land, but the extent to which it commits itself to this presence as part of the ontology of the place is doubtful. The land as a given entity is well established in Zionist thought, but it is a given that has a particular meaning based on the divine promise or on the centrality of the land in the identity of another ontological commitment, namely the Jewish people.⁷³²

The third Zionist ontological commitment that is pinpointed by post-Zionist thought is historical time. Post-Zionist thought demonstrates the Zionist commitment to a coherent temporality in which there are several national junctures that play a foundational role in the reemergence of the Jewish national consciousness and the return to history and homeland.⁷³³ Post-Zionists pinpoint the selectivity characterizing Zionist thought when it comes to time, demonstrating the arbitrariness of the choices made by Zionists and the possibility of reordering historical time, thereby demonstrating not only internal contradictions, but also the suppression of alternatives that may have enabled a concurrent view of time and its political implications. The ontological commitment to national time assumes that the presence of the nation is an agent of history that passes through various historical junctures and shapes its identity and commitments.

One of the major contradictions entailed in the ontological commitment to national time is the relationship between 1948

and 1967. The differences between these two historical junctures reveal the various perceptions of the nation and the meaning of its history, on the one hand and the impact they have on its future, on the other. The debate raised by post-Zionists as to the multiple temporal views embedded in Zionist thought and their implications enable a better view of the political construction of time, history and narrative and the lack of an inherent meaning of temporality that commits the nation to a particular national path. Having made this clear, post-Zionist exposure of the Zionist ontological commitment to national time opened the door for an alternative view of history of the land, especially from the point of view of its victims, namely the Palestinians. The presencing (i.e., making present) of Palestinian history and temporality has become part and parcel of the post-Zionist analytical view. The empirical evidence of the history of the State of Israel is reexamined, demonstrating two major points with tremendous ramifications. The first is the selectivity of the archival works done in writing the history of the Zionist movement and the gaps between the official discourse and the independent academic exploration of history. New historians demonstrated these falsifications introduced by institutionalized historians, who framed their research within the official narrative of history.

The second has to do with the critique of positivist historical research and the relationship between archival sources and power relations. Post-Zionist historians sought to expand the sources on which they rely in order to complement the depiction of history, since the official documents that could help in narrating the history of the Zionist movement, especially the 1948 War and the establishment of the State of Israel, are of the victorious side, silencing thereby the voice of the victims. The contributions of new historians did not ignore the moral implications of rewriting history, thereby humanizing not only the victims, but also humanizing the Jewish existential dilemmas, and made a clear difference between Zionism and Jewishness. This distinction must be made when dealing with the future, which does not have to be a continuation of the present.

Normative

Post-Zionism deconstructs the Israeli-Jewish national narrative by re-evaluating its symbolism. Israeli-Jews have dominated Zionist and post-Zionist discourse by relying upon its prominence in Western culture. Post-Zionism challenges this position by deconstructing the methods of study surrounding the national narrative and introducing alternative, normative approaches. The idea that power and force beget morality; that because Israel is strong, it is inherently right is also challenged. Post-Zionism asserts that liberal, Western morality and the assumption of clear right and wrong are not inherently superior to any other line of thought. In fact, Zionist discourse and Jewish history are located in the East, with many of its policies and patterns of behavior supporting tribal and non-democratic societal relations, or at least those which are more similar to its Arab counterparts than Zionists acknowledge.

In contrast, post-Zionism proposes a more relativist and proportional view, which is actually conducive to the Jewish national narrative if it comes to terms with its historical origins. Instead of relegating Zionism to a positive/ negative dichotomy as Zionists have done in the post-Zionist movement, it challenges proponents of either camp to derive its legitimacy not on metaphysical realities or power dimensions, but communication. Post-Zionism recognizes that ideals originate in society, and therefore can be developed through communication. This approach, which is much more supportive of Israel's ideal-type conceptualizations of the state and its democracy enable it to derive its legitimacy from its treatment of its most marginalized communities – the true measure of its morality and its moral compass. Post-Zionist discourse facilitates new discourse, which appeals to the rationality of Israeli-Jews in an effort to reveal common ground inside Israeli society, but not only. This common ground is the only avenue by which Zionists can truly establish its claim for legitimacy because it reconciles past and present realities without compromising its moral imperatives through continued occupation.

Post-Zionists have deeply related to the relationship between Jewish sovereignty and its treatment of non-Jews, both inside the 1967 borders and under occupation. The continued reliance of Israeli Jews on the duality discourse, which argues that Israel is a Jewish and democratic state, as if it is located inside the 1967 borders, while creeping into the areas beyond them and controlling and suppressing millions of Palestinians living in these areas, cannot hold anymore.⁷³⁴ Post-Zionists claim that mainstream Zionists have ignored this reality, despite the fact that it contradicts with moral values that justified Jewish sovereignty in the first place. Even when mainstream Zionists opposed occupation, they provided pragmatic justifications for its continuation, based on security considerations and blaming Palestinians for their reality.⁷³⁵ Post-Zionists criticized the normative foundations of the juxtaposition of the Jewish and democratic formula, demonstrating how this formula combines the procedural elements of democratic philosophy with the substantive dimensions of Jewish sovereignty, leading to justifying discriminatory policies that do not match the minimal ideals set forth by the Zionist movement. This critique demonstrates that the fundamental gap between what is sought and what is practiced is not a practical matter, but as much as a substantial contradiction in mainstream Zionist thought that promotes a close ethno-national perception of politics, emptying citizenship from meaning and placing organic identity as the main criteria of loyalty. Israeli Jews' inability to determine the future of the occupation of millions of Palestinians for almost five decades and the arguments made by Jewish settlers as to the differences between Jewish settlement in Palestine before 1948 and Jewish settlement in areas beyond the Green Line after 1967 demonstrate the contradictions of mainstream Zionism and call for fundamental change to the political reality in which Jewish rights must be guaranteed. In response to post-Zionist critique, the neo-Zionist narrative has emerged, which reaffirms Israel's legitimacy as a state and which reconnects Israeli Jews to the land, as in the time of the state's foundation and the political Zionist movement.⁷³⁶ Characterized by right-wing nationalist political parties such as the Likud and the Jewish Home, these groups reverse the

trend of cooperation with Arab Palestinians, positing Palestinians' incompatibility with Jewish-Arab coexistence as a derivation of antisemitism and render the entire population a demographic threat.⁷³⁷ Neo-Zionists' territorial ideology typically employs historic and symbolic discourse in support of the settler movement and its territorial claims to the land.⁷³⁸

Implications for the future

Despite the fact that the current reality was built on immoral grounds, post-Zionism recognizes that it would be inhumane to overcome it through dismantling it. Rather, post-Zionism is more forward-thinking. It does not dwell only on the justifications of its existence or seek to establish new divisions of "us" and "them" but appeals to a common ground upon which peace can be negotiated. Through mutual recognition, the establishment of a singular moral compass and conciliatory discourse as opposed to oppositional, a resolution can be proposed because it will take into account the realities and needs of all parties.

By opening avenues of communication and dismantling the rigid, dichotomous prism through which Zionism views and interacts with others, post-Zionism, in contrast to what has been delineated in the literature, is actually *positive*. Rather than serve as a form of criticism or inherent opposition, post-Zionism champions self-reflection, plurality and communitarian ideals.

Despite the burgeoning post-Zionist movement, it is still relatively marginalized within the mainstream Israeli political sphere and consequently its policies and Israeli society. Because the evolution of Zionism over time has adapted the Jewish narrative to one which is elevated above empirical argumentation, the contradictions within the post-Zionist camp and their inability to reconcile the past with the present has defeated any gains toward coexistence.

In summation, a critical examination of the evolution of Zionism leads us to recognize its conflictual manifestations over time. These manifestations have not led to peace or

advancement and have further muddled the discourse through its inherent contradictions. The new conceptualization of a simplified framework, post-Zionism, that enables parties to reflect on itself and its commonalities, that is conciliatory and that reduces anxiety, has the potential to bridge differences and pave a new path toward peace.

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49. The Debate over the “New Historians” in Israel

Anita Shapira

This paper is partially based on Anita Shapira, “Politics and Collective Memory: The Debate over the ‘New Historians’ in Israel,” *History and Memory* 7, no. 1 (1995): 9–40.

The stormy debate surrounding the “new historians” that raged in the Israeli press this past year has left many question marks in its wake. Despite the plethora of articles and discussions, published and unpublished, concerning it, the issues of the debate, its boundaries, essence and purpose remain unclear. It was fascinatingly obtuse and astonishingly passionate. Is the debate about facts, methodology, interpretation? Is it limited to the guild of historians or has it also spread to other disciplines? Is it a debate between schools of thought, between generations, between individuals? Does it take issue with the past, or with the present and future? And finally, who initiated it, and where is it leading? Answers to these questions may well clarify the nature of this debate and integrate it into Israel’s intellectual dialogue.

The debate began in the late 1980s, when books by Simha Flapan, Benny Morris, Avi Shlaim, and Ilan Pappé appeared in quick succession.⁷³⁹ Their publication was accompanied by proclamations in the press that a new school of Israeli historians had been born. Benny Morris, in an article in *Tikkun*, called them “the new historians,” and the name was adopted. It was applied rather loosely to various historians, all of whom had written about the events that had taken place between 1947 and 1952 and related to the founding of the State of Israel, the War of Independence and the agreements following it.⁷⁴⁰

Such intense involvement with these events comes as no surprise. Moments of historical breakthrough become the founding myth of the society in question and quite naturally arouse interest and curiosity. Even the timing of the

appearance of this group of scholars dealing with the 1948 War was predictable: under the 30-year secrecy law in Israel, it was only at the end of the 1970s that archival material from that period became declassified. Throughout the 1980s, relatively young scholars were occupied with examining these documents. The results of their investigations began to appear in the mid-1980s in Israeli academic journals, such as *Cathedra*, *Ha-Tziyonut* and *Studies in Zionism*. Some of their books were brought out by prominent British publishers and they began to claim that they were the first to have written the true history of the establishment of Israel. Moreover, they proclaimed that everything previously written on the subject was no more than Zionist propaganda, intended to present the founding myth of the state in a positive light, whether for internal consumption or as explanation to the outside world. Thus the debate began.

It soon became evident that it had ramifications extending beyond the events of 1948 and beyond the bounds of history as well. The dispute was taken up by sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, and scholars of the Middle East. It was related to another controversy, parallel yet not unconnected to the first, concerning the interrelationship between the establishment of Israel and the Holocaust, between Zionism and Diaspora Jewry. By association with another debate current in the Israeli press at that time, concerning postmodernism, those who adopted a critical attitude toward Israel and its policies were dubbed “post-Zionists.” The concept has never been precisely defined and different writers emphasize different elements as “post-Zionism.” Uri Ram, for example, demands recognition of the centrality of the national Jewish-Arab confrontation, of the changes in Palestine wrought by the Zionist movement and of the injustice inflicted on the Palestinians in its wake. He seeks to explain Israel’s situation within the context of the Middle East, in conjunction to problems created by the Zionist movement in that region, rather than to the situation in Europe and its effects on world Jewry.⁷⁴¹ In contrast, Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin sees a close connection between the behavior of the Zionist movement in the Middle East and its attitude

toward Jewish history and the traditional Jew. In his view the concept of “negation of Exile” engendered the insensitivity and lack of openness shown by that movement toward the “other,” whether Jew or Arab, and he proposes an alternative, positive approach to the notion of Exile to encourage tolerance in Israeli society toward types different from the “New Jew,” to grant them legitimacy in contemporary Israeli society and to restore them to the Israeli collective memory. He makes the plea for legitimizing other “collective memories” as alternatives to the Zionist master narrative.⁷⁴² Baruch Kimmerling contends that the central issue in the history of the *Yishuv* (Jewish community in Palestine) and the State of Israel is the Arab-Israeli conflict, as the principal nation-building factor. He rejects the use of the “Jewish uniqueness” paradigm to explain events in Zionist history and the establishment of Israel. Instead, he proposes the paradigm of colonialism, according to which Israel is to be viewed as an immigrant-settler society, similar to many others. Kimmerling urges the use of comparative methods to explain events which were formerly presented in sociological research as peculiar to Israeli society.⁷⁴³

This comparative analysis includes not only the status of the Palestinian Arabs, but that of various kinds of immigrants such as Oriental Jews and Holocaust survivors – a subject of central interest to sociologists such as Shlomo Swirski.⁷⁴⁴

Indeed, the term “post-Zionism” has varied connotations, ranging from a critique of Israeli research on the Palestinians and their treatment by the Zionist movement and Israel, to the demand for a completely new approach to the history of Zionism and the history and sociology of Israel. This approach reflects a fundamental change of attitude toward the Zionist enterprise: from regarding it as a positive and even important phenomenon in Jewish history and human history in general, despite the problems created by its implementation, to a view which, although accepting the fact that Israel exists, grants it no intrinsic value.⁷⁴⁵

The old anti-Zionism of the communist or Bundist variety or that of the New Left and “Matzpen” of the 1970s sought to

terminate the Zionist enterprise. This, however, is not true of post-Zionism. Its proponents do not question the existence of Israel, but their attitude to it is, at best, indifferent and, in more extreme cases, *a priori* suspicious and critical. Their intent is to point out the shortcomings of Zionism and Israel, the injustice inflicted on others, and the historical alternatives whose realization may have been thwarted by the actualization of Zionism. For some among them criticism of the past and present is a starting point for an alternative political program. Its agenda calls for a change in the nature of the State of Israel: the relinquishing of its ideological, Zionist component to become a secular, democratic state without any predominant national character – i.e., no more the “Jewish state.” The annulment of the Law of Return, which grants automatic citizenship to Jews coming to Israel and underscores the difference between their status in the country and that of Arabs, would manifest that change.

Post-Zionism and the 1948 War

The “generational” elements in the controversy are particularly striking. The vast majority of the “revisionists” reached maturity as scholars in the 1980s, some of them even in the early 1990s, while a few were already active in research in the 1970s. Most of them were born after 1948.⁷⁴⁶ The targets of their critique are for the most part writers and scholars who took part in the War of Independence, many in active military service. These scholars later served in the Israeli army’s history branch, thus having access to material that was, at the time, unavailable to others. However, they imposed upon themselves censorship of sensitive issues such as the expulsion of Arab residents of Ramle-Lyddā (Lod) and the treatment of the Palestinian problem in general.⁷⁴⁷ Israeli researchers (before the advent of the “new historians”) had generally regarded these works as preliminary and acknowledged that thorough research into the history of the War of Independence had yet to be done. After all, the IDF Archives have only recently begun to declassify material, and that process is far from completion. Thus, the “new historians” are challenging not so much historians or important historiographical works as

the images and myth of the War of Independence that have become rooted in the Israeli public consciousness.

Indeed, the debate is less about historiography than it is about collective memory. The current round exploded with renewed force in summer 1994 with the publication of an article by Aharon Megged in the newspaper *Haaretz* that accused the post-Zionists of delegitimizing Zionism and Israel. Megged, a well-known Israeli author active on the left wing of the Labor movement, was responding more to the articles by the “new historians” published in the press than to their books. He took issue with them not as historians or sociologists, but as spokesmen for an attempt to shape collective memory in a way he considered destructive. He sought to set his private memory in opposition to the historical version they were trying to imprint upon the Israeli public.⁷⁴⁸

Megged represented the basic ethos of the Palmach generation⁷⁴⁹ and the traumatic experiences that formed its world view: setting down roots in Palestine under the British Mandate, which was perceived as inimical and imperialistic; the Arab rebellion, which made the younger generation realize that the struggle between Arabs and Jews over the land was a matter of life and death; World War II, in which the world was divided between good and evil, with no shades of gray; the experience of Jewish weakness and impotent anger vis-à-vis the Holocaust; the War of Independence as the tragic and heroic climax of all that had preceded it. Deep anxieties and fears had accompanied at least the first stages of the war. Hence, the final victory had brought a sense of deliverance which endowed it, in the eyes of that generation, with transcendental meaning as an act of historical justice that was inexplicable in conventional terms. The “new historians,” in contrast, were born after the establishment of Israel; for them, it was a state like any other, with virtues and faults – and the latter had to be criticized and public opinion aroused against them.

Against the metaphysical explanation of victory in the 1948 War, they stressed the prosaic fact that at most stages, the Lord had stood by the strongest troops.⁷⁵⁰ This reduction of

Israel's victory to the pragmatic factor of greater physical strength, along with disregard for the sense of deliverance that came in its wake, characterizes the approach of the generation who did not experience that war. The Palmach generation had suffered the loss of friends and peers in what was the most difficult war, with the greatest number of casualties, in Israel's history. However, the new generation was less impressed by the 6,000 Jews who had fallen in that war than by the uprooting of approximately 700,000 Arabs from Israeli territory.

A typical example of this change in emphasis is Benny Morris's book on the creation of the Arab refugee problem in 1948. His conclusion that the uprooting of the Arabs originated in a variety of factors – acts of expulsion initiated by the Israeli government and army, spontaneous flight during the war, the disintegration of Palestinian society and the early departure of its leadership and elite – is indeed a reasonable one. However, his attempt to create symmetry between the acts and omissions of Jews and Arabs appears artificial; his assessment that there was no Israeli plan or blanket order to expel Arabs (as the Palestinians claim), on the one hand, and that the Arab leadership did not give the Palestinians orders to leave the country (as is claimed in Israeli propaganda), on the other hand, is problematic.⁷⁵¹ The two sides of the equation are unequal in weight. The former is of seminal importance, while the latter is secondary and has never been given much attention in research. Due to difficulties in accessing the Arab sources, but no less to psychological obstacles hampering Palestinian scholars when dealing with the subject, the role of the Arab leadership in 1948 is an issue that has yet to receive serious investigation.⁷⁵² Its replacement by discussion of the question whether or not the Arab leadership issued evacuation orders by radio is hardly satisfactory. Nonetheless, the very publication of Morris's book raised Israeli awareness of the disaster visited upon the Palestinians in the 1948 War. The basic facts had been known previously, but there is immense importance to the careful documentation of village after village, incident after incident. The details published about Jews slaughtering Arabs increased Israeli sensitivity to the fact

that the 1948 War had not been a war of the righteous against the wicked, a question of black and white, and paved the way for a more balanced view of the events.

Morris's shift in emphasis from the suffering of Jews to that of Arabs, from the heroics of the Palmach literature to descriptions of acts of cruelty and atrocity, was an inseparable by-product of the transition from one generation to the next. The younger researchers' discussion of the Arab refugee problem or the issue of agreements made or not made between Israel and the Arab countries following the 1948 War was conducted in the context of the reality of the 1970s and 1980s. They perceived the existential question, which had been a formative experience for the generation of 1948, as manipulative, intended to provide a moral basis for use of force to dubious ends. The balance of power between Jews and Arabs, which had been rather vague in 1948, was for them self-evident: Israel was the strong and aggressive side, while the Palestinians were the weak and injured. The younger researchers dismissed the contention that it was the Palestinians who had rejected the partition plan and begun the war and must therefore bear the brunt of their failure: some chose to ignore the circumstances surrounding the war's outbreak, while others stressed the so-called Zionist-Hashemite "collusion" which, according to them, had frustrated the establishment of a Palestinian state (although they themselves recognize the inviability of such a state in 1948). The essence of their criticism focused on the contention that ever since it had won the war, Israel had rejected peace, refusing to give up territories it had conquered beyond the areas allocated to the Jewish state under the partition plan, not allowing refugees back to their villages and, to prevent their return, destroying villages.⁷⁵³

While Megged and others of his generation primarily focus on war experiences, the post-Zionists deal mainly with what happened or did not happen after the war, with missed opportunities for peace and with the refugee problem. The analogy in their thinking that evolved, whether consciously or unconsciously, between the Israeli conquest in 1967 and Israel's behavior after it, and the events of 1948 and after,

leads them to ignore the fragility of Israel's existence in the early years, before it was accepted in the international arena as an unalterable fact. Indeed, only a small minority of Israelis regretted the flight/expulsion of Arabs or were willing to seriously consider their return in massive numbers. The borders established in the war's wake were considered the absolute minimum for the existence of a viable state. The justification for this policy was pragmatic, with the national, existential interest as the decisive factor. Forty years after the events, though, in the light of Israel's political and military strength and evidence of brutality against Palestinians in the occupied territories, those pragmatic contentions are rejected in the name of absolute moral principles. Accordingly, they claim that the expulsion of the Arabs and prevention of their return were unjustifiable under any conditions, even if they had been the ones to start the war.⁷⁵⁴

The "new historians" are not waging a campaign against the Israeli Right and its stances. The fact that for 15 years the Likud party, committed to a "Greater Israel" ideology, was at the helm finds no expression in the debate. Their lances are pointed against the Labor movement and its positions; the bad guys in the story are David Ben-Gurion and the old Mapai (Labor) party, and not Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir. This fact is puzzling, as we would expect the Israeli Right, which does not acknowledge any of the Palestinians' contentions, to be the ideological enemy of the "new historians." It seems, however, that their choice of the Zionist Left as the main target of their attack stems from the issue of ethics.⁷⁵⁵ The stance taken by the Zionist Left on the Arab question was always ambivalent: aware of the difficulty in striking a balance between the socialist and nationalist components of its ideology, it did not conceal the fact that, at the crucial moment, it would favor the nationalist component over the socialist one.

The idea of "Jewish labor," meaning the creation of a protectionist Jewish economy closed to Arab workers, was justified on various grounds. It was viewed as a moral necessity in order to educate Jews to toil the land, in the hope of avoiding the development of a colonialist-settler model in

Palestine, and as protection from the competition between cheap local labor and more expensive new-immigrant labor. The ineluctable fact remained, though, that Jewish socialist workers in Palestine did not uphold the principle of class solidarity, or even the principle of the fraternity of nations.⁷⁵⁶ That fact was a source of considerable distress and soul-searching that came to characterize the Labor movement. Indeed, the movement was not innocent of self-righteousness, although this fact actually testifies to its sensitivity both toward what, from its point of view, was perceived as the “Arab problem” and toward the issue of justice. Its leadership was aware that the very arrival of Jews in Palestine and the initiation of demographic and political changes there were detrimental to the status of the Arab population. It did not consider that injury to be equal to the catastrophe that would befall the Jewish people if it failed to establish a territorial and political hold in Palestine. However, it did recognize that in Palestine there existed a conflict between two “rights.”⁷⁵⁷

These historical circumstances are utterly rejected by most of the “new historians.” They are not concerned with the processes that occurred in Europe in the 19th and early 20th centuries which led to the emergence of Zionism and the desire to create a Jewish state. In their eyes, the problem of Palestine is isolated from the wider European Jewish context and stands on a different plane, that of the Middle East.⁷⁵⁸ As such, this approach undermines the moral basis for the foundation of a Jewish state and explains its existence in terms of power alone. For that reason they have no grounds for disagreement with the Israeli Right, who lay claim to the whole of Palestine, because it vindicates their own thesis. Rather, it is the Israeli Left’s complex, tortured view, riven with internal contradictions, which accepts some of the Arab claims yet at the same time bases its justification of a Jewish presence in the country on moral grounds, that draws their fire. They reject out of hand the claim that Zionism had not set out to usurp the Arabs, but was instead a movement built on certain ethical criteria that strove for a spiritual, social and moral renewal of the Jewish people, and that the trends toward use of force increased within it only over the years, as a result

of historical developments. According to their perspective, everything began in 1948. And what happened in 1948 was merely the inevitable result of Zionist policy from its very inception. They do not see two nations caught in a tragic situation which led to an unavoidable clash between them, but one completely innocent side and one completely guilty. The past is not discussed in and of itself, to be explained on the basis of the data and evaluations of the contemporaries of that period, but rather in accordance with the considerations and political agendas of the present.

Post-Zionism and postmodernism

Discussion of the attitude toward Diaspora Jewry takes place on two levels: that of acts and omissions, and that of mental makeup. Its role is to undermine the Israeli self-image as the savior of the “surviving remnant” of Jewry. The Arab refugee and the Jewish refugee – both become victims of Zionism. Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin has developed a cultural-political concept which attributes to the theory of “negation of Exile” a dual role: on the one hand, the repression of Jewish Diaspora experience as a positive and creative phenomenon in Jewish history and, on the other, the laying of the ideological foundation for removing any memory of the Palestinian story from Israeli collective memory. In its place, he proposes perceiving Jewish Diaspora experience not only as a legitimate way of life, but, in effect, as a form of existence derived from Jewish uniqueness, which he defines as a position of constant symbiotic opposition to actual reality. That, in his eyes, is the special moral position typical of Jews. Thus, the Diaspora way of life is not one forced upon the Jews, but rather an experience they chose of their own accord. “To choose to be a Jew is to choose galut [exile], and it means nothing else,” he states.⁷⁵⁹ Zionism, in contrast, which seeks to recreate for Jews a territorial national reality, to enable them a “total Jewish experience,” by its very nature causes the rejection and repression of other options of Jewish existence.

Raz-Krakotzkin writes metahistory, as if the events of the last two centuries, with all their agonies and tribulations, did

not happen. The alienation which – according to most testimonies – was the formative experience of Jewish life in the Diaspora, especially in Eastern Europe, and which still exists to a certain extent even in today’s open, assimilatory societies, takes in his writings the form of ethical-theoretical social criticism and loses the tragic, existential dimension that in fact characterized it. The Jew as victim becomes an ideal. The aspiration, according to him, is “to renew the sense of exile here in Israel, without forgetting those still in a state of real exile, the oppressed of the Third World, the inhabitants of the refugee camps.”⁷⁶⁰ In other words, galut existence as a metaphor of moral sensitivity and openness to the other is a positive attribute – which is not the case of real exile, unless a different rule applies to the Jew than to other people. He presents the historiography of Yitzhak Baer and Ben-Zion Dinur, which emphasizes historical continuity and Jewish history as national history, as “adopting the historical model of the victors.” The concept of “negation of Exile,” he contends, “prevented relating to the collective aspirations of the local Arab population and its viewpoint,” and thus, “the Arab presence did not create openness to a dialogue that could serve as a formative basis for Jewish self-awareness, and no attempt was made to adapt Zionist ideals to the local population and its culture.”⁷⁶¹ This assertion is truly ludicrous: how could Zionist ideals be adapted to the local population unless the Jewish newcomers relinquished their aspirations for a Jewish entity? And what possible connection was there between the obvious animosity between settlers and natives in Palestine and the “negation of Exile”? Raz-Krakotzkin presents the “negation of Exile” as the reason for the refusal to acknowledge the tragedy that the establishment of Israel brought upon the Palestinians. In his opinion, the question of “who is to blame” for the war is posed from the perspective of the victors, while the true question should be who the victim was. Hence, the question is not “what really happened?” but rather how the memory of the past molds the present.

Politics and collective memory

Raz-Krakotzkin's thesis reflects erudition and intellectual daring, as well as total detachment from history as it occurred. He clearly demonstrates the postmodernist influence on history: there are no events, people, reality, but only texts and their interpretation. Thus, every text is equal in value to every other, and each construct is equally legitimate.

As we have said, the concept "post-Zionism" was created in an associative context with the debate in the Israeli press on the issue of postmodernism. Some of the post-Zionists like to present themselves as postmodernists. But are they really an Israeli branch of that trend?

The link between the "new historians" and postmodernism is not self-evident. The attack on Zionism or "old" Zionist historiography is launched in the name of modern values such as humanism, equality and democracy and is far from any cultural nihilism, which dismisses absolute values in favor of a relativist approach to culture, politics and ethics.⁷⁶² This distinction, though, was blurred in the heat of the debate, which quickly became a discussion on questions of historical methodology, relativism versus objectivism, and the meaning of historical truth. The standard bearer of deconstructionism among the "new historians" is Ilan Pappé. His approach does not seem to be rooted in a crystallized postmodernist world view, but stems more from the question of what role ideology should have in historical representation.

The issue of uniqueness

One of the contentions most often made by the post-Zionists is that traditional historiography tended to see the history of the Jews, Zionism and the State of Israel as a unique phenomenon and thus developed a particular conceptual system that stemmed from the self-perception of the Zionist state-builders and does not answer to universal criteria: instead of analyzing Israel as a society of immigrant-settlers in the context of colonialism, it developed a unique concept of a nation returning to its ancient birthplace and employed a system of loaded concepts such as *aliyah* (immigration to the "Land of Israel"), settlement, pioneering, redemption, etc. As a result,

the “old” historiography and sociology were unable to apply comparative concepts in their understanding of the processes of Zionist settlement in Palestine.

It goes without saying that it is legitimate to analyze a society from the outside; the Jewish Yishuv could be examined within the framework of colonialist movements that existed in the Western world from the 16th century. The situation of a nation of immigrants settling in a land with “natives” who wish to preserve their exclusive right to that strip of land makes Palestine comparable to North America or Australia, or to the Russian colonization of Central Asia. Use of that model is both legitimate and desirable, just as an understanding of the problems of new immigrants to Israel would be furthered by applying a conceptual framework developed in relation to immigrants to the United States, for instance.

Reluctance to use such concepts stemmed from the fact that they were part of the propaganda that stigmatized Zionism and Israel as belonging to the camp of the forces of evil as opposed to the progressive, anti-colonial world. Today, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, which made colonialism the white bogey of the Third World, and with the liberation of that world from the patronage of the West, there is room for dispassionate thought, free of ideologies, on the subject of colonialism. Not every colonization movement is to be dismissed out of hand, and not every national liberation movement is, by definition, sacred. The use of the colonial model must be examined within an open academic discussion and not from positions that *a priori* reject or blame: will the white settlement of North America, Australia and New Zealand be remembered with lasting opprobrium because of its treatment of the autochthonous inhabitants? On the other hand, is every Central Asian tribe with a self-styled nationalist regime that oppresses national minorities, women or simply foreigners worthy of our admiration?

Defining a movement as settlement-colonialism may well help to clarify the relations between the settling nation and the native one. Nonetheless, it does not say much about other aspects of the settler nation. To complete the picture we need the perspective “from within” as well: how and in what

conceptual framework did the society see itself and explain its situation? That explanation is peculiar to each society and stems from the cultural traditions it brings with it, from the spiritual and ideological makeup of its members and from their expectations. Thus, use of the “internal” conceptual system in that context is legitimate and accepted regarding any culture. When Edward Said made his critique of Orientalism, he criticized the tendency of Orientalists from the West to analyze Eastern culture using a conceptual framework external to it and rooted in a different mentality, alien to Eastern society. He assumed that Orientalists originating from that Eastern society would describe it differently – more fairly – than those of Western extraction. This was, essentially, a legitimization of cultural particularism and implied that there is some advantage in describing and analyzing a society from an “internal” perspective and with empathy. The same post-Zionists who support Said’s views change direction when it comes to the history of Zionism: there they seek to apply universal models, avoid loaded “internal” concepts and, most importantly, they utterly invalidate scholars who do not declare their hostility to Zionism or at least define themselves as a-Zionist.⁷⁶³

Post-Zionism and politics

Ideas and arguments that originated in the political margins are now seeping through into academic discussion. A similar process has taken place with regard to the Palestinian issue as well: the notions that were common currency in the Radical Left of the late 1960s and 1970s – that the State of Israel was born in sin; that Zionism had sought from the outset to usurp the Palestinian Arabs and expel them; that this was realized in 1948; that Zionism is, by its very nature, a colonialist movement – have ceased to be identified with the political margins and have become a legitimate subject of academic discussion.

Two simultaneous processes can be discerned here. One is the process I call “the iron law of devaluation of the past”: if something negative about the past can be conceived, be sure it will gain credence.⁷⁶⁴ The harsh critique of the past aims at

changing today's politics. The assault on heroes of the past contributes to undermining national identity and to reopening discussion on what its nature should be. Political goals are aided by the power of the press: collective memory is no longer molded by the traditional agents of memory, but rather by journalists, publicists and television interviewers. A shared memory of the past no longer exists. Instead, we witness fragments of memory promoted by the new agents of memory. It is no accident that the "new historians" are featured so prominently in the media: polemics obviously make more interesting material than moderate and balanced analyses of the past. Thus, any kind of far-fetched critical conjecture voiced today is certain to reappear sooner or later as a central issue in academic research.

The second process is no less important, though it is less visible. I call it "the consensus drift."⁷⁶⁵ The fact that ideas that seemed marginal 20 years ago have now become partly legitimate reflects a slow shift in patterns of what is accepted and in patterns of collective memory. Like the change on the political level, from denial of the existence of a Palestinian people to recognition of it and willingness to come to a historical accommodation with it, so on the level of collective memory there is today a greater readiness to accept the notion that the establishment of Israel brought a disaster upon the Palestinians. The current peace process and the concomitant changes in perceiving reality have made Israeli society more willing than ever before to reassess the historical events that gave birth to the state. The new openness to understanding the point of view on the other side of the barricade does not necessarily mean developing a guilt complex and flagellating oneself for the sins of the past, as some of the "new historians" prescribe and as those of the Palmach generation fear. Rather, it mandates a more sober, mature outlook on the past, just as in the 1980s, when the palpable shift to the right in the Israeli consensus meant that people who had previously placed themselves at the center of the political spectrum suddenly found themselves on the left, so today people who previously considered themselves on left of the spectrum now find

themselves at the center. This process is reflected in the debate surrounding the “new historians.”

Historiography becomes an arm of collective memory: instead of aspiring to historical truth, as we previously assumed, it now represents the political interests of groups that battle for positions in the national identity. The tendency to turn history into an ideological construction serving particular interests, to transform it into a series of myths intended to establish or reinforce group identities, is becoming more and more pronounced.⁷⁶⁶

History as a chronicle of injustice and misery – that is the post-Zionist message. History becomes a sentimental description, in which we are always supposed to identify with the vanquished and criticize the victors. Thus, the very fact that Zionism turned out to be a victorious movement makes it amoral. According to that principle, the history of World War II may be reformulated as well. There may very well appear a historian who will describe events from the perspective of the Germans expelled from Danzig or Silesia. And indeed, from the point of view of the inhabitants of Eastern Prussia, there is no doubting the hardship endured by those who were expelled. It may also be claimed that their memory has been obliterated from German history. But could it not be argued that partial truth on this subject is also partial falsehood?

It is still too early to answer the question whether all this is a “new wave” in Israeli historiography or but a passing ripple. If the debate with the “new historians” turns out, in the end, to be a debate on research emphases, subjects and paradigms or, alternatively, an expression of normal youthful enthusiasm for the sensational, it will turn out to have been a limited and transient phenomenon, with the positive contribution of revitalizing scholarly research. However, if the deconstructionist trends followed by some of the “new historians” gain strength, then it will become clear we are facing a total crisis in all that concerns the human sciences and the domain of history in particular. For if no historical reality exists to be uncovered, if there are no agreed-upon research principles of what is permitted and forbidden, accepted and unaccepted, if there are no methodological rules, then there

can be no common language between historians. This problem is unrelated to which subjects are considered legitimate objects of investigation – for every subject is legitimate – but concerns, rather, treatment of sources, rules of historical evidence, the principles guiding the historian when he sits down at his desk. In the final reckoning, history has no content if the ideal guiding the historian is not the quest for truth.

Update in 2015

Some time ago I attended a lecture given by Prof. Benny Morris which focused on what has taken place in the 20 years that have elapsed since the stormy debates on the “new historians” and “post-Zionism” in the first half of the 1990s. Prof. Morris looked back serenely and without the passion that characterized his style in the past. He maintained that most of his arguments, which at the time were controversial, had in the meantime become accepted by the majority of researchers and that the debate had ended in victory for the “new historians.” Not all of them: Simha Flapan, who was not a historian, was no longer living at the time of the debate; Ilan Pappé left Israel and also abandoned the accepted methods of the history discipline; Avi Shlaim is considered an important historian with a certain anti-Israel bias, but has become more moderate as the years have gone by; and Morris himself, while not retracting what he wrote about the 1948 War and the expulsion of Arabs, his views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have undergone a turnabout and he has lost faith in the peace process. Morris’s article published in *Tikkun* in 1988, in which he coined the term “new historians” and presented the ostensibly new critical approach to Israeli history to the Israeli and Jewish public, has been forgotten. But it was not by chance that when Ari Shavit sought to publish his book on Israeli society, and first and foremost on the effects of the conflict, *My Promised Land* (2013), he published a comprehensive article in *The New Yorker*⁷⁶⁷ that focused on the same event on which Morris had focused in his *Tikkun* article of 1988: the expulsion of the Arabs of Ramle and Lydda in Operation “Danny” in the 1948 War. As far as we know, the Ramle-Lydda event was the only instance of an

instigated expulsion – not flight or voluntary evacuation – of the inhabitants of Arab towns by the IDF in the 1948 War. It was also the only case in which Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion apparently gave his explicit approval for the expulsion. There is therefore no other event comparable with it from the standpoints of both its drama and the highlighting of Israel’s “original sin”: here was the “smoking gun” evidencing the events of 1948. The fact that this event also featured at the center of Shavit’s article in *The New Yorker* is telling proof of the shortcomings of historical memory, for people did not remember Benny Morris’s article in *Tikkun* and treated the Ramle-Lyddā episode in Shavit’s article as if it were a newly-revealed dark secret. This story demonstrates the limitations of historiography in shaping memory: the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem in 1948 was described in detail by Benny Morris,⁷⁶⁸ and was discussed in numerous debates and articles. With time it became an uncontroversial convention among historians. Nevertheless, it is repeatedly forgotten and seemingly rediscovered by a journalist or writer who brings the story to the public’s attention, thus reigniting the debate.

Thus, whereas the debate on the “new historians” as Benny Morris dubbed them, was removed from the historiographic and public agenda, every few years the subject of 1948 is resurrected either by authors (see *1948* by Yoram Kaniuk, 2012), or historians (see Nurit Cohen-Levinovsky, 2014, on Jewish refugees in the war), and in their wake it again becomes the subject of public debate. This proves the centrality of this seminal event in the national history of the State of Israel, and it may be assumed that in the future, too, it will be at the center of stormy debates. Attitudes toward 1948 range from the nostalgic to the political, and although the fervor of the 1990s debate has abated and there is a feeling that the subject has been factually exhausted, it remains active in the public and political spheres since its place at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is unchanged, and even though the Israelis might want it to sink into the mists of memory, the Palestinians will not allow that to happen. One of the outcomes of the historians’ debate was increased Palestinian

awareness of the memory of the *Nakba*, and the fostering of that memory on anniversaries and at memorial ceremonies.

The “new historians”’ main arguments were: the Arab refugee problem was, to a great extent, the result of an instigated Israeli operation; the Israeli claim that there was a general order broadcast on the radio to the Arabs of Palestine to leave their homes and move into Arab-controlled areas in the hope of returning with the victorious Arab army, was an invention of the Israeli propaganda machine; there was Plan D, an a priori plan to expel the Arabs – the expulsion was preplanned; this was not a David and Goliath war – it is not true that Israel was the weaker side in the war, and in fact its forces were larger than those of the Arabs, including the Arab armies that invaded Palestine; Israel did not seek peace and missed several opportunities to sign peace treaties after the war; and finally, Israel colluded with King Abdullah of Jordan to allow him to take over the West Bank in order to prevent the Palestinians from establishing a state of their own. Of all these claims it seems that Plan D as a comprehensive, preplanned program for the expulsion of the Arabs of Palestine has not been proven in historical research, and remains a Palestinian myth. Benny Morris’s claim regarding the absence of a blanket order issued by the Palestinian leadership to evacuate their country has been proven correct in most cases: no evidence has been found of overarching Arab evacuation orders, albeit there were some partial local instructions to that effect. Both of these claims, with regard to evacuation and Plan D, were shunted to the sidelines of the debate and ceased to be a topic debated by historians, but they certainly continue appearing in political debates between Zionists and Palestinians. With regard to “the few against many” there is a consensus that at the outbreak of the war and until the first ceasefire, the balance of power was tilted in the Arabs’ favor, whereas from the summer of 1948 the IDF’s forces increased in number and strength, and in the end the forces that Israel was able to send into battle were larger than those of the invading armies. That is not to say that the Arab states did not have the potential of throwing a far bigger army into the fray, something that alarmed the Israelis and turned the struggle into an existential one, but the Arab states did not possess the political power to

do so. With regard to missing opportunities for peace in 1949 and 1950, it seems that the history of the last 20 years has proved the complexity of this issue, and to what extent hints and feelers and even real negotiations cannot ensure a peace agreement, and even more so in the complex situation of 1949. It appears that this subject has been taken off the agenda. The same applies to Israeli-Jordanian collusion to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state: in view of the Palestinian Authority's present functional difficulties, Israel's consent to Abdullah taking control of the West Bank is acknowledged as legitimate and not as collusion, and also as an understanding that it was apparently the preferred alternative in the situation.

It can be stated that the debate among the historians has exhausted itself: the facts have been named and counted, they have been related more than once, and finding new facts is difficult. The debate, therefore, has mainly dissipated, with the odd glimmer here and there following the unearthing of a scrap of a fact on a massacre or expulsion. But the debate about the "new historians" was combined with a wider debate on the legitimacy of the establishment of the State of Israel, on the Israeli and Palestinian narratives, on internal Israeli issues such as attitudes toward Holocaust survivors, negation of Exile, or the absorption of immigrants from Islamic states. Most of these questions (with the exception of negation of Exile and attitudes toward Holocaust survivors, which in the meantime have been dropped from the agenda) are still valid, and are part of the discourse in Israel and of that between Israel and the Palestinians.

Palestinians past and present have not recognized Jewish nationality, not to mention Zionism as a national movement. For their part, Judaism, like Islam, is a religion, and in their view any claim that the Jews are a nation is invalid. This gives rise to their claim that Zionism is racist and that Israel is an artificial product of British colonialism, not the creation of a legitimate national movement. They are prepared to accept the existence of the State of Israel, but they do not accept the legitimacy of the Jews' aspiration to maintain the Jewish majority in Israel as an expression of Israeli-Zionist nationality. The demand for mutual recognition between two

national movements is unacceptable to them, and they are therefore not prepared to recognize Israel as the state of the Jewish people. This argument was raised by Benjamin Netanyahu in negotiations with the Palestinians in recent years, and it is often perceived as a spurious claim designed to hinder negotiations. But the fact is that it is a result of an ideological development that has taken place in recent years: the debate on the Jewishness of the state was sparked after the Basic Law of 1992 defined Israel as “Jewish and democratic,” and after the Arabs of Israel who thenceforth termed themselves “Palestinians,” reacted with concern to the Oslo Accords since they viewed themselves as excluded from the agreement with the Palestinians, without recognition of their rights as a national minority being ensured. The “Vision Documents” which appeared in 2008 were the response of the Palestinian-Israeli leadership to Israel’s attempts to reach an accommodation with the Palestinians without ensuring their national rights. The Israeli response, to demand Palestinian recognition of Israel not only as a state but a Jewish state, was the outcome of these steps which instead of the debate on the 1948 War and its outcomes, placed on the agenda an ideological debate on the rights, or the lack of the Jews’ historical rights to the country. The Palestinian challenging of the Jewish narrative (and in fact the Christian narrative too) derives from the Palestinian claim to exclusive rights over the country and negating the Jews’ historical connection with it, and the rights ostensibly deriving from this connection. Archeology is now one of the most controversial topics: in contrast with the evidence supporting a Jewish presence in the country since the First Temple Period, the Palestinians are seeking an even more ancient genealogy, with some claiming they are descendants of the Canaanites who dwelt in the country before the arrival of the Hebrews. Whereas archeologists today cast doubt on the veracity of many conventional biblical truths, they concur that Jews have dwelt in the country at least since the 8th century BCE. But they avoid the debate on Palestinian antiquity, and it mainly remains in the Palestinian political-polemical sphere. Thus the controversy over the legitimacy of the existence of the State of Israel moved from the 1948 War to the realms of the ancient

history of the Land of Israel. This is where the contribution to this topic by French cinema historian Shlomo Sand comes in.⁷

⁶⁹ A creative way he discovered of challenging the right of the Jews to the Land of Israel is his claim that there is no connection between the Jewish people of today and the people of the Old Testament, of the First and Second Temple Periods, since according to him the Jews of today are the descendants of converts to Judaism originating in the Khazars who ruled in Central Asia in the early Middle Ages and have since disappeared, or the Berbers of North Africa. Leading historians have vainly challenged Sand's opinions, proving again and again that they were factually groundless: the power of the narrative undermining the Jews' rights to the Land of Israel is in its political attraction, and it is not by chance that antisemites and haters of Israel the world over were drawn to his conclusions.

Another topic that continues making headlines is that of the immigrants from Islamic countries. Every few years a television program or the discovery of a document from the past that does not meet the criteria of current political correctness, or even a poem published in the press, reignites the flames of Eastern rage. It seems, however, that with the improved economic situation and greater accessibility to higher education, this topic is less central than the media – which tend to emphasize extremes – presents it. From the ideological aspect, researcher Yehouda Shenhav presented the position that the immigrants from Islamic countries are Arab Jews, meaning that their national identity is Arab and only their religion is Jewish.⁷⁷⁰ It seems that at the root of this assertion lies the aspiration to identify with the space in which the State of Israel is located, out of an understanding that its Western identity stands in stark contrast to its environment, and is also in contrast to the history, culture, and traditions of the Jews from Islamic countries. There is perhaps also an aspiration here to bring these Jews closer to the peace camp by underscoring their connection to and linkage with the Arab culture. It appears that only a negligible minority of immigrants from Islamic countries concur with this view.

Benny Morris started the debate on the “new historians” as an argument over facts, some of which were controversial, but still, they were facts. But the argument quickly shifted to the political arena, between narratives, between justice and injustice, and was nourished throughout by the zeitgeist and the public atmosphere. It began as a sort of leitmotif running alongside the peace process in the first half of the 1990s: by means of this debate the Israelis would see that the establishment of the State of Israel, which for the Jews was an ancient dream come true, was concomitant with a catastrophe for the Palestinians who lost their homeland, and that they, the Israelis, should understand the need to reach a historic compromise with the Palestinians. The history of 1948, which has been revealed as a story in which both sides are not blameless victims, should have opened Israeli hearts to an agreement with the Palestinians. The large amount of space devoted to the debate in the media and the public arena attested to the subject trickling down from academe to the political sphere, from the facts to their interpretation and to their significance in the reality of the 1990s. The historians’ debate became a battle of narratives. And just as the potency of the debate was nourished by the zeitgeist, its decline derived to a large extent from the change in the zeitgeist. It is true that the debate has been largely exhausted. Everything has been revealed, all the brutal acts (committed by the Jews) have been counted and recorded in the annals of the conflict. There has been some recycling of old stories,⁷⁷¹ but finding new skeletons in the cupboard is a difficult task. Yet the decline of the debate is linked, first and foremost, with the failure of the peace efforts, with the Second Intifada, and the consequent collapse of the Israeli Left. The present public atmosphere is one of quiet despair with efforts for peace at this stage of history in the face of the rise of the Israeli Right, the shift of consensus to the right, and also in view of the feeling that the Palestinians, too, do not want, or are presently unable to reach agreement with Israel. In the turbulent Middle East of today the possibility of reaching a peace agreement seems extremely remote. Against this backdrop the internal debate on Israeli history and its meaning seems detached from reality. The debate is no longer between historians. Notable among today’s

post-Zionists are academics from the social sciences, philosophy, and cultural studies, fields of knowledge engaging more with ideas and theories and less with grounding them in reality. The debate has dissociated itself from commitment to facts.

On looking back, it seems that the debate yielded several positive outcomes. First, there is willingness and openness to a critical examination of the reality, and not to accept conventional truths. Second, a whole series of new subjects has been opened up for research. Israeli researchers have examined the functioning of the Palestinian civil system in the inter-community war period, and indicated the collapse of these systems in the Arab towns as one of the central factors in their inhabitants' loss of confidence, and in the abandoning of the towns by the middle class. At the same time a large and comprehensive research project was conducted to examine the functioning of the civil systems on the Jewish side of the divide, which yielded some interesting findings on the systems' functioning in an emergency. Together with the intensive and ongoing study on the Palestinian refugees, a riveting study was conducted on a forgotten subject: the Jewish refugees of 1948–49. The revelations concerning acts of brutality and massacre placed on the agenda and the issue of Israel's military judicial system that was established in the course of the 1948 War. These subjects directed a spotlight onto the need for comparative studies on the behavior of populations during a civil war, and also on the conduct of occupying armies from Western countries. Comparative studies are important for the purpose of comparing norms of behavior, morality, of what is and is not permissible against the backdrop of those years, since the values of the 1940s were different from those of the present day. In the end, the debate of the 1990s breathed new life into the study of the history of the Jewish community in pre-state Israel, Zionism, and the State of Israel. The second half of the 1980s saw a dramatic drop in interest in these topics. The number of students interested in studying them declined, and it seemed that they had become passé. The debate led to renewed interest in the field: it transpired that it was of prime importance to Israel's legitimacy in the world, and as such, supporters and opponents

of Israel alike understood its centrality to Israel's standing. Paradoxically, the success of Israel Studies throughout the world today is, to a great extent, the outcome of the debate with the "new historians" which has passed, and of post-Zionism which continues to this day.

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Topic XI: Criticism of Israel – A Kind of Antisemitism?

Introduction

This section asks whether criticism of Israel should be considered a legitimate form of political action, or if it has taken on forms and arguments that reveal it to be a kind of (neo-)antisemitism. We are indeed now witnessing stringent criticism worldwide that targets Israel with particular virulence, in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Faced with this, several commentators cite attitudes toward the Jewish State that are tainted by antisemitism and recall anti-Jewish discourses of the past in Eastern and Western Europe which, for some years only, were silenced in the aftermath of the Shoah. French Pierre-André Taguieff and American Arnold Dashefsky contend that this is not only an anti-Israeli attitude, but that many manifestations of opposition to Israel actually consist of a “neo-Judeophobia” or new antisemitism, to include Jews in general. In the opposite position, an American academic, Earl Raab, does not deny that Israel is the target of particular animosity on the international scene, but his contention is that this attitude is rooted in Israel’s strong relations with the US: it expresses a political perspective characterized by virulent anti-Americanism and enthusiastic support for non-Western causes.

Many scholars, however, indicate a powerful connection between criticizing Israel and antisemitism, and the fact that criticism of Israel often leads to a hostile view of Jews in general. Some see the relations the other way round: generalizing from an unfriendly attitude toward Jews to an anti-Israeli position. Both kinds of approaches – and they are only two out of many – do identify a link between anti-Israelism and antisemitism, in contrast to those who hold that no necessary connection can be assumed. And yet, many others argue that indiscriminately linking criticism of Israel with antisemitism leads to stigmatizing any criticism of Israel, and thereby delegitimizing any such criticism. We present here

a few texts that offer different approaches to the issue and show the acuteness of the debates it occasions.

Shmuel Trigano speaks of anti-Israelism as an aspect of antisemitism that constitutes the context of the rebuilding of the Jewish identity in general, and of Israel as a Jewish State in particular. He sets the issue in a broad historical and cultural context and contends that Zionism emerged as a by-product of the failure of the emancipation of the Jews in Europe. Antisemitism is actually the outcome of emancipation – whose major shortcoming was that it did not recognize the Jewish people as a collective. The later expansion of post-modernist and internationalist myths denied Jewish communities as well as Israel any legitimacy as religious and national entities. The Shoah was the ultimate failure of the civil emancipation model, and left Jews with no other way than rebuilding a Jewish identity and establishing a Jewish State. Which, for the antisemite, is nothing less than an outrage.

Robert S. Wistrich emphasizes that some current criticisms of Israel clearly indicate a new kind of antisemitism based on anti-Israelism. Already in 1990 it was impossible to ignore the fact that the demonization of Israel and the Jews was reaching new heights. In part this was bolstered by the rise of a fanatical Islamic fundamentalism that rejects the right of Jews to exercise any form of sovereignty in what it defines as Muslim domain. This attitude was by no means unprecedented. The term *Yahūd* ('Jew,' in Arabic) had long been used interchangeably with Zionist and Israeli. The popular view speaks of a powerful satanic conspiracy led by the Zionists, together with the Western powers, against Islam and the Arab world. This radical narrative masquerading under the cover of "anti-Zionism" has gained considerable strength, especially since the year 2000. It depicts Israel as a criminal, "Nazi," and "racist" state.

Leonardo Senkman also speaks of a "new antisemitism" that has emerged in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and which often goes along with a connection between the fiendish figure of the Jew and the close relationship of Israel and Zionism with the United States. Considering the contexts of globalization and Latin America,

the author points out leftist movements that see Israel as a “proxy of the US” and describe it as engaged in a Palestinian “genocide,” comparable with the Holocaust and Nazism.

Olaf Glöckner is less committed to that kind of approach. He emphasizes that realpolitik has dominated Israel-Europe relations since the late 1960s, and these relations are influenced both by the development of the unsolved conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, and Europe’s growing Muslim population. Religious and racist antisemitism has lost ground in recent decades, but anti-Zionist/anti-Israeli, “educated” antisemitism is on the rise. European capitals are flooded with militant demonstrations against Israel, often expressing open antisemitism. Here the author makes the link between Europe’s Jews now questioning their future in the “Old Continent” in the face of revived anti-Jewish stereotypes, and circumstances where Israel is blamed for current policies.

Moshe Zimmermann goes further. He contends that the overlap between anti-Zionist and antisemitic views is not typical only of the Arab reaction to Zionism; it is also common practice in Western societies. Israel’s claim to be the sole representative of the Jewish world contributes much to this development. Hence, a basic understanding exists between Zionists and antisemites concerning the definition of the Jewish collective. Antisemites turned Zionism into another proof for their belief in the “Jewish plot to rule the world.” Yet no automatic identity between anti-Zionism, or between a critical attitude toward Israel and antisemitism, follows from this statement. Criticizing Israeli politics is not necessarily tantamount to antisemitism. Israelis themselves widely voice this criticism, causing Israeli nationalists to call such criticism Jewish self-hatred, which is a way of avoiding direct and open discussion of the contents of the criticism.

In brief, Trigano speaks of anti-Israelism as an aspect of antisemitism that constitutes the context of the rebuilding of Jewish identity. Wistrich sees in given attitudes toward Israel the rise of a new antisemitism that leads to demonization and is by no means confined to Israeli Jews. Senkman analyzes the approach of leftist movements in Latin America and identifies the intermingling of deep-rooted antisemitism and anti-

Western political radicalism. Glöckner's analysis leads also to a consideration of the input of Israel's policies in fueling antisemitism which, as such, impels many European Jews to question their future. Zimmermann goes further: anti-Zionism and criticism of Israeli policies are not necessarily linked to antisemitism.

50. Post-Zionists and Anti-Zionists: The “Otherjews” Hour

Shmuel Trigano

This paper was completed in December 2014.

Among the phenomena whose convergence has made the antisemitic crisis of the 2000s, there is one that comes out of the ordinary. It can be defined very simply. At the top of a wave of hostility against the Jewish world, unprecedented since the 1930s, that swept Europe and the Arab-Muslim world – opinions, media, and states – Jewish voices, Israeli as well as diasporic, were found that demonize the Jewish communities and the State of Israel with the most dishonorable stigma. Critical discourses, violently offensive, against them were uttered by publicists speaking namely “as Jews” or as “another Jewish voice,” or, in Israel, as “enlightened Jews” or “democratic Jews” as if this self-identification founded the authoritativeness and the credibility of their judgments. Without any intellectual or ideological basis, they have started up a fatal identity circle, even though they declaratively rejected it.

The identity circle

These narratives dissociated themselves from the Jews, then under ambient pressure, and even in their very name. Their discourse indeed is said to be inspired by Jewish ethical concerns and especially the memory of the Shoah, and to a lesser degree by democratic values. The violence of the State of Israel, the aggressiveness of the Jewish community, when it is not the very existence of that state or of a Jewish community, were loudly condemned, thus in full harmony with the dominant chorus of reprobation. All the public scenes were opened to this “other Jewish voice,” and the “as Jews” monopolized the expression of those who were simply Jews,

excluded thereby under the pretense of free expression of Jewish opinions.

This doubling of the Jewish figure by the media imposed an expression of the minority over the majority, as the loud moralists had hitherto always defined themselves by their distancing from the Jewish community and their disinterest or, for some, contempt for it, or in Israel for the national sovereignty. They re-integrated into the community or the State to destroy them symbolically in a moment of extreme hostility stemming from the environment. Their intervention authenticated in the Diaspora the charge of withdrawing into themselves and “shutting themselves into their community” which they were in fact the first to launch,⁷⁷² and in Israel the charge of fascism and racism: “ethnic democracy” was the pseudo academic concept to drag the State of Israel through the mud. The separation of the “Otherjews” (*Alterjuifs*) from the rest of the Jews (presented thereby as a crude mass) – in fact, the vast majority – was thus accompanied by an aggregation with the social or the international majority, on behalf of an assumed Jewish essence under which the rest of the Jews lost all legitimacy and morality.

A former Israeli ambassador to France, Elie Barnavi, was thus ready to declare:

Yes, there are indeed two Israel. Mine turned to the world, secular and rational; and the other idolatrous, centered on deified land and prisoner of archaic beliefs [...]. Between the two there is no compromise. In the battle between them, each camp has its allies in the Jewish world and among the Gentiles. They have their own Diaspora Jews braced on their ancestral fears and they sniff antisemitism everywhere and are ready to fight for Abu Dis up to the last Israeli, or American evangelist whose ‘Zionism’ announces the conversion of the Jews and the Second Coming of Christ the King. We have our ‘ethnic Jews’ [...].

And in the radio show “Les Matins de France Culture” (October 1, 2009) he stated: “James Baker [...] said, it was recorded [...]: ‘we will screw the Jews,’ we will fuck the Jew. This was music to my ears.”

The immaculate coercion

The very fact of this founding dissociation, the ideology of the alter-Judaism reveals a very archaic Manichaean thinking. Its ethics opposes an absolute victim (the Palestinians) to an executioner (Israel), all the more absolute as it was previously the supposed absolute victim (the Shoah). This ethics generates social fracture. The most heightened emotion of the public opinion is thus, most evidently, channeled against this “executioner” and his supposed supporters, an executioner who betrayed and dishonored his former victimhood, unique source of his legitimacy. The loathing for him carries with it the whole Jewish community as if it now brought together all those who differ from the “we are the champions of morality and humanity.” An American journalist has nicely defined this posture, so frequent in the human-rightism of the 1990s, under the name of “immaculate coercion,” the moral injunction (“You cannot let that happen!”) requiring positive affirmation without any form of trial, the proclaimed “virtue” de-politicizing the issues at stake. This period saw the triumph of selective morality, exonerating the aggressor and blaming the victim. From this point of view, these Otherjews bear a heavy political responsibility. In 2015, it is now clear that there is antisemitism in anti-Zionism and it was a harbinger of troubles that have gotten hold of the whole Western society. The Otherjews have only defused the alert and set vigilance asleep. Their speaking “as Jews” to denounce an alleged abuse of identity of the Jews has, ironically, only reinforced the identification of Jews – including themselves – and their stigmatization as such.

Self-hatred?

This phenomenon is actually not new in Jewish history, and this ever since ancient times. It presents, in fact, a singularity. There is no such phenomenon occurring in any other society. The book by Theodor Lessing, *Self-hatred*, rich in high color portraits of Jewish intellectuals in Germany before the Shoah, has coined this formula to define it. To refer to it in order to grasp the situation that concerns us is already very worrying, because it was a harbinger of the tragedy of the Shoah. The concept of “self-hatred” is still too psychological. The effect of

the ideological discourse that animates it is indeed primarily political and it is in this arena that we must confront it and analyze it.

One must address the phenomenon as a political ideology, not as a passion or “identity unease” which fall into the category of pathology. The definition of the issue is crucial as it determines the handling of the question. “Self-hatred” de-politicizes it and implicitly takes the Jewish condition in its entirety out of the political realm, although it is actually an essentially political matter. This does not negate the fact that we are facing here a global multifaceted syndrome, where one also finds attitudes deriving from meanders of the spirituality of Judaism.

Some authors have tried to capture the phenomenon in question and all have struggled with its terminological categorization and the trouble of identifying it. Isaac Deutscher has written a famous essay about it, entitled *The Non-Jewish Jew*.⁷⁷³ Classifying himself in this category, he also includes “Spinoza, Hume, Marx, Rosa Luxemburg, Trotsky and Freud.”⁷⁷⁴ “The heretic Jew who transcends the Jewish condition is part of a long tradition [...]. They all went beyond the boundaries of the Jewish condition. They all considered it too narrow, too archaic, and too constricting. They sought for ideals and their realization beyond it.”⁷⁷⁵ Deutscher argues that these thinkers and revolutionaries refer to common principles. They are determinists because they believe that the universe is governed by inherent laws. Their thinking is dialectical, because they live on the border of nations and religions and see the reality dynamically. They have a relativist vision of what is right and what is wrong and conceive reality only in relation to praxis. They believe in human solidarity and are “optimists.”

The stage Jew

The construction of this model would require a comprehensive study that cannot be considered here. The name given by Deutscher arouses a problem. He does not speak of non-Judaic Jews, a formula that would be justified to the extent that these

Jews break with Judaism, as a body of doctrine. He goes further, and speaks of “Jewry,” which refers to the Jewish condition, the Jewish people, the “Jewish community,” that is a primarily political category. This last point shows that the definition of Deutscher does not suit the contemporary situation, because in the discourse of the “Otherjewish voice,” there is a central assessment: that of Jewishness. It is “as Jews,” “as Israelis” that its spokesmen speak. Shlomo Sand’s case is a caricature of it, culminating in his renunciation of Jewishness. This is quite new, as earlier “self-hate” vomited Jewishness (as much as Judaism) while, at the same time, accusing it. Those who suffered from this pathology did not express themselves “as Jews.” Today, the Otherjews condemn Jewishness in its own name. This is new. In Israel, they condemn, in the best case, Israel in the name of Israeliness.

The result is complex: it is as Jews that Otherjews identify other Jews to put them in the pillory, ditto for the Israelis. This includes a second step. Why do they actually express themselves on behalf of “Jewish morality”? The Other-Jewishness is soaked with the memory of the Shoah, a memory constructed as “universal,” transcending the “limits” of the Jewish condition and, to a lesser extent with a blurred view of the morality of Judaism, a vague altruistic and sacrificialist moralism. The Shoah memory is for them an important criterion because it reminds them that the Jews were exterminated as Jews and not as human beings, nor German, French and so on. The other Jews are condemned as they identify with a Jewish people deemed without foundation. Speaking “as Jews,” the Otherjews are supposed to embody in fact the genuine “Judaism,” the genuine “Jewishness.” Though, this Jewishness equates to a living denial of the concrete Jewish existence after World War II (in which they were always absent). The proponents of the Other-Israelism who throw the “settlers,” the “Zionists,” the “racist” to the mercy of the international “community,” speak, as for them, in the name of a utopia that is nowhere to be found in the world besides in the European Union: the “state of all its citizens,” namely a political community that would have as identity a non-identity and whose objective is, in fact, to meet the

irredentist projects of the Arab-Israeli minority and of an intolerant Moslem world.

Overall, we would say that the Otherjews identify the Jews in order to de-identify themselves from them and thereby integrate into the global society, giving rise to a new figure of Jew that could be defined as the “stage Jew” playing his or her role “as a Jew” but denying in acts and speeches the reality of Jewishness. At this level, the term “non-Jewish Jews” would find some justification, but the non-Jewish Jews evoked by Isaac Deutscher refer less to any Jewishness (or Judaism) than to the “universal.” From this point of view, it is rather the Israeli post-Zionists that come close to this type in an absolutely paradoxical manner, as they are “nationals” of a Jewish state (precisely what they feel unbearable). One day, one should write a monograph of the “universal” idea that Jews have developed over 20 centuries. The universal has become, for his heralds, their greatest particularism that distinguishes them from the rest of the universe. The irony of fate has attached this universal to ethnocentric terms, not only because only Jews promoted it (while negating their Jewishness), but also because the universal in question was always throughout identified with the dominant power (imperial) and the dominant thought, which engenders an identity all the more particularistic that projected itself across the universe. The “universal” speaks always the tongue of the dominant power and culture.

The Pauline trick

The master carrier in this sleight of hand was, without a doubt, Paul the apostle who invented a dialectic from which emerged 20 centuries of antisemitism. To found his universal, he divided the identity of Israel, by dissociating the Jew according to the flesh and the Jew “in the spirit,” in order to exclude the Jews who remained Jewish from the identity of Israel, which was thereby revisited, namely the Christian “new Israel.”⁷⁷⁶ It is indeed a recurring feature of this syndrome that the denial of the Jewish people is always accompanied by the exaltation of another people of the Christlike type. Today, the

Otherjews extol the “suffering Palestinian people” while denying the existence of a Jewish people, in the best case identified with the victims of the Shoah, that is to say dead Jews. This rhetoric obviously classified the Jews as inferior (according to their “flesh,” prisoners of the Law, blind to Christlike salvation, tribalist) to install in their place the new Israel, of course “universal”/*katholikos*, in fact very quickly identified with the Roman Empire (today for “progressive” Otherjews with the Arab-Muslim bloc). This doctrine which was destined to consecrate the Roman imperial ideology opposed obviously the Jews as a people with imperial triumphalism: by first excluding Jews metaphysically and theologically from this “universal,” and then legally and politically. Nay even by exterminating them, which is the “logical” conclusion.

The Pauline ideological operation is clearly based on the argument “because it is me who says so to you, as a Jew.” The apostle indeed finds in his Jewishness the legitimacy of his rhetoric of dismissal of Israel. He identifies with his previous membership to Pharisaism to revoke his affinity to Judaism.

Nevertheless, I have reasons to also have confidence in myself. If any other thinks he can confide himself to himself, I can even more, as I am circumcised since the eighth day, belong to the race of Israel, the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew, son of Hebrews. [...] All these things that were gains to me, I have considered them as a loss, because of Christ. (Philippians 3:4–6).

It is confusing that in France, one may read Edgar Morin, one of the leaders of the Otherjews, who is openly atheist and a great reader of Paul saying:

Those for whom being Jewish is one of their attributes do not recognize themselves either in the synagogue or in the State of Israel. [...] *les spinosants* [*“the Spinozains”*] [...] they want to reassume as their ideal and in truly humanistic exigency the research that had been formulated by the man of double identity, Saul/Paul of a world where Jews and Gentiles would neither define themselves substantively nor exclusively, the common essence being humanity.⁷⁷⁷

One could say the same of leftist thinking under the guidance of Alain Badiou or Agamben rediscovering Paul.

Sticking together with a domination

With modernity, the claim of universalism has increased tenfold. It was identified with technological and scientific progress and the global expansion of European powers. What modern Jews viewed as universal however remained limitedly European. The universal of the “Jewish non-Jews” is, indeed, essentially ideological and corporatist (from the Pauline Church as Body of Christ, the Communist Party of Jewish socialists, nay even the Freudian School). It is the exact opposite of the Talmudic concept of the universal, legal and normative.⁷⁷⁸ The apology of the universal by Jews – today the Otherjews – is always necessarily accompanied by the assignment of the other Jews – those from whom they distinguish themselves – to particularism in all its most derogatory variations (nowadays tribalism, fundamentalism, communitarism, ethnicity, colonialism, racism) to other Jews – those from whom they distinguish and separate themselves.

In the words we have forged at this level, the Otherjews identify as Jews by unidentifying themselves from other Jews, under the limelight of the “universal.” This unidentifying identification produces the “universal.” The apology of the universal hides always a not exactly admirable operation: exclusion and ranking. It is by excluding other Jews that the “universal” Jews enhance their status and valorize themselves. Why? Here the sociological component is clear. Being a minority in majority society, Jews (especially their elites which are part of the local elites) are inclined to deny their belonging to the minority in order to be accepted by the majority. This was, historically, the only procedure to be admitted among the elite in the Christian and Islamic world where the condition of the Jews as a people (the “community”!) always suffered – until today – from a low and degrading status. Analyzing Bismarck’s Germany, Hannah Arendt defined with precision the condition of “exception Jews,” celebrated by the salons, while the Jews had not been emancipated, but enjoying a privileged status only by distinguishing themselves from the “ghetto Jews.” They needed this exclusion to maintain their own valorization. This is still at work today, as we see, although in a different modality: the identity “as a Jew.”

The instrumentalization of the Holocaust

This difference can be explained by the nature of the current environment. In this respect, the fact of speaking in that capacity in the name of morality drawn from the Shoah puts us on track. The Shoah actually has become a sacred reference for the democratic West on which it has drawn, after the war, ways to free itself from its failures vis-à-vis the Jews (and from its own values) and its feelings of guilt. The assignment of the Jewish marker to refer to the Shoah has released it – partially – from its own disapproval and gave it a legitimacy recognized by a large majority. Except that at the same time a separation took place: between the Jew of the Shoah and the Jew of history, that is between the real Jew, who creates communities, who is a citizen of the State of Israel, who has the indecency to exist fully and completely. It is this separation that was revealed in the events of the years 2000–2015 during which an intense “anti-Zionist” campaign was witnessed as well as a large initial neglect of open antisemitic attacks, opening, without nearly any mediation, the worship of an entire continent to the memory of the Shoah, on the occasion of the “60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.” The dissociation was then clear between the Jew of the Holocaust revered and sacralized in pious contemplation, and the Jew of reality, too communitarian, too religious, too national, etc.

It is this sacralization of the Holocaust by the majority society that allowed Otherjews to talk “as Jews,” while remaining within the consensus of the dominant ideology. But these Jews were the defunct, sanctified, harmless ones of the Shoah, and not those of life. An entire moralism, in St. Sulpice style, developed playing precisely with this sacrificial vision of the Jew in order to turn it against the living Jews.⁷⁷⁹ As stated by many Otherjews, the image of the Israeli soldier in itself is an abomination as much as when you return the blow from your enemy. The place of Jews is in the camps. Or in museums.

There is an explanation in this evolution for the considerable public echo that the Otherjews received, while their voices obscured and excluded the entire Jewish world.

The Western media acknowledged their “inestimable” contribution by establishing them as spokespersons of the Jewish or Israeli soul and consciousness, censoring any other expression from then on identified with all that is crawling and creeping with Jewish “tribalism”: fascism, colonialism, racism, extreme right, etc. The Otherjewish discourse actually was a sign of the future dominant ideology image of the Jew which we have just outlined in large traits.

Very significant was the fact that this ideology of exclusion, censorship and disparagement was presented as subjected to persecution and aggressive threat on the side of communitarian-fundamentalist-Zionist-tribalist Jews, etc. This was also one of the manifestations of the inversion of moral criteria of those years, a sign of a deep decomposition of European societies. In the realm of the politically correct, the aggressors are systematically portrayed as victims. The stigmatization of other Jews is even the essential message of the Otherjewish ideology. The dissociation of the image of the Jew as analyzed above (everything that refers to the Jew of the Shoah expresses innocence, everything that deviates from it expresses aggressiveness and violence) explains this rhetorical and symbolic shift.

The mystification of the universal

The vindictive resurgence of the discourse of the non-Jewish Jew – “as Jew” – also fits into an old conflict between Zionist Jews and anti-Zionists. Ever since the birth of Zionism, this conflict opposed the Moses’ sons Jews and Jewish socialists against Zionists. The issue was the recognition of the strategic challenge posed by the Jewish people for the fate of the Jews, a political issue. The Moses’ sons Jews saw in it a threat to their status as individual citizens, loyal to their nations. Socialists saw it as a (Jewish) remnant of bourgeois nationalism, hostile to the proletarian cause. These last ones were totally prey to the myth of socialist and communist internationalism.

To appreciate this debate, it must be remembered that when Zionism was created, it was because the emancipation of

the Jews as individual citizens had failed or encountered serious failures. Antisemitism, an entirely new ideology, had followed emancipation 40 years later, to the point that one can assume it as the indirect product of emancipation whose main failure was the non-recognition or even banishment of the Jewish people in the fate of the Jews and of European states. Antisemitism, on the contrary, targeted the Jews as a people (portrayed in the myth of a “Jewish world conspiracy”). The conflict opposing Zionists and anti-Zionists resulted from the divergent interpretation of the nature of antisemitism. The great invention of Herzl was to forge a political interpretation of it. The persecution of the Jews resulted, in his view, from the lack of a viable solution for the Jewish *people* in modern Europe. Anti-Zionists, as they rejected the notion of a Jewish people, wanted to consider antisemitism as the expression of racism only, an anthropological hatred, ahistorical, apolitical. They made a terrible mistake.

The debate remained confined to the Jewish circle. Nowadays it takes place mainly on platforms outside the Jewish world. And this must be understood in light of the transformation of the ideological environment. Postmodernism indeed circulates again the myth of internationalism, globalization, the end of nations and states. World government, virtuous politics, human rightism, right of intervention, multiculturalism, etc., are all variations. This is the perfect time for the mystifying universalism of Jewish socialism of the early 20th century to resurface as much as the Moses’ sons Jews’ illusions. Jewish communities as well as the State of Israel, religion as well as any nation appear again as regressive, archaic, anti-progressive (except those of the non-Western world which are glorified).

However, something has happened from the early 20th century on that score: the Shoah, a phenomenon that had the Jews, individual citizens of their respective countries, excluded from citizenship, stripped of their nationality, packed together to be exterminated. It put an end to the model of the individual citizen emancipation, the terrible failure of Moses’ sonship and Jewish assimilationism. A failure of democracy. It is on this final assessment that a new Jewish identity

redeveloped after the war and a State of Israel was founded. One could not leave the fate of the Jewish people at the hands of chance and the good will of others. The Jews had to take charge. Does one need to remind that something happened to Jewish socialism, too? The Marxist mysticism it had set in motion destroyed whole nations under a monstrous system, and eventually ground themselves miserably “as Jews.” The failure of socialism is primarily a terrible failure of the universalism of Jewish socialists.

It is the Jewish resurgence out of these tragedies that is dragged through the mire by the Otherjews. It is its legitimacy that they undermine systematically. The Shoah actually embarrasses them a lot. It demonstrates the futility and irresponsibility of their judgment. They want the Jewish people to scupper itself. To go first, of course, before anyone else, to serve as an example. When they demand to do so in the name of the morality of the Shoah, it is in its sacralization they draw their justification, this operation that depoliticizes the latter for the sake of its “humanization,” its “universalization,” that is, in order to freeze any objective consideration of what it means for those concerned in the first place, the Jews: their plight as a people that did not find any frame of existence in the political modern world. “Humanity” becomes a criterion to isolate and exclude Jewishness from the Shoah. This is a typical Pauline mode of operation. Relating the Shoah to Jews, especially to the living, becomes indecent, bigoted, vulgar. Zionism and the Diaspora community are accused of committing this manipulation. Just because they assume the condition of the Jews as a people, in its collective dimension and status. The victim of the Shoah should, indeed, not leave his sacrificial vocation in order to remain trustworthy. Words are not enough to describe the contemptuous disdain for the fate of the Jews concealed in this attitude. It feeds on this narcissistic sacrificial myth at the expense of the concrete fate of a multitude of individuals, the “common people” who are confronted with the difficulties of continuity and survival, without benefitting of any empathy.

One does now understand that the center of the debate of the Otherjews, post-Zionists, post-modernists, the “new

historians,” revolves around the question of the Shoah, the “misuse of memory,” and the instrumentalization of memory. The scandal of the early 21st century is that the Jewish people is still alive and that it intends to affirm this life with force.

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51. Parallel Lines: Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism in the 21st Century

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This paper was completed in 2013. To our deep regret, the author passed away on May 19, 2015.

About twenty years ago, when writing *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred*, my emphasis lay on the longevity, near-ubiquity and persistence of anti-Jewish hatred in Europe and the Middle East over many centuries. However, already in 1990 it was impossible to ignore the fact that the demonization of Israel and the Jews was reaching new heights in the post-war world. In part this was bolstered by the rise of a fanatical Islamic fundamentalism with its stark refusal to accept the right of Jews to exercise any form of sovereignty in what it defined as an exclusively Muslim domain.⁷⁸⁰ This attitude was by no means new. In the Arab world, since the 1950s, outright rejection of the Jewish State was virtually axiomatic. The term Jews (Yahūd) had long been used interchangeably with Zionists (Sahyūniyyūn) and/or Israelis. The repeated publication of best-selling editions in Arabic of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* throughout the Middle East had, moreover, reinforced the popular view that there was a powerful satanic conspiracy directed by Zionists together with the Western powers against Islam and the entire Arab world. More recently, as I have demonstrated in a wide-ranging study, this type of radically antisemitic narrative masquerading under the cover of “anti-Zionism” has gained considerably in strength, especially since the year 2000.⁷⁸¹ It not only vilifies the Jews and Zionism as being intrinsically malevolent and as the spearhead of a Western imperialist assault on Arab-Muslim culture – it also denounces Israel as a uniquely criminal “Nazi” and “racist” state.⁷⁸²

The historic roots of the continual convergence between Muslim-Arab anti-Zionism and classical European antisemitism can already be found in the 1930s with the rise of

the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt as well as in the de facto alliance between German Nazism and Haj Amin el-Husseini, the undisputed leader of Palestinian Arab nationalism. Antisemitism was an important, even vital, cement of such ideological and political alliances.⁷⁸³ It was also no accident that during the 1950s, in Nasser's Egypt, a number of German Nazi advisers on the "Jewish question" not only found a refuge from justice but helped to organize a large-scale "anti-Zionist" propaganda campaign that reached out across Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East.⁷⁸⁴ The common antisemitic assumption behind this massive indoctrination program led by Egypt was the notion that Israel, Zionism and the Jewish people per se represented a single poisonous and deadly root of a Jewish plan for world-domination. The branches of this global Mafia allegedly extend from Jerusalem and New York to the farthest corners of the earth. This "anti-Zionist" political warfare against Israel has been inextricably linked by its Muslim-Arab protagonists to the struggle of the Prophet Muhammad against the Jews in the Arabian Peninsula – a conflict that ended in their expulsion more than 1,300 years ago.⁷⁸⁵

The Six-Day War of 1967 and the fall of Arab East Jerusalem into Israeli hands exacerbated still further the Islamist militancy of the old-new antisemitic "anti-Zionism." Koranic vituperations against the "treacherous," perfidious Jews were now widely quoted, medieval polemical tracts against Judaism and the Jews were dutifully dug out; while the antisemitic writings of authors like the martyred ideologue of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, Sayyid Qutb (executed by Nasser's regime in 1966) were widely circulated. The scale of the 1967 debacle of the Arab States with its accompanying sense of national humiliation, loss of Arab honor and the occupation by Israel of what was deemed to be "Islamic territory," sharpened and intensified the pre-existing demonology of Zionism. Increasingly, the Jewish State was seen as a 20th-century reincarnation of the cunning and insidious "spirit of Judaism."⁷⁸⁶ Khomeini's revolution in Shiite Iran in 1979 added an even more radical element to this Islamist boiling-pot of theological-political antisemitism.

“Khomeinism” combined a specifically Shiite Iranian horror of Jews as ritually “unclean” (*najas*) with Islamic religious hostility to them as an ancient foe of Islam. This was superimposed on a demonizing misperception of a non-existent “American-Israel satanic conspiracy” to destroy Iran. From Khomeini to Ahmadinejad and Ali Khamenei, Iranian Islamic “anti-Zionism” (in which the US is the “great Satan” and Israel figures as the “little Satan”) continues to attribute all evils in the world to boundless Jewish deviousness and an incessant Zionist craving for “global domination.”⁷⁸⁷

This antisemitic and anti-Zionist ideology motivates not only Iran but the Lebanese Shiite Hezbollah as well as the Sunni Muslim Hamas (an offshoot of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood) in Gaza. It is important to note that neither Iran, Hezbollah nor Hamas shrink from an openly genocidal, annihilationist demand for the total destruction of the State of Israel.⁷⁸⁸ Brazen and naked Holocaust denial, especially in Iran and in much of the contemporary Arab world (a point to which we shall return) is the other side of this radically antisemitic coin. It is surely no accident that those forces in the Middle East who insistently deny that the Nazi Holocaust ever happened are the same elements who demand the physical elimination of Israel – which would, if successful, mean a second genocide of the Jewish people – this time in the name of Allah.⁷⁸⁹ This scenario is precisely the consummation devoutly wished for publicly, on *Al-Jazeera TV*, in 2009, by the Egyptian-born Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the leading Sunni Muslim cleric in the world today.

Palestinian anti-Zionism

Both the Palestinian Fatah in the past and even more clearly the Hamas movement today, have fully embraced such radical rejectionism and its “starkly expulsionist” program.⁷⁹⁰ The original Palestinian National Covenant of the PLO (1964) as well as its later editions, all declared Zionism to be an “illegal movement,” dismissed the Balfour Declaration as “null and void,” and categorically denied any historic connection between the Jewish people and the land of Israel. No wonder

that US President Bill Clinton was driven to a state of total frustration by the intransigence of PLO leader Yasser Arafat in the summer of 2000 during the American-hosted negotiations with Israeli Premier, Ehud Barak.⁷⁹¹ Clinton's own mistake, however (repeated by virtually all Western and even some Israeli leaders), was to assume that the "Palestinian question" is ultimately about land and not about the very existence of Israel as a sovereign Jewish State in the Middle East. Arafat's doubletalk (pretending to accept a truncated Israel when speaking to Western audiences while preaching jihad to liberate all of Palestine to his own people) undoubtedly made such Western self-deception about Palestinian intentions much easier. This level of dissimulation has now changed to a certain extent. Hamas's draconian control of Gaza since 2006, its subordination of Palestinian nationalism to its own militant Islamic creed (openly raising "the banner of Allah over every inch of Palestine"), and its blatantly antisemitic incitement, make such pretenses futile. As one Israeli historian bluntly put it, for Hamas, "the destruction of the Jewish state is Allah's command."⁷⁹²

The West reacts

The Western response to the unprecedented wave of antisemitic violence since 2000, especially within the European Union (EU) – some of it Islamist in motivation – has, on the whole, been disappointing.⁷⁹³ A rare exception was the late Oriana Fallaci (a fiery Italian journalist) who wrote back in 2002: "I find it shameful that in France, the France of 'liberty, equality, fraternity,' synagogues are torched, Jews are terrorized, and their cemeteries profaned [...], that in Holland and Germany and Denmark youngsters show off the keffiyah like the vanguard of Mussolini displayed the Fascist emblem [...], that in almost every European university, Palestinian students take over and nurture anti-Zionism."⁷⁹⁴ These passionate remarks have lost none of their pertinence during the past ten years, though Fallaci was predictably harassed by Muslim and leftist organizations on bogus charges of encouraging "racism" and "Islamophobia." Indeed, things are

considerably worse today as a particularly virulent strain of pro-Palestine campus antisemitism has spread to North America and Great Britain – accompanied by repeated efforts at boycotting Israel as an “apartheid state.”⁷⁹⁵

With regard to the United States the warning-signs were already there at least ten years ago. In September 2002 Lawrence Summers, then President of Harvard, in an address to the Harvard community, observed that anti-Zionism had begun to tip over into antisemitism, even in “progressive intellectual communities” in the United States. Many of the fashionable anti-Israel positions in academia, he pointed out, were “antisemitic in effect if not intent,” especially when the Jewish State was being singled out for general opprobrium over issues of human rights whose violation was totally ignored elsewhere.⁷⁹⁶ Moreover, the growing number of antisemitic incidents out of “anti-Zionist” activism on American campuses (from San Francisco State to Yale) was a clear indication that something was seriously amiss. Supposedly “anti-Zionist” criticism of Israel was shamelessly exploiting a long-established repertoire of antisemitic stereotypes to reinforce its compulsive demonization of the Jewish State. This campus agitation recklessly disregarded factual arguments in favor of turning the story of one complex nation (Israel) into a universal scapegoat for all societal evils. Such hyperbolic hatred of Israel is not only irrational but it constitutes a moral pathology in its own right. In May 2002 Laurie Zoloth, director of Jewish Studies at San Francisco State University, summed up her own feelings about this new style of antisemitism as follows: “I cannot fully express what it feels like to have to walk across campus daily, past maps of the Middle East that do not include Israel, past posters of cans of soup with labels on them of drops of blood and dead babies, labeled ‘canned Palestinian children meat, slaughtered according to Jewish rites under American license’ [...].”⁷⁹⁷

The new antisemitism

Today, across the Western world, such vile slogans, or their equivalents, are present in many walks of life. This “new

antisemitism” is driven, above all, by the desire for the systematic delegitimization, defamation and demonization of Israel as a Jewish State. It comes not only from Islamic fundamentalists, Palestinian nationalists or neo-Nazis; it is also increasingly popular on the “anti-racist” Left (Marxist, Third-Worldist, anti-globalist) and even widespread in certain liberal, “enlightened” and intellectual circles.⁷⁹⁸ The openly exclusionary weapon of supporting the boycott of Israeli academics (boycotts have been a classic antisemitic tool in modern European history) is one especially ugly symptom of this trend. The relentless assault on the “Jewish/Zionist Lobby” is another tell-tale signal of the “new antisemitism.” No less racist is the myth of a neo-con (codeword for “Jew”) conspiracy to push the US into the 2003 Iraq War or the malicious stigmatization of a hawkish, “warmongering Israel,” allegedly seeking to perpetrate “genocide” against the stateless Palestinians.⁷⁹⁹

In this morass of falsehoods, one of the most striking features is the stubborn refusal of the anti-Zionists to engage in any substantive critique of radical Islam and its suicide-bombing atrocities. Moreover, whenever the subject of leftist or Muslim antisemitism is thrust into this particular boiling pot, a kneejerk counter-accusation is usually made – the critic is allegedly “stifling criticism” of Israel, protesting in bad faith or supposedly acting as a venal apologist of “the Zionists.” Such baseless accusations invariably shut down any serious discussion of the stigmatizing vocabulary and paranoid conspiracy theories concerning Jews, so widely prevalent today among many Islamists, Marxists and even “liberal” adversaries of modern Zionism.

There is something grossly simplistic about reducing discussion of Muslim, leftist or other forms of contemporary antisemitism to allegations about “immunizing” Israel from legitimate criticism. Among other things, it should be obvious that “criticism” of Israel, far from being silenced, is in fact very common, not to say rampant in a substantial part of the Western media. So what kind of “silence” is this to begin with? Indeed, claims that Israel resembles the racist regime in South Africa have become all-too-fashionable in much

contemporary Western discourse, despite their self-evident hollowness to any knowledgeable observer. As for the Islamists, they have never disguised their relentless effort to definitively “cleanse” the Middle East of what they openly call the “Jewish cancer.” Yet many leftists and “progressive” liberals either remain completely silent about the monstrosity of this genocidal language or cynically suggest that Israel is exaggerating the Iranian threat to justify future aggressions of its own.

In its moralistic sermons about the “sins of Israel,” the anti-Zionist Left invariably ignores its own racism. Moreover, it is typically obsessed with imaginary depictions of Zionism as a uniquely racist movement, while studiously ignoring, dismissing or massively downplaying the very real, existential threats to Israel emanating from Iran and its proxies. Even more objectionable is the way that left-wing “anti-Zionists” (some of them Jewish) recklessly compare Zionism and the Jewish State with the murderous persecutions of Jews by Hitler and the Third Reich. Such stunningly mendacious accusations repeat, almost to the letter, the hateful propaganda cynically spread by the Soviet Union and its communist allies in the 1970s when “Zionism” was continuously demonized by the USSR as an intrinsically fascist movement. At that time, Communists, like the jihadists and some anti-Zionist left-liberals today, were remorseless in slandering Israel as a militarist state purportedly based on “ethnic cleansing,” “racial segregation” and aggressive expansionism.

The Soviet influence

The Soviet media related to “world Zionism” as a sinister international network that supposedly controlled thousands of publications around the world. This “Mafia,” it was claimed, had the unlimited resources of American imperialism at its disposal – which were being mobilized to dominate the Arab world, Asia, Africa, and Latin America. “Zionism” was branded as Public Enemy No. 1 by the vast Soviet propaganda apparatus which expended seemingly endless amounts of money and vitriol in bracketing Israel with the unholy trinity

of racism, imperialism and colonialism. “World Zionism” was endowed by Communist propaganda with extraordinary satanic powers. It was invariably presented as the embodiment of the forces of darkness, as a truly monstrous force aspiring to global domination. There was a never-ending stream of repetitive depictions of the Zionist enemy as “an invisible but huge and mighty empire of financiers and industrialists”; as a giant octopus whose tentacles extended into almost 70 countries around the globe. In the fictional world of Soviet and Arab propaganda after 1967, the “Zionists” already had an iron grip on the Western mass media, on the big banks and publishing houses, especially in the United States, not to mention its armaments industry.

In Communist Eastern Europe, too, the mythical theme of a “world Zionist conspiracy” was activated during the Polish antisemitic campaigns of 1968 and following the successful effort (imposed by Soviet tanks) to bring down Alexander Dubcek’s innovative Czech experiment in humanizing “real” Socialism. In both cases, Moscow employed the time-honored techniques of racist and diversionary antisemitism under the label of “anti-Zionism” to crush internal dissent, suppress trends towards democratization and channel smoldering East European nationalism away from targeting the Soviet Union. By 1968, under Communist rule in the USSR and Eastern Europe, antisemitism was emerging as a quasi-official state doctrine. “Anti-Zionism” was the necessary rationalization for this new campaign. In 1968, an ethno-nationalist Communist version of the myth of the Jew as “the enemy of Poland” became openly manifest in Poland. Popular slogans like “Purge the Party of Zionists” (Oczyścić Partię z Syjonistów), or “Zionists represent Israel, not Poland” surfaced, alongside an official façade of “opposing antisemitism.” The Government and Party hacks cynically substituted “Zionist” for “Jew” in their racist propaganda, though there were scarcely any Zionists left in post-Shoah Poland. The anti-Stalinist Left in Western countries – despite its vehement “anti-racism” – has often used similar rhetoric and stigmatizing techniques.

In defining who was a “Zionist,” hard-core antisemites in Communist Poland relied on biological criteria that echoed Poland’s pre-1939 ultra-nationalists with their xenophobic calls for the “ethnic cleansing” of Jews by forced emigration. Prime Minister Gomułka, in a notorious speech of March 19, 1968, to Party activists, acknowledged the possibility that there might be a few Polish patriots among the Jews but the great majority (defined as “cosmopolitans,” “national nihilists,” or else as “emotionally” tied to Israel) could have no place in Poland. Indeed, since July 1967 Gomułka had condemned anyone in Poland who dared to support “the Israeli aggressor” as belonging to “a fifth column” and as being a “threat” to national security. This was a theme widely disseminated on Communist State-controlled radio and television.

“Zionists,” in particular, were singled out by the regime for conspiring with the external “enemies of communist Poland” – led by the United States, Israel and West Germany. “Zionist” Jews supposedly constituted an “antinational” and anti-Communist group in the ruling Polish Workers Party, according to Mieczysław Moczar – at the time, minister of the interior, and the driving force of the 1968 anti-Jewish campaign. Others, like Andrzej Werblan (head of the Department of Science and Learning in the Party Central Committee) favored expelling Jewish Communists since they were allegedly imbued with a “bourgeois” and cosmopolitan ethos. Their disproportionate influence “in certain organs of the power apparatus, in propaganda, and in the Foreign and Internal Affairs Ministries” had “polluted” Polish Communist thinking and alienated the Party from the Polish people. As in the Arab world and in the Soviet Union, government-controlled anti-Zionism and antisemitism had become synonymous.

The pathology spreads to Europe

In Western Europe, a different kind of anti-Zionism emerged around 1968, especially in the student New Left, among intellectuals and disillusioned ex-Communists. This chorus

found a lead tenor in the veteran Polish-born ex-Trotskyist Isaac Deutscher, who, shortly before his death in July 1967, deplored that frenzy of belligerence, arrogance, and fanaticism of which the Israelis gave such startling displays as they rushed to Sinai and the Wailing Wall and to Jordan and the walls of Jericho.⁸⁰⁰ Deutscher's harsh polemic against the Six-Day War victory over three Arab states contained every known cliché about Israel as a "Western agent," as a parasitic excrescence dependent on foreign aid and an outpost of "religious obscurantism and reaction." Himself Jewish, Deutscher nevertheless asserted that the Jewish State was built on "the spirit of racial-Talmudic exclusiveness and superiority." Ignoring Arab threats to drive the Jews in to the sea, Deutscher squarely blamed Israeli "militarism" for the 1967 War, damning contemporary Jewish nationalism as that "of conquerors and oppressors." At the same time with breathtaking sophistry, he whitewashed the exclusivist, intolerant character of Arab nationalism, idealizing it as anti-colonialist and "progressive." Israelis were caricatured as "the Prussians of the Middle East," swollen with "chauvinistic arrogance and contempt for other peoples," while the ocean of Arab dictatorship, repression and hate-speech was treated with kid gloves. Deutscher's special loathing was reserved for what he reviled as "Talmudic obscurantism" and "Chassidim jumping for joy at the Wailing Wall [...]." Nor did he fail to blame Israel for the genocidal antisemitism in the Arab world – as if Arabs bore no responsibility for their own words and deeds.

Deutscher and other Marxist "critics" during the past 40 years have repeatedly sought to discredit the Jewish State as an "alien, imperialist interloper" in the region. Through intrinsically false comparisons with some of the darker pages of Western colonial history – Algeria, Vietnam or apartheid South Africa – the anti-Zionist Left hopes to deny to Israeli Jews (after 64 years of remarkably successful nation-building) their inalienable right to national self-determination and self-defense against those who seek their annihilation. Typically, the anti-Zionists present Israel as an outlaw country, a "rogue" state, and the leading serial violator of human rights or even

the Number One threat to world peace. None of these charges has the slightest objective merit. But with the built-in majorities that such bogus claims automatically enjoy in the United Nations, broad global support is virtually ensured for the spread of a rabidly anti-Israel narrative in the international arena.⁸⁰¹

The prevailing anti-Israel climate of opinion – currently exacerbated by wars, revolutions, chaos and chronic instability in the Middle East (and the reality of 56 Islamic countries and 22 Arab states against just one Jewish state) – has without doubt contributed to the dramatic increase during the past decade of antisemitic events world-wide. Many of the anti-Jewish incidents were ostensibly triggered by Israel’s tough responses in the Second Intifada (2000–2004), the Second Lebanon War (2006) and the Gaza conflict (2009). The violent attacks across Europe on synagogues, Jewish communal institutions and individual Jews (as well as the cemetery desecrations) were not unconnected to the many hostile articles in the European media about the Jewish State; or to the antagonistic editorials, Internet blogs, commentaries and anti-Israel demonstrations in European capitals since 2001, whether in London, Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, Oslo, Stockholm, Rome, Berlin, Madrid or in several American cities. Sometimes, governments provided the lead, as in Venezuela, for example. Its pro-Iranian, pro-Cuban and virulently anti-Israel socialist president, Hugo Chávez, by using violent and incendiary language about a wholly fictitious Israeli “genocide” of the Palestinians, seriously damaged the physical security and viability of the local Jewish community.⁸

⁰² In European nations like Spain, Sweden, Norway, Belgium and Greece, where there are only tiny Jewish communities, anti-Israel hate speech – especially among Muslims or from the far Right and radical Left – has also contributed to undermining what still remains of a viable Jewish communal life.⁸⁰³

The intelligentsia and anti-Zionism

European writers and intellectuals, too, have played a singularly inglorious role in demonstrating how contemporary anti-Zionism can become inextricably linked with some of the worst antisemitic clichés. For example, the prominent Norwegian writer, Jostein Gaarder (author of the best-selling *Sophie's World*), venomously slandered the State of Israel in a newspaper article of August 2006, stressing that he personally no longer recognized its right to exist. At the same time, Gaarder deplored what he called the arrogance of the “chosen people” who were allegedly inflicting “war-crimes” on the wholly “innocent” Palestinians and Lebanese. There was, of course, not a word about the highly provocative Hezbollah actions that provoked the war of 2006.⁸⁰⁴ Another Norwegian intellectual, Johan Galtung (founder of the discipline of international Peace Studies) went even further in 2012. He suggested that the Israeli Mossad was behind the cold-blooded massacre in Norway a year earlier by the lone gunman Anders Breivik of 77 Norwegian youngsters at a summer camp outside Oslo. For good measure, Professor Galtung, a veteran anti-American and anti-Zionist leftist declared the notorious antisemitic forgery, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, to be a serious text for understanding Israeli policy. If that were not enough, he also insisted that the main source of contemporary evils was Jewish-Zionist control of American politics, the banks and the media. For his skewed information, Galtung relied on the bogus statistics of a deceased American neo-Nazi, William Pierce.

Again, in 2012, the German Nobel Prize Laureate for Literature, Günter Grass (a Social Democrat who had once served in the Waffen-SS), gratuitously accused Israel of planning a nuclear strike to annihilate “the Iranian people,” again, without offering even the tiniest shred of evidence.⁸⁰⁵ German public opinion appeared to be solidly behind Grass’s deeply offensive anti-Israel polemic (presented in the guise of a “poem”) – though the German government and more responsible German media sharply condemned his hollow assertions. But the pro-Grass public reaction in Germany is less surprising when one follows the results of recent surveys revealing that virtually 50% of all Germans believe Israel to be

conducting “a war of annihilation” (*Vernichtungskrieg*) against the Palestinians. This stunningly false perception (with its ugly Hitlerian echoes) represents a particularly obnoxious “anti-Zionist” form of Holocaust inversion – suggesting that the Israelis are “Nazis” and the Palestinians are “Jews.” This is a repellent trend which is increasingly common not only in Germany but also in Poland, Hungary (where far-right antisemitism is on the rise) and many other EU nations. By pretending that the Jewish State is pursuing a “genocidal” policy today, the need to face the scale of European guilt and complicity in the mass murder of Jews during the Holocaust can be more easily deflected.

During the past 30 years, Holocaust inversion and denial have become an increasingly important strand in contemporary antisemitism and anti-Zionism. One of the foremost French Holocaust deniers, Robert Faurisson, made this crystal clear on French radio as far back as December 1980. Faurisson, then an associate professor of French literature (with carefully disguised far-right sympathies), asserted: “The claim of the existence of gas chambers and the genocide of Jews by Hitler constitutes one and the same historical lie, which opened the way to a gigantic political and financial fraud of which the principal beneficiaries are the State of Israel and international Zionism, and the principal victims the Germans and the entire Palestinian people.”⁸⁰⁶

This gross fabrication did not prevent Faurisson from receiving qualified support for his quack theories from some intellectuals on the French Libertarian Left. Faurisson even succeeded in 1981 in publishing his defense of Holocaust denial accompanied by a preface from Noam Chomsky, the celebrated American scholar – a virulent Jewish anti-Zionist and a left-wing maverick. Although Chomsky subsequently claimed that he had never read Faurisson’s work, he nonetheless deplored efforts to “silence” Faurisson, asserting that the French literary critic had been the target of “a vicious campaign of harassment, intimidation and slander.” However, in defending Faurisson’s right to free speech he quite wrongly referred to him as a “liberal.” He also praised his associate Serge Thion (a prolific left-wing Holocaust denier) as a

“libertarian socialist scholar.” Amazingly, Chomsky even wrote that he could see “no hint of antisemitic implications” in Holocaust denial as such.⁸⁰⁷ Nor did Chomsky, himself a merciless critic of the United States and Zionism for many decades, find anything objectionable in the totally false claim that the Holocaust “is being exploited, viciously so, by apologists for Israeli repression and violence.”

Left-wing anti-Zionist Holocaust inverters like to emphasize that there have been many genocides in history and that the Jews cannot claim any monopoly on suffering. Thus the French left-wing lawyer Jacques Vergès (who zealously defended the notorious Nazi criminal Klaus Barbie in France in the late 1980s) has consistently compared French colonial oppression in Algeria with the Holocaust in order to better relativize and neutralize its uniqueness.⁸⁰⁸ Although Vergès stopped short of denying that the Holocaust actually happened, there were others who have used similarly relativist arguments to negate the Shoah. Thus the French ultra-leftist militant Pierre Guillaume and his followers could find no difference between the mass murder of European Jewry and the American internment of Japanese-born US citizens during World War II; between official French government harassment of Spanish Republicans before 1939, and the German concentration camps in wartime; or between what happened to millions of Russians, Poles and Ukrainians who were shot or died of starvation in German camps, and the fate of the Jews.⁸⁰⁹

⁹ The relativists usually end up embracing radical anti-Zionism or some other version of antisemitism. This was the case of the Third Worldist libertarian, Serge Thion, for whom the real Nazi Holocaust of Jews came to be seen as a fiction, while the purely fictitious Israeli “genocide” of Palestinians was turned into something real. This is a classic symptom of the “new antisemitism.”

Another revealing example from France of the close nexus between antisemitism, anti-Zionism and Holocaust denial was the scandal in the late 1990s involving Abbé Pierre, a missionary Catholic, a humanitarian defender of the poor, and a self-proclaimed former member of the French wartime resistance. Abbé Pierre, an extremely popular priest in France,

was already in his eighties when he came out in support of his old friend Roger Garaudy, whose 1995 book, *Les Mythes Fondateurs de la Politique Israélienne*, is generally recognized as an unadulterated piece of Holocaust denial. Garaudy, an ex-Stalinist, ex-Catholic, and leftist convert to Islam, had come to be immensely appreciated in the Arab world for his vitriolic hostility to Israel and hatred of the “Judeo-Christian” West. The emerging Arab cult of Garaudy was greatly reinforced by his 1995 blood libel against Israel, which was not only anti-Zionist but unmistakably anti-Jewish – despite all his vehement denials. When Abbé Pierre nonetheless rallied to Garaudy’s Holocaust “revisionism,” it caused a considerable stir in France.⁸¹⁰

Open or latent antisemitism has undoubtedly been a key factor behind the spread of Holocaust denial and inversion, which has in turn strengthened latent hatred of Jews. In Germany, the “revisionists” have tended to play more on the widespread German desire to be released from historic shame and guilt, to “normalize” the Nazi past, and reclaim their right to a robust patriotism. Even sophisticated scholars like the German philosopher and historian Ernst Nolte have used arguments in their writings which are clearly taken from Holocaust denial literature. Nolte, for example, has ludicrously insisted that a statement by Dr. Chaim Weizmann (president of the World Zionist Organization) in September 1939 that Jews would support Great Britain and the Western democracies, amounted to a declaration of war on Nazi Germany, thereby justifying Hitler’s treatment of them as hostages. This is a classic negationist thesis. Nolte is not an antisemite but rather a historical relativist who argues that the Holocaust (except for the “technical detail” of the gas chambers) is no different from other major massacres in the 20th century. More provocatively, the German scholar insisted that the Nazi genocide was essentially a pale copy of the Soviet Gulag – the Bolshevik extermination of the kulaks and other class enemies. Indeed, for Nolte, the Nazi extermination of Jews was best understood as a preventive measure against “Asiatic” barbarism from the East. Such arguments have given some legitimacy and even

encouragement to outright deniers and antisemites, whatever Nolte's personal intentions may have been in the matter.⁸¹¹

Exploiting the internet

Not all Holocaust denial, relativism and inversion, as we have already noted, is motivated by antisemitism or hatred of Israel. Nevertheless this has become a central motif among Holocaust deniers, especially in the United States, Britain, Canada and Australia as well as in France, Romania, Austria and Germany. An early pioneer in exploiting the World Wide Web for this purpose was the German-born Canadian hater, Ernst Zündel, an inveterate showman who, at one time, ran a mini-multimedia empire out of Toronto. Though eventually extradited and indicted in Germany, Zündel was able for several decades to cast himself as a heroic warrior against what he called "the lie of the century." He openly sought to vindicate Hitler and the Nazis even as he maligned the Jews. The internet provided him (and other deniers) with an effective way to circumvent stringent European legislation designed to punish neo-Nazi propagandists and Holocaust negationists.

About twenty years ago, the Institute for Historical Review based in California also developed its own web sites to promote the notion that the Holocaust was a "Zionist" fiction. One of the institute's most active American collaborators in the 1990s was the libertarian Bradley Smith, who exploited the Web as an extension of his "Campus Project" to promote Holocaust denial as "revisionist" history at American colleges and universities. Under the guise of defending pluralism and free speech, his aim was to legitimize denial as an authentic part of Holocaust study. The "truths" of the deniers are, of course, pure fabrications which ignore the huge mass of evidence that runs counter to their conclusions. The right-wing deniers are usually engaged in rehabilitating Nazism, fascism or white supremacist racism – an endeavor in which antisemitism (wrapped up as "anti-Zionism") plays a crucial role. For left-wing deniers, hatred of Israel is often the most compelling motif. But it is an outlook which almost inevitably involves some variant on the theory of a Jewish conspiracy.

Muslims and Arabs adopt European tropes

In the Arab world, it should be said, the so-called Holocaust “hoax” has been defined from the outset as a Jewish or Zionist conspiracy.⁸¹² It is certainly significant that Arab and Muslim Judeophobes – despite their hatred of the West – have chosen to annex the symbols and expressions of European antisemitism without any hesitation (including Holocaust denial) as an integral part of their war against Israel.⁸¹³ One finds a growing readiness among Muslims to believe, for example, that the Jews consciously invented the “Auschwitz lie,” the “hoax” of their own extermination, as part of a diabolical plan to overwhelm Islam and achieve world domination. In this surrealistic, super-Machiavellian scenario, the satanic archetype of the conspiratorial Jew – author and beneficiary of the greatest “myth” of the 20th century – achieves a gruesome and novel apotheosis.

One of the attractions of Holocaust denial to Arab Judeophobes evidently lies in what they interpret as its radical challenge to the moral foundations of the Israeli state. Palestinian Arab leaders and intellectuals have been particularly prominent in promoting this endeavor. Thus, Palestinian Hamas leader Khaled Mashal, appearing on *Al-Jazeera TV* (July 16, 2007) wished “to make it clear to the West and the German people” that they were being “blackmailed because of what Nazism did to the Zionists, or to the Jews.” For Mashal, it was self-evident “that what Israel did to the Palestinian people is many times worse than what Nazism did to the Jews, and there is exaggeration, which has become obsolete, regarding the issue of the Holocaust.” This belief also motivated Mahmoud Abbas (better known as Abu Mazen), the chief PLO architect of the Oslo Peace Accords and currently head of the Palestinian Authority, to embrace Holocaust denial nearly 30 years ago. In 1984 he authored a work entitled *The Other Side: The Secret Relationship between Nazism and the Zionist Movement* that accused Israel of deliberately inflating the number of Jews killed in the Holocaust. He openly questioned whether gas chambers were really used for extermination. Abu Mazen even suggested that

the number of Jewish victims of the Shoah was “even fewer than one million.”⁸¹⁴ He has never publicly repudiated these utterly baseless assertions.

In Iran, too, Holocaust denial has spread since the early 1980s, alongside Nazilike caricatures of the “Talmudic Jew,” the promotion of the poisonously antisemitic forgery *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and repeated calls to eradicate the Zionist “cancer” from the planet.⁸¹⁵ This escalation was a logical step for militant Khomeinistyle radicalism, which, since 1979 has totally demonized Zionism as the enemy of the human race. Hence, it is no surprise to find that the present-day Supreme Guide of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, could proclaim to his people:

There is evidence which shows that Zionists had close relations with German Nazis and exaggerated statistics on Jewish killings. There is even evidence on hand that a large number of non-Jewish hooligans and thugs of Eastern Europe were forced to emigrate to Palestine as Jews [...] to install in the heart of the Islamic world an anti-Islamic state under the guise of supporting the victims of racism [...].⁸¹⁶

Iranian President Ahmadinejad, as we have already noted, has in recent years pushed this kind of denial to a new level of obscenity by repeatedly attacking the Holocaust since 2005 as a “myth” or as despicable “Zionist propaganda.” Many Iranian journalists, taking their cue from these reckless utterances, have repeated ad nauseam that the “Zionist lobby” uses the Holocaust “as a club with which to beat and extort the West.” Such spurious claims can also periodically be heard from the lips of anti-Zionist Western intellectuals.

In December 2006, Iran hosted a much-publicized conference featuring the world’s best-known Holocaust deniers – most of them from the Western world. The Iranian Foreign Minister, Manouchehr Mottaki, opened the proceedings, stating that, “[i]f the official version of the Holocaust is thrown in doubt, then the identity and nature of Israel will be thrown in doubt.” The participants either questioned the historical fact of the Holocaust or categorically denied its reality, or else distorted the event beyond recognition. The consensus view was that the Holocaust had been grossly manipulated to serve Israel’s financial and

political interests. The Tehran conference can be seen as a major symbol of Iran's state-sponsored "anti-Zionist" antisemitism.

Palestinian denial

The Palestinian Mufti of Jerusalem, Sheikh Ikrima Sabri, has also consistently adopted the Iranian-sponsored line, telling the *New York Times*: "[We believe] that the number of 6 million Holocaust victims is exaggerated. The Jews are using this issue, in many ways, also to blackmail the Germans financially [...]. The Holocaust is protecting Israel."⁸¹⁷

Other Palestinians have also been explicitly "revisionist" in their perceptions of the Holocaust. Hassan al-Agha, professor at the Islamic University in Gaza City, declared on a PA cultural affairs television program back in 1997: "[T]he Jews view it [the Holocaust] as a profitable activity so they inflate the number of victims all the time. In another ten years, I do not know what number they will reach. [...] As you know, when it comes to economics and investments, the Jews have been very experienced even since the days of *The Merchant of Venice*."⁸¹⁸

As we have already seen, the European intellectual most frequently mentioned as a source of inspiration for contemporary Arab Holocaust deniers is the former French Stalinist (and convert to Islam) Roger Garaudy. Indeed, the trial and conviction of Garaudy in France in 1998 for "negating the Holocaust" made him a hero almost overnight, in much of the Muslim and Arab Middle East. Among his enthusiastic admirers was the former president of Iran, the still influential Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who in a sermon in *Tehran Radio*, declared himself fully convinced that "Hitler had only killed 20,000 Jews and not six million," adding that "Garaudy's crime derives from the doubt he cast on Zionist propaganda."⁸¹⁹ Rafsanjani is the same "moderate" cleric who, in 2001, proclaimed on "Jerusalem Day" in Tehran that "one atomic bomb would wipe out Israel without a trace," while the Islamic world would only be damaged rather than

destroyed by Israeli nuclear retaliation.⁸²⁰ In the Iranian case, Holocaust denial is openly linked to extreme anti-Zionism, lethal antisemitism, and the sponsorship of global terrorism, driven by the cult of Islamic jihad, which relentlessly seeks the eradication of the “tumor called Israel.”⁸²¹ The Garaudy Affair underlined the vitality of antisemitic and anti-Zionist Holocaust denial in Iran and the Arab world. Arabic translations of Garaudy’s work became best-sellers in many Middle Eastern countries, even though in France he was convicted of inciting racial hatred.⁸²² Some Arab professionals eagerly offered their services to help Garaudy. The binding ideological cement behind this outpouring of solidarity was a Protocols-style antisemitism which definitively branded the Holocaust as a Jewish conspiracy and a diabolical “Zionist invention.” Hence the favorable reaction to Garaudy’s thesis by so many Arab newspapers and magazines or by prominent Egyptian clerics such as Sheikh Muhammad al-Tantawi, leading Lebanese politicians such as the late President Rafiq Hariri, or well-known Pan-Arab intellectuals such as Mohammed Hassanin Haikal.

It is no accident that Palestinian intellectuals, clerics, and legislators have displayed great reluctance to incorporate any aspect of Holocaust study into their teaching curricula, evidently fearing that it might strengthen Zionist claims to Palestine. Hatem Abd al-Qadar, a Hamas leader, once explained in an internal Palestinian debate that such instruction would represent “a great danger for the formation of a Palestinian consciousness.” The Holocaust, he stressed, was a threat to Palestinian political dreams and religious aspirations. It could undermine the promise by Allah that the whole of Palestine was the exclusive sacred possession of the Arabs. Other Palestinian intellectuals proposed sowing “doubts” about the “veracity” of the Holocaust, while calling for an exclusive focus on Zionist “terror,” “cruelty,” and alleged “massacres” of Palestinians. The Palestinian narrative evidently cannot tolerate any reference to Jewish victims of the Holocaust.⁸²³

Denial spreads through the Middle East

Since the 1990s, Holocaust denial has become a much broader and widespread phenomenon throughout the Middle East. Since 2000, one can find increasing numbers of high-ranking Iranian, Syrian, Palestinian, Hamas and Hezbollah officials making Holocaust denial statements. In the Egyptian, Jordanian, and Saudi media, where antisemitism has long been rampant, negationist rhetoric concerning the wartime mass murder of European Jews has become a very common theme.⁸

²⁴ This is important to our analysis because Holocaust denial is a particularly malevolent and obnoxious form of racist incitement – one of the most up-to-date rationalizations for hating Jews invented since 1945, thinly disguised under the anodyne mask of revising history. This is why deniers have been called assassins of memory, fanatics engaged in a new kind of symbolic genocide against the Jewish people. Where the mobs once cried “Death to the Jews,” it is as if the deniers now cynically proclaim that “the Jews never died.” If that were true, then the Jews would have successfully fabricated a monstrous (though profitable) lie – itself a highly toxic antisemitic claim.

Holocaust denial, anti-Zionism and antisemitism belong to a common species of bigotry and incitement against the Jewish people that has persisted throughout the centuries. Anti-Zionism (like Holocaust denial) is, of course, much more recent than antisemitism. However, it is precisely the defamation of Israel which has become in our time the primary vehicle for expressing “politically correct” antisemitism – whether it be Islamist, Christian, nationalist, right-wing or left-wing in its inspiration.

Both anti-Zionism and antisemitism are essentially teachings of contempt, ideologies of hatred and negation directed against Jewish dignity, the right to collective self-definition and to a Jewish national identity. Both ideologies embody a mind-set bent on diffusing hateful images and distorted perceptions of Jews which link them to a whole gamut of contemporary evils – including racism, militarism, apartheid, ethnic cleansing, fascism, Nazism and genocide. The anti-Zionists and the antisemites are equally determined to transform the Jews (the ultimate victims of mass genocide in

the 20th century) into criminal perpetrators and evil murderers – exactly as the Church Fathers did with their fabrication of the deicide charge against the Jewish people 2,000 years ago.

Neither antisemites nor contemporary anti-Zionists are remotely interested in “criticism” of Jews. They prefer to rely on defamation, demonization or open dehumanization – most of it ideologically motivated. While in democratic Western societies (though not in the Arab-Muslim world) the taboo on classical antisemitism has not yet been completely eroded, anti-Zionist bigots feel free to libel Israel with complete impunity. There are few, if any, legal sanctions available to counter such anti-Zionist vilification, which is often protected as “free speech” or else as the expression of a “legitimate” political viewpoint. Unfortunately, Western liberties have often been exploited in perverse ways to present assaults on Jewish targets as if they were justifiable “revenge” attacks against Israel. In the minds of the jihadists there is generally no distinction in theory or practice between Israelis and Jews. For that matter, Muslims, Christians as well as “non-believers” have also fallen victim to this indiscriminate Islamist violence.

Denying Judaism’s roots in Israel

More recently the Palestinians and their supporters have widened their delegitimization campaign to an all-out negation of Israel’s history and the denial of any link between Jews and the Holy Land. Israel’s enemies increasingly seek to undermine the very roots of Jewish history, religion, cultural memory and national identity in the land of Zion, by placing a special emphasis on the uniquely “Arab” character of Jerusalem at the expense of the Jews. Already at Camp David in 2000, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat insistently denied to President Clinton that the Jews had ever built or worshipped in the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem, or indeed that these edifices had even existed. Similarly, the then-Mufti of Jerusalem Ikrima Sabri, in 2001, publicly declared that the Wailing Wall in the Holy City had no connection whatsoever with the Jewish past and was simply part of an organized effort by the “deceitful” Jews to swindle Muslims and the

entire Gentile world. Since then, there has been a systematic Arab effort, led by the Palestinian Waqf, to destroy any material traces or archeological vestiges of the ancient Jewish presence in Jerusalem (about three thousand years old) as part of its organized policy of delegitimization directed against Israel.

The fact that the Temples in Jerusalem are mentioned no less than 534 times in the Hebrew Bible and as many as 70 times in the New Testament, does not, of course, deter anti-Jewish or anti-Israel bigots. But Palestinian negationism has nonetheless fallen on fertile soil, drawing on Arab national myths, Islamic fanaticism, deeply-rooted anti-Jewish currents in Christian theology and the sheer weight of political expediency in the United Nations, and beyond. Once again, antisemitism and anti-Zionism readily converge in their common goal – to dismantle the Jewish State and return the people of Israel to an exilic and largely powerless condition – that of being permanently “wandering Jews” at the mercy of their would-be persecutors.

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52. Anti-Zionist Discourse of the Left in Latin America: An Assessment

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This paper originally appeared as “Anti-Zionist Discourse of the Left in Latin America: An Assessment,” in *Reconsidering Israel-Diaspora Relations*, edited by Eliezer Ben-Rafael, Judit Bokser Liwerant, and Yosef Gorny, 309–333. Leiden: Brill, 2014.

Much of the recent discourse on “new antisemitism” and the Israel-Palestine conflict often goes along with a tendency to connect the antisemitic figure of the Jews, as a collectivity, via anti-Israel policies and anti-Zionism, and both with anti-Americanism. But this tendency leads to blurry conceptual differences between antisemitism, critics against US imperialism, and condemnation of both anti-Zionism and Israel security policies vis-à-vis the Palestinians.⁸²⁵

According to Brian Klug the new prejudice is not properly antisemitism, but is a new phenomenon. He accepts that there is reason for the Jewish community leaders to be concerned. However, Klug argues that the proposition of a new antisemitism is an unhelpful concept because it devalues the historical significance of the term “antisemitism,” transforming it into a part of a *mindset*, a way to overstate criticism and hostility of the Left toward Israel as irredeemably antisemite prejudice.⁸²⁶

Three years before Klug’s work was published, Earl Raab argued that charges of antisemitism based on anti-Israel opinions generally lack credibility. He wrote that “a grave educational misdirection is imbedded on the formulation’s suggestion that if we somehow get rid of antisemitism, we will get rid of anti-Israelism. This reduces the problem of prejudice against Israel to cartoon proportions.”⁸²⁷

In Latin America, a continent where anti-American positions and anti-Yanquee political hostility of the Left

historically took deep roots, the conflation Israel-United States puts Zionism in a worse situation. During recent decades Israel was seen in the camps of both social movements and Left intellectuals as a “proxy of the US.” However, the disclaimer of the Jewish community establishment that any criticism against security policies of Israel should be a manifestation of the “new antisemitism,” distorts the very debate on both Jew-hate in Latin America and anti-Zionist campaigns, as well as the political debate on the Middle East conflict. Conversely, when the Left charges Israel to perpetrate “genocide” against Palestinians in the occupied territories, it perversely attempts to conflate the Israel-Palestine national conflict with the Final Solution. Sociologist David Hirsh accuses anti-Zionists of double-standards in their criticism of Israel, and notes that other states carry out policies similar to those of Israel without those policies being described as “Nazi.” He suggests that to describe Israel as engaged in “genocide” carries an unspoken accusation evoking comparison with the Holocaust, and the equating of Zionism with Nazism.⁸²⁸

Of course, both countries – the US and Israel – are not similar joint targets of hatred and contempt by the large camp of the Left, but in the era of global and transnational advocacy campaigns against globalization, criticism of Israel as a US proxy⁸²⁹ deserves a more serious interpretation than simply charging the Left of antisemitic prejudice.

In fact, denunciation in the United States about the special US-Israel relations came from both camps, the American Left and the American Right. On the one hand, Noam Chomsky’s book *The Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel and the Palestinians* (1983), became a reference text for the Left and anti-globalization partisans about the relationship between America, Israel and the Arab Palestinians. Chomsky examines the origins of this military-political relationship and its meaningful consequences for the Palestinians and other Arabs. The last edition of the book mainly concentrates on the 1982 Lebanon War and the “pro-Zionist bias of most American media and intellectuals,” as Chomsky puts it.⁸³⁰ On the other hand, the American military support to Israel and their special relation also went under attack by the Right wing. A

meaningful case is that of Paul Findley, a Republican Congressman from Illinois who chose to denounce Israel's lobby in the Congress and the Pentagon. Findley is the author of *They Dare to Speak Out: People and Institutions Confront Israel's Lobby* in which he states that the pro-Israel lobby, notably AIPAC, has undue influence over the United States Congress. He refers to this lobby as "the 700-pound gorilla in Washington."⁸³¹

Shifting images of Israel and its relations in Latin America

As far as Latin America is concerned, the effects of the strategic alliance between Israel and the US, were developed several decades earlier in the 1970s and 1980s, when Israel was a proxy of the US, the hegemonic superpower in the region, by selling arms to dictatorship governments in Argentina and Chile.⁸³² Israeli firms sold weapons, and by providing military assistance and training to counter-insurgent groups in Central America, helped to internationalize the regional crisis.⁸³³ At the same time, the Palestinian cause and anti-Zionism gained political and social support in the years 1974–1990, through an aggressive use of the rise of oil prices by the Arab countries that were members of OPEC as suppliers of important Latin American countries such Brazil. In 1975, the UN Resolution 3379 equating Zionism with racism received the supportive vote of Brazil and Mexico.⁸³⁴ Because of the increasing pro-Palestine stance among Latin American countries, Chile and Brazil included, both under military anti-Communist dictatorships, the PLO gained political and diplomatic acceptance in the continent, the opening liaison and information offices in Brazil and Mexico (1976), Peru (1979), Nicaragua (1980), Bolivia (1982), Argentina (1985).

Immediately after the proclamation by the PLO in Argil of an independent Palestine state, the UN General Assembly voted Resolution 43/177 in December 1988, approved by 10 out of 19 Latin American countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua,

Panama, Peru). However, only Nicaragua and Cuba gave their formal recognition to the Palestine state, together with the Arab countries, and also other nations from Africa and East Europe.

After a deep political polarization among Latin American republics toward the Israel-Palestine conflict during the 1970s to 1980s, the end of the Cold War and its bi-polar confrontation system had a positive influence on the region for normalizing relations with both the Palestinian and the Zionist state on an equidistance basis. Along the 1990s, and stimulated by the peace process after the Oslo Accords in 1993, formal diplomatic missions of the new Palestine Authority opened in Chile (1992), Brazil (1993), Mexico (1995), Argentina and Colombia (1996), and Peru (1998). Following the signing of the Chilean-Palestine Memorandum for Scientific Technical, Cultural and Educative Cooperation (June 1995), Chile opened in Ramallah the first diplomatic Latin American representation (April 1998). But it should be recalled that simultaneously anti-Zionism, as an ideological issue among the diplomacy of Latin American countries, lost its virulence in its rhetorical attacks against Israel and was replaced instead by pragmatic considerations also by countries such as Brazil, Mexico, and Nicaragua. Meaningfully, all Latin American countries, except Cuba, voted on December 16, 1991 in favor of UN Resolution 46/86 revoking the infamous previous resolution that equated Zionism with racism.⁸³⁵

Since the end of the Cold War and the region's irreversible process of political democratization, the US reviewed its foreign policy. Additionally, in the 1990s, the Washington Consensus was adopted by the democratic Latin American republics that implemented neo-liberal economic policies.⁸³⁶ Since the new Millenium, the Left camp's mainstream ceased to be the sole responsible for the dissemination of anti-Zionism and anti-Israelism in Latin America. Instead, facing the reconfiguration of the new world system and its effects of globalization on the continent, Venezuela under Hugo Chávez's regime (1998–2013) became a Latin American proxy state for the Jew-hating Iranian state. Beyond the imprint of the vicious antisemite and Holocaust denier Norberto Ceresole

– an Argentine nationalist political intellectual who helped Chávez to shape his views – I argue that geopolitical considerations have made Zionism and Israel the enemies of Venezuelan *Chavismo* resulting from its alliance with Iran to combat US imperialism. Chávez basically positioned himself on the world stage as opposed to American foreign policy represented by the US-Israel military partnership and international political collaboration, specifically relating to the Middle East. Part of Chávez’s animosity toward Jews might have been calculated to win the favor of the ruling mullahs of Tehran.⁸³⁷ The same explanation seems to explain the anti-Zionism voiced by ALBA countries (Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Cuba), the anti-US bloc led by Chavismo which constituted Iran’s main partner in Latin America. At its inception, ALBA had two member states, Venezuela and Cuba. Subsequently, a number of other Latin American and Caribbean nations have joined this Peoples’ Trade Agreement. President Evo Morales, of poor but natural gas-rich Bolivia, joined the ALBA bloc on April 29, 2006, only days before he announced his intention to nationalize Bolivia’s hydrocarbon assets. Bolivia is a member of both the UNASUR bloc of South American countries and ALBA, while Venezuela and Ecuador are also members of UNASUR. As a result of the accord signed between the newly elected president of Nicaragua Daniel Ortega and Hugo Chávez in January, Venezuela agreed to forgive Nicaragua’s US\$31 million debt. Rafael Correa, the president of Ecuador, also signed a joint agreement with Hugo Chávez, which allowed Ecuador to become a member of ALBA – which it officially did in June 2009. On August 25, 2008, Honduran President Manuel Zelaya followed Correa’s footsteps by signing an agreement to join ALBA. His forced removal from office (June 28, 2009), however, led the Honduran Congress to ratify Honduras’s withdrawal from this bloc (January 13, 2010).⁸³⁸

Not surprisingly, the main ALBA countries cut off their diplomatic relations with Israel largely as a way to protest Israel’s military offensive in Gaza.⁸³⁹ The presidents of Venezuela, Bolivia and Nicaragua publicly voiced harsh anti-Zionist criticism and violent diatribes against Israel. In

contrast, other ALBA members such as Ecuador did not break up relations with Israel even if economic and political relations with Iran intensified. Rafael Correa did not condemn without reservations the Iranian-sponsored Hezbollah bombings that targeted the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires in 1992 and the Jewish community center AMIA in 1994. In an interview that addressed the close relations between Ecuador and Iran – in light of the latter’s terrorist actions and nuclear proliferation program – Correa emphasized his respect for President Ahmadinejad and advanced his view on Iran’s nuclear program as peaceful in nature. He also called Iran the “most democratic” country in the region while Israel deserved the international sanctions. In regards to the two terrorist anti-Jewish attacks in the mid-1990s, Correa stated that he was sorry while stressing the world importance of other bombings as those launched by NATO against Gaddafi, Libya’s president.⁸⁴⁰ In fact, during Correa’s first year in office, Ecuador and Iran resumed diplomatic relations.⁸⁴¹

Notwithstanding Ecuador-Iran close relations, Correa – unlike Chávez – abstained from voicing animosity toward Jews and sheer attacks against Zionism. It was not by chance that Chávez boasted being the icon that stood between Venezuelan-Bolivarian socialism and the forces of “international capitalist Zionism.” Pro-Chávez groups distributed copies of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* while the anti-Zionism publicly voiced by the Venezuelan government steadily spilled over into street level antisemitism, and it was also used as violent discourse to fight against the opposition to Chavismo. Indeed, the main political opponent of Chávez, Henrique Capriles, became the target of a Venezuelan National Radio program called “The Enemy Is Zionism” accusing him of standing for “Israeli ideology covertly,” according to a translation provided by CNN.⁸⁴²

Concern about anti-Zionism in Latin America’s Jewish communities

But concern about anti-Zionism as a recurrent motif for the dissemination of Jew-hatred is not limited to Latin American

Left governments linked to Iran and its Venezuelan ally. Indeed, the Jewish communities in Argentina – a democratic populist regime led by *Peronismo* – and Brazil – a social democratic polity led by *Trabalhismo* – worry about a new kind of hostility and negative attitudes that have developed toward Jews, both based on the controversial security policies of the State of Israel vis-à-vis the Palestinians, rather than on traditional prejudices about Jews. The annual DAIA Report on Antisemitism⁸⁴³ in Argentina reveals that hostility toward Israel is prominent during the years 2006 and 2009 when *Tzahal* conducted military actions. This survey showed that in 2009, following the “Cast Lead” Operation in Gaza, the high percentage of antisemitic manifestations was quite similar to the percentage of incidents and manifestations of Jew-hatred that were grounded on Nazi symbols. A plausible hypothesis that accounts for the substantial reduction in the complaints regarding defamatory anti-Jewish graffiti and messages daubed on the street walls in 2011 is the absence of “military actions” by Israel.⁸⁴⁴ According to the discursive typology elaborated in the 2012 DAIA Report shows that the Middle East conflict ranked third as an explanatory hypothesis for antisemitism in Argentina. However, this hypothesis works out only during November-December, the two months when *Tzahal* conducted a military operation in Gaza.⁸⁴⁵ The last DAIA annual Reports on Antisemitism disclose not so much an increasing level of antisemitism but rather a rising anxiety vis-à-vis the implications of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In contrast to the past few decades, the Jewish community in Argentina sees itself as a minority group fully integrated into the nation’s citizenship and enjoying legitimacy in the public sphere, in comparison to other migratory groups with higher rates of discrimination and exclusion patterns.⁸⁴⁶

Among the antisemitic expressions attributed to the Left and radical anti-American circles, hostility against Israel is now grounded on political and ideological arguments, that sometimes turn into hostile actions against Jews. But anti-Zionism and anti-Israel discourses of the Left are neither a new phenomenon in Latin America, nor in the West. Before and after the Six-Day War, the Left in Latin America, the

Communist camp, the increasing pro-Castro Third World and non-Communist organizations were influenced by Soviet anti-Zionist propaganda. A very small group of Argentine Jewish Communist intellectuals was an exceptional case given their signing of a public declaration in December 1965 condemning the Soviet delegate's comparison of Zionism with Nazism, antisemitism, and Neo-Nazism as forms of racial discrimination in the Social and Cultural Council of the General Assembly of the United Nations. Furthermore, following the Six-Day War, a larger number of Communist-Jewish activists in the ICUF's institutions were disenchanted with the Soviet antisemitic and anti-Zionist expressions. Thus, they decided to disassociate from the ICUF, and align themselves with Israeli leftist position regarding the Middle East conflict, contrary to the official line of the PC, which condemned the "imperialist aggression" of the "Zionist state."⁸⁴⁷

Cuba's position on Israel also influenced the Argentine leftist dissidents, many of whom greatly admired Fidel Castro. The Cuban government did not take responsibility for the anti-Israel resolution of the Tri-Continental Conference held in Havana in January 1966, which called on the anti-imperialist revolutionary movements of Latin America, Asia, and Africa to break off political relations with Israel and condemn Zionism as racism. Thus, diplomatic relations between Cuba and Israel were not affected at the time. The leftist Argentine and Uruguay delegations abstained from the anti-Israel vote. Leftist political groups, university student associations, and distinguished pro-Cuban Argentine and Uruguayan individuals repudiated the resolution of the Tri-Continental Conference.⁸⁴⁸

In the 1960s and the 1970s, similar to the political mood of the Latin American Left in the 1960s, the anti-Zionism of the New Left in West Europe and the United States played the role of a cultural code. According to Shulamit Volkov,⁸⁴⁹ such discourse in terms of cultural code indicated the belonging to the camp of anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism, and a new sort of anti-capitalism. Its cultural contours displayed a struggle against the overall set of values and norms typical of the imperialist West, as authoritarianism, paternalism, machismo

(male-pride) and the legacy of colonialist conceit vis-à-vis the Third World.⁸⁵⁰ But the anti-Zionist attitudes of the New Left at the time, and frequently its anti-Jewish twists, differed in important ways from current Left anti-Zionist trends. First of all, in those years hostility toward Zionism was parcel and part of the discourse voiced inside the local political public sphere in each one of the North and South American countries. Secondly, 40 years ago, within the ideological and cultural package deal of the Left, anti-Zionist charges were not a major issue among the political and social views, but rather a code for more important matters other than the Israel-Palestine conflict. In sharp contrast, for a new wave of Left anti-imperialist and anti-globalization discourse the anti-Israel mood has become a major issue that is coordinated at a global scale. Volkov argues that when reassessing anti-Zionism today, following many years of an unsettled Israel-Palestine conflict, opposition to Israel can hardly be regarded as a code for some other evil. In addition to a more open antisemitism among xenophobic groups on the right, the subculture of the Left, even on the center-Left, can no longer consider its position toward Israel a side-issue, ripe to serve as a cultural code.⁸⁵¹ Instead, Israel has become a major concern for a larger public.

The Latin American Left and anti-Zionism

In our time, the anti-Zionist discourse indicates the belonging to a larger camp beyond the national boundaries of the Latin American countries, a sort of a transnational package that serves an ideological struggle against globalization and US hegemony.⁸⁵² In this context, antisemitism becomes a transnational phenomenon, a serious global concern via criticism toward Israel as the incarnation of the collective Jews. In addition, anti-Zionism constitutes a hateful icon that connects people across continents and cultures, operating through the political spectrum of social movements in local, national and global contexts. In Davos, Switzerland, in January 2003, at the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum, a group of anti-globalization protestors publicly expressed their hostility to Israel and Zionism as a mask

concealing antisemitism as a motivating factor. At the same time, the theatrical performance of this group caught the attention of the Jews who condemned the Left in general for conflating anti-globalization with anti-Zionism.

Irrespective of the profound differences between antisemitism as a globalized phenomenon that evolves on several arenas and world processes of racialization, both anti-Zionism and the racialization of world politics share some features. Among other we find the increasing suspicion against ethno-national diasporas and their homeland, the transnational diffusion of racial and fundamentalist religious thinking, and clashes among rival national political movements and competing religious fundamentalisms from the West and the Middle East.⁸⁵³

Undoubtedly, the current anti-Zionism appeal is much more than an ideational syndrome of a cultural struggle for equality and human rights. Unlike to developments in previous decades, current social and political actors with anti-Zionist stands are not confined solely to political parties and organizations of the Left. A large array of local social movements, NGO international organizations and heterogeneous institutions within a transnational civil society, are making use of an anti-Zionist discourse in a global scale. In Latin America today the combined anti-Zionist and anti-Israel discourse of social movements does not play merely a cultural role to indicate belonging to the camp of anti-imperialism inside each national polity. Instead, in the new Millennium such discourse has become a mobilizing myth for action and political identification of the Left with anti-globalization in both, local and transnational public spheres.

It should be underlined that the Latin American Left's opposition to Israel's policies toward the Palestinians, including center-Left and liberal organizations in the region, can hardly be regarded as a side issue. Furthermore, as long as the Israel-Palestine conflict remains stagnated, Israel's policy will continue to be a major concern for Latin American policy makers.

Latin American republics' attitudes toward the Middle East in a global era

Regarding the policies of Latin American countries toward the Middle East a contradictory picture develops. On the one hand, globalization has brought new opportunities to the region, both in the arena of international relations and world markets. On the other hand, the stalled Israel-Palestine peace process has given way to the emergence of regional leaderships and their positioning as emergent superpowers in the international arena. In this context, Latin American countries led by Brazil were among the first to give support to the UN recognition of Palestine as non-state member in 2011, a step by the Latin American bloc that challenged the US and Israel's hegemonic policy. At the same time, Brazil was the first Latin American country to take advantage of potential economic gains in the Arab markets, to approach Iran, as well as to intensify diplomatic and economic relations with Israel. At the diplomatic and economic levels, the South American-Arab Countries Summit (AS-PA) was convened first in Brazil (May 2005) and several years later in Doha, Qatar (2009). It sought to strengthen ties – political, commercial, touristic, scientific, cultural – between Latin America and the Middle East.⁸⁵⁴ As a result, commerce, trade and investments between South America and Arab countries increased sharply. New flights have also been established (between São Paulo and Dubai, Tel Aviv, and Doha).⁸⁵⁵

In this context of greater proximity, a free trade agreement (FTA) was signed between Egypt and Mercosur (the customs union that brings together Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay, and more recently Venezuela). While framework agreements with Syria, Jordan, Morocco, Palestine, and the Gulf Cooperation Council are already in place, it is worth noting that an FTA had already been signed with Israel in 2008. Led by the Labor Party of Lula, Brazil became Israel's most important commercial partner in the region.⁸⁵⁶ Simultaneously, as previously stated, Brazil expanded its commerce with Iran.⁸⁵⁷

Brazil initiative for UN recognition of the Palestine State

Through its recognition of a Palestinian state at the UN, Brazil asserted its role as an emerging global power. After Brazil announced in early December 2010 that it recognized a Palestinian state,⁸⁵⁸ the move produced a wave of support to Palestine aspirations among other Latin American countries. Argentina, Bolivia and Ecuador first followed suit, and Paraguay, Chile, Peru and Uruguay continued on this path in early 2011. Venezuela was the only country in South America to have done a long time before. Among the Latin American countries only Panama voted against, and Colombia, Guatemala and Paraguay abstained.⁸⁵⁹

Brazil's diplomatic international move was also supported by its neighbors as part of a regional integration process that was independent from the US. The general rapprochement of Israel with the Arab World was the outcome of Lula's independent foreign policy and its global economic strategy of Brazil, as described by former Foreign Affairs Minister Celso Amorim:

The increased contacts between Brazil and the countries of the Middle East have helped forge a partnership based on mutual confidence and respect. Brazil's views on Middle East matters are increasingly sought after; Brazil balanced attitudes in the United Nations Security Council regarding issues like Iraq, Lebanon, and more recently Iran and Libya, contribute to make it clear that she acts independently, in accordance with her own judgment, and is not influenced by preconceived ideas. Nor does she easily bend to pressures from big powers.⁸⁶⁰

In pursuit of a balanced position that would not disqualify her as a credible interlocutor for both sides, Brazil established contacts with both the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority. Brazil has also stressed her support for an economically viable Palestinian state within the borders of 1967, having Jerusalem as its capital while supporting Israel's right to live securely and in peace with her neighbors, and condemning the resort "to any kind of violence, including all forms of terrorism [...]."⁸⁶¹ The support given by Latin American countries for Palestine's self-determination was in some instances misinterpreted as an anti-Zionist move.

Nevertheless, the new pro-Palestine support should be seen in light of the recent changes in the international arena. The former doctrinal revolutionary discourse of the old Orthodox Left has been replaced by that of the populist reformist as well as social-democrat governments, each one using anti-Zionism as grounded on non-ideological reasons, but rather on pragmatic and geopolitical international interests. Following Israel's military actions, the left wing sector of the Labor Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores*) voiced anti-Zionist statements. But Lula's foreign policy adviser published a moderate statement in November 2009.⁸⁶² As early as March 2010 Lula made the first trip ever conducted by the President of Brazil to the Palestinian Authority and Israel, and in December of the same year President Lula recognized Palestine as a viable independent state coexisting peacefully with Israel, while assuring at the same time that relations with Israel "have never been more robust."⁸⁶³

Anti-Zionism used by transnational advocacy networks

Unlike the balanced criticism of Israeli policies by key Latin American governments, anti-Zionism became a dangerous mobilization myth for local social movements that sought to combat both globalization led by the US and Israel, the latter perceived as a sort of rogue state refusing to afford legitimacy to Palestinian national aspirations. As previously argued, such shared perception – among the fragmented and small Left camp – of Israel as an allegedly proxy peripheral state to the US in Latin America did not inhibit social democratic and populist countries of Mercosur to strengthen economic relations with Israel. However, in the last years there has appeared a new collective actor in the region that affirms anti-Zionism: social networks advocating legitimacy for the Palestine state. In effect, simultaneously, civil society organizations operating at the global level advocate legitimacy for the Palestine cause while their anti-Zionist discourse promotes de-legitimacy arguments against Israel.

World Social Forum and anti-Zionism

The new anti-Zionism strategy was proved to be particularly popular among representatives of global civil society at the last World Social Forum (WSF) held in Porto Alegre, Brazil in November-December 2012. One hundred and fifty-seven organizations and social movements worldwide were registered at WSF, and more than 3,000 persons attended. The meeting was “taken over” by organizations and NGOs based outside Brazil, principally the US, Canada, South Africa, Europe and Asia. Many Palestinian organizations also attended the Forum.⁸⁶⁴ The WSF meeting was convened specially to support the Palestine cause, and brought together non-governmental organizations, Left political groups, as well as Arab federations based in Brazil, and formal and informal social movements.⁸⁶⁵ Its modus operandi fits well into the transnational advocacy networks seeking the international recognition of Palestinian statehood claims at the UN through mass demonstrations and the use of social network as Facebook, in addition to the local media.

As far as the WSF is concerned, it would be an oversimplification to dispel its global participants, largely with anti-Israel stands, by arguing that they were merely a pawn of terrorist Hamas and Hezbollah, as well as anti-imperialist pro-Palestine organizations aiming at demonizing Israel. While at WSF meeting, anti-Zionism was used to attack the legitimacy of the State of Israel, participants largely advocated the legitimacy of the Palestine state and a two-state solution. At the same time, few other social movements criticized Israel for its security policies.

Not surprisingly, the US-Israel strategic alliance was denounced as part of the different topics included in the agenda while a struggle against imperialism was advanced. The economic, cultural and academic boycott of Israel (BDS) was largely discussed, including international forums/conferences that promote anti-colonial studies. The organizers attempted to co-opt some attendants to the Continental Congress of Theology which convened near Sao Leopoldo between October 7–11, 2012.⁸⁶⁶

Among the most important religious leaders attending the WSF was Nancy Cardoso, a Methodist pastor from the Ecumenical Bible Center in Rio Grande do Sul, who expressed solidarity as Christians to “our Palestine brothers and sisters from the Kairos Palestine initiative for deepening the discussion on Palestine, the theological approach to Israeli occupation and apartheid.” However, the most famous theology liberation movement leader, Leonardo Boff, though he expressed solidarity with the “oppressed Palestinians who today are in need of liberation,” also made explicit his hope “of peace and reconciliation with the State of Israel.”⁸⁶⁷

In spite of the futile effort by the local Jewish community to neutralize public repercussions of the WSF,⁸⁶⁸ authorities of both the state of Rio Grande do Sul and Brazil federal governments attended the inauguration. Local newspapers of Porto Alegre opened their pages with comments of bloggers and readers’ letters,⁸⁶⁹ which showed that in our global age of international flows and world politics, anti-Zionist discourse has become global due to the Internet and other digital technologies. In these public reactions to the WSF one observes both Israel-hate and Jew-hate, disseminated through transnational and virtual communities. Particularly striking is the deeply irrational and counter-factual character of most accusations, which seem to have integrated different streams of prejudices into a global amalgam of anti-Israel and anti-Zionist accusations.⁸⁷⁰ The new anti-Zionist discourse raises two important conceptual questions. First, did anti-Zionism become a globalized discursive strategy owing to the political Left influence, or instead, is it the initiative of a worldwide civil society, a new collective actor or *transnational advocacy network*?

I argue that we must face the increasing battles for legitimacy of human rights and national self-determination waged by transnational advocacy networks, successfully expressed by the Palestinian cause. However, the contradictory strategy of WSF, that is, advocacy for the legitimacy of the Palestine cause by using anti-Zionist discourse that delegitimizes Israel requires us to understand the constituencies,

ideological codes and working procedures/mechanisms of these networks.⁸⁷¹

According to the characterization elaborated by Margaret Kech and Kathryn Sikkink, advocacy networks' advocates plead the causes of oppressed people or stand for self-determination and affording legitimacy. Advocacy networks have been particularly important in value-laden debates over human rights, the environment, women, infant health, and indigenous peoples. Major actors in advocacy networks often include international and domestic NGOs, local social movements; churches, trade unions, the media, parts of regional and international intergovernmental organizations; parts of the executive and/or parliamentary branches of governments.⁸⁷²

In the case of the Palestine cause, political and ethnic national Arab organizations are understandably deeply involved in WSF, but they are by themselves a part of the vast public of the transnational network. By examining their political role in advocacy networks we can distinguish Palestinian organizations while identifying their connections with social movements, domestic NGOs and international actors, state agencies and international organizations.

As Daniel Wajner has demonstrated, transnational advocacy networks operating in Brazil, beyond the Palestine and Arab propaganda, might have influenced Lula's government to take a Latin-American leading role in the campaign for the recognition of the Palestine state at the UN.⁸⁷

³ However, Brazil's international policy regarding Palestine cannot be viewed as an anti-Zionist move. As stated, economic and information politics drove Lula's foreign policy toward the Middle East.

In contrast, activists of transnational networks often frame issues linked to the legitimacy of an issue, such as a Palestine state, within the realm of "symbolic politics," specifically, by denying Israel legitimacy, and accusing the Jewish state of being the alleged symbol of today's Apartheid state.⁸⁷⁴ In order to counter the global de-legitimization campaign against Zionism it is important to check the efficacy of the recurrent

use of symbolic politics by resorting to the memory of the Shoah and the victimhood of Jews. We must come to terms with the fair play of a transnational advocacy network, and thus operate in the realm of information politics, not exclusively in symbolic politics. In short, we must be aware that within the transnational network every actor takes part in a political struggle over information that concerns a much broader global constituency.

In the context of Latin America, it is worth asking if criticism of Israel and Zionism that is grounded on anti-US imperialism and anti-globalization is necessarily a form of antisemitism? Conflating anti-Zionism and anti-imperialism is frequently elaborated among militants of left-wing organizations as a prejudice that is not rooted in the image of the Jew linked to the traditional and conventional long hatred. It is a new phenomenon that deserves analytical distinctions such as the disentangling between anti-globalization and anti-Zionism, as well as inquiring the political discourse of both international civil society organizations and partisan anti-global movements.⁸⁷⁵

The political and intellectual anti-Zionist discourse in Uruguay and Argentina

In Latin America, the prevalent anti-Zionist discourse focuses on oppression and displacement, thus expressing political resentment against Israel's policies vis-à-vis the Palestinians and its alleged behavior as a "rogue state," whose impunity is warranted by its alliance with the United States. Today, both in Uruguay and Argentina, political hostility toward US economic imperialism, jointly with an increasing ideological resentment regarding the ill-effects of neo-liberal globalization policies have favored new anti-Zionism discourses among some local left-wing groups and social networks. Statements by social democrat politicians as well as by pro-Third World intellectuals supporting the Uruguayan left coalition *Frente Amplio*, led by President José Múgica since 2006, express this kind of political rhetoric. While Múgica disclosed moderate criticism against Israel's military operation in Gaza in 2009,

the more left-wing *Movimiento de Participación Popular* (MPP) – a partner in his governmental coalition – aggressively condemned Israel’s “imperialist policy of extermination.”⁸⁷⁶ On his part, former *Frente Amplio* activist Gustavo López, who is currently a militant trade unionist and a candidate for the Vice Presidency on behalf of the anti-imperialist new socialist party *Unidad Popular* in the upcoming 2014 general election, compared Uruguay to Israel from an anti-imperialist and anti-neo-liberal economical perspective: “Uruguay is a small country in the Southern Cone and since some 30 years ago has *become a kind of Israel in the region, an enclave of imperialism, as ‘best friend.’* [It] develops a policy today of subordination to international financial institutions [...].”⁸⁷⁷

However, the general anti-Jewish, indeed antisemitic, twist given to these political attitudes of the Left requires further analysis, especially when they are framed within a broader framework of unconditional sympathetic solidarity, given the “oppressed side of the Other,” following Alain Finkielkraut’s terms.⁸⁷⁸ Here again it becomes key to ask if claims regarding the so-called impunity of Israel as a surrogate state of the US are necessarily antisemitic accusations in the usual and established sense of that word? Discursive analysis becomes an important methodological tool to assess the latent meanings of virulently anti-Israel essays by Eduardo Galeano, who is considered an Uruguayan left-wing anti-imperialist writer, following the Israeli “Cast Lead” Operation in Gaza:

Israel is a country that never complies with either the recommendations or the resolutions of the United Nation, that never obeys the judgments of the international tribunals, that mocks international laws, and is also the only country that has legalized the torture of prisoners. Who has gifted it the right to deny all the rights? Where does this impunity, with which Israel is carrying out the killings in Gaza, derive from? [...] Perhaps the tragedy of the Holocaust entails a policy of everlasting impunity? Or that the green light comes from the big shot power which has in Israel the most unquestioning of its vassals?⁸⁷⁹

More extreme hostility toward Israel than the one voiced by the Uruguayan (intellectual) Left are the frequent anti-imperialist actions conducted by organizations of the Left and social movement of protest in Argentina. The anti-American positions and sharp criticism of Israel disseminated by

Movimiento Patriótico Revolucionario “Quebracho” – whose constituency features a social protest *Piquetero* movement⁸⁸⁰ – occasionally developed into antisemitic provocations. In an attempt to refute the allegations of antisemitism, the Quebracho movement issued a statement entitled “We are not antisemites” (January 30, 2009), in which Fernando Esteche, a Quebracho leader, disclaimed this charge on the basis of his movement’s public denunciation against Israel’s military operation in Gaza.⁸⁸¹ Esteche argued that his movement is not anti-Jewish, or stands against any religion, cultural or ethnic group. He referred to anti-imperialist policies that attempt to dominate and plunder countries and peoples. While rejecting the notion that the Quebracho movement denies the Jewish Holocaust, he also refuted denial statements of the Palestinian Holocaust.⁸⁸²

Final remarks

The transnational mobilization against globalization by certain international civil society organizations show the usage of anti-Zionism as a political strategy and a standardized ideological code in multiple contexts. This phenomenon demands alternative counter-actions by anti-defamation campaigns, instead of relying on a traditional repertoire for fighting antisemitism.

In Latin America, the current anti-Zionist mobilization with a collective transnational political agenda against globalization and imperialism also requires a better understanding of the new global arena and the need to disassociate both anti-globalization and anti-imperialist struggles from criticism of Israel as a collective Jewry. From a strategic political viewpoint, it is crucial to understand that this hatred is not equivalent to the Muslim antisemitic symbols and motifs rampant in much of the Arab world, nor does it make use of the commonplaces of Islamic arguments for defaming Israel as a Jewish State.

Within Latin America, one also needs to distinguish between the use of anti-Zionist rhetoric of populist anti-imperialist figures like Hugo Chávez and the positions of other

populist regimes in Latin America. Anti-Zionism by Chavismo develops out of new forms of articulation of a Venezuelan anti-imperialist foreign policy and the country's international strategies and positioning, illustrated by the close relationship with Iran, a country that denies the legitimacy of the Jewish State of Israel. However, the influence of Chavismo in spreading anti-Zionist discourse in Latin America is much less dangerous than the increasing influence of international social movements and transnational networks fighting imperialism, neo-liberalism and racial discrimination, including in it also Zionism and Israel. But the leading role of the transnational civil society in criticizing Israel's policies is not merely a spawn of the Muslim anti-Zionist propaganda; instead, it is itself a transnational public civil sphere in which the issue of legitimacy is crucial. In Latin America, the neo-liberal economic policies of globalization in the post-Cold World order, jointly with transnational processes, accelerated the transformation of local civil societies into a larger international one that advocated for legitimate political causes, as illustrated by the WSF.

Finally, social movements have effectively influenced political elites in the region, in particular regarding the recognition of the Palestinian state at the UN. This move was not anti-Zionist, but rather an integral part of the international struggle to develop political, social and economic alternatives that enhance justice, equality and sovereignty of the peoples. Nevertheless, we shall be aware of the anti-Zionist stances of these transnational advocacy networks, which as stated, require new political and media strategies.

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53. Europe, Israel, the Jewish Communities, and Growing Antisemitism

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This paper was completed in March 2015.

For a long time, the very idea that a large number of Jews would want to live in Europe after World War II was anything but obvious. It was not easy to overcome homelessness, disrupted networks, mourning, and pain. In the decades after the war, Jews and non-Jews tried to find a new *modus vivendi* for coexisting in Europe, and in doing so, also sought ways of overcoming the past. Both groups also confronted the challenge of having to determine their specific relationship to Israel, the Jewish state, founded by Jews in 1948. From the point of view of international and geostrategic politics, the relationship between Israel and the European Union in particular has undergone several ups and downs, but the close connection was never called into question, simply due to the common cultural background and shared political values. For some years, however, Europe's Jews have been living in a period of new uncertainty caused by outbreaks of old-new antisemitism and diplomatic friction between Israel and the EU. It will be shown that many official criticisms of Israel voiced by leading European intellectuals, publicists, theologians and artists have a distinctly antisemitic undertone, and often promote anti-Israeli and anti-Jewish sentiments.

The relationship between Europe, its local Jewish communities, and the modern state of Israel forms a unique triangle. For more than 1,500 years Jews had struggled to be not only respected and tolerated, but also to become an *integrated* minority. Finally, after certain periods of hope, especially in early Modernity, the dreams of integration and emancipation failed dramatically. Much worse: when World War II ended in 1945, two-thirds of Europe's Jewish

population had been murdered. Three years later, the State of Israel became a reality and a home for Holocaust survivors, Jewish refugees from around the world, Zionist activists, and increasingly for religious Jews as well.

For many European Jews, Israel has become the ultimate alternate place to live, the safe haven where Jews can rediscover and get in touch with their national and spiritual roots. From the very beginning, Israeli society adopted many cultural attributes from Europe, that were brought in by European Jews; for example, by Achad Haam from Kiev, David Ben-Gurion from Plonsk, Martin Buber from Frankfurt, or Robert Weltsch from Prague. All of them represented the European cultural tradition and had studied the modern ideas of politics, economics, and nation-building. The moment the Israeli state appeared on the scene, it rather surprisingly also became the first example of Western democracy in the Middle East. Nearly 70 years later, Israel remains the *only* state of that type in the region. This alone has kept the Israeli experience interesting and so important for the Western world. For decades, however, the shadow of the Shoah has strained mutual relations, and not only between Israel and Germany. When the dimensions of the Shoah gradually became common knowledge in the 1950s and 1960s, some Europeans received a moral shock. Israeli-German historian Dan Diner consequently called the Shoah “a break of civilization” in modern Europe.⁸⁸³

In fact, one of the most remarkable minorities in Europe – not necessarily beloved, and indeed often provoked and detested over centuries, but still more or less long-accepted as neighbors – had been heinously exterminated. No noteworthy groups or forces were willing or able to stop the German Nazi murderers and their allies. Nonetheless, in May 1948, the proclamation of the State of Israel was received with a great deal of sympathy from Europe. From the Western perspective, Israel became not only a legitimate Jewish nation-state but was the logical result of the Zionist struggle for national self-emancipation. Sympathy grew when Israel had to hold its ground from the very first day of its existence, to fiercely defend itself against half a dozen hostile Arab armies in the

War of Independence in 1948–1949, and to build up its own infrastructure and functioning daily life under a permanent external threat.

The wave of sympathy in the 1950s and 1960s

Left-wing movements in the West developed strong interest in the collective kibbutz settlements in Israel, that represented an attractive, local, bottom-up socialism, while conservative circles seemed to admire the country's surprisingly quick economic development and its emerging military strength. Political thinkers and intellectuals soon came to consider Israeli society an interesting model of successful social democracy and a role model of a modern country welcoming immigration.

However, the period of sympathy and admiration would be relatively short. Much of the goodwill disappeared already in the aftermath of the preventive Six-Day War when Israel did not return the West Bank, Gaza, Sinai, and the Golan Heights it had just occupied. In a surprisingly quick turnaround, the European Left in particular now began blaming Israel for being an “aggressor,” a “racist state,” “occupier” and a “spearhead of US-imperialism.” For the Left, starting in 1967, Israel became the stereotypical enemy, and later was simply “a disturbing factor” in international diplomacy.⁸⁸⁴

Most countries of the socialist Eastern Bloc and the Warsaw Pact adopted more or less outright the anti-Israel line of the USSR, that ultimately included numerous antisemitic stereotypes; for example, implying that “Zionist intrigues” were working for “US imperialism,” and accusing the Israeli army of behaving like the Nazi German Wehrmacht in World War II. In the early 1990s, when the Soviet Union collapsed, the Iron Curtain fell, and the Eastern Bloc vanished, the propaganda war against Israel calmed down temporarily, at least on that side of the globe. At the very least, exploitative anti-Israel clichés became undesirable.

Today's relations between Europe and Israel are not warm, but rather marked by a resilient pragmatism and a generally

close sense of cooperation, resulting in mutual advantages in the fields of economics, trade, science, and others. On both sides there are some diplomats such as the former German chancellor Helmut Kohl and the former Israeli ambassador to Germany Avi Primor,⁸⁸⁵ who have been particularly active in shaping European-Israeli relations into a kind of privileged partnership. There are examples of cooperation in science, culture and the arts, sports, tourism and pedagogy. Joint research centers have become success stories, and joint music, film, and theatre festivals are flourishing.

However, all of this is only one aspect, and between Israel and Europe there have always been moments of a partial or total political breakdown. The year 1967, with the outcome of the Six-Day War, marked one such obvious break. Another estrangement came in 1975, when almost the entire Eastern Bloc, along with countries such as Cyprus and Portugal supported UN Resolution 3379 that equated Zionism with racism.⁸⁸⁶

Additional breaches occurred in 1982 with the First Lebanon War, in 1987 with the outbreak of the First Intifada, and from 2000–2005 with the Second Intifada. All these became awkward and severe tests as well as subtle political crises. More recently, political friction has resulted from the various Gaza Wars (2006, 2008/2009, and 2014), frequently starting with harsh criticism from Europe. Top EU politicians often take a swipe at Israel for its policies toward the Palestinians, especially its continuing settlement policy in the West Bank. Other European representatives criticize Israel for allegedly playing a too dominant military role in the region and for harsh preventative military actions. Over the decades, a number of mutual disappointments have manifested themselves. Obviously Israel's capacities to promote or even to enforce a regional peace in the crisis-ridden Middle East has been overrated by Europe and perhaps also by the United States. Such constellations of mutual annoyance and even political tension within the triangle of European politics, Jewish communities, and the State of Israel, become problematic with the escalation of the Middle East conflict in general and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in particular. This

clearly also affects the (non-Jewish) European attitudes toward Israel. For example, during the Second Intifada (2000–2005), discussions and polls in Europe elicited such negative perceptions on Israel that it seemed fair to say that Israel was being “demonized.”

Demonization of the other

One of the most problematic empirical results in this context emerged in a survey organized by the European Commission in 2002/2003. The survey was carried out in fifteen countries, and among the questions asked was which country in the world is currently seen as the greatest threat to world peace. Israel was reportedly chosen by 59% of the respondents,⁸⁸⁷ ahead of such countries as North Korea, Afghanistan, and Iran, that were also on the list. Even when bearing in mind that the survey was conducted at a time when the Israeli army was making massive efforts to quell the Second Intifada and intense violence was erupting on both sides, experts were consternated by the respondents’ answers, as regional threats were explicitly excluded. The question was to determine which country presented the most dangerous threat to *world peace*.

Inevitably the question arose as to why so many Europeans consider Israel to be an aggressor country and at the same time greatly overrate its political and military capacities in the world. Besides understandable criticism of Israeli settlement policies in the occupied territories and the like, another current phenomenon is the widespread allegation that Israel is conducting a war of annihilation against the Palestinians. About 68% of the German respondents thought so in a survey conducted in 2004.⁸⁸⁸ The statement that “today Israel is treating the Palestinians like the Nazis treated the Jews in World War II” was agreed with by 51.2%.⁸⁸⁹ German respondents’ replies to questions like these ranked somewhere around the European average.

Mainstream papers and journals in Europe usually avoid such drastic comparisons, but they tend to invoke something similar using subtler means. For example, in January 2011

when the well-established German weekly magazine *Der Spiegel* reported on a Mossad unit that had killed the notorious Hamas arms-dealer Mahmoud al-Mabhouh in Dubai, it listed similar missions by the Israeli secret services. However, the title of the story was “David’s Avengers,” an obvious allusion to ancient Jewish war practices from biblical times. The use of the term “revenge” has become widespread, not only in reports on secret service operations, but also in the context of regular Israeli military operations. It is often used alongside words such as “payback” and “penalty,” implying that Israeli Jews still act according to the outdated and barbaric principles of their biblical forefathers. From this perspective, Israeli (Jewish) military operations can appear far more barbaric than those of Westernized (Christian) countries.

Demonization of Israel has become popular at least in some of the mainstream media, while at the same time new trends and phenomena of antisemitism in Europe seem to be carefully downplayed.⁸⁹⁰ Over recent decades, this situation has created a strange contrast with the noticeable public efforts made by many European countries to commemorate the Holocaust and explore joint responsibility in the anti-Jewish genocidal crimes.⁸⁹¹ Moreover, it even seems that the commemoration of the millions of Jewish victims across Europe from 1939 to 1945 will become a certain part of collective European identity. Politicians, intellectuals, artists and many others state “never again,” emphasizing the hope that Europe has learned its lesson on how to respect and protect ethno-religious minorities in the future.⁸⁹²

This contrast is not only noted, but also fervidly debated. The French historian Shmuel Trigano goes so far as to consider it as providing possible leeway for a new antisemitism. “The current delegitimization of the State of Israel in European public opinion,” Trigano writes, “indeed, goes hand in hand with the celebration of the memory of the Shoah.” This ambivalence explains how the new antisemitism can accuse Israel on behalf of this memory.⁸⁹³ He raises the supposition that Jewish existence in Europe is now “identified with the exclusive condition of victim and martyr, till suffocation,” and his conclusion is that “the celebrating of a

dead people” could open the way to “delegitimizing a living people.”⁸⁹⁴

However, Jews in Europe have frequently pointed out that they commemorate the Holocaust in any event, and that state-organized commemoration is a matter for non-Jews. For Europe’s Jewish communities, it is now of minor importance whether and how public commemoration is organized and designed. More central is the question whether the general security of Jewish sites, and of recognizably Jewish individuals, is indeed guaranteed. Politicians declare they are striving to ensure this and appeal for solidarity with the Jews in their countries, as with other violable minorities as well.

On the other hand, Israel’s violability seems to be less important for Europe, or even ignored. Thus, in May 2010 a group of prominent German left-wing politicians decided to join a Turkish supported flotilla aiming to break through the Israeli military line of demarcation in front of the Gaza coast.⁸

⁹⁵ Israeli troops boarded the six vessels on May 31, and in the ensuing struggle, nine Turkish passengers were killed on the flagship Mavi Marmara. After the left-wing politicians Annette Groth, Inge Höger, and Norman Paech returned to Germany, they accused the Israeli army of a “planned killing” and “piracy.”⁸⁹⁶ A few members of the German press took the same line and wrote about “Israeli massacres.” Shortly after, the German parliament (Bundestag) passed a resolution backed by all represented parties, in which Israel was called upon to end its naval blockade of Gaza. In other words, Germany’s representatives called on Israel to end an essential security measure, put in place against a neighboring official war enemy whose official charter demands the Jewish state’s annihilation. Some independent German initiatives protested that scandalous resolution of the Bundestag with, among others, online appeals to stop the dismantling of Israel.

The storming of the Mavi Marmara on May 31, 2010 remains until now a controversial topic, and the fatalities on board triggered a serious diplomatic crisis between Israel and Turkey. This is one part of the story, deplorable beyond doubt. The other part is its aftermath in Europe, including the fact

that one of its most influential parliaments (the German Bundestag) was absolutely ready to sacrifice the security of Israel (even momentarily). It is a matter of debate whether and to what extent the parliament made its decision in the heat of the moment, or on the basis of clearly anti-Israeli or anti-Jewish motifs. In fact, though, the request that Israel cease its naval blockade of Gaza was a request for Israel to put itself in a perilous situation.

Israel as a threat and scapegoat

Given the growing discrepancy between intensifying Holocaust commemoration and the publicly stated commitment to protect Jewish life in Europe on the one hand, and increasing critical attitudes toward Israel on the other, the question arises whether the special demonization of the Jews has perhaps undergone some transformations in recent years. In her well-received book *Die Sprache der Judenfeindschaft im 21. Jahrhundert* [The Language of Hostility toward Jews in the 21st Century], Berlin-based linguist Monika Schwarz-Friesel provides results of a content analysis of close to 14,000 emails, sent either to the Central Council of Jews in Germany (2002–2009) or to the Israeli Embassy in Berlin (2004–2012).⁸

⁹⁷ Schwarz-Friesel presents proof that almost all the classic stereotypes against Jews – for example being “deicides,” “murderers of little children,” “blood libel users,” “shylocks,” “traitors,” “liars,” “disloyal parasites,” “greedy profiteers,” “sly conspirators,” and “vengeful Holocaust exploiters” – have obviously survived in the collective mind, even among well-educated individuals who freely cited their professions and positions.

In the letters and messages received, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is often used as the starting point for launching general accusations and hate speech against Israel, such as “Get out of Germany, get out of Gaza, get out of this world, get out of the universe!”⁸⁹⁸ Several senders explained their urge to put an end to the State of Israel as motivated by a belief that it could erase a troublesome international problem. They also tried to introduce themselves initially as

sympathetic analysts or intermediaries, first and foremost emphasizing that they were not antisemites at all, with a remark like: “Please do not take my letter as an attack, but as an amicable piece of advice.”⁸⁹⁹

Others, however, used a very militant, Nazi-style and vulgar language, as for example: “One should cut through your shit Jews’ throat, though no blood would come out, only foul crap.”⁹⁰⁰ Fantasies of annihilation also appear regularly, such as: “I wish Iran would throw the bomb on Israel!”⁹⁰¹ Several senders delivered justifications for their fantasies of destruction, for example in this email sent to the Israeli Embassy in London: “All Israel achieves by these actions is to increase hatred against it and to further delegitimize itself as a civilized member of the international community.”⁹⁰² Others lamented being burdened by the incessant reporting on Israel’s “unscrupulousness and barbarity,” like: “You’re destroying everything again. How shall I explain your wrongdoing to my children?”⁹⁰³ Israel, as the assumed largest threat to world peace (see above), is again called upon to give up its existence: “I don’t care for the Zionist State. It has to be dissolved peacefully!”⁹⁰⁴

In the summer of 2014, many European cities witnessed powerful expressions of anti-Israeli and anti-Jewish sentiments. The huge demonstrations in June and July 2014 protesting Israeli airstrikes in Gaza that had caused a large number of civilian fatalities, had a very heterogeneous composition. Alongside European Palestinians and other Arab population groups, many Turks (especially in Germany), alongside groups sympathizing with Hamas and Hezbollah joined the demonstrations and rallies, and at some places even Islamic State flags were waved. Security forces remained rather reserved. At some rallies, counter demonstrators were called upon to roll up their blue and white Israeli flags, officially in order “to prevent provocation.” It seems worthwhile exploring to what extent those instructions will become a common pattern, and whether they reflect a general trend to instill public harmony at the expense of pro-Israel oriented Jews and non-Jews.

Another curious sign is the kid-glove treatment of antisemitic crimes even when the offenders are on trial. In February 2015, three young Palestinians living in the West German city of Wuppertal received only a suspended sentence after having been convicted for a serious arson attack on the synagogue in Wuppertal.⁹⁰⁵ Since the young men justified their crime by their general “frustration with Israel,” the court saw “no inevitable” antisemitic motif.⁹⁰⁶ While this argumentation is already questionable enough, empirical research proves that in most cases, a clear majority of Israel-haters are also prone to antisemitic stereotypes. For example, the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence at Bielefeld University, that collected data on *group-focused enmity* on the basis of yearly surveys from 2002–2012, confirmed that only a very small minority of those respondents who criticized Israel were on the other hand completely free from any *antisemitic* prejudices.⁹⁰⁷

It is not only “soft” penalties like those in Wuppertal that might encourage people from quite different camps to attack Israel and the Jewish communities in the Diaspora, openly or covertly. On the Left, some Israel pundits have still not finished with their primarily ideological warfare, and this even 25 years after the Cold War and the fall of the Iron Curtain. They consider Israel to be an “artificial fabric,” foiling an international coalition of the deprived working class and freedom fighters by preferring ethnic interests. Following the disastrous tradition of the students’ revolt in the late 1960s in Western Europe and America, left-wing critics of Israel still denigrate the alleged close relationship, or even furtive closeness, between Israel and the USA. At this point, they are joined by general opponents of ongoing economic globalization and together launch campaigns against the leading industrial countries, blaming them for recent developments in world politics that are perceived as deteriorating.

Intellectuals’ support for Israel’s opponents

One example is the well-known German journalist Jakob Augstein, who was “honored” by the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles for some of his texts, and awarded ninth place among the “Top Ten Anti-Semitic/Anti-Israel Slurs 2012.”⁹⁰⁸ He does not shy away from accusing Israel and the USA of benefiting from the explosion of violence following the Arab Spring in the Middle East and North Africa. In late 2012, Augstein wrote: “A new wave of anti-Western violence is shattering the Islamic world. As always when crimes occur, the question should be asked: who benefits from it? In any case, the US Republicans and the Israelis are trying to gain capital from the situation.”⁹⁰⁹

Commentators like Augstein consider Israel and the United States jointly responsible for violent conflicts in the world, while others, often also left-wingers, criticize Israelis and Americans as “globalization players” allegedly causing new disorder on the financial markets and impeding the welfare systems in other countries. Criticism can also come from the other corner, and not necessarily better. Some well-known far-right political leaders in Europe go so far as to blame Diaspora Jews for even supporting Israel, and suggest creating a “registry” of them. For example, in November 2012, the far-right Hungarian political leader Márton Gyöngyösi demanded that the government should draw up a list of Jews in Hungary who pose a “national security threat.” Gyöngyösi justified his demand with the following words: “I think such a conflict makes it timely to tally up people of Jewish ancestry who live here, especially in the Hungarian Parliament and the Hungarian government, who pose a national security risk to Hungary.”⁹¹⁰

The statement of Gyöngyösi, himself a deputy leader of parliament from the far-right Jobbik party, was part and parcel of the wave of criticism against Israel’s military operation “Pillar of Defense” in the Gaza Strip in November 2012. Again, we find as the starting-point critical words toward Israel, but the critic soon switches to blaming the whole Diaspora population for having connections with Israel, and finally concludes that there is no way to trust Jews in politics or anything else. Politicians or commentators like Márton

Gyöngyösi may be capable of implanting venomous pictures of today's Jews, and that is what makes them really dangerous.

Meanwhile, the increasing hostility against Israel in Europe and the trend of making Jews liable in general for any developments in Israel and the Middle East, is taking place at the same time that Europe's Jews are growing increasingly fearful and insecure – feelings that were appallingly proven by a study conducted by the European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in 2012/2013.⁹¹¹ The core of the study was a survey among Jews in nine EU member-states.⁹¹² Two-thirds of the survey respondents (66%) considered antisemitism to be a serious social or political problem in the countries examined, while on average three-quarters of the respondents (76%) also believed that the situation had become more acute and that antisemitism had increased in the past few years.⁹¹³ Close to a quarter (23%) said that they avoid visiting Jewish events or sites because they would feel unsafe there (or on the way there) as a Jew, at least occasionally. Over a quarter of all respondents (27%) avoid certain places in their local area or neighborhood at least occasionally, because they do not feel safe there as a Jew.⁹¹⁴ Of course, the percentages vary from country to country, but ultimately we see that at least every fifth Jewish citizen in the nine countries studied is scared to even observe religious demands such as attending religious services, Jewish cultural events, or meeting friends, for fear of terrorism or planned physical attacks. In the long run, a situation could emerge where European Jews will again lose their trust in the countries they live in and in the solidarity of the majority (non-Jewish) population, and start leaving the “Old Continent” in greater numbers.

Another factor that must be mentioned briefly in this context is the growing acrimony of Muslim groups (including Turkish ones) against Israel, and more or less in the same context toward the local Jewish communities in the European Diaspora. For example, in June and July 2014 when groups of Palestinians and other Arab/ Muslim groups continually demonstrated on the streets of London, Paris, and Berlin, there were attempts not only to reach and attack the Israeli embassies, but also the neighborhood synagogues. Banners

showed such things like an Israeli flag combined with a swastika, or the slogan “Stop the *Jewish* Terror!” Some demonstrations, like the anti-Israel demonstrations in Berlin, ended with chants of “Child murderer Israel, child murderer Israel!”⁹¹⁵ and the slogan “ Hamas, Hamas – Jews to the Gas!” was shouted by Muslim demonstrators at an anti-Israel rally in the city of Gelsenkirchen, North Rhine Westphalia.⁹¹⁶

Most of the anti-Israel protests on the streets of Germany and other EU countries in the summer of 2014 were obviously carried out by Muslim activists, though left-wing radicals, right-wing radicals, and activists from civic organizations also took part. It would be a fatal misjudgment, however, to consider the current antisemitism appearing as pure anti-Zionism, as solely a problem of the street. On the contrary, during recent years it has also become clear that anti-Israel sentiments have gained a foothold in academic institutions, religious bodies, and in the arts and culture scene.

Anti-Israelism in science, theology, and entertainment

Like the media campaigns, anti-Israel activities designed and organized by the academic sector in Western countries have good prospects for reaching a broad audience. The new trend ranges from universities’ refusal to invite Israeli guest scholars, the harassment of Israeli students on the campuses, up to explicit demands to sever all connections with Israeli universities. The latter practice recently gained momentum from the “Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel” (PACBI) that launched its activities “for a comprehensive economic, cultural and academic boycott of Israel” in 2004 from the West Bank city of Ramallah. PACBI urges academic institutions worldwide to “comprehensively and consistently boycott all Israeli academic and cultural institutions until Israel withdraws from all the lands occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem; removes all its colonies in those lands; agrees to United Nations resolutions relevant to the restitution of Palestinian refugees’ rights; and dismantles its system of apartheid.”⁹¹⁷

Apart from their extensive political agenda, PACBI activists do not abstain from warning and pressuring scholars and academic institutions from abroad that chose to continue their academic cooperation with Israeli colleagues.⁹¹⁸ In the first years of its existence, the movement achieved some success, and several universities in France, the UK, Austria, Italy, South Africa, and the United States indeed joined the movement or even launched similar campaigns, among them the University of Paris-VI (Pierre-et-Marie-Curie) and the University of Johannesburg. Some prominent scholars have acknowledged the academic boycott, including world-famous British physicist and cosmologist Stephen Hawking, who justified his refusing an invitation to the Israeli Presidential Conference in Jerusalem 2013 by saying he would not want to undermine the Palestinian initiative.

Academic boycott has also reached entire professional groups and associations. For example, in October 2014, 500 Middle East Studies scholars, mainly anthropologists, and librarians from all over the world also called for an academic boycott of Israel.⁹¹⁹ Among the signatories were scholars from the elite US universities Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. Another “early adopter” was the British University and College Union⁹²⁰ that began its boycott of Israeli universities in 2007. British Jewish communities defined it as a terrifying attack on academic freedom.

According to historian Robert S. Wistrich, the intellectual demonization of the Jews continued after 1945, despite the Shoah and the manifold attempts thereafter to analyze what it was and how it could have been effectively prevented. Wistrich was convinced that it is fashionable among the current European academic elite to delegitimize Israel, not least by drawing macabre comparisons between Zionism and Nazism.⁹²¹

The double moral standard of the academic boycott measures applied against Israel becomes apparent when uncovering flourishing Western academic ties with countries that head UN statistics listing acute human rights violations. Thus, for example, three German universities (Paderborn,

Frankfurt am Main, and Potsdam) have an official collaboration with the state-controlled University for Religions and Denominations (URD) in Qom, Iran. The statute of the URD formulates as an explicit goal for its own research to identify seemingly threats and menaces stemming from “deviationist sects.” In other words, the university wants to monitor and combat religions different to Islam.

That kind of stigmatization of Israeli academic institutions – equating them to state-controlled academies of Islamist and terrorist regimes, or even considering them to be criminal – is what leads to the conclusion that anti-Jewish paradigms have infiltrated the international scientific community. The outcome is that each year, Israeli politicians and networkers have to struggle and fight against the (Western) boycotts all over again.

As in academic circles, a certain anti-Israel trend has appeared among some of the established European (and American) churches. This is all the more surprising when we recall that many Christian congregations and their affiliated churches made tremendous efforts after World War II and the Shoah to reshape their relations with Jews and Judaism, both theologically and also in joint learning and communicating. In recent years though, some of the national churches in Europe are increasingly criticizing Israeli policies toward the Palestinians: ostensibly, their focus is on the suffering of Palestinian refugees and their descendants, but it is first and foremost on the complicated situation of the Palestinian population in Gaza. While some church leaders point out the basic needs of the Palestinian population in Gaza and simply demand more humanitarian support, or call upon Israel to ease the border traffic between Gaza and Israel, others have fallen back into anti-Israel clichés that are easily discernible as anti-Jewish.

The German Protestant theologian Jochen Vollmer wrote in the prestigious *Deutsches Pfarrerblatt* [German Pastor’s Journal]: “We, the Christians of Germany, cannot theologically compensate our untold guilt toward the Jews by considering the state structure of the people of Israel as a sign of God’s loyalty; [a state] that has made hundreds of thousands of

innocent people victims and continues to do so.”⁹²² In consequence, Vollmer denies the Jewish state a *Christian* (theological) recognition, because of its (alleged) inhuman behavior. In emails to the Israeli Embassy and the Central Council of Jews in Germany, Christians put this in a more hostile and defaming way: “You are proud of Gaza? What kind of human being can be proud of murder? Only an anti-Christ. Even Jesus said that the devil is your father. It’s written in the Bible!”⁹²³ Arguably, perhaps such statements have already entered the mainstream among Christians in Germany and Europe. There are indications that anti-Israel attitudes could become a common denominator, for at least some Christian congregations. For example, in October 2013 the Methodist Church in Britain launched an online survey among its members to determine whether the Church should support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement (BDS)⁹²⁴ or not.

The debate on whether or not to boycott Israel has also permeated the arts in Europe, especially in the UK and France. In February 2015, over 100 British artists and performers signed a letter in the prominent newspaper *The Guardian*, declaring their support for an initiative called “Artists for Palestine,” that in fact meant a cultural boycott of Israel. The artists, including rock singers like Roger Waters from the legendary band Pink Floyd, Brian Eno, one of the co-founders of Roxy Music, and Richard Ashcroft, co-founder of The Verve, announced that they will “not engage in business-as-usual cultural relations with Israel.” They furthermore declared: “We will accept neither professional invitations to Israel, nor funding, from any institutions linked to its government.”⁹²⁵ Watching the current shows of Roger Waters it becomes clear that the former star of Pink Floyd is now operating within the gray area between anti-Israel attitudes and antisemitism. In some of his shows, Waters finishes by releasing a giant pig-shaped balloon. On the pig are several visible symbols, including the Soviet hammer and sickle, the logo of the Shell Oil Trust, and a Star of David. Rabbi Abraham Cooper, Associate Dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, commented: “With this disgusting display Roger

Waters has made it crystal clear. Forget Israel, never mind 'limited boycotts promoting Middle East peace,' Waters is an open hater of Jews."⁹²⁶

In the Parisian *Théâtre de la Main d'Or*, the shows of popular French comedian Dieudonné M'bala M'bala frequently spread the myth of antisemitic conspiracies. Dieudonné's shows attract a large audience, including anti-Israel activists, French Islamists, and right-wing radicals. His back-story is rather unusual. Dieudonné, the son of a Cameroonian father and a French mother, originally held left-wing positions and had some of his first successes on stage together with the Jewish comedian Élie Semoun. In December 2003, Dieudonné performed a sketch on a TV show about an Israeli settler whom he depicted as a Nazi. From that time, Dieudonné has distinguished himself with anti-Jewish jokes and a series of public provocations, beyond his shows. For example, he cooperated with the infamous French Holocaust denier Robert Faurisson, and in 2009 he celebrated Faurisson's 80th birthday in his own theatre. Concerning the Shoah, Dieudonné once said: "I don't have to make a choice between the Nazis and the Jews, I am neutral."⁹²⁷ Meanwhile, French officials are investigating legal options to ban or cancel his shows. However, Dieudonné M'bala M'bala has become an icon of comedy business, like Roger Waters in rock music. Perhaps most alarming of all, is how broad audiences from quite different backgrounds, including well-educated people, now enjoy concerts and performances with clearly anti-Jewish satire and antisemitic undertones. In fact, the entertainment business seems to be becoming a social sector in Europe where antisemitism enjoys growing appeal.

Summary

For obvious historical reasons, Europe's relations with Israel, and Israel's with Europe, have a special character. While Israel, as the country of Jewish immigration, still adheres to many European traditions, Jewish community life in Western Europe has now stabilized and become more self-confident. Despite historical and cultural connections, realpolitik has

dominated mutual relations at least since the late 1960s. This is due to various and complex reasons: for example, the unresolved conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians; the growing Muslim population in Europe; the instability of the Middle East and the Iran-Israel crises; and finally the trauma of the Shoah and the unresolved problem of antisemitism in Europe. While religious and racist antisemitism has lost ground in recent decades, anti-Zionist/ anti-Israeli, secondary and “educated” antisemitism seem to be on the rise. In periods of escalated conflict between Israel and the Palestinians and/ or the Arab neighbor states, militant demonstrations against Israel fill some European capitals. While such demonstrations express open antisemitism, intellectual circles, the media, churches, academic and cultural scene are displaying trends of anti-Israel and anti-Jewish sentiment – more subtly, but hardly less dangerously.

Rising numbers of antisemitic incidents and an (empirically proven) increase in feelings of insecurity among Europe’s Jews raise questions regarding their future on the “Old Continent.” All the meaningful anti-Jewish (and antisemitic) stereotypes have survived intact in the minds of the European population. And when Israel is to blame for current policies of internal or foreign issues, they are easily reanimated. A great challenge for future research will be to carefully reveal the links between anti-Israelism and antisemitism in collective and individual minds in contemporary Europe, especially with regard to age, political attitudes, and religiousness.

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54. Criticism of Israel: A New Antisemitism?

Moshe Zimmermann

This paper was completed in January 2015.

Before delving into the discussion about the nature of a “new” antisemitism, including its anti-Zionist or anti-Israeli aspects, one should be well-acquainted with good “old” antisemitism. At least one should know what antisemitism is not.

A popular killer-phrase frequently used in discussions about Arab or Muslim antisemitism is: how could an Arab, himself a Semite, become an *anti-Semite*? Yet this question is based on a sheer misunderstanding: antisemitism has nothing to do with real Semites, since there is no such creature called Semite or a Semitic race. Semites, Semitic peoples or a Semitic race (but not Semitic languages) are the mere invention of racists who call themselves antisemites or may be classified as antisemites. This paradox needs of course an elaboration.

“Semitic” antisemites

The advent of enlightenment and liberalism in Europe during the 18th and 19th century made the attribute and nickname “Jew-hater” or “Jew-baiter” (in German *Judenfresser*) inadequate, if not obsolete. In the secularized European and American societies who believe in liberty, equality and fraternity, the Jewish religion became, like the Christian religion, a matter unrelated to civil and political rights, while belonging to the Jewish community lost its political meaning. As the emancipation of the Jews was the outcome of this belief in equality and progress, those who still nourished anti-Jewish sentiments needed a new approach, a new excuse and a new vocabulary. The word “antisemitism” was part of the solution to their predicament. People who believed that there is a “Jewish problem,” that the real social problem cannot to be

solved unless the Jews are removed from society or lose their civil rights, declared the Jews to be an alien race or an ethnic group that could neither be changed through religious conversion nor legal emancipation; a group that could never integrate into the surrounding society. This was the idea expressed in the pamphlet *Sieg des Judenthums über das Germanenthum* [The Victory of Judaism over Germanism] published in 1879 by the inventor of the political slogan “Antisemitism,” Wilhelm Marr. According to the new approach to the “Jewish question” the word “Jew” was to be substituted for “Oriental,” “Asian” or “Semite” in order to create the impression of a scientific, modern framework for the discrimination of Jews. Thereof the enemies of the Jews were to be called *antisemites*, not Jew-haters. The catchy word antisemitism, or antisemite immediately became a PR success and was ever since used by Jew-haters but also in everyday’s discourse. Yet from the start it was clear that the object of discrimination and hatred from the point of view of the antisemites were, and will remain, the Jews alone.

One of the paradoxes that emerged about half a century after the word antisemitism has been introduced was that the Nazis, or to be more exact, Joseph Goebbels, distanced themselves from this attribute: the Nazis, who believed in the existence of a Semitic race, considered the Arabs, some of whom even became Germany’s allies, to be Semites, and therefore gave up the concept of antisemitism and returned to the old concept of Jew-hatred or anti-Judaism. The success of the attempt made by Goebbels’s propaganda machinery as of 1942 to turn back the clock was limited: 60 years had been time enough to make the word antisemitism indispensable; after all it was practically impossible to eradicate all of a sudden the word from Hitler’s book *Mein Kampf*.

Today the word antisemitism is used by historians, social scientists and the common people in spite of the inherent misunderstanding and contradiction underlying it. One has to be aware of the fact that the word is nothing but a synonym for a pejorative attitude toward Jews.

At this point it becomes clear that Arabs *may* develop antisemitic, i.e., anti-Jewish attitudes and adopt antisemitic

images. As long as there was no motivation or no special cause for such an attitude, antisemitic images in the Arab world were marginal. In Muslim societies the discrimination of the Jews was usually less conspicuous than in the Christian world. The great change occurred toward the end of the 19th century: the aspirations of a certain group of Jews, imbued with the Zionist ideology, who immigrated to Palestine, served as a trigger and paved the way for an Arab anti-Zionism which would also include antisemitic traits. From the moment the conflict in Palestine appeared to be a conflict between Arabs and Jews, not just between Arabs and Zionists, antisemitism, i.e., the use of anti-Jewish stereotypes and views entered the game.

To sum up: Arab antisemitism is not a *contradictio in adjecto*, and it may be considered a component of a “new antisemitism,” typical of the second half of the 20th century, or of old-fashioned, religious, Muslim anti-Judaism that reemerged at the beginning of the 21st century. Yet this shift from anti-Zionism to antisemitism, or the (at least partial) overlap between anti-Zionist and antisemitic views is not typical only of the Arab reaction to Zionism, but became also a common practice among non-Jews in the Christian world or in Western societies. As we will show later on in this article, the claim of Israel to be the sole representative of the Jewish world contributed much to this development.

Cause and effect – antisemitism and Zionism

Here is yet another paradox emerging from the history of modern antisemitism. Antisemitism became one of the *causes* for the invention of Zionism and for the emerging belief in the existence of a Jewish nation. Herzl’s book *Der Judenstaat* appeared about a decade and a half after the word antisemitism was introduced. Zionists were thus Jews who preferred to be defined as Jews not because they belong to a religious Jewish community but because they are members of the Jewish people, or the Jewish nation. On the one hand this meant that a basic understanding exists between Zionists and antisemites concerning the essence of belonging to the Jewish collective –

belonging to the Jewish nation or even to a Jewish ethnicity. This shift from religious community to a nation made the project of Jewish emancipation – the integration of Jews into the nations of the states they lived in – most problematic. It is thus not surprising that for antisemites the Zionist definition of Judaism and Zionist activity became an effective tool in fighting Jewish emancipation. Yet the next step was no less paradoxical – they rejected Jewish self-emancipation as well: since antisemites could not believe in the ability of the Jews to sustain a normal state, i.e., they were suspicious concerning the wish of Zionism to create a state for the Jewish nation, they turned Zionism into yet another proof for their belief in the Jewish plot to rule the world. Their logics were simple enough: they believed that the Zionists are just promoting the idea of a Jewish state in order to create a territorial base for what antisemites call “the rule of world Jewry over the world” (in German *jüdische Weltherrschaft*).

This was exactly the conclusion drawn by the most antisemitic regime in history – Nazi Germany. The Nazis believed in the existence of a Jewish people, based on a Jewish race or Jewish racial mixture. When they overtook power in Germany in 1933, they were thus ready to cooperate with the Zionist movement only as long as this cooperation served the aim of excluding the Jews from German life or expelling them from Germany altogether – to Palestine too. Yet from the moment the idea of a Jewish state in Palestine became a political issue, i.e., in the wake of the proposal of the Peel Commission in 1937 to create a Jewish state in Palestine, the Third Reich turned against it, just because it suspected the Jewish state to become the territorial center of the alleged Jewish plot against Germany. This reaction and the propaganda the Third Reich launched against the Jewish settlement in Palestine during the Second World War were a clear-cut example of antisemitism turning anti-Zionist.

Nazism was not the only European ideology in which anti-Zionism (or enmity toward the Jewish state or Israel) and antisemitism merged. The politics and propaganda of the communist states of the Cold War and the argumentation strategy of the “New Left” of the 1960s and 1970s in Western

Europe also made this mixing possible. In the effort to fight Zionism as a stooge of imperialism, the stereotypes taken over from the imagery of antisemitism were reactivated. “The Israeli,” “the Zionist” and “the Jew” seemed to become one. This too was an example of a post-1945, new brand of antisemitism.

Thus far we have shown that anti-Zionism may be or may become antisemitic or vice versa. In this respect we, indeed, deal with a new aspect of antisemitism. Yet no automatic equation of anti-Zionism, or of a critical attitude toward Israel with antisemitism follows from this statement. On the one hand, for their own reasons, antisemites may and sometimes do support Zionism or the State of Israel, while on the other hand anti-Zionist or anti-Israel attitudes may be free of antisemitism. It goes without saying that criticism of Israeli policies *as such* does not necessarily amount to antisemitism. After all, criticism of Israeli policies is expressed most frequently by Israelis who oppose their government’s policies and tactics. Israeli nationalists who call this criticism Jewish self-hatred are just trying to avoid a matter-of-fact discussion of the contents of criticism.

Nevertheless it is wrong to blame only antisemites who seek proof for their belief in a Jewish world-conspiracy or Arabs who look for an effective anti-Zionist argument for the formula Zionism=Judaism (thus filling anti-Zionism with antisemitic contents). As mentioned before, it is the State of Israel itself, which provides an argument that helps blur the dividing line between being anti-Jewish and anti-Israeli: it is Israel’s claim of being the sole representative of the Jewish people wherever and whenever it may be. What follows is that Israel does not only speak and act in the name of the whole Jewish people: it considers itself the only historical heir of the Jewish collective over the centuries even though no plebiscite on this question has ever taken place. According to this self-perception – not only from the point of view of the anti-Zionists – any critical approach toward Israel must *ipso facto* be interpreted as being anti-Jewish, antisemitic. Especially since the political turnabout of 1977 in Israel, which put the nationalist parties in power, rebuffs against Israeli settlements

or Israel's policy in the occupied territories are met with the automatic reproachful reaction: this is nothing else but antisemitism! This very self-perception of Israel makes a differentiation between Jews and Israelis theoretically and practically impossible. This, of course, does not necessarily mean that every anti-Israeli or anti-Zionist policy must resort to antisemitism, but that latent as well as overt antisemites can make use of their antisemitic arsenal against their adversaries. This is exactly the point at which antisemites get away with the excuse that they do not express antisemitic but "only" anti-Zionist views. Israel thus presents itself as an outlet for antisemitic feelings, in Europe as well as in the Middle East. It goes without saying that we by no means intend to *justify* this antisemitic brand of anti-Zionism.

In itself, this "outing" of antisemites might seem advantageous for their opponents, since this "outing" helps expose hidden antisemites, if it were not for the risks this "outing" means for Jews who live outside Israel. Blurring the difference between Israel and Diaspora Jews turns non-Israeli Jews into potential hostages of Israeli politics. After all, Diaspora Jews are not Israeli citizens and their automatic support for Israel is only an Israeli myth. In spite of it these potential hostages often become the victims of anti-Israeli activities. The bomb that destroyed the Jewish community center in Buenos Aires in 1994 is the deadliest example: the Iranians and the Hezbollah intended to punish Israel by killing Argentinian Jews.

The mechanism of transforming anti-Israeli, anti-Zionist attitudes into antisemitic ones is thus relatively easy to explain. The more difficult question is: how do we find out whether criticism of Israel (or of Zionism) as such, or for that matter an anti-Israeli respectively anti-Zionist reproach, is indeed antisemitic or not?

Anti-Zionist guise and antisemitic wolves

In order to provide an answer to this question we need to go back again to the nature of "old" familiar antisemitism. A critical remark concerning a Jew (or Jews) is not antisemitic as

long as it is not based on the generalization of the “universal Jew” or based on stereotypes and prejudices. An antisemite is a person that passes a sweeping, negative judgment on the Jews as a race, nation or religious community, based on preconceived ideas, which lead up to social, economic and political measures against Jews. These measures may include discrimination, expropriation, boycott, legal measures, expulsion and murder. Antisemitism has a long tradition, many facets and a large arsenal of prejudices, invented long before the word antisemitism was introduced into everyday discourse. Modern antisemitism (i.e., since the late 19th century) suggested that the so-called social problem is entirely the result of what was called “the Jewish problem.” The most extreme form of antisemitism was, as we all know, practiced by the Third Reich. Just because of this very experience between 1933 and 1945 the Europeans became more sensitive to racism and antisemitism, which explains why present European antisemitism, compared to six or seven decades ago, is relatively weak. Yet, according to different public opinion polls, an average of about 20% of the autochthon Europeans has at least an antisemitic potential.⁹²⁸ People with this antisemitic potential also take a stand on the issue of Zionism and Israel, when it seems relevant.

Another paradox shows up at this point: this group of mostly latent antisemites did not seem to grow dramatically in the last two decades (there are of course exceptions to the rule, as is the case with Hungary). The impression that antisemitism is on the rise in all the territories which in the past were witness to the most brutal “solution of the Jewish question” is not substantiated by statistics. Moreover, when it comes to Israel, antisemites who belong to the radical and racist European Right sometimes turn antisemitism upside down and use Israel as an alibi: they support Israel, or rather Israel’s policy, in order to prove that they are free of antisemitic inclinations. This is an easy trick based on the common wisdom of “my enemy’s enemy is my friend” – the common enemy being the Islam or the growing Muslim minority in Europe. This alibi is all the more effective since antisemitism is sometimes more outspoken and less concealed among Arabs

or Muslims who live in Europe. Not only Arabs in the Middle East adapted antisemitic slogans and prejudices as the conflict with Zionism and Israel developed, but Muslims in Europe, many of them Arabs, as well. One does not have to reach far for an explanation: the correlation between outbursts of antisemitic anti-Zionism in Europe and dramatic developments and events in the Middle East (Intifadas, wars in Lebanon and Gaza, ISIS, etc.) indicates that a causal connection between Israel's policies and this reaction does exist. *This* specific “new” brand of antisemitism – anti-Israeli attitude with an antisemitic undertone – is on the rise in the last decades, but not only among Arabs (or for that matter among Iranians or Turks) in the Middle East, but also among Europeans, and rather among “Europeans with a migratory background,” as they are called in Germany.

This paradox leads us back to the “Israeli connection” of antisemitism. Antisemitism becomes active, even virulent, related to this connection and within this context. Two events which happened about a dozen years ago in Germany – the pamphlet of Jürgen Möllemann (combining an attack against Ariel Sharon and Michel Friedmann) and the speech of member of German parliament Martin Hohmann (comparing Germans and Jews as perpetrators) – or other events that took place in France, illustrate this Israeli connection of contemporary antisemitism very clearly. The correlation between the dramatic events in and around Israel mentioned above and the upsurge of antisemitic outbursts in Europe also prove that in the second half of the 20th century and later on it is less the “social problem” than the challenge of Zionism or Israeli political behavior that tempt people to resort to antisemitic slogans and practices. The antisemitic slogans used in demonstrations against Israel in Europe during the last military operation in Gaza (July 2014) are proof enough of this connection. Again, both antisemitism and the State of Israel stick to the creed that Israel and Jewry in general are one and the same, which explains why nowadays antisemitism revolves to such a large extent around Israel's right to exist or Israel's role in international politics. This does not mean of course that Israel's existence or policies are *responsible* for the

rise of antisemitism, but rather that they serve as a trigger for latent antisemitism to surface and become outspoken.

Criticism vs. antisemitism

Let us return now to the question that justly and incessantly bothers Europeans, and above all Germans on the one hand, and Israelis (including Israel's Arab population) on the other hand: does criticism against Israel *ipso facto* mean antisemitism? Based on our knowledge of antisemitism in the past we may argue that honest criticism – i.e., criticism based on facts, without resorting to anti-Jewish stereotypes and generalizations, with no intention to evoke latent antisemitic sentiments – is not and cannot be considered antisemitic, no matter where this criticism is expressed, in or outside Israel, including Germany. It is indeed easy to discover the fingerprints of “old-fashioned” antisemitism: the belief that killing Jews, or at least getting rid of the Jews, is justified, side by side with the denial of the Shoah; the conviction that Jews take part in a conspiracy to rule the world; that they are by nature greedy for money, but also the wish to remove Jews from one's own neighborhood. But what about antisemitic wolves in anti-Israeli sheep's clothing? Here the answer is more subtle: we have to be attentive to *associations* and insinuation addressed by this criticism. We must find out who is the real *object* of this criticism, and what is the real *intention*, a hidden agenda behind the supposedly PC-phrasing.

To be more specific: at the root of our world of *associations* lies the language we use. If Shylock, the *Stürmer* or Judas Iscariot enter the context of anti-Israeli criticism, if Jews (not Israelis) and Arabs (or Germans) are juxtaposed, if the Diaspora Jew is related to as an agent of “world Jewry” or of Israel, when the alleged “eye for an eye” mentality of the Jew is addressed, when the stereotype of the “rich Jew,” of the “cosmopolitan Jew,” etc. is used, when the caricature of the Jewish nose or the blood libel plays a role in an anti-Israeli, anti-Zionist publication or activity, we have indeed entered the realm of antisemitism.

As to the *object* of this criticism: if criticism is not directed against a specific person (say: Israel's prime minister) or against a specific organization (or NGO), but against the supposed representatives of "the Jews" or "Judaism"; when the framework is not the Israeli but the Jewish "character" of the object of criticism, we might talk again about antisemitism.

And thirdly – this is perhaps the most important aspect – behind one and the same expression or the same sentence, different intentions may hide. Even comparisons with National Socialism may be used for very different purposes: sometimes the aim is to highlight the differences, sometimes it is used as a warning, or, on the contrary, it may have the intent of relativizing and downplaying the Holocaust or delegitimizing Judaism (or the existence of Israel). In this last case we are again confronted with antisemitism. Very often we are able to identify the real intent behind the Israel-critic only indirectly, by extrapolating from his general state of mind or via an analysis of the character of the addressees of his historical analogies. The statements made by the historian Ernst Nolte three decades ago serve as a good example. But we must admit: for the glimpse behind the scenes the open-minded observer needs a good instinct.

Last but not least, we alluded to the connection between Israel's belief in its role as the sole representative of everything Jewish and the attacks against Israel or against Zionism becoming antisemitic, and considered it an element of a new phase in the history of antisemitism. But we have to put things straight: Jews are not the cause of antisemitism; Jews can only help, in one way or another, to turn latent into overt antisemitism. Without already existing anti-Jewish prejudices, things a Jew says or does could not generate antisemitism; and if somebody is at the same time a Jew and a supporter of Israel, or member of a certain political party, or a journalist, but is attacked because of his Jewish identity, antisemitism is in play. The reaction among Jews is often over-sensitive – after all, Auschwitz overshadows everything. However, over-sensitivity, or better the instrumentalization of this extreme sensitivity for political purposes, is in itself most dangerous. It is no secret that the official tactics of Israel when faced with

criticism against its policies (e.g., concerning the occupied Palestinian territories) rests on simply brushing it aside as an antisemitic move. Yet if every critical remark against Israeli policies amounts to a confirmation of the obsessive fear from ubiquitous antisemitism, the outcome is not necessarily an automatic support given by world public opinion for everything Israel does, but the contrary: it undermines the credibility of Israel, just because it confuses alleged and real antisemitism. In times of real danger those under fire will therefore find out that they have already wasted their anti-antisemitic ammunition.

This is the right place for a counter-factual question, which will help confirm or reject the conclusions arrived at in this paper: What would have happened if the State of Israel had never been created? Would antisemitism in the Western or Arab world have reached the new phase that we experience now? This is not just a rhetorical question. It opens yet another gate for a systematic answer.

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Part C: Israel Outward

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Topic XII: Israel-Diaspora

Introduction

This section focuses on the relations between Israel and the Jewish Diaspora. It addresses the question of how far, if at all, is Israel, as a Jewish sovereign state, central to the Jewish people worldwide. Diaspora-Israel relations constitute both a topic at the heart of the Zionist/non-Zionist ideological debate and a practical reality. The positions among scholars participating in this debate are by no means unanimous. The Zionist expectation has always been that all Jews should gather in the “restored” motherland, and if this is unrealistic, that they should at least recognize the new Jewish *patria* as the center of the Jewish world. Today, though, divergences of opinions on this issue are loudly articulated, and the following texts reflect part of the spectrum ranging from reassertions of the original Zionist stand to antagonistic contenders.

Judit Bokser Liwerant focuses on Latin America’s Jewry and contends that both its ethno-national diaspora character and its transnational trajectory have shaped its historic condition. Jews experience processes of attachment to different shifting and overlapping forces. Yet the Zionist idea and the new Center – Israel – have gradually conquered hegemony, and have become the major focus of identification and source of identity. In a world of diversified old and new diasporas, Jewish communities are today testing changing models of interactions and interconnectedness with the State of Israel, best understood through the lenses of diaspora dynamics in the context of globalization and transnationalism.

Yosef Gorny argues, on the basis of a study of American Jewish periodicals, that principled and political contradictions are elicited in attitudes toward Israel and its centrality for Jews. However, a common denominator of some sort still exists, reflected in a continuous relationship between the permanent “primordial” ethnic consciousness that is expressed in those periodicals and the different political outlooks.

Pierre Birnbaum maintains that Israel is becoming increasingly central and attractive for French Jewry. He elaborates on the French state as an illustration of a strong state that rejects any kind of hyphenated identity. This state was the first to emancipate its Jewish citizens, but it refuses any form of double loyalty. Jews preserve privately a Jewish sociability, but have for long tended to agree that hyphenated citizenship is unthinkable here. Circumstances have changed over the past few decades, however. Unprecedented manifestations of unfriendly expressions vis-à-vis Jews by non-Jews, who associate them with Israel, have resuscitated vulgar antisemitic myths. This process breaks away from French Jews' integrative history and explains the increasing aliyah of Jews from France to Israel. In a wider perspective, this aspect can be seen as indicative of the contemporary decline of the strong state.

Yossi Shain and Sarah Fainberg agree with Birnbaum about Israel's growing centrality and attractiveness for French Jewry. They claim that increasing antisemitism in France has brought French Jews to a "moment of truth." The authors elaborate on the grim prospects for Judaism in France, and the process of cultural "Israelization" that they observe in the community. Jews tend to congregate more and more among themselves, which impacts on the strengthening of their Judaism. There are now more kosher butchers and restaurants, synagogues, and Jewish schools than at any other time in France. With respect to several criteria, moreover, these institutions display more "Israeli" markers than at any other epoch.

Sergio DellaPergola focuses on the complex changes that are taking place in Jewish peoplehood. The three major axes are: immobility versus change in beliefs, customs, and institutions; separatism versus integration of Jews with regard to the general public; homogeneity versus diversity of the Jewish population. Despite all these transformations, in some respects Israel still emerges as the central backbone of the Jewish world; regarding others, however, Israel remains tributary to other Jewish centers. Different conclusions are reached when analyzing elitist sub-groups, or the Jewish

collective as a whole. The tests of peoplehood are uniqueness and shared meanings.

Eliezer Ben-Rafael emphasizes the multifaceted divisiveness of the Jewish world that entails harsh competition for influence on this world. That, in itself, asserts the unity of the Jews worldwide: the tensions which crosscut boundaries show the reality of the code of *am ehad* ('one people'). Despite this, the substantial cultural, social, and political distances and processes avoid validating the notion of Israel as the center of the Jewish world. This Jewish world is composed of disparate diasporas and one multicultural homeland, and in actual fact does not have a center at all. Transnationalism, in this case, consists of feelings of closeness crosscutting boundaries that give shape to an entity where divergent and convergent horizons conjunctively fuel feelings of belonging to the same "whole": a space of privileged interconnectedness.

Gideon Katz goes still further. He focuses on the Canaanite ideology in Israel that up to now has asserted the negation of the diaspora. Many contemporary Israeli thinkers have engaged with this topic, and among them, the writer A. B. Yehoshua. He frames the negation of the diaspora in psychological terms contending that life in the diaspora is bound to neuroticism. The establishment of the State of Israel is the only possible therapy. Yehoshua's view serves here as a particular case in point. Katz develops an analysis of this standpoint indicating both its strong contentions and weaknesses.

All these approaches have far-reaching roots in past ideological polemics. However, the discussions these days do not concern the if and how of Zionism, but rather how to refer practically and ideally to existing realities – in Israel and in the diaspora. The contributors to this section provide different angles for looking at these realities. Bokser Liwerant argues that Israel is central for Latin America's Jewry. According to Gorny, Israel's centrality is a matter of dispute among American Jews. But Birnbaum as well as Shain and Fainberg maintain that Israel is becoming increasingly attractive for French Jewry. DellaPergola asserts that regarding some respects Israel still definitely emerges as the central backbone

of the Jewish world; regarding others Israel remains tributary to other powerful Jewish centers. Ben-Rafael argues that today the Jewish world is centerless and composed of disparate diasporas and one multicultural homeland. Katz discusses the view that Israel and the Jewish Diaspora are totally separate entities.

55. The Changing Status of Zionism and Israel in Latin American Jewry

Judit Bokser Liwerant

This paper was completed in April 2015.

Introduction

The Jewish people's condition develops today amid a world of diversified old and new diasporas. Similarly and possibly even more, Jews are experiencing changing models of interactions – along with confrontation and even cleavages – through continuous bonds of cohesion and solidarity. Whereas classical diasporas implied mainly a return to a real or an imagined homeland, contemporary realities supplement or replace return with dense onward migrations and continuous linkages across borders. Simultaneously, changing forms of mobility and links have serious impact on the interactions between distinctiveness and integration of groups as well as on inner dynamics. These new forms of interconnectedness draw novel ways of relations better understood through the lenses of diaspora amidst globalization processes and transnationalism. Indeed, in increasingly mobile settings, the singular Jewish experience provides new insights to approach the changing profile of an ethno-national-global diaspora entering a new transnational moment.

Diverse approaches conceive diaspora as a distinctive “community,” held together by a singular, active solidarity, as well as by relatively dense social relationships, that cut cross state boundaries and link members of the diaspora in different states into a single “transnational community.”⁹²⁹ Both an ethno-national diaspora character and a transnational trajectory shaped the historic Jewish condition worldwide and specifically in Latin America: the region has experienced a historic process of being attached to different shifting and

overlapping external centers that acted as both real/concrete and imaginary/symbolic homelands. These relations evinced strong transnational solidary connections and a dependent or peripheral diaspora character: political concepts, values, aspirations and organizational entities brought with by immigrants, transplanted from previous Jewish experiences in other parts of the world played a fundamental role in the process of cultural and institutional formation.

Gradually the Zionist idea and the new historical center conquered communities and built hegemony. Indeed, Jewish Latin American realities point to historical convergences and interactions between diverse institutional and identity conformations, amidst a singular common trait: a close nexus of an ethno-cultural identity and its national dimension in the mold of diaspora nationalism under Zionist supremacy. The Zionist idea, the State of Israel and its Center-Diaspora model acted as a focus of identification and a source of identity building, as an axis for the structuring process of communal life, and as a source of legitimacy.⁹³⁰

Today's radical transformations, linked to globalization processes and related changes in the Jewish world system gave birth to a complex array of trends where tacit disagreement and even disputes take place regarding the frontiers of identity, its collective expression and, certainly, the place of the State of Israel. The emergence of new models of relations between communities and the Center and even new processes of decentralization and new radial configurations shed light onto common trends in the Jewish world and singular developments in Latin American Jewish communities.

New meanings of Center-Home (spiritual, symbolic, material) and transnational ideational motives develop drawing systems of relations among communities that keep differentiated, modified and strong links among them and with Israel.

Certainly, massive migration flows, transnational networks, as well as social, economic, political and cultural interconnectedness mark a new era of reordered territorial spaces and redefined ascriptions, belongings, and identities.

The singularity of the Jewish case is manifest in the wide associational and institutional underpinning of collective life and it is precisely through its weight that we may explain the dialectics of boundary maintenance and the role played by Israel.⁹³¹ From this perspective, the multi-functionality of the latter for Latin American communities as identity referent, organizational axis and energy catalyzer for building communal life has been determinant.

However, traditional pillars of the relation Israel-Diaspora, its institutional channels and the types of connection have changed. These transformations are analyzed along several dimensions: mobility patterns, the educational ecology and fundraising for the national funds. Diversity is displayed along religious, sub-ethnicity and political axes that may reinforce inner divides and overlap, thus redefining the foci of debates and the relations inside the Jewish world. Certainly, societies, countries and region act as influential contextual settings.

Past trends

The development of Latin American Jewish life has been strongly defined by its connection to Jewish external centers. Immigrants shaped their communal life, built their associational and institutional profile and their collective consciousness as part of a broader feeling of peoplehood and a sense of collective belonging that expressed itself as well through global political interactions. These relations were complex and simultaneously marked strong transnational solidarity connections and a dependent or peripheral character of new communities in the making.⁹³² This twofold characteristic went through successive redefinitions and changing formulations. Transnationalism meant for Jewish life in the region a collective life oriented not only by external referents but also by their divergent expectations regarding the models to be developed on unequal terms of exchange.⁹³³ In the interwar period, Jews from Eastern Europe succeeded in establishing transnational relations between the original centers of Jewish life and the new periphery that powerfully influenced the construction of a new ethno-national-

transnational diaspora. They gave birth to Jewish *kehilot* in the region as replicas of original experiences overseas.⁹³⁴ With diverse degrees of intensity, regions and countries of origin were the defining organizational criteria. While the Sephardic world in Latin America developed communities on the basis of different countries of origin, reflecting the fragmented character of this complex ethnic group that was textured by different sub-groups,⁹³⁵ Eastern European Jews as hegemonic community builders established the old/ new communal structures. Contrary to what happened in the United States, the collective overshadowed the individual. In the United States the process of nation building implied the incorporation of separate components into a collective higher order, while the right to self-fulfillment saw normative support as part of the national ethos. Building communal structures both reflected and shaped collective Jewish life. Founded by secularists, but seeking to answer communal and religious needs, communities were forged in the cast of European modern diaspora nationalism emphasizing its inner ideological struggles, organized political parties and social and cultural movements. The dominant pattern was a continuous trend toward secularization and politicization inspired by a plural transnational cultural baggage. Varying ideological, cultural and political currents flowed energetically in the Jewish street: from communist to Zionist; from yiddishist to bundist; from liberal to assimilationist and from there to Orthodoxy; also from highly structured organizational options to non-affiliated and individual definitions. This gave birth to an imported and original rich “Jewish street.” As in the Old Home both prophecy and politics intertwined.⁹³⁶ The communal domain, while prompting continuity, became the basic framework for the permanent struggle between world visions, convictions, strategies and instrumental needs.

Indeed, local conditions and world Jewish developments directly influenced and gradually turned the Zionist idea and the State of Israel into central axes for communal life and identity. Links and interactions brought into the forefront both the feeling and objective reality of a renewed transnational shared mission and commitment to a new ideological, political

and cultural-spiritual center. It represented a new chapter in solidarity efforts that also expressed the inherent tension between a project to renew Jewish national life in a Jewish Homeland and the idea to foster Jewish life in the new circumstances of the diaspora. Historically, Zionism sought to address a wide range of problems that deeply marked these inner tensions. Its global goals of generating an overall *aggiornamento* in Judaism led to the coexistence of both the denial of a diaspora condition and the aspiration of renewal of Jewish life as a whole.⁹³⁷ While an overall disenchantment with the diaspora condition was among the main causes for the emergence of Zionism in Europe, in the new communities Zionism committed itself both ideologically and institutionally to guarantee a new Jewish life. As any ideology in the process of being absorbed by other cultural and symbolic frames of reference, Zionism acquired novel sociological meanings without necessarily redefining or rephrasing its contents. Its organizational functionality was altered and, beyond its recognized goals, it fulfilled diverse new needs. Nowhere Jews created a communal public space with a proto-state structure so diversified as in Latin America.

The links between the new homeland and Jewish communities distanced from a one-fold uncontested dynamics. The dominant interpretation of those links in terms of bonds that connected one-directionally a periphery to a center was initially manifest within the organized Zionist movement. One has to underscore that Latin American distinctiveness and specificity were never fully understood by the organized Zionist world. The region was alternatively seen as an undefined and not a clearly visible part of the West or as part of periphery region. Latin American Jews were viewed as a substitute for vanishing European Jewry and were therefore identified as a source for *aliyah*: a shared perception of a *sui generis* diaspora, temporary in its time span, called to play a central role in the changing Jewish dispersion, and as a bridge between a vanishing old world and the new one to be built. Zionist sectors invigorated the center with both the “national home” and “refuge” qualities that simultaneously nourished and reinforced their own diaspora profile.⁹³⁸

Through successive phases, Zionism found itself caught between two different perspectives: on the one hand, Israel's expectations of massive immigration were high, and on the other hand, by equating Zionist identity with Jewish continuity, its involvement in Jewish life in the diaspora was validated. At this level an interesting paradox was revealed: the awareness of the centrality of the State of Israel did not cause the realization of the Zionist dream "to come true," but in fact perpetuated activities and obligations in the life of the community. A "substantive centrality" of Zionism and Israel developed in Latin America and in time became circumstantial.⁹³⁹ Thus, the Zionist idea and the State of Israel were functional to the goal of Jewish continuity in a region seen differentially both as home and exile. The discrepancies around the changing boundaries of Jewish dispersion coexisted with specific strategies aimed to recreate, to lead and even to strengthen life in the diaspora, even without being explicitly recognized. For Zionism, hegemony building meant institutional insertion into central communal instances that acted as channels for the development of links with the global Jewish world.⁹⁴⁰ Its communal centrality was expressed both in the contour of educational systems, youth movements and national funds as a domain where to express solidarity with the Zionist building.

Changing patterns

The place and role of the national center evolved through different stages, expressing both the changing pattern of communal and national conditions as well as the ideological, normative and practical transformations that took place in Israel. The one-center model's vicissitudes affected the dependent and even periphery perception of Latin American communities amidst a scenario that led toward increased interdependency. A relevant chapter in this new pattern and dynamics was defined by the Six-Day War. The war was a turning point experienced as a founding event in which reality, symbolism, and the imaginary converged. Discourse and social action met and they stretched the boundaries of the relation. The perception of the war as a historical watershed in

the domain of solidarity and cohesion was fostered at the very time of its unfolding, given the growing perception of a life-threatening situation, the rapidity of the developments, the magnitude of Israel's victory as well as the type and intensity of the responses it elicited.⁹⁴¹

One of the main paradoxes brought about by the large scale response to the war was that it further propelled a process which diluted the boundaries between Zionists and non-Zionists to the extent that a wide pro-Israeli attitude surpassed and came to be equated with Zionism. So, as a result of the massive and spontaneous expressions of support during the conflict, Zionism's organizational boundaries and specificity became diffused. Thus, while the organized movement had to confront new ideological and organizational definitions regarding its validity as well as its specificity and self-definition, identification patterns themselves took on new directions. The ties that bound Latin American Jewish communities with Israel moved to an increased mutual legitimation: through solidarity with Israel, communities expressed an implicit message regarding the legitimacy of their own existence. Solidarity meant responsibility and, consequently, the latter sought to legitimate the diaspora's separate existence. For its part, the Jewish State, unwittingly, legitimated the diaspora by attaching great importance to its support. In this sense, diaspora's solidarity legitimized its place and the channeling of energy into reinforcing its communities, mediated by the centrality of the State of Israel.⁹

⁴² A change in the asymmetry and periphery perception of these diasporas took place.

However, insofar as the State of Israel proposed aliyah as the central criteria to evaluate the success and limitations of the Zionist movement after the war, it led to a debated climate and confronted Zionists with new modalities of expression of their diverse goals. After 1967, aliyah offered both the possibility of converting the Jewish ferment into a permanent phenomenon and of returning its own specific profile to the Zionist idea. Paradoxically, for the organized movement, the absence of a massive immigration demanded the reinforcement of its activities, thereby justifying its

permanence. On the one hand, Israel's expectations of massive immigration were higher; on the other hand, while Zionist identity appeared as synonymous with Jewish continuity, involvement in Jewish life in the diaspora was further validated. We may define it as a sort of singular diaspora condition that reinforced the one-center model and simultaneously led to redefine the channels through which the links with it would be established. The predominant role of mediator that organized Zionism historically held started to be questioned by bringing other existing institutions to play an increasing role in the communities' relationship with Israel. While Israel became a focus of identity for growing circles, Zionism experienced a profound contradiction regarding the challenge to join efforts with other organizations without giving up its own specificity. The Zionist leadership was unaware of the structural changes that were taking place; they could not come to terms with the fact that Israel's centrality would not be reflected through its traditional institutional framework. The diaspora-homeland links and bonds gradually shifted from the Zionist organizations and partisan efforts and debates to the communal and the central representative organizations. Harsh disputes on the organizational level expressed other social processes that were taking place.⁹⁴³

A new type of interaction between ethnicity, religion and nationality that would inaugurate and thereafter reverse its path conditioned the main changing patterns of identification. The scope of action of Zionist activities was widened to non-Ashkenazi sectors; whereas the Sephardic community had established close bonds with Zionism in the past, 1967 attracted other communities to the cause, like the *Halebi* and *Shami* Syrian communities. Their rapprochement with Israel was complex. The growing identification with the State was interwoven with a growing process of secularization related to generational change. Israel offered the new generations the opportunity to move away from religion as the exclusive focus of identity and to stress political sovereignty as a complement of ethnicity. Mexico and Argentina represent two paradigmatic cases.

However, this defining turning point that marked a new dynamic in the Jewish-Zionist camp was radically reverted, when the opposite process of de-secularization developed worldwide and specifically in Latin American Jewish communities. The Six-Day War almost “miraculous” experience enhanced the connection of the Jewish people with the land and the renewed and reborn link was recovered and channeled by the Orthodox world.⁹⁴⁴ Religious Zionism and the *mitnahalim* were also nourished by this experience that led to strengthen believes and symbols brought from the biblical legacy, connecting the past to the present *Jehudah* and *Shomron*.⁹⁴⁵

Israel went through further transformations which, in turn, modified how it related to the diaspora. Looking at it from a wide perspective, Israel’s ideological and political spectrum was redefined. Left and right were gradually emptied of their ideological contents and would concentrate almost exclusively on topics such as the occupied territories and the Palestinian question. This political trend would remove the subject of its links with the diaspora from the center of the Israeli agenda. Thus, it reduced and weakened this dimension of the political parties in Israel and made them less relevant to address challenges that brought Israel to the center of the Jewish agenda.

Israel’s post-war modifying image set new items and questions concerning its role as a source of identity and legitimacy for Latin American Jews and simultaneously confronted the communities with new tasks. The way in which these tasks were undertaken defined the alternating relevance of the public and the private spheres as terrains for identity building and affirmation of collective life.

The questioning of Israel and Zionism increased. The Left, the communist camp and the increasing pro-Castro Third World were already influenced by Soviet anti-Zionist propaganda.⁹⁴⁶ Within the Jewish communities in Latin America there was a growing concern that the change in Israel’s image could affect their own. Therefore, the need to engage in the building up of the former became not only a

constant demand from the Zionist instances in Israel, but also a common pressing concern. However, difficulties arose and even failed to create the appropriate institutional tools and to develop a discourse oriented to satisfy the community's inner needs while surpassing its boundaries and addressing society at large. Even though communal institutions were conscious of the need to modify the existing dialogical structures, the task was never successfully undertaken. The inability to find in the public sphere a domain for visibility and its expression reinforced previous patterns of expression of collective identity. The identification with the State of Israel stopped at the threshold of national societies; the impact of the external constraints regarding the public manifestation of differences and the collective nature of Jewish life lies behind this situation. One certainly has to differentiate between the specificity of the different national contexts; however this was a common trend in the region: the one-center model and the centrality of Israel had to face its own public limits.

Ulterior developments have been complex: while part of the Jewish world started to experience emerging legitimacy of ethnic assertiveness, which reinforced cultural terms of collective identities – paradoxically minimizing Israel as a focus – Latin American Jewish communities were further exposed to the impact of the equation $Zionism=Racism$. Mexico represents a paradigmatic case where the national circumstances and the international changing scenarios influenced the Jewish community and its relation with Israel. The fact that the country was the scenario of the World Conference for the International Woman's Year (in June and July 1975) had important national and international implications for the new offensive on Zionism. The conference's declaration, known as the Declaration of Mexico, would be a significant precedent of Resolution 3379 by incorporating a condemnation of Zionism together with the fight against colonialism, the support of nationalist movements and the opposition to every foreign occupation, thus equating Zionism with Apartheid and other forms of racial discrimination. This condemnation was followed by Resolution 77-XII – adopted by heads of State and Government of the Organization for African Unity also in

1975 – and the Declaration of Politics and Strategy to Strengthen Solidarity and Mutual Aid between Non-Aligned Countries in Lima (which was promulgated during the same month).

Following the vote that equated Zionism and racism, the US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger declared on November 12, 1975 that the US would take reprisals “on an individual basis” against those countries that voted in favor of the resolution. In this context, the American Jewish community announced the cancelation of tourism trips to Mexico as a punitive measure given that “Americans do more business and tourism trips than any other of the 71 nations that voted against Zionism.” Thus, the so-called “boycott” was framed to create pressure and it unleashed a chain of actions and reactions that included the government’s objective to “clarify” first, and then “correct” its vote.

Without ignoring the pragmatic dimension of the 1975 Mexican vote, the critique of the links with the State of Israel and with the American Jewish community was projected onto the embarrassing realms of national loyalty. The dynamics of the vote/boycott conduct of the American Jewish community and the clarifications offered by the Mexican government to the United States and Israel fostered a domestic vision of disloyalty, lack of patriotism, and the noxious impact of those who “constitute a powerful group within the country’s economy and politics.” The main argument advanced by various sectors of civil society juxtaposed being national and being transnational as mutually exclusive terms.⁹⁴⁷ One may point to the reinforced argumentative chain that related Zionism, racism, imperialism, expansionism and militarism to the State of Israel with permanent strangeness.

The interplay between adscription and self-adscription, while reinforcing the collective identification with the State, reduced its expression to the communal space, so that Israel’s centrality was reaffirmed and simultaneously endogenously constrained. In addition to Mexico, the UN Resolution 3379 also received the supportive vote of Brazil.

Contextual parameters

In the coming years, due to the increasing pro-Palestine stance among Latin American countries – Chile and Brazil included, both under military anti-communist dictatorships – the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) gained political and diplomatic acceptance in the continent. It opened liaison and information offices in Brazil and Mexico City (1976), Lima (1979), Managua (1980), La Paz (1982), and Buenos Aires (1985). More than a decade later, immediately after the proclamation by the PLO in Algiers of an independent Palestine state, the UN General Assembly voted Resolution 43/177 (December 1988), which was approved by 10 out of 19 Latin American countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru). However, only Nicaragua and Cuba gave their formal recognition to the Palestine state, together with the Arab countries, and other nations from Africa and East Europe.⁹⁴⁸ The anti-American prevailing ideological mood and political hostility of the Left over-determined the synonymy Israel-United States. Both intellectuals and social movements progressively radicalized their view of Israel as a “proxy of the US.”

Among them, Jewish intellectuals and activist took part, thus enhancing the relevance the political axes were gaining. The singular cultural/ideological code that characterizes wide sectors of intellectuals, public figures and the media developed: anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism incorporate and overlap with anti-Zionism and anti-Israelism and connect with antisemitism.⁹⁴⁹ It started amidst varying national configurations and became transnational. Already in the 1960s and 1970s, anti-Zionist discourse served in the United States and Western Europe as a cultural code among the New Left that suggested belonging to the wide camp of anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism and a new sort of anti-capitalism. In North and South America, anti-Zionist charges – with their frequent anti-Jewish twists – initially were not an independent issue among the prevalent political and social views of the Left, but rather a code for more important matters other than the Israel-

Palestine conflict. The cultural contours of this code displayed its struggle against the overall set of values and norms typical of the imperialist West, such as authoritarianism, paternalism, machismo (male-pride) and the legacy of colonialist conceit vis-à-vis the Third World.

Nevertheless, following many years of an unsettled Israel-Palestine conflict, today's opposition to Israel can hardly be regarded only as a code for some other evil. Together with a more open antisemitism by right-wing xenophobic groups, but not only by them, the subculture of the Left, even of the center-Left, cannot be seen in its position toward Israel as a side-issue, ripe to serve as a cultural code.⁹⁵⁰ Increased hostility toward Israel became globally coordinated transcending the national boundaries of countries. Thus it became an expanded "transnational ideological package" that symbolizes and codifies the struggle against globalization and US hegemony, so dominant in Latin America.

The anti-Zionist and anti-Israeli discourse gained argumentative weight, as it was essentially connected to the ups and downs of the peace process in the Middle East. As such, it reflected the First Intifada (from the end of 1987 to the beginning of 1988), the Gulf War in 1991, the outburst of the Second Intifada in September 2000, Operation "Cast Lead" or the Gaza War in 2008–2009, the Gaza Flotilla incident in 2010, Southern Israel cross-border attacks by Egyptian and Palestinian militants in 2011, Operation "Pillar of Defense" in 2012 and so on. Zionism became an implicit and dependent argument of the major focus – the State of Israel portrayed as a belligerent and war-prone state, oppressive and genocidal. The axis of human rights violation gained presence among the critical arguments. Insofar as the State of Israel became the main focus of argumentation, the fluid interconnections established between anti-Israelism and historical antisemitism, or between anti-Israelism and dilution of the Holocaust, the former became the radicalized argumentative point of departure.⁹⁵¹

On an overall perspective, following a profound polarization toward the Palestinian-Israeli conflict during the

1970s–1980s, the end of the Cold War and bipolarity had a positive effect on the region thus leading to the normalization of relations with both the Palestinians and the Jewish-Zionist state, although founded on an equidistance basis. In the 1990s, and motivated by the signing of the Oslo Peace Accords (1993), formal diplomatic missions of the new Palestine Authority opened in Chile (1992), Brazil (1993), Mexico (1995), Argentina and Colombia (1996), and Peru (1998). A few years after the signing of the Chilean-Palestine Memorandum for Scientific Technical, Cultural and Educative Cooperation (June 1995), Chile opened in Ramallah the first diplomatic Latin American representation (April 1998). But we should recall that simultaneously anti-Zionism, as an ideological stance among the diplomacy of Latin American countries, lost its virulence as a resource to rhetorically attack Israel and was replaced instead by pragmatic considerations in countries such as Brazil, Mexico, and Nicaragua. Meaningfully, all Latin American countries, except Cuba, voted on December 16, 1991 in favor of UN Resolution 46/86 revoking the resolution that equated Zionism with racism.⁹⁵² However, along the coming years, the main ALBA countries (Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Cuba) cut off their diplomatic relations with Israel. They were first led by Hugo Chávez and Evo Morales in January 2009 to protest over the military offensive in Gaza. In June 2010, Daniel Ortega, President of Nicaragua, followed such move. They all voiced harsh anti-Zionist and anti-Israel criticism. Unlike the other ALBA members, Rafael Correa (Ecuador's President) did not break up diplomatic ties with Israel, although he intensified his country's economic and political relations with Iran. In a reconfigured world system, the Venezuelan regime under Hugo Chávez (1998–2013) and currently under Maduro became a Latin American proxy of the Iranian state and its hatred of Jews. Geopolitical considerations played an important part in making both Zionism and Israel Venezuela's enemies. Thus, part of the government's animosity toward Jews might have responded to his aim to win favor from Teheran. This explanation also seems to hold when analyzing the anti-Zionist position of the ALBA countries, the anti-US bloc led by Chavismo.⁹⁵³ As seen, the process involving the

problematic social representation of Israel has become a new shared pattern in Latin America, although with regional variations. It certainly represents a difficult challenge for Jewish communities and their recurrent need to oscillate between the private and public spheres as realms of expression of solidarity. The capacity to coordinate efforts with Israel to influence regional diplomacy has been subject to ups and downs, a much required strategy in the always determining trilogy Latin American governments-Jewish communities-Israel.⁹⁵⁴ Both autonomy and heteronomy explain the pathways of a permanent search for new equilibrium in the changing relation Israel-Diaspora.

Redefining centers in a globalized world: the territorial referent

For Latin American Jews, besides its condition of national sovereign and creative cultural center, Israel has historically been a vital space for those who are in need. Necessity and ideology interacted in particularly interesting ways, as expressed through migration waves and selected places of destination. Regional and national trends point to dependency of aliyah (and Jewish migration in general) on the unfolding of specific local circumstances, varying recurring economic crises, political unrests and returns to normalcy; in some cases, these factors tend to form repeated cycles.⁹⁵⁵

There also emerge some sub-regional similarities. The situation in the country of origin was by far the most powerful determinant of aliyah, although one cannot neglect the intervention of successful absorption in the country of destination as a further explanatory factor. Jewish migration and Israel population growth was hence tributary, in some measure, of the general crises and of their interferences with the orderly life of Jewish communities on the Latin American continent.⁹⁵⁶ As DellaPergola further underscores, the fact that Jewish migrants preferred Israel to other available alternatives indicates that “cultural and symbolic” factors continued to play an important role among the determinants of existential choices concerning the preferred place of residence. But the

fact that Israel is ranked significantly above every Latin American society, according to the Human Development Index, is certainly compatible with making that choice consonant with the routine preference of most international migrants to move from poorer to better environments. Over 100,000 Jews have made aliyah and the different moments and profiles point to the weight of their ideational motive.

For Argentine Jews, Israel has been a central spot. However, when asked today about their country of preference in case of emigration, 27% declare Spain, only 24% opt for Israel, followed by 14% that point to the US.⁹⁵⁷ The emigration preferences of Mexican Jews show as well a reduction of Israel's importance, even though 84% have visited it at least once.⁹⁵⁸ Among Jews in Caracas in 1998–1999 – before the significant change of political regime of the last years – who were asked about their moves facing a crisis, 14% stated they would go to Israel, the same percent would prefer the US, 9% would chose another country, and yet 63% would remain in Venezuela.⁹⁵⁹ Data on Jews living in Mexico and Argentina show that both age (cohort) and country of origin influence the place of Israel in people's lives and their attachment to it. Mexico has exceptionally high rates of visits to Israel while lower rates characterize Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela.

A survey by the Comité Central Israelita de México (2008) shows that while 97% of the older members (individuals of 70 years old, for instance) of the Mexican Jewish community express that Israel is of uttermost importance, only 77% of the young population (18–19 years old) make the same statement. These percentages are far higher if we compare them with opinions expressed by members of other Latin American communities. In Argentina, the percentage of those who express that Israel is of uttermost importance diminishes to 57%. Erdei points to the age cohort effect when referring to self-definition by younger and older Jews to Judaism.⁹⁶⁰

We may further look into this variation through the angle of educational trips to Israel, an indicator that reveals the unique convergence of modern nationalism and postmodern

transnationalism in the Jewish world and the region or, in other terms, the changing role of the Center or national homeland to guarantee the continuity of the diaspora. Seen from the perspective of interactions and circulation, trips oscillate between links and bonds to the nation-state and diaspora building.⁹⁶¹ However, the latter must be seen from a regional lens that focuses on the process of becoming an ethno-transnational diaspora. Ethnic diasporas – the “exemplary communities of the transnational moment” – are today engaged in a renewed geography of dispersion.⁹⁶² These trips and their function – based on a complex logic of interdependence, disjuncture and convergences between Israel and the diaspora – are closely related to the institutional density, the social capital and the communal legacy of the diverse communities. Accordingly, Israel plays a central role. And, yet, the specific characteristics of Jewish life point to different scenarios in the region. For example, day attendance school in Mexico reaches over 90% while Brazil and Argentina are close to 50%. Affiliation rates differ from 85% in Mexico and between 45–50% in Brazil and Argentina. Out-marriage rates are 10% in Mexico while in both Brazil and Argentina they reach 50%. These parameters reflect and shape the scope and inner differentiation of the place and role of the trips to Israel: total attendance in the Mexican case reaches 70% vis-à-vis 45% and 50% in Brazil and Argentina.

Jewish educational ecology and communal institutional density act as central variables. While Mexican youth has visited Israel in the framework of the school system, they also have a subsequent stronger presence in long-term programs and therefore a reduced one in the framework of Taglit.⁹⁶³ Concomitantly, it explains the latter’s success in Argentina and Brazil – in larger Jewish communities with lower levels of Jewish education attendance and similar rates of intermarriage. Jewish education still explains why in spite of lower affiliation rates there is a strong cultural component. Families of participants are engaged and related to the Jewish community. While in Argentina 86% feel very connected to Israel, in Brazil this percentage reaches 20%.⁹⁶⁴

Tab. 1: Latin American Israel trips, 2009–2010

	MASA	TAGLIT	MOTL	TEEN	TOTAL
Brazil	224	428	158	400*	1210
Argentina	294	967	200	600*	2061
Mexico	261	29	272	350*	912
TOTAL	779	1424	630	1350	

Source: Table elaborated by the author based on data provided by the Jewish Agency.

Masa programs take place between 5–12 months, and include Youth Movements, experiential, Academic, Specialization and Orthodox programs. Its target population is young adults. Taglit lasts 10 days, and participants are young adults of 18–26 years. March of the Living lasts 15 days, and is designed for high school students and young adults. Teen Trips take place between 5–6 weeks, and they are designed for 9th graders.

Indeed, different approaches are expressed in various spiritual-national-cultural representations of the Center; connectedness develops along a diversified world of identities and it is implied by the existential and cognitive dimensions, thus underscoring Israel as a territorial and symbolic referent while strong and durable diasporic life develops. Moreover, in light of the fluctuating place of national homeland/diaspora as identification referents, it is also interesting to see the complex widening and intensification of the framework in which the March of the Living is conveyed as an expression of the convergent/ divergent place of the *Shoah* in public discourse and social practices.⁹⁶⁵ The Shoah has become an increasingly relevant axis of identification and points to a global trend in the Jewish and non-Jewish worlds, which may be interpreted as a reevaluation of the diaspora as a fundamental value and element in the formation of Jewish history and memory. Vis-à-vis the identification with Israel as the main center, one may ponder whether current narratives in which the present is subdued to the moment of destruction express – mainly for post-Zionist sectors – an “unexplainable uneasiness” with state power while being more consonant with patterns of postmodern times.⁹⁶⁶

Israel and the changing educational ecology

From an integrative perspective of Jewish dispersion and the place of Israel, education has played a central role in the shaping of Latin American Jewish life. Indeed, the schooling

of children and young adults in comprehensive Jewish educational institutions took priority over other collective needs. Jewish education has been a fundamental basis for continuity; the main channel to transmit and project their cultural profile while creating differences among local communities and between the latter and their host societies. Historical, political and ideological currents marked the original differentiation of schools. Thus, it reflected the gamut of secularized political and ideological currents that shaped Jewish communities, with a central place given to the Zionist idea and the State of Israel. The latter's role became central in communities that while being traditionalists gravitated around debates and secular political motives.

While the centrality of Israel can not be denied, and main aspects of the educational system are interwoven with it, today, historical, political and ideological currents that differentiated schools in Latin America have been replaced by religious and communitarian (sub-ethnic) criteria, in consonance with world Jewish trends. The educational system has been changing both expressing general developments while acting as an arena where they are shaped. Historically, religion played a minor role in what were basically secular communities. This trend was reinforced by the scarcity of religious functionaries, dating back to the earliest days of Latin American Jewry.⁹⁶⁷ Thus one may affirm that important changes have taken place that may be also seen as part of the general public relevance religion has gained as a result of its claims to a new interaction between private and public morality, in a sort of so-called “de-privatization” process.⁹⁶⁸

In the 1960s the Conservative movement began its spread to South America. As it adjusted to local conditions, the synagogue began to play a more prominent role both in community life and in society in general. In recent years, in tandem with changing trends in world Jewish life, Orthodox groups have formed new religious congregations. Today, the spread of the Chabad movement and the establishment of Chabad centers, both in the large, well-established communities as well as in the smaller ones, are striking. While in Mexico the presence of Chabad is marginal at best, there are

well over 50 synagogues, study houses, *kollelim* and *yeshivot*, more than 30 of which were established in the last 30 years by Shas, Aish HaTorah and other Haredi movements.

Looking at the educational ecology, the highest rate of population growth takes place at the religious schools. While acknowledging the fact that this trend is related to the incidence of community social policies on communal cultural profiles – as expressed in the massive support offered through scholarships by religious schools – it also must be noted that this process reflects an increase in religiosity and observance. The changing dynamics differ in the diverse communities of the region. The profile of Jewish educators and the challenges derived from the current needs define the importance of their training, both structures and contents.⁹⁶⁹

Argentina is characterized by its comprehensive community school system, which has grown in spite of the various crises it has suffered starting the decade of the 1990s. The highest rate of population growth takes also place at the Orthodox-Haredi religious schools. In total numbers the Orthodox schools experienced an increase of almost 49% in the last ten years.⁹⁷⁰

In Mexico, close to 93% of Jewish children attend Jewish schools. A strong organizational structure of 16 (15 in Mexico City and one in Monterrey) day schools has developed; one school for each 2,500 Jews in Mexico City. Close to 25% of the student population benefit from scholarships, while more than 40% do so in the Haredi schools. The latter, serving 26% of the student population, show the highest population growth: 55% in the last eight years.⁹⁷¹

The increase in the number of attendants of religious schools reflect both the demographic changes in the composition of the community, the arrival of educators coming from intensively Orthodox communities from South America as well as the overall trend in education.

In a recent study we carried among Latin American Jewish educators,⁹⁷² a clear majority in each country strongly supports the Zionist identification option; 80% of the

respondents overall stand behind and asides Israel. The higher contingent of non-Zionist educators (15%) comes from Mexico, where the Haredi population was reached. Anti-Zionist and post-Zionist, or even indifferent options appear at the very margins of the system. However, considering the ideological orientation of educators the main cleavage appears between educators in Haredi institutions and all the others.⁹⁷³ However, less than 20% declare the high importance of self-definition as Zionist, versus the majority to two thirds in all other educational orientations. The largest group declares to be non-Zionist (36.5%), with another 14% critical pro-Israeli. This low declared involvement with Zionism is also indicated by about 12% indifferent, and 14% “Other.” Whether such ostentatious detachment from Israel is truly felt individually or rather the product of institutional constraints is worth further investigation, in view of answers provided to other issues which demonstrated *far stronger and positive involvement with Israeli destiny and values*. This religious axis, in any case, appears to be the true divide within the Jewish educational system.

Simultaneously, vis-à-vis Israel, preoccupation with its security and the importance of strengthening its relations with the Latin American diaspora stands on top. Interestingly, the Law of Return does not attract total support among a majority of educators. On other accounts, wide gaps characterize the opinions of educators according to countries. Those Latin American educators that live in Israel and in other countries stand up much more in favor of principles like civic pluralism, and with respect to the Arab-Israeli conflict, recognizing two states for two peoples, expressing preoccupation for the situation in Judea and Samaria, allowing for critique of Israel in the presence of Jews, and especially of non-Jews. It seems that the positions of educators in Argentina and in Mexico tend much more to align with a support for Israel that does not seek to question the mode of operation of Israel’s government, or to tackle the more controversial issues on the table.

While it is interesting to point to the boundary maintenance role of education, it is important to highlight that it is the transnational pertaining to Jewish identification which

unifies not only educators within a given country but also across countries. This is not necessarily an Israel-diaspora perception, characterized by a center and a periphery, rather a widespread and far-reaching identification network of global relevance. Among the preferences expressed by educators regarding possible available options aimed at developing relations with Israel, there is broad agreement that the main options include educational trips to Israel; encouraging identification and solidarity with Israel among pupils, and teaching of contents related to Israel. Financial support to Israel is accepted in Mexico and in other countries, but less in Argentina and among Latin Americans educators who live in Israel. Participation in general public activities aimed at providing political support to Israel attracts a much lower support.

Argentina has ceased its dependence on *shlichim*, educational personnel sent from Israel, the working assumption being that the necessary educational personnel are being trained locally. Mexico was the Jewish community that gathered the highest number of *shlichim*, a trend that has recently decreased and reflects new ways of understanding the role of educational personnel coming from Israel. Instead of approaching it either as an affirmation of Israel's role in irradiating cultural influences or as an interactional sphere in which encounters nourish a shared experience, emphasis has been put in autonomy and more pragmatic considerations. Simultaneously, the ideological and organizational changes in Israeli instances such as the closure of the Department of Education of the Jewish Agency marked the reduction of its engagement in formal Jewish education through these classical patterns of *shlichut*. However, funds have been channeled to educational enterprises in the communities. Thus, in Argentina, *Bamah* was established, a teachers training institute for the school network and for informal education (youth movements) and recently strengthened. In Mexico, the support agreement known as *Heskem Mexico* helps funding various educational activities such as the Hebraica University and youth movements. These projects, which have achieved considerable success are supported jointly by Keren Hayesod, the Jewish Agency and the State of Israel. These initiatives were the

outcome of intense debates regarding the nature of the relation and the changing meaning of material support, as we will now address.

The national funds: solidarity, pragmatism, and more

Fundraising for the national funds has always played a meaningful role among Latin American Jewish communities. It has been a terrain where to manifest priorities, preferences and political conceptions; a realm for expressing and building empathy and support and therefore relevant debates took and take place. We may certainly affirm that spiritual motives are not the only ones behind the mobilization of resources; ideology and needs interact. Different factors concur, such as the economic condition of Jewish communities; their organizational characteristics and the scope and meaning of affiliation; the leadership's ability to mobilize resources, as well as the profile of Jewish identity. The links between Israel and world Jewry through resources and lately partnership to attain shared objectives may be seen as a source to build social capital and reaffirm the volunteer character of Jewish collective life.

Let us address the dynamics and changes in the framework of one of the national funds, Keren Hayesod (K. H.).⁹⁷⁴ With the establishment of the State, it became the main Jewish organization in charge of fundraising to “encourage, assist, and promote Jewish immigration to Israel and to establish, manage and conserve institutions responsible for this.”⁹⁷⁵ Further, it committed to strengthen the State of Israel and ensure the “unity of the people of Israel.”

Fundraising has known different stages – starting with a highly ideologically oriented one, in which contributions were motivated both by Zionist ideals as well as by feelings of peoplehood and Jewish identification. These motives, though redefined, are still present today. A second stage – of recognition and increased appreciation – was characterized by a diversification of mechanisms and means for economic flows. Once Jewish communities realized that they could lend

money to Israel due to its solvency and funding guarantees, new parallel forms of financial aid developed, such as the acquisition of guaranteed loan bonds (Israel Bonds). Thus, an economic logic lay behind this act and a new channel was opened to world Jewry in order to take part in the “national endeavor.” Association and partnership would be the third stage, which was defined by equity investment, that until today develops along different options.⁹⁷⁶

Changes have been related to the perception of the vulnerability of Israel, the hostility of its neighbors and its wars.⁹⁷⁷ The aliyah of Jews from the Former Soviet Union and Ethiopia also acted as stimulus. The binomial emigration or aliyah was a meaningful axis of debates; the support for communities in distress vis-à-vis aliyah too.

Jewish communities in Latin America, with 392,000 members, make up currently approximately 15.8% of all Jews living in the area where K. H. operates, which includes Jewish communities around the world with exception of the United States. This ratio is in turn maintained in the region’s share in total proceeds. The comparative analysis of the contributions sheds light on the multiplicity of factors that explain such variations.

Magbiot, i.e., campaigns of fundraising headed by K. H. aimed to mobilize resources for national causes, have suffered a drastic reduction in recent decades. It is relevant therefore to ask if this decrease is exclusively the result of changes that took place in the economic life of the region or if other factors and trends have influenced it.⁹⁷⁸ This question is even more important when we observe the fluctuation in the number of donors, which has decreased significantly and differentially in the region.⁹⁷⁹

Indeed, new ideas and novel views of the relationship between Jewish communities and Israel have developed. They reflect changing ideological visions as well as pragmatic considerations as expressed in unfolding debates in which hard-core conceptions of the Israel-Diaspora relation are at stake. One of them worth to approach is the Beilin proposal, initially manifested in 1992 to the leaders of the United Jewish

Appeal that the relations between the Jewish world and the State of Israel should change.⁹⁸⁰ Israel ceased to need economic aid from Jews around the world; its considerable economic growth placed it above many of the nations where Jews were living.⁹⁸¹ Instead, Beilin proposed that the money raised in campaigns for Israel should be channeled to address the internal needs of the communities. He further claimed that by canceling the image of Israel as a country in need, in addition to supporting the improvement of the condition of many diaspora communities in crisis, it could even improve the chances of immigration of many young Jews to the State.⁹⁸

² This position resulted in intense debates that last until today, in which the ideological and pragmatic dimensions crossed. The disagreement on the nature of the links and the meaning of fundraising were both approached in terms of the challenge to transcend material needs. With time, the political ascriptions and their influence on dissent emerged with strong profile and one may see it reflected in further diversification of projects and institutional arrangements.⁹⁸³

Fundraising and philanthropy in general and in the Jewish world in particular have changed in the last four decades. The support to Israel is maintained as a key activity, even though the centralized fundraising and allocation system has transferred its dominion and has given rise to more direct and diversified ways to contribute. In more general terms, these patterns are part of current privatization trends and of the political and social changes that Israel itself is going through while approaching neo-liberal trends. The gradual and sustained distancing from the Zionist and socialist ideology require from the national funds to address the changing trends while maintaining the premises of the Jewish collective project. However it has to be underscored that partisan divides and certainly the religious-secular axis point to further implications both in fundraising and in the allocation of resources. Therefore, while ideology reduces its scope, politization has been increased.

Going global: faces of an ethno-transnational diaspora

Historically, Latin American Jewry constituted a hub of immigration, but in the last decades the direction of migration flows has changed, originating from Latin America to other destinations. It has become an exit region for wide social sectors. In parallel to processes of growing pluralism – political, institutional and cultural – and the ensuing affirmation of civic commonalities, recurrent economic crises, political instability, high levels of public violence and lack of security have acted as main processes that lead to exit. Simultaneously, a global and interconnected world opens opportunities to move and benefit from professional opportunities and entrepreneurial expansion in increasingly interconnected markets. Thus, growing mobility, international migrations, and the diversification of internal and transnational displacements involve the renewed expansion of spaces and places. At the same time, the increased speed and density of interactions evolve in changing spheres, enlarged and framed by global networks and transnational realms. Contemporary migration encompasses steady as well as repeated and circular, bi-local and multi-local movements. Indeed, migration today exhibits very particular characteristics, including the multi-directionality of migratory flows, which presupposes reversible trajectories; frequency of movement; volume of migrants; and living across borders, which suggests a simultaneity of involvements “here” and “there.”⁹⁸⁴

During the past 40 years, more than 150,000 Jews emigrated from Latin American countries to different regions; specifically, to those that have acted as poles of attraction – Israel and the United States. The United States has become the top choice of international migrants from different regions/countries, religious affiliations, and ethnicities.⁹⁸⁵

Partly following and partly preceding the becoming of transnational communities by other diasporas, Jewish communities in the continent transit toward unprecedented modalities of re-diasporization. In fact, we are witnessing the conjunction of two nutrients: the recovery of a historic trajectory of ethnic and ethno-national diasporas, and the pluralization of new migrant populations. Migratory flows enhance the Jewish global character while also reinforcing the

particular aspect of the Jewish experience. This implies incorporating diaspora and transnationalism as related concepts to approach the contemporary itinerary of dispersion; that is, the new global ethnic landscape.⁹⁸⁶

Latin American Jews move and stay, bring and host, interact and negotiate in a context of past and present trends of an interconnected Jewish world. The reaffirmation and changes of collective communal practices/configurations affect the traditional Diaspora-Center relation. Thus, the basic triadic relationship between globally dispersed yet collectively self-identified ethnic groups, the present territorial states and contexts where such groups reside, and the homeland states and environments their forebears arrived from is altered.⁹⁸⁷ Homeland(s) must be analyzed in light of changing territories and referents that add new spatial scopes and exchanges.

Redefining and reconnecting belongings are related to processes of *diaspora making* and *diaspora un-making* provoked by migration crises, de-socialization from the country and community of origin, and re-socialization in the country and community of destination.⁹⁸⁸ Diverse scenarios have developed along the US: de-diasporization with respect to belonging to an ethno-national Jewish diaspora in the country of origin – and the subsequent processes of a different migrant re-grouping in the new place of destination; re-diasporization of migrant communities which maintain a thick package of old-country cultural norms and personal relations, hold intense and enduring links, as well as effective mechanisms with the country of origin, and sustain a transnational ideational nexus with home. Under these conditions a unified mental and relational space – a sort of sub-diaspora – emerged vis-à-vis physical dispersal and pluralization of “homelands”; de-diasporization by having moved to Israel and developing a full sense of participation in the Israeli mainstream, or continuing to nurture a form of diasporic identity – somewhat disconnected from new (putative) core country – while residing in the State of Israel and the possibility of re-diasporization upon return to their countries of origin, or to a third country.⁹⁸⁹

Indeed, in these processes of constructing homeness and perceiving exile the role of Home-Center is reframed. The markers that define the transnational links have evolved, concurrently expressing and shaping the overlapping domains of Jewish life, its local, regional and global interactions and a plurality of collective realities. It is interesting to focus on the associational and organized communal settings that constitute porous containers of primordial and elective belonging. Such bordered spaces provide alternative/complementary pathways into maintaining distinctiveness while reaffirming/ redefining bonds and links with Israel, for which it is a key referent. Both the *Ken* (San Diego) and Hebraica/JCC (Miami) may be conceived as ethno-national/transnational autonomous magnets. They reproduced Latin American Jewish social practices – including language, food, frequent social gatherings, and a Zionist identification. The Maccabi games at the JCC in Miami represent a Jewish-Israeli arena of interaction, intersection, and differentiation between Latin American Jews, between Venezuelans, Mexicans, Argentinians, Colombians, and Cubans, among other nationalities.⁹⁹⁰

Nevertheless, the cultural-ideational relationship with Israel is also defined in new terms and spaces; it implies the re-signification of attachments and the coexistence of multiple centers. It has a peculiar salience as a target of economic support and political advocacy. Social practices such as donations to Israel are in need of further study in order to evaluate the interaction between awareness of participation in a national enterprise and philanthropy. In Miami and San Diego old (pre-migration) and new patterns coexist. Direct individual-family donations and financial support are channeled through American Jewish organizations with a strong pro-Israel agenda (e.g., the Jewish National Fund, Friends of Israel Defense Forces, the United Jewish Federation, NACPAC – Pro Israel National Action Committee – and SunPac – Florida Hispanic Outreach). However, migrants also sustain regular links with their original communities, partly expressed through the maintenance of affiliation to Jewish institutions (mainly among Mexican and

Venezuelan families); therefore, resources intended for Israel-related and other overseas assistance continue to be transferred through Latin American institutional channels.

Political advocacy for Israel is conducted mainly in the framework of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), illustrated by the leading roles played by Latin American Jews in this organization, their wide representation in its annual events and the creation of local groups through the Latino and Latin American Jewish Institute.⁹⁹¹

Additional channels for inter-regional Jewish activism include the American Jewish Committee, which has played a mediating role between Latinos, Jewish communities in the US and Jewish communities in the Latin American region. This has led to the mobilization of additional social capital for American Jewry, and to the organization's increased presence in Latin America.

In analyzing the strength and centrality of Israel's role for Latin American Jews in the US, we ought to take account of the hypothesis of American Jewish self-distancing from Israel and the debate this has elicited.⁹⁹² An interesting discussion regarding the "distancing hypothesis" has developed. While some researchers claim that there is a growing distance from Israel by the younger American Jewish cohort, with the exception of Orthodox youth, and this trend will likely lead to a general distancing of American Jews from Israel,⁹⁹³ others do not find a dramatic change in the attachment. The weakened bonds among the young is not the result of a distancing pattern but a characteristic of the Jewish life cycle.⁹
⁹⁴ Further discussion has highlighted the increased complexity of Israel-Diaspora relations and the lack of conclusive evidence regarding the above mentioned erosion, which shows the need to consider both the changing circumstances of American Jewish life and Israel's social and political scenario. Data on Jews living in Mexico and Argentina show that both age and country of origin influence the place of Israel in people's lives and their attachment to it. As seen, Mexico has exceptionally high rates of visits to Israel while lower rates characterize Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela. Past tendencies

in the US show that just over one third of all American Jewish adults have been to Israel (35%), almost two thirds (63%) of American Jews say they are emotionally attached to Israel and nearly three quarters (72%) say US and Israeli Jews share a common destiny. Ties to Israel vary by affiliation and age. The affiliated are uniformly more connected to Israel than the unaffiliated.

Indeed, Latin American Jewish migration to the United States implies an altered posture vis-à-vis the connection to Israel. A geographically diverse transnationalism replaces older binary connections between Latin American Jews and Israel. That does not necessarily imply the weakening of attachments but rather their re-signification. There is some departure from the previous dominant pattern of almost exclusive interaction with Israel or Israel-Zionist based organizations, as North American Jewish institutions become an important source of direct political support and a model for collective organization. Paradigmatic of this trend has been the support and advocacy Argentine Jews received not only from Israel or Israel based organizations such as the Jewish Agency (JAFI) but from numerous North-American Federations, the Joint Distribution Committee and the American Jewish Committee when facing recurrent economic crises and the attack on the Jewish community – AMIA (1994) and its aftermath; or the vulnerability of Venezuela's Jewish community and its interests under the Chávez and the Maduro regimes. The debates surrounding this topic have to be seen in the light of a multi-centered pattern that has taken shape and prevails in the Jewish world. The last four decades point to a progressive renewed code in the discussion in which polarized options are gradually substituted by a more radial conception regarding center(s) and diaspora communities.⁹⁹⁵

Religious and transnational flows

A modified interplay between historic ethno-national patterns and religious and transnational flows takes shape today. One example may be seen in the current debates and source of ongoing conflict: the place of Conservative Judaism in Israel

and its non-recognition by hegemonic Orthodoxy. The relevance of the former in the region and the place of Latin American rabbis in the new settings in the United States contributed to the expansion of communal practices. Simultaneously, transnational practices have enhanced their connection with Israel. As mobile agents of change across national borders, they recreate a Zionist congregational-communitarian-transnational matrix. The discussion around the definition of who is a Jew and the rejection to recognize Conservative conversions have added complexity to this circuit.

However, the transnational flows in the region have now spread to Orthodoxy as well. Reflecting global trends in the Jewish world and in Israel, Orthodox groups have gained new impetus founding new religious congregations and supplying communities with rabbinical leadership. Ultra-Orthodoxy has expanded too through the region. As expressed in the world of education and educators, Israel is Eretz Yisrael and not the national Center. They are strictly bound to normative traditional Judaism together with a refusal (partial or total) of civil modernity, and maintaining toward Israel a spiritual rather than a national or civil orientation. These developments take place also (and interactively) in Israel.

Israeli Orthodox Jews are divided into two major sectors – a religious Zionist sector and an ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) one. Both have acquired a new saliency and increased interactions outside Israel, though in different ways.

One has to take into consideration that the Israeli religious scene has singular traits associated to its national milieu that includes the pervading phenomenon of vicarious religion of belonging without believing and delegated functions.⁹⁹⁶

Parallel trends of individualization, privatization and autonomous expressions of the religious experience are displayed both in Israel and the diaspora. However the disjuncture between religion-ethnicity-nation context has serious differential impact. Thus, the historic blending of religious and ethnic identity among Latin American Jewish communities explains membership in organizations that seem

to be religious (such as synagogues) but in fact provide the space for expressing or fulfilling ethno-national identity.⁹⁹⁷

Religious transnational networks cross communities and the State of Israel surpassing and erasing the traditional spaces and mechanisms of interaction defined by borders between voluntary communities and the sovereign State. An exemplary episode in which religion and sub-ethnicity challenged the prevailing official channels was the organizational arrangements of the trip to Israel of the current Mexican President Peña Nieto when he was governor of the state of Mexico. Both *Mizrahi* and Orthodox belonging provided the networks through which the community arranged encounters and meetings overcoming the natural limits of the diplomatic official normative. Mexico City, New York, Buenos Aires, Brussels, and Jerusalem operated as nodes and fluent borderless spaces that defined religious and sub-ethnic networks.

Another significant trend that has redefined the relations refers to the pluralization of actors and links, of circuits of presence by the organized transnational Jewish world. It may be seen in the concrete case of Argentina, as expressed in past dilemmas (and current crisis) that originated in the Foreign Affairs Minister Hector Timerman's encounter in Aleppo (2011) seeking to advance a deal with Iran regarding the clarification of the bombing of the Jewish community center AMIA. The cancellation of the invitation of the minister's visit to Israel and its subsequent reschedule brought into the scene diverse channels and actors.⁹⁹⁸ Political and subethnic circuits crossed the critical stand of a divided community.

While communal political behavior related to transnational links and support for Israel and the capacity to influence decision making processes has increased as a consequence of globalization and transnationalism, the latter generate new constraints derived from the regionalization, the inner differentiation and the geopolitical positions of Latin American countries. In this respect, it reflects the complex interplay between a wider public sphere, the prevalence of traditional mechanisms for negotiation, the internationalization

of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the presence of splits within the Jewish communities and geo-political/regional considerations.

Thus, diaspora communities and Israel have ceased to be homogeneous units and need to be seen in their inner and cross-border diversification. In a global Jewish world, the relation diaspora community-Israel cannot be seen as binary ties but as part of a matrix or network of relationships, a radial configuration.

Diasporas connect among them and with the Center and interact through circulation. Latin American Jewish communities follow multiple pathways of belonging, thereby moving and fixing old-new definition and membership criteria in the process of becoming transnational and expanding its connections. In a highly mobile and changing context, the challenge of boundary maintenance, integration, intellectual creativity and communal innovation acquire new meanings and certainly widen the challenges and strengthen the role of Israel for the diaspora's enlarged lateral axes.

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56. Ethnicity and State Policy: Israel in the Discourse of the Jewish Press in the USA during the Past Generation

Yosef Gorny

This paper originally appeared as “Ethnicity and State Policy: The State of Israel in the Intellectual and Political Discourse of the US Jewish Press,” in *Reconsidering Israel-Diaspora Relations*, edited by Eliezer Ben-Rafael, Judit Bokser Liwerant, and Yosef Gorny, 86–103. Leiden: Brill, 2014.

This article aims to examine the relationship between Jewish ethnic awareness and the political attitude toward the State of Israel as expressed in three leading intellectual periodicals in the United States, *Tikkun*, *Commentary*, and *The Forward*, during the past twenty years. The research presented here complements my two earlier books, *The State of Israel in Jewish Public Thought: The Quest for Collective Identity* (1994) and *Between Auschwitz and Jerusalem* (2003; particularly Chapter 5, 196–219), both of which were published in Hebrew and English.

These books explore the political and conceptual discourse of statesmen and intellectuals – Zionists as well as non-Zionists – regarding the existential essence of *Klal Yisrael* (‘All of Israel’) in light of the historic change it underwent following the tragedy of the Holocaust on the one hand and the founding of the Jewish state on the other. These discussions, which began in the mid-20th century and continued until almost the close of that century, examined the relations among three forms of Jewish existence: official national existence in the State of Israel, religious and ethnic existence in countries around the world, and civil and ethnic existence in Western countries.

Prominent Zionist leaders in Israel and the Diaspora participated in this discourse, including David Ben-Gurion and Abba Hillel Silver, as well as the philosopher Nathan

Rotenstreich from Israel, the historian Ben Halpern, and the religious philosopher Mordecai Kaplan from the United States. Other past participants in this discourse included newspaper editors Azriel Carlebach and Gershom Schocken, and present participants include the editors of the periodicals discussed in this article.

The three periodicals discussed here differ in terms of their essential *raison d'être* as well as the ethnic, political, Jewish-American thinking that they have presented in the past and still maintain today. *The Forward*, the oldest of the three, was founded in 1897 as a daily Yiddish-language newspaper under the leadership of its charismatic and authoritative editor, Abraham Cahan, who oversaw this publication for 50 years, until 1946. *Commentary* was founded by the American Jewish Committee (AJC) in 1945 under the leadership of its first editor, Elliot Cohen, and after his retirement due to illness in 1959, he was replaced by Norman Podhoretz, who served as chief editor for 35 years, until 1995. *Tikkun* was first published in 1986 under the initiative of Michael Lerner with the financial support of his wife. Its financial sponsors have changed a number of times since then, and as of 2012 it has been a regular publication of Duke University in North Carolina.

Since their founding, each one of these three periodicals has adopted its own unique conceptual and political approach, which has been subject to change over the years. *The Forward* carried on the social and conceptual tradition of the socialist-liberal spirit that correlated with the politics of American trade unions. Beginning in the mid-1920s, the chief editor's ethnic Jewish perspective fostered an affinity between the newspaper and the Zionist enterprise in the Land of Israel, subsequently resulting in consistent support for the State of Israel from the time of its establishment to this day, despite inter-generational editorial changeover. *Commentary* was founded with the aim of bringing young Jewish intellectuals with liberal and radical leftist perspectives closer to the democratic, pluralistic values of American culture. Norman Podhoretz, who replaced Elliot Cohen, maintained this approach throughout most of the 1960s. Toward the end of the decade Podhoretz's worldview

underwent a transformation, as did the focus of the magazine, which then became a salient mouthpiece for a group of primarily Jewish intellectuals who identified themselves as “neo-conservatives.” Salient Jewish neo-conservatives included Irving Kristol, who was considered their founder, alongside *Commentary*’s editor, Norman Podhoretz. Their political and moral worldview was based on principles that included the sanctification of the ideals of a free American society, refutation of the totalitarian communist regime in the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries, and fierce opposition to imperialist Soviet policy anywhere in the world where it was being promoted. This political perspective assigned a special status to the State of Israel as a Jewish state with values and political interests akin to those of the United States. The gist of this relationship was encapsulated not only in its political nature but also in the inseparability of the distinctly ethnic Jewish essence of the Jewish Diaspora from that of the State of Israel. Podhoretz has uncompromisingly adhered to this position from the Six-Day War of 1967 to this day. In 2007 the relationship between *Commentary* and the AJC came to an end, and the magazine became independent. Its new editor is John Podhoretz, the son of Norman Podhoretz.

Tikkun

The political viewpoint of *Tikkun* has its origins in radical leftist critiques of US society and world democracy, from which it derives its attitude toward Zionism and the State of Israel. Within this context there is a clash of two opposing political trends: a fundamental commitment to the existence of the Jewish state and a radical political critique of its treatment of Palestinian Arabs. Consequently, the magazine’s editor eventually reached a distinctly “post-Zionist” standpoint.

Despite the different perspectives among the three periodicals, their standing in terms of readership distribution has been comparable. All three have limited distribution compared with similar, non-Jewish periodicals in the United States. During its peak, in the 1920s and 1930s, *The Forward*

had a distribution of between 170,000 and 275,000 readers. Today it has 30,000 readers, of whom a total of 23,000 read the English version and 7,000 read the Yiddish version. The distribution of *Commentary* has declined from 60,000 during the 1950s and 1960s to 30,000 at the present time. *Tikkun* does not release information about the scope of its distribution, but judging by its editor's repeated appeals for financial donations from readers one may conclude that its distribution is significantly lower than that of the other two.

Beyond the scope of their distribution, there is also some similarity between the two opposing magazines, *Commentary* and *Tikkun*. Both have founding editors with forceful, extroverted personalities, as illustrated by their tendency to publicly reveal their private sides and occasionally integrate their personal and familial experiences and musings into their political writings. Podhoretz, for example, chose to incorporate conversations with his daughter and grandchildren who live in Jerusalem into his critique of Israeli government policy. Lerner, for his part, told readers about his mother, who had been a Zionist activist, and about his son, who had decided to join a combat unit of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF); he also shared information about the worsening state of his health as a result of a malignant disease.

The discussion that took place within the three periodicals during the past generation has been primarily political in nature, free of the ideational questions of principle that had preoccupied statesmen and intellectuals during the two preceding generations. These sought, first and foremost, to formulate a collective definition of *Klal Yisrael* in the aftermath of the Holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel, as a consequence of which the center of gravity of Jewish life had shifted from Europe to the United States and Israel.

The first issue raised during these discussions was the question of a collective definition of world Jewry. The basic disagreement was between those who now saw Jews as a regular nation, and those who continued to view them strictly as members of a religion or as an ethnic-religious entity with a unique history and culture, which they defined as

“peoplehood” – a term that encompassed all aspects of the new Jewish existence.

The second matter of principle under discussion related to the definition of Jewish existence outside the State of Israel. Here opinions were divided between those who adhered to the term *gola* (‘exile’) and those – particularly Zionists from the United States – who defined this existence as *tfutza* (‘diaspora’), which is entirely different in essence from the term *gola*. The third issue related to the question of obligations incumbent upon Zionists residing outside the State of Israel: are they obligated to immigrate to Israel, or is it enough that they consistently support Israel economically and politically?

There were two additional disputes, each of which entailed a combination of universal moral values and political interests of Jewish organizations in the United States. The first of these related to the freedom of choice between the State of Israel and the United States for Jews emigrating from the Soviet Union on the basis of Israeli immigration permits. At the basis of this question of principle were the conflicting interests of Israel and US Jewish community organizations, each of which hoped to grow stronger with the influx of these immigrants.

The final moral and political dispute related to the purpose of the Holocaust Memorial Museum established in Washington DC with the support of the US government during the years 1980–1993. Among the participants in the discussion surrounding this initiative were local Jewish intellectuals who saw this enterprise as a step toward liberation from Israel’s “custodianship” over Jews in the Diaspora and, in particular, the US.⁹⁹⁹

During the past generation these disputes have disappeared from the public debate, and the focus has shifted instead to political issues regarding Israel. This change indicates some form of normalization of relations between the State of Israel and the Diaspora, comparable to the relationship that exists between various ethnic groups and their country of origin – setting aside questions about the existence of the State of Israel, to which the Palestinians and their supporters are not fully reconciled.

One can discern three different approaches in the discussion of this issue among the three periodicals examined here: the utopian-messianic approach of *Tikkun*, the politically hardline approach of *Commentary*, and the policy analysis provided by *The Forward*. *Tikkun*'s editor-in-chief, Michael Lerner, who is virtually the only author of the magazine's editorials, is a self-declared utopian, as stated in the very first issue and reiterated in later issues over the course of the following years. In the opening essay of *Tikkun*'s first issue he laid out the magazine's guiding principle "to mend, repair, and transform the world," which he defined as the moral and utopian core inherent in the Jewish vision, as he openly and proudly declared: "The utopian demand for transformation is something we proudly identify with – it remains a central ingredient in Jewish vision."¹⁰⁰⁰

The Western concept of "transformation" is equivalent to the Hebrew moral-religious concept of *tikkun* ('repair'), which Lerner learned from his spiritual mentor, the renowned philosopher-theologian Abraham Heschel, who viewed the believer as a constant companion of God in the moral act of *tikkun* of the individual and society, which Lerner aspired to transform into the means of *tikkun* of the relationship between the State of Israel and the Palestinian people. Lerner adhered to this "utopian" faith even though the "realist" in him publicly admitted that he is not so naïve as to believe that the Arab nations' hostility toward Israel would simply vanish as a direct result of any political agreements they might reach, which they would undoubtedly be signing halfheartedly. He held the two opposing sides responsible for this situation.

Lerner's "neutral" position created a deep divide between him and leftist circles in the United States that condemned Israel as an aggressive and oppressive state. Lerner described this attitude as outrageous hypocrisy in light of the occupation of Kuwait by Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, whom the Left did not condemn as vociferously as they did the US intervention to liberate Kuwait from this occupation. He was seeking, in this context, to emphasize that the Middle East's problems do not derive solely from the Israeli occupation, even though it is unjust and poses a threat to both sides. In his

opinion there should be an honest acknowledgement that this conflict stemmed from the war that Arab states had declared in 1947 against the very existence of Israel. Accordingly, Lerner did not shy away from defining the all-encompassing condemnation of Israel – specifically on the part of radical leftist circles – as a new antisemitism aligned with the traditional antisemitism of the Right, especially in light of the concerns voiced by Jews throughout the United States regarding frequent antisemitic statements categorically condemning Israel within radical anti-war leftist circles. He linked this antisemitic phenomenon with the absolute and even fully unjustifiable opposition to the military intervention of the US in order to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation: “Equally disturbing was that Jews from all over the country reported to us a disturbing amount of anti-Semitism and Israel bashing in the anti-war movement.”¹⁰⁰¹

Seven years later Lerner’s position of boldly defending Israel in the face of belligerent criticism by the radical Left in the United States changed. In 1998, on the occasion of the State’s 50th anniversary, Lerner spoke out strongly against its policy of occupation, which he labeled as “post-Zionist.”¹⁰⁰² According to him, the State of Israel – which a large portion of the Jewish people respect and revere – has turned out to be one of the “false gods” populating human history, as a result of which Judaism could become one of the foremost victims of Israeli policy, giving rise to a tragic paradox: “The State of Israel that was created to preserve Jews may be at the center of the process that leads Jews away from their Jewishness.”¹⁰⁰³

In view of the hopes of redemption that Israel’s founding had inspired among Jews 50 years beforehand, its actions at the time led Lerner to use terms such as “false messianism” to describe the driving force behind state policy. Accordingly, in order for the state to free itself from this falsely messianic, Zionist drive it must end the state of occupation and oppression that places it among the worst of the world’s states facing comparable situations. By contrast, in a “post-Zionist” society, he hoped that Israel would return to its original purpose – to uphold and implement Jewish and universal moral values.

Three years later, as an extension of Lerner's "ideational divorce" from Zionism, he publicly presented a comprehensive and detailed proposal for the *tikkun* of most of global society's ills.¹⁰⁰⁴ In his words, the proposal is intended for "people who are unashamedly utopian and willing to fight for their highest ideals,"¹⁰⁰⁵ people who demonstrate a willingness to educate the young generation in schools and to be receptive to the ills afflicting all of society; to carry out the political struggle needed to abolish third-world debt; to oversee the use of monetary lending in order to ensure that these funds are used exclusively to expand and enhance education; to implement universal healthcare; to provide professional training and guarantee fair housing for the entire population; and of course, first and foremost, to ensure the liberation of all the nations in Asia and Africa that are suffering from political oppression and economic exploitation.

One of the main sections in this global utopian statement deals with the Jewish-Arab conflict, under a heading that conveys a clear message of policy: "Peace, Justice, and Reconciliation for Israel and Palestine."¹⁰⁰⁶ In introducing this part of the statement, Lerner humbly presented himself as someone seeking to pragmatically address a problem whose complexities he does not fully understand. Yet for all his publicly stated caution, his political imagination soared to great idealistic heights in the name of a comprehensive agreement between two peoples fighting over the same tract of land. To his credit, it should be noted that he was not a novice when it came to discussing this problem, having frequently addressed it during the preceding years, and this experience is presumably what guided the cautious wording of the strategic principles he presented.

The first principle was mutual recognition of two national states existing side by side. The second principle called for a Palestinian right of return, but limited it to approximately 20,000 per year over the course of several years, in order not to endanger the continued existence of a Jewish majority in the State of Israel. The third principle called for full Palestinian recognition of the State of Israel within the 1967 borders as well as a cessation to acts of terror against its Jewish residents.

The fourth principle called for mutual recognition of both peoples, and placed responsibility for the long-standing, violent conflict on both of them. The fifth principle underscored that the founding of the State of Israel was a supreme historical need of the Jewish people, and by the same token the founding of a Palestinian state along the 1967 borders is not only a matter of justice for their sake but also a regional and international political necessity.

Undoubtedly, this statement contains a number of founding principles that I define as realistic with a distinctly utopian tendency, as manifested in each of the various proposals for the *tikkun* of a historical relationship that embodies political struggles and violent clashes between two peoples over the course of the past century. Characteristically, however, Lerner did not adhere to realistic plans for long because his fundamental orientation was toward the utopian dream. Thus, three years later, when Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon decided on disengagement from the Gaza Strip and evacuation of the Jewish settlements therein, Lerner asserted that for the sake of a future peace agreement, Jewish settlers should not be expelled from their homes because such action contradicts the vision of two peoples coexisting in the future. His utopian vision was that in a future Palestinian state, the two peoples should be able to live alongside one another as citizens with equal rights, as is generally the case in practice within the State of Israel.¹⁰⁰⁷

It should be noted that Lerner was not the only proponent of this idealistic political thinking. Seven years later the young intellectual Zionist Peter Beinart, a prominent representative of liberal Zionists in the United States, proposed that this idea be given consideration as an inseparable part of a permanent agreement between the two peoples.¹⁰⁰⁸ This demonstrates that utopian tendencies can be intergenerational and, as such, may be found among peace-seeking intellectuals throughout all time.

Commentary

Under the leadership of its editor Norman Podhoretz, *Commentary* conveyed a politically hardline position that was diametrically opposed to that of *Tikkun*. As previously indicated, Podhoretz's political perspective was based on the absolute justification of aggression as a normative phenomenon among nations, whose political interests clash under certain historical circumstances that provide morally relative legitimization. This perspective was the political and conceptual background behind two articles by Podhoretz that appeared in 1995 and ten years later, in 2005. In these articles, as he tends to do from time to time, Podhoretz combined his personal feelings with his political outlook and used this combination as an unshakable foundation for his support for the State of Israel and as the motive behind his constant concern for its existence.

It should be noted that these articles were published after Podhoretz resigned from his position as editor-in-chief of *Commentary*, although he remained on the masthead as a senior editor of the magazine, meaning that he maintained significant influence over its political stance. Ten years after his resignation, his son John Podhoretz was appointed editor-in-chief of the magazine, and simultaneously its institutional link with the AJC was severed. Under its new leadership with the son as chief editor and father in the background, *Commentary* continued to present a hard-line political critique of what it termed the conciliatory policy of the US government and particularly of President Obama toward enemies of the State of Israel, Palestinians, and Arab countries.

The first article was written shortly before the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin and expressed fierce criticism of him and his colleague Shimon Peres for having led the process that yielded the Oslo Accords and thereby having threatened the future of Israel. However, the assassination struck Podhoretz as a tragedy for himself personally as well as for the Jewish people generally and thus raised doubts, in his words, about the appropriateness of publishing the article at that time. After extensive deliberations he decided to publish it nonetheless, in order to warn the public about the grave danger facing Israel from the Accords negotiated by its leaders.¹⁰⁰⁹

This article is among the most extreme critiques of Israel that Podhoretz wrote during the 30 years in which he served as *Commentary's* chief editor. In reading it, one can discern two distinct undertones, the first personal and familial, and the second Jewish and emotional as continuously manifest in his political outlook. This outlook was infused with concern for the nation, which did not diminish on his part throughout the many meetings and conversations he had with his family during visits to Israel, especially with his grandchildren, as well as with acquaintances who were experts in the political-military sphere. Consequently there developed a type of clandestine and concern-driven relationship between criticism of the Israeli cultural experience, which his Israeli grandchildren proudly upheld, and complete rejection of the policy being pursued by the government of Israel under the leadership of Shimon Peres.

In a tone of humor infused with concern, Podhoretz recounted how his grandchildren proudly told him about the symbols of American culture that had reached Jerusalem: McDonald's, Coca-Cola, and pop music. He added that his Jerusalemite daughter, who has a far-right political perspective, had asserted that in terms of education, all Israel has to offer children is McDonald's and the memory of the Holocaust. The following day, while visiting his grandchildren's school, he was indeed impressed with the new buildings but simultaneously shocked by the vulgar English-language graffiti on their walls. These images led him to pose the following question: "Is this why we needed a Jewish state?" His reply, after skeptical deliberations, was decidedly affirmative in light of the evident potency of the Jewish-national normalization that he had witnessed, which included the language and symbols of American culture. His impressions of Israeli culture did not end here, however.

The following day, having experienced the cultural shock caused by the English-language graffiti on the walls of his grandchildren's school, Podhoretz visited the Western Wall, where he was emotionally moved by the presence of Jews devotedly praying to their Creator. He was especially touched by the sight of a family from India whose ceremonial dress

was admittedly foreign to him but whose prayer rituals he remembered from his childhood experience of having accompanied his father on Saturdays to synagogue in Brooklyn, New York. The most poignant sight, however, was that of a rabbi of Moroccan lineage who led a ceremony in front of the Western Wall, wearing the clothing of a Hasid from Eastern Europe. In these images from the Western Wall, Podhoretz discovered the mysterious wonders of *kibbutz galuyot* (ingathering of exiles), which brought tears to his eyes.¹⁰¹⁰

Podhoretz's emotional musings were, of course, merely the harmony accompanying his politically critical composition, from which there emerged a strong call of warning against any political concession. In his opinion Israel had already lost its struggle against the Palestinians during the First Intifada, when it had failed to be decisive and do what was expected of it as a state with far superior military power to that of the Palestinians.

The scathing language that Podhoretz used to condemn the actions of Rabin and Peres in this context is worth quoting directly: "In their negotiations with the Palestinians they are acting not like far-sighted statesmen or magnanimous victors – or for that matter like 'deformed' products of the Diaspora – but like the leaders of a defeated nation, and in that way too, they are acting normally."¹⁰¹¹

These harsh remarks convey the undertone of a proud, "post-emancipation" American who has taken upon himself the role of a custodian of the State of Israel, adopting the same attitude that its leaders had taken toward him in the past. With a heavy heart and the sense that Israel is facing an existential threat stemming from the weakness of its political leadership and their "exile" mentality, he left Israel and parted from his family members – his daughter and grandchildren in Jerusalem – again with tear-filled eyes. These tears, however, were not in reaction to the emotions that had flooded him upon seeing Jews from various countries praying at the Western Wall but, rather, from the hope in his heart, which was also a plea of sorts, that this time around, those who believe in peace accords

would be in the right while those who cannot free themselves of their fear for the future of the state would be in the wrong.

These dramatic warnings give rise to the following question: Which had the greater weight and significance – his concern for the future of the State of Israel or his criticism of its political leadership?

Perhaps the answer to this question can be found in the next article that Podhoretz published, ten years later, when the leader of Israel's government was Ariel Sharon, with whom Podhoretz was certainly acquainted and whose hardline political views he shared.

To the surprise of many of his readers and those who respected his political views, particularly his extremely right-wing daughter, Podhoretz publicly defended Sharon's decision to withdraw unilaterally and unconditionally from the Gaza Strip. He openly admitted that this was a deviation from his previous position – which he had held since the Six-Day War in 1967 – that the sovereign State of Israel has the right as well as the option of defending its national interests through any means of force available to it. Accordingly, as mentioned above, he had used harsh and insulting language ten years earlier in condemning Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, calling them “‘deformed’ products of the Diaspora.” This time, given the surprising decision taken by Ariel Sharon, whom he viewed as the personification of the heroic Jewish warrior, he was of a different opinion. This shift can be explained in terms of his assumption that such action would ensure US support for the large-scale settlement enterprise in Judea and Samaria, as seemingly conveyed by President George W. Bush's remarks the previous year, although Bush had never made an explicit promise in support of such a far-reaching measure. Indeed, Podhoretz did note that he does not have full confidence in the remarks of the president or of other US politicians friendly toward Israel when it comes to this issue. Nonetheless, as someone who had always held that state policy must rely on power, and given his strong doubts regarding peace accords with the Palestinians, he expressed confidence in the ongoing and ever-expanding settlement of Judea and Samaria over the coming years as the course of

action that would ensure Israeli rule over this area that is so vital for Israel's security.¹⁰¹²

Podhoretz's article drew a vast number of reactions from readers. Most expressed concern that Sharon's optimism, which relied on a non-explicit promise by a president who was nearing the end of his second term in office, was excessive and therefore also dangerous for Israel. In response Podhoretz agreed with most of the concerns voiced by his critics, and he even accepted their argument that disengagement from the Gaza Strip would generate threats to Israel's security. Nor did he dismiss their fear that Bush's successor, whether Republican or Democrat, would not feel bound by or willing to uphold the vague promises of his predecessor. Nevertheless, Podhoretz, who agreed with Sharon's hardline version of Zionism, maintained his confidence that the continued endeavor of widespread and ever-expanding Jewish settlement in these areas would ensure the political future as well as the security of the State of Israel.¹⁰¹³

It should therefore come as no surprise that John Podhoretz, as chief editor of *Commentary* four years later, forcefully argued that no political initiative is more dangerous for Israel than the interest in renewing the peace process and the efforts to determine right then and there what the substance of an agreement between the two peoples would be: "There is nothing more dangerous for Israel, going forward, than yet another peace process, yet another peace plan."¹⁰¹⁴

The Forward

The English-language version of *The Forward* carries on the tradition of its predecessor *The Yiddish Daily Forward* by preserving and even highlighting the ethnic-Jewish, cultural, and political foundation of Jewish existence in modern society. That is, in contrast to *Commentary*, which has centered on Israel's security, and *Tikkun*, which has championed a messianic Jewish vision, *The Forward* has represented the interests of *Klal Yisrael* in its historical sense rather than only in terms of the Jewish-American perspective as the other two periodicals have tended to do.

This approach on the part of *The Forward* was clearly illustrated by the protests of some of its readers when it published a positive review of a biography of Ze'ev Jabotinsky authored by Shmuel Katz. Responding through an editorial board opinion piece, the newspaper's chief editor justified his decision by relying on the view of its founding editor, Abraham Cahan. According to the editorial, Cahan had decided in 1940 to send a senior reporter to cover the funeral of Ze'ev Jabotinsky in New York, explaining that at a time of emergency and severe distress for the people of Israel, it was essential to demonstrate Jewish solidarity beyond the symbolic level. Likewise, the editors concluded, at a time when the government of Israel under the leadership of the Likud party was conducting peace negotiations, it was incumbent upon the newspaper to support the government politically, as it would certainly do if the Labor party were in charge of the state.¹⁰¹⁵

From *The Forward's* perspective, the ethnic-national connection between the Diaspora and the State of Israel, which it saw as inseparable, generated a relationship of intertwined contradiction and complementarity that, consequently, sometimes required a clarification of principles.

Thus, for example, the newspaper's editor, Seth Gitell, published a polemic against Israeli President Ezer Weizman for publicly criticizing Diaspora Jews because they prefer to reside in exile rather than make *aliyah* (immigrate) to their own state. Gitell's position differed from Weizman's. Instead of the latter's "Israel-centric" approach, Gitell revived the doctrine of "spiritual Zionism" of Achad Haam, which he believed could serve as a shared ideational focus for Jews in the Diaspora and in Israel. Although he notes that Achad Haam's theory does not help Israel in its political struggles or Diaspora Jewry in their encounters with antisemitic phenomena in their countries of residence, it does have the potential to provide *Klal Yisrael* with the spiritual foundation to develop a shared way of life in the present and the future, in Israel and the Diaspora.¹⁰¹⁶

It should be noted that Gitell's views did not fully reflect the prevalent opinion within the editorial board. This is

evident from a reply that the editorial board published in response to a question posed by a reader who queried whether the rumor she had heard was true – that no board member had visited Israel in recent years. Accordingly, she asked, does this phenomenon not publicly imply that Israel is no longer important for the Diaspora's existence, as it had been in the past since the 1967 War?

In their response, the editors sought to correct her assessment of their attitude toward Israel, even emphasizing their frequent visits to Israel. At the same time they also openly admitted that it is indeed true that recently the subject of Israel has not been the main focus of their concern. This situation, they stated, stemmed from the regime changes that had been taking place in former Soviet republics, which were likely to endanger the Jews residing in those countries because of the increasing trends of nationalism and religiosity taking place therein.

Another significant subject matter that engaged the newspaper in relation to *Klal Yisrael* was the renewed debate between devotees of Yiddish and devotees of Hebrew in terms of the status of each language within Jewish culture today. The newspaper was requested to take a stance on this dispute, and it did so in accordance with its collective Jewish perspective, which in turn was based on comprehensive compromise on various issues including, naturally, this one as well. It therefore held that in the reality that has emerged since the Holocaust and the founding of Israel, the Hebrew language is the factor that shapes Jewish culture in the present and with a view to the future. Yiddish, for its part is a vital cultural asset that must be carefully preserved. Consequently these two Jewish languages, alongside English, are what will shape the new Jewish culture. In the newspaper's view, this aspiration is conditional on Israeli public opinion having an in-depth and genuine understanding of the way of life of Jews in the United States, which differs greatly from that of Jews in Israel and even contradicts it with respect to certain fundamental principles, such as the determinative value attributed to the individual in the United States as opposed to the determinative value of the collective in Israel. As a result Jews in Israel do

not understand the essence of community life in the United States, a dynamic that generated a negative attitude toward the Diaspora among Israeli Jews. Even in the present, when this attitude has vanished from the public debate, it has been replaced by general cultural apathy toward the ways of life of their US “cousins” – in the words of the newspaper.

In order to repair these relations within the *Klal Yisrael* family, two actions are needed. First, US Jews must highlight their identification with the State of Israel in word and deed while also emphasizing their right to choose the particular way of life that is right for them. After all, the two largest Jewish societies in the world cannot allow themselves to have separate and tension-ridden existences without making a concerted political and educational effort to achieve mutual understanding and a consistently close and pragmatic relationship with each other.¹⁰¹⁷

This approach achieved conceptual and political salience toward the end of the 20th century, when the editorial board underwent a personnel change, with J. J. Goldberg appointed as editor-in-chief. The young publicist had been part of the rebellious generation of the 1960s and 1970s, and he bravely and publicly stood up to the antisemitic trends and anti-Israel views within the “New Left” among universities.

The statement of the editorial board that presented the newspaper’s new direction openly declared the start of a new era, which would take the form not only of a language change – something that had occurred a year earlier – but primarily a change in direction from the Yiddish tradition of US trade unions with social-democratic leanings, to the American Jewish liberal perspective of *Klal Yisrael*, in the spirit of the founder of the newspaper and its chief editor during 50 years, Abraham Cahan. The statement outlined this approach without devaluing the Jewish trade unions and while underscoring the achievements of past editors.¹⁰¹⁸

This approach, which may be described as “American-centric,” was explicitly detailed in an editorial published over a year later, which noted with satisfaction that a survey conducted within the Jewish community revealed that a

majority identify first and foremost as American and Jewish, with no contradiction between the two. This compatibility between the two identities included, in particular, a warm and caring attitude toward the Jewish state in all matters relating to its national situation and the nature of its political relations with their homeland, the United States.¹⁰¹⁹

In this spirit, on the occasion of Israel's Independence Day in 2002, the newspaper published a special article under the heading "Celebrating Israel," in which it underscored that although the population that had experienced the founding of the Jewish state was gradually disappearing, nonetheless, even for the young generation that had not lived through its founding, an unmediated encounter with the social and national reality of Israel – a state whose majority population is Jewish and therefore determines its character – is an electrifying experience.

The recognition and cultivation of this feeling is particularly important in the current era because the political as well as moral standing of Israel has been steadily declining within public opinion in large sectors of the Western world. This phenomenon is not only politically worrisome, it is also morally disturbing because Israel was founded for the historic purpose of putting an end to the isolation of the Jewish people, but these days Israel's state policy is once more isolating the Jewish people. In this writer's opinion, the above phenomenon affects not only the standing of Israel but also the sentiments of Diaspora Jewry, especially in the United States. The article's author does not fully share this pessimistic view, as he has not yet abandoned hope that a political agreement can be reached that would be acceptable to the two Middle Eastern rival parties. His optimism stemmed from Israel's ability to function like a normal political entity as customary in the Western world, despite the many difficulties it faces.¹⁰²⁰

Notably, *The Forward* not only demonstrated continuous interest in and consistent political support for Israel, but also granted itself the right and even the authority to serve as an advisor of sorts as well as a partner in matters of state policy. It consistently offered political advice regarding negotiations

and the formation of coalition governments in Israel. In 1998 it urged the Labor party to join the coalition government of Benjamin Netanyahu in order to restrain this government's right-wing tendencies.¹⁰²¹ Three years later, when Ariel Sharon was elected prime minister following Ehud Barak's political downfall, the newspaper encouraged the Labor party to join Sharon's government in order to try to curb his aggressive inclinations.¹⁰²² Two years after that, when Sharon was reelected as prime minister, *The Forward* openly called upon the head of the Labor party, Amram Mitzna, to join this government for the sake of Israel and its Jewish supporters throughout the world, especially in the United States. This action would, in the newspaper's view, benefit the Labor party in future elections.¹⁰²³

Opinions such as these, which were frequently offered over the years, represented not only the advice of experts knowledgeable in international and internal Israeli politics. They also expressed a sense of concern for the welfare of the Jewish state, which was shared by *Tikkun* and *Commentary*, as noted above. For *The Forward*, however, this concern was more deeply rooted in the experience of *Klal Yisrael* within its own state and throughout its Diaspora, and the newspaper also sought to infuse this experience with an optimistic political interpretation, as conveyed by the stated opinion of its editor: "Today [...] Israel is engaged in tough negotiations with its neighbors over the terms of coexistence. This is not peace, at least not yet. But neither is it total war between good and evil. It is a gray area, somewhere between the two."¹⁰²⁴

Henceforth this was the salient and consistent tone of the newspaper's political stance. It called for Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories populated by Palestinians.¹⁰²⁵ This call was preceded by a strong appeal for Israel to respond affirmatively to the Saudi government's proposal as a basis for peace negotiations.¹⁰²⁶ These pleas were of course supplemented by the call for Israel, with the support of US Jewry, to agree to begin negotiations on the basis of the Geneva Initiative,¹⁰²⁷ whose potential rejection by Israel the newspaper described as unforgivable.¹⁰²⁸ When it became

clear that the proposed Geneva Accords were not politically pragmatic, the editorial board transferred its support to the joint proposal of Ami Ayalon, an Israeli, and Sari Nusseibeh, a Palestinian.¹⁰²⁹ The difference between these two proposals related to a sensitive issue: the status of Jerusalem. Under the Geneva Accords, the city would be divided between the two states, with Jewish sovereignty over the Western Wall and Jewish Quarter, while the Temple Mount would be included within the Palestinian side of Jerusalem. In contrast, the Ayalon-Nusseibeh document rejected the division of Jerusalem into two capital cities and instead proposed that Jewish-populated neighborhoods on one side and Arab-populated neighborhoods on the other side would be subject to each side's respective national sovereignty within the framework of one single city. The newspaper then recommended, in the spirit of some of its editors' utopian tendencies, that on all matters relating to Jerusalem, peace-seeking politicians and their supporters in the United States back a combination of the two plans in the form of a single, joint proposal based on the historiosophical understanding that in political reality – particularly that of Judaism and Zionism – political dreams are never fully realized, and statesmen must therefore understand that historical national deeds are sometimes “honey coated” and sometimes carry a political “sting.”¹⁰³⁰

From this point forward the newspaper focused more on the “sting” than on the “honey.” This is the context in which to view chief editor J. J. Goldberg's intervention in the strategic military dispute that erupted in Israel over taking action to counter Iran's aggressive intentions. He publicly sided with former military leaders who strongly spoke out against the option of taking such far-reaching action, with all of its political and military implications.¹⁰³¹

Conclusion

In concluding this essay it is appropriate to consider the question of whether the views conveyed in the periodicals examined here indeed had political influence among Jews. Clearly a complete answer to this question requires a special

study, and considering that – to the best of my knowledge – the necessary information is not available, for now I will offer the impression that I formed during the course of my research. In my opinion, two of the periodicals examined here are closely aligned in their views with two US organizations that are politically active on the issue of Israel. I am referring here to the large, long-standing organization AIPAC – the American Israel Public Affairs Committee – which has a conservative outlook and is supported by middle- and upper-class Jews and salient political figureheads in both major political parties, the Republicans and the Democrats. This organization has the means to apply significant political pressure on the Senate in Washington. The second organization, a new one, is J Street, which was founded as recently as 2008. This organization defines itself as having a liberal, Zionist political outlook that is openly critical of Israel’s state policy on all aspects of the Jewish-Palestinian conflict.

Indeed, one can discern a strong correlation between the political stances of AI-PAC and the opinion pieces published in *Commentary*, not to mention the personal proximity between Podhoretz and at least some of this organization’s leaders. By the same token, one can perceive a definitive likeness between the political views expressed by *The Forward* during the past decade and the policy advocated by the organization J Street. Regarding *Tikkun*, there is no evident political correspondence with any Jewish organization. Indeed, efforts by its editor, Lerner, to join J Street were categorically rejected by the organization’s leaders, who cited ideational incompatibility as their reason.¹⁰³² At the same time, one may describe this magazine – and particularly its editor with his utopian-messianic leanings and his practice of disseminating his neo-Hasidic enthusiasm among his few readers – as a type of “New Age” phenomenon within ethnic Jewish politics.

The picture that emerges from this discussion is one of principled disagreements and political and practical contradictions among the three periodicals, which in turn gives rise to the question: Do they, nonetheless, also have a common denominator of some sort?

My response to this question can be found in the title of this article – “Ethnicity and State Policy” – which points to a continuous relationship between the permanent “primordial” ethnic consciousness and the various political outlooks that have undergone change over time and even contradict one another, as demonstrated by our comparative analysis of the positions of the three periodicals examined here.

In this sense, the comparative approach is also important for studies of other ethnic groups, especially in relation to their political views regarding their countries of origin. In addition it can help us to better understand the relationship between the policy-based perspective and the ethnic perspective among political Jewish groups in the United States. This observation, however, does not directly relate to the present essay but merely indicates potential topics for further study in the future.

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57. The French State, the Vertical Alliance, and the State of Israel

Pierre Birnbaum

This paper was completed in September 2014.

Israel versus diaspora

In early June 2014, during a symposium held in Jerusalem, A. B. Yehoshua participated in a roundtable meeting with Nicole Krauss – author of the magnificent *The History of Love*, a Jewish American haunted by memory – and bluntly stated that “all the Jews of the Diaspora are cowards,” their writings are “devoid of any meaning.”¹⁰³³ In his eyes, a “normal” Jew can find a place only in Israel where creativity is freely expressed. For him, “the genocide is the absolute proof and ultimately the failure of the diaspora.”¹⁰³⁴ Living in the diaspora is, at best, sterility, and at worst, death. Before him, other Israeli thinkers, such as Yitzhak Baer, also blasted the diaspora, saying, “exile is and remains what it has never ceased to be: a political enslavement that is to be completely abolished [...], all we have accomplished in a foreign land was a betrayal of our own mind.”¹⁰³⁵ Far from the theses of Heinrich Graetz, Simon Dubnow or Salo Baron who highlighted the extraordinary fertility of the Sephardic or Ashkenazi diaspora, these thinkers articulate a radical vision of the lachrymal theory of history. Like Baer, Yehoshua nowadays sees the diaspora as a field of ruins, suffering, intellectual sterility and of no real history: only the creation of the State of Israel is to end the “extraordinary tragedy”¹⁰³⁶ that is life in the diaspora. We are here far from the observation of Yosef Yerushalmi according to whom “it is possible to be simultaneously ideologically situated in exile and existentially at home,” a “Judaization of exile” that may frequently generate unparalleled creativity.¹⁰³⁷

Leaving aside the assessment of diaspora culture that seems anything but sterile, as underlined by Yosef Yerushalmi and his elaboration of *Galut*,¹⁰³⁸ or equally unjust authors, like Isaiah Berlin, who see, conversely, not more than a cultural desert in Israel's provincial confinement,¹⁰³⁹ we want to come back to this undifferentiated assertion of "political enslavement," as formulated by Baer. It evokes the question of the relationship of Jews to the State, in the diaspora and in Israel, especially when, as Yehoshua asserts, "a Jew living in the Diaspora is called Zionist when he recognizes the principle that the State of Israel is also his."¹⁰⁴⁰ It is estimated, conversely, that a Jewish citizen of any state in the world would not call himself Zionist, if he is only loyal to his own state. Where his loyalty cannot be exclusive, it would at least be shared between two states in the deep hope that no conflict of loyalty will arise. This is a broad question that is difficult to solve – as illustrated in the case of the ships of Cherbourg in France, the Pollard case, and many others in the US.¹⁰⁴¹ The most friendly inclined states to Israel would not tolerate any form of treason in favor of a foreign state, even when it comes to the Israeli ally.

In reality, this discussion needs to take place in the context of comparative political sociology. It is likely that a "weak" state like the US, sparsely institutionalized with a deeply pluralistic society, favorable toward hyphenated citizenship, can only strongly condemn the betrayal of military secrets by one of its Jewish citizens, even in favor of the State of Israel; but the same American State proves to be infinitely tolerant when it comes to favorable positions toward the policy of the Israeli State put forth by groups, associations and even legally declared lobbies in Washington. It is to point out here, contrary to the assertion of Yehoshua, that a large number of American Jewish organizations can be defined as Zionist, as their goal is the defense of Israeli interests in the press, the public, the Congress and even toward the Presidency. At the same time, they remain loyal citizens of the US. In all this, the American "house,"¹⁰⁴² except in extreme cases as with the Pollard case, refutes undifferentiated assertions like Baer's or Yehoshua's. By no means are the Jews there "enslaved." On the contrary:

from President Washington to President Obama, their security is guaranteed and their membership in the American nation is recognized as essential. From the founding of the American republic till today, they pray with devotion for the President's success.¹⁰⁴³ They participate, at least since the turn of the 19th century, in the implementation of political power; they are elected as senators or representatives and sometimes access the President's Cabinet; they play a significant role in the Supreme Court, where, as illustrated by Louis Brandeis or Elena Kagan, their presence is always asserted, to the point that today they account for one third of the Court. Considering that the Supreme Court acts as a functional equivalent to the strong state, far from being in a subservient position, Jews fully participate in the exercise of power. Far from any "enslavement," Brandeis plays a vital role in American political life, and even more so Felix Frankfurter who was considered the most powerful man of the New Deal – a crucial period of American society during which Henry Morgenthau served for several years as Treasury Secretary. Within the American "house," many Jews have become State Jews decided to strengthen the state apparatus, but also to establish a radical separation between Church and State, rejecting any religious presence in the public sphere. One may speak of direct or indirect "Jewish power,"¹⁰⁴⁴ even if it is not about adhering to a conspiracy, as hypothesize John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt,¹⁰⁴⁵ who contend that the Jewish domination of American politics is of that kind that it threatens the sovereignty of the state.

Moreover, being part of the American political and legal staff, many of the State Jews do not hide their adherence to a sometimes very militant Zionism. Louis Brandeis stated in June 1915:

Let no American imagine that Zionism is inconsistent with Patriotism. Multiple loyalties are objectionable only if they are inconsistent. [...] Every American Jew who aids in advancing the Jewish settlement in Palestine, though he feels that neither he nor his descendants will ever live there, will likewise be a better man and a better American for doing so. [...] There is no inconsistency between loyalty to America and loyalty to Jewry. [...] Indeed, loyalty to America demands rather that each American Jew become a Zionist. [...] And a conflict between American interests or ambitions and Jewish aims is not conceivable. Our loyalty to America can never be questioned.¹⁰⁴⁶

When appointed to the Supreme Court, Brandeis firmly maintained his commitment to Zionism. He played an important role in the implementation of the Balfour Declaration, became a friend of Chaim Weizmann whom he helped as much as he could. He pushed his loyal friend Felix Frankfurter to attend the Versailles Conference, to help the Zionist movement in gaining international support. It is when Weizmann got committed to building a genuine state in Palestine that their paths diverged. Brandeis showed little support for the idea that went against his own perspective drawn from the American model of a pluralistic society maintaining a weak state and allowing multiple loyalties. Once he became the first president of the State of Israel, Weizmann invited Brandeis and Frankfurter to join him and occupy important positions. When they refused, Weizmann, to some extent in the spirit of Baer and Yehoshua, wrote to Frankfurter, with bitter irony that tells a lot about the weight of his and Brandeis' loyalties to different states, regardless of the depth of their Zionist commitment: "Brandeis could have been a prophet of Israel, and you have the qualities of a Lassalle. Rather than engaging in this path, you have chosen to be just a professor at Harvard and Brandeis just a judge of the Supreme Court."¹⁰⁴⁷ A way of saying that both preferred their important positions in the American State to other positions equally distinguished in the new Israeli State. Integrated in the political staff, with a strong presence in the Supreme Court, and a zealous support for most of the State of Israel, many American Jews implement a "long-distance nationalism,"¹⁰⁴⁸ which is, in itself, not dysfunctional with the pluralistic mechanism of American democracy that recognizes the legitimacy of multiple allegiances. This attitude could become conflictual only in extreme cases of a hypothetical military conflict that would break up loyalties to states that are about to strive, as for example, during the 1956 war along the Suez Canal or maybe tomorrow, with regard to Iran or to any other aspect of the strategy of the Hebrew State that deviates from the essential interests of the American State. How this dilemma would be resolved is difficult to predict, as the attachment to American exceptionalism is deep, and the attachment to Israel strong.

Where do French Jews stand?

Things are profoundly different when we turn to the case of a strong state like the one that has been built through French history. Such a strong state, solidly institutionalized and highly differentiated from all social and cultural peripheries, seeks to guide its nation, impose universalist norms, ensure that citizens recognize themselves in it and turn away from any collective identity, or communitarism, rejecting even all forms of hyphenated identity. From the era of absolute monarchy till the construction of the republic, this state rejects any form of intermediate structure and, using its own education system, imposes its own political socialization. This means that the state expects the entire loyalty of its citizens, which could not cede any degree of loyalty in favor of another state. To turn again to the concepts proposed by Albert Hirschman, the strong state is based on the extreme loyalty of its citizens to such an extent that they firstly, would not think of “exiting” their commitment and, for example, hardly emigrate and do not leave their nation-state, and secondly, are reticent to speak out via intermediate structures that have remained almost illegitimate for a long time.¹⁰⁴⁹

Such a strong state plays a significant role in Jewish history since it was the first to emancipate its Jewish citizens by opening, on a meritocratic and universalist basis, the door of its institutions without requiring their conversion in advance. Jews turned into active citizens, entered the public space, were allowed access to colleges, passed the exams for the senior civil service and became State Jews,¹⁰⁵⁰ judges, generals, prefects, MPs, ministers, and even heads of state. As part of this logic of the state, Jews are particularly numerous to play an important role in the public space without renouncing for all that, in the private sphere, their own history and identity. They almost always marry Jewish spouses in the synagogue, their sons make a bar mitzvah, rabbis officiate at their burial. They preserve a Jewish sociability, keep a very close relationship with other Jews, often participate in Jewish philanthropic institutions, or in salons frequented by coreligionist.¹⁰⁵¹ Their dedication to the state is total. They

firmly and devoutly prayed for the absolutist monarchs and later for the leaders of the republican state with fervor and enthusiasm through the centuries, as they have always counted on the strong state to protect them.¹⁰⁵²

The idea of a multiplicity of allegiances, a hyphenated citizenship, is here unthinkable. As devotees of the emancipatory state, they have never betrayed it. This is what explains the incredible scandal of the possible betrayal of Captain Dreyfus: a State Jew like him, coming from an Alsatian patriotic context, who studied at the prestigious Ecole Polytechnique, and, above all: a soldier cannot betray. All Jews knew it before and were convinced of his innocence. Yesterday like nowadays, a Pollard case cannot occur in such a context of a strong state where allegiance to another state is against all intensely socialized standards. The most emblematic text of the refusal of a Jewish state presented by Joseph Reinach, the State Jew *par excellence*, is without a doubt the following:

If Zionism is understood as the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, I say, decisively, no. The idea alone of a state based on religion is contrary to all principles of the modern world. [...] Since there is no Jewish race or Jewish nation, but only a Jewish religion, Zionism is a folly, a triple historical, archaeological, ethnic error.¹⁰⁵³

This assumption is also expressed by Theodore Reinach, another prestigious State Jew, when he writes:

The Zionist enterprise is fatal if it fails, and even more so, if, improbably, it succeeds. The modern conscience rejects the idea that a man can have two homelands, two nationalities. If Judaism becomes officially a nationality, it will be necessary that the Jews of France choose between Judaism and France.¹⁰⁵⁴

One could not better present the radical theoretical incompatibility between the construction of a Jewish state and loyalty to a strong state like the French. In this sense, the French state model is the extreme opposite of the Zionist project. It is literally unthinkable as the French state model is based on enormous and ramified institutionalization, on an array of functions which are supposed to have men and women disappear behind their impersonal roles assigned to them in accordance with their mere qualities certified by meritocratic impersonal recruitment, regardless of the religious

faith or values of a person. Hence, in the middle of the Cold War, the State Council ruled that it was inconsistent with law to exclude a candidate from competition for the senior civil service on the grounds that he is a member of the Communist Party (Barel decree).

Except for the Vichy regime during which, following the defeat and German occupation, the state abandoned its universalist logic, no official has been excluded from his or her position because of his or her religion, origin or political values. This state, close to the ideal type of the Weberian state, has not only institutionalized, but also exceedingly differentiated itself from all social or cultural peripheries: France is the country that has pushed the separation from the Church the furthest by rejecting, in the most radical way, almost any presence of religious symbols in the public space. Ever since the 1905 laws up to the contemporary ban of the headscarf in state institutions, this logic continues to intensify, not only to the great dismay of the religious, in France as well as around the world, but also to the astonishment of American lawyers and philosophers, concerned about maintaining the legitimacy of cultural pluralism, who perceive, from Charles Taylor to Will Kymlicka, the state *à la française* as a Satanic model that should be avoided, because it undermines the cultural code of the society.

This means that the model of the French strong state has not much to do with the Israeli State and those who, despite that fact, engage in comparative analysis of the political realities are met with incomprehension. Thus, in the 1980s, when invited by Zeev Sternhell to present to the Department of Political Science of the University of Jerusalem this model of the state as an institutionalized and differential structure, we advanced, in a slightly provocative manner, the idea that a state may escape the definition of capitalist, socialist, Catholic or Jewish, as there is a contradiction: a state, we contended, can only obey its own logic, otherwise it turns into a mere instrument of a social class or a religion. As could be expected, the reaction of colleagues was one of indignation, complete misunderstanding, causing a furor. This more than vivid, but eventually unproductive meeting comes to my mind

today, when Israeli leaders intend to make recognition of Israel as a Jewish state a sine qua non condition for peace with the Palestinians. Back then at the seminar in Jerusalem, till nowadays, keeping in mind the model of the strong state, the difficulty remains, as there is no means to declare a state “Jewish” without it becoming a mere political instrument at the service of a particular religion. By the same token, saying that “Jewish” refers to a people, not a religion, does not solve the difficulty, because it implies that the state belongs to the Jewish people only, ignoring that it is equally the state of large non-Jewish minorities. Thus, when Claude Klein retranslates the important work of Theodor Herzl, *Der Judenstaat*, translating it as *The State of the Jews* and not *The Jewish State*, he may be influenced by his legal studies in France. He tackles this problem directly, but does not solve it completely, because, implicitly, such a definition still excludes non-Jews from “the State of the Jews.”¹⁰⁵⁵ Basically – to meet political theory and remain faithful to Max Weber, which is obviously not, and one easily understands it, the main concern of the Israeli leadership – it would suffice to keep the name of the State of Israel. The Israeli State is anchored like any state in a dominant cultural code anyway. Hence, the strong French State remains, despite its radical break with the Church, influenced by the Catholic cultural code, and, in the same manner, the Israeli State will remain characterized by the cultural code of Judaism, without however becoming a Jewish state. This is also the kind of solution Yael Tamir, the then emerging and ephemeral Israeli minister of education, thought of, when she published her book *Liberal Nationalism*.¹⁰⁵⁶

Significantly, when the Supreme Court intends to clarify the status of Israel, it does so by unduly referring to the case of France: in 1988, the Israeli Court assessed that “Israel’s definition as the state of the Jewish people does not negate its democratic character, in the same way that the Frenchness of France does not negate its democratic character.” According to this unconvincing logic, in the same way that the French state is the state of the French, Israel should be the state of the Israelis, not the Jewish state or state of the Jewish people, because even if there exists a Jewish people, this people is not

limited to Israel and, in addition, the state must also remain the state of many non-Jews who share common values with other peoples.¹⁰⁵⁷

This question is still a highly topical issue, when we consider what Benjamin Netanyahu declared at the end of April 2014:

Israel gives full equal rights to all its citizens, but it is the nation-state of one people – the Jewish people – and no other. To fortify Israel’s standing as the nation-state of the Jewish people, I intend to spearhead the legislation of a Basic Law that will enshrine this status. Israel is a Jewish and democratic state. [...] Our Basic Laws give full expression to the democratic aspect of the state. We do this by giving full equal rights to each and every citizen. The Basic Laws do this by means of two main laws – the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty, and the Basic Law: Freedom of Occupation. However Israel’s status as the nation-state of the Jewish people is not given sufficient expression in our Basic Laws, and this is what the proposed Basic Law is meant to do. It will define the national right of the Jewish people to the state of Israel, without infringing on the individual rights of any citizen of Israel. It will fortify the standing of the Law of Return as a Basic Law, it will anchor in the Basic Laws the standing of the national symbols – the flag, the national anthem, the language and other components of our national being.¹⁰⁵⁸

For the Israeli Prime Minister, Israel “is the nation-state of one people – the Jewish people – and no other.” This formula of nation-state was invented by the strong state *à la française* literally building its nation by homogenizing it as much as possible, and by differentiating itself, as far as possible, from any cultural or religious dimension. In this sense, it can hardly be appropriate to describe in the same terms the nature of the Israeli State since there is little similarity between “the French people” and the “Jewish people.” Finally, the French Jews who are socialized with a strong state whose national symbols are devoid of any cultural or religious connotations, most often share another idea of the state whose emblems remain impersonal and neutral.

More than American Jews who also live in one of the few societies with a “wall of separation” between the state and the church – a lower one than in France, however – and where the national symbols remain neutral, French Jews stay attached to this strong state which has protected them. More than any other political regime, this state is the guarantor of the functioning of the vertical alliance, the “royal alliance,” in which they have trusted for a long time.¹⁰⁵⁹ It is this strong

state – except in special cases such as during the Vichy regime – which has defended Jews from antisemitism at the time of Louis XVI as well as in the Dreyfus Affair. The strong state was able to fight political antisemitism that rose in France against the accession of Jews to political and administrative power. Its favorable logic toward the emancipation of the Jews and their integration into administrative structures sparked the invention of a political antisemitism of which the same state managed to limit the consequences; hence the Jews’ extreme loyalty that has long diverted them from political Zionism.

Today’s crisis of confidence

Yet in recent history, French Jews have seen this confidence unravel, precisely when the destiny of Israel was at stake. The Six-Day War and the embargo imposed by General de Gaulle on weapons assigned to Israel, the famous phrase of “the chosen people, self-confident and domineering” which not only condemns Israeli action but, in addition, makes Israel the representative of the Jewish “people,” even beyond Israel’s borders, encompassing in its spirit – who knows – the French Jews, blurring the boundaries and allegiances through metaphors invoking traditional antisemitism. It is the fact that de Gaulle, the hero revered by French Jews who stood up against the persecuting Vichy regime, has come to appropriate this vocabulary, which has unsettled French Jews in general, and in particular the loyal State Jews. The protest attempts forwarded to General René Cassin, Vice-President of the State Council – the quintessential State Jew who had joined de Gaulle in London in 1940, an official of undeniable international prestige – testify by themselves the confusion, disappointment, and doubt that had befallen the State Jews, troubled by the threats facing Israel. It is thus in a moment, when the existence of the Israeli State seemed at stake, that this State Jews, and also Raymond Aron and others, raised openly a voice of protest and made clear how far their own destiny is at stake through that of Israel. This time, the logic of Joseph Reinach was abandoned and renounced; a vital link was established between loyalties that had seemed mutually exclusive for a long time.

Today, French Jews, as a whole, seem to experience such a dilemma in the war against Hamas. Although they beware of endorsing any official collective stand, most of them feel strong emotions and intense concern. The outbreak of war between Hamas and Israel has provoked strong anti-Zionist campaigns which in many cases do not hide their antisemitic guise. This new war erupted a few months after the *Jour de colère*, in January 2014, during which devastating slogans like “France is for the French!” and “Death to the Jews” could be heard in the streets of Paris, shouted by far-right activists joined by young Frenchmen or immigrants of North African origin.

In July 2014, at the height of the war, these outcries resounded anew by young people from among the North African immigration who view Palestine as equivalent of the struggle once led by Algerians against French colonization. To protest against the events in Gaza, they attack synagogues and stores of Jewish owners; they condemn the assumedly “almighty” power exercised by the CRIF (Representative Council of French Jewish Institutions) on state leaders, and brand President François Hollande as a Zionist. For many, French Jews are from then on conceived as Israelis, to the point that, describing a late demonstration of French Jews in favor of Israel, *Le Parisien* titles on the first page: “The Israelis of Paris demonstrate”!¹⁰⁶⁰

Perceived more and more often as forming an organized and powerful “community,” French Jews, like a reified collectivity, are thus almost imagined as detached from their nation: this identification of French Jews with Israelis breaks with their long history of deep integration into the nation and challenges their individual citizenship acquired since September 1791. Hence, like in the time of Edouard Drumont or during Vichy, Jewish citizens are tagged collectively, and for many non-Jews they again constitute “a nation within the nation,” even worse: a nation within the nation closely linked to a foreign nation. Assimilation *à la française*, hostile to all forms of intermediate collective structures, seems more than ever challenged as the “imagined communities,” that is the “Jews” and the “Muslims,” assumedly competing, appear as

struggling with each other, thus importing a distant conflict on the national soil.

In this disturbing context, there is an increasing *aliyah* of French Jews. Some of them decide to leave and to emigrate to Israel, to finally reach this famous “normality.” For Natan Sharansky, “[n]ever in the history of the State of Israel has there been a Jewish community in the free world that has sent such a large proportion of its Jews to Israel.”¹⁰⁶¹ Later on, highlighting the French case, he adds: “I believe we are seeing the beginning of the end of Jewish history in Europe.”¹⁰⁶² The world press gives an incredible coverage on this immigration to Israel: *Newsweek*, on the first page, published an article entitled “Exodus: Why Europe’s Jews Are Fleeing Once Again,” which devotes large parts to the situation in France comparing the present-day flight with the expulsion of Jews in 1492 from Spain;¹⁰⁶³ another commentator speaks of “Paris’s Kristallnacht,”¹⁰⁶⁴ while *Haaretz* publishes an article entitled “Will France Expel Its Jews?”¹⁰⁶⁵ This exaggerated dramatization shocks the observer. In reality,

99 percent of European Jews choose to continue living there, and in many places are undergoing a fascinating cultural renaissance. They are aware of and worried about the rise in anti-Semitism, but as yet there doesn’t seem to be the fear of a pogrom right around the corner. No one is sleeping with their bags packed, ready to flee to Zion. Even the most ardent Zionists among them are concerned not to be held accountable as Jews for the actions of the Jewish state.¹⁰⁶⁶

After all, the decline of the strong state, its questioning in the context of an Anglo-Saxon liberalism, its insertion into international economic exchange relations, its integration into Europe, the implementation of an accentuated decentralization and regionalization: all this combines to challenge the strong state’s strength and legitimacy. Consequently, French Jews, like their fellow citizens, see their relations to the state changing rapidly. In this new context, how does their entire loyalty warrant them a relative protection against manifestations of threatening antisemitism that draws its sources from both the far right and the suburbs of large cities? Is their conception of the state thereby profoundly changed? Does this conception herald a slow change toward multiple

loyalties, as in the US, which would render their link with Israel both collective and public?

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58. French Jewry and the Israelization of Judaism

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This paper was completed in January 2015. In view of the events in France, the authors updated certain parts later.

The terrorist carnage of *Charlie Hebdo* on January 2015 followed by the killing of Jews in a kosher supermarket in Paris two days after, and the later massacre of Bataclan on November 13, transformed France in a historic fashion and may have signaled the twilight of French Jewry. A day after the kosher market killing, French Prime Minister Manuel Valls made a resounding plea: “Without the Jews of France, France would not be France. [...] I said this in my own words, with my heart, with my guts, and I will keep repeating this since it is my profound belief.”¹⁰⁶⁷

Indeed, for French Jews who have been wrestling for decades with their commitment to the Republic while facing growing insecurity, the clock of decision-making has been ticking. While previous terrorist attacks on Jews by French Muslims did not break their spirit and many still believed that somehow normality could return, by the end of 2015, it seemed that an impending catastrophe is looming.

As a matter of fact French Jews can no longer send their kids to public schools or even Jewish schools without having endless anxieties. Undoubtedly the sense of insecurity felt by Jews is now shared by many other French citizens. And yet, in the case of French Jewry, insecurity is also entangled with a much broader transformation we call the “Israelization of Judaism.” These two developments, security fears and the Israelization of French Jewish identity, are tied with one another, creating a nexus that shapes the future of the French Jewry Diaspora; still the largest and most important Jewish community in Europe.

The Islamic threat in France has pushed many French Jews to exit, many of whom already made *aliyah* while others are shuttling between Israel and France. Those who are still hoping to build a Jewish future in Paris, Marseille or Toulouse, have by choice or reality become more and more “Israelized.”

High holidays in Paris

On Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur of 2013 and 2014 Paris synagogues were full. In a small synagogue in the old Jewish quarter *Le Marais*, we met four men in their 70s. They came from Algeria and Morocco. They invited us to join them in a post-prayer snack of salted crackers, *boutargue*, Israeli olives, and Arak. Two of them spoke a bit of Hebrew. The other two combined French, Arabic, and Hebrew together. One of them showed us an ad in a French Jewish newspaper about opportunities to buy land in the Galilee. “It is in Yavneel,” he said, “and it costs only 8,000 Euros! Is it good?” “I think it is,” I answered, “but you’d better check out that it’s not a hoax.” For generations, Jews have been buying land in the ancestral homeland. In recent decades French Jews have become experts in the booming Israeli real estate market. But a small piece of land in Yavneel still has the taste of an old genuine Zionism.

Nearby, in an attic on *rue des rosiers* we heard people praying in the Ashkenazi intonation. We rushed up four flights of the round rickety stairs accompanied by a strong smell of urine. We met four ultra-Orthodox (*Haredi*) women and two little children sitting in the backroom. They were surprised to see us: they proudly explained that this synagogue was active even under Nazi occupation. In the next room there were exactly ten Haredi men, a full *minyán*. They had just finished their *Mussaf* prayer and were sipping wine and even vodka for *Kiddush*.

A few days later, for *Kol Nidrei* we went to the Grande Synagogue, *rue de la Victoire*. The tight police security and the body searches performed on the congregants reminded us of Israel where, since the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin in 1995, searches like these are usually conducted at events where the prime minister is in attendance. Remarkably the

scene inside *La Victoire* was reminiscent of Theodor Herzl's recording of his emotional experience visiting the same place back in 1895. In his diaries Herzl wrote that the religious festivity in *La Victoire* was uplifting and prompted him to write about the "Condition of the Jews."

With the ringing in of the Jewish New Year in 2014, European Jews were once again facing intense antisemitism. Rabbi Jonathan Sachs, the former Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth, wrote that he could not recall a period in his lifetime when Jews were entering the holiest day of the Jewish year with such a "degree of apprehension. [...] Anti-Semitism has returned to Europe within living memory of the Holocaust. Never again has become ever again."¹⁰⁶⁸

In fact, years before the terrorist killings of January 2015, many already questioned whether France, with the largest Jewish population in the continent (about 500,000), was still safe for the Jews. Some have warned against France's growing "Judeophobia"¹⁰⁶⁹ even before the gruesome killing of the Jewish youth Ilan Halimi by a Muslim gang in 2006, the attacks and murder of children and a teacher in a Jewish school in Toulouse in 2012, and the anti-Israeli mass demonstrations of the summer of 2014. These traumatic events are seen as extensions of the overall struggle of Israel and the Jews worldwide against Muslim radicals.

In this climate, one should not be surprised that in the past decade French *aliyah* to Israel has tripled, reaching about 7,000 in 2014 and making France the leading country of emigration to Israel. Many more French Jews are part of "Boeing Aliyah"; one leg in Tel Aviv and Netanya, the shore cities of Israel, and one leg in Paris and Nice. The "push factor" in the Jewish departure has also been impacted by the ongoing French pessimism about the prospects of preserving the *grandeur de la France*.

The most recent data from the French Chamber of Commerce and Industry showed that 27% of French graduates are planning to expatriate. In fact, France is losing about 60,000 to 80,000 citizens annually.¹⁰⁷⁰

Obviously, the “push factor” is only part of the story of Jewish departure. The growing centrality of Israel in all aspects of Jewish life worldwide, nourished by Israel’s growing society and economy, is behind the “pull factor.” By 2014, 44% of world Jews live in Israel and in less than a decade, Israel’s Jewish population is expected to comprise over 50% of world Jewry. This is a monumental milestone in the history of the Jewish people.

In our journey to France we uncovered two distinct features of the “Israelization” of French Jewry. The first is the growing entanglement of French Jews with Israeli international politics and standing. The second dimension of Israelization relates to the impact of Israeli state and society on central institutions, theologies, liturgical practices, and the overall cultural life of French Jews.

Indeed, the struggle over Israel’s “legitimacy” is an inescapable feature of Jewish life in France. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has spilled over and shaped French politics in such a manner that criticism of, or advocacy on behalf of Israel became the most defining element of French Jewish identity. Antisemitism itself is by now part and parcel of the Israelization of French and European Jewry.

Moreover, the strong penetration of Israeli internal politics, religious trends, artistic and cultural creativity into French Jewish life, has been visible in the growing consumption of Israeli mass media, film, music, literature, and food. So too, French Jewish religious habits, rabbis and teachers are by now “Israeli” in nature. Erik Cohen’s extensive sociological surveys, compiled over three decades, have shown that the majority of French Jews have embraced the Israelization of their Jewish identity. His data indicates that most French Jews would have liked to “be reborn as Jews in Israel” rather than “as Jews in France.” He also reported that 85% of French Jews traveled to Israel at least once, and on average a 40-year old French Jew will have spent several months of his life in the Jewish homeland.¹⁰⁷¹

Yet the Israelization of French Jewry is not all-inclusive. Many French Jews are still trying to hold onto a French

republican heritage, and others are resisting complete Israelization by adopting ideologies and practices grounded in the experiences of North American Jews. Undoubtedly, the prospects of growing Israeli influence is not only a source of unity among French Jews, but also a matter of controversy.

The Jewish security dilemma and the Israelization of antisemitism

From its birth, the State of Israel adopted the Talmudic maxim “*kol Yisrael arevim ze baze*” (‘all Jews are responsible for each other’) as its national creed. The idea of the “brother’s keeper,” of kinship responsibility, was enshrined in Israel’s Law of Return in 1950. The principle of mutual responsibility was further sanctified in section 13 of Israel’s Penal Code of 1994, which prescribed that Israel is responsible for the “security of the Jews” wherever they may be. In fact, Israel committed itself to extra-territorial intervention if “the life of a Jew, his body, his health [...] his property [...] or institutions [are assaulted] [...] because he is Jewish.” Since the 1960s and 1970s, when Western Europe became a surrogate battlefield for the Israeli-Arab conflict, and Palestinian terrorists launched attacks not only on Israeli targets but also on European Jews and their institutions, the creed of mutual fate and responsibility grew to become the cornerstone of the Jewish state’s security doctrine.

But Jewish “mutual responsibility” not only reinforces communal solidarity and sense of obligation, it always had a darker dimension when the Jews were “held responsible for the deeds, real or alleged, of other Jews.”¹⁰⁷² In fact, when Diaspora Jews are targeted by anti-Zionists, some liberal Jewish intellectuals question the Israeli claim of providing security for the Jews worldwide and at times even charge Israel with becoming a leading source of Jewish insecurity. This view has long been expressed by French Jewish scholar Diana Pinto and her husband, Dominique Moïsi, well-known for his writings in North America. In the summer of 2014, Moïsi wrote that “the strategy of terror used by Israeli authorities to deter further attacks [...] has been costly not

only in terms of Palestinian lives [...] but [detrimental] to the security of Jews around the world.”¹⁰⁷³ Such views, however, are rejected, and even despised by most of the French Jews we met, who see it as an expression of shameful treason.

It’s not the “Jewish question” stupid! It’s the “French question”

In the synagogue of *La Victoire* in Paris we were hosted by Rabbi Moshe Sabbagh. He came from Israel. The seats for the Rosh Hashana services cost over 200 Euros per person and the place was full with the Parisian bourgeoisie in its finest attire. The service was very formal and the beautiful choir joined the *Kol Nidrei*’s recitation along with the senior cantor. We were seated in the upper deck and felt a bit constrained, like in a concert hall. The next day we attended services with the Moroccan crowd of the *Vauquelin* synagogue. A less formal feeling of the holiday was all around, with everybody hugging and kissing with great warmth. Several prayers were taking place simultaneously. At *Vauquelin* they also had a small service for the Ashkenazim. In the Sephardic service, everyone was a cantor unto himself. In the *Aneinu* prayer congregants spontaneously jumped into the solo, and for the sounding of the shofar you could feel a real sense of competition over who could blow it the strongest. “What you have experienced in *La Victoire*,” told us the writer Michel Gurfinkiel, “is a relic of Ashkenazi Judaism and of 19th century’s religious practices.” At *Vauquelin* too, a police car was parked across the street. When we left, people dispersed quickly, so as not to be an easy target in case of a terrorist attack.

Dominique Schnapper is a famous French social scientist. She is also a former member of the French Supreme Court, and the Honorary President of the *Musée d’art et d’histoire du judaïsme*, the main French museum of Jewish art and history in Paris. Her own laurels notwithstanding, she is still known as the daughter of the famous post-war Jewish intellectual Raymond Aron.

After WWII Aron became an icon of French liberal republicanism. He represented post-Holocaust rebirth of the French *Israélite* of the 19th century, and his public stature indicated that people with Jewish origins could still serve as poster children of Modern France. Yet Aron was stung by his former friend Charles de Gaulle, when in the aftermath of the Six-Day War, the French President denounced the Jewish people as “an élite people, self-confident and domineering.” On the eve of the 1967 War, when Israel’s very existence was in doubt, Aron wrote that if the world would allow the destruction of the State of Israel it would be an unbearable crime that “would deprive me of the strength to live.”¹⁰⁷⁴

Schnapper, like her father, remained an avid republican trying desperately to hold on to Rousseau’s vision. Her public and scholarly focus on the “Jewish condition” has been driven, she said, by her concern and reflection about France’s own changing nature.¹⁰⁷⁵ She reminded us that she and her late husband were secularists and did not mark Jewish holidays. We met her at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in Paris. She looked vital and intense as she turned 80. She insisted that there was no longer a “Jewish question” in France, only a “French question.” For her the “French question” is a shorthand for the disparity between France’s official commitment to universal principles of *laïcité* and republicanism and its new “*droit à la différence*”; ethnic, religious, and cultural.

In her works on citizenship and Diaspora, Schnapper discussed the crimes of Vichy against the Jews as “an open wound in the heart of France” and “the State’s biggest breach to the model of citizenship ever since the Revolution.” But she still thought that the war period was an aberration and refused to fall into the predicament of France’s “Islamization.” She also believed that French Jews should release themselves from the forces of ethno-religious particularism and criticized their “unconditional support” for Israel. Schnapper was critical of Israel’s over-involvement in French Jewish affairs and has questioned the wisdom of Prime Minister Netanyahu’s presence in the mourning ceremony for the victims of the 2012 Toulouse attack. She may have felt frustration when

Netanyahu called the Jews of France to emigrate to Israel after the January 2015 massacre in the kosher supermarket of Vincennes.

Unlike Schnapper, the life of Algeria-born sociologist Shmuel Trigano is informed by his Jewishness. Yet just like her he bemoans the growing “estrangement” of French Jews from France. For him the gradual evolution of an “invisible wall” between Jews and the rest of France became pronounced when the “Jewish community” started to be compared to the “Muslim community.” This lexicon was tied to the Arab-Israeli conflict in the 1980s and was accelerated with the First Gulf War in 1990–1991.

Trigano is in his mid-60s. He studied at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and has written numerous books on the French Jewish experience. They are spread all over his living room. “Israelis don’t know what I wrote,” he said with disappointment. “They never translated my books into Hebrew.” We interviewed him in his Tel Aviv apartment. We laughed about how Israelis complain that prices of housing have been exploding because French Jews buy flats. He insisted that we film him speaking only in French, though his Hebrew is fluent. The message he wanted to convey is about France. The “feeling of solitude [...] that you become a stranger in your own country” saddened him. “The Diaspora is slowly disappearing. [...] I believe that most Jews will leave Europe [...] many of them to Israel.” Trigano is convinced that the “weight of Jewish existence will rely on the Israeli journey and no longer on the Diaspora. This is a gigantic evolution with spiritual, intellectual, political and moral consequences.”

The young Republican-Zionists

In Paris we meet representatives of the young “Republican-Zionists” who are already gaining positions of leadership in the Jewish community. These people in their 30s work tirelessly to build a traditional Jewish family life, without compromising their French identity. We quickly notice that their Frenchness is completely different than the assimilationist version of Schnapper’s generation. In fact, the

younger generation is mainly Sephardic, and their “Israeliness” is particularly visceral.¹⁰⁷⁶ This group includes successful entrepreneurs, with business and marketing degrees. They cherish their global lifestyle while embracing traditional Judaism. Jewish French “neocons” speak passionately about the values of the Republic and about Israel, as if the two were an extension of each other. Jewish Republican-Zionists are following the footsteps of US Jewish neocons, who have tied their commitment to the American creed with their loyalty to the democratic State of Israel and the well-being of Jews worldwide.

Thirty-eight-year-old Jérémie Haddad and 34-year-old Yonathan Arfi are excellent voices of “Republican-Zionists.” Haddad is married with three kids. Arfi is still not married. Both refuse to accept the idea that France is a closed chapter in Jewish history and reject the notion that their life should be defined by the challenges of antisemitism. We meet Haddad on the eve of the Sukkot Holiday. “I am tired of talking about Muslim antisemitism!” he exclaimed, “I am looking for a positive identity for French Jews.” A successful businessman, Haddad is active in Jewish youth organizations. He is the Jewish scouts’ representative to the CRIF’s Board of Directors. Arfi serves as Vice-President of CRIF. Haddad and Arfi laud the virtues of France’s *laïcité*. Haddad who is observant criticizes Israel for being too “religiously intolerant.” He emphasizes that North African Jews have been more successful in France than in Israel: “You Israelis have too many biases.”

Haddad’s family moved to France from Tunisia in 1962. His grandparents had four children. Two married non-Jews and assimilated. His father kept the Jewish traditions at home and sent his kids to Jewish primary school. His aunt moved to Jerusalem. “She is *Haredi* with 11 kids,” he laughs. “My grandparents moved to Israel in 1992 as well. They wanted to be close to their daughter and grandchildren. Me and my wife also contemplated *aliyah* but decided to stay in France [...]. It’s possible that our kids will end up in Israel, we don’t object.”

Without kids yet, Yonathan Arfi's outlook is more theoretical. The "new antisemitism" and the campaign to delegitimize Israel during the Al-Aqsa Intifada and after 9/11 drove him to become the President of the Union of Jewish Students (UEJF). In those days, when anti-Israeli demonstrators stormed the streets of Paris, Arfi stood tall to defend the Jewish homeland and quickly emerged as a public figure. More than a decade later Arfi resides in an affluent neighborhood of Paris. He holds an impressive book collection on Israel and Jewish history. In his library one finds beautiful French anthologies on Israeli cinema and literature. Zionist posters of the 1960s decorate his walls. He proudly shows us his great uncle's portrait on the *Paris Match* magazine's cover: "He was a native of Algeria who became France's first Jewish swimming champion in the 1930s."

Like Haddad, Arfi is a successful entrepreneur who wants to believe in a renewed blossoming of French Jewish life and sees a value in keeping French Judaism alive, no matter what. "French Jewish life is completely tied to Israel," he adds, "but the two should not negate each other [...]. I am convinced that I need to be a few years in Israel in order to become a true Jew."

The Jews of the Maghreb: between French assimilation and religious revival

The great migration of North African Jews to France began after WWII and was accelerated with the decolonization of Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria. The newcomers included contingents from Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt. The largest group of about 120,000 Algerian Jews came after the independence of Algeria. This massive pool of Jews of the Maghreb doubled the number of French Jews almost overnight, and gradually transformed French Jewish culture and religious practices.

The Jews of the Maghreb found familiar surroundings in France: "Having lived in lands under French domination, the [...] émigrés [...] did not feel they were coming to a completely foreign country. Indeed, a great many had already

spent long periods of time in France, where they had attended university, vacationed, or served in the military.”¹⁰⁷⁷ Yet North African Jews were quite diverse in terms of their economic conditions, access to education, and their overall modernization. France’s colonial policy, which favored “assimilation in Algeria, reform in Tunisia, and a status quo in Morocco,”¹⁰⁷⁸ impacted their relations to France and to Zionism. For Algerian Jews, coming to France was a journey of “repatriation” while Moroccans and Tunisians had to fight for access to French citizenship since they lived as “Jewish natives” under “French protectorate,” and were denied access to naturalization. This explains why in the 1950s and 1960s Moroccan Jews moved en masse to Israel while for Algerian Jews the natural destination was France. Indeed Algerian Jews were granted French citizenship already in 1870 through the *Décret Crémieux*.

It is interesting to note, as historian Keren Rouche uncovered, that the process of “integration” of Algerian Jews as French citizens in Algeria had two opposing impacts. On the one hand, they benefited from easy access to all aspects of French society. On the other hand, this smooth integration and the French legal (“civilizing”) restrictions that were imposed on them eroded their Jewish identity and institutions thereby undermining traditional Jewish family and religious practices.¹⁰⁷⁹ In these circumstances, Rouche shows, Algerian Jewish elites found the best source for ethno-religious attachment in burgeoning political Zionism, which was used as a tool for reenergizing Jewish traditions and ethnic pride across the Maghreb.¹⁰⁸⁰ The “Zionization” process of French Jewry gained tremendous momentum with the awakening of Jews worldwide after the Six-Day War.

After 1967 Jewish religious practices became more and more associated with the struggles and triumphs of Israel. Jews also felt more comfortable in asserting their diasporic religious particularism as the Jacobine ideology lost steam in the 1970s. With other minorities gaining momentum at the expense of long-standing republican commitments to

universalism, Jews were “less shy about calling themselves French Jews rather than Jewish Frenchmen.”¹⁰⁸¹

The ethnicization of French Jewry unfolded in conjunction with the revival of North African identity inside Israel. Demands by Israeli Moroccans, in particular, for greater respect and political empowerment were echoed among Moroccan Jews across France. Hence North African Jews have evolved along similar cultural-religious contours as North Africans inside Israel, in a dynamic that made the two communities interconnected. Today French Jewish ethno-religious practices and French religious leaders among Jews of the Maghreb have become completely Israelized. Since the 1980s the growth of the Israeli Moroccan ultra-Orthodox party Shas and its leader Ovadia Yosef, which moved many Israeli *Mizrahim* to adopt ultra-Orthodox practices, has left a deep imprint on the religious and education practices of French Jews.

Eliette Abecassis: a French Jewish novelist facing the storm

Suddenly there is a knock on the door. Two kids ages 7 and 9 rush into the room carrying backpacks over their scrawny shoulders. French passports are thrown into a cabinet drawer in the corridor by the former husband who quickly shuts the door and goes down the winding staircase of the post-war building complex in Western Paris. We stop the filming. “My kids just got back from Israel. They stayed there with their father for the Sukkot holidays,” says Eliette Abecassis, the 45-year-old literary icon. She was born in Strasbourg to Sephardic parents. Her father, Armand Abecassis, was born in Casablanca in 1933 and made his way to France in the early 1950s.

He became an exemplar of republican integration and made his way up the elite ladder of French academia as a professor of Jewish philosophy. Armand is also a pioneer in the movement for Jewish-Christian dialogue that began in the wake of “*Nostra Aetate*” in Vatican II.

Eliette Abecassis, like her father, went through a rigorous French academic training, becoming a promising professor in her late 20s. Yet she made her fame as a novelist whose best-selling *Qumran* – a historical novel on the Dead Sea Scrolls – has been translated into 20 languages, including Hebrew. Her literary success did not bring with it a full sense of belonging and security in France: “My kids used to go to a French public school, but I had to place them in a private Jewish school. It is not safe to send Jewish kids to a French public school anymore,” she says with great pain. In just a few years, Jewish pupils left the public school system *en masse* with nearly 60% of Jewish youth now attending a private –Jewish or Catholic – school. “I gave my older daughter a French name – Capucine – but my son was born soon after Ilan Halimi was killed – I gave him a Jewish-Israeli name, Eytan. It means strength.” In 2006, Ilan Halimi, a 23-year-old French Jewish salesman, was deceived online by a gang of Muslim youngsters, and was eventually kidnapped and murdered. The Halimi Affair sent shockwaves throughout France and in particular among French Jews.

Like many French Jews we spoke with, Eliette feels growing uncertainty about her children’s future in Paris. She believes they will end up in Israel. She however is not ready to give up on her country: “I write both as a French and a Jewish woman. I am a *Sepharad*, and I am also Shabbat observant. The Jewish people are my existential center. My love is also Israel.”

Abecassis has been wrestling with the religious exclusion and mistreatment of Jewish women in her writings as well as in her own life. Her novel, *La répudiée*, made into the film “Kaddosh” by Amos Gitai, tells the story of an ultra-Orthodox rabbi who instructs a young man in Jerusalem to end his marriage to his beloved young wife because she failed to conceive and bear children. In the novel, divorce brings the young woman liberation. When Abecassis herself went through a trying divorce, facing a husband who refused to give her the Jewish *Get*, her story became a public drama. She tells us that the French rabbinate of the *Consistoire* is so stringent on marriages and divorces, even more than the ultra-Orthodox

Israeli rabbinate: “They always side with men. In Israel men can be put in jail if they refuse to grant the *Get*, but this is not the case in France.” Indeed as she was considering which religious authorities – the *Consistoire* of France or the Israeli Rabbinate – would carry more authority in freeing her from her husband’s religious chains, the literary icon turned to Jerusalem over Paris and solicited three rabbis to travel from Jerusalem to France in order to have her wedding annulled. How ironic it is that in Paris, a famous writer, the beacon of *laïcité*, needs three Israeli ultra-Orthodox rabbis to provide a “more liberal solution.”

We were overwhelmed by Abecassis’s beauty and depth, and her voice still echoed in the narrow elevator as we were leaving her apartment. The French passports of her kids, freshly stamped by Israel, were still lying in the cabinet drawer.

The Consistoire and the CRIF: between Paris and Jerusalem

The story of Eliette Abecassis turning to Israel’s Chief Rabbinate to obtain her *Get* against the will of the religious radicalism of the *Consistoire* is indicative of the crumbling walls of France’s central religious authority.

The *Consistoire* governed French Judaism for over two centuries. Napoleon established the body in 1808 responding to complaints about Jews and their character as “dishonest peddlers and usurious lenders.” Such stigmatization was circulated widely in the Paris press mainly by Catholic figures who called on the Emperor to disenfranchise the Jews. Instead the Emperor acted to centralize and control French Judaism in a manner that would guarantee Jewish submission to the State in all matters, “including judicial, educational, taxation, and other administrative functions.”¹⁰⁸² The *Consistoire* created a new version of European Judaism known as *franco-judaïsme*. It promoted a model of identity that enabled the *Israélites* to remain Jews at home and citizens in the public sphere (“*Juif à l’intérieur, citoyen au dehors*”). Judaism was thus reduced to a strictly religious creed, thereby minimizing other core

components of identity: ethnic, linguistic, cultural, or national. The *Consistoire's* motto of “*patrie et religion*,” celebrated loyalty to the French Nation as its highest mission. At the turn of the 20th century this vision stood in sharp opposition to the rising movement of political Zionism.

Historian Michael Marrus wrote that when antisemitism exploded in the 1930s, and many Jews discovered the fragility of their politics of assimilation, leaders of the *Consistoire* worked hard, against all hopes, to embrace “ultra-patriotism [...] as the best antidote to antisemitism.” They even considered an alliance with the fascist “Croix de feu” league of Colonel de la Rocque.¹⁰⁸³ Marrus quotes historian David Weinberg who wrote that the tragedy of French Jews was that they held almost blindly to the emancipation idea while most Frenchmen were on their way to reject it.¹⁰⁸⁴ Indeed when the war broke out, official France failed to live up to the promise of emancipation. This was true even in the French Maghreb, where Nazis were not present. Under Vichy's collaboration with the Nazis, Napoleon's *franco-judaïsme* was completely destroyed. Of the 300,000 Jews living in France when the Germans invaded, about 80,000 perished in the Holocaust.

Yet the Jews of France rose from the ashes soon after the Liberation. Already in 1944, Jews who fought in the *résistance* created a non-religious organ initially called the “Representative Council of French Israélites” (the CRIF). This organization would eventually become a competing institution and a threat to the monopoly of the *Consistoire*. In the 1950s and 1960s, the French Jewish community doubled in size as a result of the massive inflow of Sephardic Jews from North Africa. While the *Consistoire's* leadership and practices were Ashkenazi, Sephardic Jews brought with them alternative practices of worship and built new synagogues, the *oratoires*. The *Consistoire* gradually lost its grip. On the eve of the Six-Day War the formerly anti-Zionist *Consistoire* organized mass pro-Israel Jewish demonstrations in the streets of Paris. Such events indicated that French Jews were no longer just a religious minority but also a diaspora with strong kinship affinity to Israel.

Delphine Horvilleur: a woman rabbi shuttling between Jerusalem, New York, and Paris

The growing Israelization of French Jewry impacted French Jewish religious practices. Similar to Jews in North America, French Jews adopted the prayer for the State of Israel and the prayer for the safety of IDF soldiers in the Saturday service. As noted earlier, French Jewish religiosity evolved side by side with the religious transformations taking place in Israel. As the more ultra-Orthodox groups in Israel gained power over religious Zionism and Israel's Chief Rabbinate, the *Consistoire* itself shifted toward greater Orthodoxy. In fact, over the years its leaders adopted a more stringent Judaism acquired in their training in Israeli ultra-Orthodox yeshivot.¹⁰⁸

5

But French Jewish religious practices are not only Orthodox. Again, like in Israel, there are those who are searching for pluralist religious alternatives against the monopoly of the Orthodoxy. In Israel they import theology and practices from American Jewish life. So too in France, liberal Jewish leaders began drawing on American pluralism, emphasizing openness to intermarriage, conversion, gay marriage, and above all women's religious empowerment.

A few blocks away from the house of Eliette Abecassis, in the 15th arrondissement, stands one of the two liberal synagogues of Paris where we meet Rabbi Delphine Horvilleur, the co-chief of the Liberal Jewish Movement of France. On the walls of her office hang large-sized pictures of Ethiopian Jewish *Falashas* awaiting the journey to Jerusalem. Horvilleur comes from an Ashkenazi family with deep roots in eastern France. She became France's third female rabbi in 2008 when she turned 34. We switch to Hebrew, a language that she speaks with total comfort and fluency. For five years she lived in Jerusalem and studied in the Hebrew University's medical school. In Hebrew Horvilleur articulates her visceral love for, and yet split relationship with France: "On my father's side, my grandparents were arrested by the French police and deported to Auschwitz. On my mother's side, they managed to hide thanks to the assistance of remarkable French

Righteous Gentiles. I grew up with this image. On the one side, France had killed us. On the other, France had saved us.” After Jerusalem, Horvilleur moved to New York where she was ordained as a Rabbi at the Hebrew Union College.

Liberal Judaism in France is almost an aberration in a community dominated by North African Jews. The men of this community, mostly Moroccans and Tunisians, are not only traditional, but almost allergic to the idea of French Jews adopting the “Americanization of Judaism.” They are particularly incensed when it comes to Rabbis with high heels. But Horvilleur is a woman with an impressive voice and great courage. She believes her mission is to transplant the American pluralist model of Judaism into France, the country of the Enlightenment. In her view, this is essential in order to end what she calls the “hijacking” of Jewish life by the centralized, statist, and increasingly conservative *Consistoire*. “Legitimacy should spring from every branch of Judaism. Nobody should have a monopoly over texts and multiple interpretations.” She also insists on her feminist ideals: “My vision is modern Judaism with women mastering the texts.” Horvilleur’s bestseller book *In a Birthday Suit: Feminism, Modesty and Judaism* (2013) chastises the obsession of the Israeli ultra-Orthodox world with women’s modesty: “I can’t stand the exclusion of women in Israel and believe that both Israel and France must build progressive religion that fights these regressive forces.” Horvilleur herself also ventures to connect with liberal Judaism inside Israel, in particular with women like Member of Knesset (MK) Ruth Calderon who has championed the movement “ALMA” for empowering Jewish women in traditional life and text study.

In today’s France, a young Jew without a synagogue or a strong connection to Zionism has little to hold onto in terms of his or her Jewish identity. While Horvilleur’s model of Judaism is antithetical to the practices of the conservative French *Consistoire*, for French Jewish secularists God was never high on their list. In fact, even for members of Horvilleur’s own synagogue the struggle for Jewish belonging is not determined in Paris but surprisingly in Jerusalem: “When I receive young couples who want to marry, their first

question is ‘will our *ketuba* be valid in Israel?’” Indeed Israel has emerged as a provider of *kashrut* in every aspect of French Jewish life, to the chagrin of Horvilleur’s French liberal-religious dream.

As Horvilleur’s congregation was preparing for the closing prayer of Yom Kippur, *Neila*, Marc Konczaty, the President of the Mouvement Juif Libéral de France (MJLF), gave an emotional sermon. He acknowledged the presence of Imam Hassen Chalghoumi, the most progressive Imam of France who had the courage to condemn the series of anti-Jewish attacks that devastated the Jewish community ever since the murder of Ilan Halimi in 2006. Konczaty asked “are Jews leaving France because of their love of Israel or because of antisemitism?” He wondered aloud whether too much effort had been spent by the *Consistoire* on inter-religious dialogue, instead of on healing wounds within the Jewish community. He pleaded with the congregants to embrace the liberal values of Judaism and appealed to the new Chief Rabbi of France, Haïm Korsia, to make room for intermarried couples.

The Israelization of French Jewish culture

What constitutes Jewish intellectual life in today’s France? What is “French Jewish culture” at the turn of the 21st century?

The thirst for a rebirth of Jewish life after the Shoah started early, among Jewish fighters of the French *résistance*. In 1946 they opened the “École des cadres Orsay,” a school aimed at training new Jewish leaders who would be connected with their traditions. Similar Jewish intellectual ventures included the “École de Paris,” which advocated for a stronger combination of European universalism with traditional Jewish teachings. The philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas was the spiritual leader of this group. He and his colleagues, including the biblical scholar André Neher, the Algerian-born rabbi Leon Ashkenazi (the legendary Manitou), and the philosopher Vladimir Jankélévich, strove to give Judaism a place of honor in the French *belleslettres*. In 1957, they initiated the “*Colloquia* of French-speaking Jewish intellectuals,” a yearly

convention of French Jewish figures that remained the matrix of French Jewish intellectual life until the 1990s. At the same time, a corpus of “French Jewish literature” prospered under the pens of Salonika-born novelist Albert Cohen, Egyptian-born poet Edmond Jabès, and the 2014 Nobel Prize winning chronicler of German Occupation, Patrick Modiano. Furthermore, after the publication in 1974 of Solzhenitsyn’s *Gulag Archipelago*, a new generation of “anti-totalitarian intellectuals” of Jewish descent emerged. Among them, Alain Finkielkraut, André Glucksmann, and Bernard-Henri Lévy. These public intellectuals had tremendous visibility in the French intellectual scene until the late 1990s.

In the last two decades Jewish culture in France still seemed to be thriving, with the flourishing of new cultural initiatives and the creation of Jewish institutions and academic programs. French bookshops are filled with Judaica. And yet, there is also a deep sense among many French Jewish intellectuals that this “golden age” is in its twilight. This is also the impression of Professor Astrid von Busekist. She chairs the PhD program at Sciences Po, Paris but has established strong ties with Israeli universities. While French academia is filled with scholars and professors of Jewish descent, “there is almost no intellectual Jewish life in France today,” says Professor Pierre Birnbaum. This is quite an astounding observation by one of France’s leading sociologists.

Birnbaum hosted us in his home-office in the 13th arrondissement. He seemed to be in a fatigued and disillusioned mood when he reflected on the future of French Judaism. “When I decided to write a book about Jews and not about the sociology of the State as I used to, I felt quickly exiled to the periphery of French intellectual life.” For many of his colleagues the book was an intellectual digression from greater intellectual questions. “Their message was: ‘Why Pierre did you move to the margins? Stay with us, stay with us.’”

The intellectual celebrity Bernard-Henri Lévy – better known as BHL – disagrees with Birnbaum that there is no Jewish intellectual life in France. He receives us in his stylish

home dressed with his familiar black jacket and white shirt. Characteristically BHL sees himself as the quintessential French Jewish intellectual. In the French academy he may have only a few followers but he could not care less. When I hosted BHL at Tel Aviv University in the summer of 2011 he “made history.” BHL gave a lecture that was put up onto YouTube, in which he made a statement about the possibility of preventing the rise of Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt by the army. Two years later, President Morsi was indeed ousted by the army led by President Sisi. Turkey’s Prime Minister Erdogan presented the YouTube clip of the Tel Aviv University event as proof of the Jewish Zionist conspiracy to unseat the Muslim Brotherhood. BHL and I laughed loudly. He says that it is quite remarkable how a leader of such a great country like Turkey could resort to such childish, antisemitic accusations. “Mr. Erdogan is an overgrown child who was playing a game of Ottoman Empire in which the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt was a powerful card. Then all of the sudden the game is over. At which point the king stamps his foot and falls back, as I’ve said, on the old story of the Jewish conspiracy.”¹⁰⁸⁶ BHL continues to laugh: “Thanks to Erdogan, my stature is growing!”

BHL has little formal ties to the French Jewish community. “I know how to write and appear in the media, this is what I do.” He is perhaps the most visible French neocon, although he probably would not like this title. “My focus,” he says, “is on democracy and justice.” BHL acknowledges that antisemitism is an integral part of France and is convinced that his country is saturated with a strong Muslim antisemitism. “But France as a whole is not antisemitic,” he insists. He also stresses that there is “an intellectual disease of Israel hatred” and a distorted vision of Israel as the world’s central evil. It sickens him. “I just don’t deal with it. I despise them.” BHL also expresses his contempt for post-Zionist Israelis. “Let them read Shlomo Sand and enjoy his book.” “I never heard about Peter Beinart,” he says, nor does he care about Beinart’s claim that there is a “crisis of Zionism” because of the occupation. Lévy vehemently refuses to apologize for Israel’s behavior. On the contrary, he believes that Israel is an exemplary democratic

model. "I am not afraid for Israel every day, I am glad that Israel is strong and vibrant. Israel should solve the Iranian and Palestinian issues but we must not forget that Israel is the greatest success story of the 20th century." For BHL, Tocqueville's new edition of *Democracy in America* should be retitled *Democracy in Israel*.

Just at the time when everybody is talking about French Jews' moving to Israel, Israeli novelists, filmmakers, actors, choreographers, dancers, and musicians are landing in ever-increasing numbers at the Charles de Gaulle airport. They receive numerous honors for their artistic talent and innovations. While many people in the media are calling for the boycott of the Jewish "apartheid State," Israeli culture is thriving in Paris, Cannes, and Avignon. *Nouvel Observateur*, *Le Monde*, *Libération*, and *Le Figaro* have celebrated Israeli novelists Amos Oz, David Grossman, and A. B. Yehoshua as the "Israeli Sartres." Israeli writers Aharon Appelfeld, Zeruya Shalev, Meir Shalev, Ronit Matalon, and the Israeli-Arab novelist Sayed Kashua are fast emerging literary luminaries in the elitist French book market. French infatuation with Israeli cinema is particularly stunning with filmmakers and actresses Ronit Elkabetz and Yael Abecassis as Parisian stars. "France, which is not known for its pro-Israeli positions, adopts a real protectionist policy when it comes to Israeli cinema. [...] This is an incredible dynamic: if France does not officially support Israel, it just loves its cinema!" wrote H el ene Schoumann, a French journalist and President of the Festival of the Israeli Film in Paris. In fact, France has become the foreign country where Israeli movies have enjoyed the greatest success. Book publisher H elo ise d'Ormesson, the daughter of the famous French historian and intellectual, tells us: "We are looking for upcoming Israeli talents. This is a hot commodity in Paris." It is a moment when Israeli cultural production has for the first time been recognized and appreciated as *Israeli* and not only as indistinctly *Jewish* as it had been in the past. It is also a moment when Jewish Israeli intellectuals are *the* new voices of reference of the Jewish people as a whole. Daniel Shek, former Israeli ambassador to France, tells us that "Jewish culture may fade away with the rising prominence of Israeli culture."

Changing histories and memories

“Whether you like it or not, whether you are critical or unconditionally supportive (of Israel’s government), [...] our destiny is related to Israel,” said one of France’s most influential Jewish intellectuals, Alain Finkielkraut. This statement is quite striking when it comes from one of France’s most conservative intellectuals who recently became a member of the French Academy.

The fact that Israel emerged as the most powerful rallying point of French Jewry is not self-evident. Political Zionism in France remained weak well into the troubling days of fascism. Even after the Holocaust and the creation of the State of Israel, many French Jews continued to keep the flame of emancipation burning in their hearts. They were trying to build a new life despite the fire that consumed so many of them in the Shoah. French Jews wanted to believe that Vichy’s antisemitism was an aberration. The post-war years were dominated by the desire to restore normality. Jews yet again championed the French republican tradition. Moreover, after the Holocaust European antisemitism was widely repudiated and was held to be in bad taste. France’s love affair with Israel in the 1950s and the 1960s also brought hope that Zionism could in fact work in tandem and strengthen the bond between Jews and their French *patrie*. But the honeymoon between France and Israel did not last. Their bilateral relations waned after Algerian independence, and were severely strained after the Six-Day War as France shifted its sympathy toward the Arabs.

The status and treatment of Jews in modern France has always been entangled and filtered through France’s own changing identity. The Jewish question is perhaps a litmus test in France’s historical debate over the core idea of republican citizenship. Hence France’s ongoing wrestling match between national particularism and civic universalism put the Jews at the epicenter of its historic drama.

On the eve of the Revolution, the status of Jews was one of the main catalysts in building the ethos of civic equality and

minority inclusion. Gary Kates has written that the debate “over Jewish emancipation was in fact a debate over what it meant to be a French citizen.”¹⁰⁸⁷ A century later the outburst of antisemitism during the Dreyfus affair was a crucial juncture not only for Herzl’s Zionism but also in testing the power of France’s assimilationist creed and the resilience of the Third Republic’s democratic institutions. The Dreyfus trial gave France the legacy of Emile Zola. The rocky period of the socialist Popular Front in the early 1930s exposed yet again the nexus between French identity and the Jewish question. The nationalists and antisemites who perpetrated the vitriolic attack against France’s first Jewish Prime Minister Léon Blum were informed by the very idea that socialism itself is a Jewish invention intended to split and abuse the French nation. Nazi occupation and Vichy’s regime reduced Jews to second-class citizens. Overnight, in 1940, they lost their public positions and property rights. The greatest failure of France to uphold its core principles and honor in extreme times of peril came with the roundup of Jews for extermination by the French police in 1942.

In the 1980s Shoah memory and France’s own behavior under Vichy took center stage. Nothing contributed more to this shift than Columbia University historian Robert Paxton’s 1972 book *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940–1944*. The French translation of his work sent shockwaves through French society. Before Paxton, writes Martin Evans, “[n]obody had any interest in returning to the historical roots of Vichy. Gaullists cherished the image of massive support for de Gaulle from the first hour. The Communist Party wanted to forget its neutralism during the Nazi-Soviet pact. Conservatives wished to cling to the idea of Pétain’s passive resistance, whilst technocrats rejected any suggestion of a Vichy legacy in post-war economic planning.”

We met Serge Klarsfeld and his wife Beate during the Jewish high holidays in Paris. The home-office of the former Nazi hunters was packed with boxes and organized folders, a veritable archive of France’s drawn-out battle for Shoah memory. On the wall hung a map of the Auschwitz extermination camp and on the table laid a huge book, half a

meter tall and weighing about 15 kilos, that closely documents the roundup and deportation of 76,000 French Jews to extermination camps. Serge worked on this project for decades and he is proud to tell us that the book is now displayed in State museums and archives, and has become the official French documentation of Vichy's crimes. Serge is almost 80 years old, and Beate is in her mid-70s. Both look very youthful and gaze at each other with loving eyes. He was 8 years old when his Romanian-born father, Arno, was arrested by Vichy and deported to Auschwitz. The young child was hiding in the wardrobe, and witnessed the entire deportation scene. Beate grew up as a German Lutheran, and was 5 years old when Nazi Germany was defeated. When she turned 20 she traveled to Paris to become an *au pair* and met Serge in the Paris metro. "We fell in love in a station just underneath our home." The couple soon became known all over the world for their daring missions to bring former Nazis and collaborationists to justice. They also played an important role in France's gradual reckoning of its own sins during the Shoah.

Jews and the National Front: the Drama of the Zemmour Affair

Seventy years after the Shoah, when the fault lines in the struggle between universalists and ethno-culturalists are defined primarily by France's attitudes toward its Muslim community, the subject of "Vichy and the Jews" continues to inform debates over immigration policy and collective memory. The current "threat of Muslim immigrants" is now debated with references to Jews under Vichy. In France, Général Pétain and Pierre Laval's culpability during the Shoah is far from being a settled memory and attempts to set the historical records straight are used as a currency in the rivalry between the far-right National Front and the mainstream republican parties. The far-right under Marine Le Pen is seeking to rehabilitate Vichy's record, defending the claim that Pétain protected the "national interests," advanced the vision of "France for the French," and upheld the principle of "*préférence nationale*." These arguments are now presented as "new historical evidence" against the well-respected

historiography of Robert Paxton and Michael Marrus, which uncovered Vichy's crimes and became the authoritative history of France. The "new historians" are painting Vichy's treatment of the Jews "with greater nuances," emphasizing that only "foreign Jews" were rounded up and delivered to the Nazis, while the vast majority of French Jewish citizens were in fact saved.

When in October 2014 such revisionist reading was made public by Jewish media icon Eric Zemmour, in his best-seller book *Le Suicide Français* [The French Suicide], a huge public storm erupted. Thousands of French followed hours of debates about Vichy and the Jews on prime time television and on the cover pages of *Le Figaro*, *Le Point*, and *Le Nouvel Observateur*. Certainly the construction of memories is part of the political arsenal available to actors in domestic and foreign politics. Salient memories of historic struggle and victimhood and suffering, or memories of victories and triumphs of human will, can lend legitimacy to actions in our time. Adjusted memories are what Carl Schmidt called "the surplus value of legitimacy." When "old" historians, including Paxton, and many French public figures realized the danger of Zemmour's assault on France's official memory, they responded harshly with counter-arguments and condemnation of "historical amateurism." Serge Klarsfeld was adamant in his criticism of Zemmour's attempt to create a moral confusion in French domestic politics by reconfiguring Vichy's memory to suit political ends. He argued that Zemmour's attempt to legitimate Le Pen's struggle against Muslim migrants by wiping the stain from General Pétain and Pierre Laval was unforgivable. "I think Eric Zemmour writes this today in order to clear the National Front. He would like to be the National Front's intellectual guide. The arguments of [...] Zemmour and (Jewish historian) Alain Michel are two Jewish theses that serve the positions of the National Front."¹⁰⁸⁸

The penetration of the Shoah into French official memory was influenced by and took place in conjunction with the rise of Auschwitz as the paradigm of universal suffering, what Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder called "cosmopolitan memory." Although Auschwitz and the "March of the Living"

became an annual pilgrimage for Israeli and Diaspora Jews, many have also started to question the so-called “over-usage” of the Shoah. One must remember that international actors tap into the memory bank at any time, consciously or unconsciously in order to justify their action and undermine rivals. The Jews are also susceptible to revisionist historians from within and without their community. Even former Knesset Speaker Avraham Burg declared that the “Holocaust is over; we must rise from its ashes.” Such expressions are quickly adopted by anti-Zionists and anti-Jewish forces. Indeed around the world, blaming world Jewry and Israel of using the Holocaust to justify their own acts of injustice, and turning the table on Israel itself in order to demonize it as a genocidal entity, is a common practice. In many French schools, whenever the Shoah is taught Muslim students object vociferously demanding to know “why the suffering of the Jews in the past is taught while our suffering in the present by the Jews is neglected?” Such new antisemitic charges are alarming Serge Klarsfeld, who tells us that those who claim that Israel is exaggerating the Holocaust or that Bibi is exaggerating the Iranian threat are enemies of the Jews: “Remember, it can happen once again overnight.”

As we are about to depart the Klarsfelds’ home, their son Arno shows up. Arno is known in France as a brilliant lawyer and a human rights activist. For many French he is also known as a former companion of Carla Bruni and an advisor to the former French President Sarkozy. Arno worked with his parents on the trial of the mass murderer Klaus Barbie. He is an ardent Zionist who lived in Israel and served in the IDF’s border defense. He also holds Israeli citizenship, a point always mentioned during his interviews with the French media. They like to remind him of his dual identity, maybe dual loyalty. When in July 2014 thousands of pro-Palestinian demonstrators flooded the streets of France, torching Jewish shops, community centers and eight synagogues while chanting “Death to the Jews!” and “Burn the Jews!,” Arno spoke on the French radio and said: “If I had children I think I would leave France.” This was at the time of the Israeli Operation “Protective Edge” in Gaza. As thousands of missiles were falling on Israeli cities and Israel retaliated with heavy

bombing in Gaza, a black Swastika was drawn on Paris's Statue de la République. The sacrosanct symbol of the French Republic was covered with Palestinian, Algerian, Turkish, and Islamic State flags.

Boeing Aliyah and the “moment of truth”

The growing antisemitism in France and the fact that Jews have become a “soft belly” of Israel's security brought French Jews into a “Moment of Truth” to quote Michel Gurfinkiel.¹⁰⁸⁹ A writer and a recognized public intellectual in Jewish circles in the United States, Gurfinkiel is the son of Polish Holocaust survivors. He was born in Paris after the war and grew up as a fervent Gaullist. His Jewish identity was awakened when de Gaulle made his stunning statement directed at Israel. “I was nineteen at the time [...]; I remember listening to the radio broadcast and feeling my blood run cold.”¹⁰⁹⁰ De Gaulle's statement revived the antisemitic canards of a not too distant past – the Vichy experience – and reawakened the trauma of a seemingly normal existence being interrupted overnight.

Over the years, Gurfinkiel became more religiously observant. He sees a grim future for French Jews but he himself cannot leave yet. He also speaks with great concern about the future of liberal democracy in Europe. He and his wife Brigitte hosted us for a Rosh Hashana dinner. They do not turn on the lights on Shabbat and holidays, so we climb into their apartment in absolute darkness. When we left the beautiful Jewish celebration we were still praying, but this time that one of the “goyim” will activate the door buzzer so we can get out of the building. The Gurfinkiels live in an apartment building that belongs to the Paris municipality. Many of the building's residents are North African and sub-Saharan African immigrants. There are also many Turkish tenants in the building. Gurfinkiel talks about the sweeping demographic changes in his neighborhood. He speaks with empathy about the immigrants but he is very concerned about the growing Islamic antisemitism. “Jewish hatred,” he tells us, “is now displayed with impunity [...]. Everybody is vulnerable.”

Even before the terrorist attacks of January 2015, Gurfinkiel considered the Halimi Affair of 2006 and the murder of three Jewish children and their teacher in Toulouse in 2012 as critical turning points: “This is not the end,” he told us. “This hate is strong and getting stronger. It is unstoppable [...]. France is Islamized.” But Gurfinkiel also points out that there is a paradox in this predicament. In danger, Jews congregate more around members of the tribe. This in fact strengthens French Judaism. There are more *shochtim* (kosher butchers) and kosher restaurants, synagogues and Jewish schools than any other time in French history, he says. “Jewish parents are actually afraid of sending their kids to public schools.” Gurfinkiel’s own daughters and grandson already live in Jerusalem: “What is interesting about Jewish education,” he laughs, “is that eventually it works.”

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59. Israel and the Diaspora: Convergent and Divergent Markers

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An earlier version of this paper appeared as “Jewish Peoplehood: Hard, Soft, and Interactive Markers,” in *Reconsidering Israel-Diaspora Relations*, edited by Eliezer Ben-Rafael, Judit Bokser Liwerant, and Yosef Gorny, 25–59. Leiden: Brill, 2014.

Multiple markers of Jewish peoplehood

Since the early origins and in the *longue durée*, inherent tensions have existed between several possible concepts and interpretations of Jewish peoplehood. We define Jewish *peoplehood* as being part of or connected to a Jewish *people*, whether by choice or not, and carrying the consequences of such circumstance. Definitions of Jewish peoplehood have relied on *inside* versus *outside* judgment and circumstances. One fundamental contrast is between a *Jewish peoplehood of presence*, dependent primarily on physical-demographic realities, in turn reflecting a changing set of outer circumstances, including market conditions and judgment expressed by outsiders that may stimulate or deter the given collective’s ability to subsist at a given point in time and space; versus a *Jewish peoplehood of contents*, dependent on a unique set of inside norms and values, in turn reflecting the capability to transmit such contents from generation to generation regardless of external time and space circumstances. Much of the current debate about Jewish peoplehood, its nature, changing configuration, and dynamic trends indeed still revolves around the forces and circumstances that may produce either result, and about the longer term viability of the final product thus attained.

Closer resolution requires attention to the manifold and multivariate markers of the processes at stake. The use of the

term *markers*, often applied in the natural sciences, does not intend to convey a particular interpretative focus, but simply to restrain overused terms like: process, trend, variable, factor, force, dimension. Debates on Jewish peoplehood often focus on one major process (such as assimilation versus revival) or seek mono-causal explanations (such as exposure to a given type of formal or informal Jewish education). Avoidance of undue generalization and simplification demands that the many possible major drivers of change and other intervening mechanisms be analytically distinguished and disaggregated. Most importantly, the study of Jewish peoplehood – also viewed as a paradigm in the comparative study of other peoplehoods – needs to be undertaken in the light of appropriate investigative instruments which unfortunately still seem to be largely lacking conceptually or underdeveloped empirically.

In order to significantly appreciate the ongoing trends and their implications, several markers of Jewish peoplehood should be monitored simultaneously. Some of these main markers of the general nature, internal composition and changing relevance of Jewish peoplehood are listed in Table 1. A first distinction is between processes that unfold as a consequence of:

- (a) factors operating inside the Jewish collective, independently and differently in different places, and whose balance contributes to reshaping the whole global Jewish configuration;
- (b) factors operating outside the Jewish collective, globally and locally, whose balance independently influences the whole global Jewish collective; and
- (c) factors of active interactions between parts of the Jewish collective located in different places, global change resulting from changing relations of dominance/dependency between the different local components.

Tab. 1: Israel-Diaspora relations: hard and soft markers

Process unfolds:	Hard markers	Soft markers
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<p>Internally, in each locale: different dynamics in each place reshape global Jewish configuration</p> <p>Externally, globally and locally: different effects of non-Jewish environment on Jews reshape global Jewish configuration</p> <p>Through active mutual interaction between locales: different dominance-dependency between Jews in different places reshape global Jewish configuration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demographic trends - Socioeconomic stratification - Jewish accessions and secessions - Physical violence and murder - Antisemitic, anti-Jewish, anti-Israeli discrimination and harassment - Import/export of migrants - Import/export of resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jewish religious and secular identifications - Jewish politics, institutions and governance - Jewish assimilation - Import/export of Jewish religious culture and secular tastes and skills - Import/export of Jewish politics, institutions and governance
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A second distinction is between *social-structural/materialistic* (here defined as *hard*) markers, and *normative/ideational* (here defined as *soft*) markers. The former include demography and population, social stratification, material resources, physical violence and other unilateral expressions of harassment and discrimination whose effects are objectively measurable and create new firm points of departure toward further developments. The latter include attitudinal, normative,

psychological, political and institutional expressions more difficult to measure, and whose consequences may be more ambiguous or reversible.

A third distinction is between processes that generate *convergence and greater similarity* across the global Jewish collective, on the one hand, versus *divergence and growing heterogeneity*, on the other hand. The question whether different geographical components of the whole global Jewish configuration tend over time to become closer or most distant is debatable indeed.¹⁰⁹¹ It carries momentous consequences on whether one Jewish peoplehood, or several, or none should be considered in the final analysis. The working hypothesis here is that there *can* exist a concept of one recognizable global Jewish collective, bound to be measured, monitored over time, compared across space, and assessed in its ongoing mutations and polymorphisms. Such an opinion may not be held unanimously in today's scholarly community or among the public at large,¹⁰⁹² but it still constitutes a solid and sufficiently documented default option to allow us to proceed further into our investigation without further do.

A fourth distinction, stemming from the dual experience of modern and contemporary Jewry as a *minority* or a *majority* of their total population environments, naturally leads to a comparison or even confrontation between trends occurring in Israel and elsewhere. Quite often this duality is construed as a relationship between a *center* and a *periphery* within the global Jewish configuration. Historically, and reflecting Jewish population size and density versus other population groups, different places have competed for primacy in the dialectics between a real or imagined role of center, and a chosen or ascribed role of periphery. This is not the main focus of this article, which is more concerned with a wide description of patterns rather than with their hierarchical ordering or specific geographical location. However there is growing theoretical interest and substantive significance in adjudicating between the rival models of *center-diaspora* versus *multi-centered* versus *center-less transnational* in the global assessment of Jewish peoplehood.

This article selectively analyzes some of the issues briefly outlined here, based on a variety of findings from recent research. It also suggests some working tools which, if practically implemented, might help to strengthen the study and understanding of the topic at stake.

Hard markers

Population size and geography

The primary marker of Jewish peoplehood is changes in the number of Jews worldwide as against changes in the world's total population. Looking at changes between 1945 and 2013, in Israel, and, in the aggregate of the rest of the world – commonly referred to as the Jewish Diaspora – the world's *core* Jewish population (see definitions below) was estimated at 11 million in 1945 and reached 14.2 million in 2014.¹⁰⁹³ The core Jewish population concept assumes mutually exclusive sub-populations even though multiple cultural identities are an increasingly frequent feature in contemporary societies. While 13 years were needed to add one million Jews after the tragic human losses of World War II and the Shoah, 47 more years were needed to add another million.¹⁰⁹⁴

Since the 1970s, world Jewry stagnated at *zero population growth* for nearly 20 years, with some recovery during the first decade of the 21st century. This was the result of the combination of two very different demographic trends in Israel and in the Diaspora. Israel's Jewish population increased linearly from an initial one-half million in 1945 to 6.1 million in 2014. The Diaspora, from an initial 10.5 million in 1945, was quite stable until the early 1970s, when it started decreasing to the current 8.1 million. The world's total population increased more than threefold from 2.315 billion in 1945 to 7.243 billion in 2014. Thus, the relative share of Jews among the world's total population steadily diminished from 4.75 per 1,000 in 1945 to 1.94 per 1,000 currently.

World Jewish population has tended to become more strongly concentrated in few major locations. In 2014, two countries, Israel and the US, accounted for over 83% of the

total, versus 63% in 1970. Another 16 countries each with more than 18,000 Jews accounted for another 15% of the 2014 total, and another 77 countries each with Jewish populations below 18,000, accounted for the remaining 2%. When comparing changes intervened between 1970 and 2014, the later distributive pattern is indeed much more concentrated. Israel has substituted the US as the largest Jewish population, and significant changes have occurred in the list of the 20 largest centers of Jewish life. Of the countries listed in 1970, eight have disappeared in 2014: Belarus, Uzbekistan, Moldova, Iran, Romania, Georgia, Morocco, Azerbaijan, while eight have appeared that were not listed in 1970: Germany, Mexico, Belgium, Netherlands, Italy, Chile, Switzerland, Uruguay. In other words, five former Soviet republics, another Eastern European country formerly part of the Soviet area of influence, a country in Asia and a country in North Africa have been substituted among the majors by five countries in Western Europe and three in Latin America pointing to definite Westernization of the global collective. But the smallest of the 20 largest Jewish populations listed had diminished from 39,000 in 1970, to 18,000 in 2014. Finally, the balance of all other countries comprised 564,000 Jews in 1970 versus 203,000 in 2014, confirming the general contraction in the dispersive profile of Jewish peoplehood.

Geographical mobility

World Jewish geography is critically determined by the volume and direction of international migration. Between the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 21st century roughly 10 million Jews moved from, to, and across countries and continents. More than half, about 5.2 million, moved between 1948 and 2013. These figures stand against a total Jewish population estimated at 10.5 million in 1900, 16.5 million in 1939, 11 million in 1945, and 14.2 million in 2014, and demonstrate the uniquely high impact of migrants out of total Jewry. The mere observation of the size and distribution over time of this imposing human flow provides important interpretative clues about its nature.

Assessments of Jewish migration since World War II can be referred to two main periods, 1948–1968 with an estimated total of nearly 1.9 million migrants, and 1969–2012, with a total of over 3.25 million. Israel was the principal recipient of Jewish migration, 69% of the total during the earlier period and 59% during the latter. Not only did migration constitute the main vector of Jewish population redistribution, it also demonstrated the systemic nature of Jewish peoplehood. Consistent reciprocity modes were established across the main poles of Jewish settlement and resettlement. The intensity of such relationships was strongly affected by the nature of each type of place; hence the transfer of a person from place to place affected the likelihood of further movement from each place to another, with consequences for the volume and mobility directions across the whole Jewish migration system.

In-depth understanding of the underlying logic of Jewish international migration is allowed by looking at the admittedly selective but uniquely detailed and reliable data of movement of Jews and their extended families to Israel. The respective rates of migration to Israel per 1,000 Jews in a country can be represented as against the ranking of the respective countries of origin according to the Human Development Index (HDI).¹⁰
⁹⁵ The HDI provides a synthesis of indicators of health, education and income in real terms among the total population in each country. The correlation between country HDI rank and the frequency of migration to Israel is very powerful and negative: -61.1%. If we assume that Jewish migration to Israel – and presumably to other countries as well – were to be explained exclusively by the levels of education, health, and income in the general population of a country, those basic variables alone would explain 37.3% of the total country variance. Reality is of course rather more complex, as it involves many more possible cultural, political, and personal determinants of migration, but this simple functionalist explanation is singularly powerful.

Significant differences in the migration propensities appear not only between individual countries but also between broader geo-cultural regions. The lowest migration rates appear among countries here defined as Oversea Anglo – the

transoceanic human and cultural product of past migrations initiated in the British Isles, including the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. These countries also share some of the top HDI rankings. A second group of countries with somewhat weaker HDIs and higher migration rates is Western Europe, followed by Eastern Europe. Countries in Latin America and the FSU share comparatively similar HDIs, but migration rates from the FSU are significantly higher. Finally, in countries in Asia and Africa which today have only minimal Jewish populations, small numbers of migrants are sufficient to generate high migration frequencies. The extreme case is Ethiopia which, besides being one of the poorest countries in the world, generates a migration of persons (the *Falash Mura*) whose Jewishness is attained only after actual migration and conversion in Israel (performed under the authority and rules of the Orthodox Chief Rabbinate). Therefore, relatively large numbers of migrants from Ethiopia match with a Jewish population basically extinguished in the country of origin, thus producing artificially high migration rates.

The large-scale and at the same time selective impact of Jewish international migration naturally affected the geographical configuration of world Jewry. By carefully assessing the final product of such movements one gains further insights on their deeper determinants and meaning. The relationship that existed in 2014 between the numbers of Jews per 1,000 of the total population in over 90 countries and the level of development of the respective countries can be represented again against country development measured through the HDI. The simple correlation between the two variables (country development and relative presence of Jews) is again very high: 64.0%. Israel, here included among all other countries, features a uniquely high proportion of Jews among its total population. This uniqueness, however, is not incompatible with the general developmental model in view of Israel's quite high place (16th) in global HDI ranking. Assuming a directional relationship between country's level of development and Jewish presence, HDI ranking of a country alone explains 40.9% (and 41.5% if excluding Israel) of inter-country variation in the percentage of Jews out of total population. This remarkably high result points to an extremely

robust relationship of *dependency* of the Jewish presence on the level of development attained in a given society. Indeed, one might postulate that the relative Jewish presence in a country does not *depend* on its level of development but rather *determines* it. No matter how attractive this hypothesis, it seems to reflect a rather naïve way of thinking about world affairs.

The current geographical profile of world Jewry is radically different from the one that prevailed in the past when the Jewish presence was determined by political or religious circumstances and often led to the need to find whatever niches were available in less developed peripheries of the global system. The current configuration instead reflects the freedom of movement of the last generations, especially since World War II, and the natural tendency of people to try to improve their environment if given the opportunity there are no constraints to the choice to leave a country or to settle in a different one. In particular, many people would seek for improvement in their socioeconomic opportunities and in the legal framework governing the degree of freedom and civil rights available. Socioeconomic and legal/civil rights frameworks appear to be powerfully correlated at the country level. As already noted, the exodus from the FSU demonstrates the huge effects on migration intensity and on local population size when sudden changes emerge in such given opportunities.

As a rule, those countries that we have labeled Oversea Anglo have some of the better HDI rankings and the higher percentages of Jews among total population – followed on both accounts by Western Europe, and by Eastern Europe. Latin America and the FSU (after the great exodus) have comparatively similar HDI ranking/ Jewish percentage situations, but at a given HDI level the percentage of Jews in the FSU is still generally higher. Finally, countries in Asia and Africa (with the notable exception of Japan and Korea) have the lowest level of development as measured by HDI, and the lowest percentages of Jews.

Demographic change

Demographic trends are one of the main engines of changing population size and composition. Age structure provides a powerful synthetic indication of the nature of demographic trends within a given population, namely the interplay of fertility levels (in turn affected by marriage propensities and by frequencies of choice of partner within or outside the Jewish domain) and survivorship. The relationship between the share of children below 15 and of elders 65 and over has evolved in the US, in the Former Soviet Union/the Russian Republic, and in Palestine/ Israel in basically the same direction of aging. But the difference between Israel and the rest of world Jewry in this respect is striking. Age composition of Jews in Israel in 1948 was the same as in the USSR in 1926, but Israel subsequently underwent relatively minor age-structural change keeping all the time a relatively young and balanced mix of age-groups. Israel's age composition in 1995 was similar to that of Jews in the US in 1957, and still in 2012 it featured a substantial surplus of children over the elderly. Jews in the Russian Republic underwent quite a dramatic process of aging and in 2002 had only 5% of children versus 37% of elders. This extreme case of what has been termed a *terminal* age composition was enhanced by three main factors: very low fertility, high rates of intermarriage estimated at above 70% by the 1990s, and more recently mass emigration selectively more inclusive of younger adults and children.¹⁰⁹⁶ Jews in the US too shifted toward population aging, though at a slower pace than in Russia, because of below-replacement fertility and intermarriage rates approaching 60% by the 2010s.¹⁰⁹⁷ Already in 2001 and more so in 2011, the estimated share of elders surpassed that of children.

Over the years Jews in Israel maintained steady fertility levels, significantly higher than among all developed countries and even more so in comparison to Jews elsewhere in the world.¹⁰⁹⁸ Israel also had intrinsically low intermarriage rates, estimated at 5% at most.¹⁰⁹⁹ Diaspora Jewish communities, besides their intrinsically low birthrates, incurred significant losses of potential Jewish children through the non-Jewish socialization and affiliation of many of the descendants of intermarriages. Thus *effectively Jewish fertility* was usually

lower than an already low total fertility of Jews. The consequence of low fertility in the presence of rising population longevity is a gradual relative increase in the share of the elderly among total population. A younger population is bound to expand, while an aging one is bound to shrink. A clear Israel/ Diaspora dichotomy emerges regarding Jewish demographic patterns.

Socioeconomic mobility

Socioeconomic stratification and mobility is one of the major markers of the nature of a society. It outlines levels of human capital and development, equality or inequality in the internal distribution of opportunities and resources, and directions of change intimately related to other aspects of collective life. Educational attainment provides a sufficiently representative proxy among several other indicators as well, such as occupational patterns and income levels.

Higher education achievement is measured here through the amount of academization of the younger Jewish adult generation in different countries. The proportions of those who attain post-secondary education and academic degrees are constantly increasing across the board, namely the percent of younger Jewish adults in their late 20s and early 30s who ever went to college, and of those who completed at least a first university cycle and received a B.A. degree. Of course, those with completed academic training are part of those who ever went to college. In the US in 1957, 23% of Jewish women versus 38% of Jewish men had ever attended college at 30–39, and 10% of women versus 26% of men of the same ages had any academic degree. By 2001 these percentages had spectacularly increased: 89% of Jewish women and 88% of man had at least some college education, while 67% of Jewish women and 71% of men had attained a degree. Most of the increase had occurred by 1990 showing that the trend of educational achievement already approached its possible peak.

In France the extent of academic studies among Jews was quite high and expanding, too, but it did not reach the level of US Jewry, implying wider margins for further growth. In 2002,

73% of Jewish women aged 30–39 versus 69% of Jewish men had some college education, and 43% of women versus 45% of men had a college degree. It should be stressed that both in the US and in France, rates of academization of Jewish adults were in the past and remained significantly and uniquely higher than among the total population, in spite of the general progress in educational attainment. The respective frequencies in Israel were initially much lower, but grew much faster than elsewhere. Israel's college exposure rates in the 1960s were about one-third those of US Jews, but around 2000 they had grown to reach three-fourths of those in the US. College completion in Israel grew from about one-fifth to nearly one-half of the respective achievement among US Jews. The growth in higher education was particularly impressive among Israeli women whose rates passed from 7% of exposure and 2% of completion in the 1960s, to 66% and 35% respectively around 2000.

Keeping in mind that the data refer to younger adult cohorts who tend to be better educated than older people, we observe here the edge of a continuing trend toward ever increasing higher education. As against past differences that existed in the opportunity and practice of higher education across segments of the Jewish people in different regions of the world, considerable convergence has occurred, remarkably so between lower opportunities in Israel and higher opportunities across Diaspora communities. Moreover, the gender gap – once one of the markers of deeper social structural differences – has nearly disappeared among Jewish populations globally.

Soft markers

Defining the collective

The discussion of the soft markers of Jewish peoplehood must start from the very definition of the boundaries of the collective. Beyond classic discussions of “who is a Jew” contemporary society is widely characterized by a high amount of fluidity and ambivalence vis-à-vis identities – not

only religious, national or cultural but also class- or even gender-related. In this general context, the capability to generate a widespread consensus around fundamental concepts tends to diminish.

Jewish population figures presented above refer to a definitional concept known in the literature as the *core Jewish population*. It includes all persons who, when asked in a socio-demographic survey, identify themselves as Jews; *or* who are identified as Jews by a respondent in the same household, *and* do not have another monotheistic religion. Such a definition of a person as a Jew, reflecting *subjective* perceptions, broadly overlaps but does not necessarily coincide with *Halakha* (Jewish law) or other normatively binding definitions. Inclusion does *not* depend on any measure of that person's Jewish commitment or behavior in terms of religiosity, beliefs, knowledge, communal affiliation, or otherwise. The core Jewish population includes people who identify as Jews by religion, as well as others who are *not* interested in religion but see themselves as Jews by ethnicity or by other cultural criteria. Some others do not even recognize themselves as Jews when asked, but they descend from Jewish parents and do not hold another religious identity. The core Jewish population also includes all converts to Judaism by any procedure, as well as other people who declare they are Jewish without conversion and do not hold another identity. Persons of Jewish parentage who adopted another monotheistic religion are excluded, as are persons of Jewish origin who in censuses or socio-demographic surveys explicitly identify with a non-Jewish religious group without having formally converted out. The *core* concept offers an intentionally comprehensive and pragmatic approach reflecting the nature of many available demographic data sources.

In the wake of the modern and contemporary increase in intermarriage, a significant growth has occurred in the numbers of descendants of intermarriages who are not uniquely committed to the identification of the Jewish parent but hold significant bonds to both. Therefore numerous people today hold multiple identities, including many – mostly declaring no religious commitment – who feel partly Jewish

and partly something else. Others of Jewish parentage choose to leave Jewish identity and to exclusively adhere to a different religious or other identity. Therefore a predicament of ever increasing complexity is inherent in any assessment of Jewish peoplehood from the point of view both of scientific research and of the interests of Jewish organizations who seek their catchment area to provide their services or to assert their area of influence.

At the center of a multiple circle population configuration stand those who identify as *exclusively* Jewish – it should be noted again, regardless of their personal level of Jewish commitment. Next to them is a broader circle inclusive of those who identify as *also* Jewish, while holding some other identity. The next circle includes those who have Jewish *connections*, because of more distant ties in their family of origin or because of their marriage ties with Jews. A further circle includes those who hold other kinds of permanent and personally meaningful relation with Jews, like friends, neighbors, work associates, students of Judaism and other fans, cronies and sympathizers. In the experience of daily life it is sometimes difficult to clearly distinguish and separate those who better fit each of these several definitional categories. However, for analytic purposes, namely historical and geographical comparisons, no serious work can be done without at least considering these typologies. Experience shows that each category displays very different patterns of intergenerational transmission of identification, the burden resting almost exclusively on those within the inner circle of the whole configuration.

Jewish organizations are well aware of the complex normative stratification emerging in Jewish peoplehood and can make different choices regarding their preferred constituency. In the eventuality of a shrinking base of action the logic of organization survivorship imposes a quest for an expanded base. Indeed, in various instances the tendency can be observed to enlarge the respective area of activity toward more inclusive target populations, in other words toward the incorporation of more of the less clearly identified Jewish

population sections, and of non-Jews somewhat associated with Jews.

Following these observations, a major bone of contention in the quantitative evaluation of Jewish population is whether or not group identities should be assessed along mutually exclusive definitions and boundaries. If holders of multiple identities are counted within one group, they should also be counted as part of the one or more other groups they identify with. In reality there occurs growing overlap of multiple identities in the presence of two or more different groups.

One first inner ring marks the holders of a given exclusive group identity – in our specific case a Jewish identity. This is surrounded by a second ring of household members and others who hold both the same *and* another group identity – therefore the partial holders of the first identity. Moreover, next to the first inner ring, a second inner ring includes people who hold another group identity. They too are surrounded by kin who partly hold that other identity and partly hold further identities. Because of the intermarriage interactions between the two groups, part of the holders of the first identity also hold the second, and vice versa. A conspicuous and growing share of the total population hold multiple identities and can be thus counted more than once, one for each identity. A broader definition of the (Jewish) group investigated will include them; a more exclusive definition will exclude them. Evidently both approaches are analytically useful, but they should be kept and discussed separately to allow legitimate assessment of the historical unfolding of ongoing trends and of the growing complexities of identification preferences based on comparable definitions. The recent attempt to ignore these distinctions, to adjust group definitions over time, and to straightforwardly incorporate these multiple-identity cases in Jewish population estimates constitutes a unilateral narrative choice.¹¹⁰⁰ The better way for both quantitative and qualitative purposes is to present side by side a core (mutually exclusive) and an enlarged (non-mutually exclusive) definition of Jewish peoplehood.

Intensity and partitions of Jewish identification

Beyond the definitional predicament, a significant question relates to the value contents of Jewish identification. Judaism is a multivariate cluster of religious beliefs, ethical norms, ritual behaviors, and family, community and transnational ties. Faced with multiple options Jews can freely create their personal world of contents choosing to focus on all or else on one rather than another portion of the whole Jewish universe. Such preferences may evolve differently under different historical or geographical circumstances. Intensity of a selection of possible Jewish contents as a strong determinant of the overall feeling of belonging to Judaism can be compared for Jews in the United States and in Israel surveyed at comparable points in time at the beginning of the 21st century.

There is quite a lot of consistency between the Jewish value hierarchies expressed by Jews in both countries, although there are differences as well. At the top of the list, remembering the Holocaust precedes in both cases, believing in God, and *Tikkun Olam*. By the same token at medium levels of significance, the family precedes observing Jewish holidays, and lower levels of significance, caring for or living in Israel precedes voluntarism/philanthropy, and observing the traditional Jewish precepts. What is remarkably different is the three top values which in the case of the US are those mentioned above, but in Israel are the family, living in Israel, and remembering the Holocaust. One can only note that belief in God is a generally widespread value in American society – much more so than in other Western countries, while family values are much resilient in Israel, as also demonstrated by demographic indicators like high marriage propensities and high fertility rates. Besides these predictable environmental influences, it seems that the perceived rankings of Jewish normative propositions are still fundamentally compatible among the two largest components of Jewish peoplehood.

A further more cogent test of the preceding proposition comes from an examination of the full matrix of mutual relationships between the manifold possibilities of expressing one's own Jewish identification. The question here is whether consistent logical patterns of association or incompatibility

exist between several such measurable indicators. The willingness to rate one value as important and another as equally important or unimportant can be condensed in a thick statistical matrix of correlation coefficients. This can be efficiently transformed into a graphical pattern using the Small Space Analysis (SSA) technique relying on Facet Theory (FT). FT suggests that a cognitive space can be partitioned into different regions, each of which signifies shared contents, some hierarchically ordered, some not.¹¹⁰¹ Different questions, or indicators of contents, that attract similar answers will graphically display as neighboring points; indicators that elicit different answers will display as distant points. The disposition of such points on a map allows for clear recognition of the underlying major contents, defined as spatial-conceptual regions which convey a configuration of the total perception of Jewish identification among a given Jewish population.

Inspection of the answers provided to over 90 questions related to Jewish identification in the US and in Israel unveils the mutual relations of proximity and distance that exist between different aspects of Jewish identification.¹¹⁰² Different domains of Jewish identity distribute around a common origin partitioning the space into wedge-like regions. These domains are: *family and friends* (lifecycle), *normative and traditional* (religious rituals and norms), *education* (socialization and learning), *community and organization* (voluntarism and philanthropy), *culture and history* (including memory of the Shoah and politics), and *mutual responsibility* (toward local needs and toward Israel). The innermost Jewish identification cluster includes several primary and more generic indicators of *Jewish peoplehood*: feeling Jewish, importance of being Jewish in life, feeling part of the Jewish People, importance of being part and supporting Jewish organizations, having a rich spiritual life, and giving children a Jewish education.

The configuration of Jewish identification markers can be compared for Jews in the US and in Israel.¹¹⁰³ Perhaps contrary to expectations, the overall structure of Jewish identification perceptions in the two countries is very similar. Notably, in both countries a general feeling of belonging to the

Jewish People occupies the same central position as the origin and the synthesis of other domains of Jewish identification which in turn occupy very similar radial positions. The only two observable differences are that identification with Jewish culture, history and politics among US Jews occupies the same position as participating in civil society for Israeli Jews; and, respectively, responsibility for Israel needs, occupies the same position as personal fulfillment and living in Israel in the latter country. These differences are eminently plausible considering the different nature of, and opportunities for Jewish experiences in Israel and in the US.

This demonstration of overarching and shared global patterns of Jewish identification in two so different countries is no minor finding. It provides powerful empirical evidence to the proposition of resilience of transnational coherence in contemporary Jewish symbolic and institutional perceptions over the opposite thesis of a Jewish identification that essentially stems from the variable circumstances of the different local national contexts. Jews in the US and in Israel may be distancing from each other, as shown by recent research, but they still are part of one and the same concept of Jewish peoplehood.

A further demonstration of possible common perceptions in defining a general concept of the shared contents of Jewish peoplehood relies on a survey of future expectations, challenges and concerns for the Jewish people in a variety of domains.¹¹⁰⁴ Contrary to the data just reviewed that referred to individual perceptions of representative cross-sections of the Jewish population, this study reflected the opinions of a selected group of experts from different countries who were asked to express their judgment toward several issues of potential relevance to Jews in the world. That the respondents do not constitute a representative sample need not – and thanks to their sufficient randomness does not in this case – affect the structural display.

The structure of the concerns about main future trends facing world Jewry includes at its center those issues more consensually perceived and at its margins issues over which the response of different judges is differentiated or even

diametrically opposed. Several indicators of what emerges as a latent understanding of the core concerns of Jewish peoplehood include: Concern with Jerusalem as the Spiritual Capital of the Jewish People, and Identification of Jews with the Jewish People. Close and surrounding them are: Identification of Jews with Israel concerning its immigration and emigration, and Children's enrollment in Jewish education. More specialized concerns include: *geopolitical, demography, Europe, Islam, Jewish solidarity, political relations, science and technology, and economics.*

The various domains appear to be ordered from issues eliciting hopes to issues eliciting fears with regard to the future of world Jewry, on the one hand, and from issues of broader global relevance to issues of internal Jewish relevance, on the other hand. Trends eliciting an optimistic orientation of hope for the future of the Jewish people include the domains of economics (like Flourishing of Israel's economy), science and technology (The Jewish People as a knowledge society), and political relations (Prospects for a stable solution of the Israel-Palestinian conflict). Trends eliciting fear mainly include the domains of demography (Jewish assimilation and out-marriage), the situation in Europe (Intensity of antisemitic incidents in Europe), and Islamic dangers (Radical Islam and terrorism). Feelings of antisemitism in the United States is located in the Geopolitical domain, rather than next to Europe or Islam, showing a likely perception of the Jewish-American relationship as strategically important beyond specific contents that may make it similar to Jewish relations with other geopolitical regions.

Quite interestingly, Percent of Jews out of Israel total population, supposedly part of Demography, plausibly appears related to Islam dangers. On the other hand, Percent of Jews in Israel out of total world Jewry appears to be strongly cognate to Jewish People assuming a greater role in humankind through science, technology, values and culture, and to Jewish People developing as a knowledge society, both part of the Science and Technology domain, and to Flourishing of Israel's economy which is part of the Economics domain.

Diametrically opposed to the more optimistic domains are attitudes toward the situation of Jews in Europe and the dangers of Islam and its emerging role. Position of Jews in Europe and Intensity of antisemitic incidents result interestingly related to developments with Radical Islam and terrorism and to Changes in the percent of Jews in Israel out of total population (obviously related to the size of Palestinian population), all on the side of fears. Relations with China appear quite proximate to the more optimistic side of expectations. Some other more conventional Jewish issues such as Assimilation and out-marriage, Visits to Israel, or Donations to Jewish projects and Needs in Israel and in the Diaspora, are all on the fears side of expectations. General Geopolitical standing of the Jews was also viewed as quite proximate to the core, although not very optimistically related. A final observation of interest is the quite peripheral perception of Jewish organizations and Jewish leadership.

Political preferences

One last identificational marker of Jewish peoplehood pertains to political preferences, namely the tendency of Jews to converge around shared global patterns or to depend exclusively on local political circumstances. Political party choices blend economic interests and ideational propensities, namely changing stratifications by social class facing the opportunities existing at the macro-economic level, the role of national and religious identities in society, or the attitude toward such more specific issues like the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Party choices are necessarily determined by the kind of voting system that prevails in a country, which in turn may determine how many viable options are allowed to compete on the public scene. In this respect the situation in different countries is highly variable, the two extremes being the US with its simplified dual option and Israel with its highly fragmented party system. In Israel's case, in order to enhance comparability with other countries, some manipulation of actual voting returns is necessary. We have suggested a possible regrouping of the Israeli party system into four major groups.¹¹⁰⁵ We define as Israel's "Republicans" all nationalist,

right-wing liberal, and national-religious parties. Their platforms share many elements concerning an active role of religion in the civil state and a preference for a tougher political line toward the Palestinian issue, including a quest for expanded Jewish territorialism. We define as Israel's "Democrats" all social-democrat, radical, and moderate-centrist liberal parties. Their platforms share greater concern for socioeconomic issues, secularism and a lesser role for religion on civil life, and a moderate stance including readiness for territorial concessions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Two further party groups, not included in the present analysis, are the Haredi (Orthodox-Jewish) parties and the parties mostly oriented to Arab-speaking voters. These two groups together generally tended to win a growing share of the vote, among other reasons because of the faster growth rate of the respective constituencies. Such oversimplification does not do justice to the nuanced complexities of Israeli polity that obviously have their good historical and sociological reasons of being, but at least allows for some comparisons of the Jewish vote in different countries over the last tens of years.

The vote of Jews in the US was assessed on the basis of presidential elections between 1992 and 2012, and was traditionally oriented toward the Democratic Party. However, there appears to be a slow but steady trend toward reinforcing of the Republican Party at the expenses of the Democrats. In Israel, based on Knesset elections until 2013, the interesting result of our dichotomization of the two main components of a multi-party system is the absence of a clear trend. Israel's "Republicans" and "Democrats" since the early 1990s hold similar shares of the electorate, through repeated rotation of the role of elections winner. If anything, a mild declining trend appears among the "Democrats," the internal composition of which – it should be stressed – has significantly shifted over time from Labor to Centrist. Had we gone more back in time, one would have found a much more hegemonic position of the "Democrats" among Israel voters, which makes their more recent decline even more dramatic. No such declining trend appears among the "Republicans," although through more substantial periodical ups and downs.

All in all it is not implausible to say that a modicum of convergence is occurring between the political preferences of the two Jewish electorates in the US and in Israel, reflecting in part internal demographic changes, and in part the diminished differences in the respective socioeconomic structures, upward mobility, and emerging class interests.

Interactive markers

So far we surveyed some of the main hard and soft markers reshaping Jewish peoplehood through individual processes that operate separately in different locations, namely in Israel and in some of the major Jewish communities throughout the world. However the truly challenging task is to survey and unveil those processes that operate through interactions between the different geographical components of the global collective. In practice these exchanges happen through passages from place to place of individuals, resources, ideas and other types of influence. It can be assumed that such passages occur from each place to each place, but the important notion to be ascertained is the net direction of such exchanges, meaning that with regard to each possible couple of places, one gains and the other loses. As an example of this concept, all possible mutual flows can be estimated with regard to international migration between eleven geographic areas.

A rough accountancy of all possible inter-area migration exchanges generates two analytic products. One of them is the total net migration balance of each area. In recent years we evaluated the total of net gains by the benefitting areas, and respectively of total losses by the losing areas, at 17,500 annually. Israel was the area with the highest net annual Jewish international balance with about 9,500, followed by the US with about 5,000, and Canada with 2,000. The areas with the main negative net migration balances were Russia with -5,500, the rest of the FSU with -4,200, and France with -3,000. A second analytic product of perhaps greater importance is the total number of net positive migration flows incurred by each area in front of all other possible areas. Out

of a total of eleven areas, each confronts itself with ten other areas. It can be roughly estimated that the only area that gains in its migration exchanges vis-à-vis all other areas was the US. In the second place Canada gained migrants from nine areas but loses to the US, followed by Oceania (Australia and New Zealand) with eight gains, and Israel in the fourth place with seven gains (and net migration losses to the three former areas). The UK was fifth, still with an estimated small positive migration balance, followed by six other areas with a negative migration balance in this order: other countries in Europe (besides the two major ones), France, Latin America, Russia, other FSU countries, and other countries in Asia and Africa. The latter incurred a negative migration balance toward each of the other 10 areas. By such an approach one sees that while Israel had the highest number of net migrants, it stood in a tributary position as against three other areas in the world, all English speaking, whose migration balances gained versus Israel.

A similar approach can be applied to many other types of trans-area transactions and exchanges, for each of which a ranking between maximally dominant/ gaining to maximally dependent/losing area can be determined. Besides *international migration*, focus should turn to net flows of *tourist visits* (which area attracts more visitors from the other area), *extended family networks* (which has more relatives in the other area), *training and other intellectual relations* (which attracts more students from the other area), *communications systems* (which area's sites are more clicked in the other area), *political/institutional relations* (which area has greater influence in the other area), *business and other economic relations* (which initiates more in the other area), *money remittances* (which sends more money to the other area), and possibly other topics of interest.

Evidently until empirical work is carried out within such theoretical framework – besides the data already demonstrated regarding migration – no firm conclusions can be reached about the trans-area shift of influence within global Jewish people-hood. In the lack of such systematic study, one can provide a rough descriptive outline of some of the main

patterns of institutional/ political influence according to selected main areas of origin. Table 2 provides some examples of the location of the main agents of influence and change within the Jewish institutional world regarding to a variety of important functional and thematic areas. Incidentally, much of the actual relationships of dominance and dependency within the global Jewish communal and institutional system are well known to professional observers of the Jewish scene, but some existing reticence has prevented yet truly systematic analysis.

Tab. 2: Selected examples of Jewish trans-area cultural, political and institutional influences

Type of influence	Source of influence toward other Jewish communities		
	Israel	United States	Other countries
Sovereign government	Israel government		
Political lobby, international and national	Labor, Likud, Kadima, Meretz, Mizrahi, Yisrael Beiteinu, Agudat Israel, Shas, Gush Emunim, Shalom Achshav	Presidents Council, WJC, AIPAC, AJC, J Street	FACCMA, EJC, European Jewish Parliament, JCall
Religious	Chief Rabbinate (Orthodox), Haredi Courts	Habad, Satmar, UO, Conservative Movement, Reform Movement, Reconstructionist	Argentina-trained Rabbis
Philanthropic and Organizational	Jewish Agency, Wizo	JFNA, UIA, Joint, Claims, HIAS, B'ne Berith, ADL, Hadassah, NIF, Friends of NGOs, George Soros	KH, Friends of NGOs, Russian oligarchs, Argentina trained professionals
Educational, formal and informal	Ministry of Education school system, Independent Haredi school systems, Jewish Agency, Levayev, Youth movements	Local Jewish day school systems, Habad, Otzar Hatorah, Reform Movement, Birthright	Local Jewish day school systems, Alliance Israélite Universelle, Limmud
Academic	Universities, Individual academics	Universities, Individual academics	Universities, Individual academics
Culture, leisure and sports	Yad Vashem, Museums, Major performing artists, Major writers, Sports teams, Maccabiah games	Jewish Museums, JCCs, Major performing artists, Major writers	Jewish Museums, Major writers, FACCMA, Regional Maccabiah games

Reflecting the more recent concentration of Jewish population in the US and in Israel, but also because of deeper historical

reasons, the spread of the main actors who influence associated Jewish life is quite unequal across the world. Poles of innovation and influence are overwhelmingly concentrated in the two largest Jewish communities and clearly suggest a distinction between main centers of influence, semi-autonomous centers with some independent power, and fully dependent centers. Israel and the US tend to function as the main exporters of religious norms, political ideas, institutional influences and interests, and above all budgets. Jewish communities in other parts of the world – while not entirely deprived of their own original agents of international influence – tend to be principally dependent on imports from the two main suppliers. Israel is also a major budgets importer.

A hierarchic configuration can thus be detected in the overall institutional functioning of the global Jewish collective in most of the following areas: *sovereign government* (confined to Israel government only); *political lobby, international and national*; *religious*; *philanthropic and organizational*; *formal and informal education*; *academic*; *culture, leisure and sports*. These tentative lists suggest that agendas, priorities, executive actions, and the leading manpower in charge are in large part determined in the two major Jewish centers, Israel and the US. By the same token, major conflicts and cleavages of Jewish interests that exist *within* each of these two major Jewish geographic and cultural areas tend to be exported and to involve actors in other areas. A noticeable part of such agreed or conflictual activities therefore occurs on the turf of what can be jokingly termed a “Jewish third world,” raising among the concerned Jewish communities significant following but also occasional reactions of embarrassment if not protest.

Among the more noticeable non-Israeli and non-American sources of power and influence, some mentions pertain to France, the UK, Argentina, and Russia. But these countries, too, fall within a general pattern where the origins of a predominant mass of investments and influences can be clearly located in the US and in Israel, whereas original independent inputs play a complementary role. These more autonomous local sources of influence are mostly confined to

the areas of education, culture and leisure. This has reflected local capabilities to generate independent Jewish creativity and leadership toward other components of the global Jewish collective, but also the willingness and ability of the main global actors – the US and Israel – to intervene or not in the given areas. The whole matter of course requires much more detailed investigation.

A final crucial observation in this respect is that there is no true and recognized system of global Jewish governance. Several major organizations claim to such primacy, by the very plurality of such claims – again by organizations that mostly operate from Israel or from the US – disqualifies the very claim. One critical junction of such global organizational system which appears to be critically underdeveloped is some form of coordination between Israel's government – by far the most powerful single actor on the whole – and a genuine representation of Jewish constituencies located elsewhere in the world. The idea was raised of a global Jewish Forum anchored at the House of Israel's President that would involve a table of encounter or even a sort of House of Representatives of world Jewry. But both because of powerful institutional resistances and of contingent circumstances the idea has been abandoned for the time being.

Interim conclusions

Wishing to condense the many and complex changes in the essence of Jewish peoplehood undergone in the past and present, along with those expected in the foreseeable future, three major analytic axes can be singled out in longer term analysis:

1. Immobility vs. change in Jewish beliefs, perceptions, customs, stereotypes, and institutions;
2. Separatism vs. integration of Jews on the general public scene;
3. Homogeneity vs. internal diversity and cleavages within Jewish society.

The foregoing analysis clearly points to far reaching changes regarding a variety of major hard and soft markers of Jewish peoplehood, even in the relatively short span of the last few tens of years. Paradoxically, both conflicting trends of far reaching integration within surrounding societies and of clear cut separation from them can be detected. Patterns of internal convergence and greater homogeneity coexist, too, with patterns of distancing, differentiation, and struggle over hegemony within the global Jewish collective. In this last respect, the question of Israel centrality versus the Jewish Diaspora, versus the alternative of center-less – or possibly multi-centered – transnationalism is not entirely adjudicated by our findings. On some respects – such as demography and certain cultural and institutional processes, including parts of the collective imaginary – Israel definitely emerges like the central backbone; but on other accounts – such as other cultural and institutional processes or the investment of resources – Israel remains tributary to other powerful Jewish centers of influence, especially in the US.

Part of what we know and we do not know reflects the availability of relevant information and above all the existence of analytic tools apt to the task. We basically know how to efficiently describe changes concerning the hard markers of peoplehood, such as demographic trends and socioeconomic structures, but we rarely own or use analytic tools that would allow us to reach clearer and more valid conclusions about the softer markers of identities and institutional configurations and functioning. A paramount question: “Who pays for all of this?” remains fundamentally unanswered.

One crucial distinction is whether analysis of the selected trends is performed *from the inside* or *from the outside* of the target Jewish group. Current Jewish people-hood realities naturally reflect a blend of both, but it should be stressed that without an eye to the logics of the outer global system – such as in the case of international migration and the geographical distribution of Jews, with the consequent exposure to different political and juridical environments and the ensuing opportunities and constraints – much of the logics of the inner Jewish system is often lost. It is also significant to stress that

quite different conclusions may be reached whether the analysis is focusing on *selected, sometimes elitist Jewish sub-groups* such as Jewish leaders, intellectuals and artists, or on *the entire Jewish collective*. The former will always display new forms of intellectual production – consensual or not but in any case a sign of the collective’s creativity and vitality. The latter may unveil slower processes of change that risk to seriously undermine the collective’s longer term meaning and durability.

Finally, let us note again that an assessment of Jewish history and society cannot rely on *watching the Jews only*, with all of their many distinctive patterns. It has to incorporate *the general world* that often played a crucial role as a causal determinant of the Jewish fate and the parallel though much minor influence of the Jews on general societal transformations. As the future directions of world society at large are not easily predicted or predictable, the same applies to the future of Jewish peoplehood.

The ultimate tests of peoplehood are uniqueness and shared meaning. The diagnosis from our survey of hard, soft, and interactive markers of Jewish peoplehood, while acknowledging uniqueness, is not univocal on both accounts of what the meaning is, and how much readiness to share there is.

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60. Israel-Diaspora Relations: “Transmission Belts” of Transnationalism

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This paper originally appeared as “Israel-Diaspora Relations: ‘Transmission Driving-Belts’ of Transnationalism,” in *Reconsidering Israel-Diaspora Relations*, edited by Eliezer Ben-Rafael, Judit Bokser Liwerant, and Yosef Gorny, 447–460. Leiden: Brill, 2014.

Some general considerations

“Diaspora,”¹¹⁰⁶ a word of Greek origin, designates the dispersal throughout the world of people with the same territorial origin. A descriptive notion, dispersion often receives religious or ideological connotations such as in the Hebrew token of *galut* (‘exile’) that is imbued with messianic aspirations of “Return.” Understandings attached to the diasporic condition may vary both within and between diasporas. As a rule, diasporans aim for absorption within their new environment, but when they attach to their dispersion a particular significance that merits enduring loyalty, they still attempt to remain distinct from “others,” as a diasporic community. The institutions and networks that they establish, then bring them to adopt the usual syndrome of an ethnic group grounded in an awareness of primordial particularism (religion, origin, or a language). This means that diasporans’ (unavoidable) adjustment and acculturation to their environment do not inevitably lead to loss of all concern for original identities.

Establishing a diaspora community, however, is not a uniform process and it can vary from one community to another – in the same society, and in different settings. Robin Cohen distinguishes between the “solid” diaspora marked by powerful myths of a common origin territorialized in an “old country,” and the “liquid” diaspora that is constructed through

new cultural links and the replacing of sacred icons.¹¹⁰⁷ One novelty of our era, however, resides in the frequency of the sense of attachment to a “territorialized origin” that relates collectives of the same origin to each other transnationally. “Transnationality” implies that dispersed groups perceive themselves as forming “one diaspora” that, under an appropriate token, also encompasses the country of origin: the “Jewish diaspora” refers to Jews’ dispersed communities; the “Jewish world” to the same, including Israel.

Another growing category in this era of multiple diasporas consists of the “returnees.” Germany and Japan are examples, besides Israel, that are witnessing the immigration of diasporans who – even after many years of “exile” – have decided for ideological or instrumental reasons to “return home.”¹¹⁰⁸ Those returnees have absorbed the culture of their diasporic environments, which has dug cultural and social gaps between them and the homelander that they rejoin. Hence, they may eventually see themselves as a “special tribe” and rebuild a new community where the previous national token becomes a diasporan identity and the previous national one, a diasporic allegiance: in brief, adhering to the “diasporic code” but in inverse mode. The common denominator of all cases pertaining to this category of transnational diaspora consists of their illustrating entities considering themselves as such, i.e., as part of a transnational entity. Narratives account for the condition of dispersal and assess its challenges.

A growing body of research focuses on transnational diasporas against the background of the phenomenon’s spreading and increasing importance. Some researchers still stick to the assimilationist paradigm and emphasize the role of the specific – uniformization versus pluralist – central policies in the new groups’ social, cultural, and political insertion. Other scholars insist more on diasporans’ own velleities, and point out that immigrants and their offspring tend today to be unwilling to abandon their identities while acquiring their new national tokens.¹¹⁰⁹ The nation-state “container” view of society, it is contended, has definitely become outdated.

Some scholars associated with the postmodernist trend launch ideological attacks on the very assumption that diasporas, ethnicity, and race are topics of study in their own right. These notions distort democracy and reduce people to symbols. Identity is but a means of exploitation. Among the more positivist scholars of diasporas, a distinction should be drawn between those emphasizing the impact of contingencies on diasporans' aspirations, and those focusing on cultural and identity aspects. In the first group, Govers and Vermeulen and their colleagues describe cases where diasporic identities are assumedly molded by economic interests and power relations.¹
¹¹⁰ Tsing¹¹¹¹ and Anthias¹¹¹² deny, from this perspective, that our world has entered a new era. Diaspora communities, like many other groups, are simply instances of social mobilization.¹¹¹³

Other conceptualizations of diaspora underline shared identities as significant elements of their own.¹¹¹⁴ Whatever the importance of circumstances, they believe, there can be no diasporic community without a consciousness of diaspora – even though it does not presuppose consensual formulations among its individual members. This approach does not reject the mobilization dimension, nor the assumption of fluidity of collective boundaries, but it does reject the necessarily a priori primacy of the contingency-first hypothesis. Hence, William Safran acknowledges that a diaspora often entails oppression and painful adjustment, but it is also via diasporans' own incentives that they develop institutions, symbols and contents of collective identity.¹¹¹⁵

Defining a collective identity is by no means easy, as its formulation often varies among members of the same community, and at different places and times. This difficulty, we have suggested,¹¹¹⁶ leads us beyond the circumstantialist/essentialist argument toward a structuralist approach. Accordingly, diverse identity formulations may be generated within the same collective as the outcome of different circumstances interacting with varying aspects of the same original legacy. What may still keep such formulations connected to each other within the same identity space – and

prevent their splitting the collective into different, reciprocally alienated, groups – is conditioned on their commitment to more or less the same people, and their drawing identity symbols and markers from the same reservoir circumscribing the collective's singularity.

As a general case, the founding narrative of diasporas justifies aspirations to retain distinctiveness from locals and allegiance to legacies originating from “elsewhere.” “Elsewhere” means a transnational orientation rather than an international horizon, since it does not imply any buffering by official institutions. It indicates a commitment that cuts across boundaries and concretizes “here and now” the principle of “dual homeness.” This principle implies the anchoring of a collective in its local environment, intensified by an external reference of belongingness. Diasporans are thus inclined to settle in neighborhoods inhabited by fellow-diasporans, where the new is mitigated by the familiar. Contemporary ease of transport throughout the world and media exposure of every part of the globe make it relatively easy to visit, and maintain communication with, the original homeland and nurture ongoing contacts with fellow diasporans who have settled in other countries.

On the other hand, finding jobs and guaranteeing children's future still pressurize diasporans to acculturate to their environments and invest their best efforts at successful insertion into their new environment. In the process, they acquire a new language and grow accustomed to new symbols. Ultimately, they acquire a new national identity that becomes their primary one, relegating the original one to a secondary status.

Such processes are bound to set off inner dilemmas and create tensions. French-speaking Quebec and France, for instance, both perceive themselves as autonomous centers of *francophonie* – beyond their reciprocal allegiance. The scattered structures of diasporas and the disparate influences exerted on their various communities may indeed generate divergent perceptions of the common identity, and blur lines of authority. Diasporans become “different” from what they were originally, and become factors contributing to the sociocultural

heterogenization of their diaspora. It is also often the case that English becomes the most used lingua franca among members of the same diaspora – even if each one speaks it with a different accent – while the original common language loses much of its grip on diasporans. Yet whatever the degree of retentionism – however weak it may be – of diasporic communities, as far as these remain somehow loyal to their original identity and culture and maintain relations of exchange with their original homelands, they still constitute a factor of multiculturalization of their current setting. In brief, transnational diasporas illustrate a double trend of multiculturalization, in two different dimensions. In each of those respects, they concretize sociocultural heterogenization of our global reality, and in this, they may be seen as a bi-directional force of multiculturalization.

This reality both entails hardships and provides comforts. Diasporans may feel at ease, as a distinct social entity, in their present setting – in spite of all prejudices that might be directed at them – and see this setting as a genuine – possibly their principal – homeland. They thereby make it quite awkward to call this setting “hostland” – as do several commentators who reserve the token of “homeland” exclusively for the diasporans’ original homeland. This, however, should not hinder governments of their original homelands from investing efforts to retain a protective role over their émigrés abroad. In return, diasporic constituencies may be prompted to lobby not only on behalf of their own direct and local interests, but also of their original homeland’s vis-à-vis the state, making diasporic transnational interests topics of domestic politics – and thereby widening the space and nature of interstate relations.¹¹¹⁷

These processes have led some scholars to cite “hybridization”¹¹¹⁸ as a feature of contemporary social dynamics. “Cultural hybridization” means the borrowing by a given culture of patterns of behavior and values upheld by another one. The result, according to Jan Nederveen Pieterse, consists not only of changes occasioned among people of given groups through intercultural contacts, but also of the emergence of new in-between categories.¹¹¹⁹

In turn, this fluidity of boundaries allied with the dual-homeness condition of diasporans signify that for many people social belonging somehow becomes blurred, and that for diasporans, more specifically, commitment to the national society and the state is coupled with transnational allegiances. The development of transnationalism and multiculturalism is also largely favored by endemic traits of the current societies, above all by their democratic regimes, grounded as they are in competition of parties and leaders for support throughout society. This allows groups of many types to become political actors by bargaining their sympathy in return for responsiveness to their claims. A fertile ground for any group capable of building up a constituency and articulating identity politics,¹¹²⁰ a democratic regime grants public acknowledgement and legitimacy to such claimants as political actors. When this process involves diasporic communities, it fuels society's multiculturalization and the legitimate action of transnational allegiances. The other side of the coin is that political achievements probably foster these communities' identification with society and weaken feelings of alienation. Yet by the same token, it is also well-known that wherever politics is a source of profit for a constituency, it may also incite leaders and militants to intensify their mobilization.

These general – by no means comprehensive – considerations throw some light on the evolution of specific cases, and in particular on the development of the Jewish diaspora's relations with Israel, on the one hand, and their current societies, on the other. We will make do with a few distinctive outlines, at the risk of over-generalizing our propositions.

Israel-diaspora relations

The Jewish world is indeed a most appropriate example of the dilemmas and challenges considered above. In this case though, in contrast to many others, it concerns a diaspora that, with its own hands, created its homeland – the State of Israel – that was set up on the basis of a negation of the diaspora condition and a vibrant appeal to all Jews of the world to join

the Zionist enterprise – that only a minority responded to. This peculiar path of the making of a homeland finally resulted in the creation of a quite unusual diaspora-original homeland configuration, wherein the diaspora's weight in the making of the state inevitably aroused the question of the source of authority over the Jewish world, and in what terms to formulate the Israel-diaspora relationship. Those questions received many answers, of which four of them can be seen as the principal ones.¹¹²¹

One remembers the Ben-Gurion-Goldmann argument about the external Zionist leadership's right to intervene in Israel's policies on behalf of the "will of the Jewish People" and as a direct consequence of the state's self-definition as the State of the Jews. In the discussions that followed, between intellectuals, academics, and politicians, four perspectives were advocated.

- (a) The Zionist-Israeli perspective assesses Israel's ultimate importance as the sole center of the Jewish world. The argument is that it is only in the Jewish state that Jewishness is a primary identity, and it is where essentially Jewish structures and life-style take shape. Hence it is here that life is "completely Jewish."¹¹²²
- (b) The general Zionist perspective advocates a bi-focal model where the two major Jewish settings (i.e., Israel and American Jewry) are supposed to serve as two centers that should cooperate with each other despite their differing horizons. Implicit in this approach is the right of diaspora leaders to intervene, at least consultatively, in Israel's affairs as a Jewish state.¹¹²³
- (c) The diasporist model, elaborated by intellectuals like Benbassa (in France), Steiner (in England) and the Boyarin brothers (in the US), considers Jewishness as essentially attached to the diaspora condition. It is a set of values and precepts that draws its singularity from its dwelling in all world civilizations. A "historical incident," Israel is where Judaism gets distorted as a coercive religion-state. The centers of Jewishness are thus

to be found in the diaspora, and the Israeli experience is of no relevance to diaspora-historical Judaism.¹¹²⁴

- (d) The anti-diaspora outlook of the Canaanites that radicalizes the diasporist perspective from the viewpoint of Israelis. According to this approach, Jewishness in the diaspora is doomed to disappear through assimilation, and Hebrew-speaking Israelis will remain the sole heirs of the biblical civilization. Hence, Israelis should sever their links with the diaspora, repudiate the term “Jew,” and call themselves “Hebrews.”¹¹²⁵

While that question of what is the center and what is the periphery has never been solved in a manner satisfactory to all Jews, new developments in Jewish and global reality have shed new light on this argument – such as the notion of transnationalism considered in the foregoing, that has now emerged with respect to today’s movements of population. Present-day migrants, we have seen, now retain direct and intimate contacts with their compatriots remaining in the societies of origin. At the same time as they insert themselves into their new societies and thereby acquire new languages and elements of culture, they continue to be a part of their societies of origin, carrying markers of their legacies.

These processes, as mentioned, render obsolete the classic assimilatory paradigm that dominated the sociology of ethnicity for decades. Like many other cases, the Jewish transnational diaspora goes through acculturation and often manages to anchor itself solidly in the society. However, despite this rapprochement to the mainstream society, in most countries of the diaspora, and especially in the US, Jews retain some particularism and still display contrasts in certain respects with their environment. However, by the same token, they have also become somehow different not only from what they or their ancestors were when they left their countries of origin, but also from those Jews who settled and live in Israel. As such, they make the Jewish world a genuinely multicultural entity.

Moreover, like many other cases, the Jewish diaspora and Israel conjunctively also produce a new kind of collective,

namely, the phenomenon of “returnees” in the sense of *yordim*, i.e., people who left Israel to return to the diaspora, and of *olim*, i.e., Jewish immigrants who chose to settle in Israel and see themselves as “returning to the homeland” – whether for instrumental or ideological reasons. Like *Aussiedler* in Germany, Brazilian Japanese in Japan, and Afro-Americans “back” in Africa, Jews who settle in Israel are defined as a kind of returnees entitled to rights and facilities to advance their social insertion. These people are received by veterans by right, and are expected to merge into society, even though they are carriers of another culture, and although the symbols of Judaism they display represent their specific manner of asserting Jewishness. Today, in the era of globalization and enforcement of multiculturalism, such groups are strongly tempted to form their own new communities, where previous national tokens have become ethnic markers, at the same time as their previous ethnic labels have become a national identity. This kind of *re-diasporization* in new terms may then be expressed in the building of new transnational networks binding returnees with their communities and societies left behind in the diaspora.

This re-diasporization can be expressed in a wide variety of ways: the building of institutions, associations, movements, cultural centers, and even parochial schools. On the other hand, cultural and media entrepreneurs may set up a press, radio and TV broadcasts, depending on the community, mailing lists, and groups hosted by social networks on the web.

The Jewish populations of the world and of Israel illustrate numberless examples of diasporic communities: some settled in their present place many generations ago; others migrated from a place where they failed to put down roots; still others “returned” to their original homeland or, something that is quite different, chose to see Israel as their home and relocate to it. Israel itself is a very special case, since the diaspora preceded the creation of a homeland. What made this possible, however, was the fact that the Jewish heritage always located its source in that region of land, and defined it in religious terms as the ultimate destination of Jews.

It is against this background that in circumstances of bloody persecution in Europe, a small minority among European Jewry mobilized to create a homeland for this diaspora, and turned toward the Land of Israel for that purpose. This endeavor was articulated by a nationalistic ideology that denied legitimacy to the diasporic condition – in spite of the fact that it emerged itself from the diaspora. Ever since and still today, the whole enterprise strongly relies on the diaspora as a hinterland of resources, as well as a potential source of immigration and demographic strengthening; roughly speaking, diasporan Jewry does recognize Israel as the national anchor of Judaism.

It is against that backdrop that representatives of Jewish movements and frameworks, from both the diaspora and Israel, tend to convene in world umbrella-organization meetings and institutions, the principal of which is the World Jewish Congress. These meetings give live expression to what the notions of transnational diaspora and *Klal Yisrael* ('the commonwealth of Israel') may mean. One observes here the diversity of national delegations from across the world, that sit together with Israeli representatives while participants speak in their different national languages, display their own cultural markers, and by no means keep to themselves the specific problems preoccupying them. Above all, there is the fact that all those who found their way under that umbrella, help it to stand firm and to articulate the interest common to everyone in the reality of Jewish peoplehood. None of these actors – American, French, British, Latin American, or Israeli – is ready to leave his or her seat in this all-Jewish forum: on the contrary, everyone is highly sensitive to their respective status in this forum.

On the other hand, all delegations also experience internal tensions occasioned by competing forces – movements, parties, and trends – that in most cases crosscut the boundaries of the national delegations on behalf of their particular definitions of what *Klal Yisrael* signifies, its horizons, and desirable lines of development. Among others, one finds here Zionists and non-Zionists, Orthodox Jews and non-halakhic streams, secular groups who oppose the religious

denominations, as well as left-leaning versus right-leaning activists. These forces compete for predominance on the all-Jewish scene, and through that kind of centripetal conflictedness they demonstrate that this Jewish world is one.

The very fact that one finds in this Jewish world not only umbrella-organizations but also ramified networks of educational frameworks, synagogues with different traditions, charities with diverse target-populations, political movements, youth and adult clubs, and many more kinds of structures active in the largest variety of communities, only shows how far one can indeed speak of a world primarily characterized by transnational interconnectedness.¹¹²⁶

This interconnectedness does not skip over Israel's role, as the State of the Jews; on the contrary, branches of many of those networks are headquartered in Jerusalem and hold their conventions in Israel. All in all, this interconnectedness concretizes two basic principles that one finds in all versions of Jewishness throughout the world, namely the principle of *kol yisrael haverim* ('all Jews are friends to each other') and *am ehad* ('One People'). In other words, Jewish solidarity is the one precept that is universal to all Jews, wherever they are. It is the fundamental code that explains why actors with divergent perspectives on Jewishness fight for influence over the Klal Yisrael: because of their very endorsement of the concept of Klal Yisrael, they are driven to achieve influence over it, as parts of it that "know" – each one according to his or her own horizon – "what is good for it." In brief, Klal Yisrael transpires here to be a dialectical endemic confrontation of oneness and division: it is a *problématique* that crosscuts the Jewish world, as well as each individual community. In either respect, and as a consequence of the basic tendency to increase one's impact on Jewish affairs, each actor tends to involve itself in the other's patrimonium.

This latter aspect is particularly relevant when it comes to the general issue of Israel-diaspora relations. As a Jewish entity, Israel definitely wishes to be involved in the activities and dynamics of diasporan communities: in each Israeli embassy, there are people specifically in charge of relations with local Jewish organizations, and often the ambassador in

person represents Israel's presence. The motivation is, of course, the Israeli authorities' desire to strengthen diaspora Jews' allegiance to the Jewish state and, ultimately, to motivate diasporans to immigrate – i.e., to make *aliyah*. Another interest is to win political and economic support from the communities that, in many cases, belong to the privileged strata of society – not to mention, as noted, that the Israeli state apparatus projects a self-image as leader of the Jewish world.

The diasporan institutions, for their part, are interested in relations with Israel as a lever of Jewish education today, as a reservoir of living symbols of Jewishness, and above all on behalf of Jewish solidarity – particularly in light of the existential challenges that Israel confronts, which assume a most acute significance in the context of the dramatic Jewish history of the 20th century. Furthermore, numerous diasporan Jews have relatives and friends in Israel who settled there at different periods, and so there is already a good reason to keep abreast continuously about Israeli affairs and the Middle East conflict. Another good reason is visiting Israel and keeping in contact with the family's "Israelis" or the network: a large proportion of diasporans have visited Israel at least once – and many of them multiple times; and of course about 25% of the Israelis go abroad at least once a year. Moreover, many diasporans have acquired a secondary residence in Israel. In brief, one can speak of a kind of symbiosis between Israeli and diasporan Jews.

Last but not least, in recent years immigrants from the diaspora are tending to illustrate the transnational-diaspora syndrome in reverse – what we mean by the notion of "re-diasporization." These olim, indeed, who do their best to learn Hebrew and get acquainted with the Hebrew culture, are at the same time unwilling neither to neglect their original language – Russian, French, or Spanish – nor to abandon cherished aspects of their culture. In the context of globalization, they also stay in touch with their relatives and friends in the diaspora. In all these respects, they do illustrate a new syndrome of immigration in Israel.

The group that best illustrates this model in Israel today is composed of the Russian-speaking immigrants of the 1990s. Within a few years, these immigrants developed transnational networks, newspapers, TV stations, cultural centers, and educational frameworks – all of which reflect their allegiance to the Russian language and culture.¹¹²⁷ Another group that is demonstrating a similar development, consists of the recent immigrants from France, and the same pattern apparently characterizes the new immigrants from Latin America.

All these phenomena do not necessarily enthrall veteran Israelis, who see this kind of insertion as a sort of arrogance – on behalf of a “superior” culture – vis-à-vis Israeli culture, and a lack of motivation to fully integrate into Israeli society. Those veterans are all the more resentful, since they themselves are former immigrants, or children of immigrants who, for the most part, were willing to abandon their culture and language for the good of Hebrew and Israeliness, and on behalf of Israel’s nation-building project. Now they watch with mixed feelings the newcomers who, together with their wish to “Israelize,” reject the idea that this should come at the cost of giving up their cultures of origin.¹¹²⁸ These new cohorts aspire to the model of dual homeness and, whether consciously or not, are forwarding Israel’s transformation into a multicultural setting.

As such, one may discuss these groups in terms of “transmission belts.” By this we mean social entities that not only link the diaspora and Israel by direct contacts, but also convey to each side of the national boundaries cultural resources that singularize each of them. The new immigrants bring to Israel markers that enrich the country’s cultural repertoire, while at the same time – through their direct contacts with the diaspora that they recently left – convey to the latter symbols of “Israeliness” that they acquire in the country and which now become theirs.

This is the place to signal that among the present-day transmission belts, one of them has a particular impact, i.e., the so-called *yordim* – former immigrants to Israel, or their offspring, who leave Israel for the diaspora, though generally

not to their original homeland. These yordim are returnees in a twofold sense: they themselves or their parents were “olim,” i.e., in principle returnees to their genuine homeland; now they are returnees again, in a sense, in the diaspora. In each sequence, however, the “return” receives a very different meaning: aliyah or immigration to Israel receives, in the Israeli consensus, a positive connotation as the realization of a major ideological tenet; *yerida* (literally, ‘descent’) designating emigration from Israel, is linked – or at least was linked for decades – to a lack of identification with the national Israeli collective and a desertion from its obligations.

In practice, however, yordim generally speak Hebrew among themselves, meet socially in an Israeli style, and maintain close ties with their relatives and friends in Israel.¹¹²⁹ They are the best conveyors of Israeliness to the diaspora, while in and their visits to Israel, they also convey the symbols and life values that they have acquired in the diaspora.

It should be emphasized, though, that nowadays not only olim and yordim serve as transmission belts between Israel and the diaspora. In the almost symbiotic reality of relations between these populations, the very circumstances of transnationalism constitute the primary factor of symbolic exchange and feelings of closeness. Hence, no Jewish marriage is held in the US or France without some Israeli dish being served; there are no year-end parties in Jewish schools without Hebrew songs being sung. On the other hand, in Israel, segments of the population are well aware of the importance of learning Jewish history and getting acquainted, to whatever degree, with the enormous cultural resources accumulated – through periods of deep misery as well as prosperity and blooming – by Jews across the world and throughout history.

In actual fact, the Jewish world – one of the oldest diasporas in world history – represents a kind of extreme case where the diaspora itself, inspired by its heritage and assailed by harsh circumstances, created a homeland on its own. Israel has, as a whole, been built by a minority of diasporans who saw themselves as returnees, driven by the ambition to revolutionize the diaspora by negating it.

Even that means is unable, however, to demolish the numerous obstacles to efficient communication between diasporans and Israelis. If we consider just a few of them here, there is the basic fact that for diasporans, Jewishness is primarily a matter of personal commitment substantiated willingly by individuals, and subordinate to Americanness, Frenchness, or Swedishness. For Israelis, Jewishness is the very reality of life. As citizens of a state whose survival is sometimes challenged, many of them – most regrettably probably – develop attitudes toward their collective problems that mix realpolitik understandings with aspirations for security and power. Diasporans who follow Middle-Eastern events often tend toward more judgmental opinions. They may feel uncomfortable about “what the Israelis are doing” and have difficulty identifying with it, particularly in the prevailing atmosphere today in the world media, universities, and political circles – where Israel often has a pariah status. That kind of attitude easily leads to “diasporism.”

In another comment on this picture, diasporans often achieve exceptional social mobility in many domains and are shining success-stories. Israelis, contrastingly, are much less concentrated in the middle or upper-middle strata: the exceptionalism of Israelis resides in their being part of a society that adheres more or less to normality, despite their overburdening with endless dramatic collective challenges. These circumstances are not unconnected to their display of roughness and lack of civility, plus the tendency, here and there, to belittle diaspora Jews: this, in turn, may incite diasporans to react disparagingly.

In a rather provincial way, and despite today’s multiculturalism, Israelis are proud of “Israeliness”; they speak of “Israeli” high-tech, wine, or literature. Diasporans cite Jews’ universal contributions. In Israel, politeness is often “diasporic”; in the diaspora, roughness is “Israeli.” The *moledet* (the fatherland) that diasporans have created has indeed become “different.”

Furthermore, there is the demographic importance and influence in Israeli society of groups that are much less salient in most diasporas – Mizrahim (Jews originating from North

Africa and the Middle East), Russian-speakers of recent arrival, ultra-Orthodox or *mitnahalim* (West-Bank settlers). Many a diasporan fails to recognize in Israel the familiar Jewish figure.

In conclusion: a privileged space of interconnectedness

One important factor that contributes to counterbalancing this multisided divisiveness is the fact that, curiously enough, we find among Jews everywhere – in the World Jewish congresses, for example – forces active in many Jewish populations fighting for status and predominance within the Jewish world as a whole. Paradoxically, these very tensions that crosscut national boundaries show the reality of the cultural code of *am ehad*.

They display in many, if not all, versions of Jewishness compliance with the mitzvah of *kol yisrael haverim*, however strongly Jews define their commitment to it, and in whichever way they define Judaism's meaning for them. For the present generation, a test-case is the attitude toward Israel and its challenged survival that awards practical significance to this attachment to Jewishness. Another related trial is the neo-antisemitism fomented in many countries by Islamist movements that level their hostility for Israel against Jews, enfolding their communities in feelings of vulnerability.¹¹³⁰ It is a new subject for concern that cancels out diasporist velleities for a rupture between antisemitism and anti-Zionism.

This brings us back to the different perspectives on Israel-Diaspora relations stated from the beginning of these pages. We may say that despite the mitzvah of solidarity, the cultural, social, and even political distances are still too substantial to validate the notion of Israel as the sole center of the Jewish world. In the same context, the bi-focal model is not too convincing either, as the interests of the two sides only partly overlap, while Israeli and diasporan Jews are, as a whole, divided not only among themselves, but also by cross-cutting trends. Neither the diasporist nor the Canaanite perspectives are any more successful, since they condition their validation

by truncating the Jewish world – whether from the Israeli branch or the diaspora – setting both of them outside Jewishness.

What appears to be the case, is that this disparate Jewish world, composed of multiple diasporas and one multicultural homeland, does not have a center at all. Transnationalism, in this case, consists of feelings of allegiances and closeness crosscutting boundaries that give shape to a changing entity where divergent and convergent horizons conjunctively fuel feelings of belonging to the same “whole.” They shore up that kind of family belongingness that describes Jews in the diaspora and in Israel – not as one nation – but still as one people, one world, and above all, *one privileged space of interconnectedness*.

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61. Negation of the Diaspora from an Israeli Perspective: The Case of A. B. Yehoshua

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This paper was completed in September 2014.

Introduction

The negation of the Diaspora has a central place in Zionist thought.¹¹³¹ This topic has been of concern to many contemporary Israeli thinkers. The most radical negation of the Diaspora, which we may as well refer to as “ignoring the Diaspora” was professed by the Caananites, headed by Yonatan Ratosh.¹¹³² Several decades later, some Israeli intellectuals started criticizing the negation of the Diaspora and pointed at it as the source of faults and injustices in Israeli society.¹¹³³ The negation of the Diaspora is, of course, not only the concern of the non-Zionist intellectuals. This topic serves them as an important framework for formulating their Zionist-Israeli position.

A. B. Yehoshua’s essays on the Diaspora are a typical example. The entirety of his arguments on this issue can be considered an Israeli version of the idea of the negation of the Diaspora. He frames this negation in psychological terms. His main point is the following: life in the Diaspora is a typical neurotic pattern; Zionism and the establishment of the State of Israel are the therapy. Achieving it depends on the analysis of the neurotic pattern, as well as its recognition, according to the reasoning of the psychotherapeutic process. This idea is suggested in his essays and articles.

In the first two sections of this article, I will analyze Yehoshua’s view. I will extract his main arguments, and explain what is the Diasporic existence in his eyes and what is the role of the State of Israel in light of that existence. In the

last section, I am going to take an “outsider’s view” of his outlook and find out what we can learn from it about the presence of the Zionist idea in Israeli intellectual life. Thus, Yehoshua’s view serves here as a particular case in point. Through its analysis I hope to point at wider phenomena as well.

Before I turn to the matter itself, I would like to make two comments. First, I am concerned here with Yehoshua’s view of the Diaspora in his essayistic writing. Although he deals with the topic in his novels as well, and especially in his historic novels, this is not the place for a discussion of the novels; that would require a separate paper. Second, in some places, I am going to point to weak points in Yehoshua’s views. I am not trying to criticize him. The attention to these weaknesses is not meant to find out the value of his ideas. I will do it in order to highlight the essence of the ideas, as well as what is apparent in their weaknesses.

Life in the Diaspora as neurosis

Yehoshua’s in-depth discussion of the Diaspora appears in the second essay included in the collection *In Praise of Normalcy*, entitled “The Diaspora as a Neurotic Solution.” In this article, Yehoshua explains – or, rather, describes – life in the Diaspora in three ways:

1. One typical characteristic of the Jewish people is the tension between two basic types of self-definition. On the one hand, the Jewish people is defined as a nation, with its own territory, language and national framework; on the other hand, it is defined by its religion. This internal opposition is not unique to the Jewish people: the life of every people involves national elements, on the one hand, and spiritual and cultural elements, on the other. It is the lack of balance between both types of components which is unique to the Jewish people, who relied on its religion and, to a large extent, abandoned its national components. What made the tension between religion and nationality more severe, in this case, was the fact that its religion had no universal vocation. Since its demands and aspirations were meant to come about within the framework of

the Jewish collective only, this component became more significant in the self-definition of the Jewish people, condemning it to find itself in a never-ending internal conflict. Diaspora serves as the solution to the problem: “The people, aware of this sharp internal conflict and its dangers, protects its existence by going on exile and living in the Diaspora [...]. Since life in the Diaspora does not take place within a total Jewish reality that allows an unequivocal decision, the potential conflict is thus alleviated.”¹¹³⁴

2. The uniqueness of the Jewish people can also be described in symbolic terms:

The natural balance between the father-God and the mother-homeland was shaken as a result of the takeover by the dominant father. The sanctity of the land and its deification only served to increase the fear from it. The mother turned into a woman (the father’s wife), which meant that from then on any reckless contact, without the supervision of the father’s authority, equaled incest, the punishment for which was quite severe.¹¹³⁵

This description illustrates the rejection of territory in the life of the people and its ensuing departure into exile. Naturally, these mother and father are not entities acting within the world, but symbols representing the national consciousness.

3. Life in the Diaspora is the result of the Jewish people’s self-image as the chosen people, a light unto the nations, etc. This self-image implies a resolute demand to have an absolutely distinctive identity: “The only way to respond to this demand was to go into exile. When the people is in exile, it is indeed essentially different from all other peoples.”¹¹³⁶

These conflicts and lack of balance underlie Yehoshua’s claim that (living in) the Diaspora is a neurotic solution. “It is as though the people strongly felt how dangerous this internal conflict was and, therefore, strove to reject and neutralize it by avoiding a situation in which it would come about. This is the meaning of the neurotic solution: Escaping to a new situation that precludes the conflicts one is afraid of.”¹¹³⁷

This definition is insufficient: a conflict that one is afraid of is not necessarily a conflict that one should solve, and what is described here as “escaping” can, to the same extent, count as a solution – even as a creative solution. If we were to agree

with Yehoshua's definition of a neurotic solution, for example, we should have also qualified as such the state's avoidance of a comprehensive solution to issues concerning public transportation, one of the "scary" aspects of the relationship between state and religion in Israel. This avoidance is made possible through the development of local arrangements. Are they actually the signs of a neurosis? Are there no good reasons why they should be considered as an advantage?

In other words, Yehoshua's definition of the neurotic solution is insufficient because, in fact, it does not reveal the object of avoidance which underlies it. This is understandable given the difficulty of definition, and it can be complemented by what Yehoshua wrote elsewhere, which implies that life in the Diaspora involves the avoidance of something deeper and more essential. In 2005, Yehoshua published an article on the causes of antisemitism, which appeared in the journal *Alpayim* [Two Thousand]. His main argument is the following: it is often thought that the deep motive behind antisemitism is envy of the Jews. However, Yehoshua wonders, a people who was so miserable – limited in the ability to earn a living, persecuted, poor, humiliated and degraded – what was there to envy? The reason for the chronic feelings of hatred against the Jewish people, therefore, cannot be envy. Its source must be found elsewhere. It is a fear that stems from the Jews' diffuse and amorphous identity: "In fact, the gentile stands in front of something amorphous, with a tremendous potential for change, with a large and varied spectrum of possibilities. In other words, neither is the Jew's disappearance ever final, nor is his presence a certain and definite presence."¹¹³⁸ The Jew's ever-changing shape endows him with an evasive, demonic quality. This is why Hitler could speak of "the Jew within us"; this is why the authors of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and their readers were able to attribute to the Jews some kind of pervasive magic power.

For our purposes, more important than the question of whether Yehoshua's explanation of antisemitism is a good one, is the diagnosis that he bases his argument on: the Jew's fluid, virtual and amorphous identity – these are the adjectives Yehoshua uses to describe the Jew – means that the Jewish

people cannot develop a concrete and whole identity. Clearly, it is the collective rather than the individual whose fulfillment is prevented. The amorphous aspect is a clear indication, and it refers to the amorphous nature of the collective, rather than the individual.

This diagnosis underlies Yehoshua's perception of the Diaspora. Although he does not say so explicitly, the three explanations he provides for the Diaspora are its manifestations. The self-image of "the Chosen People" which calls upon the people to be unique in every way, prevents it from having a real identity. This tendency to abstain from developing a full identity is also the main component in the characterization of the Jewish people as unable to balance the basic elements in its definition. It is also at the center of the psychological explanation. The proponent of these notions claims that a person's identity is the result of the integration of the father figure and the mother figure. Denying one of them, as in the case of the Jewish people, implies a difficulty in the development of a whole identity.

This diagnosis is also central to other related contexts. The situation of the Jewish people living in the Diaspora equals that of someone deeply engrossed in fantasies and delusions.

The people is drawn to the Diaspora as a possibility that is an integral part of its essence, while hating the Diaspora at the same time. The people makes every effort to survive in the Diaspora, yet it keeps pushing away the return to its homeland, thanks to the growing ability to actually survive in the Diaspora. The Jews feel guilty for not returning to their land and, therefore, they glorify and elevate it more and more; they infuse the land with a deep and sacred essence, and render it exceptional, in order to justify the fact that they are not worthy of returning to it. On the other hand, they describe the land as a nightmare, as a dangerous and voracious place, 'devouring its inhabitants,' in order to justify their fear of the return.¹¹³⁹

The people's detached identity and its barren reality are also expressed by the fact that its life circumstances in the Diaspora prevent it from fully realizing itself as Jewish. Yehoshua compares the State of Israel and the Diaspora and likens the Diaspora Jew to a prisoner:

A prisoner who is sitting in jail is only partially human, in the sense that he cannot take part in a significant part of the prospects of human activities, which are closed off and prohibited for him. In his awareness and consciousness he certainly is a whole person, but in reality, he is an incomplete person, he is flawed. The feeling and awareness of the Jewish person in the

Diaspora is undoubtedly wholly and fully Jewish, however in his reality as a Jew [...] he is limited, incomplete and blocked. The Diaspora or the exile is a partial situation, flawed and limited, according to the way Judaism perceives itself.¹¹⁴⁰

The Jewish people abstains from fully realizing itself – that is exile. This identity is so deeply engrained that Yehoshua speaks of exile not only as a particular socio-historical situation, but as a destructive tendency that is inherent to the Jewish people. He speaks of “the essence of the Diaspora within us,” which cannot be removed without “thorough treatment.”¹¹⁴¹ This is how he analyzes the situation which prevailed following the Six-Day War. The fact that Israel has no borders, in his view, is an indication of the danger, when the Jewish people is once again blurring its identity by imposing upon itself a symbiotic relationship with the Muslim world. This way, he explains, we are reverting to “the old and dangerous Jewish models that nurture virtuality and non-determination.”¹¹⁴²

To conclude, the neurosis that characterizes life in the Diaspora is not limited to the avoidance of a solution to the conflict between state and religion; it is something far deeper and more essential: it is the destructive pattern that is inherent in the Jewish people and which condemns it to blur its identity, to limit the fulfillment of its culture and waver undecidedly between opposites and contradictions, and to delve into fantasies and delusions. This pattern is linked to the psychology of the Jewish people, not only to its history. This deeply-rooted tendency is a constant threat on its existence.

The State of Israel as therapy

The key to the cure of the Jewish people lies in the adoption of a normal life within the framework of the State of Israel. Yehoshua describes this transformation – from Diaspora to Israel – in two ways (although he does not examine the difference between them). The first one occupies a central place in his essays. It focuses on the claim that life in the State of Israel grants the Jewish person the opportunity to fully realize their Judaism. A secondary argument is implied in some brief remarks, but mainly arises from the above

diagnosis. He argues that the existence within a normal political framework implies a deep change within the Jewish people, entailing the abandonment of some of its characteristics.

As aforesaid, the idea that the State of Israel enables the full realization of Judaism is central to Yehoshua's essays. It is first explained from the perspective of life in exile – the Jewish identity of the person living in the Diaspora is only part of a broader, alien identity. All the governmental institutions, the educational system, the military, are not Jewish; therefore, the Diaspora Jew is “a Jew of the evening hours or of the holy days, and mainly Jewish in his social and family contacts. A schizophrenia of existence has been formed, when all energy is invested in protecting the Jewish incompleteness, which is constantly swept into the general flow of life of the people amongst whom the Jew is dwelling.”¹¹⁴³ On the other hand, “[b]eing Israeli means being a total Jew, and this totality of life itself is what generates our Jewish responsibility.” This means that

[i]n Israel, every detail of life is examined in light of Jewish values, beliefs, conduct and dreams. Whoever is concerned with the continuity of these values must examine them not in theory but in practice. For example, is an Israeli prison directed according to the Jewish value system? This is a real question. When IDF soldiers act according the ethical code of Purity of Arms, Jewish values are upheld, whereas when IDF soldiers commit atrocities, Jewish values collapse. There is no longer a separation between an enclosed spiritual world, in which ideas are discussed, and reality, where it has no relevance.¹¹⁴⁴

The move from life in the Diaspora to life in the State of Israel is therefore based on the idea that life in Israel can be the means toward a full realization of Judaism. Judaism in Israel could serve as the determining source in the shaping of public institutions. Judaism will thus extract itself from the limitations and incompleteness which characterize it in the Diaspora. Clearly, this possibility has a strong therapeutic value. Life in Israel can release the Diaspora Jew from the age-old pattern of avoiding the development of a full identity. His Judaism will no longer be theoretical, detached and partial, but rather rooted in all areas of Israeli life.

As we recall, Yehoshua also describes this transformation in another way. Life in Israel makes it possible for the life of

the Jewish people to be shaped differently. The power of this shaping does not lie in its continuity – in the fact that life in Israel will enable the full expression of Judaism; on the contrary, it lies in the change of identity which is likely to take place there. The State of Israel offers the possibility to weaken the religious component and to strengthen the national component, thereby enabling the essential conflict between religion and nation to be resolved. This will come about by doing away with the exclusive status of religious orthodoxy: “The change will only come about through the creation of additional centers of authority, through the division of religious people into various sects, an act which will reveal the superiority of the national element, shared by all.”¹¹⁴⁵ It is in this context that we can read Yehoshua’s criticism of the division between the glorification of the text in the Jewish world and the insignificance ascribed to daily life. In opposition to the importance of the sublime, yet detached texts of Jewish tradition, he wishes to introduce earthly, political texts, and emphasizes their significance: “The texts which I am proposing for Israelis to read, and I also recommend that American Jews at least glance through, are perhaps not as brilliant and not as sacred, but they are far more important. For example, the State’s Budget [...] or the IDF’s Code of Ethics.”¹¹⁴⁶

It is important to see that the change suggested here is not aimed at the full realization of Judaism. The establishment of centers of authority other than orthodoxy is not meant to commend the variety of Jewish denominations and the richness of their values, but to reveal their political inferiority. Their multiplicity reveals their dependence on the national framework. Neither is the second argument presented above a demand for total fulfillment, but rather for the renouncement of a number of components in the identity of the Jewish people: the traditional texts have rendered the Jewish people too mobile. Clearly, the State’s Budget will not satisfy any reader. This reading means that what has been provided so far as detached texts, should now be provided by uncovering the concrete life of the State.

Hence, the strengthening of the Jewish people within the State of Israel involves renouncement and not only fulfillment; this can also be deduced from Yehoshua's reasoning. Life in the Diaspora suffers from the avoidance of constructing a true identity. Living this way for such a long period of time turned the Jewish people into an entity of multiple faces and shapes. The normalization of the Jewish people, since it is a process of full realization, necessarily implies the renouncement of the richness of an amorphous existence. The criticism which Yehoshua voices against the image of "the Chosen People" should be read in this context. Each people has a unique identity; the aspiration of the Jewish people to be exceptional caused it to have a partial and undetermined identity. A normal framework, more than enabling the full realization of this identity, will, in fact, make it finally possible to abandon it.

Zionist ideology from an Israeli point of view

Yehoshua's negation of the Diaspora is based on two arguments: first, Judaism can be wholly fulfilled only as part of life in the State of Israel; second, Jewish existence in the Diaspora is amorphous and delayed. Israeli reality, like any concrete reality, is both defined and partial. Therefore it can correct the faulty, ancient predispositions of the Jewish people.

Surprisingly, Yehoshua's first argument is close to Achad Haam's idea of "the Spiritual Center." Achad Haam believed that the Jewish people was not going to concentrate in the Land of Israel, and its future existence therefore would depend on the possibility to maintain a Jewish identity. That, in his view, was the main role of the Jewish settlement in Eretz Yisrael. This settlement, which, in his opinion, would depend on quantity rather than quality, and which he described as "an exemplary miniature," would be the embodiment of Judaism. The Jewish nation's unique morality, the Hebrew language with its incredible richness, would exist within it to the fullest. Thus, the Jewish settlement in Eretz Yisrael would radiate the image of a secular Jewish identity that is not divided from its past, and show the Jews around the world how to continue to maintain their national identity.

Yehoshua's argument resembles Achad Haam's viewpoint because of the scope of his aspirations:¹¹⁴⁷ what may become real in the State of Israel is not only the sovereignty of free Jews, but Jewish values, including the morality attributed to them. However, Yehoshua's is, in fact, a reversal of this idea. For Achad Haam, the demand for a total realization of Judaism in Eretz Yisrael served as the basis for the continued existence of the Jew in the Diaspora. For Yehoshua, on the other hand, it indicates the abolition of the Diaspora. Since Judaism can be fully realized only in Israel, there is no point in its existence outside of Israel.

The Achad Haam features of Yehoshua's perception of the Diaspora forces us to pay attention to one particular context that it operates in. Achad Haam's philosophy has a noticeable presence in Israeli culture. It influenced the ideas of many Israeli intellectuals, as well as numerous cultural practices. This influence can be mapped as follows: it is the main conceptual framework in the effort to formulate the Jewish identity of Israeli society. Those who operate within this framework base their arguments on the national-cultural significance that was ascribed to Judaism in Achad Haam's thought, and use it to define the possible connection of Israeli society to its Jewish past. The common approach to teaching Bible in the official-secular educational system in Israel, the attempts at canonization by Israeli intellectuals, the deep desire to strengthen the link between the Israeli judicial system and the "Hebrew [system of] Justice," the reliance of the Israeli public sphere on Jewish cultural symbols as well as the propagation of theories on how essential it is for the secular public to be familiar with Judaism – these are just a few examples.¹¹⁴⁸ What they have in common is the use of the ideas of Achad Haam in order to form a position on inter-Israeli questions – the shaping of the society and the examination of its connection to tradition – without any discussion of the relation between Israeli society and Jews who are living outside of it.

The influence of Achad Haam can also be found among those who credit the State of Israel with a central place in the existence of the Jewish people, with its numerous communities

all over the world. Such an influence can be seen in projects such as Birthright, reminiscent of Zionist utopias written in the spirit of Achad Haam, and also in the directions of Jewish Agency officials.¹¹⁴⁹ More extensive positions can be found in the writings of Israeli intellectuals. For example, the historian Yosef Gorny's suggestion for the renewal of Zionism.¹¹⁵⁰ Gorny claims that the Jewish people is united politically but divided culturally as it has never been before. The political unity revolves around support for the State of Israel, but

the Jewish people is divided and fragmented between religious and secular, and the religious themselves are divided among the various denominations and sects, with ever deepening rifts on questions of conversion, interfaith marriage and the Law of Return; there is a gap between those Jews who form an inseparable part of their native lands and those who live in their national-sovereign state, and there is a gap between Jews who speak different languages, who contribute to the culture of their lands of dwelling and not merely enjoy that culture.¹¹⁵¹

This situation constitutes the basis for the Zionist nature that Gorny attributes to the State of Israel. The will to maintain national unity “leads, through its own internal reason, to the recognition of the State of Israel as the center of the nation; for a scattered nation, lacking both a territorial and cultural framework, needs a focal point to hold all its pieces together. No diaspora can fill the place of Israel in this historic role.”¹¹⁵²

Yehoshua's first argument for the negation of the Diaspora is rooted in the context of these ideas, namely the multifaceted influence of Achad Haam's thinking on Israeli intellectuals. The manifestations of this influence vary in approach or consequence – focusing on Israeli issues, affirmation of the Diaspora or its negation – and also by the fact that each one of them follows one particular aspect of Achad Haam's legacy. Those who focus on the Israeli identity rely on the way he converted religious tradition into a national culture. Proponents of the Diaspora take his formulation of the ideas of center and margins. And Yehoshua picks up the idea of “total realization.” It is easy to see that each approach is constructed according to its share in the legacy. Achad Haam's philosophy is diverged in Israeli intellectual life, to the point of the negation of the Diaspora. What may appear like the positioning of Yehoshua's opinion in one of its contexts

includes the observation on the various manifestations of one Zionist approach.

Yehoshua's viewpoint can shed light on the presence of Zionist ideology in Israel also because of its problems. Generally speaking, it is easy to notice the difficulties that arise from his claims on "total realization." Yehoshua thinks that the State of Israel is the framework that enables the fullest expression of Jewish values. In Israel, he says, "every detail of life has to withstand the test of Jewish values, beliefs, conduct and dreams." Directing a hospital and the ethics of war – that is where Jewish values would either be realized or fail. What exactly is the meaning of such total realization? Judaism is not an ethical conception nor a worldview. How, for example, will Halakhic literature be realized in Israeli daily life? Who would know how to extract "values" from it? The catchwords of "total realization" are problematic from another aspect as well: Can an Israeli HMO, founded and run by Jews, be described as "Jewish"? Even if the medical clinics are, indeed, "Jewish," the ethical characteristics of these systems are inherently anchored in universal norms.

Another difficulty we are dealing with is the incoherence in Yehoshua's approach. His position on the negation of the Diaspora includes two arguments. One is based on the identity of Judaism, and the possibility to fully realize its values, and the other assumes that Judaism and the Jewish people are an amorphous and delayed entity. This contrast is also expressed in the fact that they offer different arguments for the negation of the Diaspora. According to the first argument, Jewish culture may fully realize itself in Israel; according to the second argument, the Jewish people will go through a metamorphosis: from a blurred, unhealthy experience to an Israeli existence, with a defined and healthy identity. According to the first argument, Israel is a continuation of life in the Diaspora; according to the second argument, Israel is, in fact, a different mode of existence.

Each one of these contradictory arguments has its own identity. The first one is "Zionist," the other is "Israeli." The Zionist nature of the first argument is not only due to its source, i.e., the link to Achad Haam's philosophy, but also

this: part of the power of the arguments of the fathers of Zionism is based on the fact that they were thinking about the future. Life in the Diaspora was presented by A. D. Gordon as moral and national atrophy, because of the possibility of creating a deep renewed connection with nature. In Achad Haam's thinking, the existence of the Jewish people is based on the possibility of the embodiment of Judaism in Eretz Yisrael. It is not a coincidence that Zionism gave rise to numerous utopias.¹¹⁵³ Other thinkers, who had no utopian tendencies whatsoever, also based their positions on their future intentions. We find a similar vein in Yehoshua's "Zionist" argument. He determines the role of the State of Israel not according to its empirical existence, but according to its possibilities, which are understood in light of a Jewish set of values. Zionist views and Yehoshua's position share the same mode: their fundamental justification depends on what is possible. The second argument is just the opposite, as it is based on a concrete reality, on the creation of real life.

In short, Yehoshua's position regarding the Diaspora consists of two separate arguments. This is due to contradictory underlying assumptions (total realization and amorphism), because of the type of the "negation of the Diaspora" that they imply (continuity and metamorphosis), and also because Yehoshua's view of the Diaspora is comprised of two different perspectives: a "Zionist" one, which draws on an idea from the past and examines Israel according to its possibilities, and an "Israeli" perspective, which is based on psychotherapeutic diagnostics and an observation of life in the present.

In my opinion, this incoherence is not only linked to the relation between the ideas in Yehoshua's writing, but has its roots in a wider phenomenon, which we can refer to as "the burden of Zionism." As of the early 1990s there has been an ongoing debate in Israel between Zionists and post-Zionists. Although the debate has taken place in several arenas and involved a variety of arguments concerning philosophical and methodological issues as well as specific historic events, it gave rise to a simple and clear division between proponents and opponents, with one thing in common: unwavering, strong

opinions.¹¹⁵⁴ This must be the result of a debate that presses the opponents to express resolute opinions and to hide doubts and difficulties. However, Zionist ideology as upheld by Israeli intellectuals is, in fact, much more nuanced.

Some of the participants in the debate with post-Zionism have distinguished between proponents and opponents, between those who identify with the Zionist project and think that it had reached its end and those who are against it. The philosopher and literature scholar Menachem Brinker presented such a positive post-Zionist position in a lecture he gave in the early 1980s at the Van Leer Institute, titled “After Zionism.” His main point was thus expressed:

Personally, I think that the time of ‘normalization’ is closer than we imagine. We can, in my opinion, stop aspiring to the hastening or delaying of the end – the end of Diaspora – and, instead, dedicate ourselves to thinking of how the State of Israel will look like after the normalization, that is, at the end of the Age of Zionism.¹¹⁵⁵

Such normalization includes, for him, the focusing on the existential problems of the State of Israel: “What will the borders of the State look like? What kind of a relationship will it have with its neighbors? Will it still have a Jewish majority by the year 2000? How will the Jewish-secular and Jewish-religious subcultures coexist side by side without disintegrating the cohesiveness of Israeli society?”¹¹⁵⁶

It would appear that Brinker’s positive post-Zionist opinion and Yehoshua’s position have nothing in common. However, if one accepts my argument about the incoherence in Yehoshua’s views, one can also notice that these two thinkers are actually rather close in a certain way: Brinker calls for breaking free of Zionism as the framework that defines the State of Israel; Yehoshua presents a Zionist stance and an Israeli position that cannot be reconciled. Their approaches are different, as well as the focus of their arguments, and yet, for both of them, Zionism and Israeliness have become almost mutually exclusive.

I am certainly not trying to undermine the importance and centrality of the distinction between various post-Zionist and Zionist positions, but to claim that this distinction, when it becomes a unique means of classification, blurs a more

continuous and diverse phenomenon in Israeli intellectual life. The way Israeli intellectuals think about Zionism includes more than firm pro and con opinions. The attitude toward Zionism calls for a theoretical effort, if only for the reason that it was originally formed before the establishment of the State, and also because of the tension between adherence to Zionism, and the loyalty to Israeli society, with its particular character and many sub-groups. This does not amount to the reservations expressed by its opposers. Part of it is also expressed in the difficulties of its supporters.¹¹⁵⁷

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Topic XIII: The Conflict

Introduction

This section deals with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its possible solutions. It is a very complex conflict and most difficult to solve, that strongly impacts on all aspects discussed previously in this handbook. In fact, it is the most important issue on Israel's agenda and on the agenda of all scholars studying Israeli reality.

A focus of intense reflection, highly disparate proposals have been advanced that compete with each other. At one extreme is the negation of Israel's remaining a Jewish state, and at the other, the search for solutions that would prevent the separation of the West Bank from Israel. Proposed solutions vary from a one-state perspective to variants of a two-state solution. Each proposal that puts forward a "way out" of the conflict is, of course, bound to each scholar's view of the conflict itself.

Karin Wilhelm focuses on an initiative of economist Edgar Salin who contributed to the debate on Zionism and modernization during the 1960s. In 1969, he indicated in an interview that integrating Arab Palestinian refugees into Israeli society was of prime importance. This actually meant abandoning the project of a Jewish state. This solution has several variants and had already been advocated in the past by Jewish organizations such as Brit Shalom, before becoming a key slogan of the Palestinian Liberation Organization.

Mustafa Kabha discusses various aspects of the one-state, binational solution. He defines the conflict as a confrontation between two national communities contending for control over a single piece of land, their exclusive claims receiving religious, mystical, and messianic dimensions. Pondering the major options on the table for a solution to the conflict, the author assesses that Israel's majority is not acting in the best interests of its minority, neither materially nor symbolically. Kabha underlines the benefits and costs of a two-nation state. It would require recognition of the Jewish-Israeli community

by the Palestinian community, a move that will always be considered, from the Palestinian perspective, a concession and an Israeli achievement: as long as Israel does not come to terms with that concession, the solution has no chance of succeeding. However, a two-nation state solution could realize Palestinian aspirations and allay Israeli concerns.

Yoel Bin-Nun suggests a solution that involves two states – Israel and Jordan – but not a Palestinian state. Partition of the land makes war unavoidable seeing that the conflict is basically of a religious nature, ever since the Arabs' terroristic campaign of 1929. The author reminds us that Begin offered the Palestinians autonomy over almost all Judea and Samaria – unsuccessfully. On the other hand, all areas of land ceded to the Palestinians became bases for war against Israel. Israelis who support partition are anxious about Israel's democracy. Yet the only realistic arrangement is to grant Jordanian citizenship to Palestinians, and to divide responsibility between the Palestinians, Israel, and Jordan.

Meron Benvenisti offers a solution that does not entail a precise division of territory or authority between states. He focuses on the relations between the belligerent peoples and asks how far it matters if, in the prevailing circumstances, one considers the possibility of a federal state or any other model that might enable living – at the same time – together and separately. The coexistence of the Israeli and Palestinian national communities is a destiny that cannot be escaped, provided it is based upon equality and ethical principles.

Tamir Magal, Daniel Bar-Tal and Eran Halperin emphasize the socio-psychological barriers to finding a peaceful solution to the conflict. They bring out a whole line of research conducted among Israeli Jews showing that, at least currently, a basic mistrust reigns vis-à-vis Arabs: many individuals adhere to the idea that Judea and Samaria, the two areas forming the West Bank, should be part of the Jewish homeland. People living in continuous exposure to violence validate narratives supporting the conflict. They also tend to free themselves from feelings of guilt vis-à-vis eventual unethical acts against Palestinian civilians. Critical NGOs are portrayed negatively. It is the authors' conviction that a

necessary condition for leading a peace process is to change the conflict supporting narratives. Leaders, especially, must prepare themselves and society for the difficulties of a transitory period.

Shlomo Aronson discusses a variety of barriers and obstacles to achieving a viable solution to the conflict. He sees the conflict not only in the local dimension, but more through its regional and global aspects. The “Right of Return” of Palestinian refugees to Israel, borders, and the future of Jerusalem, are minor issues in the multi-faceted Middle-East drama, when compared to macro-developments taking place in recent years – the “Arab Spring” that destabilized major states in the region, the growth of Islamic State, not to speak of Iran’s new nuclear threat. Dramatic moves and counter-moves create an imbroglio where Israel-Palestinian peace talks weigh little.

Asher Susser, for his part, proposes a two-state solution that endorses the creation of an independent Palestinian state. The “one-state solution” and the continuation of the occupation, are immeasurably worse and will prolong the struggle. Coordinated unilateralism could create a new reality even without any written agreements. It would enable the parties to make significant progress without having to sign any “historical turnabout.” The temporary and provisional nature of the process would make it easier for leaderships on both sides to face their publics on issues relating to their respective historical narratives.

All in all, these chapters discuss possible solutions to the conflict, emphasizing at the same time barriers and obstacles to achieving any solution. Wilhelm presents the view of Salin and his proposed solution signifying, actually, the creation of one binational state. Kabha discusses, from the Arab point of view, various aspects of the one-state binational solution. Bin-Nun aspires to a solution that makes do without an independent Palestinian state. Benvenisti offers a solution that does not focus on a precise division of territory or authority between states, but rather on the relations between the belligerent parties. Magal, Bar-Tal and Halperin emphasize the socio-psychological barriers to finding any kind of peaceful

solution to the conflict. Following that point of view, Aronson discusses a variety of political barriers and obstacles to achieving a resolution of the conflict. And finally, Susser portrays a two-state solution that includes the creation of an independent Palestine.

62. “They help to weave the veil”: Edgar Salin and the Israel Economic and Sociological Research Project

Karin Wilhelm

This paper was completed in November 2014.

“They help to weave the veil” is taken from Adorno 1997, 13.

On the “postmodern condition”

It was the early 1980s when a study by the French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard on the “Postmodern Condition” appeared which shook the way science interprets the modern world forever. In this article, which attempted to explain the “upheaval nature of our turn of the century”¹¹⁵⁸ against the background of the new information technologies, Lyotard diagnosed the final decay of the set of values and their impulse to clarify that had dominated the scientific worldview for centuries, since the Modern Age in Europe. Already in the draft to *Dialektik der Aufklärung*,¹¹⁵⁹ which the Jewish philosophers Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno wrote as American émigrés in the context of their *Kritische Theorie* as a swansong to the power of optimizing progress of the modern, enlightened disenchantment of knowledge included motifs similar to Lyotard’s. In his pivotal text on the transformation of European knowledge culture, Lyotard also declared the modern social theories, sated in promise, and their emancipatory terminology to be obsolete.

From then on, Lyotard’s discourse on postmodernity diagnosed the decline of the great social model narratives, which with a utopian gesture had postulated a world of peace and equality. In this context, there finally arose a skepticism of occidental emancipation and liberation ideals, which had served as the bourgeois ideals since the French Revolution.

This ultimately led to a re-evaluation of the construction of meanings of people's self-determination as nation-states and the discourse on nationalism which legitimizes them. But had not the new world order protected by its political models after the Second World War been successful since 1945? Had not the newly created post-war countries been able to appropriately position the categories of reason in a civil society?¹¹⁶⁰ Had they become worthless and had they lost any further normative power? Or did these critical positions rather offer a return to the very origins of emancipatory models?

There has been much research on the so-called Middle East conflict which has dealt with the political texts on the founding of and justification for the State of Israel, both against this background and that of a newly formed global territorial policy since 1989. A central concept in this research is the narrative of promise, a mixture of religious salvation and a social project sometimes based on anarchy and sometimes on socialism, and its implementation in Palestine, which has formed the basis for and legitimized the political discourse in Israel for various different agendas. This credo was incorporated into the 1948 Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel in the Israeli Declaration of Independence, and Anna Minta recently based her study of the architecture and urban development in Israel on it. She defines as the "national narrative" the "covenant between the Israelites and God on Mount Horeb in Sinai" to be simultaneously the creation of a "Jewish collective identity," as can be seen in a passage in the Israeli Declaration of Independence: "The Land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and national identity was formed [...]. Here they wrote and gave the bible to the world."¹¹⁶¹ After the terror of the annihilation of assimilated European Jews, it was exactly this Zionist idea of Palestine which helped secure the implementation of a Jewish nation-state after the Second World War and assured safety.

At the same time, the State of Israel's fate was determined by the search for rational politics, as the Israeli nation building project was bound to the systematic reorganization of a rigid East-West dichotomy in the Cold War and had to assert itself

in this geopolitical conflict. The formation of Israel took place as the “invention of a nation”¹¹⁶² within this area of tension containing equal parts literary-biblical messianism and active pragmatism.

Nation building between war and peace

With the founding of the State of Israel, there began to appear many opinion pieces and other publications in Europe which, as opposed to the existing extensive literature on the settlement and the history of Jewish culture in Palestine, increasingly focused on nationalistic and economic policy aspects of the newly independent Jewish State. There had already been many various, and indeed controversial, reports on the types and successes of Zionist settlement of Palestine during the British Mandate, and now with the establishment of the State of Israel, the focus increasingly shifted to questions of territorial security, problems with building up society and the related debates on the economic prowess of Israel. In the so-called Arab-Israeli or Israeli War of Independence in 1948/49, it became obvious that the UN General Assembly’s Partition Plan from 1947 would not be accepted by the Arab states in the long term. The reasons for this are evident and their repercussions can still be felt today. In one of the most nuanced and demonstratively empathetic books on the building of the young State of Israel, the British historian Laurence Frederic Rushbrook Williams described the principle reason for this rejection in 1957, “[...] because they feared that it opened the door to unrestrained Zionist territorial expansion in the future.”¹¹⁶³

In this historical context, the European and American literature and publications mainly dealt with the consequences of the founding of the State of Israel on international law. After the end of the Suez Canal crisis in 1956/57, when at least the military situation in Israel seemed to have become stabilized and the territorial process of “shaping Israel” appeared to be completed and secured to a certain degree, international research institutions increasingly began to

concern themselves with the territorial construction of the new state area and the population which was to settle there.

As Israel began to develop its national identity and establish its viability in a hostile environment, obviously confident and politically effective as a nation, the perspective emerged that there would be “enough room for everybody”¹¹⁶⁴ in the country. The state founders had accordingly expressed their commitment to an open, democratic society in the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948. It paraphrased a human rights model influenced from the European spirit of Enlightenment:

The State of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration and the for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to *all its inhabitants* irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. [...] We appeal – in the very midst of the onslaught launched against us now for months – to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions. We extend our hand to all neighboring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighborliness [...].¹¹⁶⁵

With this avowal of a pacifist territorial policy, which was obviously oriented toward the equal treatment of all residents on Israeli territory living peacefully, foreign observers and authors turned their attention over the next few years to those pragmatic questions of upbuilding which concerned the socioeconomic basis for the new country. Along with the numerous travelogues about the impressive landscapes of Palestine and the Israeli development taking place there, more academically oriented appraisals gradually appeared, which eventually allowed those from the 1949 founded Federal Republic of Germany (FRG/West Germany) to join the circle of international Israel research.

The Israel Economic and Sociological Research Project (IESRP)

The Israel Economic and Sociological Research Project (IESRP)¹¹⁶⁶ took shape within the parameters of West Germany's so-called restitution policy. It was initiated by the economist Edgar Salin, who had lived and worked in the Swiss city of Basel since 1927, from his professorship in Switzerland. Within this project, Israeli, Swiss and German economists and sociologists came together over the course of ten years for a discourse on the phenomena of the transformation of the Zionist development project to a modern Israeli nation. The studies made between 1957 and 1968 were dedicated to those problems in Israel's social development which could emerge after the end of the Second World War under the premises of the Cold War and its economy. The question how it was even possible for a globally competitive national, economic and social structure to develop while under constant threat of war was by all means important also with regard to other regions in the world. If a country which had to accommodate, feed and integrate refugees from all different cultures would be a suitable subject for comparative studies with other "countries under construction" (Salin) in similar stages of development was a central motif securing the long-term financial support of the IESRP, with its areas of study of collective lifestyles, and financial, energy and settlement structures. That a scholarly examination of the problems in Israel could provide salient information about the problems in rebuilding the war-torn countries of Europe and their newly planned towns, such as those being built in Great Britain since the 1946 New Towns Act, was a further argument to now find financial backers in West Germany as well.

These connections were indicated by Helmut Gollwitzer, who was a theologian teaching at the Freie Universität in Berlin since 1957, in his 1959 foreword to the German translation of Rushbrook Williams' *The State of Israel*; at this time Salin had begun to contemplate his broadly based research project. Gollwitzer wrote,

[...] that which superficially arouses interest in the State of Israel seems to be shared with several other countries at the moment. In our 'Century of the Displaced,' other countries such as Greece and Germany are also facing the task of integrating great masses of refugees; China is also experiencing revolutionary modernization at a breathtaking speed; India and Indonesia are rushing toward a new form of government after an apolitical past; the Turks

and Irish have experienced a national regeneration after a long decline, which now the Arab and African people can expect.¹¹⁶⁷

The IESRP was intended to try and study the possibilities of a complete modernization in developing countries, or “countries under construction” as Salin preferred, based on the example of Israel.

“Biographical links”¹¹⁶⁸ – aspects from Edgar Salin’s life

It is impossible to speak of the content and importance of the research project without knowing the modalities which allowed this bilingual (German for the German authors/ English for the Israelis) project to come into being. The intended variety of topics covered by the IESRP can only be understood by taking Edgar Salin and his intellectual horizons into consideration. That the joint research projects within the framework of the IESRP with its unmistakable German accent on the situation in Israel could even come into being is undoubtedly due to Edgar Salin personally, despite West Germany’s intense economic ties to and military support of Israel.

Edgar Salin was a member of that generation of German students of intellectuals whose cosmopolitan education was based on the liberal arts education at the most important universities in the German Empire. Looking back, Salin described how this education influenced his later life in a short resume:

Edgar Salin, born in Frankfurt am Main in 1892, studied political science, social science and economics in Munich, Berlin and Heidelberg under Lujo Brentano, Max Sering, Werner Sombart, Eberhard Gothein and Alfred Weber and received his doctorate on the economic development of Alaska already before the First World War. In 1918, having returned home after receiving severe injuries, Edgar Salin became an advisor in the political section of the German Embassy in Bern. Salin left the Foreign Service just a year later to devote himself to an academic career. In 1920 he completed his post-doctorate in Heidelberg, where he became the Gothein Professor in 1924. He later taught as a visiting professor in Kiel and has been a full professor for political economics in Basel since 1927. In 1961 he became dean.¹¹⁶⁹

Salin came from a wealthy Jewish family in Frankfurt am Main, where Goethe was born, and spent part of his defining

student years at Ruperto Carola in Heidelberg along with the brothers Max and Alfred Weber. His thinking developed in the field of discourse, as was customary for studies in the humanities to include at the time. Salin therefore also attended lectures on art history and by Friedrich Gundolf, the young and admired literature professor, besides studying philosophy. Through Gundolf, Salin came into contact with disciples of the idolized Stefan George. Salin remained interested in George's poetry and interpretation of the ancient world for the rest of his life, as well as in Alfred Weber's image of antiquity which he presented in his interpretation of classical and post-classical Greek tragedy. This unique characteristic of a bygone university academic culture, which combined positivistic-pragmatic thinking with humanistic knowledge, influenced the wide spectrum of Salin's published works, his studies on *Platon und die griechische Utopie* (1921), on Augustine's *Civitas Dei* (1926) or on *Jakob Burckhardt und Nietzsche*, conceived in the 1930s and first published in 1938. His books, written in an at times seemingly strained Georgian style, remain – with a few exceptions – at their core influenced by a “project of an academic interpretation of the times [...] in the context of the search for new cultural ideals”¹¹⁷⁰ as represented by Alfred Weber's historical sociology in its educational aristocratic emphasis after 1910. His reputation as an economist is based on an essay first published in 1923 and reprinted many times afterwards, *Geschichte der Volkswirtschaftslehre*,¹¹⁷¹ in which he developed his “organic-historical” or “clear theory” for the first time and postulated it against Gustav Schmoller's (1838–1917) younger historical-oriented economic school of thought. With this article, Salin was qualified to be one of the co-founders of the *List Gesellschaft* (List Society), founded in 1925 in honor of the liberal economist Friedrich List. Salin continued to run the Society in Basel after it dissolved in 1935 and he refounded it in West Germany in 1954. Already in the early 1950s influential public figures met with representatives from the business community, who were therefore able to become members, in the West German List Society.¹¹⁷² Politicians, journalists, managers and academics who had made a name for themselves in the young country enjoyed using and could

effectively use the List Society to discuss contemporary issues. Within the List Society and in his function as its secretary, Salin was ultimately able to establish the funding necessary to enable the IESRP, namely the travel costs of the researchers directly involved in the project, as well as of those of several experts, including in the 1960s Rudolf Hillebrecht, head of the municipal planning office in Hannover, and Marion Gräfin Dönhoff, journalist at the Hamburg weekly *DIE ZEIT*, who had received her PhD under Salin in 1935.

The enthusiasm from the Israelis to cooperate so unbureaucratically with Salin's professorship in Basel and the West German List Society already in the late 1950s in this joint research project on the development of Israel was partially due to the fact that with Salin's participation, they had one of Europe's leading experts in planning and energy. Salin was familiar with the problems in energy and water resource management and had numerous contacts throughout American and European research institutions connected to the European Economic Community (EEC), which was founded in 1957. Above all, Salin, as a surviving member of assimilated German Jewry whom fate had treated kindly, was trusted implicitly and this fact certainly played an important role. In addition, Salin knew some of the leading Israeli politicians who were responsible for questions of development in the young country from their shared university years in Heidelberg, including Josef Cohn, who had, like Salin, studied under Alfred Weber and on his advice wrote his dissertation on "England und Palästina. Ein Beitrag zur britischen Empire-Politik" in 1931. One main aspect of this dissertation dealt with the question of how "Zionist policies (for Palestine) could even be possible"¹¹⁷³ under the conditions of the British Mandate. Ultimately as part of the Zionist program, there should be a large scale settlement of Palestine by Jews willing to emigrate. The concept of Zionism aimed at acquiring land on a large scale. The question was how this program was to be carried out under the existing conditions of indigenous Arabs inhabiting the area, some of whom followed a nomadic lifestyle and had a subsistence economy? Around 1930 Cohn posited a pragmatic, yet extremely idealistic solution, "[t]he

‘normalization of the Jewish people’ connected to this goal, as well as the entire colonization [...] can only be formed, enlarged and completed with the help of concrete, pragmatic means.” However, declaring a belief in the pacifistic “Zionist biologism” of Markus Reiner, “[t]he factor of *violence* does not belong to the means and content of Zionist policies.”¹¹⁷⁴ Against the political theory of Max Weber, who had postulated the necessity of government force, Cohn makes a critical turnaround:

Even if the ‘Zionist political organization’ (the Zionist organization or the Jewish Agency) had the possibility to use physical force to reach their goals, which is not the case, they would renounce to use these methods at all events because Zionist policy (just like the entire concept of Zionism) is at its heart based on justice, tolerance and loyalty. [...] This fundamental realization determines and controls the direction official Zionist policy will take, as in the Arab question.¹¹⁷⁵

Cohn formulated his criticism of Theodor Herzl’s program for a Jewish State accordingly and rejected Herzl’s program for having simply ignored the “existence of the Arabs.” Instead, Cohn supported a solution such as the one Winston Churchill had come up with, of a binational country, “in which [...] Jews and Arabs face each other as equal communities living completely free as state-nation.”¹¹⁷⁶

This kind of Zionism, or the “cultural Zionism”¹¹⁷⁷ like that perpetuated by Gershom Scholem before 1920, was met by enthusiasm in the German “Reparation Nation’s” attitude toward the socio-political constitution of Israel, particularly in the first two decades after the country’s founding. Living in collectives, as seen in the kvutza, kibbutzim and moshavim, justified the belief that with the founding of a new homeland for the Jews, the idea of the Holy Land in which, as Maurice Halbwachs described it, “another world” where the promises of the past could become revived in parts of “the present,”¹¹⁷⁸ had become reality, or as Salin hoped, could be taken as such. During the Weimar Republic, Josef Cohn had honored the president of the World Zionist Organization, Chaim Weizmann, as representing this worldview and acting for a suitable Zionist policy. After the founding of the State of Israel, Cohn continued to advocate this kind of Zionism at the Weizmann Institute, which had been founded in Rehovot

already in 1934, with his passionate youthful commitment to pacifism, “[t]he construction of the National Home will continue in full strength, [...] because the invincible power of an idealistic and revolutionary movement stands behind it.”¹¹⁷

9

To what extent this empathetic avowal of tolerance for the Arab population, who were now called Palestinian, has retained its validity after experiencing the Shoah, the territorial war in 1948 as well as the Sinai War in 1956, were not been asked by the German aid workers, and rightly so. Such things were not spoken of in official West German politics, or only behind closed doors, and for good reason. Rather, it was seen as important to support the “invincible strength of Israel” through financial and specialized aid, scientific cooperation and an increase in productivity within the framework of peaceful coexistence among the inhabitants of the new Israel.

The Weizmann Institute and the research areas of the IESRP

It was Josef Cohn who established contact with European research institutions as the Vice-President of the European Committee and envoy of the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot in 1957/58. Within this function, Cohn also visited Switzerland and West Germany to explore the possibilities for joint research. Cohn’s mission first led him to Heidelberg and Geneva to CERN (Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire), the recently founded European organization for nuclear research which had been headed by the German nuclear physicist Wolfgang Gentner since 1955 as its director. Now in 1958, Gentner had moved to the newly founded Max-Planck-Institute for Nuclear Physics in Heidelberg, where he, together with Cohn, initiated extensive cooperation in research between West Germany and Israel over the next few years.¹¹⁸⁰ Cohn’s attention was drawn to Salin on his travels, as the Israeli education and research politician was looking for extensive opportunities to work together in the field of nuclear research.

Salin had long been addressing questions on the economic benefits of nuclear power with a view to the development of the European Economic Community (EEC), and had completed some studies which presented ways how nuclear power could be applied to secure and cheapen energy production. Another phenomenon that Salin discussed in this context was indicated by the refinement in data technology in the automation of labor. He was incredibly attuned to the innovative power of new technologies and prognosticated far-reaching economic and political changes in the social make-up in all developed, industrialized nations already in the early 1950s. At the time Salin maintained the prognosis that resource-poor developing countries would also be able to profit from this technical advance and through it attain a certain level of independence and prosperity. This topic was given much attention at the time in the in-house publication of the List Society, the *Mitteilungen der List Gesellschaft* [List Society Reports]. Additionally, under the guidance of Salin's colleague Harry Zimmermann, alliances were being formed between researchers working at American, French, German and Swiss universities. Zimmermann, who had received his PhD in the early 1930s under Salin and who had beforehand associated with the George circle in his years as a student in Heidelberg, would co-develop and coordinate the IESRP from Basel for about seven years starting in 1960.¹¹⁸¹

At the time of Cohn's European trip, Salin had the reputation of being an economist who devoted extensive energy to the consequences of automation and the civil use of nuclear power.¹¹⁸² In February 1958, Cohn wrote from Geneva to the Israeli physicist Amos de-Shalit, who had meanwhile established a good relationship with Gentner and to CERN: "Salin is today one of the outstanding international authorities in the field of the economic aspects of atomic energy [...]."¹¹⁸³

When Cohn arranged for Salin to get to know the Weizmann Institute in 1958 as its guest, he was a traditionally educated economist who was aware of the destructive power of nuclear technology since the dropping of the atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Salin also had never dismissed

the inherent potential for catastrophe in reactor technology. He ultimately shared the skepticism of a cultural criticism of modernity like Alfred Weber, but with some reservations. In the end he, like many of his contemporaries, was hopeful that there could be “peaceful use of nuclear energy” on a global scale, as this technology seemed to be able to solve one of the important political problems facing the world. Along with Werner Heisenberg, winner of the Nobel Prize in Physics, he thought that nuclear power could meet the expected energy needs of the world. Salin felt that nuclear power would be necessary particularly in developing countries without significant coal, oil or water resources. He therefore welcomed the future energy concept for Israel with the use of nuclear power.¹¹⁸⁴

At the time of his first trip to Israel, Salin was undoubtedly inspired by the dream of the peaceful use of nuclear power. In July 1959, he published an article entitled “Israelische Impressionen” about his trip to Israel in the List Society Report. He had undertaken the trip with his friend Constantin von Dietze. In his article, Salin also spoke of the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot, whose natural science and nuclear physics institutes had impressed him greatly. To the former translator of Plato, it seemed to represent a new version of Plato’s Academy. Located in an area won from the desert now enclosed by trees, Salin thought the Institute and its surroundings to be magically beautiful. In the gorgeous “blooming living and work environment” of the Weizmann Institute, he wrote that he had felt himself to be in an “enchanted garden [...] in which there were no remnants of the erstwhile desert, but trees and buildings that recalled scenes from One Thousand and One Nights and pictures of Persian miniatures.”¹¹⁸⁵ Around this paradise, the Nuclear Research Center was being built according to plans of Philip Johnson, the American architect. The Center was part of the Weizmann Institute and Salin mentioned it in passing. He certainly did not consider it to be a disturbing factor in this Garden of Eden. This favorable view of the building was due to architectural objectives seeking to symbolize a new union between the Promised Land and the technically modern

nationstate of multi-ethnic Israel. Guido Fischler exposed the reality in this effusive perspective in an IERSP study published in 1965. Fischler's study confirmed Salin's estimation that, "in all of the countries with an energy deficit the feeling" dominates that their energy problems could be solved by nuclear power. In the 1950s, the creed that civil use of nuclear power would prevent future energy shortages prevailed all over the world. "Nuclear power and developing countries were mentioned in the same breath and people imagined how this relationship could stimulate and support the economies of underdeveloped regions. These hopes soon proved to be too optimistic."¹¹⁸⁶ Fischler was obviously skeptical of the construction of nuclear reactors in developing countries. He considered the exploitation of alternative energy sources such as wind or solar power to be of marginal importance due to the lack of a refined storage technology. In any case, the Israeli energy specialists were looking at the potential of green energy. Fischler's study does imply that it would make sense to exploit solar energy with the colonization of the Negev so that Israel would have a chance to become no longer dependent on oil. It was therefore conceivable that there was potential for development in the energy industry in other developing countries with a similar climate, as well.

Individual studies on social and settlement structures I

Topics to be covered in the IESRP were agreed upon by Israel, Switzerland and West Germany mainly between 1961 and 1964. Several trips were taken to Israel by researchers and associate members of the List Society and other research institutions such as Theo Pirker and Erika Spiegel, to both generate insights into the situation in the country, as well as to set the main areas of research with the Israelis. Meetings were also held with members of the Advisory Council for the IESRP, which was founded in Israel. The Governor of the Bank of Israel, David Horowitz, served as the Council's Chair, with Yeshayahu Foerder, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Bank Leumi Le Israel B. M., acting as Vice-

Chair.¹¹⁸⁷ There were more than 30 members on the Council, including the sociologist Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, who later published some of his books on Israeli society in West Germany in German and was able to bring the German view of Israeli society up to date.¹¹⁸⁸ The economist Nadav Halevi was brought on board as the Director of Research. He represented the Falk Project for Economic Research in Israel, founded in 1952, in the Council. Finally, Yacov Bach was also a member, serving as Executive Secretary (hon.). Edgar Salin later had a close friendship with Bach, whose estate afforded important insights on the genesis of the research project.¹¹⁸⁹ The proposed individual studies were to examine structural problems in energy development, population policy and urbanization. The List Society was able to secure financing with the help of the Swiss National Fund, the Ford Foundation and the Israeli Falk Institute, as well as from private donors. Twenty-three publications were already planned for 1963. The Israeli studies were to be solely devoted to economics.¹¹⁹⁰ The List Society's field of activity by itself was to generate a detailed presentation of the influential socio-political collectives in the country such as the Histadrut trade union, the kibbutz and moshav movements, which, "as a part of the agricultural sector created by them – (formed) a central factor in the economic, cultural and social development of the country."¹¹⁹¹ These collectives, crucial to the state, had to react to the modernization of the Israeli living and working environment under industrial capitalized forms of production. All of the IESRP individual studies were to analyze this process, which would ultimately fit together like puzzle pieces to create an overview of modern Israel.

Salin was able to engage Theo Pirker, long associated with the German Confederation of Trade Unions (Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund, DGB), to author the trade union study. Pirker became a professor at the Institute for Sociology at the Freie Universität in Berlin, where he also explored questions of labor organization.

The complexity of the Histadrut study cannot be gone into in detail here, but it should be mentioned that Salin's question

if Israel could serve as model for developing countries is given an extensive answer. In his analysis, Pirker pointed out an aspect that was unexpected in Israel as an immigration country; Israel itself was in need of further development, but already after 1960 had become so consolidated that it was able to provide development aid, albeit on a small scale. The aid took the form of sharing their own development work and its institutionalization on site with functionaries and students from African and other developing countries.¹¹⁹² The intention behind this process was seen by Pirker thusly: “Israeli development aid has [...] a very clear political strategy. The goal is to not allow the new countries in Asia and Africa to be drawn in by the Arab leadership.” Pirker related the success of this strategy with a special feature in the political-economic orientation of the Histadrut union, as it was able to, “not only convey [...] to the visitors from the underdeveloped countries [...] a very simple socialist ideology with a cooperative-union character, but also an ideology [...] that seemed to fulfill the desire of many of the representatives from underdeveloped countries of a synthesis between capitalism and socialism.”¹¹⁹³ The Histadrut union commended itself as a model for a third way between the deeply entrenched global East-West ideological systems. Pirker briefly mentioned one essential aspect which made Israel’s social development interesting as a model for developing countries. He verifies a “will to self-help [...] to achievement [and] the utopia of work and colonization,” which was equipped with, “a relatively secure financial source in the organization of the Zionist movement.” According to the DGB-functionary Pirker, this Zionist-based, “collective will to work and achievement,”¹¹⁹⁴ which enabled the communal living arrangements of the kibbutzim and moshavim to be so successful, manifested itself as an occidental work ethic, described by Max Weber in *Der Geist des Kapitalismus*.

Mentality analyses of this kind, those cultural-intellectual models influenced by Zionism of European provenience, shaped the views taken by the IESRP researchers toward the Zionist colonization policy in Palestine and its development in the new Israel. These can be found in the studies on the

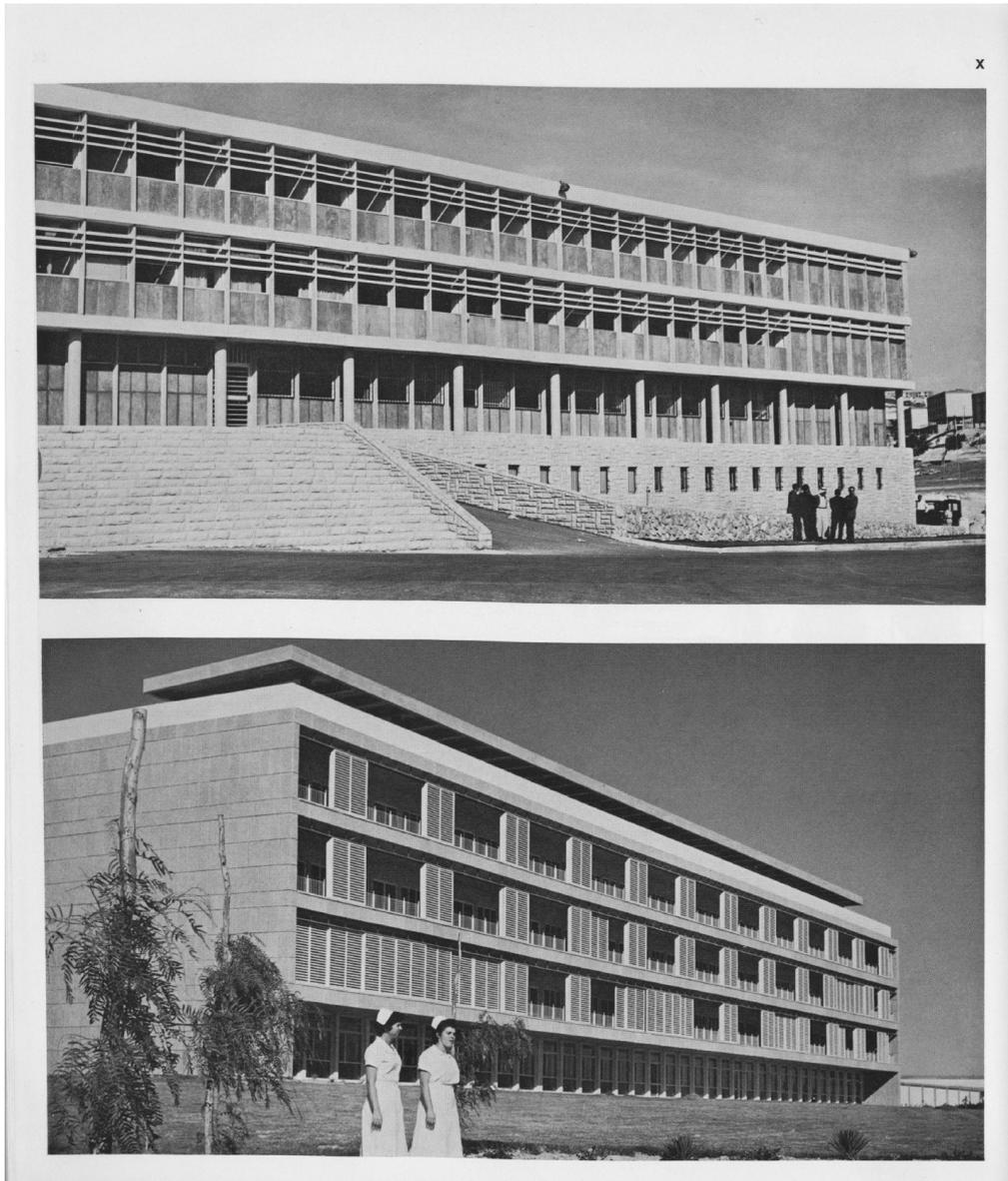
settlement and social structures of the kibbutz and the moshav as well as in the studies on the *Neue Städte/New Towns* by the sociologist Erika Spiegel.

Individual studies on social and settlement structures II

Martin Pallmann's study of the kibbutz came out a year after the Histadrut report in 1966. Egon Meyer's work on the Ovdim moshav, which was accepted as a doctoral dissertation by Salin, appeared in 1967.¹¹⁹⁵ Characteristic of both works is their attempt to first unravel and classify the tightly woven web of Zionist colonialization policy terminology, certainly also with a view toward their German readers. As a basis, the authors not only used the extensive literature available on the subject, but also the method of participant observation. This meant that they not only described the settlement structure in a standardized way, but went further, as Pallmann who temporarily integrated himself into a kibbutz community to live and work in the collective. Pallmann's study therefore not only contains the organizational structures of such collective cooperatives, their distribution of property, land and means of production, but with the descriptions of the common living, educational and cultural facilities, also information on individual members of the kibbutz and their lives and responsibilities in the community.



Illustr. 1: New immigrant housing in Beer Sheva. Taken from Erika Spiegel, *Neue Städte/New Towns in Israel* (Stuttgart: Karl Krämer Verlag, 1966).



Illustr. 2: District administration building in Nazareth (top); regional hospital in Beer Sheva (bottom). Taken from Erika Spiegel, *Neue Städte/New Towns in Israel* (Stuttgart: Karl Krämer Verlag, 1966).

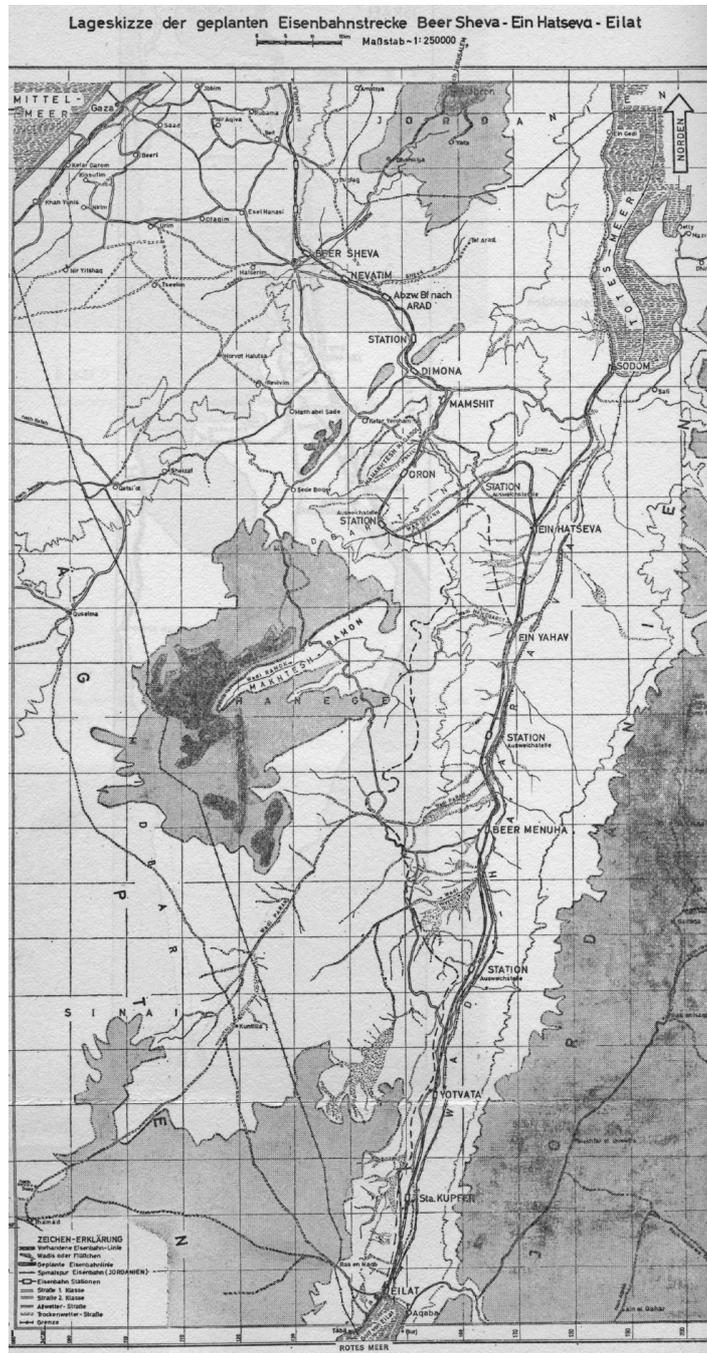
Israeli society receives an individual, tangible face in Pallmann's book. He introduces some of the people who are engaged in the process of nation building in a dangerous, at times existence-threatening environment. However, his kibbutz observations already reveal tendencies toward the dissolution of the pre-state ethos, as the Israeli "population" was becoming more and more similar to "an American 'mass culture society.'"¹¹⁹⁶ Salin ignored this development at first.

Neue Städte/New Towns in Israel and Die Bahn der drei Meere

The Israeli geographer Ruth Kark compared this period with the demands of the waves of immigration in the early years, which, along with the current threats from the outside, created internal conflict potential, as well.¹¹⁹⁷ The Jewish immigrants from North Africa, Eastern Europe or Asia Minor brought with them mentalities which were completely different from both a European-based educational canon, as well as clan-based oriental lifestyles. The important thing now was to sensibly relocate these immigrants all over the country, which needed to be resettled, and most of all, to socialize them together, despite all of their differences, for the new Israeli nation. This education in identity was to guarantee, “the integration of immigrants from different ethnicities, the promotion of social mobility and social mixing.”¹¹⁹⁸ This aspect of nation building requires concrete, certain acquisition of land for urban development and territory. The National Master Plan drawn up by the architect Arie Sharon from 1948 to 1952 created the first far-reaching planning requirements with the founding of new “development towns.” The new settlements or the development of older villages previously inhabited by Arabs who had fled or been driven out were unceremoniously built over in the Sharon plan and developed with a view to expansion. These were realized in 30 new development towns according to the population distribution plans.¹¹⁹⁹

In connection to this process of urbanization, transportation planning was taking place, which was to reorganize street and railroad construction as well as promote the development of the port cities Haifa and Ashdod. Two individual studies are of particular importance in this context, the study on the *Die Bahn der drei Meere* and Erika Spiegel’s review of the *Neue Städte/New Towns in Israel*. The town study analyzed existing and future locations for settlements that would be appealing enough to attract newcomers to stay. The railroad study examined the possibility of opening the Negev desert up to Eilat to create new trade routes between the

Red Sea and the Mediterranean. In the foreword to the railroad study, Salin justified the usefulness of this complicated new railway from Ashdod on the Mediterranean via Beersheba, Dimona and Oron to Eilat citing the insufficient resource capacities in the country.



Illustr. 3: Site plan of the planned railway line Beer Sheva - Ein Hatseva - Eilat. Taken from Dietrich Regling and Reimar Voss, *Die Bahn der drei Meere* (Basel: Kyklos-Verlag Basel; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1963).

However, there were phosphate deposits lying dormant in the Negev in the Oron-Dimona region waiting to be economically exploited.



Illustr. 4: Textile factory in Ashdod (top); factory buildings in Nazareth (center); flour mill in Beer Sheva bottom. Taken from Erika Spiegel, *Neue Städte/New Towns in Israel* (Stuttgart: Karl Krämer Verlag, 1966).

Moreover – and here he reflected on the crisis of the closing of the Suez Canal in 1956 – opening the Negev and connecting Mediterranean towns with the Eilat region on the Red Sea would guarantee the country necessary, undisturbed economic independence. Naturally, the publisher of Friedrich List's writings would be especially interested in the study on the railroad project, particularly as its authors, the German

railroad engineers Dietrich Regling and Reimar Voss, had received a lot of support from the West German Transportation Minister, Hans-Christoph Seeböhm, for their “appraisal,” which also went into great financial detail. Salin commented on the involvement of the minister: “He was just like the experts before, first he made a sober, objective inspection and gradually became fascinated by the greatness of the plan and the opportunity to carry it out.”¹²⁰⁰ Salin also considered the project to be a decisive “contribution to creating lasting peace in the Near and Middle East”;¹²⁰¹ as a contribution to extinguish the smoldering threat of war.

The “three sees railroad” was projected to take a good five years to construct, but ultimately remained unrealized. In May 1964, Salin was able to inform the board of the List Society that the railroad line was under construction and that, “[t]he track [from Beersheba] to Oron will be completed by the mid-1965. [...] No decision has been made about continuing to Eilat.”¹²⁰² This truly impressive project to open up the Negev was to be financed by West Germany. However, it, like Salin’s proposal that the 160 million DM railroad track be turned over, “after the end of reparations [...] as a gift from the German people to the Israeli people,”¹²⁰³ remained wishful thinking.

Salin considered the last study, Erika Spiegel’s *Neue Städte/New Towns in Israel*, which appeared in English and in German in 1966 to be the “grand finale” of the List Project. Spiegel’s study showed grosso modo respect for the Israeli achievements in development and documented this attitude in an empirical description, which was largely limited to a neutral, precise recording of the legal and administrative facts. Spiegel presented a well-structured planning-based analysis of the 11 existing towns which had been further developed between 1948 and 1956, as well as of the 19 towns which had been founded “in the open countryside.” In her analysis she included the distribution of economic units in the kibbutzim and moshavim, the development of regional market functionality of the new agglomerations and the industrial sites to be constructed, as well as a discussion of the existing land development plans. A central aspect of her incredibly diverse

study was the analysis of the deficiencies in Sharon's land and urban planning, which had become obvious over the years. Her analysis culminated in a critical-skeptical evaluation of Patrick Geddes' concept for Tel Aviv. Sharon had based his idea for garden cities on this concept, and continued to develop it further. It had served as the basis for many newly established communities.

Erika Spiegel raised the ideological veil of the garden city idea with regard to Tel Aviv:

Already in 1909, the founders of Tel Aviv [...], had conceived their town, despite the dune and sand desert around them, as a garden suburb of the Arabic Jaffa – as 'Hill of Spring.' Even if they were, and wished to remain, city dwellers, there was alive in them, too, a reflection of the Zionist vision which I saw, in the working of the soil with their own hands, one of the vital elements of the Jewish rebirth.¹²⁰⁴

Spiegel concluded that the stagnation in urban development was due to Sharon's "initiative plan" of such mixed forms of urban and rural structures, which had to be replaced by an industrial modernization in the long term. For now, the garden city concepts should be replaced by centrally oriented urban structures so that their economic ties could further advance the regions to become regional centers. Rough drafts of new plans like this already existed and were being built as a corrective by Artur Glikson as Integrative Habitation Units.¹²⁰⁵

In order to be able to judge the quality of the new settlements appropriately, the author recommended comparing them with the agglomerations of "slums and shanty towns" which were emerging in the developing world or on the outskirts of Western cities at the time. Only in this context could the new constructions be truly assessed according to the garden city principles and models of the recently completed English plans by Patrick Abercrombie. Spiegel came to the conclusion that,

[i]t can scarcely be denied that the initial garden city pattern lies as a heavy burden on most of the new towns and is certainly responsible to some extent at least for the much bewailed lack of a lively 'urban' atmosphere. These beginnings, however, were subsided by such steady and logical progress that the quality of town planning, [...], is one of the greatest assets especially in the newer places.¹²⁰⁶

Wohnungsbau für Neueinwanderer in Beer Sheva
New immigrant housing at Beer Sheva

Reihenhäuser in Ober-Afula
Terrace houses at Afula Illit



Illustr. 5: Terrace houses in Afula Illit. Taken from Erika Spiegel, *Neue Städte/New Towns in Israel* (Stuttgart: Karl Krämer Verlag, 1966).

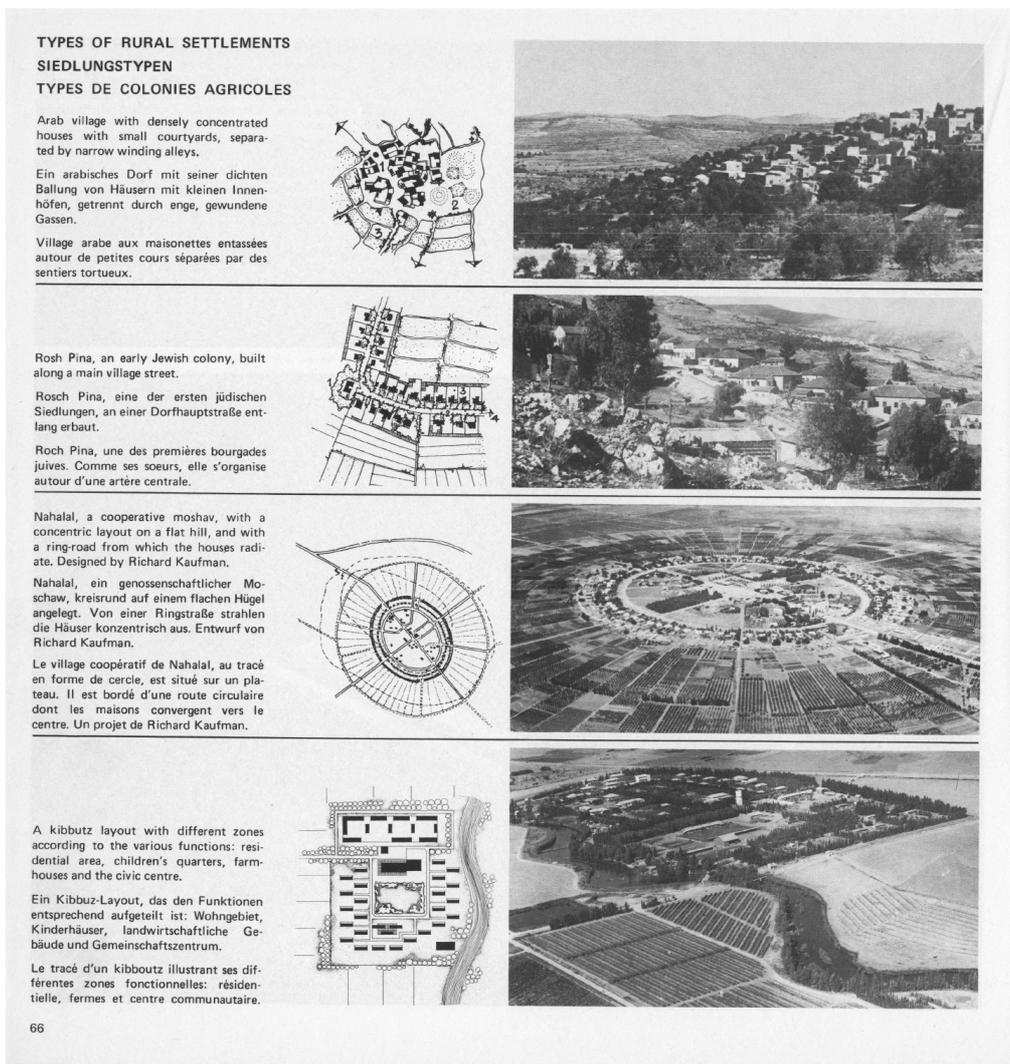
Spiegel composed her study with extreme sensitivity and restraint, like almost all of the IESRP participants from Switzerland and West Germany. She did not really comment on the emerging political crisis with Zionist colonization, and yet in her text there are some indications of the geopolitical consequences of this modern Israeli urban development policy as a policy of displacement, which, for example, subordinated the living area of “21,000 Bedouins, 19 tribes with anything from 100 to several members”¹²⁰⁷ in the Negev with a wave of the hand.

A year after Erika Spiegel's book appeared on the German market, it was reviewed by Heide Berndt, an urban sociologist and young co-worker of Alexander Mitscherlich, a psychologist at the Sigmund-Freud-Institute in Frankfurt a. M. While Spiegel used a certain restraint in her assessment of new urban development in Israel, Berndt employed rather a cold, diagnostic viewpoint. For Berndt, Israeli urban planning had unforgivable conceptual deficiencies, which could also be found in West German cities. Berndt felt that the significance of Spiegel's study was no longer in the respect given to the Israeli experiment, but rather in the, "explanatory effect [...] on ideological recipes [...] like the garden city idea." She felt that, "for the sake of an ideological principle [...] no cost or effort was spared [...] to lay out green spaces or green wedges in the harshest desert."¹²⁰⁸ What had occurred in urban development in Israel in the International Style opened Berndt's eyes to the absurdity of West German urban planning, which had been carried out according to the so-called functional city, interspersed with green areas, in the Adenauer era. Berndt could not find anything exemplary in Israel's new cities, unlike West German urban planners like Rudolf Hillebrecht in Hannover.¹²⁰⁹ "The reasons for these ridiculous experiments [Sharon's new cities] lie in the political history of Israel in which Zionist ideas of salvation and anti-Arab colonization attempts play an important role."¹²¹⁰

Heide Berndt's assessment foretold the need for a re-evaluation of the Zionist colonization model and raised the suspicion that the IESRP had only produced a whitewashed picture of Israel; an affirmative narrative of the postulate of freedom and equality in the nation building process. A fundamental question was now raised. Had the IESRP really helped weave the veil of a false consciousness covering the power politics dimension in the Israeli nation building process? Filled with these doubts, the awareness of the importance of the List Society's Israel project for scientific policy gradually evaporated, a process which was advanced by the events of the Six-Day War in 1967.

Image politics

This tendency had already been felt earlier and had even been documented in the publishing history of the research series. Unlike the purely economic or social studies which were all published in the Kyklos publishing house in Basel and the J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) publishing house in Tübingen, Erika Spiegel's book was published by the Karl Krämer publishing house in Stuttgart/ Bern. This publishing house had just begun to produce a series of fabulously edited books on contemporary modern architecture.¹²¹¹



Illustr. 6: Types of rural settlements. Taken from Arie Shon, *Kibbutz+Bauhaus. An Architect's Way in a New Land* (Stuttgart: Karl Krämer Verlag, 1976).

However, the change in publishers was not only due to the book's subject of urban development. In addition, the public in German-speaking countries in particular showed little interest in research of Israel; at least, that is what the shockingly low

sales numbers imply. For this reason the editors in the List Society decided to publish in two languages and bring out a book that not only included tables and graphs, but also impressive black and white photography, which invited one to take a leisurely look. These photographs, which not only convey an attractive picture of the new cities, also attest an attitude toward life, an Israeli national identity which bore its own unmistakable signature of success, social homogeneity and strength.

Salin felt this image to be authentic, and he connected it with the courage of the Jewish immigrants from Eastern and Western Europe who had survived the Shoah. They and the immigrants from North Africa and other regions in the world where Jews were being persecuted seemed to bring the spirit of a caring community to life in the development of Israel. Salin was also fascinated like many others by the unbreakable voluntary pioneer spirit of the Jewish immigrants. He was excited to see their work ethos, which he experienced as an almost Prussian-like self-discipline. He found a potential for caring for the other, caring for their troubles and the willingness to engage in dialogue in their collectives. As Salin saw it, this dialogue did not shut out their Arab neighbors, but rather sought them out, at least as long as – continued the argument of Salin, ever the realist, who naturally thought of the territorial independence of Israel won by military means in 1948 – they agreed to maintain the rules of civilized political dialogue. It should be mentioned that Salin was convinced of the necessity and possibility of reaching an agreement between the Arab countries and Israel. As early as 1969, he indicated in an interview that integrating Arab Palestinian refugees into Israeli society was of prime importance. Although disillusioned, Salin therefore supported a Swiss initiative which wanted to realize a project which aimed to settle and reintegrate the refugees on Israeli territory. He commented on the Israeli reaction to this initiative: “The Israeli government was not exactly enthusiastic about the plan. But I can assure you that many a company would still be ready to participate.”¹

The model of Zionism that Salin ultimately felt connected to had been described by Cohn in Heidelberg in 1931. However, he expressed his doubts about this project to Chaim Pozner already in 1948: “You are too clever not to know that the dreams that become realized usually look very different in the light of day.”¹²¹³ Over the years, the binational model of Zionism, as well as the IESRP, have faded from view; the project with its comprehensive and at times critical body of knowledge did not continue to have an impact on either Israel or in German-speaking Europe.

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63. A Perspective on the Prospects of Settling the Zionist-Palestinian Conflict

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This paper was completed in April 2015.

The nature and dimensions of a profound conflict

The Zionist-Palestinian conflict is one of the most complicated and complex in modern human history. It is a conflict between two national communities contending for control of a single piece of land, their exclusive claims receiving religious, mystical, and messianic dimensions, while citing historical and moral rights to explain their claims of exclusivity and their refusal to recognize the other's rights to the holy land. A zero sum game.

Terms used to describe the conflict

I have chosen to use the term "Zionist-Palestinian conflict" in the title of this paper, as in my opinion it reflects more than any other the nature, dimensions, and essence of this conflict. This choice, however, does not rule out other terms used to express other dimensions of the conflict, such as "the Arab-Jewish conflict" or "the Arab-Israeli conflict" or the "Muslim-Jewish conflict." Each indicates a certain dimension of the conflict in its different stages of development, one that has kept the embers burning and furthered its complexities, adding additional hurdles to the possibility of a peaceful solution.

The Zionist-Palestinian dispute is, first and foremost, a struggle between two national communities in an era of "nation-states." Each attempted to realize their national aspirations by establishing a sovereign nation-state on

sovereign territory strongly affiliated with these aspirations. The context and background of the two movements' growth and development are incomparable: their wide ideological and cultural context, geopolitical context, identity-based background, and how each community expresses its identity and defines itself both versus the other community and internally.

As evident in its initiation and critical stages of development, the Zionist movement is strictly a European organization. Most of its components are a product of the Enlightenment and it considered itself an offshoot of Western culture and embraced basic codes and concepts that derive from Western culture, in the sense of the "white man's mission." All this despite European Jews' sense of "estrangement" in Europe, which gradually increased with the widespread emergence of antisemitic ideas and feelings concurrent with the development of modern European national movements. The proto-Zionist longing for Palestine, then under Ottoman rule, was extremely paradoxical and ambivalent: it was an attempt to flee the atmosphere of hatred and repression prevalent in Europe and an immediate threat to Jewish life there, but at the same time the East and contemporary residents of Palestine were seen through a European perspective of "white enlightened" colonialism.

A small minority of Jewish writers called for integration with the natives and even for assimilation with them. They even observed the Arab population of the land with admiration and wonder. A marked representative of this group is Eliahu Epstein, who presents his views in his well-known article "A Hidden Question." He described the Arab people and said: "[...] this people [...] is mighty and numerous [...]. Physically it is superior to all the European peoples."¹²¹⁴ Epstein believed that the strengths of the Arabs and the Jews could be combined, considering that the qualities of the two nations are complementary and both will benefit, in his opinion. In order to promote this plan Epstein was in favor of forming a joint Jewish-Arab system of education, and he proposed the following formula: "The Jews shall have a homeland and the Arabs shall have progress." Epstein's views were disputed and

strongly criticized by representatives of the Zionist mainstream, who rejected his approach and objected to any integration and assimilation, claiming that the two nations would never join forces. These writers had a patronizing attitude toward the Arab natives and portrayed them as savages, primitive, and Philistines. Any connection of these natives to the land was perceived as incidental, and their symbolic and emotional ties with the country were not considered worthy of mention. These writings indeed took different approaches but, in the main, the local culture was perceived as inferior and one with which it is almost impossible to live. The most radical attitude was expressed by Joseph Klausner, who described the local culture as “a semi-savage culture based on ‘the sword and the fist,’” and therefore we cannot and should not, in his words, “descend once again to the cultural level of the semi-savage. And although I know that nations are not formed without clashes and the spilling of blood, now that such things are not a necessity they should be put off for as long as possible.”¹²¹⁵

Klausner indeed did not object to clashes and blood spilling, which he believed to be part of the nation building process. This necessity, if it should come about, should in Klausner’s opinion be “advantageous.” Of this “advantage” he says: “[...] since the clashes have already come about and blood has been spilled, it is our sacred duty to make an effort that the blood spilled not be in vain. Only then will we at least have some comfort.”¹²¹⁶

Yosef Haim Brenner too displayed a degree of cultural arrogance toward the Arab locals. He rejected all sentimental and ideological approaches toward them and explained his views as follows:

Aside from its other residents, the small Land of Israel is also home to no less than 600,000 Arabs, who despite their inferiority and lack of culture are the masters of the land, in practice and in consciousness, and we have come to intrude on them and reside among them, compelled by necessity. There is hatred between us as is wont to be – and it shall remain. They are stronger than us in all ways, and they are capable of trampling us like dust. But we – the Israelites – are used to being the weak among the strong. So must we be prepared here for the results of the hatred and use all the means in our weak hands to persevere here as well. We know what it is like, to be surrounded by hatred – and this generates more hatred, that is as it should be; accursed are

those of the bleeding hearts, we have been struggling since we became a nation. But first of all we must understand the real state of affairs. First of all, no sentiments or ideals.¹²¹⁷

While Brenner understood that the Arabs constituted the majority of the country's residents and were its masters "in practice and in consciousness," Ze'ev Smilansky completely rejected all the Arabs' national rights in the country, claiming that they are not a nation but rather a divided society comprised of conflicted and competing sects and tribes.

But the call to actively resist the Arab national movement was voiced by Aharon Hermoni, who published a list of articles in the Hebrew press in this spirit. Although recognizing the legitimacy of the pan-Arab idea, he called to take a stand against it. In one of his articles he said:

The idea of unity has emerged among the Arabs, even if in an inferior form, and this idea, that of national revival of the Arabs, has the right to exist just as ours does. And we must be attentive to this, because this idea will undoubtedly grow and advance with the progress of Arabic-speaking countries, and it shall spread with the railroad and with European colonialism. In this way the fate of the future Arab movement depends not only on the Arabs but on the future of Turkey and on the political circumstances of the great kingdoms.¹²¹⁸

Hermoni accused the Zionist leadership of committing an oversight by not responding to the claims of Nagib Azouri concerning the idea of Arab unity and not preparing for this movement's gradual emergence and its endangering of Zionist activities and of efforts to promote the Zionist enterprise in the country.

On the other side, from the perspective of Palestinian Arabs, so long as they remained under general Ottoman authority, which allowed for the integration of Jews and other elements, they were not averse to the presence of Jews in Palestine and in other parts of the empire.

Two factors led to a complete transformation of the Palestinian attitude toward Jewish immigration and the Zionist enterprise. The first was the initial emergence of "particularist Turkish nationalism" at the expense of the "multinational Ottoman identity" with the formation of the Committee of Union and Progress that eventually led to the Young Turks revolt in 1908. The second was the slogans used by the second wave of Jewish immigration, primarily national slogans that

did not conceal the intention to “eliminate and put an end to” Palestinian Arabs, for example: “conquering the land,” “redeeming the land,” “conquering the defense,” and “Arab labor.” These two factors encouraged the development of a particularist Palestinian national identity entitled “Palestine for the Palestinians.” This identity sphere developed concurrently with that of Egyptian and Lebanese local nationalism and may have even been inspired by them.

Both the Arab and the Palestinian modern identity indeed began to emerge at the turn of the 19th century. The Arab aspect of this identity was an inseparable part of transitions in the entire region and the local Palestinian aspect resulted from the unique problems of the country and the initial conflict with the Zionist enterprise. The first signs of this identity were evident at the time, among other things, in the development of a unique modern press, in the form of the newspapers *Al-Karmil*, established in Haifa in 1908, and *Filastin*, established in Jaffa in 1911. The names of the two newspapers indicated their identification with the local scenery. The articles in these newspapers and in other similar publications reflected the development of a Palestinian awareness that emerged gradually, while identifying Jewish immigration as a threat to the country and to its Arab residents. The emphases of the Jewish immigrants, particularly the second wave of immigration, undoubtedly contributed to the initial formation of a local patriotic national-based Palestinian movement, of which one foundation was the strict objection to Zionist activities in Palestine and to the Zionist national enterprise. From here on, an Arab Palestinian national consciousness emerged and it has been the driving force of its advocates ever since. This consciousness was and is part of the regional Arab identity. The Arab aspect of the Palestinian identity derived both from a pure historical cultural association and from the need for Arab support in the struggle against the Zionist movement.

Notably, in the years prior to World War I, this complex modern national identity was borne by a fairly small class of intellectuals. The lower classes were indeed the first to come into contact with the Zionist immigrants but they probably

interpreted the threat posed by the newcomers in traditional terms of defending the general Islamic and Arab region.

In the first years after World War I and with the establishment of an Arab government in Damascus headed by the Hashemite Emir Faisal Ibn al-Husayn, the modern Arab national identity of the intellectuals and the elite was enhanced. Faisal's followers, among them Palestinian intellectuals, saw Palestine as the southern part of Greater Syria, while many Palestinians recognized the greater Syrian entity and the Damascus government as their representative framework. This is clearly indicated by the newspaper *Surya al-Janubiyya* [Southern Syria], published at the time in Jerusalem. Its name shows where its loyalties lay. At the time, the names of the newspapers reflected the spirit of the times and the different emphases of the new modern identity. Side by side with *Surya al-Janubiyya*, edited by 'Arif al-'Arif and Muhammad Hasan al-Budayri, another newspaper published in Jerusalem at the time was *Mira'at al-Sharq* [Mirror of the East], edited by Boulous Shihada. This newspaper expressed a general Eastern sense of identity, seeking to blur the ethnonational and religious differences between all people of the East. The Palestinian local-patriotic dimension was also expressed by the newspaper *Filastin*, edited by Issa al-Issa, who renewed its appearance after World War I (it was first published in 1911 and then closed by the Ottoman authorities in 1914). The names of the new organizations, such as the "Christian Muslim Societies" and the "General Palestinian Congress," also expressed the new gradually emerging Arab-Palestinian modern identity. In addition to the association with pan-Arabism, focused at the time in Damascus, Palestinian identity was also shaped by resistance to the Balfour Declaration, its implications and threat to the future of Palestine. As early as mid-1918, members of the Christian Muslim Society in Jaffa formulated a "protest against the aspirations of the Jews and the demands of the Arabs." This protest included statements that specifically stressed the uniqueness of Palestine's Arab population and their moral connection to the country as a distinct territory: "Palestine, the homeland of our forefathers."¹²¹⁹

In this appeal they clearly expressed their strong objection to the concept of the Jewish National Home and its realization in Palestine. They said:

We do not recognize the call to transform Palestine into a national homeland for the Jews, because Palestine is the homeland of the Arabs. We ruled this country for 1,200 years and before that it was ruled by our brethren the Christians whose descendants are still living here among us. We received them [the Jews] as guests here and how can we consent to be ruled by them? We saw (in the Turkish era) how they exploited the weak who were not from their nation and how they held them brutally under arrest and even prevented others from using public roads leading through their colonies. We have seen them do so in the short period since they have arrived here, and the question is whether the Arabs (Muslims and Christians) behaved similarly. They did not. So how can the progressive nations judge the Arabs for excluding them from a homeland whose earth contains the remains of their forefathers?¹²²⁰

The same letter of protest also mentions the claim of “historical rights” and the argument over which of the two nations first inhabited the land. It says:

They wish to return to this country claiming that it was in their possession 2,000 years ago, and if they believe that this gives them priority then the Arab prophet Salih and his tribe settled here long before Prophet Abraham, may he rest in peace. Thus, we were here before them and therefore it is our land and the land of our forefathers.¹²²¹

The conflict: now and tomorrow

I have brought this historical background in order to show the enormous differences between the positions of the two sides with regard to the conflict and with regard to their views of each other, and how each side has defined itself versus the other and versus the land as the focus of the conflict.

These differences, full of prejudice, sanctification of the “self,” and scorn for the “other” are, in my opinion, the roots of this bloody conflict with its strong emotional underpinnings.

Honest attempts to solve these differences and intensive activities aimed at reducing them are, in my opinion, the first basic condition for outlining a potential solution for the two nations.

This reducing of differences must proceed along the following stages:

1. *Clearing the residues of the past and eliminating injustices*: The first step in this stage is the need to stop adding new complications, i.e., to manage the conflict without causing unnecessary friction, adding new victims and agonizing wounds. Then it will be necessary to begin restoring the life of people on both sides on all levels such that all barriers (barriers of cement, iron, or various psychological barriers) between them will be redundant. The walls, fences, barriers, and gates erected around many towns in response to concerns and fears of the other are evident at a glance. These barriers and walls prevent free access throughout Israel and create an abnormal daily routine.

The walls, fences, gates, and barriers were erected by the strong side, by Israel, both in the occupied territories and in its sovereign territory. They may provide a temporary sense of security, but they do not explain why the strong side feels a need to continue its policy of building walls. Moreover, they cannot eradicate the other side, its demands, arguments, and particularly its sense of bitterness and injustice. In the tactical sphere they might neutralize the danger of another violent outburst, but in the strategic sphere they only add to the conflict, bringing the entire situation even closer to the breaking point.

Changing the “policy of walls” must be effected through trust-building steps based on recognition of the other side, their rights and the injustices perpetrated toward them. The modus operandi of managing the conflict and preserving the status quo while continuing to create facts on the ground and apply constricting measures, reducing the living space and freedom of the other side, must be replaced by a policy of openness, of recognition of the other and his rights, and of the need for painful and far-reaching compromises so that both sides will be able to live in the same homeland with no need to build more walls, fences, and gates. The two nations can live side by side (two states for two nations on the same territory) or together (one state on the entire territory), in the knowledge that there is no third possibility of one nation having exclusive rights with the capacity to eliminate the other and erase all memory of its connection to the land.

In this context, it must be emphasized that it will not be possible for long to continue speaking about two states (without defining their nature, borders, and mutual relationships) while creating facts on the ground to prevent this.

Significantly, removal of the psychological barriers and correction of the injustices requires extensive amendments to the educational systems of both sides, involving disposal of inconsiderate, hostile, and scornful contents toward the other, to be replaced by humane and pluralistic contents that teach acceptance of the other and of those different from oneself. In order to realize this goal it will be necessary to initiate a five-year plan in which skilled teams shall compose new study programs and plans. Students shall learn their own history and that of the other side, as well as the common history of both sides, emphasizing the considerable positive events in their common history.

Recognition of the other side, learning their culture and language not in order to know the enemy, but rather as part of a response to an intellectual and existential need in a common space, and primarily recognition of their restrictions, understanding their pain, and developing ways of identification, is the route toward a new beginning aimed at eliminating the residues of the past and constructing a new outline based on mutual consent. This will create a situation in which Palestinian students will learn about the Holocaust and Jewish students about the Palestinian *Nakba* with no unnecessary sensitivities, antagonism, and comparisons and analogies that seek to blame rather than to understand the context and create a sense of identification and understanding.

2. *Constructing shared life frameworks based on mutual consent*: I shall now give a short review of two possible options for solving the conflict, in the knowledge that the two-state possibility is gradually becoming less applicable and practical and the other option is becoming a reality rather than an option reached through the choice and consent of both sides.

The two-state option

This option is based, from a legal standpoint, on the UN Resolution of November 29, 1947, to split mandatory Palestine into two states, a Jewish state and an Arab state. This resolution was not accepted and was never implemented in practice and since then its recognition as a basis for a possible solution has undergone many transformations dictated by the military balance of power between the two sides. This began with the massive Jewish celebration of the resolution and its concurrent rejection by the Palestinian leadership (the Mufti and the High Arab Institution) who refused to accept the division of the country as a fact. It continued with the outbreak of bloody clashes and their evolvement into an overall war in which the Jewish state that was eventually established occupied not only the area originally allocated to it, but also 32% of the area slated for the Arab state, which to this day has not been established. It continued in 1967 when Israel took control of the entire territory of mandatory Palestine and the situation was further complicated by the establishment of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories.

The two-state option requires Israel to reach understandings and agreements with the Palestinians in two spheres: first with the Palestinians in the occupied territories (the West Bank and the Gaza Strip) and secondly with the Palestinian-Arab citizens of Israel.

In the first sphere the solution must be based on a full Israeli withdrawal from the territory occupied in 1967 (including East Jerusalem and the surrounding villages) and the establishment of a fully sovereign Palestinian state on this territory while allowing any Jew who so wishes to live there. Let us not forget that this territory constitutes only 22% of mandatory Palestine and only 48% of the territory allocated to the Arab state in the 1947 UN Resolution. The agreement reached must take into account special arrangements for and free access to the holy places in East Jerusalem for members of all faiths.

With regard to the second sphere, the procedure must be based on the principle of awarding full Israeli citizenship to Arab-Palestinian citizens, while recognizing them as a native national group with all this implies. This means forming a “joint existence” outline, rather than the currently cited “coexistence,” within a state that encompasses 78% of mandatory Palestine. Does coexistence mean a full and unrestricted partnership between two equal partners or does it mean coexistence and integration in the conditions and criteria determined by the majority and demanded of the minority?

Sixty-seven years of charged coexistence and of minimal integration prove that we are a long way from the appropriate foundation for integrating the Arab national minority, as well as other minorities and sectors, in the utopian concept of a single “Israeli nation.”

If we return, for example, to the idea proposed by Moshe Berent in his book on the concept of the Israeli nation (referring to conditional inclusion of the Arabs in the Israeli nation), we may begin by saying that the basic conditions he sets for turning this concept into a practical idea have the effect of taking the Arab minority out of the game as they do with other minorities and sectors in Israeli society: the conditions he sets are a strong state on the one hand and a full and enduring Hebrew culture supporting a modern industrial society on the other.

Since I do not wish to discuss the strength and power of the state and the meaning of this condition I would like to deal with the other side of the equation, i.e., a full and enduring Hebrew culture supporting a modern industrial society. Both these aspects are capable of removing Israel’s Arab society from the equation, even though the Hebrew culture is not presented as an exclusive culture and other cultures may exist alongside it, such as the Eastern culture which belongs not only to the Arabs, or the Russian culture which is gradually spreading and becoming a meaningful and weighty element among extensive parts of the population.

Predicating this idea on a modern industrial society is also incompatible with wide parts of Arab society which, although

they do not object to modernity, have been compelled to accept processes that have paralyzed the secularization, modernization, and urbanization that began in the 1930s, as a result of the 1948 War and the disaster that consequently befell the Palestinian people.

But before we explore this condition and the Arab society's ability to meet it, it is necessary to deal with more basic elements pertaining to the majority and minority groups, their life in the country, and real collaborative relationships.

Historically, after 67 years it is already quite clear that Israel's majority has not acted in the best interests of its minority. Israel and its institutions have not shown an honest desire to integrate the Arab minority in all possible settings. These have been 67 years of harsh discrimination, exclusion, subjugation, the blurring of identity, and even attempts at branding a certain consciousness in an endeavor to create a "new Arab," separated from his roots and spheres of identity.

Moshe Berent deals with this issue and says:

It is not necessary to further show how the Jewish state can improve the socioeconomic condition of Israelis of Arab descent. It is important to stress that the requested improvement is not only a matter of standard of living, i.e., the income level of Israelis of Arab descent, rather of absolute equality in the range of employment possibilities available, particularly those related to the higher branches of the economy and of technology, as well as absolute equality in choosing one's place of residence. This combination is a topmost Israeli interest: it will reinforce the loyalty of Israeli citizens of Arab descent to the state, lead to better utilization of the labor potential within the Israeli economy, ease the security burden, and change Israel's image among Arabs in the Middle East.¹²²²

These issues of improving the socioeconomic condition and raising the standard of living, as well as integration in the higher economic and technological systems, are important issues that can help connect the Arab population to the various government systems and of course reduce their bitterness and sense of estrangement, but they will obviously not result in a sense of full partnership and belonging because it is not an issue of "loyalty," a term often used by Israeli public opinion shapers. Arab citizens have done everything possible to prove their loyalty. They celebrated the Day of Independence and took every opportunity to brandish the state's flags and symbols, many of them served in the army and the security

forces, but none of this seems to have helped. Proof that military service will not change the Israeli attitude toward Arabs as Arabs or as “non-Jews” is evident from the Druze and Circassians who perform compulsory military service and Arabs in the Negev who serve in various army units, even though many of them still live in unrecognized villages with no basic living conditions.

A real partnership should be manifested in symbols; the just and fair distribution of resources, particularly land and water; equal employment opportunities; elimination of the strange category of “present absentees” encompassing nearly 25% of Israel’s entire Arab population, currently numbering almost a million and a half people; and removing the many obstructions encountered by the entire Arab population by virtue of being “non-Jews” or because they do not serve in the army.

The one-state option

Since the two-state option will soon become impractical due to Israeli procrastination and refusal to reach a strategic decision to fully withdraw from the occupied territories, the one-state solution will become a reality in practice and not as a result of the desires or wishes of the two sides. Particularly since the idea of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is becoming irrelevant due to the actual state of affairs as a result of the expansion and reinforcement of Israeli settlements there, the Palestinian public is increasingly demanding a renewed discussion of the entire conflict concerning the territory of mandatory Palestine, i.e., to begin anew, apparently sensing that the Palestinians have nothing to lose. The idea of a two-nation state in the entire territory seems promising to the Palestinians, a way out of the impasse they have reached. Indeed, not all Palestinian forces and groups support such a proposal, but it is already possible to speak of an increasing movement in this direction and it will probably not take long for this flow to turn into a flood that will draw with it most of the influential forces within all Palestinian communities, both in Israel and elsewhere.

To be precise, it may be noted that the one-state solution as perceived by the Palestinians ranges from the concept of “a state of all its citizens,” based primarily on the values of secular democracy, which award equal citizenship to all citizens unrelated to race, religion, or nationality, to that of a two-nation (Jewish and Arab) state, in which members of both nations will be able to realize their national aspirations.

On August 10, 2008, Ahmad Qurei‘ (Abu al-‘Ala), former prime minister of the Palestinian Authority and a senior member of the Palestinian delegation for negotiations with Israel, announced that in light of the reality on the ground the chances of establishing an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip have become extremely slight, and the option of a two-nation state on the entire territory of mandatory Palestine is becoming a real and even desirable option.¹²²³

Abu al-‘Ala was speaking in the wider context of progress in negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, and he raised the option of Palestinian adoption of the two-nation state as a potential solution if negotiations for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state by 2008 would not prove successful.

Abu al-‘Ala may not have realized that he was in fact taking the lid off a diverse and lively public discussion and discourse that had previously been taking place in whispers in the corridors of Palestinian academia and in quite a few intellectual circles. But this was the first time that such a central figure, from the mainstream or at least from one of the two main streams of the Palestinian national movement, had voiced such a decisive statement that in fact revoked one of the most basic and common demands of the Palestinian national movement since 1948, i.e., the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in which the Palestinians could realize their national aspirations and where the Palestinian people would have sovereign status. The question is: what does “the plan for a two-nation state” mean and does it indeed refer to the entire territory of mandatory Palestine? Or perhaps to the territory of the State of Israel? Or a completely new

formula? Is this proposal identical to that of “one secular and democratic state”?

During the British mandate, two main proposals were put forth in this spirit, primarily by the Jewish side or by joint Jewish-Arab entities: the first spoke of a two-nation democratic state and was proposed mainly by Zionist left-wing circles from certain parts of Hashomer Hatzair and related intellectual groups such as Brit Shalom; and the second spoke of one secular and democratic state and was proposed by the Palestinian Communist Party (PCP). Both proposals were raised in the context of a possible solution to the Zionist-Palestinian conflict on the entire territory of mandatory Palestine and most of the people and groups who suggested them changed their mind in light of the reality following the 1947–1949 war and maybe even earlier (in the case of Hashomer Hatzair). Both probably emerged and were encouraged by previous proposals made by Britain with regard to the establishment of joint government institutions of the two populations in a single state.

Discussions of this proposal are nothing new. It was first voiced among Palestinian academic circles (mainly Palestinian academics in Israel) in the first half of the 1990s.¹²²⁴ These discussions gradually increased and since then have entered other spheres, mainly the public sphere, through the various media.

Once discussions of a two-nation state grew, attempts were made to define this concept, shape it, and try to adapt it to the Palestinian context, particularly when it became one of the most extensively discussed issues in the Palestinian public arena and especially in the varied media.

Azmi Bishara, a Palestinian-Arab intellectual from Israel and a former Member of Knesset, dealt with this subject quite a lot as part of his advocacy in favor of the concept of a “state of all its citizens” and later in his search for alternative options following the failure of the independence process and the impasse reached in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. In the second of a series of articles he wrote, entitled “Israel and the

Historical Option,” Bishara tried to define the idea of a two-nation state. He said there:

The idea of the two-nation state encompasses recognition of the existence of two national groups in Palestine, each a political entity, within one state. This idea implements the principle of a national homeland or a homeland for each of the two national groups in the framework of one state that recognizes both nations [...]. The ‘two-nation’ model recognizes the existence of two national groups: one native and the other an emerging national group. Both ideas (a state of all its citizens and a two-nation state) are closer to the Palestinian case than to the South-African. In the new reconstructed South Africa the intention was to disregard national elements in favor of the concept of heterogeneous cultures, languages, religions, and ethnic elements, within a single civil nation. This means that the construction of a single South African nation (unlike the French nation, for example) does not reject the ethnic elements, tribes, languages, and cultural groups of South Africa. Thus, the model proposed there is not a multi-national model but rather a multi-ethnic model, with many languages and cultures.¹²²⁵

This element of a native national group versus an emerging national group appears often in the writings of many Arab and Palestinian authors. The main purpose of this distinction is to say that any possible two-nation solution that includes recognition of the emerging (Jewish-Israeli) community by the native (Palestinian) community will always be considered, from the Palestinian perspective, a Palestinian concession and an Israeli achievement, and as long as Israel does not recognize or come to terms with this concession, the two-nation state has no chance of succeeding.

Recognition of the joint partnership in the country among the two communities is an important element in promoting Palestinian acceptance of the existence of the other nationality in the country. It also signifies a tendency to flexibility that was not typical of Palestinian views in the past, and the question will always be whether this tendency is the result of Palestinian comprehension and disillusionment with regard to the balance of powers between the two communities or whether it stems from their understanding that they are gradually losing this protracted battle.

Majed al-Kayyali tries to define the subject in two spheres: the general sphere and the Palestinian case. Concerning the general sphere he says:

The two-nation state may be defined as a form of coexistence between two national groups in one state, in a setting that includes recognition, solidarity,

and understanding, guaranteed by a constitution that will ensure the equality, justice, and identity of both sides, who will live side by side unrelated to their numerical proportions. This state must be established on the basis of mutual recognition and of the respect of each national group for the needs of the other, as well as on an agreed formula for the just distribution of resources (not based on majority and minority groups rather on their relative representation), since equality between the two communities must be the foundation, with both sides having the right of veto and a clear way of solving conflicts through peace, democracy, and law.¹²²⁶

With regard to the Palestinian case, al-Kayyali presents the options and the complexities involved in their implementation. He says:

In the Palestinian case, we see the idea of a two-nation state as an intermediate solution between separation and integration. This idea is proposed at a time when separation between Israelis and Palestinians in a two-state framework by establishing a Palestinian state has become untenable. Moreover, this idea is presented in circumstances that are not amenable to the option of a 'secular democratic state' based on the concept of full integration of Jews and Arabs in a state of all its citizens in the full territory of Palestine, particularly as both the Israeli and the Palestinian side are insisting on a national-based solution, in light of the many incidents of hostility and hatred between them. Hence, this idea is an intermediate solution between the two-state concept and the 'democratic secular state' concept.¹²²⁷

Thus, al-Kayyali believes that the idea of one state in which citizens can live undistinguished by religion or nationality, is not applicable in the current situation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict due to the strong national emotions among both nations and the need of each to realize its national aspirations in the proposed state. He thinks that in certain predetermined conditions the two-nation state would be realistic. Al-Kayyali outlines these conditions and says:

The two-nation state will presumably ensure collective rights, primarily recognition of the national identity and self- and cultural autonomy and the right to establish cultural and educational institutions. In the political sphere, this proposal ensures the division of government functions by representative institutions in the constitutional, executive, and parliamentary authorities, within a state to be established on democratic constitutional foundations.¹²²⁸

Based on the above, it may be concluded that, in the Palestinian-Israeli case, a two-nation state solution can realize Palestinian aspirations and answer Israeli concerns. This means that on the tactical level, the Palestinians will consider any solution that will give them equal weight with regard to ownership of the country an achievement, and such a solution will realize a considerable part of their national aspirations

much better than the establishment of an ephemeral Palestinian state with no chance of survival or continuity between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In the long-term strategic sphere, this solution can quieten Israeli concerns with regard to the demographic issue, in which the Palestinians have a growing advantage.

Al-Kayyali is part of a group of Palestinian authors who call for serious consideration of the two-nation state as a way out of the impasse that the Palestinians have reached in their efforts to establish an independent state. Members of this group call to reach conclusions from the failed idea to establish a Palestinian state on a portion of mandatory Palestine and to focus on the need for solutions that come to terms with the results of the continuous conflict, in which the Zionists managed to found an independent Jewish state while the Palestinian national movement failed in this endeavor. However, they also stress the need to refrain from submitting to Israeli dictates, which strive to complete implementation of the overall Zionist plan on the entire territory of mandatory Palestine.

In the opinion of this group, Palestinian recognition of their inability to establish an independent sovereign state in part of Palestine does not necessarily mean a defeat by the Zionists, as by opting for a two-nation state they are expanding their understanding of the struggle. The struggle is thus expanding from endeavors to form a separate state on a small part of the homeland to a struggle for shared existence on the entire territory of “historical Palestine” and from a struggle limited to the political arena to a struggle in other areas such as human rights and civil rights, particularly with the two-nation option joining individual and national rights. Al-Kayyali explains this and says:

Obviously, by turning to the two-nation option the Palestinians might lose their dream and their aspiration for an independent state of their own, but this loss is a temporary loss that can be compensated for in the strategic sphere because through this option, the Palestinians will maintain the unity of their historical land and will unite their people. With regard to the struggle against the Zionist plan, if the struggle is managed adequately it can lead to a historical defeat of this plan, even if not directly, as the two-nation state is the complete opposite of the Jewish-Zionist state and maybe it will eventually become a state of all its citizens or a secular democratic state.¹²²⁹

Clearly, the people raising these ideas are not part of the mainstream of the Palestinian national movement, but their numbers are increasing daily. They are also aware that this idea is not popular among the other side. But at the very least they are convinced that the Israeli government's actions in the territories do not attest to an Israeli desire to promote a two-state solution and are leading to the one-state option, on whose nature and conduct the two sides are far from agreeing.

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64. Accords or Peace between Israel and the Palestinians

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This paper was completed in November 2014.

Background

The United Nations Resolution of November 29, 1947 planned to partition the western region of the Land of Israel (between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River) into two states, one Arab, one Jewish. The Palestinians' immediate rejection of the UN resolution, and the war they launched the next day, resulted in the War of Independence of the Jewish State of Israel (as defined in its Declaration of Independence), and the calamity of the Palestinian Nakba. This chapter will discuss issues directly related to solving the conflict and is not meant to be a comprehensive historical analysis.

Although Jerusalem was not included in the area of the nascent Jewish state, the war did involve the city on three fronts – the commercial center by the Jaffa Gate; the explosion of the main water pipe to Jerusalem and an attack on a Jerusalem-bound bus. Abd al-Qadir al-Husseini later commanded a siege of Jewish Jerusalem aimed at bringing the civilian population to its knees. After Israel broke through to Western Jerusalem and declared it the nation's capital, al-Husseini's death at the Castel created a vacuum in Palestinian leadership for at least a generation.

From a wider perspective, one sees that the Palestinians' consistent refusal of any solution that includes recognition of a Jewish state in any part of Western Israel means that while 67 years later the Israeli state is threatened but flourishing, attacked yet vibrant, a Palestinian-Arab state west of the Jordan river has still not been created.

Also worth noting is that a priori the conflict had a religious and antisemitic nature, reflected in the terror already committed in 1929 that the Palestinian Mufti (Amin el-Husseini) led against Jews praying at the Western Wall, and against the Old Jewish Yishuv (the non-Zionist Jews) in Hebron. In this campaign too, the Palestinians lost by launching all-out hostilities against the British Mandate regime (the Arab Revolt, 1936–1939). The Mufti's overt identification with the Nazis, for which he was exiled from Palestine and found a haven in Berlin, contributed substantially to the Palestinians' lost chances for a state of their own, both in 1937–1938 and 1948. The British policy set out in the White Paper against Jewish immigration and a direly needed haven from German persecution did not satisfy the Palestinians, who let themselves be led by extremists.

A generation later, Menachem Begin negotiated with Anwar Sadat over lands won by Israel in the 1967 War, and suggested Palestinian autonomy over almost all the territory of Judea and Samaria while relinquishing the Sinai to Egypt. The Palestinians rejected this, too. Begin had promised them massive support from most of the Israeli public for a Palestinian entity, yet what they possess today is far less than what Begin offered – and long before most of the Israeli settlements were built in Judea and Samaria. Terror attacks have failed to gain them any territorial achievement, either.

All the land that Israel gave the Palestinians via the 1993 Oslo Accords and the 2005 evacuation of Israeli settlements from the Gaza Strip have become staging sites for continued violence against Israeli civilians via terrorist bases and missile attacks. Those circumstances forced Israel to wage a defensive war against terror bases in the West Bank in Operation “Defensive Shield,” and three wars in Gaza. Most Israelis now oppose any new accord, concerned that a Palestinian state in Judea and Samaria would facilitate rocket and mortar attacks on Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, as well as Ben-Gurion Airport and critical infrastructure in central Israel.

What nevertheless causes Israeli governments and many Israelis to support a peace agreement with the Palestinians?

1. The need to foil the danger of granting Israeli citizenship to 1.5–2.5 million Palestinians, who could claim full and equal citizenship in a single state and thus destroy the Zionist-Jewish dream of “a Jewish state in Eretz Yisrael, to be known as the State of Israel” (in the words of the Declaration of Independence). The phraseology used in Israel (erroneously) terms this preventing “apartheid” and ensuring a Jewish and democratic state.

2. Hope for the future: The whole Zionist endeavor was grounded on hopes that the Jewish people could live full and normal lives, that they would put the Diaspora behind them, and return to their ancestral land, with *HaTikva* (literally, ‘the hope’) as its national anthem. Brimming with passions, fear, hatred, and bloody terrorism, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is the most powerful threat to hope for the future.

Ostensibly there are Palestinian leaders who accept the Israeli state as a fact. Since American assistance has helped build close liaison between Israel’s security apparatus and their Palestinian counterparts over the past few years, many view this as a historical opening toward diplomatic possibilities to reach an agreement that would bring about “two states” coexisting peacefully side by side.

3. Israel’s international status: Led by Benjamin Ze’ev Herzl, the Zionist movement strove to achieve international consent to its plan, and tangible support from great powers (or at least one great power). As such, the Zionist movement was distinct from the Messianic Jewish vision that envisaged a prophet-like Messianic leader resembling Moses and King David (or perhaps a combination of the two) – a leader who would conduct the crucial intellectual debate versus the “Pharaohs” of the world. The Zionist movement chose a path recognized by the “law of nations.”

Herzl himself did not win the pre-WWI Ottoman Sultan’s consent, nor that of the great European powers (Britain, in particular) and considered this a failure. The Zionist goal was only accomplished after the Great War, with the British conquest of the Land of Israel, the Balfour Declaration, and

the proclamation of the British Mandate at the League of Nations in San Remo (1920).

With the end of the British Mandate, the State of Israel was established “by virtue of our natural and historic right” though also “on the basis of the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly” (in the words of the Declaration of Independence). However, following the War of Independence, full international agreement was not achieved as regards Israel’s ceasefire lines. The UN demanded a solution for the plight of the Palestinian refugees, who were entitled to return to their homes if they chose (Resolution 191). Since then, no full political solution has come to fruition that could include the Palestinians and determine recognized, secure boundaries for Israel with international validity. International pressure on Israel sometimes intensifies and exacerbates the danger of isolation, with ensuing political, diplomatic, economic, and security-related consequences. Supporters of such accords believe that the only way to attain the Zionist goal is a permanent agreement with international backing.

Permanent or interim agreements

The real dispute in Israel was never between Peace Now and the Movement for Greater Israel, but between those favoring permanent agreements and those supporting the interim agreements method – “armistice,” “ceasefire,” “interim agreements,” “non-aggression pacts” and so forth – assorted names for the outcomes of a single method. In contrast, the many political ideological arguments, weighed down with great slogans and petty fears, are in fact conducted between the two extreme poles, that do not really design Israel’s path.

This conclusion is easily proved by comparing two Israeli prime ministers – Yitzhak Rabin and Ariel Sharon: the first is still considered leader of the “peace camp,” while the second is thought of as the leader of the “national camp,” the architect of “the settlements.” And yet, Yitzhak Rabin as prime minister signed the interim agreement with the Egyptians in Sinai after the Yom Kippur War, and similarly (during his second term of office) signed the Oslo Accords with the Palestinians – all this

without adversely affecting Jewish settlement in the Sinai Peninsula (Yamit and South Sinai), and without harming a single Jewish settlement in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza. Sharon, the “rightist” as defense minister in Menachem Begin’s government, supported the permanent agreement with Egypt and uprooted all the Jewish settlements in the Sinai (Yamit and South Sinai). As prime minister, he was responsible for Israel’s unilateral evacuation of the Gaza Strip and the eradication of all Jewish settlements in Gush Katif, the Gaza Strip and parts of Northern Samaria.

These facts cannot be explained in the terms customarily used in the Israeli argument. Yitzhak Rabin, as the leader of the peace-aspiring “Left,” safeguarded all the “settlements,” while Ariel Sharon, who aspired to maximum Israeli control of “Greater Israel,” encouraged and pushed for “settlements” on every possible hilltop, was the leader who destroyed and uprooted them. But if we consider the real argument, a rather different picture comes to light. Ariel Sharon did not want an “interim agreement” on any account, preferring unilateral retreat or a permanent agreement. Yitzhak Rabin preferred “interim agreements” because he had no faith in the possibility of a permanent agreement. As a leader of the historic Labor movement (that was never actually a socialist “Left,” but rather a social democratic centrist movement), Yitzhak Rabin continued along the lines that David Ben-Gurion had laid down when founding the state, and adhered to “ceasefire” agreements. Both aimed for interim agreements, because permanent ones seemed unlikely without far-reaching Israeli concessions.

In early 1948, Ben-Gurion was well aware that it would be impossible to reach Arab-Jewish agreement over two states according to the UN resolution, and instead strove for an Israeli declaration without an agreement. When the War of Independence ended in early 1949, Ben-Gurion knew that permanent agreements could not be achieved without major Israeli concessions relinquishing a Jewish Jerusalem. That is why he chose “temporary” ceasefire agreements as Israel’s “permanent” situation in its earliest days.

The Israeli state channeled all its resources and powers toward “ingathering the exiles,” immigration and absorption, settlement in the Galilee and the Negev, and economic development, alongside security efforts (unparalleled anywhere in the world) to defend the state with its temporary borders, and to constantly prepare for future wars.

Yitzhak Rabin followed the same path. Since he saw permanent agreements as impossible without Israel having to cede the whole of Sinai, the eastern Jordan Valley as a safety-belt, and also Old Jerusalem, he accordingly directed all his efforts at achieving long-term interim agreements. He believed that interim agreements did not justify harming Jewish settlements – including those that had been established by his opponents, even in places that he had objected to in Judea and Samaria.

Another important point is inherent in the interim agreement perspective. The Middle East is an unstable region and no one can predict which undemocratic regimes will rise and fall, and how those events will impact on the region as a whole, and on Israel specifically. Permanent agreements – if achieved (at the price of far-reaching Israeli concessions) – could well become temporary agreements, if hostile regimes rise to power through revolutions. The vision of permanent agreements could well be revealed as an historical illusion with exorbitant costs.

Egypt recently provided a significant example of this. The popular revolution in Cairo against Hosni Mubarak’s regime gave birth to a regime headed by the Muslim Brothers. After democratic elections (with a low voter turnout) President Morsi was appointed; though he did not announce the rescinding of Egypt’s permanent agreement with Israel, he declared it to be a temporary situation. In tandem, terrorist organizations proliferated and exploited the demilitarization of Sinai that sheltered front-line bases for missile and terrorist attacks against Israel, along with Gaza. Simultaneously, the gas pipeline from Egypt to Israel via Sinai was blown up several times, and the stable and permanent agreement became very unreliable.

Two unconnected developments then took place in tandem, seemingly something of an historical “miracle”: Israel became independent in the natural gas sector, and will soon be exporting gas through Egypt, while a counter-revolution broke out in Cairo as the result of democratic elections (with a low voter turnout). This brought to power a regime that relies on the Egyptian military. Egypt’s current regime shares a common goal with Israel, to act forcefully both against terrorist cells in the Sinai and against Hamas in Gaza. After the first revolution in Egypt, serious questions were raised about that important and stable agreement between Israel and Egypt, but following the counter-revolution the agreement resumed its stable nature, together with close cooperation between the nations.

In one of the many one-on-one conversations I held with Yitzhak Rabin during his term as defense minister in Yitzhak Shamir’s first government, he told me that “in Sinai, Begin was right!” In other words, Begin proved it possible to achieve a stable permanent agreement with the Egyptians, with international backing, an agreement that preserved Israel’s security (chiefly, the demilitarization of Sinai, and Palestinian autonomy without weapons), greatly reduced the threat of war against us (without Egypt’s involvement there is no chance of this), and strengthened Israel’s position in the region and the world. Rabin, who preferred a non-aggression agreement on the El-Arish border, without an Israeli embassy in Cairo, and without uprooting our settlements and airports in eastern Sinai, recognized his mistake retroactively, but only regarding Sinai and Egypt.

In another personal conversation with Rabin after the Oslo Accords, I asked him directly: “After what you’ve given the Palestinians in the interim agreement, what will you give them in the permanent one?” (scheduled to be completed within five years, according to the Accords). Rabin looked at me and said: “Yoel, there’ll be no permanent agreements, because it’s impossible to reach peace over Jerusalem. We will manage with interim agreements, and gradually improve them, but no Israeli settlements will be uprooted.” There was a hint of anger in his words, deriving from the “settlers” frenzied attacks on

him – even though he was paving bypass roads from Jerusalem to Ofra and to the communities in Benjamin and Samaria (according to a proposal I presented him, together with Pinchas Wallerstein, head of the Benjamin Regional Council). In the Cairo Agreements, Rabin supported the continuous existence of the Jewish Gaza communities (Gush Katif). He predicted that, without an Israeli presence in Gush Katif, Hamas terrorist bases would spring up there, a prediction proven correct after Ariel Sharon ordered the uprooting of the 25 towns of Gush Katif.

The political perspective of Jabotinsky and his followers

Ze'ev Jabotinsky saw himself as following in the footsteps of Benjamin Ze'ev Herzl. In his political perception, international agreement would form the principal basis for the Zionist project. While Herzl did not consider the need for self-defense, Jabotinsky was the first to organize a defense force in Jerusalem, necessitated by the Arab Uprisings (1920).

Jabotinsky's political aspirations for an independent state on both banks of the Jordan River were based on the initial boundaries of the British Mandate and the League of Nations resolution in San Remo. Jabotinsky did not support Jewish settlement on the Golan Heights, since that was not part of the map of the Mandate, nor did he support a conflict over the Galilee Panhandle (countering the line determined in the post-WWI Sykes-Picot Agreement regarding Lebanon, Syria and Palestine/ Eretz Yisrael). It was not settlement efforts that would create facts on the ground, but international agreement with an option of force, to reach agreement with Britain over the establishing of an independent state throughout the Land of Israel. It was meant to be a liberal modern state – in fact, a “binational state,” in the words of the well-known Beitar song, “The East Bank of the Jordan”:

Two Banks has the Jordan –
This is ours and that is as well.
From the wealth of our land there shall prosper
The Arab, the Christian, and the Jew,

For our flag is a pure and just one
It will illuminate both sides of my Jordan.
Two Banks has the Jordan –
This is ours and that is as well [...].

Despite the differences between Menachem Begin, who was close to Jewish tradition, and Jabotinsky, who was remote from it, both stipulated international agreement as the foundation for the Zionist project and the State of Israel. After the Yom Kippur War, at the peak of Begin's arguments with Rabin, Begin objected most of all to interim agreements, and constantly repeated a key sentence: "[we must not give] a scrap of land, without a peace agreement!" At the time, many in my camp heard only the sentence's first part, but I heard the latter part clearly. When Begin returned with the Camp David Agreements (at the core of which is a permanent agreement with Egypt), I had to tell my many surprised friends that they had misunderstood the Zionist vision according to the perception of Jabotinsky and Begin.

This perspective opposes any interim agreement and any Israeli concession intended to reach interim agreements. There is only room for Israeli concessions in the framework of a permanent agreement recognized by the international powers and the UN. If it is impossible to reach a permanent agreement, Israel will remain where it is located at the time, without taking even one step toward withdrawal. That was the official line adhered to by the post-Six-Day War Labor government, headed by Levi Eshkol and Golda Meir, and it prevailed for several years including when Begin and Dayan joined the first national unity government that was set up to deal with the existential threat facing Israel on the eve of the 1967 Six-Day War. As prime minister, Begin did not aspire to eternally hold on to the land that the IDF captured in the Six-Day War, but to retain them according to Jabotinsky's "iron wall" position, until a full peace agreement, acceptable under the "law of the nations," would become possible.

That perception argues that it is not settlement which determines borders, but rather agreements between sovereign states which determine commensurate settlement building. If a state agrees to internationally determined borders, settlements

on the other side must be evacuated. Therefore it was Jabotinsky's disciples who uprooted the settlements in Yamit and South Sinai.

As an example, Ariel Sharon preferred a one-sided retreat from Gaza over another interim agreement, which according to that credo is nothing but an illusion.

This also makes clear Israel's current Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's (from Begin's Likud) principled line – Israel will only support “two states” in a permanent agreement and on clearly defined conditions. It implies Palestinian recognition of Israel as “the state of the Jewish people,” an end to the conflict and to any further demands such as the “Right of Return” for 1948 refugees, and ensures defensible borders.

The Palestinians' attitude to interim agreements

The Palestinians declare they are no longer interested in interim agreements and aspire to a sovereign autonomous state with permanent borders. They are well aware that many Israeli governments have preferred interim agreements and that Israel tends to view temporary agreements as “permanent” situations. That is why they requested (at Oslo) and request (in all negotiations) a “timetable” for signing a permanent agreement.

Although they achieved their first step toward Palestinian autonomy because of interim agreements (the Oslo Accords), they remain incapable of acknowledging Israel as a Jewish state and abandoning the Palestinian refugees' “Right of Return” to Jaffa, Haifa, Lod, Ramla, Safed, Tiberias, Ashkelon (Al-Majdal), and Beer Sheva, concessions that would be required both by their leadership and public.

Israel's opposition members are just as unwilling to make concessions as is the Palestinian leadership, which is trying to win recognition as an independent Palestinian state through the UN and the EU nations, instead of holding negotiations with the Israeli government.

At one point, a “Palestinian state with temporary borders” was proposed, but the Palestinians turned it down, aware that such borders could remain in place for years and become permanent, both in territorial terms and within the collective awareness. As far as I know, from sources close to the negotiations, “a permanent arrangement, in stages,” means that any temporary arrangements that are reached will be considered part of the permanent arrangement to be concluded in the future.

On the other hand, the Hamas movement that has controlled Gaza since the violent revolt against elected Fatah and Palestinian Authority (PA) officials, actually prefers temporary arrangements because the Islamist religious outlook favors them. Leading rabbis in Israel are also likely to prefer an agreement that halts terrorist attacks for a seven-year period, with an option for extension, an agreement that does not mandate reciprocal recognition of the enemy’s rights. Instead of “reciprocal recognition” as the necessary basis for any internationally valid agreement, a “religious” agreement may be preferable, one that is acceptable to leaders on both sides, on the basis of “non-reciprocal recognition.” Each side remains with its beliefs and principles intact, without compromise, peace and quiet will prevail on the ground, and this will enable normal life and a thriving economy on both sides. All the major questions that cannot be solved in a reciprocal agreement will be deferred to the next generation, or perhaps generations.

Who represents “the Palestinian people”?

Today Palestinians live both within Israel (some Arab Israelis define themselves as Palestinians), in the territory of the Palestinian Authority, in Gaza and also in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan where the vast majority of the population are Palestinians. Apart from citizenship, there is no difference between Palestinians in Jenin, Nablus, and Ramallah and their brothers in Irbid, Ajkun, As-salt, and Amman. As well as ties of brotherhood, they also have extensive family ties.

The Kurds, a far more ancient people, reside in Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and Iran; there is no autonomous Kurdish state, because those four states object to full Kurdish independence. Despite long years of diplomatic struggle and a harrowing war, they have nothing like the international support that Palestinians enjoy.

The Palestinians residing in Jordan, Israel, Gaza, and the Palestinian Authority also have four political leaderships, and do not have their own state. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan faithfully represents Palestinian interests, not only those of its Palestinian citizens, but also of Jerusalem's concerning the status of the city and the Al-Aqsa mosque. This recently transpired when Israel's prime minister met with the king of Jordan in Amman, to calm the turbulence in Jerusalem. The Palestinian Authority in Ramallah represents the PLO, that for decades was the leading force in the war of terrorism, but its prestige declined once it was tasked with building a regular civil society. Hamas today represents not only Gaza but also the majority in the Palestinian parliament in Ramallah, and more than a few Israeli Arabs. In Israel, there is a political democratic leadership of Israeli Arabs.

The historical Land of Israel, and the Mandatory version, extended over both banks of the Jordan, and within this space are two independent states. Are there three peoples in this space? The answer is negative: there are two states and two peoples, but the two Palestinian leaderships (PLO and Hamas), in addition to Jordan, claim to be the sole and exclusive representatives of "the Palestinian people." Hence, it is clear a priori that whatever agreement is reached, some other leadership is bound to object to and fight against it, with substantial support from Palestinians. This situation makes it almost impossible for democratic Israel to achieve any sort of agreement, certainly not a permanent one, and it is definitely not a situation in which peace can grow.

Just as the Palestinian Authority today is totally dependent on Jordan, and on Israel too, the situation will persist if an autonomous Palestinian state is established in Judea and Samaria. Those areas have no independent existence, not economically, nor in terms of security, in fact in no terms

whatsoever. Jordan must therefore be brought back into the picture and the Palestinians in the Palestinian Authority must receive Jordanian citizenship. Only a solution of this kind has any prospects for creating stability and perhaps also of encouraging peace.

What is peace – and where is it found?

Peace is not found in any sort of agreement, neither interim nor permanent. Peace is found in coexistence, open trade, joint employment, in cultural and sports meetings. Perhaps a good agreement can encourage peace to flourish, but an imposed agreement built on separation, on walls, on fear and hate will not bring peace but will harm the little peace that exists.

An independent Palestinian state is liable to provide a basis for terrorism above and beneath the walls and fences, exactly as is the case in Gaza – the antithesis of the vision of peace. It is enough for the Palestinian masses to feel that the state they have won after three generations of war is extremely disappointing as regards the expectations and dreams that motivated them to “liberate Palestine.”

Even if peace prevails on both sides of the border, the Palestinian state will probably act against Israel in international institutions far more than it does today. Its status will enjoy greater international power, and legal and political campaigns are likely to aggravate hostility and make peace grounded on coexistence even more remote. An example: the first commander of the Gaza police force after Oslo supported good ties with the Israeli settlements in Gush Katif, and told us “without Israeli settlers here, extremists will take control and things will be much worse for everyone.” Unsurprisingly, he was soon out of a job.

Close to 4,000 Palestinians worked in Gush Katif’s greenhouses, and made a decent living. Ahead of the settlements’ uprooting, the European Union bought the greenhouses for their full value from the settlers, so that the Palestinians in Gaza could continue working there and making a living – but they were totally destroyed and nothing remains

of them. It was not peace that took root in the rubble of Israeli settlements – but missiles and terrorism.

Thousands of Palestinians earn their living today in Israeli factories and settlements in Judea and Samaria. If those communities are uprooted in order to reach any kind of agreement, it will adversely impact on the lives of Israelis and Palestinians. Peaceful life will disappear. Extremist settlers cannot be compared to the terror cells of extremist Muslims, yet they capture inordinate media attention. The general public in Israel and across the world has little idea of the many local peace arrangements that paradoxically thrive around settler communities. Doubters are invited to visit and see for themselves.

Should an independent Palestinian state arise on the debris of Israeli homes, it will function as an Arab society without a single Jew (a fine example of racism and ethnic cleansing) and will severely worsen the conflict, deepen extremism on both sides of the border, and postpone peace for a few more generations.

In my community, many Palestinians do their shopping alongside settlers, soldiers, and police officers, and the stores employ Israelis and Palestinians who coexist amicably, as if there was no war or hate around them. Yet all attempts to develop shared industrial and business zones as part of agreements (for example, on the Gaza border) have failed resoundingly due to Hamas' intransigence. Peace thrives between people who live, work, meet and talk together. Negotiated agreements are liable to destroy peace and to sow separation, alienation, fear and hatred. Anyone seeking peace would do better to abandon politics that are growing ever more extreme, and to seek out people who believe and want to live in peace.

The great mistakes

Secret negotiations constitute the first mistake – as if only leaders with authority and public power can sit together and work out agreements that will bring peace. We live in a period of active mass media and nothing that is agreed in backrooms

will be easily accepted by many sections of the public. In most cases, secret negotiations are doomed to fail, and intensify suspicion and distrust.

Successful future leaders will be capable of creating trust within a broad swath of the public. By conducting negotiations open to daylight and the media, they will manage to conquer fear and hate with integrity and decency, and to hold an open discourse characterized by mutual respect – a particularly important value in the Moslem-Arab world. Direct decent discussions allay suspicion, while negotiations covertly conducted “require” lying to the general public that is excluded from the process. They empower the actively objecting groups, and political leaders must either gratify their opponents or wage a battle with them replete with slogans and deception for the electorate’s heart. I believe this is equally true in negotiations between Russia and the USA, and between the Big Powers and Iran.

The second mistake is the intentional splitting of Palestinian and Israeli society – so that the “moderates” in both societies can accomplish reciprocal agreements, and each one will do the utmost to subdue their own extremists. This premeditated formula underlay the Oslo Accords and it stirred up a double calamity. While Israeli governments subdued the extreme “Right” in its political system, a single evildoer assassinated the Israeli prime minister, and the sophisticated political Right increased its power until it democratically blocked any arrangement with which it disagreed. In Palestinian society, the Hamas triumphed in Gaza, using missiles and terrorism that has dragged the Palestinian Authority and Israel into bloody hostilities. Hamas dominates the Palestinian parliament as well as young people, and no agreement can be signed without it. The splitting formula is grounded on moral wrongdoing that inflicts huge damage to political policy making.

There is a paradoxical boon to collaboration between the PLO and Hamas: for any agreement achieved, even partial or temporary, will be harder to undermine and damage. In Israeli politics too, prospects for an arrangement will flourish if broad unity is achieved within Israeli society. As long as Israel’s

“Left” tells the Palestinians not to give into the present “rightist” leader and to wait for a change of government in Israel, it is distancing the likelihood of an arrangement and increasing the probability of war. If the leaders of Israel’s “Left” are really intent on advancing a “historic” agreement, they should channel all their energies into influencing Palestinian leadership to see that it does not and will not have another partner apart from Benjamin Netanyahu.

I used to ask friends what predominated in them – love of their people and country, or hatred of the “Left,” and could read their answer in their faces. The same holds true on the other side: what is stronger among them, love for human beings and morality, and aspirations for peace, or hatred of Netanyahu and the settlers?

Once (only once) I was invited to address a memorial meeting for Rabin in Tel Aviv. To the audience’s surprise, I spoke about peace among us being more vital than efforts for peace with our neighbors, and called on the prime minister (Shimon Peres, at the time) and the leader of the opposition (then Benjamin Netanyahu) to jointly draft shared principles according to which negotiations would be conducted with the Palestinians. There was hesitant applause. Seated on the podium were Shimon Peres and Ehud Barak (then defense minister). Barak remarked: “Yoel, you’re right,” while Peres said, in his deep voice: “Yoel, you’re wrong. First we’ll get an arrangement, and then everyone will get used to it.” Anyone who looks at events in hindsight will see who was wrong.

Possible foundations for an arrangement with the Palestinians

After creating consensus among Israelis, we need to start open meetings of religious leaders, rabbis, and imams, aimed at achieving clear rulings ordering the cessation and prohibition of acts of terrorism of all kinds, for a defined period at least. Negotiations not based on a religious agreement are pointless, because any other agreement will disintegrate in the ensuing conflagration. The chief point of such meetings is an atmosphere of respect, because reciprocal respect allays fear

and hatred. And only afterwards, will we be able to lay down the foundations for a stable arrangement with the collaboration of Jordan, Egypt, and Hamas, that will include several principles:

1. Jordanian citizenship for Palestinians.
2. Collaboration on security issues between Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinians.
3. A division of responsibility between the parliament and government of Ramallah, and the parliament and government in Amman.
4. Joint projects.
5. The main issue without which no stable agreement can be achieved, is determining the borders according to the contemporary circumstances, without returning to any previous point in time (neither 1948 nor 1967). Any attempt to reverse history is sure to generate more disasters.

The arrangement has to allow descendants of the 1948 refugees to receive citizenship in the countries where they have resided for two generations, and not to try and return to the historical state of affairs.

Ways must be found to accommodate Israeli communities in Judea and Samaria in such a way that they maintain ties with Israel, and to allow all Israeli Arabs who identify as Palestinians to receive Jordanian Palestinian citizenship – all this without destroying the communities, and without uprooting anyone and any family from their home.

6. Open discourse, based on mutual respect, is the guiding principle.

The Temple Mount and Jerusalem

Neighborhoods in Jerusalem where Arab citizens are currently living, will become part of the Palestinian Authority, in collaboration with Jordan.

Neighborhoods in Jerusalem where Jewish citizens are currently living, will become part of the State of Israel.

Neighborhoods in Jerusalem where Jews and Arabs are living together, including the Old City and its environs, will be jointly managed by Israel and the Palestinian Authority, in collaboration with Jordan, with each side managing its own sites and citizens.

The most difficult site to reach agreement over can be the most easily resolved: the Temple Mount (= the site of the Temple = *Bayt Al-Muqaddas*) and the Al-Aqsa mosque. There are several reasons for this:

1. A holy place must be managed by religious leaders. On the day that Muslim religious leaders and Jewish religious leaders sit down to discuss the question of the Temple Mount, peace will start emerging. The greatest difficulty entailed is convening those Jewish and Muslim religious leaders for a joint discussion at all, and on this question particularly.

2. The Al-Aqsa mosque itself, in the southern part of the mountain, is not built on the Temple of David and Solomon (*Bayt Al-Muqaddas*), the Jews do not consider it as one of their holy places, and have no claims regarding Al-Aqsa itself; but the Dome of the Rock (*Qubbat As-Sakhrah*) is the very site of the old Jerusalem Temple (*Bayt Al-Muqaddas*) and it is a shrine, not a mosque – Muslims do not pray in the Dome of the Rock, and do not prostrate themselves there. Muslim tradition is aware of the Dome of the Rock's connections with David and Solomon (Daoud and Suleiman).

3. Jewish tradition is aware that the site of the Temple was pillaged and desecrated after its destruction by the Romans, throughout the entire Byzantine period – and is grateful to the Muslims who have kept the place free of idol worship since the construction of the Dome of the Rock by Sultan Abd Al-Malik.

4. The core of the Jewish tradition regarding the site of the Temple forbids Jews from entering what may have been the Holy of Holies. Transgressing the holiness of the Dome can

happen by a Muslim or a Jew. Therefore, the site of the Temple must be preserved solely for God (Allah).

5. If a miracle happens, and joint discussions begin between Jewish and Muslim religious leaders, it is important that one outcome will be a decision that the holy place is permitted only for prayer and prostration to one God (Allah), and these must be performed by religious leaders who agree to define the following as prohibited:

- a. Weapons, Molotov cocktails, fireworks, stones and knives may not be brought into the holy site – all of these desecrate its sanctity.
- b. No one may raise a hand, or strike any other person, particularly in the holy site.
- c. The police may only enter the holy site if human life is in danger.
- d. The restrictions on entering Al-Aqsa must comply with the Muslim religious leaders; but the ban on entering the holy site in the Dome of the Rock must comply with Jewish tradition, with the agreement of Muslim religious leaders.

6. The decisions of the religious leaders will be approved by the king of Jordan, the head of the Palestinian Authority, and the Israeli prime minister.

65. The Binational Dilemma

Meron Benvenisti

This paper was completed in October 2014.

There are two diametrically opposed portrayals of Zionism: a colonial, white-settler incursion and a national liberation movement. The arguments against the colonial model can be summarized as follows: The Zionist movement originated in the Jewish faith, an ethnic religion, with strong nationalistic elements. The Zionists initially came to Palestine not in search of space but to return to their ancient homeland. It was an ideologically motivated movement whose objective was to build a new society, based on self-work rather than on exploitation of natives. Unlike the white settlers of European colonies on foreign continents, the Zionists came to Palestine without the support of a mother-country. They created a separate social and political system but did not become a superordinate class, dominating and exploiting the native population.

Zionism transformed

However, it can be argued that in 1967, after the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, the Zionist movement underwent a major transformation and became “colonialist.” Jewish settlements in the territories have been deemed an aberration of Zionism. As I wrote in 1986: “[sitting] in cozy offices guarded by the Israel Defense Forces, sequester land using the coercive power of a sovereign state and calling it reclamation, build settlements with funds freely provided by government ministries [...] believing that it is a continuation of the deeds of the starving swamp reclaimers [...].”¹²³⁰

Zionism, it has been argued, did not escape the fate of other great liberating ideologies; its failure to adjust to changing realities enabled dark forces to usurp its revered symbols, now fossilized and anachronistic, and turned

enlightened, moral, and progressive ideals into reactionary beliefs and immoral deeds.

Even after 1967 the conflict could still have been analyzed by employing the “two nation” model, namely as a clash between two national groups whose objectives are to attain exclusive sovereignty over a contested territory which both claim as their homeland. The obvious conclusion from that analysis is encapsulated in the known slogan: “Two states for two peoples” – a formula considered almost universally as the solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, the changing conditions and discerned trends raised doubts concerning the compatibility of the *national* model and the applicability of the alternative *settler-indigenous* model. Already in the late 1980s it seemed to this writer that the former ignores many aspects that do not exist in national conflicts but prevail in clashes between settler and native societies. Moreover, even the *settler-native model* seems insufficiently accurate to describe the intensity of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, because the term “settler” is too mild. It lacks the crucial process of coercive supplanting of the native society by the settlers and the violent reaction of the dispossessed natives. Such a protracted, violent and painful process transforms the conflict into a multi-layered confrontation and encompasses all human interactions. It resists attempts to direct it to rational channels such as diplomatic negotiations or a political-parliamentary system.

Supplanting societies

David Day, in his book *Conquest*,¹²³¹ coined the concept “supplanting societies.” He describes how the Japanese treated the population of Hokkaido, Javanese treated other residents of the Indonesian archipelago, white Americans victimized Amerindians, Spaniards persecuted natives in Central and South America, Australians wiped out Aborigines, Germans supplanted Poles and vice versa, Turks massacred Armenians and Kurds, Greeks clashed with Turks and Macedonians, English dispossessed Irish, among others. And the Zionists, in

their naiveté or arrogance, believe that the Zionist enterprise is unique and special.

In my book *Sacred Landscape*¹²³² I described in detail the coercive supplanting of the Palestinian society (the *Nakba*) and the theoretical framework that was established to justify it. Comparative studies have shown that similar processes occurred wherever alien immigrants endeavored to overwhelm indigenous communities and dispossess them. The settlers altered existing geographical names or invented new ones in an attempt to domesticate the alien landscape, drew maps to establish ownership, expelled the natives and took possession of their dwellings, built settlements in the midst of the native population, expropriated land or declared uncultivated lands as state domain, erected military installations in strategic locations and roads to facilitate safe traffic. They exploited the natives' violent reactions to justify disproportional state violence that caused massive casualties, spun myths that legitimized the coerced ascendancy, formed an ideology of cultural supremacy of the settlers and the savagery of the natives, purported to reclaim the blighted environment, caused by the primitive natives, and bragged about making the desert bloom, and the progress they bring to the backward native population. They made efforts to indoctrinate the young generation "to know the land" and love it, appropriated local cultural, architectural and culinary traditions, and made them their own.

Gradually, this writer reached the conclusion that the attempt to understand the conflict using the classical national model offers an inaccurate tool to perceive reality. What seems to be an academic discourse actually reflects ideological stances.

Divided society or temporary occupation

Only a minority of Israeli researchers views the Israeli and Palestinian societies within a unified framework, and the discourse is usually conducted in disconnection and separation. Indeed, a crucial question is whether both societies belong to one, divided society, or two separate societies who

found themselves in a situation of forced proximity as a result of temporary occupation. The answer depends on the historical-political ethnic evaluation of the pre-1967 period and indeed, on one's perception of the entire Jewish-Palestinian encounter since the beginning of the Zionist enterprise. It has profound ramifications on the understanding of the present situation in Israel/Palestine.

Those who seek to break up the history of the conflict into two unrelated periods – before the 1967 War and after – and turn the “Green Line” (the 1949 armistice boundary) into a mighty geographical obstacle would like to believe that the root of evil is the occupation following the war. These people consider the pre-1967 situation of “Little Israel” as a Golden Age not connected to the post-1967 reality. However, the period of two generations that elapsed since then reveal that 1967 was not a break but rather a bond, and the 1948–1967 period was a lull.

During the British Mandate period the Zionists emphasized the dual aspect of Palestine's economy and society and viewed it as two separate entities with minimal interaction between them. The Palestinian perspective was that of a colonial situation in which the white-settler Zionists, in cahoots with the mandatory authorities, exploited the native Palestinians. Both sides over-emphasized, for political ends, the separation, thus eclipsing the considerable economic and social interaction between Arabs and Jews, who were actually joint participants in a single economic and bureaucratic system. Both sides refused to acknowledge the strong, though hostile, interaction, creating an intimate enmity that formed the central component of self-identity in both communities.

This mandatory dual-society structure that existed until 1948 – and was suspended for 19 years between 1948–1967 – was reconstituted after the 1967 War but with a fundamental difference: instead of an equally-ranked social system of Jewish and Arab communities under a British bureaucracy, a superordinate-subordinate status hierarchy was created. This polarized society is kept together by coercion and the political, economic and social inequalities are explained away by the status of *temporary military occupation*.

The 1948 War destroyed the Palestinian society in Israel and its meager remnants have vanished from the Israeli conscience. The Palestinians have disappeared and become “refugees and terrorists”; the conflict was transformed into the “Israeli-Arab conflict” with Arab states. The Israeli society perceives itself as a homogeneous Jewish society that contains “cultural” tensions which will gradually disappear with the successful culmination of “nation-building.”

The 1967 War seemingly altered everything but actually it was merely the final battle of the 1948 War, and the partition of Palestine, which had existed for 19 years, was erased within six days. Only the placement of the post-1967 period within the 120 year history of the conflict will identify the continuity of the native-supplanting settler encounter that characterizes the Jewish-Arab confrontation since its inception. It should form the paradigm within which the conditions prevailing in Israel/ Palestine may correctly be understood.

Mother country and colony

The partition of Palestine into two geopolitical units (1948–1967) has not lasted long enough to create emotional separation between the Jewish and Arab communities on both sides of the Armistice Line. The dynamics that define arbitrary and artificial political boundaries as “homeland” are well known. In many third world countries the boundaries, demarcated according to imperial interests, established the national identity of the communities living inside them and not vice versa. In Palestine the time was too short to bring that dynamic to culmination: the Arabs continued to feel strong affinity to the areas from which they were expelled, despite the growing development of a “Jordanian” identity. The Jews, who mostly accepted the separation from the West Bank – or as new immigrants never knew those areas – resumed their national and religious emotional ties to the “cradle of the nation.”

The perception of the occupied territory as thoroughly different from “sovereign Israel” faces great difficulty: where to locate the border between the occupied area and the mother

country? Has Israel ever defined its borders? What happens when the capital, Jerusalem, is part occupied territory (East Jerusalem) and part mother country?

Occupation as an alibi

Many Israelis perceived the occupation as liberation and even those outside the “Greater Israel” movement were not willing to accept the obligations imposed by international law on the occupying power. Gradually the term “occupation” was transformed from a juridical definition, describing the condition of belligerent occupation of enemy territory by a foreign army, into a political and value loaded concept. Like many terms that comprise the dictionary of the conflict it has become a shibboleth, a code word that makes any argument or clarification redundant: using “occupation” indicates belonging to liberal leftist circles and those who refrain from using it are considered right-wing bigots. Similar terms are “West Bank” versus “Judea and Samaria,” “Liberation of Jerusalem,” “Palestinian State,” “Security Fence” versus “Separation Wall,” or “withdrawal” versus “redeployment.”

The occupation of the territories in 1967 resulted from military action, but the military element quickly became secondary, while the “civilian” component – settlements – became the dominant factor, subjugating the military to its needs and turning the security forces into a militia in the service of the Jewish ethnic group. Eventually, settlements themselves were no longer as meaningful as they once had been.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the very fact of building and populating settlements at any given spot in the territories played a vital role in the creation of political *faits accomplis*. Those who planted the settlements in the Katif Block in the Gaza strip, or in the heart of Samaria and northern Judea, assumed that the Palestinians would forever remain submissive; otherwise, how could one explain the logic of establishing Jewish islands in the heart of Arab populations? The settlers argued that from the very beginning, Zionism flew in the face of reality. It succeeded, they said, precisely because

it ignored reality. Therefore, the demographic and geographic arguments used against the settlers evaporated in the fervor of their fantasies.

Settlements as museum exhibits

At some point in the late 1980s, the settlements crossed the critical threshold beyond which continued demographic and urban growth were assured. Settler leaders successfully set up a powerful lobby that straddled the Green Line. Thus the legal and physical infrastructure, making the de facto annexation of the territories possible, was firmly in place. From that point on, the number of settlements, and even the size of their population, became immaterial because the apparatus of Israeli rule was perfected to such a degree that the distinction between Israel proper and the occupied territories – and between settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and Jewish communities inside Israel – was totally blurred. Similarly, the takeover of land ceased to be chiefly for the purpose of settlement construction and became primarily a means of constricting the movements of the Palestinian populace and of appropriating their physical space.

In the new paradigm the settlements no longer have importance as instruments of spatial control. The separation barrier/wall and its gates, the “sterile roads,” and a myriad of military regulations have taken the place of the settlements as symbols of Zionism. The numbers of Jewish settlers in the occupied territories exceed in 2014 half a million. Most settlements, large and small alike, have continued squandering public resources on a colossal scale while falsely claiming to be “foci of Zionist ideological endeavor” and necessary for security. Forty years after the establishment of the first settlement, “the settlement” – like the *kibbutz* and the *moshav* and like the tower-and-stockade colonies of the pre-state era – became just another exhibit in the museum of Zionist antiquities. The age of ideology is over and erecting settlements, as well as dismantling them, has become an outdated pastime with no real impact on political developments, except as a symbol and a mobilizing device for

both right and left, and a convenient expression of condemnation by foreign powers. The attempt to mark the settlements – and the settlers – as the major impediment to peace is a convenient alibi, obfuscating the involvement of the entire Israeli body politic in maintaining and expanding the regime of coercion and discrimination in the occupied territories, and benefiting from it.

By the late 1980s, after two decades of occupation, Israeli control of the territories beyond the Green Line has become quasi-permanent, differentiated from sovereign rule only vis-à-vis the Palestinian residents: as far as Israeli citizens and their range of interests are concerned, the annexation of the territories is a *fait accompli*. Defining the territories as “occupied” is, in fact, an attempt to depict it as a temporary condition that will end “when peace comes,” and is designed to avoid resolving, “in the meantime,” immediate dilemmas. The term is a crutch for those who seek optimistic precedents, allowing them to believe that just as all occupations end, this one will too. This linguistic choice thereby contributes to the blurring and obfuscation of the reality in the territories, thus abetting the continuation of the status quo.

Quasi stable status quo

The continuation of the status quo creates a quasi-stable situation: the Jewish community, a loose framework of cultures and ethnic tribes in constant tension, is held together by enmity to the Palestinian “Other,” and by a determination to rule them. The unity vis-à-vis the outside world enables it to maintain control and to successfully implement a strategy of fragmentation of the Palestinian community.

The “divide and rule” strategy is a notorious device of colonial power except that here it is implemented in the 21st century, in an era that perceives imperialist traditions as a disgraceful chapter in the history of the Western world. The Palestinian people have been fragmented, over the last three generations, into splinters. They have not merely been crushed by force but also have taken upon themselves split identities and have surrendered to agendas, dictated to them: the

Palestinian Authority (PA) ostensibly represents the Palestinian people but, actually, represents only the 2.5 million Palestinian splinter that lives in the West Bank and is struggling, through the so called “peace process” and other diplomatic initiatives, to get better conditions for merely one quarter of the entire Palestinian nation. The almost 400,000 residents of annexed East Jerusalem want only to be left alone and not to be forced (“out of patriotism”) to forego the privileges they enjoy as Israeli residents; in the debate over detaching peripheral Arab neighborhoods, the residents of East Jerusalem support continued annexation to Israel. The almost 1.5 million Palestinian Israelis (“Israeli Arabs”) are fighting for recognition as a “national minority” and demand equal individual and collective rights within the Israeli polity. They do not tie their struggle to the struggle of their brethren who live on the other side of the separation fence/wall. The Palestinian Israelis are fighting for “equality” and “citizen rights” whereas the Palestinians in the occupied territories are fighting for “self-determination.” The Hamas activists, ruling 1.8 million in the Gaza Strip, are not interested in the implications of their rhetoric and military actions on the interests of the entire Palestinian nation. And those in the diaspora continue to carry around the keys to the homes they left in 1948 and to dream about “the return.”

The process of splitting up into sub-communities has not yet reached its consummation. Periodic attempts to resist fragmentation and form unity fail and the political, economic and security constraints are deepening the entrenchment of the divided identities, which slowly assume separate cultural and even linguistic characteristics. Over the generations the Zionist enterprise, whose development challenged the Palestinian Arab community, and thus helped its unification into a distinct national group, became the dominant force under whose fist the Palestinian community has been shattered.

Process of Palestinian fragmentation

Fragmentation became the major tool of Israeli control, to preserve their rule over Israel/Palestine from the river to the

sea. Fragmentation serves them as insurance against the “demographic threat” when, very soon, the Palestinians achieve a numerical majority in the region. The ruling Jewish community will continue, even when it becomes a minority, to force this split on the Palestinians with the usual carrots and sticks, dictating the agenda, presenting threats, imposing collective punishments and bribery. This will preserve and even deepen the lack of coordination, the conflicting interests of the splintered Palestinian communities and insure the dominance of the internally fragmented but externally cohesive Jewish community over the fragmented Palestinians, thus sustaining the status quo.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the policy of fragmentation was aimed at the small minority of “Israeli Arabs.” Now it is being put into practice in the most sophisticated fashion against six million Palestinians, attracting almost no attention. It is not accidental that Israeli propaganda has no interest in stressing the achievements of the fragmentation; on the contrary, Israel’s aim of erecting the bogey of “existential threat” needs a monolithic adversary, to rally against “the dark forces of Islamo-fascism.” In this, they are unwittingly assisted by Israeli leftist circles and the “peace camp” that remain steadfast to the romantic notion about a cohesive Palestinian people, united in its struggle for freedom. They are joined by Palestinian spokesmen who view talk about the success of fragmentation as hostile propaganda. Even those who are informed and knowledgeable are surprised when the extent of the fragmentation process is brought to their attention. Attention is diverted to marginal issues, and various competing organizations are supporting each fragmented group, pursuing different agendas and clamoring for attention, thus exacerbating the fragmentation, and increasing the confusion. The paradox is that serious attempts to deal with separate Palestinian agendas and fight for them disconnectedly, which purport to challenge the status quo, are actually strengthening it.

The high profile of “international relations” and the diplomatic discourse is the most glaring example. Useless negotiations and lengthy expert discussions on “core issues”

are going on decade after decade without any change in the stale arguments and counter arguments, while the reality is transformed and the “peace process” serves as a curtain behind which divide-and-rule is entrenched.

A unique concept of sovereignty

Since it is no longer possible to refrain from reacting to the Palestinian demand for self-determination in the occupied territories – by using the traditional Zionist stance of denying the very existence of a Palestinian nation – the Israelis seek to limit it to a mere quarter of them – those who live in the West Bank. For them they have invented a unique concept of a “state”: its “sovereignty” will be scattered, lacking any cohesive physical infrastructure, with no direct connection to the outside world, and limited to the height of its residential buildings and the depth of its graves. According to Israeli plans the airspace and the water resources will remain under Israeli control. Helicopter patrols, the airwaves, the hands on the water pumps and the electrical switches, the registration of residents and the issue of identity cards, as well as passes to enter and leave, will all be controlled (directly or indirectly) by the Israelis. This ridiculous caricature of a Palestinian state, beheaded and with no feet, future, or any chance for development, is presented as the fulfillment of the goal of symmetry and equality embodied in the old slogan, “two states for two peoples.” No wonder it is endorsed, even by staunch supporters of “Greater Israel.”

How did it come to pass that many scions of the “nationalist camp” became champions of the “Palestinian nation-state”? Even Prime Minister Netanyahu, the arch champion of “Greater Israel,” declares his support for “two states.” What brought those who believed that there is only one legitimate collective entity – and the Palestinians are merely terrorist gangs – to declare that the conflict is national and therefore the solution is partition between “two nation-states”? This was caused by the Palestinians who by launching the Al-Aqsa Intifada compelled the Israelis to realize that they are irrepressible and cannot be ignored or deported. The

Intifada forced the Israelis, for the first time in their history, to delineate the geographic limits of their expansion, construct fences and roadblocks and abandon populated areas that could upset the demographic balance. The withdrawal (“disengagement”) from the Gaza Strip and the evacuation of Jewish settlements therein is a prime example.

Large segments of the Israeli “peace camp,” who staunchly believe in “partition of the land” as a meta-political tenet, are gratified; they believe that they won the ideological, historical, debate with the Right that believed in “Greater Israel.” Now they can load the entire Palestinian tragedy on an entity that comprises less than 10% of the area of historic Palestine. Moreover it is supposed to offer a solution to all refugees outside Palestine “who can return to the Palestinian mini-state,” and also provide remedy to the Israeli Palestinians who can achieve their collective rights in the Palestinian state. Indeed, a cheap and convenient solution; after all, it is seemingly based on the venerable model of the “national conflict” and the classic solution of two states for two peoples. However, more realistic observers begin to question the feasibility of the two-state solution and openly admit that this option is overtaken by events.

Erasing from consciousness

The realization that a separation is inevitable had been caused by the Intifada which brought the Israeli public to a crossroad in relation to their neighbors-enemies. For the first time since the tragic encounter began more than a century ago, the Jews turned their backs to the Palestinians, erasing them from their consciousness, imprisoning them behind impenetrable walls. Ostensibly this is not new: the Jewish public has always alienated and disregarded the Arabs. But it was an intimate disregard, similar to a person’s approach to his own shadow; one can ignore it but never be rid of it. The process of mental disengagement is a continual one, but there is no doubt that the emergence of suicide bombers hastened it. There could not be any intimate regard for a culture that nurtures such a monstrous phenomenon, and the Palestinians were thereby

complicit in bringing about the divorce imposed upon them. Racist right-wing circles exploit the situation and turn diffuse emotions into a practical plan for “transfer” (or expulsion) and denial of civil rights; political movements thrive on erasing the Arabs from Israeli awareness; and those who caution that millions of human beings cannot be erased, are treated with hostility. The Israeli Right shows contempt toward the Arab “rabble” and believes that it is possible to control them by tricks and threats, and a dwindling Israeli Left plays with theoretical peace plans and refrains from involvement in the daily hardship of the Palestinian population; everybody joins in chanting the slogan “we are here and they are there,” and racist attitudes expand.

Through trial and error

The conclusion that Israel will continue to manage the conflict by fragmenting the Palestinians is realistic. The status quo will endure as long as the forces wishing to preserve it are stronger than those wishing to undermine it, and that is the situation today in Israel/Palestine. After almost half a century, the Israeli control system known as “the occupation” – which ensures full control over every agent or process that jeopardizes the Jewish community’s total domination and the political and material advantage that it accumulates – has become steadily more sophisticated through random trial and error, an unplanned response to some genetic code of a supplanting settler society.

This status quo, which appears to be chaotic and unstable, is much sturdier than the conventional description of the situation as “a temporary military occupation” would indicate. Precisely because it is constitutionally murky and ill defined, its ambiguity supports its durability: it is open to different and conflicting interpretations and seems preferable to apocalyptic scenarios, therefore persuasive.

The volatile status quo survives due to the combination of several factors:

1. Fragmentation of the Palestinian community and incitement of the remaining fragments against each other.
2. Mobilization of the Jewish community into support for the occupation regime, which is perceived as safeguarding its very existence.
3. Funding of the status quo by the “donor countries.”
4. The strategy of the neighboring states gives priority to self-interests over Arab ethnic solidarity. Internal considerations cause them to prefer the status quo of Israeli control – while paying lip service to Palestinian national aspiration. The Egyptian military regime, in its struggle against the Muslim Brothers and Islamist terrorists, cooperates with Israel in its fight against Hamas and participates in the siege of Gaza. As for Jordan – the establishment of a Palestinian state constitutes a threat to its very existence.
5. Success of the propaganda campaign known as “negotiations with the Palestinians” convinces many that the status quo is temporary and thus they can continue to amuse themselves with theoretical alternatives to the “final-status arrangement.”
6. The silencing of all criticism as an expression of hatred and antisemitism; and abhorrence of the conclusion that the status quo is durable and will not be easily changed.

Internal changes

One must *not* surmise that the status quo is frozen; on the contrary, actions taken to perpetuate it bring about long-term consequences. Cutting off Gaza, and the establishment of a separate Hamas controlled regime there, is not a temporary but a quasi-permanent situation which will affect the future of the Palestinian people. Periodic conflagrations such as Hamas rocket attacks and Israeli harsh retaliations (2009, 2014) raise hopes for shattering the status quo. But the dominant Israeli strategy of maintaining the separation extinct any attempt to create unity and they possess enough coercive power to enforce it. The severance of Gaza from the West Bank creates two separate entities, and Israel can record another victory in the fragmentation process: 1.8 million Palestinians in Gaza are

on their way to achieve a caricature of a state that encompasses 1.5% of historic Palestine where 30% of their people reside.

The West Bank canton, whose area is rapidly shrinking due to massive settlement activity, is considered the heart of the Palestinians under occupation. However, it is experiencing rapid political and economic developments that resemble those experienced by Israeli-Palestinians after 1948, with obvious differences due to historical circumstances and population size. Half the West Bank territory (“Area C”) is totally annexed while the remainder is trespassed by “illegal outposts” with tacit Israeli government approval. It seems that many West Bankers have genuinely grown tired of the violence that led them to disaster and are adopting the strategy of the Israeli Palestinians, which forces the Israelis to relate to their non-violent struggle and to their community’s accumulation of economic and socio-cultural power.

All these and other changes in the status quo, are significant yet *internal*, and take place under the umbrella of *Israeli control* that can speed them up or slow them down, according to its interests. However, without the sanction, or at least the indifference of external powers, the status quo could not endure. Massive financial contributions free Israel from the burden of coping with the enormous cost of maintaining the control over the Palestinians and create a system of corruption and vested interests. The artificial existence of the PA in itself perpetuates the status quo, because it supports the illusion that the situation is temporary and diplomatic efforts will soon end it.

Economic disparity

Usually the emphasis is on the political and civil inequality and the denial of collective rights that exist under occupation, and partition is supposed to solve. But the economic inequality, which characterizes the current situation, is more significant. There is a gigantic gap in gross domestic product per capita between Palestinians and Israelis – which is more than 1:10 in the West Bank and 1:20 in the Gaza Strip – as

well as an enormous disparity in the use of natural resources (land, water). This gap cannot endure without the force of arms provided so effectively by the Israeli defense establishment, which enforces a draconic control system. Even most of the Israelis who oppose the “occupation” are unwilling to let go of it, since that would impinge on their personal welfare. All the economic, social and spatial systems of governance in the occupied territories are designed to maintain and safeguard Israeli ascendancy and prosperity on both sides of the Green Line, at the expense of millions of captive, impoverished Palestinians. One can prove that the economic prosperity and high standard of living of the Israeli community is based on the exploitation of a vast captive market of millions of Palestinians, who are forced to yield to Israeli economic interests. It is clear that settlement of half a million Israelis in the occupied territories considerably relieves the pressure on land use in Israel proper, thus bearing great impact on its environment.

A new paradigm

It seems that one must seek a different paradigm to describe the state of affairs almost 50 years after Israel/ Palestine became one geopolitical unit again, following 19 years of partition. The term “*de facto binational regime*” is preferable to the *occupier/occupied* paradigm, because it describes the mutual dependence of both societies, as well as the physical, economic, symbolic and cultural ties that cannot be severed without an intolerable cost. Describing the situation as *de facto binational* does not indicate parity between Israelis and Palestinians – on the contrary, it stresses the total dominance of the Jewish-Israeli nation, which controls a Palestinian nation that is fragmented both territorially and socially. No paradigm of military occupation can reflect the Bantustans created in the occupied territories, which separate a free and flourishing population with a gross domestic product of more than US\$ 30,000 per capita from a dominated population unable to shape its own future with a GDP of US\$ 1,500 per capita. No paradigm of military occupation can explain how half the occupied areas (“Area C”) have essentially been

annexed, leaving the occupied population with disconnected lands and no viable existence. Only a strategy of annexation and permanent rule can explain the vast settlement enterprise and the enormous investment in housing and infrastructure, estimated at US\$ 100 billion.

History of binational/partition dilemma

The binational versus partition dilemma is not new to either national movement. The Palestinians, who rejected the 1947 UN Partition Resolution, stated in their National Covenant, that Palestine “is one integral territorial unit.” This principle evolved in the 1970s to the concept of “democratic non-sectarian (or secular) Palestine.” In 1974 PLO political thinking began to grapple with the idea of partition. The formula endorsed was the “phased plan”: “We shall persevere in realizing the rights of the Palestinian People to return, and to self determination in the context of an independent national Palestinian state in any part of Palestinian soil, as an interim objective, with no compromises, recognition, or negotiation.”¹
²³³ In 1988 this strategy was changed to the present formula of partition along the 1967 armistice lines, through negotiations. Thus, Palestinian acceptance of the partition option is only two decades old.

Until the mid-1940s, the Zionists officially defined their ultimate national objectives exclusively by the general formula of the transformation of Palestine (Eretz Yisrael) into an independent entity with an overwhelming Jewish majority. The ultimate objective of all national movements, the creation of a sovereign state, was implied in Zionist self-identification as a national liberation movement. However, the debate on the merits of emphasizing that ultimate objective continued throughout the history of the Zionist movement. The official leadership concentrated on formulating intermediate political objectives and those changed according to political conditions. These objectives (in chronological order) were: a national home, unrestricted immigration and the creation of a Jewish majority, “organic Zionism” (i.e., settlement and an independent Jewish economic sector); power-sharing

(“parity”) with the Arabs (irrespective of size of population); a binational state; a federation of Jewish and Arab cantons; partition. Only in the early 1940s the Zionists openly and officially raised the demand for a sovereign Jewish state. The territorial objectives of the Zionist movement were also ambiguous. The agreement to the partition of Palestine (1936, 1947) was accepted by many as merely a phase in the realization of the Zionist aspirations, but also (by some) as a fundamental compromise with the Palestinian national movement.

During the Mandate period the binational idea was acceptable to the Zionist establishment, including Chaim Weizmann and David Ben-Gurion. However, one must remember that the Jews were a minority and the demand for a Jewish state was impudent; power sharing, and even parity, sounded better. Also, a federation of cantons could have evened out the huge Arab demographic lead. The choice between binationalism and partition was made twice: in 1936 the Peel Commission rejected the cantonization plan of the Jewish Agency and chose partition; in 1947 the UN General Assembly voted for partition and rejected the minority plan for a binational federal state.

Only a marginal group of Jewish intellectuals considered the binational state as the only way to avoid endless bloody conflict. They sought to emulate the Swiss model, accentuated the principle of parity but did not elaborate the details. Indeed, there was no need for such elaboration since both the Palestinians and the Zionists rejected the binational idea, and most Jews considered it treason. The *Hashomer Hatzair* movement adopted some elements of the binational model, but the establishment of the state in 1948 called off the initiative. The opinion that the realization of Zionism can only be achieved by a sovereign Jewish state triumphed, and those who dare to challenge this precept are today considered anti-Zionists.

After the 1967 War the Israeli political Right played with the concept of binationalism, in the shape that suited its ideology (the autonomy plan). Likud ideology rejected the “transitory” nature of Israeli occupation but its belief in

“Greater Israel” clashed with the demographic reality, and liberal circles in Likud (led by Menachem Begin) struggled with the famous dilemma: a Jewish or democratic state? Begin’s answer was based on the (failed) system known to him in Eastern Europe after WWI – non-territorial, cultural and communal autonomy for ethnic minorities under the League of Nations minority treaties. Begin’s autonomy plan had been modified in the Camp David Accords (1978) and territorial components were added. The Oslo model used many components (with major changes) of Begin’s autonomy plan, and the Oslo Accords can be viewed as binational arrangements, because the territorial and legal powers of the Palestinian Authority are intentionally vague; the external envelope of the international boundaries, the economic system, even the registration of population, remained under Israeli control. Moreover, the complex agreements of Oslo necessitated close cooperation with Israel which, considering the huge power disparity between the PA and Israel, meant that the PA was merely a glorified municipal or provincial authority. So, in the absence of any political process, a de-facto binational structure, was willy-nilly, entrenched.

Description, not prescription

It is no longer arguable: the question is not *if* a binational entity be established but rather *what kind* of entity it will be. The historical process that began in the aftermath of the 1967 War brought about the gradual abrogation of the partition option, if it ever existed. Hence, binationalism is not a political or ideological program so much as a *de facto reality masquerading as a temporary state of affairs*. It is a *description* of the current condition, not a *prescription*.

This reality-oriented approach differs from that of some advocates of binationalism (usually anti-Israeli circles) who use it to delegitimize Israel and “to put an end to the anachronism of the Israeli nation-state.” They view binationalism not as a lamentable consequence of the protracted conflict but as a project that should replace the Israeli state.

The Israeli public discourse over binationalism versus partition into two states is conducted on a theoretical and ideological plane, and in effect binationalism is mentioned only as a threat to the desirable solution of partition. But that debate, which always resurfaces when frustration with the peace process intensifies – and gaining increasing support amongst despondent leftist circles – never manages to turn into a real discussion of the two alternatives and instead remains a provocative academic topic. For this reason, the precise definition of terms is regarded as unimportant. On the contrary, the arguments pro and con are presented in dichotomous terms, as being diametrically opposed – as if this were a genuine meta-political, moral and ethical dilemma. However, an examination of the two concepts (binationalism and partition) from a theoretical perspective, and from the point of view of political attitudes toward them, reveals that each has multiple variants incorporating diverse political structures. Moreover, a comparison of these models shows that the two concepts are not as dichotomous as they seem, but form a *continuum*, with some variants of each concept actually overlapping.

“Two states for two peoples” implies the assumption that the State of Israel (in its 1948 borders) will continue to be “the state of the Jewish people,” constructed on the model of “a tyranny of the majority” as it is today, where the Arab minority is denied collective political rights. Theoretically, of course, a model also exists for “a state of all its citizens,” essentially a de facto binational state within the 1948 borders of Israel.

As for the “Palestinian State,” there is the Palestinian variant: a fully sovereign state within the borders as they stood on June 4, 1967 (the eve of the 1967 War), with free access to the outside world by land, sea, and air; total control of all its natural resources; sovereignty over the Old City of Jerusalem, including the Temple Mount/ Haram al-Sharif and the whole area to the east of the 1949 armistice line; the dismantling of the settlements; and implementation of the Palestinian refugees’ “right of return,” with some flexibility of interpretation (but without losing sight of the principle).

Similar, although not identical, to this variant is the unofficial Geneva Accord model of December 2003, under the terms of which several limitations (some temporary) would apply to the Palestinian state's sovereignty; with settlement blocks close to the border to remain under Israeli sovereignty. In his term of office, on January 7, 2001, US President Bill Clinton proposed to incorporate the whole of the Gaza Strip within the boundary of the Palestinian state and between 94% and 96% of the West Bank, with territorial exchanges totaling no more than 3%.

Since the late 1970s Ariel Sharon thought of a Palestinian state in terms modeled on the South African "homelands" (or Bantustans). On the partition-binationalism continuum, Sharon's plan stands at the junction of the two alternatives. On the one hand, the Palestinian cantons fulfill the minimum requirements for "a state," whereas on the other, these territories – cut off from the outside world, with no independent means of becoming economically viable and with no cohesive physical infrastructure – are no more than semi-autonomous provinces such as one might see in a decentralized binational structure.

The situation is well known to perceptive Palestinians. Therefore more and more are now leaning toward a one-state solution and by that they frighten the Israelis and their supporters. The binational bogey is so off-putting to Israelis that any Palestinian expression on the issue gives rise to speculation and conspiracy theories.

Indeed, the Palestinians use the slogan "one state" to threaten Israel, and they know well how effective that threat is. So great is the fear that the Palestinians are planning to exchange their struggle for national independence for a demand for citizenship and collective rights in a binational state, that the very mention of this option is seen as proof of their aversion to peace. The Palestinian demand for Israel to annex the territories and extend citizenship rights to their inhabitants is considered more of a threat to Israel than the demand for an independent state, since civil equality is a universal norm and the demand for its implementation would win sweeping support in the West. And woe to the Israeli who

dares to champion binationalism: he is denounced as a traitor wracked with self-hatred.

Demographic bogey and binationalism

The danger of a binational state is portrayed by the bogey of the “demographic threat.” According to most forecasts, by the end of the second decade of this century, there will be more Arabs than Jews living in former Mandatory Palestine. Continuation of this demographic trend, claim some Israeli pundits, will destroy the Jewish state and turn Israel into a country with a Jewish minority, just as in the Diaspora. The demographic bogey has meaning only when presented in relation to *one specific binational model*, that of “one man, one vote.” This is the model of a centralized, unitary state where the civil rights of the individual citizen are respected, but the collective rights of ethnic groups are not grounded in constitutional law – the model adopted in post-apartheid South Africa, for example. The unitary binational model is wholly inappropriate for Israel/ Palestine, for the simple reason that its presentation would result in perpetuating the supremacy of the Jewish ethnic group, securing its rule by Palestinian fragmentation. A liberal democracy cannot function in a milieu such as Israel’s, where ethnic polarization – political, economic and cultural – runs deep. Here the problem is not one of individual rights but is focused on mutually incompatible collective rights, and the political system (elections, separation of powers) lacks the means for channeling the interethnic frictions.

One has a sneaking suspicion that Israeli public discourse concerns itself solely with the unitary binational model precisely because this is a truly unworkable option, thereby delegitimizing the whole concept of binationalism. There are, of course, other, more appealing, binational models whose implementation may be more efficient and practical than that of the partition option.

International comparisons

In the early 1980s it was fashionable to locate Israel within an international pattern that placed it as one of several societies in which “intercommunal conflicts” exist: Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, Maronites and Shiites in Lebanon, Blacks and Whites in South Africa, Sinhalese and Tamils in Sri Lanka, Greeks and Turks in Cyprus, Serbs and Muslims in Bosnia, Germans and Italians in South Tyrol, etc. The feeling that “one is not alone” brought some relief, and a common denominator between various other groups and Israelis/Palestinians facilitated dealing with painful, though theoretical, dilemmas. Comparative studies flourished and international conferences were organized to discuss models of “ethnic control,” “ethno-national disputes” versus “national liberation wars,” “colonialism” versus “pluralistic cleavages,” “apartheid” versus “ethnocracy,” “binationalism” versus “nation-state.” All these debates overwhelmed the intellectual discourse and diverted attention from the constant slide on the slippery slope of intensified conflict. At the end of the 1980s and especially in the mid-1990s there was a dramatic change in intercommunal conflicts and as if by a magic wand they subsided almost to the point that many believed they have been resolved. It happened in Lebanon, South Africa, Northern Ireland, and even in Israel/ Palestine, during the euphoric years of “Oslo.”

In all these polarized societies no permanent solution has been achieved – no such solution is possible – but in most of them internal and external forces successfully channeled the conflict into a dialogue track and a conflict management mode which led them to adopt models of power sharing. Only the Israeli-Arab conflict remains festering and violent. Israel remains the only state in the Western world that does not hesitate to implement policies aimed at the appropriation of national and private assets of the rival ethnic group, thus deviating from international norms. When others are striving to settle ancient bloody feuds, the anachronism of a state purporting to belong to the enlightened world and behaving as if nothing has happened in the last generation is conspicuous.

Internal soft boundaries

In this context, it should be pointed out that major intercommunal peace processes launched since 1989 (Ireland, Bosnia, Cyprus, Lebanon, and Macedonia) were based upon binational or multinational models. This fact flies in the face of the conventional wisdom that the binational model failed everywhere in the world with the exception of Switzerland and Canada. One of the reasons binational models are used in the resolution of interethnic conflicts is that a partition solution – which requires the alteration of international borders – disturbs the existing geopolitical balance and gives rise to tensions in nearby countries. For example, resolution of the Kurdish problem via the partition (or even by creating a federation) of Iraq would send dangerous political shockwaves throughout the three neighboring states with large Kurdish minorities: Iran, Turkey, and Syria. It is preferable to retain the recognized international borders – which are like a mosaic, in that every little change distorts the picture and causes problems – and to aim for “*soft*” *internal boundaries*, as in federated or confederated states.

Former Yugoslavia

The dissolution of the Yugoslav Federation and the ensuing violent ethno-national conflicts produced some ingenious conflict resolutions. In the peace agreement signed in Dayton, Ohio (1995) that brought an end to the bloody intercommunal war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the three communities – Serb, Bosniak (Muslim), and Croat – agreed to “continue [...] as a state with its internal structure modified [...] within its present internationally recognized borders.”¹²³⁴ The state consists of two entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska, with dual citizenship of Bosnia and Herzegovina and citizenship of each entity. The relatively satisfactory operation of the combination of federal-territorial components and power sharing is possible only because Bosnia-Herzegovina is essentially a NATO protectorate. What is most important for our purpose, however, is the fact that the international community understood the advantages of preserving Bosnia’s territorial integrity, preferring “soft” internal boundaries to rigid dividing lines, which would have

made it difficult to travel freely and would have hindered economic recovery.

In another ethno-national conflict between the Albanian minority and the Macedonian government, the sides agreed to end hostilities and signed the Ohrid Agreement in 2001. The document states:

Macedonia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the unitary character of the State are inviolable and must be preserved. There are no territorial solutions to ethnic issues. [...] The development of local self-government is essential for encouraging the participation of citizens in democratic life, and for promoting respect for the identity of communities. [...] Laws that directly affect culture, use of language, education, personal documentation, and use of symbols, as well as laws on local finances, local elections, the city of Skopje, and boundaries of municipalities must receive a majority of votes, within which there must be a majority of the votes of the Representatives claiming to belong to the communities not in the majority in the population of Macedonia [...].¹²³⁵

Cyprus

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's plan for the reunification of Cyprus was supposed to form the basis for that country's acceptance by the European Union. The plan did not earn the necessary majority in the plebiscite held in the Greek sector of the island and has therefore not yet been implemented. Nonetheless, the components of the plan demonstrate the principles that the international community would like to see play a fundamental role in the resolution of this and other intercommunal conflicts. The proposed arrangements are based on a united Cyprus and not on the perpetuation of its division. The Annan Plan describes a federated "bizonal" republic modeled on Switzerland, made up of two states, each of which "sovereignly exercises all powers not vested by the constitution in the federal government, organizing themselves freely under their own constitutions." The key word here is "bizonal," with the borders between the Turkish and Greek zones (after certain minor changes) left open, and all fences, walls and obstacles removed. The sides are called to state that they have "a common home," recognize their "separate identities and the obligation to prevent the tragic past from ever repeating itself."¹²³⁶

Parity of esteem

This is where it is useful to insert the principle of “parity of esteem,” which is a core concept in the Northern Ireland peace agreement (“Good Friday” 1998). It reflects the principle of respect for the identity and the ethos of both communities (Unionists and Republicans) and underlies the effort to achieve co-existence in a common physical space, despite the cultural differences. In Northern Ireland, it is impossible to draw internal ethnic boundaries because the populations are intermingled. The “Good Friday” Agreement outlines a framework for shared rule (“power-sharing”), the principal points of which are: a 108-member elected Assembly with institutions to be set up “in proportion to the strengths of the [respective] parties”; decisions to be taken on a cross-community basis in one of two ways: decision by a majority of the members representing each community (Protestant Unionists and Catholic Republicans), or by 60% of the members of the Assembly, including at least 40% of the voting participants from each of the two communities; the government – consisting of a prime minister and a deputy prime minister – to be chosen by the Assembly as decided by representatives of the two communities; the European Convention on Human Rights and the Northern Ireland Bill of Rights serve as safeguards, ensuring that all sectors of the population will be able to participate and to work together successfully in the operation of these democratic institutions.

Of course, one could have cited Belgium and Canada, along with Switzerland, as models of functioning bi-communal states. Contrary to the popular view of Lebanon as an example of the failure of multi-communalism (or power-sharing), it is also worthy of note that ratification of the Taif Accord of 1989 brought an end to the civil war in Lebanon and reaffirmed the pre-existing multi-communal Lebanese method of governance (with added guarantees of equality between Muslims and Christians).

The historical, diplomatic, political and constitutional literature is full of theoretical and empirical cases that have coped with problems of states torn by ethnonational conflicts.

The Israeli discourse chooses to ignore the vast experience accumulated, and sticks to wholesale rejection of all binational models. It is even more surprising that the international community, which as we have seen, seeks to preserve the integrity of polarized states, insists in the case of Israel/Palestine on a solution based on partition, even after repeated, failed attempts.

Horizontal and vertical partition

In the prevailing circumstances, does it matter whether a person supports “two states for two peoples” or a federal state, power sharing in the context of a “consociational democracy,” cantonization, or other models? The nature of the constitutional framework is secondary; after all, the entire dilemma is not earth shattering: it is a choice between *horizontal* (power sharing) and *vertical* (territorial) partition. But the bottom line is this: the coexistence of the two national communities is a destiny that cannot be avoided. All attempts (theoretical and empirical) to separate them have failed. This coexistence must be based upon communal equality and ethical principles, human dignity, and freedom; otherwise it will not endure, and will perpetuate violence. It is clear that without parity of esteem, mutual respect for the identity and equality of the two communities, there will be no reconciliation and neither of the two alternatives – partition and power sharing – is implementable. In any case, productive discussion of this topic will be possible only when the people of this region have taken psychological ownership of the binational condition that has been thrust upon them and have begun to strive together to pave a road to reconciliation.

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66. Why Is It So Difficult to Resolve the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict by Israeli Jews? A Socio-Psychological Approach

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This paper was completed in December 2014.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, resisting numerous attempts to resolve it peacefully, is considered to be a prototypical example of an intractable conflict in spite of the fact that it has fluctuated in its intensity in the last 25 years. It has lasted for over 100 years over goals that are viewed by both sides as existential; it is violent and perceived as being unsolvable and of zero-sum nature. It is carried with tremendous investment by the parties involved, and greatly preoccupies society members viewing it as central in their lives.¹²³⁷

Thus a question should be asked: why in spite of the heavy losses on both sides, destruction, tremendous financial costs to maintain it, and especially the suffering and the low quality of life, both parties have not succeeded to reach an agreed solution to the conflict? This stranded situation exists in spite of the fact that the general contours of the solution were well spelled out by US President Bill Clinton in December 2000, elucidated in the Taba talks in January 2001, appeared in the Geneva Accord in 2003 and even were outlined in the Arab League Initiative in 2002.¹²³⁸ The last attempt initiated by John Kerry, the secretary of the US State Department, began in August 2013, lasted about nine months, but did not yield an agreement on any of the core issues. Both parties thus continue to blame each other for the stalemate.

We realize that there are various reasons for the failures and researchers and politicians discussed them – not only by pointing to different factors, but also blaming differently the

two parties and also different third parties including the United States, or Arab states.¹²³⁹ We will focus on the socio-psychological barriers to peaceful resolution of the conflict as they appear in the Israeli-Jewish society. We suggest, as a major argument, that side by side with other influential factors, socio-psychological ones also play a role in the continuous stalemate. However, we will not go back to the history and will not describe their functioning through the years of the conflict,¹²⁴⁰ but will concentrate on the years of the present leadership of Prime Minister (PM) Benjamin Netanyahu, 2009–2014. In this focus we will be able to point out to present significant barriers that have a strong inhibitory power on the attempts to move the Israeli-Palestinian peace process to its conclusion. We realize that similar socio-psychological barriers – that are in some respect mirror image to the Israeli barriers – play also a role on the Palestinian side and they also play a detrimental role in the peace process.¹²⁴¹ However this handbook attempts to elaborate on the Israeli dynamics and therefore we will illuminate the Israeli socio-psychological barriers that explain the political-psychological dynamics within the society and thus point out to their contribution to the present deadlock.¹²⁴²

In the present chapter we will first present in brief the theory of socio-psychological barriers. Then we will elaborate at length on the themes of conflict supporting narratives that appear to be dominant in the Israeli-Jewish political culture of conflict. This description will be supported by results of polls that indicate the views of the Israeli Jewish citizens and quotations of Israeli Jewish top leaders that reflect their political views regarding the conflict. Finally conclusions that discuss the implications and meanings of the presented analysis and data will be rendered.

Theory of socio-psychological barriers

The basic proposed premise is that in order to cope with the major challenges posed by the context of the conflict, societies under the conditions of intractable conflict evolve functional

repertoire narratives of ethos of conflict,¹²⁴³ and of collective memory.¹²⁴⁴

These conflict supporting narratives are simplistic and one-sided, being constructed on the basis of supporting sources, magnification of information that supports them and marginalization or even omitting of information that contradicts them.¹²⁴⁵ Eventually, during the climax of the conflict, they become hegemonic, held by a great majority of society members and especially by leaders as central and with high confidence. They serve as a prism for viewing the conflict reality and processing new information. With time these conflict supporting collective narratives,¹²⁴⁶ which can be seen also as being of ideological nature, become the pillars of culture of conflict together with collective emotional orientations,¹²⁴⁷ providing particular illumination of the conflict with different modes, ways and contents.¹²⁴⁸ Societal institutions and channels of communication impart these narratives to society members via leaders, governmental messages, mass media, educational system, ceremonies, and so on. The official organs of the society then try to maintain them and at the same time attempt to block presentation of contradictory information that may be presented by individuals, groups, NGOs or even sources in the media in order to assure their hegemonic status.

The second major premise is that while these narratives and shared emotions are functional during the conflict when there is no sign of possible peace, they become significant barriers to peacemaking process when a light at the end of the tunnel appears and signals a possibility of peaceful conflict resolutions (for example cues from the rival, arrival of a reliable mediator, or appearance of a new solution). This functioning of the conflict supporting narratives is not surprising because they are propagated through many decades and they are well entrenched in the societal repertoire. They prevent information processing that opens new perspectives and may facilitate peacemaking process. That is, they function as “an integrated operation of cognitive, emotional and motivational processes, combined with pre-existing repertoire

of rigid conflict supporting beliefs, world views and emotions that result in selective, biased and distorting information processing.”¹²⁴⁹ This description implies that conflict supporting narratives freeze and this state is reflected in continuous reliance on the held narratives that support the conflict, the reluctance to search for alternative information and resistance to persuasive arguments which contradict held positions.¹²⁵⁰

The third premise suggests that in many societies engulfed by intractable conflict, especially in those that are democratic and enable at least some level of openness and free expression, an alternative ethos evolves that negates and even challenges the ethos of conflict. It focuses on three main themes: there is a possibility of solving the conflict peacefully; there is a need to make compromises and thus societal goals that led to the conflict have to change; and the rival can be a trustworthy and legitimized partner to a peacemaking process. In addition, details of a peace proposal sometimes appear that can lead to the settlement of the conflict. These ideas begin often with a small segment of the society but gradually, at times, are disseminated and then perpetuated by individuals, groups, NGOs, and even political parties and leaders.¹²⁵¹

The Israeli case

The above presented premises nicely correspond with the development of the political culture in Israel. According to numerous empirical studies,¹²⁵² with the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 the conflict supporting narratives were fully hegemonic till the early 1970s with their reflections in all the channels and institutions, formal and informal, including leaders’ speeches, public opinion, literature, ceremonies, school books, newspapers and radio news and commentaries, films, theatrical plays, language, etc.

The first signs of development of alternative view of the conflict began to appear in the 1960s and early 1970s, but only with the visit of the Egyptian President Anwar Sadat to Jerusalem in 1977 and with the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, it

greatly accelerated. The context of the intractable conflict began to change and with this process the alternative culture solidified, especially in sectors of art, academia and in civil society, but also in the political arena.¹²⁵³ The Oslo Agreement with the Palestinians carried by the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin brought a new era of peace support. But it ended with his murder and ascendance to power of Benjamin Netanyahu. The failure of the Camp David Summit in 2000 and the eruption of the Palestinian Second Intifada signaled a new phase – re-escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that in fact lasts till today, as a number of attempts to reach a peaceful resolution of the conflict failed. This trend strengthened the support for conflict supporting narratives of the culture of conflict and they have become dominant among political leadership and society members, as we will show.¹²⁵⁴ Nevertheless the contradictory narratives of the culture of peace did not disappear: they are alive, grounded in their founding bases – intellectual and cultural elites – competing with the formal narratives presented by the government and other formal institutions, as well as by the great majority of the mass media channels.¹²⁵⁵

In the next section, we attempt to provide evidence to our identification that the conflict supporting collective narratives are dominant in the present context.

The themes of the Israeli conflict supporting collective narratives

In this main part of the chapter we present the major themes¹²⁵⁶ of the conflict supporting collective narratives, as they appear in the present period in the Israeli society. The evidence comes from survey polls and rhetoric of leaders – the former expresses the views of the Israeli Jewish public and the latter articulates the views of its leaders. The polls of the public indicate the level of its readiness to move along with a meaningful peace process with the Palestinians.¹²⁵⁷ Of special importance are views of leaders because they are the ones who have to decide whether to embark seriously on the

peacemaking process and begin negotiation with the Palestinians, with the knowledge that they will lead to painful compromises.¹²⁵⁸ Reviewing the views of leaders thus opens a way to understand their positions on core issues, which may need to undergo change if they are serious in their aspirations of promoting a peace process. Furthermore, these expressed views reveal what the leaders tell the Israeli public that needs to be prepared for the departure from the conflict supporting narratives to new cements of peacemaking. In this chapter we pay special attention to the views of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu because he is the dominant leader, who has considerable influence in the government and on the public.

In sum, we argue that the level of adherence of the leaders and the public to the conflict supporting narratives provides a good indication about their ripeness to accept peaceful resolution of the conflict that satisfies the needs of the rival as well.¹²⁵⁹ If they highly adhere to these narratives, they have great difficulty to move along in the peacemaking process, because their view of the conflict serves as social-psychological barriers to see the conflict and the rival in a way that enables carrying the peace process.

The following themes are central in the conflict supporting narratives.

Justness of goals

Almost all the Jews in Israel view the establishment of the Jewish state as a homeland for the Jewish nation as a sacred goal. This goal, which stimulated the conflict, is consensual but the core of the disagreement with the Palestinians today lies in the territories conquered in the 1967 War. Many of the Israeli Jews began to view the military takeover of the control of the West Bank in the 1967 War as continuous liberation of the homeland.¹²⁶⁰

As the Green Line was erased from the maps, including school maps, and the extensive Jewish settlement of the West Bank spread out all over the area, substantial portion of the Israeli public began to view the West Bank as Jewish land and

even when they were ready to compromise and withdraw from this area, they saw the act as major Israeli concession of yielding part of their homeland.¹²⁶¹ These attitudes are clearly visible in public opinion surveys, where a significant majority of the Jewish Israeli public (55%) believes that the territories of Judea, Samaria and Gaza are “liberated” rather than “occupied” territories.¹²⁶² Furthermore, a significant majority (64%) also believes that Eretz Yisrael belongs solely to the Jewish people.

In a similar vein, the platforms of Israeli-Jewish political parties in the 2013 elections referred to the historical right of the Jews over Eretz Yisrael, and its ancient biblical heartland:

Eretz Yisrael belongs to the Jewish people from biblical times, and only in this land it may survive and prosper.¹²⁶³

In our perspective, the Jewish return to Zion was not aimed at Raanana or Kfar Saba, but rather to the regions of longing of the Jewish people, like Bet-El, Hebron and Shilo. We view the settlers who live in these regions as the true Zionists.¹²⁶⁴

The Jewish people have an in-annihilable right to a sovereign state of its own in Eretz Yisrael – its national, historical, religious and cultural homeland.¹²⁶⁵

Similar attitudes are also expressed in speeches of Israeli political leaders, for example Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu:

In Judea and Samaria, the Jewish people are not foreign occupiers. We are not the British in India. We are not the Belgians in the Congo. This is the land of our forefathers, the Land of Israel, to which Abraham brought the idea of one God, where David set out to confront Goliath, and where Isaiah saw a vision of eternal peace. No distortion of history can deny the four thousand year old bond between the Jewish people and the Jewish land.¹²⁶⁶

And even the leader of the relatively moderate *Yesh Atid* party stated: “This place where we stand today has deep national and emotional meaning for us. Through these mountains and villages I passed today on my way here, the prophet Elisha led the armies of Aram after he struck them blind. This is our history, our national ethos; these are the sceneries in which the Jewish people was born.”¹²⁶⁷

Also with regard to Jerusalem that stands as a core issue in the conflict, the great majority of Jews became convinced that it is a reunited city that cannot be divided and is the foundation

of Jewish existence. Public opinion surveys reveal that a large majority of the Jewish population (63%) opposes relinquishing parts of Jerusalem to the Palestinians.¹²⁶⁸

Similar emphasis on the importance and indivisibility of Jerusalem was expressed in the 2013 elections' platforms of Israeli political parties that are considered relatively moderate or dovish:

Jerusalem is the eternal capital of Israel, and its unity is the utmost national symbol. Jerusalem is not only a location or city, but also the center of the Jewish-Israeli ethos, and the holy place toward which Jews have aspired throughout the generations.¹²⁶⁹

Jerusalem, including its Jewish neighborhoods, is the eternal capital of the Jewish people and the State of Israel. [...] The Jewish holy sites will remain under Israeli rule.¹²⁷⁰

PM Netanyahu also expressed his conviction that Jerusalem belongs solely to the Jewish people:

There are people who believe that ensuring the future of our people means dividing Jerusalem, but Jerusalem is the heart of our people and we cannot ensure our future by ripping out our heart. The future is ensured by strengthening our heart and that is what I am doing and that is what I will continue to do. [...] I will continue to stand strong in front of the world's nations and tell them that Jerusalem will always remain the united capital of the State of Israel and the united capital of the people of Israel.¹²⁷¹

Finally, in the specific cases of military encounters in Gaza over the last five years, Israeli Jews viewed them as being fully justified. Thus during Operation "Cast Lead" in 2008, 92% of the Jewish public thought the military operation was justified.¹²⁷² During Operation "Pillar of Defense" in 2012, 84% of the Jews thought it was justified.¹²⁷³ Most recently, during Operation "Protective Edge" which lasted 51 days, 92% of the Jews perceived it as justified.¹²⁷⁴

Security

Israeli Jews believe, on the very general level, that defense and secure existence are the major challenges for the Israeli state and the Jewish population which lives under continuous threat. They perceive the State of Israel as an island or a villa in the jungle, surrounded by hostile states, nations, ethnic groups and organizations which either openly, implicitly, or wishfully

would like to destroy it and exterminate the Jewish population, or at least lead Jews to emigrate back to the states from which they came, if only they could.¹²⁷⁵ In the present context, in addition to the perceived threat of the Iranian nuclear bomb, the continuous shelling of rockets on civilians by Hamas provides for the Jewish population evidence to the intentions of at least substantial part of the Palestinian people. Also the ongoing attempts to carry violent acts by the Palestinians in general and widely spread anti-Israeli rhetoric in many channels of communication reinforce the perception of threats.¹²⁷⁶ In recurring public opinion surveys, the majority of Israeli Jews (67%) believes that the ultimate goal of the Arabs is the annihilation of the State of Israel.¹²⁷⁷

These beliefs are clearly expressed in the platforms of leading mainstream Israeli political parties:

Many threats lie at Israel's doorstep: the threat created by Iran's nuclear program; [...] the rise to power of Islamic movements in Egypt and other countries following what is known as 'the Arab Spring'; the continuing civil war in Syria; cyber terrorism; and of course the Islamic terrorism and the rule of Hamas in Gaza. On top of these, there is a horrific campaign of delegitimization going on against Israel in Europe and the United States.¹²⁷⁸

Similar perceptions are repeatedly reflected in the speeches of Israeli leaders, for example PM Netanyahu: "Since the birth of the State of Israel, many have tried to destroy it. [...] They will never succeed. The State of Israel is a shining island of prosperity and stability in an area which is dark, in turmoil, and turbulent."¹²⁷⁹

The views of threats are based on the long history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict beginning with the 1948 War that was initiated by the Palestinian community and the Arab states, in the attempts by the Arab states in 1956, 1967, and most seriously in 1973. Also the continuous Palestinian terror attacks from the 1950s on the civilian population with guns, knives, stones, bombs, suicidal attacks, and rockets have been threatening personal lives of the Israeli civilian population.

In the Jewish perception, only because of effective use of military force through the years Israel survives.¹²⁸⁰ The use of force by Jews includes different kinds of means, beginning with retaliation operations, necessary wars, and ending with

initiation of various violent actions. The use of force includes necessary control, supervision and even oppression of the Palestinian population in the occupied territories and in Israel – which, although being sometimes harsh, are believed to be required in order to prevent attacks on the Israeli Jewish population.¹²⁸¹ Thus all these means are viewed as prudent, justified, and in accordance with moral standards. The insecure public often therefore demands use of more force. For example, during Operation “Cast Lead” in 2009, 92% of the Jewish public justified continued Israeli bombardment of Gaza, despite the high number of civilian casualties.¹²⁸² Also in the recent military Operation “Protective Edge” 48% of the Jewish population thought that the use of firepower in the operation was appropriate and additional 45% thought that too little firepower was used.¹²⁸³

In a similar vein, Israeli political leaders justify the use of extreme measures against the Palestinians: “We do not want to rule Gaza and are not seeking out war, but we must guaranty the security of Israel’s citizens [...]. No one would have agreed to have missiles fired on Washington, Berlin, Rome or Athens, and we cannot accept missiles fired on Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, or any other city [...].”¹²⁸⁴

Delegitimization of Arabs and especially of the Palestinians

In spite of the changes in the Arab and Palestinian images among Israeli Jews, their basic attributed characteristics of untrustworthiness and dispositional violence pose a major obstacle to a peace process.¹²⁸⁵ Also in recent years Palestinians of Hamas have been viewed as being religious fundamentalists connected to radical Islamic organizations, like ISIS.

Arabs and especially Palestinians are viewed as people that cannot be trusted because of their essential nature, because of their national aspirations and because of their wish for revenge. Also they are viewed as anti-Israeli and anti-Jewish with the intention to harm Jews. In fact many of the Jews

believe that Palestinians do not intend to reach an agreement with Israel because they missed so many opportunities refusing the best offers given to them. In addition, they are stereotyped as violent and with little regard for human life due to their continuous attacks on the Jewish population, but also for using the Palestinian civilian population in activities that result in human losses.¹²⁸⁶

These attitudes are clearly reflected in recurring Israeli public opinion polls, where a large segment of the Jewish Israeli population (50%) believes Arabs are not to be trusted.¹²⁸⁷ Other surveys reveal that 77% of the Jewish Israeli public believe that Palestinians “have shown themselves to be untrustworthy,” while 60% believe that Palestinian morality is “lower than the standard among other human societies.”¹²⁸⁸ Consequentially, 70% of the Jewish Israeli public view peace with the Palestinians to be impossible.¹²⁸⁹

Similar perceptions are expressed in speeches of Israeli political leaders, who emphasize Palestinian hatred toward Israel, as well as their disregard for human life:

In Western society we sanctify the value of life, while many in the Arab society glorify death. When human life does not count, how can we speak of human rights, women rights, and freedom of speech!?¹²⁹⁰

A deep and wide moral abyss separates us from our enemies. They sanctify death while we sanctify life. They sanctify cruelty while we sanctify compassion.¹²⁹¹

Also, as reflected in the public opinion, 70% of the Jewish Israeli public believe that Arabs and especially Palestinians are responsible for the initiation of the conflict that is still going on.¹²⁹² Similar perspective is expressed by Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Ya’alon: “They [the Arabs] launched wars – the pogroms of the 1920s, the 1936 massacres, or even in the War of Independence. They were the ones who opened war [...]. In the Gaza Strip, they have territorial continuity and they could have decided to produce strawberries for export instead of missiles and rockets. This was, and still remains, their decision.”¹²⁹³

The above presented attributions lead to the major belief that Palestinians are not partners to peace talks, or to an

agreement. This belief is clearly echoed in the speeches of Israeli political leaders:

Why has this conflict gone on for over 60 years? [...] The simple truth is that the root of the conflict was, and remains, the refusal to recognize the right of the Jewish People to its own state in its historical homeland. [...] The closer we get to a peace agreement with them, the more they are distancing themselves from peace and raise new demands. They are not showing us that they want to end the conflict.¹²⁹⁴

It is very clear that regarding the negotiations, there is absolutely no desire on the part of the Palestinians to reach an agreement with Israel [...]. Whenever there is progress and a step forward in negotiations, the Palestinians take two steps back. [...] Therefore, it is clear that the real problem is not settlements in Judea and Samaria but the clear reluctance of the Palestinians time after time to pursue peace.¹²⁹⁵

Glorification of Jews

In contrast to their perception of the Palestinians, Israeli Jews view themselves as being civilized, modern, and moral.¹²⁹⁶ Public opinion polls show that the Jewish Israeli public believes the Jewish people to be generally smarter than other nations (77%), and hold higher moral values (57%).¹²⁹⁷ Other surveys reveal that the public takes special pride in the scientific and technological achievements of the State of Israel (91%).¹²⁹⁸

Similar views were expressed in the platforms of political parties during the 2013 elections. In one example, *HaBayit Hayehudi* stated: “The State of Israel is an island of democracy and freedom in an ocean of totalitarian Arab regimes. We are the western world’s front-line in the face of the Islamic surge.”¹²⁹⁹

PM Netanyahu has often emphasized in his speeches the technologically advanced, politically democratic, and religiously tolerant character of the State of Israel:

In a region where women are stoned, gays are hanged, Christians are persecuted, Israel stands out. It is different. [...] As the great English writer [...] George Eliot predicted over a century ago that, once established, [...] ‘the Jewish state will shine like a bright star of freedom amid the despotisms of the East.’ [...] We have a free press, independent courts, an open economy, rambunctious parliamentary debates [...]. Of the 300 million Arabs in the Middle East and North Africa, only Israel’s Arab citizens enjoy real democratic rights.¹³⁰⁰

Furthermore, recurring public opinion surveys during the 2000s revealed that the majority of the Jewish Israeli public viewed the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) as highly moral (68%).¹³⁰¹ Israeli political leaders also emphasized its moral character in their speeches, presenting the IDF as the most moral army in the world: “There is no army more moral than the IDF and we proved this time and again when faced with the most despicable enemies – those dedicated to death and barbarism, while we sanctify life and enlightenment.”¹³⁰²

Sense of self-perceived collective victimhood

Collective victimhood denotes “a mindset shared by group members that results from a perceived intentional harm with severe and lasting consequences inflicted on a collective by another group or groups, a harm that is viewed as undeserved, unjust, and immoral and one that the group was not able to prevent.”¹³⁰³ This mindset greatly characterizes Jewish self-perception. Israeli Jews view themselves as being victims in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in general, as well as in endless military encounters.¹³⁰⁴ In all the violent encounters, the majority of the Israeli Jews believes that they were either initiated by the Palestinians, or Israeli Jews carried them to prevent Palestinian violence or they were in retribution to Palestinian violent acts. As an example, in the presently discussed context, Israeli Jews have viewed themselves as being victims of the Hamas attacks on civil population that are going on through the years. Public opinion surveys during Operation “Pillar of Defense” in 2012 revealed that 80% of the Jewish Israeli public viewed themselves as victims of Palestinian aggression, and the military operation as a reaction to such aggression.¹³⁰⁵ PM Netanyahu expressed similar view in his 2011 Memorial Day’s speech: “We did not look for wars. They were forced upon us. But when we were attacked, we did not have the option of losing even one.”¹³⁰⁶

This sense is based on the long-term cultural perspective of collective victimhood entrenched in Jewish history. The transmitted Jewish history shows that from the destruction of the Second Temple and the beginning of the forced exile in the

Roman era, through the Middle Ages, the Reformation, and the Industrial Revolution until the present, Jews have consistently and continuously been victims.¹³⁰⁷ Throughout this long history they have experienced unjust persecution, libel, social taxation, restriction, forced conversion, expulsion, and pogroms.¹³⁰⁸ Public opinion data shows that 77% of the Jewish Israeli public perceive Jews as being constantly persecuted throughout history.¹³⁰⁹ Similar views are expressed in PM Netanyahu's public speeches:

The first and most terrible upheaval for the Jewish people was the transformation from a proud people who fought for its freedom in ancient times, to a downtrodden, stateless and helpless people in exile. [...] For almost 2,000 years of exile, the Jews lived as a defenseless nation, entirely at the mercy of others. We know the result: the fall from a deep pit into an even deeper pit, from tragedy to tragedy – until our very existence was put at risk.¹³¹⁰

The described view gets its major evidence from the major event in the Jewish history: the Holocaust – the attempt of Nazi Germany to exterminate the Jews during World War II. Although the Holocaust took place in Europe, its collective memory has a major influence on the present conflict, by being the Jewish chosen trauma.¹³¹¹ Years ago, a well-known Israeli writer and a publicist noted:

The Holocaust remains a basic trauma of Israeli society. It is impossible to exaggerate its effect on the process of nation-building. [...] There is a latent hysteria in Israeli life that stems directly from this source. [...] The trauma of the Holocaust leaves an indelible mark on the national psychology, the tenor and content of public life, the conduct of foreign affairs, on politics, education, literature and the arts.¹³¹²

His observation is even more valid today, a few decades later. Public opinion data shows that the majority of the Jewish Israeli public (59%) believes that “no other nation has suffered such horrible annihilation as the Jewish Holocaust.”¹³¹³ In this vein, the Nazi-German enemy with its evil characteristics and intentions became a symbol that was transformed to represent the Arabs.¹³¹⁴

Jewish historical collective victimhood is also related to “siege mentality,”¹³¹⁵ defined as the mental state in which members of a group hold a central belief that the rest of the world has highly negative behavioral intentions toward them.

Public opinion polls reveal that the Jewish Israeli public perceives the international community as essentially critical and hostile toward Israel (56%), and believes that this attitude will never change, regardless of Israeli policies (77%).¹³¹⁶ In 2014, 63% thought that “the whole world is against us.”¹³¹⁷

Similar attitudes are expressed in the speeches of Israeli political leaders:

The so-called ‘pro-Palestinian’ activity, which, like in those dark days, calls for a boycott of ‘Jewish goods’ and is directed aggressively against the only democracy in the Middle East, is anti-Semitism, and not part of a legitimate political debate over a territorial dispute, like those found in many parts of the world.¹³¹⁸

[I]t becomes clear from a historical perspective that hatred of the Jews did not reach its peak and disappear after the Holocaust. It was not a fleeting episode; it has accompanied us for thousands of years, and has not disappeared yet.¹³¹⁹

This conception suggests that the Israeli Jewish society is embedded in three layers of collective victimhood: historical victimhood based on accumulated Jewish experiences of persecution and suffering unrelated to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; then, sense of collective victimhood, which pertains to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in its gestalt; and finally conflict event victimhood, related to a distinct event within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as for example the Gaza War in 2014.¹³²⁰

Patriotism and unity

The narrative of a society in intractable conflict encourages patriotism and unity that are essential in order to mobilize for achieving group goals, and especially for violent confrontations with the rival, including readiness to make the ultimate sacrifice of life. In the Israeli society, the narrative praises citizen’s loyalty and sacrifice to the country and glorifies patriotic models.¹³²¹ Indeed, recurring public opinion polls in Israel reveal that a large majority of the Jewish Israeli public (80%) feels very proud with being Israeli,¹³²² and is willing to risk his/ her life in order to defend the state.¹³²³

In a similar vein the platform of the right-wing nationalist party *HaBayit Hayehudi* during the 2013 elections emphasized

the need to teach the heroic heritage of sacrifice for one's country by claiming that every child in the country must be familiar with the Jewish people's past and its "exceptional figures," as well as Israeli heroes like Yoni Netanyahu, Hannah Senesh, and Judah the Maccabee.

Defense Minister Ya'alon clearly encouraged an expression of the narrative of heroism and sacrifice in his speech:

'All Israelis are guarantors for each other,' these are the values of sacrifice. Only through this kind of education, heroism becomes part of us. This is what made Dror Weinberg jump into battle, and this is what made all those security forces and firefighters [...] jump into the fire in order to save lives. Strength is physical force, while heroism is courage of the heart and spirit. [...] preparing the ground to fight for the nation.¹³²⁴

The master narrative in intractable conflict refers to the importance of maintaining unity in the face of an external threat. The Israeli narrative stresses the common heritage and religion of the Jews in Israel and minimizes ethnic differences among Israeli citizens especially in the context of the conflict.¹

³²⁵ PM Netanyahu clearly expressed this narrative in one of his speeches:

The entire nation joined together and was again reminded of who we are, why we are here and, no less importantly, what great strengths we possess. [...] Throughout the history of our people, we have proven time and again that even when faced with the greatest of tragedies and the deepest agony and despair, the force of life that pulses in us overpowers the murderous aspirations of our enemies. [...] I want to thank all the citizens of Israel for lending a hand and for your spirit of volunteerism and unity.¹³²⁶

Peace

This theme refers to peace as the ultimate desire of the society and describes the society as peace loving. Indeed in the Israeli-Palestinian context, this theme refers to peace as the ultimate goal which the Israeli Jewish society yearns for.¹³²⁷ Following the Oslo peace process, the idea of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has become acceptable to the majority of the Israeli public, and receives overwhelming support in recurring public opinion surveys (70%).¹³²⁸ Even the ideologically oriented PM Netanyahu in his 2009 speech in Bar-Ilan University accepted the idea of a two-state solution.¹³

²⁹ But this idea has remained a very general slogan and the leaders never transferred it into concrete proposal how to carry the division of land. Thus it is not surprising that most of the Israeli public while accepting the idea of a two-state solution, also opposes various concrete solutions that are crucial for peaceful settling of the conflict, like for example division of Jerusalem. Similar yearning toward peace in very general terms without specifications was expressed in the platforms of Israeli political parties during the 2013 elections, for example:

We believe that the Palestinians [...] ‘never missed the opportunity to miss an opportunity’ and rejected time and again Israel’s hand in peace. [...] All these incidents do not absolve us from the need to keep striving for real and sustainable regional peace. For peace is the most effective remedy to the threats [we face], and the only way to significantly diminish these threats in the long term.¹³³⁰

Similar attitudes appear also in the speeches of Israeli leaders:

Israel is a peace-seeking nation, our hand will be held out in peace forever, and we will always strive for peace with our neighbors.¹³³¹

We want peace more than any other people. We pray for peace, yearn for peace, dream about peace. I want to make sure that the peace holds. [...] So I’m willing to make that kind of peace, a peace with security.¹³³²

Conclusions

The present chapter attempted to point out to one type of obstacles on the Israeli Jewish side that hinders movement toward peace process in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It suggests that it is extremely difficult for leaders to carry meaningful steps toward a peace process if their worldview consists of conflict supporting narratives and they adhere to its original goals: they delegitimize the potential partner to negotiation, they stress all possible threats and put their society in the role of victims, and at the same time portray it in glorious colors. In this case they hold specific beliefs that allow them carry their conflict supporting policies and lines of actions, namely that they have the human and material resources to continue the conflict without losing it, and/or that time is on their side to gain a better deal, or to create better conditions. When in addition these views are also held by the majority of the society members, it is hard to think

how the process can begin and lead to peaceful resolution of the conflict, without external intervention.

We suggest that it is hard and at times even impossible for a peace process to succeed, not because of the mere existence of the beliefs and narratives described above, but rather because of their detrimental influence on the way people process new information that could have potentially promoted such endeavor. The ignorance of the Israeli public regarding the existence and the details of the Arab League Peace Initiative, as described in earlier pages of this chapter, provides a real life example for such effects.

Further support for these processes is provided by extensive research we have conducted in recent years. For example, in one study participants with high levels of ethos of conflict tended to perceive photos depicting encounters between Palestinians and Jews differently than did those with low level of ethos of conflict.¹³³³ In a more recent study we specifically focused on the effect of societal beliefs on information processing pertaining to possible opportunities for peace.¹³³⁴ We found that Jewish Israelis who adhere to beliefs like the delegitimization of Palestinians and victimhood of Israel tend to actively ignore such information and instead focus on more threatening data that can potentially negate any opportunity for peace.¹³³⁵ The former tended to perceive the Palestinians as more aggressive, to blame them more for attributed aggressiveness, and to explain this perceived aggressiveness more in terms of internal and stable causes. They also tended to stereotype Palestinians more negatively and Jews more positively. In another study it was found out that the more society members adhere to the ethos of conflict, the less support for solutions that can be accepted as agreed settlement of the conflict.¹³³⁶ In general a whole line of research on Israeli Jews that investigated the effects of holding the above-mentioned specific themes of conflict supporting narratives (such as sense of being victim, delegitimization of Arabs, perceiving threats or self-glorification) showed they are related to non-compromising attitudes and support for military action.¹³³⁷

As a major point that sheds determinative light on the situation in the Israeli Jewish society, we propose that when there is a correspondence between the views of the leadership and the great majority of the public, there is very low likelihood that the process of societal change will take place from the inside. Societal change from within the society takes place when there is considerable disparity between the narrative of the significant segment of the society and the leadership that rules. The needed internal change can happen either when a visionary leadership initiates and leads a peace process (top-down process) as occurred in France during the Algerian War, or under the pressure of the civil society (bottom-up process) as occurred partially in Northern Ireland. In the first case the leaders (for example Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres in Israel with regard to the Oslo process) change their views and led the nation into the peace process. In the latter case a well-established and organized civil society, experiencing deprivation, puts a significant pressure on the leadership to embark on the peace path. In case of correspondence in conflict supporting narratives between leadership and the society members, there is no internal force that can lead the nation into the peace process, except when the leaders change their views (this can happen in a relatively fast process) or when the public is persuaded of the need for peace and presses the leaders to carry the peace process (this usually takes place in a longer process). Obviously we are aware that a peace process can begin and be concluded as a result of pressure from a third party or parties in different ways and forms. We also recognize that a major event¹³³⁸ can greatly accelerate the internal process of changing the views of the leaders and the public to reach a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Nevertheless observing the Israeli society we conclude that at present there are very strong forces that are imparting and preserving the conflict supporting narratives within the Israeli Jewish society. Furthermore, the Israeli prime minister remains an ideological hardliner who, as was shown, holds monolithic views of the conflict, the rival and the Jewish people. Although he made explicit changes in views, accepting the

notion of the two-state solution, it looks more like a tactical move rather than a genuine change of deep convictions. These convictions carry basic mistrust of Arabs, adherence to Judea and Samaria as being the cradle of the Jewish homeland and angst about Jewish existence.¹³³⁹ On the other hand, the Jewish society members, living under continuous exposure and experience of violence and threats that are framed by the Israeli dominant leaders, formal institutions and most of the media as being constant and serious, and being presented and reminded about the collective memory of the Holocaust and its possible recurrence, get validation for their conflict supporting narratives.¹³⁴⁰

Moreover, when the conflict supporting narratives are dominant in the society, being held by key leaders and by the majority of society members, there are severe consequences that intensify the conflict. First, on the socio-psychological level the conflict supporting narratives, as research shows, lead to selective and biased information processing as society members, including leaders, tend to search for information and opinions that support the narrative and reject any contradictory knowledge. In addition, they tend to select and interpret information about possible harm too readily, sometimes biasing and distorting it. They also tend to avoid seriously considering proposals and information that provide indications about concrete and serious possibilities of peace. The Arab Peace Initiative is a case in point. Reiterated several times since its first announcement by the Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah in 2002, the Arab Peace Initiative has been amended and approved again by the Arab League in April 2013.¹³⁴¹ Public opinion surveys reveal that a strong majority of the Israeli Jewish population (76%) supports its basic tenants.¹³⁴² However, despite such strong public support, Israeli leaders continue to ignore this initiative,¹³⁴³ while the majority of the public (73%) remains ignorant of its very existence.¹³⁴⁴

Second, the described contents of the narratives lead to moral *disengagement* – they serve as a buffer against group-based negative thoughts and feelings. That is, they free society members from feelings of guilt and other thoughts and

emotions that are usually felt when a group acts immorally, and thus psychologically facilitates immoral acts.¹³⁴⁵ A work by Greenbaum and Elizur about psychological effects of occupation on the Israeli society notes a number of studies that show a clear moral disengagement phenomenon. That is, soldiers in the Israeli army, who were able to disconnect themselves from moral considerations, were the ones who did not experience guilt and therefore were able to more easily carry out immoral acts against Palestinian civilian population.¹

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Third, the narratives of the conflict lead to *moral entitlement* defined as the belief that the group is allowed to use whatever means to ensure its security, with little regard to moral norms. It allows freedom of action because the society believes that it needs to defend itself to prevent immoral and destructive behavior of the rival, and this super-ordinate goal supersedes moral considerations. This need often allows the society to feel free from the binding force of international norms and agreements. Survival is instead its overriding consideration. In the very recent study by Schori, Klar, and Roccas the sense of self-perceived collective victimhood was found to be strongly positively associated with the feeling of moral entitlement and negatively associated with group-based guilt over Israel's actions in the occupied territories. Sense of victimhood was also related with willingness to continue the military operations at all costs, even allowing for great losses to either the Israeli or the Palestinian side; and with the wish to continue punishing the enemy group, even if such punishment means retaliation and suffering inflicted upon the Israeli Jews.¹³⁴⁷

Moreover, societies make all the efforts to maintain the conflict supporting narratives especially in situations of violent stress. They try to block permeation of information that may contradict the dominant supporting narratives. Then formal and informal institutions, together with leaders, use various methods to carry this mission such as censorship, monitoring or closure of archives. They also discredit counter information and their sources by portraying them as unreliable and as damaging the interests of Israel. Various current-day NGOs

that criticized Israel's immoral conduct are portrayed very negatively in Israel, as symbols of evil and as traitors that damage the international standing of Israel, and it is therefore argued that their criticism should be rejected and they should be even punished.¹³⁴⁸ An example are the attempts to discredit *Shovrim Shtika* (Breaking the Silence) – an organization that collects testimonies from Israeli soldiers about immoral conduct against Palestinians (e.g., illegal shooting, looting, abuse, and corruption), and its information. The IDF argues that these testimonies are unreliable, one-sided, and based on rumors, thus trying to discredit their arguments.¹³⁴⁹ Furthermore, individuals' attempts to criticize Israeli policies have been met with growing derogation by government ministers and public officials, who depict these attempts as “tortuous” and “slanderous.”¹³⁵⁰

They also use formal and informal sanctions, of social, financial and physical nature, aimed at discouraging presenting and disseminating information and opinions that negate the conflict supporting narratives. The tool of financial sanctions is in evidence today: legislation currently under consideration, supported by the Israeli government and many Knesset members, proposes to forbid NGOs that are critical of Israel's activities in the conflict from getting any financial support from foreign entities.¹³⁵¹ Moderate peace organizations would be allowed to get such funding but will not enjoy a total tax deduction on such donations, as is the practice (unless they convince a Knesset committee that they are not acting against Israel).¹³⁵² Additional legislation, which has already passed into law, allows withdrawal of government funding for organizations which oppose the “Jewish character” of Israel.¹³⁵³ Other forms of punishment include convincing foreign donors to withdraw their donations to such organizations;¹³⁵⁴ or summoning their activists to “warning talks” with representatives of the Israeli Internal Security Services (Shabak).¹³⁵⁵

In sum, we suggest that review and evaluation of the rhetoric and acts by leaders provide evidence of how they stand regarding the peace process. If they express time and

again the major themes of the narratives supporting the conflict; if they de-legitimize continuously the rival, and especially the leader, who is supposed to be the partner to peace talks; when they repeatedly blame the rival party for various acts – such as incitement – without being able to criticize similar acts carried by their own group; when they cooperate with spoilers who have vested interest to prevent any peace process; when they overlook violence carried by these spoilers; and when they carry acts that intensify the conflict – then it is clear that the party is not interested in genuine peace process. It might carry it for various ulterior reasons, but avoid significant progress that will lead to peaceful conflict resolution. Israel in the last years under the leadership of Benjamin Netanyahu carried all these verbal and real acts. Clearly those are not the only reasons for the lack of progress in the peacemaking process, but they definitely have contributed to it.

We suggest that one of the necessary conditions to sincerely lead a peace process is to change the conflict supporting narratives – at least toward the conflict goals and toward the rival – in order to carry the negotiation. There is need to build mutual trust, with full legitimization and humanization of the partner to negotiations. At the same time leaders have to make efforts to change the narratives of the society in order to get its support and prepare it for the peace era. Also they have to be prepared and prepare the society for the difficulties in the transitory period, when there is still violence and peace negotiations are going on. This is a period of duality when the signs of conflict and peace appear at the same time. And they have to be prepared to struggle against spoilers who usually use all available means – maybe even violence – to stop the peace process.

Only full conviction in the way of peace that is uncertain and risky, as well as determination to progress in it with all the needed strategies and tactics, will bring the decried peace. Leaders and nations need to aspire for peace with the same intensity that they launched the conflict, because conflict begins in the minds of the human beings and peacemaking

must also appear in their mind as a very desired goal that is important to achieve for the benefit of their own society.

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67. Perspectives of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, 1917–2015

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This paper was completed in March 2015.

Introduction

The following parts of this essay discuss the origin and development of the Israeli-Palestinian and the Israeli conflict with the Arab states by a professional historian, rather than by social scientists and practitioners specializing in conflict studies, conflict resolution and peace research, supported as they may be by case studies. The basic approach of some social scientists is that of an abstract model, or models anchored in generalizations, which may be interesting, but in most cases are divorced from the historical facts, the necessary linguistic skills, and the cultural-historical knowledge without which the historian cannot study history *wie es eigentlich gewesen war*.¹³⁵⁶ The abstract ideal type does not emerge from historical research, as it was the case with Max Weber's own vast historical knowledge, but in the quest, say, for peace as it may emerge from the democratic theory of peace, born in the reality of war, let alone from Kant's search for eternal peace.

My research, which has begun with the 1973 Yom Kippur hostilities, under the stress of this experience, led me to set aside a study on the origins of the European Economic Community, to start with traditional Labor-Zionist points of view, which are well known,¹³⁵⁷ introducing however issues which are missing from the history that usually begins for the Palestinians and their supporters nowadays with the 1948 *Nakba* ('catastrophe' or 'exile' of Arabs from Israel).¹³⁵⁸ This is only a more current view of the history of the Palestinians, which goes back to its sources and development before the *Nakba*.¹³⁵⁹ As I see it now, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is

anchored in three levels: the domestic dimensions, the regional ones, and the global dimensions. Altogether, these structures contain identity issues, related cultural religious-historical ones, and political-strategic matters, plus visions of time and expectations of the future across various time axes.

My contribution would discuss peace as an independent master variable, as a solution to the conflict endorsed as it is by various scholars and actors in Israel, along the following core issues: the “Right of Return” of 1948 and 1967 Palestinian refugees to Israel proper, boundaries, and Jerusalem. To this a number of key terms should be added but not discussed here fully because of the limited space available: two states for two peoples with East Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian state; one state for two peoples; recognition of Israel as the homeland of the Jewish nation; Arab-Palestinian claims for Palestine before and after the birth of Islam as currently adopted. The Holocaust and its politicization require our attention as well. To this the following terms should be added: “decisive wars” and armistice arrangements; “preventive wars,” “acts of war,” and non-belligerence; the 1967 and the 1973 Wars; the Intifadas; Oslo and the peace process thereafter, postulating economic cooperation in a “New Middle East.” Yet the historical starting date for my discussion is the *Balfour Declaration* of November 1917 and the Muslim religious contents of the conflict which had been adopted by Arab-Palestinians much before the Nakba of 1948. After the 1967 War “occupation of Palestinian land” became its term, and the human rights lingo its language, justifying resistance and Israeli countermeasures combined with yearning for peace and or at least to limited peace agreements. Hence I have left aside the details of Security Council Resolution 242 and those of the Oslo Agreements of 1993 onward, the Second Intifada and the Lebanon wars. Also Yasser Arafat’s leadership and demise could not be given its due space. This was done due to another dimension of the Arab-Israeli and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict usually missing from the standard discussion thereof: the *nuclear factor*, to be discussed here next to peace itself.

Peace

For many “peace” without brackets, became the independent master variable during and following WWI, which was supposed to govern the world thanks to the American model and power, anchored in an international organization named League of Nations. The League, which was crippled by American refusal to adopt President Woodrow Wilson’s original ideas, has granted Great Britain mandatory power on West and East Palestine following the Balfour Declaration of November 1917. The Declaration promised the Zionists British support for the creation of a “Jewish National Home in Palestine” provided that the rights of the indigenous population will be honored. The Eastern part of mandatory Palestine had been separated by the British in favor of the Hashemite family, finally on the way to the creation of Jordan. Others perceived the Soviet Union as the guarantor of world peace, and others still adopted a pacifist credo as a supreme postulate.¹³⁶⁰ In mandatory Western Palestine the voluntary *Yishuv* reflected these but mainly other postulates such as Zionist brands of Social Democracy when Israel was born and found itself in a very costly war; starting with onslaughts of the Arab-Palestinians in November 1947, when the UN General Assembly recommended the partition of Western Palestine between Jews and Arabs, all the way to the invasion of the Arab states in May 1948. The result was enormous losses on the Israeli side, the mobilization of the *Yishuv* to fight the Palestinians and the Arab states, and the beginning of the search for unconventional solutions to Israel’s security dilemmas in the long run. Thus, when Israeli independence was proclaimed by David Ben-Gurion on May 15, 1948, Israel created itself, with Soviet military support coming later, while the West introduced a weapon embargo on all belligerents. Arab defeat in what became a partitioned West Palestine seemed to David Ben-Gurion – Israel’s first prime minister, minister of defense and the acknowledged head of the *Mapai* Party – to allow peace negotiations. He referred to peace in a somewhat surprising fashion in November 1948, when the war was almost won, addressing the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) leadership as follows:

‘End of the War’ would it end when there would be an end to the hostilities now [...]? *If peace is negotiated, was there any war that was not preceded by peace?* [italized by SA] We must ignore [...] resolutions [such as UN decisions favoring the Arabs] and study the historical reality. What is our reality? The Arab peoples were defeated by us [...] 700.000 [Israelis] prevailed over 30 million [Arabs]. We shall try to pursue peace, but peace requires two sides. [...] Could we rest assure that they would refrain from seeking revenge? Let us acknowledge the truth: *We have won not because our army is a miracle doer* [italized by SA]; but because the enemy’s army is rotten.¹³⁶¹

This would lead Ben-Gurion to distinguish between *final victories*, or decisive ones, and *temporary victories*, which dictated in Ben-Gurion’s view a non-conventional solution to Israel’s security problems,¹³⁶² anchored in Arab numbers, vast territories, strategic locations and oil, next to religion and culture, in due course; this was accompanied by Ben-Gurion’s constant study of the powers at work in favor of the Arab side in a longer run. In fact, Ben-Gurion warned against *overconfidence in peace as such*, based on his observations of the Versailles Peace Treaty and its complicated compromises, on Kemal Atatürk’s refusal to accept the great powers’ postwar *Diktat* all the way to the Lausanne Conference of July 1923, which created the modern Turkish Republic and triggered the evacuation of the Greeks from Turkey. Ben-Gurion had no illusions when comparing tiny Israel to Turkey; but he hoped to mobilize Jewish “brain power” and technological advantages while avoiding an Israeli-Arab military confrontation as long as possible after the 1948 War, seeking for foreign allies such as secular, non-Arab Turkey, Ethiopia and Iran – an informal alliance which existed until the fall of the Shah in 1979 and the rise of Erdogan’s regime in Turkey in 2003.

The multiple traps

As emphasized above, Israel created itself when the British left and transferred the future of the country to the UN. Responding to the Palestinian-Arab state challenge, Ben-Gurion extended the UN 1947 partition boundaries, while absorbing Soviet authorized modern weapons. The semi-colonial Arab armies were dependent on Western supplies, and hence exposed to arms embargo proclaimed by the West over

Western Palestine as a whole. This ignited the Palestinian uprising against the British and war against the Jews between 1936–1939, under Haj Amin el-Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem, who became Hitler's ally in 1941 and continued to influence Palestinian politics in exile until the early 1950s. Haj Amin consolidated his power among the Arabs of Palestine by invoking violent measures, eliminating a moderate alternative by force, and introduced Islam as the main source of the Arab-Jewish conflict already in the 1930s. For the Mufti, the emergence of Jews and Judaism from their alleged historical grave under Christianity and the final victory over Islam, was unacceptable as it was rewriting world history and thus had to be resisted by all means. The fact that the Temple Mount was Islamized and transformed to be the third holiest monument of the new religion – by itself a clever use of elements acquired from the older religions, closed to Jews however – to legitimize Islam was of course missing here. The Mufti then transformed WWII, as best he could, to a struggle between Nazi Germany and its allies to a worldwide campaign between the Allies and Islam. Hitler justified his alliance with the Mufti thanks to the “fighting spirit of Islam” in contradiction to “Jewish Christianity” and its “poisonous postulates” such as divine grace and love for all mankind.¹³⁶³ While mobilizing to fight Hitler, under the Palestinian Arab pressure the British had fought back with Zionist support but finally closed the gates of Palestine in May 1939 to Jewish refugees in order to win Arab support in their forthcoming war against Hitler. For his part, Hitler continued to deport them, even to Palestine in order to get rid of them while exporting antisemitism as he saw fit. Most of the potential deportees would end up in Hitler's death factories in due course with the Mufti as his official ally and representative of the Muslims, not just of the Palestinians.¹³⁶⁴ Later on the Mufti's active role in supporting Hitler's “Final Solution of the Jewish Question” worldwide created an operational German-Palestinian connection which would overshadow the scenery in Israel psychologically and politically all the way until today; whereas the pro-Nazi opinion in the Arab World drove the Western Allies to ignore the Jews even more in order to win their war against Hitler.

Caught between Hitler, the Allies and continued Arab pressure, the Zionists faced a multi-trap situation when the Arab-Palestinians and Arab states imposed themselves as a factor on Allied calculations, while preparing to face the Arabs of all colors when WWII was over. A detailed discussion of the Mufti's career is required to understand to which degree he was close to the Muslim Brotherhood, a pan-Arab religious leader on his own, and/or a nationalist Palestinian cleric, in whose view a sort of Muslim Caliphate should be the form of government for all Arabs, replacing the existing post-WWI structure of the region with German backing. His role in ordering the Palestinians to leave the country following their defeat in the war against Israel and to wait for the invasion of the Arab states is debated among Arab scholars and Palestinian politicians to this day. However, a coordinated Arab war effort to foil the UN Partition Plan proved to be impossible to achieve, and a prolonged Arab siege over Jewish West Jerusalem was broken and later declared to be Israel's capital; Amman remained Jordan's capital. The Jordanians built a wall between East and West Jerusalem, closing Jewish holy sites in East Jerusalem to Jews. In the meantime, Washington withdrew its support of the UN Partition Plan, allowing UN efforts to enforce ceasefires which in fact left the Jews alone to declare independence and the situation on the ground to be decided by war, with Soviet support. Having been defeated, most of the Arab states refused to absorb about 700,000 Palestinians who left or were deported from the Jewish state following the Mufti's wars which started in 1936, and entered a period of post-colonial-secular challenges. About 20% of the indigenous Arabs remained in Jewish Israel under military regime as a minority, by itself a minority among the huge majority of the Arabs in the region. Thus, the Israeli Arabs were granted passive and active voting rights but remained under military control at the same time, pending the developments around Israel. The military regime was abolished in 1966 by the Center-Left Eshkol government, resulting later on in the emergence of several Arab parties prone to compete with each other while adopting radical anti-Zionist views. In 1949 the Arab states adopted armistice agreements with Israel but refused to make peace. Soon

enough the Arab states imposed an economic blockade on Israel and tried to isolate it internationally, as best they could. The ruling hope at the time was secular Pan-Arabism, obliged to eradicate the “Jewish colonial entity” in Palestine, to be achieved with Gamal Abdel Nasser’s Egypt leading the struggle. The only nation that was ready to supply Israel with conventional weaponry was France, now that the Soviet Union became more and more the patron power of the Arabs and pushed a reluctant Washington behind Israel. A nuclear reactor became later Israel’s main gain from its part as France’s ally in the 1956 Suez-Sinai Campaign.

A basic maxim adopted by Ben-Gurion after the 1947–1948 war was the maintenance of the partition of the country while avoiding to rule over a large number of Arabs, that could combine with pre-state multi-party, absolute proportional ballot system, which could have given Arabs a growing role in Israeli politics, and yet he was preoccupied with problems of Jewish “inner strength” and “anarchistic instincts” – which might signify missing understanding of the birth of a state, compared to the road leading to it in a voluntary society.¹³⁶⁵ The solution would be adaptation of the British constituency majority ballot system, which would be rejected by the other parties in the Knesset with Mapai as pivotal party – a status gradually lost in favor of a Center-Left coalition under Levi Eshkol,¹³⁶⁶ and later to the Right movement Herut under Menachem Begin,¹³⁶⁷ later known as Likud.

The refugees

Instead of creating a Palestinian state in partitioned Western Palestine, the West Bank was occupied by Jordan and the Gaza Strip was occupied by Egypt. In the “bottleneck” of the heart of Israel, the Jewish state was about 15 miles wide. The UN decisions allowed the refugee issue to survive, and in addition to it, the UN created relief agencies in an unprecedented fashion: not only was the first wave of the refugees recognized as such, but UN relief agencies, manned by refugees and their sons and grandchildren, inherited the UN refugee status. Thus

their number grew from 700,000 to six million, mostly dwelling in miserable refugee camps in and around the Arab states and in Gaza. No such status was granted to Greek refugees under Mustafa Kemal in the 1920s and to German refugees after WWII. UN refugee recommendations and decisions were transformed to the “Right of Return,” a Palestinian sacrosanct principle,¹³⁶⁸ reflecting as other postulates the Israeli “Law of Return”: the right of every Jew to settle in Israel. Yet the exiled Palestinians vanished from the scene for a long period of time as an independent factor in favor of secular Pan-Arabism, while the Arab states assumed various measures against Israel such as the economic boycott, and the closure of the Suez Canal and the Red Sea to Israeli shipping by Egypt, which go beyond the scope of this discussion, except the 1956 Suez-Sinai War. One of the *casus belli* leading to this war were acts of violence committed by Palestinians residing in Gaza with Egypt’s blessing. Israeli-French collaboration yielded a semi-official alliance, but no preventive war until the French nuclear reactor was promised, following Egypt’s acts of war such as the closure of the Suez Canal to Israeli shipping and the blockade of Eilat. The reactor was supposed to become operational several years later.

The politics of the Palestinian refugees lay dormant until 1964 when two organizations of exiled Palestinians were established: *Fatah*, led by Yasser Arafat endorsed a guerilla campaign against Israel from bases in Syria, ruled now by the secular Ba’ath Party, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) born under the leadership of Ahmad Shukeiri and President Nasser’s secular-Egyptian sponsorship, which however did not allow military activities against Israel until May 1967. One factor here was the lifting of the Egyptian blockade over Eilat as a result of the Sinai-Suez War, and the stationing of UN peace keeping forces around the Gaza Strip and in Sharm el-Sheikh, leading to Eilat. The aims of the PLO were specified in its 1964 charter and in related documents, declaring Israel illegitimate and calling for the return of the Palestinian refugees to their homes in Israel and for the return of the Israelis to their countries of origin if they

arrived or were born in Israel after November 1917. These developments were inspired by two factors: the Algerian war of independence, which was being won against France, and Israel's nuclear program in the making, which would be close to maturity in 1967, missiles included. The difference between Arafat and Shukeiri is to be sought in Syrian-Palestinian conviction that guerilla warfare under the nuclear threshold drove a nuclear France out of Algeria, and that the United States – now Israel's reluctant patron – would be driven out of Vietnam thanks to the Vietcong's guerilla tactics. Shukeiri, however, raised hell in the Arab media to remark that the Palestinians were the only victims of the Jews, when they lost their homes in 1948, whereas the Arab states did not share this fate with the Palestinians and would not risk a nuclear Armageddon to allow the return of the exiled Palestinian refugees to Israel. Thus there was a conflict of interest between the exiled Palestinians and the Arab states once Israel went nuclear. The date would be possibly in 1967.

The Six-Day War and after as viewed in 2015

The role of the superpowers on their way to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), endorsed in 1968 by most nations – Israel not included – and ratified in 1970 (later prolonged indefinitely with various addenda), opened a conflict of interest between the United States and its anti-proliferation campaign and Israel. Also, the Kennedy and the Johnson administrations were very much aware of the refugee problem and of Soviet military support to the Arab states requiring some solution to it in favor of the refugees, and took Egyptian open threats of preventive war ahead of the completion of the Israeli nuclear project very seriously. Thus Washington was ready to offer to Israel a variety of offensive conventional weapons (no such American arms were supplied beforehand) in exchange for the Israeli bomb and delivery missiles. The agreement in this regard was signed in 1965, but Israel continued its clandestine nuclear effort, by adopting an “opaque” definition of its nature, and thus refrained from assuming an open nuclear strategy. Egypt's moves on the ground in May 1967 such as the removal of the UN peace

keepers from around Gaza and the renewal of the blockade over Eilat were perceived by the Eshkol government as a gambit aimed at forcing Israel to start a preventive conventional war that would allow, among other things, the destruction of the Israeli nuclear facility at Dimona. This could be done by means of Egyptian air attack once Israel fired the first shot. Soviet support had to be calculated by the Eshkol government, as if Moscow was behind the crisis, thanks to the forthcoming deployment of Israeli medium-range missiles ordered in France which could reach Soviet territory, using Nasser's Egypt as the necessary tool to neutralize Israel's nuclear ambition regardless of its undeclared or opaque status. In this regard we should recall Soviet threats to use nuclear weapons against France, Britain and Israel during the 1956 Suez-Sinai Campaign. We may further ask whether the French-German post-WWII relations were the result of economic necessities which imposed themselves on the politicians. Or was the strategic political base of the birth of the European Economic Community the destruction of the Third Reich to begin with? Had France agreed to the Treaty of Rome of 1958 which created the Common Market because its real aim was EURATOM? In other words, was EURATOM supposed to be a European response to American refusal to support its NATO ally, plus its British ally, in their campaign against Nasser's Egypt? At least one of the responses was to be the October 1957 agreement regarding the supply of the French nuclear reactor to Israel.¹³⁶⁹ In the meantime, however, General de Gaulle's ascendance killed not only the Fourth Republic, but its plans to collaborate with West Germany and Italy in the framework of EURATOM were shelved, combined with the General's pursuit of French nuclear monopoly vis-à-vis Bonn and Rome. De Gaulle forced Israel to make its nuclear ambition public, as if it was aimed at peaceful use alone, and later on expected it to avoid misuse thereof toward changes in the strategic political status quo in the Middle East. Finally, Israel launched its preventive war early in June 1967 against Egypt, once the straits of Eilat remained closed by Egypt and no American intervention to reopen the straits was forthcoming, as was expected by the Eshkol government, but instead Israel was continuously called on to open its nuclear

complex to International Atomic Energy Agency's supervision and to refrain from deploying nuclear missiles.

Eshkol was trying to ride the storm and avoid a preventive war thanks to American support regarding the Egyptian blockade backed by Moscow, but finally was forced to create an Israeli government of national unity, which was born with Levi Eshkol as prime minister, and Moshe Dayan as minister of defense instead of Eshkol. The ensuing Six-Day War seemed to have been a stunning Israeli victory in all fronts, which made the nuclear option unnecessary, or rather a *last resort* factor, hidden in Israel's basement – ever since Israel adopted a variety of conventional strategies and tactics pending Arab challenges, such as the two Lebanon Wars and the two Gaza operations. The 1967 preemptive war yielded the following political and territorial results in Israel: first, Eshkol's grand coalition adopted Israeli political demands aimed at peace instead of the 1949 armistice agreements, to be negotiated directly between the Arab states and Israel; second, Israel annexed Jordanian East Jerusalem, now that Jordan joined Egypt in its June 1967 War against Israel. The annexed Palestinians in East Jerusalem – about several hundreds of thousands – became Israeli subjects, carrying Israeli IDs and being eligible to Israeli social security benefits, allowed to move freely and work in Israel like the Westbankers, but not to cast their vote in Israeli general elections. The Temple Mount remained under control of the *Waqf*, the Muslim authority in charge of holy places in indirect cooperation with Jordan. Jews were supposed to avoid the Temple Mount itself by invoking halakhic reasons, but the Mount and its surroundings remained under Israeli security control. The united Jerusalem has been extended much beyond the old city to surrounding areas; the poor treatment of the Arabs living therein, in comparison to the mushrooming Israeli neighborhoods around them, became a social-cultural trouble on top of the religious-cultural divides. Jewish worship in holy sites – prevented by Jordan until 1967 – was now allowed in the Wailing Wall area. But slowly, and more vigorously Jewish militants insisted on praying on the Temple Mount, triggering Arab violent response, to be discussed. Israel annexed the occupied Golan Heights, following Syrian and Syrian-supported acts of

guerilla warfare by Fatah and direct acts of violence by the Syrian Ba'ath regime against Israel before the 1967 War. Third, Israel allowed a few settlements to be established in and around East Jerusalem, the patriarchs' city of Hebron and on the Golan Heights. The settlements and related security measures to protect them became later on a major subject for worldwide condemnation, as obstacle for peace, yet Fatah, under Arafat, tried to use the occupied West Bank and Israeli pre-1967 territories as bases for continued guerilla warfare, declared by Israel to be acts of terror.

Khartoum, Palestinian guerillas, and the nuclear option

David Ben-Gurion, pushed now to the sideline of Israeli politics, perceived in the 1967 victories temporary, rather than decisive ones, except for East Jerusalem, which could not be divided again by Israel as it was under Arab rule. The definition of a decisive victory is rooted in its finality. For example, the end of the American Civil War which annulled the Confederacy was such a case. As was Hitler's Third Reich collapse which ended Nazism as a strategic-ideological military power. Also, Japan's endorsement of the Potsdam demands leading to its occupation and regime change.

President Johnson however was far from acknowledging the Six-Day War's victories as final. The president issued accordingly a five point program toward a resolution of the conflict with the refugee problem coming first. The resolutions of an Arab Summit convened in September 1967 in Khartoum were interpreted by Israel's grand coalition as totally negative, but a meeting between President Nasser and Robert Anderson, an American emissary could be interpreted differently:

I met today with President Nasir at 1230. He opened the conversation by saying, 'above all else, try to make clear to your government and your people that we are eager for a political settlement, for a political peace. [...] let us try to be practical and, if we all want peace, and we do, then let us find a way to settle our differences and live in peace.'¹³⁷⁰

He proposed a resolution of the UN implying five points: the principle of the right to exist of all countries of the region; free shipping in the Gulf of Aqaba and the Suez Canal; withdrawal

by Israelis of all occupied territories; an official statement of non-belligerence between Israel and Arab states; and settlement of the problem of the refugees. Later in the conversation,

[Nasir] continually links the free passage of Israeli ships through the Suez Canal with the settlement of the refugee problem. [...] Nasir said that the key point is that Israel cannot be allowed to expand, that for every Muslim nation, regardless of whether or not it borders on Israel, the consuming fear is that Israel plans territorial expansion. [...] this is one of the basic problems in trying to unite the New and the Old City of Jerusalem. It is regarded by everyone of the Muslim faith as a violation of their religious rights and as Israeli expansion.¹³⁷¹

Nasser recalled that some of the Arab states, notably Syria and Algeria, had been “very vehement”: ““You [Nasser] cannot agree to a resolution or a declaration which includes the right to live for Israel.”” He replied to this that ““we are no longer talking about Israel’s right to live. We are talking about our own right to live.””¹³⁷²

In fact, this statement would lead to Nasser’s endorsement of Security Council Resolution 242, rejected at first by Israel, and to the war of attrition along the Suez Canal soon afterwards and to Nasser’s alliance with Fatah leader Yasser Arafat. Arafat became PLO chairman with Nasser’s blessing in 1968. The ongoing war of attrition along the Canal ended with American sponsored ceasefire in September 1970, when the deceased Nasser was replaced by Anwar Sadat. “Black September” was preceded by Palestinian acts of violence on Jordanian soil that triggered King Hussein’s all-out offensive against them amid acts of Syrian intervention in their favor; this threat was neutralized by threats of Israeli counter-intervention and followed by the departure of the Palestinians from Jordan to Lebanon. The Israeli action seemed to have given Israel a status of a strategic ally of the United States in the region that could fend for itself with American military supplies. The Israeli-French military connection was now terminated. Arafat, on his side, created a PLO state within a state in Southern Lebanon and in Beirut, and launched attacks against Israel therefrom, prompting Israeli reprisals and American efforts to stop both of them.

The war of attrition and the ongoing infighting with the Palestinian organizations based in Lebanon strengthened the aspiration to peace in Israel and the criticism of the national leadership for its failure to reach peace, on top of the usual consensus about Arab behavior. “Talk to your enemy *because* he is your enemy” started to combine with imported criticism of the Vietnam War, the music of the 1960s and 1970s, with the Beatles and Led Zeppelin plus original Israeli songs of high quality stressing the longing of the individual for meaning in his or her life in a for him or her meaningless modern reality. Imported from abroad was also the “Black Panther” symbolism, adapted from the American model by Israeli migrants from Muslim countries, or rather by their siblings, who felt discriminated upon by the European elite.

The 1973 War, the nuclear factor and peace, as discussed from the 2015 viewpoint

Egypt’s and Syria’s two-front assaults in October 1973 should be understood in terms of the Superpower Détente, which seemed to have relegated the Arab-Israeli conflict to the sideline of international politics, yet promising the opening of the Soviet Union to mass Jewish immigration to Israel, including to the occupied territories. Arafat joined them by launching missiles into Northern Israel, while asking for a dialogue with the Americans, who responded that Israel’s and Jordan’s status as allies must be recognized first. The double attack took the Israelis by surprise, causing enormous losses, and seemed to be a war of destruction, which it was not. In fact the Yom Kippur War was a *limited act of war* on the verge of Sinai, and an attempt to recover the Golan Heights with no concessions by the Arabs of all colors, except for Egypt regarding the other issues demanded by Israel so far, such as direct negotiations for peace with security based on territorial guarantees, according to the Israeli interpretation of Resolution 242. The Arab states reaffirmed their position which included the Right of Return to the refugees thanks to the initial Arab success and to an extended Arab oil boycott, imposed later during the war. For his part, President Sadat informed Secretary of State and NSC Chief Henry Kissinger –

now the major American actor – that Egypt was not planning a decisive blow but postwar diplomacy in due course. The nuclear factor played a role in driving Sadat to adopt this strategy to begin with, but the Israelis feared that the Arab assaults were a war of destruction, aimed at Israel's very survival, and if initially they were not, they might deteriorate to one, since all the reserves were called up; a Syrian breakthrough on the Golan, supported by Iraqi forces and Jordanian auxiliary elements could allow the continued attack to proceed into Israel beyond the Golan. The Syrians were halted, however, and so were the Egyptians, waiting for the OAPEC oil boycott, which followed American military supplies flown to Israel, following a major Soviet supply effort shipped and flown to Egypt and Syria. The question now seemed to have become a threat to the Détente, when the IDF crossed the Suez Canal and started to encircle the Third Egyptian Army on the Israeli side. At that stage the Soviets invited Kissinger to Moscow to talks which produced Security Council Resolution 338, calling for direct negotiations between Israel and the belligerents, a peace conference and a ceasefire in the Egyptian front on October 22, 1973. The threat to the Détente and a possible superpower confrontation emerged when a Soviet vessel carrying "nuclear materials" was intercepted by the Americans on its way to Alexandria harbor. The nuclear cargo disappeared from the ship after the ceasefire of October 22, and could be classified as nuclear warheads for Soviet Scud missiles already deployed in Egypt. The ceasefire itself was broken by both sides, mainly by the IDF, which closed the ring around the Third Army on October 24, during which Security Council Resolution 339, calling for return to the October 22 lines, was supposed to be implemented. In the meantime, the Soviets asked the Americans to join them on the ground in order to relieve the siege over the Third Army – otherwise Moscow would act unilaterally. Washington responded in fact by declaring DEFCON III – World Wide Nuclear Alert; and by pushing Israel to allow entry of supplies for the besieged Third Army. Sadat agreed in the meantime to direct negotiations between military missions of both sides at Kilometer 101 of the Cairo Suez Highway. The negotiations, carried out with Kissinger's

direct involvement, including American financial and military aid to Israel and later to Egypt, led to a gradual Israeli withdrawal on the Canal front and to the promised peace conference in Geneva on December 1973. Yet two factors now intervened in the US-Israeli relations, still in effect to this day: an active American Jewish involvement in the Middle East conflict, and the rise of Soviet Jewry on its way later on to Israel. This explains the sources and development of the Arab-Palestinian conflict and peace efforts when a “peace process” was pursued by Kissinger beginning with the 101 negotiations until the Israeli-Egyptian Peace Treaty of 1979.

The 1979 peace agreement: origins and implementation

If we remember the Nasser-Anderson dialogue quoted above, and Nasser’s behavior later on until his demise, we can observe the differences between Sadat and Nasser, if we add to it the following developments leading to the Israeli-Egyptian Peace Treaty, and to its continued survival until today: first, President Sadat’s final move from Soviet dependency to an American orientation, backed up by US military and financial support, and by Kissinger’s assumption that comprehensive peace is unattainable. Only step by step withdrawals in the Sinai could lead to Egyptian political concessions formulated in terms of non-belligerence, and to the opening of the Suez Canal to Israeli shipping. In the meantime, the losses of the Yom Kippur War and public criticism of Golda Meir’s government’s alleged refusal to negotiate peace with Egypt led to the resignation of Meir and Dayan, her defense minister, and to the ascendance of Labor’s Yitzhak Rabin as PM. Rabin concluded another interim agreement with Egypt in 1975, but was forced to resign because of corruption allegation. The winner was Menachem Begin of Likud, but the big surprise was Sadat’s visit to Israel and his speech in the Knesset on November 20, 1977.

Two developments preceded this event: Jimmy Carter’s and Menachem Begin’s ascendancies, to start with. Carter adopted the Brookings Institution’s recommendations for

“Land for Peace,” a peace which was not on Kissinger’s agenda, and in Carter’s view should have revived the 1973 Geneva Peace Conference with Syria and the Soviet Union. Sadat feared that Syria, Iraq under Saddam Hussein and the PLO with Soviet support would lead the peace process to an abyss, leaving him alone while his army was in the middle of adopting American equipment with US financing, when Israel’s nuclear program and the deployment of the Jericho II Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile seemed to have made significant progress – on top of the conventional military aid given to Israel since the 1973 War and after.¹³⁷³ Now, being totally dependent on Washington, Sadat might have taken Israel by the American and its own word: Peace for Land, contractual peace, within the pre-June 1967 lines. The thorny issue of the Palestinians was transformed to autonomy limited in time, to be negotiated with Jordan or with a peace seeking PLO, or both. For Sadat a tiny Jewish entity, forced to stop its alleged expansion – when we remember Nasser’s interpretation of Israel’s behavior following the 1967 War – might be acceptable to Egypt under the circumstances of Carter’s *Diktat*. The ensuing negotiations between Sadat, Begin and Carter go beyond the scope of this discussion, but Sadat and his successor Hosni Mubarak remained obliged to the Peace Treaty of 1979, except for one thing: it remained a *cold peace*, limited to maintaining border arrangements and formalities, but nothing like the French-German rapprochement. Typical to the Israeli misunderstanding of Sadat’s and Mubarak’s peace was the expectation of Israeli officials that Egypt’s State Television would adopt a French-German bi-lingual program like *Arte*. Egypt, on the other hand, continued and still continues to demand Israel’s endorsement of NPT, justifying the continued peace with Israel thanks to its nuclear factor at the same time.¹³⁷⁴

Lebanon and the First Gulf War

The second Begin coalition, inaugurated after the 1981 general elections, was dependent on Ariel Sharon’s small fraction in the Knesset, resulting in Sharon’s appointment to minister of defense. Sharon’s grand solution to continuing PLO missiles

and other acts of belligerence inside Israel was the Israeli invasion into Lebanon which became the First Lebanon War and began on June 6, 1982. In wake of the invasion, a peace treaty between Israel and the Christian Lebanese was to be concluded; and the evacuation of the Palestinian refugees from Lebanon to Jordan would be the solution to the refugee problem in the previous Hashemite, now the Palestinian state, which should also allow the West Bank Arabs to cast their vote in elections to its institutions. Sharon's siege of Beirut and the ensuing expulsion of the PLO leaders with Arafat on top to Tunis, and a serious blow inflicted on the Syrian Air Force at the opening of the campaign were conceived by Sharon as conventional means requiring to ascertain unconventional deterrence as well. To this, Sharon added a new policy of independence from the United States as far as possible.¹³⁷⁵

Syria's presence in Lebanon and its support of the PLO and involvement in Lebanese and Palestinian politics go beyond our scope. Several developments led to the collapse of Sharon's grand design and to his resignation as minister of defense: first, the assassination of Bashir Jumaiel, the Christian-Lebanese ally of Israel by Syrian agent, and the ensuing Israeli occupation of parts of Beirut which allowed the revenge-seeking Christians to enter the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila and massacre their inhabitants, perceived to be the allies of Syria. The massacres prompted a mass demonstration in Tel Aviv against the war and Sharon personally, in which *Peace Now (Shalom Achshav)*, a new phenomenon in Israeli politics, played an important role. *Shalom Achshav* was born in March 1978, following Sadat's visit to Israel, and tried to mobilize public support for the exchange of occupied territories with peace accords. Its real influence was gained during the First Lebanon War as a protest movement related to the Yom Kippur War experience, leading to an official inquiry by an independent commission of the Begin-Sharon government's behavior during the war so far, to Sharon's demise and to the ensuing departure of a few generals. This was followed by the resignation of Menachem Begin himself, whose tiny majority in the Knesset dictated

acceptance of the Commission's appointment to begin with, and dealing with the Reagan administration's own actions following Sabra and Shatila. Unable to function under these circumstances, Begin transferred the premiership to Yitzhak Shamir of Likud pending the results of the 1984 general elections. Shamir's ensuing long tenure as PM and foreign minister goes beyond our scope here, all the way to the Oslo Peace Treaty of September 1993.

Oslo and the Intifadas

Several developments preceded the Israeli-PLO Peace Treaty, signed on September 13, 1993 in the larger Middle East arena: first, the Iran-Iraq eight-year war; the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, supported by Yasser Arafat; the ensuing Gulf coalition war of 1993, and the beginning of the demise of the Soviet Union. Exiled in Tunis, Arafat gambled on supporting Saddam Hussein's occupation of Kuwait, by itself a rather popular endeavor among Palestinians and the Arab masses. Yet the American-led coalition against Saddam, with Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria on top forced him out of Kuwait as a result of the First Gulf War (August 2, 1990–February 28, 1991). Extended to include Iraq's unconventional facilities, most if not all were destroyed by allied bombing. Saddam launched about 40 SCUD missiles onto Israel, hoping that its response would break up the coalition, but Shamir refused it. The war left the United States, with declining Soviet influence, as the dominant superpower in the region.

Deprived of Arab financing and political support, Arafat started to respond positively to private Israeli peace initiatives, endorsed by Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, which finally led to the Oslo Peace Accords with PM Rabin's reluctant consent, at first, and to his assassination later on at the hands of a religious militant. The series of agreements endorsed by President Bill Clinton require a separate discussion except for the roles of the Gibril deal and the First Intifada, Mr. Peres's New Middle East, and the emergence of *Hamas* and *Islamic Jihad* as alternatives to the PLO. One dimension of their role and control of Gaza was the Gibril deal: an exchange of 1,150

Palestinian guerillas for a few Israeli captives under the pressure of their families on May 21, 1985 by an Israeli government under Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin. The released would play a role in instigating the First Intifada in the occupied territories.

A “New Middle East” and the “end of history”?

During the initial, euphoric time of the Oslo Agreement, Foreign Minister Peres published a book entitled *A New Middle East: A Framework and Developments for the Epoch of Peace*,¹³⁷⁶ in which he connected peace to nuclear deterrence, as acquiring a deterrence capability meant acquiring a strategic deterrence which could minimize the will to make war and thus open the road to a peace process. In this spirit David Ben-Gurion had adopted the idea and a nuclear reactor, Dimona, was built, creating a “detering fog” that could drive many to long for a Middle East without nuclear weapons and consequently free of wars.

This argument was not new, and drove Peres to object to Begin’s decision to attack and destroy Saddam Hussein’s nuclear reactor Tammuz 1 in 1981, and adopt “Begin’s Doctrine,” prohibiting any nuclear program sought for by Israel’s enemies, such as Iran. Peres refrained from discussing Ben-Gurion’s and Levi Eshkol’s tribulations with Washington and its anti-proliferation crusade, and President Richard Nixon’s agreement with PM Golda Meir which recognized Israel’s status as an “undeclared nuclear power” in 1969.¹³⁷⁷ Yet the impression was created, that the First Gulf War and the decline of the Soviet Union have established the United States under President George H. W. Bush as the dominant power in the Middle East.

Francis Fukuyama’s “end of history,” the related “triumph of the West,” the unification of Germany and the destruction of the mighty Soviet Bloc could, however, be perceived by Saddam Hussein in what was left of his domain and by Syria, Iran and radical Palestinians as incentives to pursue their own ways without Russia. Even Mr. Peres was unable to foresee that a Vladimir Putin would emerge from the shadows of

history, and that George Bush Jr. would invade Iraq following September 11, 2001, as well as the Second Gulf War. At least, Mr. Bush's "War on Terror" was accompanied by the concept of the *two-state solution* to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Peres's road to the notion that peace makes war, boundaries, and old-style nationalism obsolete and thus must be replaced by regional economic cooperation following the European Community's model, was rejected by Egypt as an Israeli exercise in economic expansion, while Peres was unable to pursue it actively in a position of real power.

Netanyahu, Iran, and the two-state solution

In the meantime, Israel installed a *Separation Wall* in the West Bank, and under Sharon withdrew unilaterally from the Gaza Strip, leading to his decision to split the Likud and create a new political, centrist party, Kadima. Sharon was, however, taken ill and replaced by Ehud Olmert, who tried to negotiate a final peace agreement with Arafat, who declined his overtures. Olmert resigned following a corruption scandal. The road for Netanyahu's return was now open.

The Second Intifada (September 27, 2000 to 2003) followed a failed effort by Prime Minister Ehud Barak to reach a final deal with Yasser Arafat, who supported this outbreak of violence in connection with Barak's withdrawal from the small security zone maintained so far in Southern Lebanon. Arafat was succeeded by Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen), who opted for a non-violent, mainly political effort to isolate Israel internationally without giving up the Right of Return and a Palestinian state within the 1967 lines, thus playing into Likud's hands.

Yet so far I have avoided dealing with Likud's history after Shamir, all the way to the ascendancy of Benjamin Netanyahu as its leader in 1996. Netanyahu served as prime minister between 1996–1999, 2009–2013, and 2013–2015. The general elections of March 2015 gave him a mandate to continue as PM with a manageable coalition for the next four years. A conservative nationalist American-style politician, Netanyahu tried his best to create and maintain coalitions comprised of

many parties, the result of Israel's absolute proportional ballot system, yet invoking clear-cut, far-right arguments and obligations to give up his previous adaptation of the two-state solution, to which he returned in face of serious trouble with the Obama administration. During Netanyahu's campaign, the alleged Iranian nuclear threat and President Obama's negotiations with Iran played a role, but more so the old loyalties to the Likud legacy. Thus he was able to mobilize the support of the Israeli nationalist-religious majority, and revive the old Ashkenazi-Sephardi enmity at his favor. Netanyahu's relations with the liberal President Barack Obama were tense from the beginning, especially regarding Iran, and his view of the Palestinian leadership under Abbas was suspicious and at the same time he was obliged as far as possible to the Likud base among the settlers. His various military responses to the Hamas and Jihad challenges coming from Gaza were relatively balanced, but the worldwide condemnation thereof pushed many Israelis to perceive them as antisemitic phenomena, especially among Muslims in Europe and among students on American campuses. Dancing between these and other developments in the region, for me, and due to my emphasis upon the nuclear dimension of the Middle East conflict, Netanyahu is judged for his Iran strategy, which has succeeded in making the Ayatollah's nuclear effort subject to sanctions imposed by the great powers without Israel's own nuclear program being part of the negotiations in this regard. And yet, we must first wait for the results of the Iran negotiations and for the reaction of moderate Arab states to them. Netanyahu's responses to Hamas and Jihad challenges ended in major military operations in Gaza,¹³⁷⁸ whose effects enhanced the Obama administration's linkage between the two-state solution and the Palestinian-Israeli fruitless negotiations; among other things because of the Palestinian insistence on the Right of Return to Israel proper and its refusal to acknowledge Israel as a Jewish state; arguing that if they did, the Right of Return of the refugees may be compromised thereby. The outcome was a continued deadlock in the Israeli-Palestinian talks, and limited expansion of settlement effort.

Conclusion: Islam and the Arab Spring – back to the Mufti?

The “Arab Spring,” which began in mid-December 2010, brought at first the demise of Mubarak’s secular regime in Egypt with American blessing, which in turn allowed a takeover by the Muslim Brotherhood under Mohamed Morsi, who was replaced by General Abdul Fattah al-Sisi, heading a secular military regime. In Syria, a civil war between the secular minority regime broke out, with Putin’s Russia supporting Bashar al-Assad, who used chemical weapons against various enemies, including a local *al-Qaeda* branch. This led to Russian-American agreement to remove them and, most importantly, to the emergence of *Daesh* or *Isis* in control of the “Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.” This phenomenon raised, in my view, the issue of the reemergence of the concept of a Muslim state, offered by Haj Amin el-Husseini, who was ready at first to perceive the Palestinians as South Syrians, and later became, in his eyes, the leader of the Muslims in the whole region, thereby challenging the existing state system in the Arab world by invoking Islam as the master variable in a new Middle East. At the same time the Mufti pretended to be the leader of the Palestinian Arabs. The question is whether Haj Amin left behind a violent legacy that could be revived or whether Islam could become the essence of the new-old postulate of radicals in the region and among Muslims in Europe on its own as against the secular or less radical elements among various groups therein. A Sunni Muslim concept, Daesh filled the vacuum created by President Obama’s withdrawal from Iraq, following the ascendancy of a Shia controlled government in Baghdad, and NATO’s forthcoming withdrawal from Afghanistan. The expected reaction of Sunni Saudi Arabia and Egypt under al-Sisi, combined with the activities of Hamas and Jihad in Gaza and the West Bank to produce a policy of sealing off Gaza by Egypt, brought about a Saudi-Egyptian axis and led to a prolonged war in the vast territories in Iraq and Syria controlled by Daesh, in which Kurds and the Iraqis were supported by Western allied air strikes.

Thérèse Delpèch, a noted French strategic analyst has compared the Middle East to Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire;¹³⁷⁹ an ongoing earthquake, whose ramifications were hidden in a foreseeable future, full of terrible dangers, nuclear ones on top. Reduced to an almost simplistic formula, Delpèch's view of the Arab Spring and other contributions to its instability is rather dark, divorced as it was from the substance of Sunni Muslim religious inputs, and from the Shia contents of Iran's behavior. Other theoreticians, such as Kenneth Waltz,¹³⁸⁰ suggested a rather optimistic view of our post-Cold War realities and remarked that the bomb is an equalizer that could not be denied from a defensive Iran. The result of this is rather a continued theoretical controversy reduced to a dispute between pessimists and optimists. My contribution to this dispute is the suggestion to discuss the nuclear dimension of the Middle East conflicts within the political, cultural history thereof, which guarantees Israel's survival, as the constant master variable explaining the transformation of Israel from a tiny, conventional island in the stormy Arab ocean to a power to be reckoned with.

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68. The Two-State Solution: A Way Out of the Impasse

Asher Susser

This paper was completed in February 2015.

Introduction

As the Israeli occupation of the West Bank approaches the half-century mark, many observers would argue that the two-state solution is no longer viable. This is mainly due to the fact that Israeli settlers now number well over half-a-million, if one includes in the count the new Jewish residential quarters built in and around Jerusalem since 1967. Israeli right-wing supporters of the settlement movement claim with satisfaction, while their left-wing opponents contend with pessimistic trepidation, that the settlements are an insurmountable obstacle to the creation of a viable Palestinian state. This has increasingly become the conventional wisdom.

This article, however, will contend that the conventional wisdom is far from self-evident, despite the repeated failures of the Israelis and the Palestinians to actually produce an agreement based on two states. As difficult as it might be to achieve a historical agreement to end the conflict in two states, the alternatives, such as the “one-state solution,” or the continuation of the occupation, are immeasurably worse. In fact these are not solutions at all, but rather recipes for unspeakable bloodshed and conflict. Rather than resolving the conflict these options would undoubtedly prolong the struggle, which would eventually become a lot uglier than it has ever been.

Narratives and mistrust – the gulf between the parties

The intensity and duration of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict have created a profound sense of hostility and mistrust on both sides, exacerbated further by perceptions of historical victimhood and self-righteousness that both Israelis and Palestinians believe with great passion.

An unbridgeable abyss separates the Arab Palestinian and Zionist historical narratives. Zionism, in the widely held Jewish perspective, is a heroic project of national revival and restored dignity and self-respect. Jewish national liberation, statehood and sovereignty are the epitome of defiance and self-defense in the face of the horrific historical fate of the Jewish people. Israel's foundation in 1948, therefore, was an achievement of historical justice for the most oppressed of all peoples. The Jewish people, in their greatest victory in 2000 years, had literally risen from the ashes of horrendous destruction to victory and political independence within the space of just three years, from the end of the Second World War in 1945 to 1948.

For the Palestinians the complete opposite is true. The narratives do not just differ. They are absolutely and irreconcilably opposed to one another. Zionism, in the Palestinian view, is not about self-defense or justice. It is all about aggression from the first Jewish settlement in Palestine, but especially as of the 1917 Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate established after the First World War, against the wishes of the local Arab population. The memory of the Palestinian *Nakba* or catastrophic defeat at the hands of the Israelis in 1948, the loss of their homeland, their dispersal and refugeedom are at the core of the Palestinian collective identity and their self-perception of victimhood. This is the Palestinian formative collective experience and the very essence of Palestinianness. Aptly put by the American-Palestinian historian, Beshara Doumani: The “shared memories of the traumatic uprooting of their society and the experiences of being dispossessed, displaced, and stateless” were to “come to define ‘Palestinian-ness.’”¹³⁸¹

Palestinianness carries within it a profound sense of historical injustice into which the Palestinian people were born. For the Palestinians, therefore, the independence of

Israel is their disaster “*yawm istiqlaliquim yawm nakbatina*” (‘your Independence Day is the Day of our Catastrophe’).¹³⁸² The Palestinians yearn to turn the clock of history back and reverse the consequences of Israel’s creation in 1948 and of its expansion in 1967. Israelis, therefore, live in a world of perpetual uncertainty concerning long-term Arab objectives. Do the Arabs intend to put an end to Israel’s occupation of Arab territories in the War of 1967, or do they still really aspire to put an end to Israel itself?

Israelis are not sure of Arab intentions and are forever preoccupied with security (checkpoints, fences, “iron domes” and occupation, and even a nuclear option). For the Arabs this only means more Israeli aggressive hegemonic design that provokes Arab distrust of Israeli intentions and discourages any serious thought or discussion of genuine reconciliation or normalization. The Palestinians argue that Israeli security requirements in the West Bank are actually part of an inbred “occupation mentality” (*’aqaliyyat al-ihtilal*) of the Israelis, rather than a real defensive need. The Arab unwillingness to normalize with Israel, in turn, only serves to reinforce Israeli insecurity, and thus the security/hegemony vicious circle of mistrust is virtually cast in stone.

Diplomatic failure

But one could still ask why an agreement with the Palestinians was so difficult to obtain even though Israel did succeed in making peace with two key Arab states, Egypt and Jordan. The answer to that question lies in the fact that the conflicts between Israel and the Arab states and between Israel and the Palestinians differ in their fundamentals. In the conflict with the Arab states the issues on the table relate to the conquests made by Israel in 1967. On the basis of UN Security Council Resolution 242 from November 1967 the Arab states that had lost territory in the war with Israel – Egypt, Syria, and Jordan – were entitled to retrieve their territory in exchange for peace with Israel, that is, the “land for peace” formula. Indeed, Egypt and Jordan (after the kingdom disengaged from the West Bank in 1988) made their peace with Israel on that basis and Israel

and Syria were very close to doing the same in the 1990s. Both in theory and in practice the Arab states that border on Israel, ever since 1967, have made demands on Israel that relate solely to the “1967 file,” that is, to Israel’s territorial expansion in 1967 and not to Israel’s existence, as of 1948.

The Palestinian-Israeli dimension of the conflict is very different. Here there are clearly two sets of issues: the 1967 file, which includes matters relating to the 1967 Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, such as settlements, borders, and Jerusalem. Then there is the 1948 file in which there are two critical questions raised by the Palestinians in the name of historical justice, both of which go beyond the 1967 occupation. Moreover, these questions relate to the very existential core of Israel’s being as the nation-state of the Jewish people. One is the issue of the “right of return” of the 1948 refugees and their descendants to their original homes that are now situated in what has become Israel. The other is the rejection of Israel’s definition as the nation-state of the Jewish people, which many of Israel’s Palestinian citizens strongly resent as exclusionary, denying them full equality. Both of these positions are seen by most Israeli Jews as designed to undermine their national ethos. They conflict with the inherent right of the Jewish people to self-determination in a state of their own, the *raison d’être* of over a century of struggle since the beginnings of the Zionist movement in the late 19th century.

From the Palestinian point of view Security Council Resolution 242 of November 1967 was essentially deficient. The Palestinians and Palestine are not mentioned in the resolution. The resolution was intended as a basis for negotiations between Israel and the Arab states from which Israel had occupied territory in the war of June that year. The Palestinians, not yet recognized as autonomous players in the conflict, were not even referred to in the rather minimalistic reference to a just resolution of the refugee question. Indeed the resolution was designed to deal with the 1967 file as part of the interstate conflict between Israel and the neighboring Arab states. The Palestinian dimension was to be dealt with in Israel’s negotiations with Jordan. Resolution 242 was about

1967 and not 1948. It therefore took many years for the PLO to accept the resolution and it never really did so fully and unequivocally. The resolution was eventually accepted by the Palestinian National Council, the PLO's quasi-parliamentary body, only in 1988, and even then the acceptance had various caveats and reservations.

The Oslo Accords were based specifically on Resolution 242. What one could call "the Oslo dynamic" seemed to be narrowing the Palestinian issue down to the 1967 dimensions of the West Bank and Gaza. The Palestinian Authority (PA) established under the auspices of the Oslo Accords virtually inherited the PLO. The PLO continued to exist as the supreme Palestinian political authority, even though it had become an empty shell in practice. The PA had two important elected institutions, the Presidency and the Legislative Assembly. Both of these were elected solely by the people of the West Bank and Gaza, and thus, as opposed to the PLO that represented all Palestinians everywhere, in Palestine and in the diaspora, the PA only represented the people of the West Bank and Gaza. The limited representation institutionalized the process whereby the question of Palestine was being reduced to the two-state dimensions of the West Bank and Gaza, placing the issue of the diaspora and refugee return very much on the political backburner, or at least so it seemed from the Israeli perspective.

Moreover, it was on the basis of this understanding that the Israelis sought a formal trade-off to end the conflict. Israel would make what it believed were generous concessions on territory, settlements and Jerusalem, the key components of the 1967 file, in exchange for closure of the 1948 file. This meant that the Palestinians would rescind their demand for refugee return to Israel proper, and instead would have refugees be compensated and returned to the future state of Palestine, or resettled elsewhere. However, this trade-off never materialized. The Camp David Summit convened by US President Clinton in the summer of 2000 to achieve an agreement on this basis ended in failure.

The negotiations between Israel and the PA that began in July 2000 at Camp David and continued at various venues

ended in January 2001 at Taba in Egypt. Despite the Second Intifada that raged in the West Bank and Gaza from the end of September 2000 the Israelis and the Palestinians continued to negotiate, but agreement remained elusive. There was progress on some issues and profound disagreement on others. On territory Israel started with an offer to withdraw from some 80% of the West Bank and Gaza which was increased by the last round of the negotiations to over 90%, with land swaps to compensate for some of the rest.¹³⁸³

On Jerusalem the parties agreed in principle to divide the city on an ethnic basis, which meant that Jewish residential areas, including those established after 1967, would remain part of Israel's capital. Arab residential areas would become part of the future capital of Palestine. Deep differences remained on the issue of sovereignty over the Temple Mount/al-Haram al-Sharif. The Palestinians demanded that the area be solely under Palestinian sovereignty, a demand that Israel would not accept, considering that the Temple Mount was the most important of holy sites to the Jewish people. Various formulae for sharing sovereignty were not accepted by the parties either. On the question of the Palestinian refugees' "right of return" no real progress was made at all throughout the negotiations.

At the root of the discord were the different points of departure of the parties concerned, as clearly reflected in the divergent perceptions of the territorial issue. Israel proposed what it believed to be a generous compromise, offering more than any government had done before. The rejection of the offer by the Palestinians as insufficient was seen by the Israelis as a rigid "all or nothing approach." But the Palestinians argued that Israel already possessed 78% of historical Palestine, that is, post-1948 Israel. All that was being negotiated now were the mere 22% that remained, and on that, the Palestinians contended, they would not and could not compromise. For the Israelis the starting point of the negotiation was in 1967, but for the Palestinians it was in 1948.

Israel's demand for finality on the basis of the 1967 issues was fundamentally unacceptable to the Palestinians, and as

apparent as this was on territorial matters it was all the more so on the refugee question. The issue of Palestinian refugee return is governed by UN General Assembly Resolution 194 of December 1948. As for the Palestinians, the resolution is interpreted as confirming the unequivocal and absolute right of the refugees to return to their original homes and properties. Israel has never interpreted the resolution as conferring such an absolute “right of return” and demands that it reserve its own sovereign right to determine who does or does not enter its territory.

Essentially Israel sought to include or contain the refugee question and Resolution 194 within the framework of Resolution 242, that is, within the territorial limits of the West Bank and Gaza, or the 1967 file. According to Israeli logic, refugee return ought to be to the future state of Palestine and not to Israel. But for the Palestinians refugee return according to Resolution 194 had to be added to Resolution 242 and not contained within it, which meant refugee return to Israel proper and not to the West Bank and Gaza. After all, the Palestinians explained, the refugees did not originally come from the West Bank and Gaza but from what was now Israel proper. The refugee question could therefore not be subsumed in the 1967 file. It belonged to the 1948 file and had to be treated accordingly.

This did not mean that the Palestinians realistically expected or demanded that millions of refugees inundate Israel. But to obtain some sense of justice there had to be an element of refugee return to Israel proper. The number, to be agreed, also had to be large enough to allow the Palestinian refugees a real freedom of choice. The Israelis, the Palestinians argued, were solely responsible for the creation of the refugee problem in the first place and it could not therefore be the Israelis to decide who would return. Israel had to recognize the principle of the “right of return” and accept individual free Palestinian choice on the implementation of this right.

In the “Clinton Parameters” of December 2000, in which the US president summed up his understanding of the contours of a possible settlement between Israel and the Palestinians,

his proposal on the refugees demonstrated a clear preference for refugee return to the future state of Palestine rather than to Israel proper. It was this part of the Clinton Parameters that was most scathingly criticized by the Palestinian leadership, focusing their complaint especially on the denial of Palestinian freedom of choice on refugee return.¹³⁸⁴

For the Israelis the right of refugee return was seen as a form of subversion of the very *raison d'être* of Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people. As relations between the Jewish majority and the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel deteriorated, especially following the unprecedented anti-government riots, in October 2000, in various parts of the country in solidarity with the Second Palestinian Intifada, the idea of anything more than a symbolic return of refugees became increasingly unacceptable to the great majority of Israelis. In the last round of serious negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians in 2007–2008, between the Ehud Olmert government and the PA, progress was made on some territorial matters, but on refugees the gulf between the parties remained as wide as ever.

The “one-state non-solution”¹³⁸⁵

As the Oslo process faltered in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and as the South African model acquired the image of an enduring success, the one-state discourse began to gain public prominence. The apparently insurmountable obstacles to a two-state solution gave rise to an increasing tendency to opt for the one-state alternative. The one-state proposal as discussed in various forums in the international arena meant undoing Israel as presently constituted, as the nation-state of the Jewish people, in favor of what in theory was supposed to be a single binational or nonethnic civic nation-state, shared by all. As others have already pointed out, this was not an alternative *for* Israel, but an alternative *to* Israel.¹³⁸⁶

Herein lay what was perhaps the most deeply flawed assumption of the one-state protagonists. While the Israelis could not be convinced to give up the occupied West Bank, the solution, so the one-state protagonists argued, lay in

persuading the Israelis to completely forego their national rights and give up their country altogether. The one-state solution meant the creation of a state that would most probably have an Arab majority within a short time. Considering the almost equilibrium in population that already exists in all of historical Palestine/Eretz Yisrael, Arab natural increase and a significant measure of Palestinian refugee return, such an outcome was almost a foregone conclusion. Israel would therefore “cease to be a ‘Jewish State’ in the sense commonly understood by most people today.”¹³⁸⁷ Though these very same advocates contended that the Palestinians could hardly be expected to allow their national aspirations to “somehow evaporate,”¹³⁸⁸ they seemed to assume that the Israelis should and would do just that.

The one-state notion, in the eyes of its advocates, was a workable solution. It would be governed by an “inclusive vision” and would rest on “common values.” The power of government would be exercised with “rigorous impartiality” in a state that would be Jewish and Palestinian “equally, simultaneously, and without contradiction.” Freedom of religion would be guaranteed, and the state would actively foster “economic opportunity, social justice and a dignified life for all.”¹³⁸⁹

How this idyllic reality would actually come into being has never been explained. Very few states of such perfection exist anywhere at all, and there are none in the Middle East. It boggles the mind to project such utopian visions at a time when much of the Middle East has descended into self-destructive sectarian and/ or tribal civil war, where some religious minorities are even threatened with extinction. Not to mention Palestinian society where Fatah and Hamas have failed to establish an “inclusive vision” even between themselves, never mind the Jews.

Abba Eban, Israel’s former foreign minister, once commented that “not for a single minute in a day do the [...] Palestinians and the Israelis share a common memory, sentiment, experience or aspiration.”¹³⁹⁰ Expecting the Israeli Jews and the Palestinians to live happily ever after in one state

after over a century of vicious conflict, including in their most recent past, was fanciful to say the least. In the scheme of the more hostile one-state advocates, the Israeli Jews, after having had their state undone, would become a defenseless minority that would finally be beaten into submission. After all, it was the power of the Israeli state that had heretofore proved to be the insurmountable obstacle. Once the Israelis no longer possessed their majoritarian state, as a defenseless minority they would not stand a chance. That was a road that would not be taken voluntarily by Jewish Israelis of any stripe, including the far left.

Israel, as an ethnic nation-state, the one-staters argued, was anachronistic and/ or obsolete. But, as Omer Bartov, a prominent Israeli historian, has shown, the one-state advocates were reading history backwards. Modern-day Poland and Serbia, for example, both based on a view of unity of nation and state, would in their minds be anachronistic like Israel. On the other hand, interwar Poland with its multi-ethnic composition, rife with conflict, or Yugoslavia, which broke up in a sea of bloodshed, were supposed to be the enlightened examples that Israel was expected to follow. The idea of a binational state was absurd, Bartov concluded.¹³⁹¹ Or as Shlomo Avineri, a renowned Israeli political scientist, observed: “nowhere in the world has a conflict between two national movements been resolved by squeezing” the two of them “holding each other’s throats, into the boiling pot of a bi-national state.”¹³⁹²

Recent trends throughout Europe also ran counter to the one-state argument. Following the domino-like collapse in the 1990s of multinational structures like the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia it had to be recognized that the desire of peoples to find a place under the sun for their culture, language and history, and to “feel at home” were all major components of the human experience.¹³⁹³ As Shlomo Avineri concluded, if Czechs and Slovaks in Czechoslovakia and Flemings and Walloons in Belgium, who had never fought each other but had different cultures and different historical memories, could not, or had great difficulty, in coexisting in one state, then one had to be “blind, ignorant, thoroughly

insensitive, or all three” to think that Jews and Palestinians, after so many years of bloodshed, would be able to solve their problems and maintain a democratic way of life after being forced into a single political cauldron.¹³⁹⁴

As for the South African model, which for the one-state advocates was the ideal prototype, it had very little in common with Israel/Palestine if anything at all. In South Africa there never was a two-state option or a two-state reality. Blacks and whites were totally interdependent economically. The prospect of a two-state solution was never even considered during the negotiations to end apartheid and to transfer power to African rule. The abolition of apartheid did not require the dissolution of an existing state but the repeal of apartheid legislation, while the institutions of the state, the civil service, the police and the military and the court system all remained in place as the cornerstones of the new regime.

In South Africa it was not as if the whites preferred a one-state option to the two-state paradigm. There was no realistic two-state alternative to begin with. The overwhelming majority of Afrikaners supported the one-state solution, as there was no other and their survival depended on the creation of a new South Africa. The vast majority of Jewish Israelis, however, is firmly convinced of quite the opposite – that a one-state “solution” would be a mortal threat to their community. In their mind there is a preferable and viable alternative, the independent State of Israel, which has been in existence for nearly 70 years, and which the one-staters seek to dissolve.

As opposed to the situation in Palestine/Eretz Yisrael, in South Africa the struggle of the African National Congress (ANC) against apartheid recognized the economic interdependence with the white minority and never called for its expulsion or annihilation. Nelson Mandela paid tribute to the Afrikaner nation and their struggle against British imperialism. He also made a point of accepting the Afrikaners not as settlers but as indigenous Africans.¹³⁹⁵ As a rule the ANC armed struggle deliberately did not target white civilians,

in order to reassure the white minority of the peaceful and cooperative character of future black majority rule.

None of this was ever true of the Palestinian struggle against Zionism. Generally the Palestinian national movement systematically refrained from any recognition of Zionist legitimacy. In the early 2000s the Palestinian armed struggle peaked with the suicide bombings inside Israel, deliberately designed to kill as many civilians as possible. The Hamas Charter unabashedly exposes the organization's genocidal intent against Jews. As Benjamin Pogrund, a former South African newspaper editor and anti-apartheid activist, has pointed out, "[t]here was nothing remotely like this in apartheid South Africa: Blacks did not do this [bombings of civilians] and the psyche of the whites did not suffer the trauma and the memories of the Israelis."¹³⁹⁶ Indeed, not only was the South African case dissimilar to Israel/ Palestine, it was in many ways the complete reverse.

Two states, we are told repeatedly by the one-staters, were simply no longer realistic. But they are overstating their case. The two-state idea is still more acceptable to all the inheritors of British Mandatory Palestine, Israelis, Palestinians, and Jordanians, than any other solution. Two states were not the ideal for any of the protagonists. In their heart of hearts they would probably prefer their enemies to disappear. But the two-state solution was still the most widely accepted, if not as the ideal, then as the most practical and the lesser-of-all-evil.

In recent years the Israeli right has also produced a variety of one-state advocates. But by and large their vision looks like a version of old-fashioned apartheid and would not be accepted by the Palestinians or the international community. Many and possibly most Israelis would probably not be able to live with it either. These Israelis of the right envision an annexation of some 60% of the West Bank to Israel which would leave only about 10% of historical Palestine to the Palestinians. The Palestinians would live under some form of political autonomy with voting rights to a non-sovereign Palestinian parliament, or alternatively with voting rights to the Jordanian parliament. Needless to say, there is not the slightest chance that the Palestinians or the Jordanians would

acquiesce in such an arrangement. Some of these Israeli one-staters speak of eventual Israeli citizenship for these Palestinians at some vague distant moment in the future, probably after generations. But that was an empty gesture to dodge the issue in the meantime and to continue to disenfranchise the Palestinians of the West Bank in practice.

The road to two states – the course of “coordinated unilateralism”

With negotiations on a two-state solution deadlocked, and the one-state option an undesirable and/or improbable solution, there would seem to be no alternative to the debilitating status quo. But that was not really the case. The PA made a persistent and concerted effort to preserve the two-state option by obtaining international recognition for a Palestinian state within the 1967 boundaries, despite the continuing Israeli occupation and settlement activity.

In the summer of 2009 Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad unveiled a government program, “Palestine: Ending the Occupation, Establishing the State.” The program was designed to establish the institutions of a *de facto* Palestinian state, irrespective of the stalled negotiations with Israel and to free the Palestinian state-in-the-making from economic dependence on Israel, by mid-2011.¹³⁹⁷ Simultaneously with the state-building process, the PA envisaged an approach to the UN Security Council to pass a resolution that would endorse “the establishment of a Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, on the 4 June 1967 border.” The Security Council had already endorsed the idea of a Palestinian state, but the PA was seeking a specific delineation of the state’s frontiers by the Council along the 1967 lines. Moreover, the PA also sought the inclusion in this resolution of a call for a just solution of the Palestinian refugee issue “in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 194.” If and when such a Security Council resolution were passed the Palestinians intended to seek recognition of Palestine as a member state of the United Nations.¹³⁹⁸

In practice the Palestinians were seeking an “international imposition of [the] final status solution” on Israel. This Palestinian unilateralism was designed to force Israel into final negotiations on Palestinian statehood with the international community firmly committed to the Palestinian desiderata. Or alternatively the Palestinians hoped to at least gain international recognition of Palestinian rights to statehood and sovereignty without having to obtain any Israeli consent.¹³⁹⁹

Until Fayyad resigned from office in April 2013 his plan was moderately successful. Palestinian security forces achieved an unprecedented level of law and order in the West Bank and security cooperation with Israel was generally good. Fayyad had also made progress in introducing transparency and accountability in the PA’s rather chaotic finances.¹⁴⁰⁰ But dependence on Israel remained high in all spheres. Unilateral attempts to obtain international recognition often led to Israeli retaliation in the form of withholding Palestinian tax revenues collected for the PA by Israel, which added to the ongoing financial crisis in the PA.

All the same, in the international arena, important, albeit symbolic achievements were made in the sphere of recognition. Repeated Palestinian attempts to obtain the desired Security Council resolution failed. But in November 2012 the UN General Assembly passed a resolution by an overwhelming majority of 138 to 9¹⁴⁰¹ (with 41 abstentions) reaffirming the “right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to independence in their State of Palestine on the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967” and according to Palestine “non-member observer State status in the United Nations.”¹⁴⁰²

At the end of 2014, a Palestinian attempt to obtain a resolution from the Security Council setting a deadline for an Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 lines by the end of 2017, ended in failure. But, at the same time, the Swedish government recognized Palestinian statehood as did the European Parliament, and a number of European parliaments, including those of France, Britain, Spain, Ireland, and Portugal urged their governments to recognize Palestinian statehood. Palestine

also joined the International Criminal Court. Clearly, international recognition of Palestine along the 1967 lines was gaining ground, as patience with Israel's occupation seemed to be running out, especially in Europe, but also to a certain degree in the United States.

These were years of right-wing governments in Israel. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu delivered a groundbreaking speech in June 2009 on his acceptance of the two-state solution. Israel, he said, did not want to rule over the Palestinians. If Israel would obtain a guarantee of demilitarization of the Palestinian state and if the Palestinians recognized Israel as the Jewish state, Israel would be ready to accept two states living side by side in peace.¹⁴⁰³ Netanyahu thereby ostensibly committed his own Likud party, the leading party of the ideological right, to the two-state idea. He followed through by repeatedly declaring that a binational state was dangerous and undesirable for Israel.¹⁴⁰⁴ Yet, at the same time, he did very little to make the two-state idea a reality by outlining and implementing a corresponding policy. Moreover, Netanyahu allowed for continued Israeli settlement in the West Bank, creating the impression that his commitment to two states was disingenuous.

As the political stalemate continued Israeli confidence in a negotiated settlement with the Palestinians declined, even in the ranks of the Israeli center and left. Unilateralism as an alternative strategy regained currency in the internal debate, particularly out of fear for Israel's Jewish and democratic character, if the occupation of the West Bank was not brought to an end. Israel had withdrawn unilaterally from South Lebanon in 2000 and from the Gaza Strip in 2005. In both cases peace did not follow. War erupted with Hezbollah in South Lebanon in the summer of 2006 and since 2005 there have been three rounds of serious fighting between Israel and Hamas (that took over Gaza after the Israeli withdrawal in 2007) in 2009, 2012, and most recently in the summer of 2014. Unilateralism rapidly lost its appeal to the disillusioned majority of the Israeli public.

At the same time, however, no serious consideration was given to the reoccupation of these territories even when renewed fighting provided the opportunity to do so. Israel sought alternative forms of self-defense to the occupation and control of large Arab populations, certainly in areas that were more distant from Israel's main urban centers and were also of no particular religious and/ or historical significance. South Lebanon and Gaza, were therefore of considerably less importance than the West Bank. The West Bank was situated in immediate proximity to Israel's coastal plain, by far the country's largest concentration of population and industrial, cultural, scientific and educational infrastructure. Moreover, the West Bank was biblical Judea and Samaria and thus an ideological and emotional issue for the Israeli right, especially the religious right.

Israel faced a real dilemma. The continued occupation of the West Bank provided a critical security asset for the defense of the coastal plain and the bulk of Israel's population. At the same time, however, it placed Israel on the slippery slope toward a one-state reality, which could entirely undermine the long-term survivability of Israel and its *raison d'être*, as the democratic nation-state of the Jewish people and as a legitimate member of the family of nations. In the center and left of the Israeli body politic there was a growing anxiety about the potential effects of the continued occupation on Israel's long-term well-being. Even Netanyahu, as already noted, expressed his opposition to the idea of a single binational state.

There was, therefore, increasing interest and support in the Israeli center-left in a revived Israeli initiative to extricate the country from the occupation, albeit unilaterally, in the event that negotiations with the Palestinians remain deadlocked. Ideally representative of this trend were the policy recommendations of the most important and influential of strategic think tanks in Israel, the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS). In April 2013, an INSS working group headed by Gilead Sher, formerly chief negotiator with the Palestinians on behalf of Prime Minister Ehud Barak, proposed that in circumstances of stalemate Israel had to

prepare for a gradual disengagement from the Palestinians. This was intended to shape the borders of Israel, in coordination with the United States and the broader international community, by withdrawing in phases from the great majority of the West Bank and thereby allowing for the eventual emergence of a contiguous Palestinian state.¹⁴⁰⁵ This was by no means the view of a marginal few. Similar views were held in various quarters of the Israeli political and intellectual elite.

Such a phased withdrawal would mean gradually removing the more isolated settlements and illegal outposts beyond the major settlement blocs (which housed about 75% of the settlers, but occupied less than 10% of the West Bank) and the evacuation of about 100,000 settlers. This would obviously be a difficult undertaking for any Israeli government, but the assumption that some make that this was an impossible task, should not be accepted without question.

First, Israel has already removed all its settlements in Gaza, and some in the West Bank too. True, the previous evacuation involved only about 10,000 settlers, but it was done, even in the face of considerable opposition. Second, about half the settlers are children and not all settlers are violent ideologues, who would resist evacuation by force. Alternative housing and compensation could satisfy many of the settlers who were initially motivated by financial stress rather than ideological preference. Third, there is a possibility that arrangements could be made for some settlers to remain as citizens in the future state of Palestine. Fourth, in a democratic Israel, the notion that a small radical minority (less than 2% of the Jewish population), and elected by no one, should determine the fate of the other six million Jewish Israelis, by the implied threat of violence, is totally unacceptable, in principle. The struggle in this case was not just about the settlements, but about Israel's democratic soul.

“Coordinated unilateralism,” (including coordination with the PA in implementation as far as was practically possible) would not resolve all outstanding issues. Questions like final borders, Jerusalem and refugees would have to be negotiated at some time in the future. This would, therefore, not yet be

the much-desired two-state solution. But it would reverse Israel's settlement project that went beyond the major blocs of settlement (that are mostly accepted by the Palestinians, as becoming part of Israel in the future, if compensated for by land swaps with Israel), it would revive the two-state dynamic by creating a two-state reality, and thus also prevent the inadvertent gravitation toward the "one-state non-solution," from whence there might be no return. Serious Israeli and international efforts to simultaneously bolster the economy of the Palestinian territories in both Gaza and the West Bank may make Israeli unilateral actions more easily acceptable to the Palestinians.

As one astute Israeli observer put it: "Instead of allowing such issues as the refugees and the status of Jerusalem to delay the establishment of a Palestinian state [such a provisional arrangement] would constitute a major step toward ending the occupation, fundamentally reconfigure the conflict, and make prospects for a final-status agreement far brighter than ever before."¹⁴⁰⁶

In such a process of coordinated unilateralism the Palestinians could advance their unilateral project of state-building and the achievement of international recognition, undisturbed by the Israelis, and the Israelis could proceed to redeploy in the West Bank as they saw fit. This would not entail "concessions on vital rights or points of principle." Both sides, in theory, could engage in "parallel unilateralism" whereby Israelis might withdraw unilaterally from certain areas, without concessions on other issues of principle like refugees, for example, and the Palestinians could develop their institutions of statehood, without the shackles of Israeli preconditions. This could be the "only temporary, if as yet fuzzy, way out," an idea proffered by the Palestinian intellectual Ahmad Khalidi a decade ago, in 2005.¹⁴⁰⁷

Conclusion

Coordinated unilateralism would create a new reality on the ground without any written agreements. While this had the disadvantage of not providing an official end to the conflict, it

would have the advantage of enabling the parties to make significant progress without having to sign away “historical rights” that a negotiated formal agreement would require. The temporary and provisional nature of the process would make it easier for the leaderships on both sides to face their publics on issues relating to their respective historical narratives. It was actually this lack of finality that would allow the parties to concede on their great historical principles, without actually appearing to have done so, precisely because the concession would be neither final nor theoretically irreversible. Some critical issues would remain unresolved for the meantime, but if anything has been learnt from the last 20 years, it is that the effort to resolve all the problems at once has left the parties with nothing. Half a loaf is better than none.

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Glossary

Agudat Israel: Ultra-Orthodox non-Zionist party

Akkedah: the binding of Isaac by his father Abraham

Aliyah: Jewish immigration to Israel

Aliyah lakarka: lit. 'ascent to the land'; rural Jewish settling in Palestine/Israel

Am Yisrael: the People of Israel

Ashkenazim: Jews originating from Europe and Yiddish culture

Athalta degeula: the religious notion of "the beginning of Redemption"

Beitar: Jewish right-wing Zionist youth movement

Bnei Akiva: Jewish religious-Zionist youth movement

Brit-Habiryonim: a far-right Zionist association of the 1930s

Brit Milah: ritual circumcision

Brit Shalom (Union for Peace): a group of Jewish intellectuals in Mandatory Palestine, founded in 1925, which sought a peaceful coexistence between Arabs and Jews

Eretz Yisrael: Hebrew traditional naming of the Land of Israel

Etzel (or Irgun): right-wing Jewish underground which fought against the British in Palestine

Ezra: a Jewish religious-Zionist youth movement

Falash Mura: people originating from Ethiopian Jewry who converted to Christianity

Falashas: Jews from Ethiopia

Fatah: acronym for the Palestinian National Liberation Movement; it constitutes the largest faction of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)

Gadna: an Israeli pre-military framework for youngsters

Gahal: a political alignment grouping the rightist Herut and right-wing Liberals (1965–1973)

Galut: Hebrew term for Exile

Gdolei Hatorah: the Sages of the Torah

Gemara: a division of the Talmud

Get: Jewish divorce

Geula: Redemption, in terms of Messianic age

Geulat Hakarka: the settling of Jews in Palestine/Israel as "Redemption of the Land"

Goy, pl. Goyim: non-Jew

Gush Emunim: lit. 'Block of the Faithful'; a religious Zionist settlement movement in the Occupied Territories (West Bank)

HaBayit Hayehudi: religious Zionist party, successor of the National Religious party (Mafdal)

Hagana: Zionist paramilitary underground organization founded in 1920 to defend Jewish settlements in Palestine; it later constituted a major component of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF)

Halakha: Talmudic laws

Halutz, pl. Halutzim: pioneer

Hamas: Palestinian Islamic fundamentalist organization; has been the governing authority of the Gaza Strip since 2007

Hametz: items of forbidden food during Passover

Hamulla: Arabic for extended family

Hardal, pl. Hardalim: Religious-Zionist close to the ultra-Orthodox

Haredi, pl. Haredim: ultra-Orthodox Jew

Hashomer Hatzair: left-wing Zionist youth movement and political organization

Haskala: Enlightenment era (in reference to Jewish culture)

Hassid, pl. Hassidim: members of a faction of ultra-Orthodox Jews that originated in Eastern Europe in the second half of the 18th century and constitute today the predominant component of ultra-Orthodoxy

Hatzav: lit. 'drimia'; it also designates a special intelligence unit in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF)

Herut: right-wing Zionist party that was the main component of the Likud created in 1973

Hezbollah: Shia Islamist militant group and political party based in Lebanon

Histadrut: the general trade-union confederation in Israel

Intifada: Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation

Irgun: right-wing Jewish underground organization which fought against the British in Palestine

Judea and Samaria: respectively the Southern and Northern parts of the West Bank

Kabbala: Jewish religious mysticism

Kach: a Jewish extremist right-wing militant group headed by Meir Kahane

Kadima: a centrist Israeli party

Kahane Chai: an organization claiming to perpetuate Kach

Kashrut: Jewish dietary rules

Kehila, pl. kehilot: Hebrew term for Jewish community

Keren Hayesod: lit. 'the Foundation Fund'; United Israel Appeal, it is the official fundraising organization for Israel the world over

Ketuba: the groom's document of commitment to his bride, on the Jewish wedding ceremony

Kibbutz, pl. kibbutzim: collective settlement in Palestine/Israel

Kibbutz Galuyot: the ingathering of Jews in the Land of Israel

Klal Yisrael: lit. 'the whole of Israel'; the world commonwealth of the Jewish People

Knesset: the Israeli Parliament

Kollel, pl. kollelim: school for Jewish religious higher learning for married men

Kol Nidrei: the prayer for atonement on Yom Kippur

Kosher: the predicate for Kashrut

Lehi: a split of the Irgun that formed a group of its own

Likud: right-wing Zionist Israeli party formed in 1973

Ma'achaz, pl. ma'achazim: an outpost settled in view of the creation of a permanent site

Ma'amad Har Sinai: the event, on Mount Sinai, of the reception of the Torah by Am Yisrael

Ma'arach: an alignment of left-of-the-center parties that preceded the formation of the Israeli Labor Party (Avoda)

Mafdal: the National-Religious party of Israel

Mahapach: the political upheaval that marked the end of the longstanding rule of the Zionist socialist parties (1977)

Mapai: the left-of-the-center ruling party of Israel since its foundation in 1948 and up to 1968; it then remained in power, as Avoda, after uniting with other factions, till 1977

Mapam: a left-wing Zionist party which joined other leftist groups in 1997 to form Meretz

Mekubbal: scholar who studies the Kabbala

Midrash: the body of exegesis of Torah texts and Talmudic (Mishnaic) rulings along with homiletic stories

Millet system: a system in vigor in Muslim states according to which Jews and Christians constitute tolerated minorities

Minyan: a group of at least ten Jewish men who pray together

Mishna: a division of the Talmud (rulings)

Mitzvah, pl. mitzvot: Divine commandment

Mizrahim: Jews originating mostly from the Muslim world who have neither shared the European-Yiddish legacy (Ashkenazim) nor the Spanish-Jewish one (Sephardim)

Mizug Hagaluyot: the fusion of Diaspora Jews in Israel

Moshav, pl. moshavim: cooperative settlement in Palestine/Israel

Mossad: lit. 'institution'; used to designate the Israeli Intelligence Agency

Nakba: lit. 'catastrophe'; Palestinians' definition of the creation of Israel and their exodus from the corresponding part of Palestine

Neturei Karta: lit. 'Guardians of the City'; an ultra-Orthodox anti-Zionist faction founded in 1938 by splitting from mainstream ultra-Orthodoxy

Olam Haba: the world after death

Oleh, pl. Olim: Hebrew term for a Jew who immigrates to Israel

Palmach: commando units of the Hagana, the armed forces of the Yishuv

Psulei hitun: individuals who are forbidden to marry according to Jewish traditional law

Rosh Hashana: the Jewish New Year

Sabra: Jew born in Palestine/Israel

Seder: family ritual meal for Passover

Sephardim: Jews originating from Spain who conveyed their own Jewish Sephardic legacy; often used to designate Mizrahim

Shalom Achshav (Peace Now): a non-governmental organization, active in Israel with the aim of promoting a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Shalosh Hashvu'ot: lit. 'the three oaths'; refers to an interpretation of the Scriptures by some scholars as forbidding organized return of the Jews to the Land of Israel and rebelling against the Nations, and ordering the Nations not to oppress the People of Israel "too much"

Shas: ultra-Orthodox party of Mizrahi Jews

Shekhina: Divine presence to men

Shoah: lit. 'catastrophe'; Jewish Holocaust; the genocide of Jews perpetrated by the Nazis during the 1940s

Shofar: musical instrument made of a horn, traditionally that of a ram, used for Jewish rituals

Sukkot: Biblical Feast of Tabernacle which marks the end of the harvest time

Taglit: a one-week study trip to Israel for youngsters from the Diaspora including lectures and excursions in the country, financed by the World Jewish Agency (*Sochnut*)

Talmud: the central text of Rabbinical Judaism which codified the Oral Torah in writing

Tefillin: phylacteries consisting of two small boxes containing scrolls of verses from the Torah worn by observant Jews during weekday morning prayers

Tikkun or Tikkun Olam: lit. 'repairing' or 'world repairing'; for the kabbalist this notion refers to the Jews' obligation to correct the world by religious mystical learning and understanding

Tohar midot: virtuous behavior

Torah: s. str. the Jewish Bible; also used to designate the Holy Scriptures as a whole

Tzahal: Hebrew acronym for IDF

Tzohar: an Israeli organization of religious Zionist Orthodox rabbis; aims to bridge the gaps between religious and secular Jews in Israel

Waqf: an Islamic legal body which has authority over resources and assets of the Muslim community; in Jerusalem, this body is recognized by Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Jordan regarding the custody of the Temple Mount site

Yarmulka, Yarmulke, or Kippah: a skullcap worn in public by Orthodox Jewish men

Yerida: Hebrew term for leaving the State of Israel and settling in the Diaspora

Yesh Atid: centrist Israeli party founded after the economic mass protests of 2011

Yeshiva, pl. yeshivot: institution of Jewish higher religious studies

Yishuv: settlement, also used to designate the organized Jewish population in Palestine till the establishment of the State

Yisrael Bealayah: Zionist party founded by Russian-speaking immigrants in the 1990s

Yisrael Beiteinu: right-wing Zionist party created by Russian-speaking immigrants

Yom Kippur: the Jewish Day of Atonement

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- 1 Ben-Eliezer 1998.
- 2 Kimmerling 1993, 199–202.
- 3 Lissak 1996, 247–293.
- 4 Luckham 1971; Lissak 1967, 1985.
- 5 Lissak 1995.
- 6 Idem 1988.
- 7 Horowitz 1982, 80–81.
- 8 Schiff 1995, 18–22.
- 9 Arian 1993.
- 1 Mintz 1985; Mintz and Ward 1989.
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- 1 Horowitz and Lissak 1989, 172–176.
- 1
- 1 Ibid.
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- 1 Peri and Lissak 1976.
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- 1 Peri 1989, 143–150.
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- 1 Maman and Lissak 1990, 279–308.
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- 1 Kimmerling 1993, 199–202.
- 6
- 1 Barkai 1980.
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- 1 Berglas 1983, 31–36.
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- 2 Peri and Neubach 1984, 38–42; Mintz 1984, 106–109.
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- 2 Wertheimer 1993, 18–42.
- 1
- 2 Luckham 1971, 5–25; Lissak 1984.
- 2
- 2 Lissak 1984.
- 3
- 2 Rapoport 1962.
- 4
- 2 Mintz 1984.
- 5
- 2 Lebel 2005.
- 6
- 2 Cohen 2006.
- 7
- 2 Nossek and Limor 2005.
- 8

- 2 Nettle 1968.
9
- 3 Peri 2001.
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- 3 Barzilai 1996.
1
- 3 Dor 2004.
2
- 3 Gur 2005, 9–14.
3
- 3 Negbi 2005.
4
- 3 Poulantzas 1969.
5
- 3 Ben-Eliezer 2003, 37.
6
- 3 Levy 2003.
7
- 3 A concept which has also been translated as the “securitist approach” (Baruch
8 Kimmerling), “hyper-security” (Hanna Herzog), and “securityism” (Chaya Shalom).
3 Levy 2003.
9
- 4 Allon 1960, 228.
0
- 4 For the text of *Schenck v. United States*, 249 U.S. 47 (1919), see for example <https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/249/47>, accessed September 5, 2015.
1
- 4 Arian 1999, 228–229; Sherman and Shavit 2005.
2
- 4 Schiff 1996.
3
- 4 Tamir 2005.
4
- 4 Interview with Danny Rubinstein published on the site of the Keshev watchdog,
5 January 2006, accessed May 4, 2015, <http://keshev.org.il/en/interviews-with-journalists/%D7%A7%D7%A9%D7%91-%D7%9E%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%99%D7%99%D7%9F-%D7%90%D7%AA-%D7%94%D7%A2%D7%99%D7%AA%D7%95%D7%A0%D7%90%D7%99-%D7%93%D7%A0%D7%99-%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%91%D7%99%D7%A0%D7%A9%D7%98%D7%99%D7%99%D7%9F.html#.VNsb1PmUeyo>.
4 Tuchman 1973.
6
- 4 Keren 1991.
7
- 4 A partial list of such journalists includes Erez Tal, Avri Gilad, Yaron Dekel, Alon Ben-
8 David, Geula Even, Tal Berman, Yakov Eilon, Yonit Levy, Udi Segal, Ilana Dayan, Gil
Tamari, Alon Shalev, Raffi Mann, Chilik Sarid, Aryeh Golan, and David Gilboa.
4 Negbi 1985.
9
- 5 Gur 1998, 349.
0
- 5 *Ibid.*, 352.
1
- 5 Interview with Danny Rubinstein, January 2006.
2

5 Althaus 1996.
3
5 Poulantzas 1969.
4
5 Peri 1983, 1996, 2001, 2002, 2003; Horowitz and Lissak 1989; Schiff 1992;
5 Kimmerling 1993; Yaniv 1993; Ben-Eliezer 1995, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2004; Ben Meir
1995; Maman and Lissak 1996; Etzioni-Halevy 1996; Levy 1997, 2003, 2010; Van
Creveld 1998; Dowty 1998; Lomsky-Feder and Ben-Ari 1999; Ben-Ari, Rosenhek, and
Maman 2001; Al-Haj and Ben-Eliezer 2003; Rosenhek, Maman, and Ben-Ari 2003;
Shelah 2003, and see in particular our publications: Barak and Sheffer 2006, 2013.
5 By “security sector” we mean not only the armed forces (or: the military) but also
6 other law-enforcement agencies such as the police and paramilitary forces; the border
guards and coast guard; the intelligence and internal security services; and the
military industries. In this article however, we will mostly relate to the armed forces,
which are the most significant security service in terms of their size, roles, and close
association with the process of state formation.
5 Peterson 2003, 1; Marsh and Smith 2000, 6. See also Marin and Mayntz 1991; Marsh
7 and Rhodes 1992; Marsh and Stoker 1995, 292–294; Sheffer and Barak 2013.
5 Janowitz 1964.
8
5 Luckham 1971.
9
6 Horowitz 1982; Eisenstadt 1967, 1985; Horowitz and Lissak 1989.
0
6 This corroborates with Luckham’s definition of the “nation-in-arms,” Luckham 1971,
1 24.
6 Horowitz 1982, 78–79.
2
6 Maman and Lissak 1996.
3
6 Horowitz quoted in Peri 1983, 8.
4
6 By this term we mean the cumulative product of three interrelated and often-
5 overlapping subprocesses: a) state-building, which consists of measures that produce
“territorial consolidation, centralization, differentiation of the instruments of
government, and monopolization of the means of coercion”; b) statecraft (or state-
construction), defined as the “processes or mechanisms whereby a state enhances its
power and authority,” using its formal agencies but also an array of informal,
including cultural, means; and c) national integration, which involves centrally based
efforts to inculcate the state’s entire populace with a common identity. The first quote
is from Tilly 1975, 42. See Mitchell 1991; Steinmetz 1999. The second quote is from
Davis 1991, 12. See also Anderson 1991; Hobsbawm 1990; Gellner 1983; Smith 1986.
6 Perlmutter 1969; Horowitz and Lissak 1989; Ben Meir 1995; Lissak 2001, 403–405.
6
6 Peri 1983, 15.
7
6 Ibid., 7–11.
8
6 Peri 2002, 13.
9
7 Idem 1983 and 2002, 12; Owen 2000, 216.
0
7 Peri 1983, 8–9.
1
7 Sela 2004.

2
7 Owen 2000, 215.
3
7 Peri 1983, 9, and 2003.
4
7 Schiff 1995, 8; Ben-Eliezer 1998b.
5
7 Kimmerling 1993, 197–198; for criticism, see Sheffer 1996.
6
7 Peri 1983, 286.
7
7 Ben-Eliezer 2001, 138; Schiff 1992 and 1995, 9.
8
7 Kimmerling 1993; Ben-Eliezer 1995, 2001.
9
8 Levy 1997, 104–106.
0
8 Schiff 1995, 17–19.
1
8 Etzioni-Halevy 1996.
2
8 Mintz 1985; Peri and Neubach 1985.
3
8 See, e.g., Luckham 1971, 24 and the sources he cites.
4
8 Ben-Eliezer 1998b, 339–340.
5
8 Ibid.
6
8 Peri attributes this failure to these authors’ uncritical use of the concept of militarism;
7 see Peri 1996.
8 Horowitz 1982.
8
8 Peri 1983.
9
9 For an overview of these approaches, see Segal 1994. A book that argues for a
0 professional army in Israel is Shelah 2003.
9 Moskos 2000.
1
9 See Levy 2003, and his notion of a “materialist militarism.”
2
9 Owen 2000, 199.
3
9 Barak and Sheffer 2006.
4
9 Ibid.
5
9 Kimmerling 1993, 199. For an analysis of recent events in Israel from this perspective,
6 see Ben-Eliezer 2004.
9 Levy 1997.
7
9 For details, see Barak and Sheffer 2006, and Sheffer and Barak 2013.
8
9 Sheffer and Barak 2013.

9

1 Peri 2002, 12.

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1 Lissak 2001, 403–405.

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1

1 Peri 2001.

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2

1 Barak and Sheffer 2006.

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3

1 Eyal 2002.

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1 See especially Wæver 1995; Buzan et al. 1998; Williams 2003.

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5

1 Haas 1990, 55, and 1997; Adler 1997, 101–145, and 2005; Sheffer and Barak 2013.

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6

1 Schmitt 1985; Agamben 2005.

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7

1 Kimmerling 1992.

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8

1 See, for example, Perlmutter 1977, 267–280; Luttwak and Horowitz 1975, xiii; or
0 Halpern 1962. One notable exception was al-Qazzaz (1973) who defined Israel as a
9 “garrison state,” but his familiarity with Israeli society and its military was highly
questionable.

1 Mintz 1985.

1

0

1 Halpern 1962.

1

1

1 Horowitz 1982.

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1 Perlmutter 1968; Horowitz 1977, 1982b.

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3

1 Peri 1983.

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4

1 Azarya 1983; Lissak 1970; Roumani 1979.

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5

1 Bowden 1976.

1

6

1 Azarya and Kimmerling 1980.

1

7
1 Azarya 1983.
1
8
1 Luckham 1971, 24–25.
1
9
1 Perlmutter 1968.
2
0
1 Such as Carmi and Rosenfeld 1989.
2
1
1 Ben-Eliezer 1988.
2
2
1 Barzilai 1992.
2
3
1 Kimmerling 1983.
2
4
1 Kimmerling and Migdal 1993.
2
5
1 Shaw 1991, 14.
2
6
1 Coleman and Brice 1962.
2
7
1 Kaufman 1990.
2
8
1 Johnson 1964, 13–35.
2
9
1 Kimmerling 1992.
3
0
1 The basic situation will not change, even if some form of autonomy is granted to the
3 Palestinians in the occupied territories. Even if Israel’s armed forces leave populated
1 areas, real power will still remain in Israel’s hands. Only the transfer of real authority
to another sovereign entity will put an end to the situation of coercive control over the
Palestinians that has persisted since 1967.
1 Kimmerling 1989.
3
2
1 Giddens 1985, 192–194.
3
3
1 Vagts 1959, 451–483.
3
4
1 Almog 1992.

3

5

1 Liebman and Don-Yehiyah 1983.

3

6

1 Luckham 1971, 17–19.

3

7

1 This is an essentially unbalanced and unstable situation, as each social organization
3 that has repute and access to sources of power is blocked before it; or, alternatively,
8 each one tries to convert its prestige into political strength.

1 Liebman and Don-Yehiya 1983, 93.

3

9

1 Or as Shaw (1991, 9) put it in general context: “[...] the war-preparations of the
4 potential adversary are clearly defined as ‘militarist.’ ‘Our own’ military activities,
0 however, may not even be counted as war preparations; they are more likely to be
seen as ‘defence’ or ‘deterrence’ policy, the professed aim of which may be to avoid
war rather than to fight it. An ambivalent attitude toward power being wielded by
Jews followed Zionism after its inception (and is reflected in the writings of such
figures as Berdichewsky and Max Nordau); a kind of counter-history has developed
around this ambiguity – a view that perceives the development of power by Jews, who
thus act ‘like all the nations,’ has emerged. At its extreme, contemporary Jewish
philosophy exercised by apologist writers like Emil Fackenheim utilizes the example
of extreme Jewish vulnerability – especially the Holocaust period during which Jews
were entirely victimized by the use of coercive power – to accord legitimacy to Israel’s
deployment of unrestrained violence against ‘the gentiles.’” An intriguing review of
the ambivalent Jewish response to the responsibilities and vagaries of power and
force since the emergence of a modern Jewish national movement, and then later
with the establishment of the State of Israel, can be found in Biale 1986, 133–176.
This study, however, does not address directly the issue of militarism.

1 Speier 1952, 230.

4

1

1 The most manifest example in this context is provided by the subject of the
4 development of Israel’s nuclear arms potential in the 1950s and 1960s (known, in the
2 lexicon of the time, as the “delicate matter”); or the clumsy espionage and sabotage
affair in Egypt encoded as “the rotten business” (which turned in 1960–1961 into
“Lavon [Defense Minister] Affair”).

1 Vagts 1959, 13.

4

3

1 Rapoport 1963; Finer 1962.

4

4

1 See Johnson 1964; Kaufman 1990.

4

5

1 Dominant regional or ethnic units (which ordinarily bridge religious cleavages) such
4 as Yoruba, Fulani-Hausa or Ibo, or militarist coalitions that join different units and
6 use their control of armed forces to rule over smaller, weaker elements. The most
evident example here is the departure of Ibo Biafra from the Nigerian federation in
1967, a step that caused a blood-stained civil war won in the end by the “Federal
Army” (January, 1977).

1 Mills 1956.

4
7

1 Giddens 1985, 223–237.

4
8

1 Lukes 1974.

4
9

1 This definition bears a resemblance to Michael Mann's (1987, 34) judgment, yet it is
5 less sweeping than Mann's conception which avers that "militarism [is] a set of
0 attitudes and social practices which regards war and preparation for war as a normal
and desirable social activity."

1 The use of the concept "national security" is preferable to other terms, as it is widely-
5 based and encompasses other spheres. Another advantage of this term, and of the
1 classification of this culture as "civilian militarist," is the emphasis given to the
"civilian" aspect – that is, civilian experts can also be engaged in "national security"
matters which include political considerations also, and they might even elevate this
realm to the level of science. It is worth mentioning that this approach which gives
high priority to the sphere of "national security," and to anything that is, or seemingly
is, connected to security, represents a type of ideology.

1 Lincoln 1989.

5
2

1 Since the state's establishment through the present day, military service has been
5 obligatory (today, the length of service is three years for men and two for women). Yet
3 the Minister of Defense retains the authority to release from service any person or
group; he may do so in his own authority, and release the so-called "declared" (as
religiously observant) girls, students of traditional Jewish academies (*Yeshivot*),
Muslim Arabs and all other types of Arabs, except Druze and Circassian. Christian
Arabs and Bedouins can volunteer for service. Among large portions of the young
Druze generation, military service has come to be perceived as a good career
opportunity, and it is a source that supports social mobility. The subject of being
included or excluded in the framework of the universal and compulsory military
service became on some occasions a cause for sociopolitical bargaining. Kimmerling
1979.

1 Ross 1987.

5
4

1 See Horowitz and Kimmerling 1974; Kimmerling 1985a. With the return of the Labor
5 party after the 1992 elections, its leader Yitzhak Rabin wagered a distinction between
5 "security settlements" that aim to facilitate *outside* control of regions of the West
Bank, and "political settlements" that are found within densely populated, Palestinian
areas and are now slated to be dismantled, when autonomy is granted to a Palestinian
administration.

1 Luttwak and Horowitz 1975, 104–137.

5
6

1 Lissak 1970.

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7

1 Horowitz 1982.

5
8

1 Janowitz 1971, vii–x.

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9

1 For descriptions of how society and realities are constructed and restructured, the
6 reader may consult Berger and Luckman 1966 and Lincoln 1989.

0

1 Teveth 1972, 240.

6

1

1 See the detailed analysis of the institutional and value system in Israel connected to
6 preparation for war and conduct of wars in Kimmerling 1985. As for the value system,
2 a research team (Arian, Talmud, and Harmann 1988, 83) summarized parts of its
findings as follows: “The ‘religion of security’ is an apt metaphor for considering the
phenomenon of security in Israel. Just as a child is born into a certain religion, so too
is the Israeli born into a very difficult geopolitical world with its attendant dilemmas.
Just as a child accepts unquestioningly the religion he was born into and some basic
answers he received [...] so too the Israeli child absorbs at a very early age the basics
of the core-belief of national security.” This socialization is so deep that when samples
of youngsters are asked if the service in the Israeli armed forces was to become
completely voluntary, would they still volunteer for service, around 90% express their
willingness to serve, about 60% being ready to serve the same period (as the
customary three years). Moreover, the actual volunteering for special units or officer-
courses that involve high risk and physical and mental stress and hardship (such as
paratroopers, reconnaissance or commandos) always obtains at rates higher than the
actual needs of the armed forces; Gal 1986, 61–62; Meizels, Gal and Fishoff 1989, 51–
58. For the military service as a basic factor in the shaping of individuals as well as of
sociological generations personalities, attitudes and life-cycles, see Liebllich 1989 and
Lomsky-Feder 1993.

1 Lissak 1985, 143.

6

3

1 Horowitz and Lissak 1989, 239.

6

4

1 For some reason, in Carmi and Rosenfeld’s (1989) analysis, socialist or communist
6 regimes cannot be militarist. In reality, such regimes can, of course, be militarist –
5 see, for example, the typology that appears in Perlmutter’s (1977, 141) analysis of
military regimes, and the “party-army-regime” type.

1 Huntington 1957, 59–79.

6

6

1 Janowitz 1964, 65–66.

6

7

1 The research and development (up to the construction of a prototype) for a super-
6 advanced combat plane (the “Lavi”) was carried on, only to be interrupted (after the
8 investment of 1,5 billion dollars) when the United States refused to continue to
finance the construction of the development and production of the plane.

1 Barnett 1992, 227–230.

6

9

1 See Mintz 1984, 1985; Mintz and Ward 1989.

7

0

1 Bichler 1991.

7

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1 Halperin and Tsiddon 1992.

7

2

1 Mintz 1984, 109.

7

3

1 Bank of Israel 1992, 167.

7

4

1 The first crude manipulation of security-related symbols transpired on July 5th 1961, when a small rocket ("Shavit 2") was launched several days before a national election.

7
5 The missile's purpose was defined as "weather research," but in the pictures released to the public emphasis was given to the presence of the Prime and Defense Minister (Ben-Gurion) who wore a military uniform, as well as to the Chief of Staff (Maj. Gen. Zvi Tzur), etc. The timing of the destruction by Israeli aircraft of the Iraqi nuclear reactor in 1984 was also surely part of the ruling-party's electoral campaign. However, for a long time the most important abuse of "security-needs" was the military censorship of the mass media, which was deployed many times between the 1950s to 1970s as a political censorship. Goren 1979.

1 An apt example of this dynamic is the law that bans political contacts between Israeli peace activists with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) leadership in exile on grounds of "prevention of terrorism" or state security; a small number of people have been judged and imprisoned after they violated this law.

1 Hofnung 1991.

7

7

1 Dowty 1988.

7

8

1 Only much later, in the 1970s, was this "demographic policy" severely criticized, because it applied mainly to lower-class families of oriental origin, and reinforced their poverty and marginality in the Israeli society. But even this criticism was made in "security terms," i.e., Israel does not need many "low quality" soldiers; it lacks instead "higher quality warriors."

1 Bernstein 1983, 1987; Swirski and Safir 1992.

8

0

1 Bar Yosef and Padan-Eisenstark 1977; Kimmerling 1985a; Yishai 1985.

8

1

1 Bloom and Bar Yosef 1984; Yuval-Davis 1992.

8

2

1 Ben-Ari 1989; Helman 1993.

8

3

1 Chazan 1992; Sasson-Levy 1992. Chazan (1992) and Sasson-Levy (1992) observed that in most of the protest movements (left of the "Peace Now" movement) against the 1982 War (of Lebanon), as well as against the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, women represent the overwhelming majority, and some protest groups are exclusionary female.

1 Kimmerling 1985.

8

5

1 Begin 1982.

8
6

1 Shelef 1989.

8
7

1 Helman 1993.

8
8

1 Ben-Ari 1989.

8
9

1 Jacek Tittenbrun, "Talcott Parsons' Economic Sociology," *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences* 13 (2014): 20–40.

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1

1 IHC 6698/95, Qa'adan v. Israel Land Authority et al.

9
1

1 Here my work joins previous critiques of the Israeli regime; see, for example, Ben-Eliezer 1995; Kimmerling 1995; Ghanem 1998; Shapiro 1977.

2

1 Ashkenazi Jews (Ashkenazim in plural) are of European origins, while Mizrahi Jews (Mizrahim in plural, also termed Sepharadim or Oriental Jews) hail from the Muslim world.

1 Following Lefebvre 1991.

9
4

1 See Yiftachel and Fenster 1997.

9
5

1 Fredrickson 1988; Shafir 1989.

9
6

1 Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis 1995. This broad classification fluctuates according to the specific circumstances of each settler society.

7
1

1 Soysal 1994.

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8

1 Murphy 1996.

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9

2 Billig 1995.

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2 Anderson 1996; Connor 1994; Smith 1995.

0
1

2 Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis 1995.

0
2

2 For the global process, see Held 1990; Harvey 1989. For its Israeli manifestations, see Ram 1998; Shafir and Peled 1998.

3

2 The term "ethnocracy" has appeared in previous literature; see Linz and Stepan 1996, 69; Linz 1975; Mazrui 1975; Little 1994, 72. However, as far as I am aware, it was

4 generally used as a derogatory term, and not developed into a model or concept, as formulated here. For an earlier formulation, see my “Israeli Society and Jewish-Palestinian Reconciliation: ‘Ethnocracy’ and Its Territorial Contradictions,” *Middle East Journal* 51, no. 4 (1997): 505–519.

2 As noted, ethnocracies have existed for long periods in countries such as Sri Lanka, 0 Malaysia, and Northern Ireland (until 1968), and more recently in Estonia, Latvia, 5 Slovakia, and Serbia.

2 Here the advent of “illiberal democracy” (Zakaria 1997) is instrumental, by 0 establishing a regime with formal democratic appearance but with centralizing, 6 coercive, and authoritarian characteristics. See also Yonah 1998.

2 Gramsci 1971; see also Lustick’s illuminating discussion of the notion of hegemony in 0 his *Unsettled States, Disputed Lands* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

7

2 Kimmerling 1989.

0

8

2 This is supported by repeated statements of Israeli leaders. For example, Prime 0 Minister Netanyahu claimed that “only one government has and will have sovereign 9 power west of the Jordan” (*Ma’ariv*, February 18, 1998); similarly, Minister of Justice Y. Hanegbi claimed on September 14, 1998 (Channel One, Israeli TV) that “sovereignty in Eretz Yisrael will never be divided and will remain Israeli, and Israeli only.”

2 Israel’s Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) 1998; figures relate to December 31, 1997.

1

0

2 Rekhess 1991.

1

1

2 The differences from “typical” European settler movements include Zionism’s nature 1 as an ethno-national and not an economic project, the status of most Jews as 2 refugees, the loose organization of diasporic Jewish communities as opposed to the well-organized metropolitan countries, and the notion of “return” to Zion enshrined in Jewish traditions.

2 See, for example, Cohen and Haberfeld 1998; Lewi-Epstein and Semyonov 1986.

1

3

2 For the historical evolution of Israel’s ethnic political economy and labor relations in 1 Israel, see Grinberg 1991; Shalev 1992.

4

2 Lahav 1997.

1

5

2 The 1985 Law also disqualifies parties using a racist platform.

1

6

2 See Kretzmer 1990; Adalah 1998.

1

7

2 See Morris 1993.

1

8

2 According to Peled and Shafir (1996), the intensity of the Judaization project has 1 slowed down recently, in part because of the global orientations of Israeli elites. But 9 despite the decline, the logic of Judaization is still fundamental to Israeli-Jewish politics and should be treated as the historical “genetic core” of the Israeli regime.

2 See Ram 1995. Records show that Jews remained in the land of Israel for centuries
2 after the destruction of the Second Temple, and in most cases emigrated voluntarily.

0

2 On policies affecting Palestinian-Arabs in Israel, see also Falah 1989; Lustick 1980;
2 Smootha 1982; Yiftachel 1992; Zureik 1979.

1

2 I.e., the area of Israeli regional councils, where world Jewry organizations are part of
2 most land leasing and ownership arrangements.

2

2 See Hasson 1981; Gradus 1984; Swirski and Shoshani 1985.

2

3

2 See Falah 1989; Lustick 1993; Newman 1996; Yiftachel 1997.

2

4

2 See Yiftachel 1997.

2

5

2 There exists a wide body of literature which debates the characteristics of Israeli
2 democracy, all assuming a priori that Israel is governed by such a regime. See Arian
6 1997; Neuberger 1998; Smootha 1997.

2 For elaboration of the historical evolution of the Israeli-Jewish “ethnocracy,” see my
2 “Israeli Society and Jewish-Palestinian Reconciliation.” A similar formulation of
7 Israel as an “ethnic state” can be found in Rouhana 1997; Ghanem 1998.

2 See Held 1988; Linz and Stepan 1996. Needless to say, pure democracy is never
2 implemented fully, although Linz and Stepan list 42 countries which fall over a
8 democratic threshold. We use the democratic model here as an analytical tool with
which the Israeli regime can be examined.

2 A striking example of the involvement of world Jewry was the declaration by ultra-
2 Orthodox Australian millionaire, and major donor to religious parties, David
9 Guttnick, that he would work to “topple the Netanyahu government” in case it decides
to withdraw from the Occupied Territories (*Haaretz*, August 14, 1998).

2 Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories were established under military rule;
3 the settlements are closed to Palestinian-Arabs.

0

2 For a thorough, ground-breaking analysis of the role of borders in Jewish politics, see
3 Kemp 1997.

1

2 Most accounts of the Israeli regime, including critical analyses, have continued to
3 treat Israel concurrently as (a) the land bounded by the Green Line, and (b) the body
2 of Israeli citizens (including Jewish settlers of the Occupied Territories). This
contradiction was rarely problematized in the literature. For examples of critical
accounts which take this approach see Peled 1992; Ram 1998; Rouhana 1997; Smootha
1997. For earlier debates with this approach, see Kimmerling 1989; Migdal 1996.

2 See Kimmerling 1995; Nevo 1998.

3

3

2 Quoted in Neuberger 1998, 41.

3

4

2 Interview of Rabbi Azran, *Globs*, September 28, 1998.

3

5

2 Kimmerling 1995; Liebman 1993.

3

6

2 See Peres and Yuchtman-Yaar 1998; Smooha 1992.

3

7

2 See Migdal 1996; Peres and Yuchtman-Yaar 1998.

3

8

2 See Stockhammer 1998, 219; see also a recent interview with the new leader of the
3 Religious National Party, Rabbi Y. Levi, who claimed that the main goal of his party
9 was to ensure the Jewishness of the state for future generations (*Haaretz*, August 12,
1998).

2 As observed by Don-Yehiya (1997), the most striking feature of Orthodox-secular
4 relations is their cooperation, and not conflict, as the two groups differ sharply on
0 most values, goals and aspirations. I suggest here that the central project of Judaizing
the country has formed the foundation for this cooperation.

2 See Shohat 1997; Swirski 1989.

4

1

2 Bensky 1993.

4

2

2 Peled and Shafir 1996.

4

3

2 On protest and resistance in the Israeli peripheries, see my "Israeli Society and
4 Jewish-Palestinian Reconciliation."

4

2 For the events that led to the Second Intifada and its short-term consequences, see
4 Yiftachel 2004 and 2001. It can also be argued that the Oslo process has accelerated
5 the process of Judaizing large parts of the Occupied Territories, by legitimizing the
construction of further Jewish housing and pervasive land confiscation for "by-pass
roads." In this vein, the long closures of the Territories, and the subsequent
importation of hundreds of thousands of foreign workers to replace Palestinian labor,
are also part of the post-Oslo process of Judaization.

2 For recent attempts to compare Israel to Western democracies, see Dowty 1998;
4 Sheffer 1996.

6

2 I do not claim, of course, that the Judaization process can explain every facet of ethnic
4 relations in Israel/Palestine; rather, it is a factor which helped shape these relations
7 while remaining largely overlooked in scholarly literature. But the Judaization
process has also affected greatly power relations between groups not covered in this
paper, including military-civil society, gender relations and local-central tensions; see
Ferguson 1993.

2 This includes some my own previous writings, such as *Planning a Mixed Region in*
4 *Israel* (1992), where I classified Israel as a bi-ethnic democracy.

8

2 Neuberger 1998; Sheffer 1996.

4

9

2 Eisenstadt 1985.

5

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2 Don-Yehiya 1997; Liebman 1993; Horowitz and Lissak 1990.

5

1

2 Smootha 1997; Peled and Shafir 1996.

5

2

2 See Arian 1997; Barak 1998.

5

3

2 See Bishara 1993; Ben-Eliezer 1998; Peled 1992; Shapiro 1977; Swirski 1989; Ram
5 1998.

4

2 Zureik 1993.

5

5

2 See Ghanem 1998; Rouhana 1997.

5

6

2 Here we can note that the political disagreement between the Jewish left and right in
5 Israel, which is often portrayed as a bitter rivalry, is not on the broadly accepted
7 “need” to Judaize Israel, but only on the desired extent of this project.

2 A step in this direction has already been taken; see Ghanem 1998; Rouhana 1997;
5 Yiftachel 1998.

8

2 This affects adversely the political rights of Israeli-Jews too, as it undermines the
5 extent of their own sovereignty.

9

2 Political theorists discuss in recent debates the possibility of cultural or linguistic
6 forms of self-determination, which may be non-territorial (see Kymlicka 1995).
0 However, these forms also allow the possibility of civil entrance into the collectivity.
This is different in Judaism, which is neither territorial, cultural or linguistic, and
thus prevents the possibility of civil inclusion.

2 Neiman v. Central Elections Committee, Judgment of the then High Court President,
6 Justice M. Shamgar.

1

2 On this issue, see the detailed analysis by Fenster 1993.

6

2

2 The government’s new strong-arm approach became evidently clear in early April
6 1998, when three homes built by Bedouin on private Arab land in the Galilee were
3 demolished. The event was followed by demonstrations and strikes, and community
efforts to rebuild the homes.

2 Lijphart 1999 offers a classic analysis of deeply divided (plural) societies and argues
6 that consociational democracy is the only political system that has any chance of
4 keeping them peaceable and stable.

2 For a comprehensive analysis of various aspects of Israel’s state and democracy, see
6 Arian 2005, and Galnoor and Blander 2013.

5

2 In the 2013 elections the threshold was 2% but rose to 3.25% thereafter.

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2 Peri 2006 and Levy 2010.

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2 Rudnitzky 2015.

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2 The head of the secret service declared that the organization would fight these Arab

6 activists even if they pursued their plans peacefully because these activities were
9 subversive (Adalah, Press Communique, May 21, 2007). Despite this statement, the
role of the secret service to protect the Jewish and democratic nature of the state in
addition to national security is in dispute.

2 Ghanem, Rouhana, and Yiftachel 1998.

7

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2 See Yakobson and Rubinstein 2008 for a detailed presentation of Israel as a genuine
7 liberal democracy, and the statement by Oren (2012), Israel's ambassador to the
1 United States at the time, on the exemplary qualities of Israeli liberal democracy.

2 Israel Democracy Institute led the main effort in this direction and masterminded the
7 writing of a draft constitution known as "Constitution by Consent." For the story of
2 the failure of this undertaking, as told by the Institute's president, see Carmon 2012.

2 Ben-Yehuda (2010) nicknames the various forms of religious coercion and religious
7 extremism in Israel "theocratic democracy."

3

2 Gans (2013) argues that the predominant brand of Zionism in present-day Israel is
7 exclusionist, and calls for an egalitarian brand.

4

2 Podeh 2015.

7

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2 See Kimmerling 1993 on militarism in Israel, Hofnung 1996 on the impact of national
7 security on Israel's laws and democracy, and Bar-Tal and Schnell 2012 on the
6 repercussions of prolonged occupation for Israeli society.

2 On the impact of national security on the status of Arab citizens, see Smootha 1993
7 and Frisch 2011.

7

2 For these opposing interpretations and analyses, see Yuchtman-Yaar 2005 and
7 Smootha 2004, 2007.

8

2 See Cohen and Susser 2000, and Hazan 2000 for analyses of consociationalism and
7 its decline in the treatment of national-religious Jews.

9

2 For analysis and advocacy of a single state and how it would benefit Arabs in Israel
8 and the Palestinian people, see Ghanem and Bavly 2015.

0

2 For this reason the spectacle of a binational state in all Israel/Palestine is illusionary
8 because Jews share consensus, resolve and power to block it. The real alternative to a
1 two-state solution is continued occupation, apartheid, disorder, and bloodshed.

2 For a discussion of binationalism for tackling Israel's problems, see Shapira, Stern,
8 and Yakobson 2013.

2

2 The ethnocracy model was developed by Yiftachel (2006) on the basis of the Israeli
8 case. It gained the support of As'ad Ghanem (Yiftachel and Ghanem 2005), Nadim
3 Rouhana, Nur Masalha, and Shlomo Sand, among others.

2 For instance, despite their radical critique of Israel, Shafir and Peled (2002) and
8 Azoulay and Ophir (2013) see Israel proper as an ethnic democracy, not an
4 ethnocracy.

2 The ethnic democracy model was developed by Smootha and applied to Israel
8 (Smootha 1990, 2002) and other states (Smootha and Jarve 2005; Peled 2013, 2016).

5

2 Gans 2008.

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6

2 See the exchange between Danel (2009) and Smooha (2009) on whether Israel is or is
8 not an ethnic democracy. Berent (2010, 2015) rejects ethnic democracy as a general
7 model and claims that it represents just the unique case of Israel. Yet the model
proves its utility as an analytical tool that Berent himself applies in comparing Israel
with some Eastern European states. Yakobson and Rubinstein (2008, chapter 6), like
Gavison (1999) and Dowty (1999), explain away Israel's various deviations from
liberal democracy, arguing that Israel is no different from other Western-type
democratic nation-states.

2 Although he does not view Israel as an ethnocracy, Jabareen (2014) considers Arab
8 citizenship colonial, its subordinate status having been imprinted in the first years of
8 statehood.

2 For a compilation and brief discussion of indicators of social democracy in Israel, see
8 Swirski 2011, Swirski, Konor-Attias, and Zelingher 2015, and Ben-David 2015.

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2 Rabin and Shany 2003–2004.

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2 Hermann et al. 2014, 40–50.

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2 Shalev 2000.

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2 Bichler and Nitzan 2001.

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2 The protest movement had an advisory committee which issued a report that contains
9 analysis of wellbeing issues and demands (Spivak and Yonah 2012).

4
2 Two new political parties were established in response to the social justice movement:
9 the centrist “Yesh Atid” party and the center-right “Kulanu” party. Together they won
5 16.3% (8.8% and 7.5% respectively) of the vote in the March 2015 Knesset election.

2 The differences between Israel and the United States, a prototype of liberal
9 democracy, are striking. This discrepancy neither stops politicians from claiming that
6 the two countries share basic democratic values nor persuades social scientists to
question the view of Israel as a true liberal democracy.

2 Pedahzur 2012.
9
7

2 Fischer 2012.
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8

2 Peled 2013.
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9

3 Right-wing Knesset members have proposed various versions of “a nation-state law”
0 that would make the “Jewishness” of the state superior to democracy when the two
0 are in conflict. Leftist and Arab Knesset members object to the proposal and label it
racist.

3 To the 350,000 Israelis living in the West Bank should be added 200,000 living in
0 East Jerusalem and 20,000 on the Golan Heights

1
3 Gabriel Sheffer writes in 1996 that we are witnessing a transition from a “consensual
0 and democratic model to private liberal democracy.” Sheffer 1996, 35.

2

3 Meron Benvenisti speaks about *Herrenvolk* democracy because for him the Israeli
0 polity encompasses all area between the Mediterranean and the Jordan where the
3 disenfranchised Palestinians coexist with a Jewish majority enjoying the full
attributes of democracy. See his book *Conflicts and Contradictions* (New York:
Villard Books, 1986), 182–185.

3 This also makes the marriage of some Jews impossible. For example, a Cohen
0 (supposedly descended from the sacerdotal cast) cannot marry a divorcee or a woman
4 who is a convert to Judaism.

3 Muslims are married in this way under the Sharia law, which is also discriminatory in
0 regard to women.

5

3 Neuberger 2003.

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6

3 Yiftachel 2006; Ghanem 2010.

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7

3 Yiftachel and Ghanem 2004, 666–667.

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3 Dahl 1971, 246; Powell 1982, 5; Lijphart 1984, 37–45.

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3 Sprinzak 1993.

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3 Lustick 1980.

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3 4.5% were bought by the Jewish National Fund, 2.15% were acquired by the Palestine
1 Jewish Colonization Association (PICA) of Baron de Rothschild, and the remainder
2 belonged to other Jewish individuals.

3 Hermet 1996, 18 (my translation).

1

3

3 Sharon 1993.

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3 Figures taken from Peres and Yuchtman-Yaar 1992.

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3 The expression comes from Wolfsfeld 1988, 164.

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3 Ezrahi 1997.

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3 Louër 2007.

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3 Rekhess 1995, 191–193.

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3 Data taken from Arian, Philippov, and Knafelman 2009, 59 and 65.

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3 Arian and Keissar-Sugarmen 2009, 66.

2

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3 To use Amal Jamal's expression of 'hollow citizenship,' see Jamal 2007.

2

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3 An analysis of those documents is provided by Smooha 2009.

2

3

3 The laws and bills are examined by Kremnitzer and Krebs 2011.

2

4

3 Smooha 1990, 1997.

2

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3 Yiftachel 2000; Peled 1993; Rouhana 2003; Ghanem 1999; Jamal 2005; and the
2 authors of the *Future Vision Papers of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel*, see <http://adal6ah.org/newsletter/eng/deco6/tasawor-mostaqbali.pdf>.

3 Lustick 1982.

2

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3 Kimmerling 1994.

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3 Aloni 2008, 23, 38, 49, 93, 295; see also idem 2007.

2

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3 See Smooha 1999, 2000, and 2002.

3

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3 Idem 2000, 566, 617.

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3 Rubinstein and Yakobson 2003, 400.

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3 Ibid., 401.

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3 On this, see Gross 2013.

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3 Mapai from 1948 to 1965; the Alignment from 1965 to 1977; the Likud from 1977 to
3 1984, 1996 to 1999, 2001 to 2005, and 2009 to 2015; the Labor party from 1992 to
5 1996 and 1999 to 2001; and Kadima from 2005 to 2009.

3 This includes Shlomo Benizri (then a Knesset member and a former minister of
3 health and minister of labor and social welfare for the Shas party), Aryeh Deri
6 (minister of the interior, Shas), Avraham Hirschson (minister of finance, Likud),
Haim Ramon (minister of justice, Kadima), Yitzhak Mordechai (minister of defense,
Merkaz party), and Avigdor Liberman (minister of foreign affairs, Yisrael Beiteinu).

3 The Kahan Commission was an Israeli commission of inquiry established in
3 November 1982 under heavy public pressure on the government to investigate the
7 events that took place in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps during the First
Lebanon War. The commission was headed by Chief Justice Yitzhak Kahan, and its

members included law professor and Supreme Court Justice Aharon Barak and Major General (res.) Yona Efrat. In its conclusions, the commission found that direct responsibility for the events that took place in the camps rested with the Lebanese Christian Phalangists. However, it also found shortcomings in the actions of Israel's military and political elite. The commission's report recommended that Ariel Sharon, who was serving as minister of defense at the time, draw the appropriate personal conclusions and resign. As Rafael Eitan was about to complete his term as chief of staff of the IDF in any event, the commission refrained from recommending his dismissal, despite its findings that he failed to issue appropriate orders to prevent the bloodshed. In contrast, the commission recommended the dismissal of Military Intelligence Chief Yehoshua Saguy for ignoring the events in the camps as they were taking place. The commission was also critical of the decision-making process after initial news of the events reached Jerusalem and recommended to continue teaching the soldiers to fulfill basic ethical obligations during wartime as well.

3 Election Appeal 2/84.

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3 Bracha 1982.

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3 The *Bul* Affair: In December 1966, the sensationalist Hebrew language weekly *Bul*
4 reported that the Israeli security services had been involved in the abduction of
0 Moroccan leader Mehdi Ben Barka (1965). The police confiscated all copies of the
magazine immediately following their release and arrested its editors for publishing
"false reports detrimental to state security." The Israeli censor banned publication of
the arrest for 48 hours, and the courts extended the gag order until February 1967.
The editors of *Bul* were convicted of publishing confidential information without
authorization and were sentenced to one year in prison, but were pardoned in April of
that year. The Editors Committee managed to avoid dealing with the issue altogether,
whether because it did not represent *Bul* or because it was convinced that damage had
knowingly been done to state security. The affair had significant reverberations in the
foreign press, which spoke out fiercely against the use of security censorship in Israel.
In Israel, in contrast, the press refrained from discussing the matter in detail due in
part to the fact that such discussion would have been in violation of the law.

3 The *Hadashot* Affair: On April 24, 1984, the daily Israeli newspaper *Hadashot*
4 published photographs of the terrorists who attacked Bus 300 on its way to Ashkelon.
1 The photograph, which had not been submitted to the censor for approval prior to
publication, proved that, counter to the version alleged by the Israeli security services,
the terrorists had been captured alive. The matter was kept secret, but following the
publication a commission was set up under the leadership of Justice Moshe Landau to
launch an inquiry into the death of the prisoners and the General Security Service's
attempt to conceal the facts. As a result of the publication, *Hadashot* was shut down
for four days by order of the military censor, in accordance with the powers granted to
him under the Defense Regulations. As the paper was not represented on the Editors
Committee, it did not enjoy the protection a newspaper represented on the committee
would have enjoyed had it been involved in a similar affair.

3 Goren 1976, 151.

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3 H CJ 262/62.

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3 The Council for the Review of Films and Plays is an Israeli government council
4 responsible for authorizing the presentation of cinematic films, theatrical plays, and
4 other performances. The council, which operated in accordance with the
Cinematography Films Ordinance (1927), is today appointed by the Israeli interior

minister and subject to government approval. Its approximately 30 members consist primarily of public figures and a much smaller number of government officials. The council has subcommittees that provided it with opinions on films and plays brought up for discussion. In the event of disagreement within a committee, the matter is referred to another committee or to the council as a whole. The council was authorized to prohibit the showing of certain sections of a film or play or to ban them altogether. The council banned primarily films and plays, or sections thereof, which contained extreme acts of violence or pornography or did injury to Jewish values or state security. In 1989, censorship on plays in Israel was lifted for a one-year trial period, and after the experiment proved successful, it was terminated altogether, leaving intact only the censorship of films (between 1990 and 1995, the council disqualified five out of a total of 1,000 films, as well as sections of a few others).

3 H CJ 62/243.

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3 H CJ 79/148.

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3 H CJ 95/49, *Na'if Salim al-Khouri v. Chief of Staff*: Al-Khouri was detained by the
4 Israeli security authorities in September 1949 on the charge of murdering two
7 members of Kibbutz Negba during Israel's War of Independence. The order against
al-Khouri was issued in the name of then IDF Chief of Staff Yaakov Dori under the
authority of the Defense (Emergency) Regulations based on the assertion that al-
Khouri constituted a security threat and that he had once taken part in the organizing
and planning of armed attacks against Jews. Al-Khouri challenged the legality of the
order on the grounds that it did not properly identify him and failed to specify a
specific place of detention. In addition, Chief of Staff Dori issued the order based on
recommendations he had received without checking the accuracy of the facts. In
conclusion, al-Khouri claimed that there was no legal way to prove that he had
actually committed the offenses attributed to him. The Court rejected the first
argument, but found the others to be justified, and therefore ordered the petitioner to
be released.

3 H CJ 220/51, *Aslan et al. vs. Military Governor of the Galilee*: Jamal Mahmoud
4 Aslan, an Arab resident of Israel, petitioned the H CJ due to the regional military
8 commander's refusal to permit him and another 30 or so residents of the Western
Galilee village of Rabasiya to return to their village, from which the IDF had expelled
them during the 1948 War. On December 25, 1951, the Supreme Court issued an
order against the military governor of the Galilee obligating him to explain why the
petitioners were not being allowed to return to their village. In his response, the
governor argued that the petitioners were not currently residents of Rabasiya, but
rather of the nearby village of Danun. He also maintained that in the spring of 1951,
Rabasiya was declared a closed military area under the Defense (Emergency)
Regulations. The Court ultimately ruled that, because it was unable to consider the
details of the security considerations guiding the governor, the prohibition would
stand.

3 H CJ 95/49.

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3 Gavison 1992.

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3 The *European Convention on Human Rights*: Since the Universal Declaration of
5 Human Rights, which was approved by the institutions of the United Nations, lacks
1 the legal authority of a binding international convention, a European Convention on
Human Rights was drafted by the Council of Europe and was opened for signature in
Rome on November 4, 1950. Overall, the convention reiterates the principles of the

UN's Universal Declaration but is also legally binding on signatory countries. For the sake of actualizing these obligations, the Council of Europe established a special institution with the authority to pass on citizens' complaints against their own government to the European Court of Human Rights.

3 The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* was drafted by the UN Commission on
5 Human Rights and unanimously adopted by its member states in December 1948
2 (with the abstention of the Soviet Union, Saudi Arabia, and South Africa). The
declaration contains general definitions of democratic rights that are divided into two
categories. The first includes civil and political rights enjoyed by the individual, such
as the right to personal security; to the protection from arbitrary detention, arrest,
and deportation; and to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. The second
category includes more modern social and economic rights, such as the right to social
security, work, education, and participation in cultural life, and the right to enjoy the
arts and scientific advancement.

3 See Ruth Gavison's introduction to *Civil Rights in Israel*, 21.

5
3

3 Although the interior minister's decision has been subject to judicial review (ever
5 since the legal precedent delivered in the *Kol Ha'am* decision) and although the HCJ
4 has stated that it would authorize the closure of newspapers under the Newspapers
Ordinance only in the event of "near certainty" that the public order will indeed be
disrupted, it is actually possible to shut down a newspaper in Israel with no
justification whatsoever by invoking the Defense (Emergency) Regulations. On this
basis, a number of newspapers in East Jerusalem were denied publication licenses.

3 Rottenstreich quoted in Goren 1976, 177.

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3 Goren 1984, 61.

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3 Peleg 2003, 253.

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3 Hermann et al. 2013, 178.

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3 Balint 2003. It should be noted that the legal dimension constituted only one
5 component of these surveys (others included detentions, pressure, and monopolies in
9 the media).

3 Capra 1987.

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3 Begin quoted in *ibid.*

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3 Bracha quoted in *ibid.*

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3 On this distinction, see Rubinstein 1974, 129.

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3

3 *Ibid.*, 126.

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4

3 Shelach 1982, 106.

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3 Landau quoted in Rubinstein 1974, 113.

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3 Ibid., 137; *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Article 16.

6

7

3 Conservative Judaism is a current of Judaism with roots that reach back to 19th-
6 century Europe. The Conservatives maintained that Jewish law should be flexible and
8 adapt to the needs of the time, but objected to extreme deviations from the principles
of Jewish law and to a distancing from tradition. The centers of the movement in
Europe were the Torah study centers of rabbis in Breslau (formerly Germany), Padua
(Italy), and Budapest (Hungary). Some members of the movement settled in the
United States, where they established a new center, which is currently the world
center of Conservative Judaism. The Conservatives initially tried to work within the
Reform movement and to influence it from within, but when they failed to do so it
was decided in 1886 to sever their ties with the Reform movement and to establish
their own organization. Today, Conservative Judaism has more than one million
members and is the world's largest Jewish religious movement. Conservative religious
rulings are not binding on each of its members. In 1976, the Conservative movement
joined the Zionist movement. Although the Israeli establishment does not recognize
its religious authority, the movement has a presence in the country that consists of 35
congregations.

3 Reform Judaism is a movement based on the belief that the Jewish religion and
6 tradition should be updated to be compatible with the surrounding culture. Its origins
9 reach back to 19th-century Western and Central Europe, when it sought to stem the
trend of conversion to Christianity, which was then prevalent among assimilating
intellectuals. The Reform movement portrayed Judaism primarily as a religious faith,
not as a framework of national belonging, and relinquished a large portion of its
practical commandments. The traditional prayer services were modified so as to
remove all traces of the desire to "return to Zion." Today, the center of Reform
Judaism is located in the United States, where its first representative arrived in 1824.
The movement was strengthened by the wave of Jewish immigration from Germany
to the United States following the Revolution of 1848. The Reform movement in the
United States is strong and well established and enjoys significant influence on the
life of the country's Jewish community. The establishment and stabilization of the
State of Israel resulted in a change in the Reform movement's approach to Zionism,
characterized by a return to the Jewish people, without however relinquishing the
components of universalism. In 1972, the Reform movement joined the World Jewish
Congress, and in 1975 it joined the World Zionist Organization.

3 Pluralistic theory regards multiple groups, views, and organizations as a guarantee for
7 the maintaining of balance among the forces of a liberal democratic political system.
0 Stressing the value of multiplicity and variety also encourages the protection of
minorities against the all-powerful majority.

3 Shapiro 1977, 24.

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1

3 Segal 2006.

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3 Reinfeld 2001.

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3 Idem 1997.

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3 The *Law of Return* was enacted by the Knesset on June 5, 1950, and specifies that
7 every Jew is eligible to immigrate to Israel and to become a citizen immediately. The
5 law lists three exceptions in which this general right is not to be granted: if the person
has been engaged in activity against the Jewish people, is likely to endanger the public
health or state security, or has a criminal past that is likely to endanger public welfare.
It was also proposed to include within the law's provisions a prohibition on deporting
Jews from Israel, but this proposal was ultimately rejected in light of the advantages
provided by the Law of Return. Controversy erupted around the question of "Who is a
Jew?" as the original law lacked such a definition. As a result of the pressure of the
religious parties, the Law of Return was amended in 1970 to include Article 4B, which
specifies that "for the purposes of this Law, 'Jew' means a person who was born of a
Jewish mother or has become converted to Judaism and who is not a member of
another religion." This amendment did not satisfy the Orthodox parties, which
demanded to modify it and specify that not all converts, but only individuals
converted to Judaism in accordance with Orthodox religious law, would be regarded
as Jews. They hoped that this would prevent Reform and Conservative conversions.

3 Landau 1997.

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3 Kretzmer 1987.

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3 Avineri 2012.

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3 Zadok 1988.

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3 Lijphart 1984, 38; see also www.democracyranking.org/wordpress/?page_id=14,
8 accessed in 2013.

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3 For example, according to "Freedom in the World Report" published by the Freedom
8 House Organization, Israel's score rose since 1973 from grade 3 to 2 in Civil Liberties,
1 and from grade 2 to 1 in Political Rights: [freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FIW%
202014%20Scores%20-%20Countries%20and%20Territories.pdf](http://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FIW%202014%20Scores%20-%20Countries%20and%20Territories.pdf), accessed January
20, 2014.

3 For example, in 2012, according to the *Democracy Index Report* published by *The*
8 *Economist*, Israel ranked 37, while Lebanon ranked 99, Egypt ranked 109, Jordan
2 ranked 121 and Syria ranked 164. See [www.freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-
world#.UoP2MPL_tqU](http://www.freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-world#.UoP2MPL_tqU), accessed October 24, 2014.

3 I have addressed this debate 15 years ago in Gavison 1999a, 44. Now as then I find the
8 framing problematic.

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3 See references below.

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3 Smootha introduced the archetype: Smootha 2002, 475. See also Peled 2013.

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3 Yiftachel 2000, 725.

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3 See, e.g., Levontin 1995, 521.

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3 There are some disagreements about “brute facts” but they are small. Mostly real
8 disagreements concern narratives and interpretations. Attitudes to the situation may
8 be affected by false or misleading allegations of facts. This fact, too, is part of the
background.

3 Naturally, I cannot fully defend my conceptual choices in this paper. I let the reader
8 judge if they promote or hinder the clarity of the analysis. I have elaborated on these
9 choices in Gavison 2011b.

3 Deviations from majority vote may at times be justified and may even be required, but
9 they offend against the equal value of each vote, and give extra weight to minorities.

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3 Jones 1994.

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3 See Ackerman 1994, 516. Ackerman accepts that the constitutional project of “We the
9 People” is judged by its own constitutional design, even if the products of the process
2 may not be those required by one’s theory of justice. One should fight for one’s ideal,
but not in the name of democracy. Democracy facilitates the struggle, but does not
dictate the results.

3 Egypt since 2011 is a powerful reminder about how democracy itself is used as a
9 rhetorical and military tool against the actions and even the legitimacy of a freely
3 elected ruler. These developments are an important reminder to the fact that rules-of-
the-game democracy is a procedure seeking to reflect a critical principle of legitimacy:
the mandate given by the majority of the population subject to the law.

3 I elaborate on these points in Gavison 1999b.

9

4

3 I believe full neutrality cannot be a value even for paradigmatic civic states like the
9 US. Such states, however, do claim to have a civic identity that may be rich enough to
5 sustain the required level of civic solidarity.

3 As in many charged debates, the terms have become very charged themselves. The
9 description of the state closest to Jewish self-determination is “the nation-state of
6 Jews.” It is preferred by those who fear theocratic tendencies and think that “a Jewish
state” has this connotation. However, the UN resolution talks of Jewish self-
determination and of “a Jewish state.” Some critics of theocracy prefer this term
because “the nation-state of Jews” seems to exclude non-Jews from full citizenship.

3 This definition used to be sufficient even in the context of the Law of Return when it
9 was either dangerous or undesirable to be seen as Jews. The fact that Israel has
7 become a desirable destination means that today further elements reflecting an
authentic affiliation with Judaism are needed to benefit from preference in
immigration. However, not only Jews by Halakha should be eligible. See Gavison and
Medan 2004, 31–40. See online in <https://gavison-medan.co.il/>.

3 Indeed, some claim that Jews are not a people and thus are not entitled to a state. But
9 these are claims aimed at the very legitimacy of Israel and are not related to its alleged
8 democratic flaws. For these claims, see Gavison 2011a.

3 The formulation, chosen in the 1992 Basic Laws protecting human rights, is not
9 optimal. Attributing “Jewishness” to a state is not a simple matter. The Declaration of
9 Independence manages to express the duality between Jewish specificity and
democratic civic equality in more accurate and moving ways.

4 I make statements in this paper about groups, such as Arabs and Jews and subgroups
0 within them. These generalizations are always inaccurate. Democracy in fact tends to
0 increase internal varieties among groups and this is one of its virtues. I do not want to
make my comments cumbersome by always adding reminders of this danger, and this
is a general caveat in this respect.

4 For a general justification of nationalism and an analysis of the justice of Zionism and

o a Jewish nation-state, see, e.g., Gans 2008.

1

4 The Declaration of Independence lists them in its opening paragraphs. Since then, affirming the principle of partition so that Jews and Palestinians enjoy self-determination in parts of their homeland is the consistent position of the international community. See Gavison 2011a.

4 See the comparative review in Yakobson and Rubinstein 2008.

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3

4 Historically, Zionism was a non-religious movement, parts of which were explicitly anti-clerical. Even today, a majority of Zionist Jews are not observers. Ultra-Orthodox Jews, a group of growing size and importance in Israel, are usually non-Zionists, with an anti-Zionist minority.

4 Agbaria and Mustafa 2012, 718–736.

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4 In fact, Israel has gradually enacted comprehensive civil legislation in most matters of personal status, leaving the application of religious law as a matter of choice. A strong legal religious monopoly remains on the books, but not always in action, concerning matters of marriage, divorce and conversion. For an historical account of the legal arrangements in Israel, see Harris 2002, 21–55.

4 See, e.g., Westreich and Shifman 2013, in which two Orthodox Jewish scholars advocate abolishing the Orthodox monopoly over marriage and divorce because of a commitment to Israel as both Jewish and democratic.

4 The attitude of non-Jewish communities is more complex. See below.

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4 See Gavison and Medan 2004, 42–54.

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9

4 Ibid., 22–41. This is a very strong illustration of the institutional sensitivities. The halakhic definition of a “Jew” in the Law of Return is the backlash of the Knesset to a judicial decision that demanded that the children of a Jewish father and an agnostic Christian mother be registered as Jewish in their nationality.

4 This goes back to my preference to use “democracy” in a procedural sense, so that it does not include the protection of all human rights, see above.

1

4 Most Christian democracies are either neutral or have old establishment arrangements that are primarily symbolical and expressive. Yet in terms of social and political reality, countries are different according to the relative strength in them of strong religious groups. For a discussion of Moslem countries and Israel, see, e.g., Hirschl 2011. The book does not do justice to the complex relations of national and religious elements in Judaism.

4 Thus there is broad de-facto recognition of same sex couples, and a legal and judicial vindication of a civil union arrangement in many of its form. Nonetheless, a change in the law allowing same sex marriage or a judicial recognition of such marriage seems at present unlikely.

4 Thus there is a tension between the secular and national religious drive to force the integration of ultra-Orthodox men into the military and the economy and the wish to maintain full gender equality and integration in the same places.

4 Moses and Hellinger 2014, 14–18.

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4 Michael Karayanni points out the complex implications of this situation to the role of religion in the Arab minority in Karayanni 2007, 333.

6

4 See, e.g., Gavison and Medan 2004, 55–62 (arrangements on Sabbath); Gavison and
1 Perez 2008.

7

4 In fact, some of the Arab vision statements suggest a regime that will protect only the
1 national rights of the Arabs, leaving open the possibility that the state may become an
8 Arab state in the future, since they do not include recognition of the national rights of
Jews, and describe them as colonialists and imperialists. See note 26 above.

4 Gavison 2013.

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4 Israel evacuated Gaza in 2005, and there is some debate whether it is still occupied
2 territory.

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4 See the fascinating discussion in Lustick 1993.

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4 Smootha 2002, 475.

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4 Smootha 1997, 200.

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4 Kretzmer 2002; Dowty 2001, chapter 10. For a statement of the “control system”
2 approach, see Kimmerling 1989, 265–284.

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4 Ghanem, Rouhana, and Yiftachel 1998, 255.

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4 *Ibid.*, 261. Emphasis in the original.

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4 On *de jure* discrimination against non-Jews, see Kretzmer 1990, 17–22.

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4 Yiftachel 2006.

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4 The National Committee for the Heads of the Arab Local Authorities in Israel 2006, 9.
2 This section of the document specifically credits the research of As’ad Ghanem.

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4 Kimmerling 2001, 181.

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4 Yiftachel 2006, 90.

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4 Rustow 1967, 94, 290.

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4 Dahl 1971, 3, 9, 248.

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4 Vanhanen 1991, 27.

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4 Coppedge and Reinecke 1991, 47–68.
3
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4 Lijphart 1984, 2, 38, and 1994.
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4 Powell 1982, 3, 5.
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4 Przeworski et al. 2000, 18–28, 59–69.
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4 Freedom House, *Freedom in the World*; idem 2006–2013.
3
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4 Marshall and Cole 2011.
4
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4 Pemstein, Merserve, and Melton 2010.
4
1
4 Economist Intelligence Unit, *Democracy Index 2012*.
4
2
4 For example Peleg 2007.
4
3
4 Yiftachel 2006, 34. Yiftachel cites a single source in support of this generalization
4 about the literature of the field: Held 1987, 1996, 2006. But in fact Held applies the
4 “minimal” criteria proposed (see above) by Robert Dahl (2006 edition, 271).
4 Center for Palestine Research and Studies, “Results of Public Opinion Poll No. 38, 7–
4 9 January, 1999.” In a 2002 poll by the Palestine Center for Policy and Survey
5 Research, 66% of Palestinians held a positive view of the status of democracy and
human rights in Israel (<http://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/370>).
4 Kretzmer 1990.
4
6
4 See note 14.
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4 Dahl 1971, 106–121. See also the study by van den Berghe 1969.
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8
4 Dowty 2001.
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4 Snyder 1990, 230.
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4 Scruton 1982, 313.
5
1
4 This includes some states that also recognize *jus solis*; a partial list would include
5 Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Liberia, Poland, Sri Lanka,

2 Switzerland, and the United Kingdom as well as the Soviet Union and most Soviet successor states. See Donner 1994, 32, 69, 114–119; United Nations Legal Department, *Laws Concerning Nationalities* (United Nations ST/LEG/ ser.B/4, 1954), 222–224, 386–387. The Israeli Law of Return can also be defended as a policy of selective immigration, rather than an extension of a particular conception of citizenship; since all states practice selective immigration, the question then becomes the legitimacy of selection on ethnic grounds, and again Israel is not unique in this regard.

4 Klein 1987, 4; United Nations Legal Department, *Supplement to the Volume on Laws Concerning Nationality* (United Nations ST/LEG/ser.B/9, 1959), 118; Brubaker 1990, 386–387, 396, 400; Steger and Wagner 1993, 65, 67.

4 United Nations, *Laws Concerning Nationalities*, 466.

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4 Lijphart 1990, 494–495, 503.

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4 Israel, Election Appeal 2/88 Ben Shalom v. Chairman of Central Elections Committee, 43(2) *Piskei Din* [Judicial Rulings] 221.

6

4 Weingrod 1993.

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4 Rouhana and Ghanem 1998.

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4 Ghanem 1999, 2005 and 2006.

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4 Smootha 2005; Gavison and Hacker 2000; Gavison 1999.

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4 See http://www.hofesh.org.il/yoman/o2/amanat_kinneret.html, accessed February 23, 2014.

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4 See, for example, Ozacky-Lazar, Ghanem, and Pappé 1999.

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4 Benziman 2006.

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4 Ghanem and Mustafa 2009.

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4 Shamgar 2005, 91.

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4 *Ibid.*, 91–93.

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4 The Israel Democracy Institute claims that 77.4% of Arabs would support a constitution that recognizes the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. Many have criticized the way the question was phrased: it links the identity of the state with equality for Arabs, without making clear the content of this identity from a constitutional and legal standpoint. The question should have been phrased as

follows: “Do you support the identification of the state as a Jewish and democratic state in which Arabs enjoy equality?” The annual survey by the Mada al-Carmel Center in 2004 found that 62% of Arabs believe that Israel cannot be both a Jewish and a democratic country.

4 Ozacky-Lazar and Ghanem 2003.

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4 Arian et al. 2004, 2005 and 2006.

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4 Ghanem and Mustafa 2007, 56–60.

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4 Ghanem 2001; Ghanem and Rouhana 2001.

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4 Rekhess 1993; Ghanem and Mustafa 2009, 52–54.

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2

4 Payes 2005.

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4 Ozacky-Lazar and Kabha 2008.

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4 Rekhess 1993.

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4 Landau 1993.

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4 Cohen 1990.

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4 Lustick 1980.

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4 The Accommodationists represent the current that accepts the inferior status of
7 Palestinians in Israel as a Jewish state. The Reservationists have accepted the Jewish
9 character of the state, but still struggle to improve the status of Palestinians in Israel.
The Oppositionists demand changing the Jewish character of the state and a change
in the status of Palestinians under the new framework. The Rejectionists are opposed
to the existence of Israel.

4 Al-Haj 1993.

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4 Al-Haj 1993, 65.

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4 Smootha 1992.

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4 Zureik 1979; Nakhleh 1979.

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4 Lustick 1980.
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4
4 Ibid.
8
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4 Yiftachel and Ghanem 2004.
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4 Al-Haj 2006.
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7
4 Zureik 1979; Nakhleh 1979.
8
8
4 Kymlicka 1995.
8
9
4 Jamal 2005, 27–30.
9
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4 Kimmerling and Migdal 1993, chapter 5.
9
1
4 Jamal 2005, 27.
9
2
4 See <http://undesadspd.org/indigenouspeoples/declarationontherightsofindigenousp9oples.aspx>, accessed February 23, 2015.
3
4 Ibid. This declaration is based on the United Nations General Assembly Resolution
9 No. 47/135 of December 1992.
4
4 Gurr 1993.
9
5
4 About this debate, see Ghanem and Mustafa 2009.
9
6
4 Kimmerling and Migdal 1993, chapter 5.
9
7
4 Yiftachel and Ghanem 2004.
9
8
4 Ibid.
9
9
5 Yakobson and Rubinstein 2003.
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5 For details, see Ram 1995; Shafir and Peled 2002.
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1
5 Zureik 1979; Nakhleh 1979.

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5 Yiftachel and Ghanem 2004.
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5 Rouhana and Ghanem 1998.
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5 Elkins and Pederson 2005, 2; Veracini 2010, 1–15.
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5 Benton 2010, 28–31.
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6
5 Ibid., 2–4.
0
7
5 Shenhav 2011, 37.
0
8
5 Veracini 2010, 53.
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9
5 Shafir 1989, 7–12.
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5 Fredrickson 1988, 281–221, see also Fieldhouse 1966.
1
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5 Shafir 1989, 151–154.
1
2
5 Ibid., 198.
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3
5 Ibid., 146–186.
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4
5 Ibid., 213–215.
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5 Elkins and Pedersen 2005, 2.
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6
5 Shafir 2013, 165; Elkins and Pedersen 2005.
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7
5 Veracini 2010, 168.
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5 Ibid., 14.
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5 Ussishkin 1964, 118.
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5 Lein 2002, 52; Hareuveni 2010, 25–26.

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5 Lein 2002, 47.

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5 Ibid., 47–48.

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5 Ibid., 48–51; Hareuveni 2010, 22–23.

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5 Kretzmer 2002, 79–81; Zertal and Eldar 2007, 346–348.

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5 Lein 2002, 50; Hareuveni 2010, 22–23.

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5 Kretzmer 2002, 85–89; Hareuveni 2010, 22.

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5 Kurtzer 2010, 9.

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5 Hareuveni 2010, 24.

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5 Ibid., 25–26.

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5 Lein 2002, 55–58.

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5 Ibid., 58–59.

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5 Ibid., 60–61; Hareuveni 2010, 29–30.

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5 Lein 2002, 61–62; Hareuveni 2010, 30.

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5 Hareuveni 2010, 28–29, 33–35.

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5 Efrat 2003, 61.

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5 Sasson 2005.

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5 Harel 2006.

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5 Blau 2009.
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5 Hareuveni 2010, 33.
4
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5 Ibid., 31–32.
4
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5 Kretzmer 2002, 197.
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5 Kurtzer 2010, 11.
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5 Hareuveni 2010, 15–16.
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5 Kurtzer 2010, 2; Hareuveni 2010, 13.
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5 Lein 2002, 17.
4
6
5 Hareuveni 2010, 17–19.
4
7
5 Lein 2002, 47; Hareuveni 2010, 5; “Land Expropriation and Settlements,” January 1,
4 2011, accessed June 18, 2015, <http://www.btselem.org/settlements>.
8
5 Benvenisti 1990; Hareuveni 2010, 66–67.
4
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5 Benvenisti 1990.
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5 Hareuveni 2010, 65.
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5 Benvenisti 1990.
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5 See Schoeps 2013a.
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5 See idem 1997.
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5 See especially Hagemann 2010, 14–21.
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5
5 See Schoeps 2014.
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6
5 See Klausner 1958.

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7
5 See Schoeps 2013b, 185–186.
5
8
5 Ben Ami quoted in Bein 1934, 341.
5
9
5 Berlin Office of the Zionist Organization 1922, 32.
6
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5 Hagemann 2010, 326.
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5 Amital quoted in Rubinstein 2001, 154.
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5 Hess 1862.
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5 Zionist Congress 1898, 7.
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5 Hagemann 2010, 302.
6
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5 Achad Haam 1923, 84ff. and 113ff.
6
6
5 Ibid., 87.
6
7
5 Elon 1972, 175.
6
8
5 Goldmann 1970, 387.
6
9
5 See here the dissertation by Dieter Wiechmann which the author supervised at the
7 University of Duisburg, Wiechmann 1998.
0
5 Rülff 1883.
7
1
5 See Gorenberg 2012, 221ff.
7
2
5 See Rubinstein 2001, 329.
7
3
5 For more on the current debate in Israel, see Schäfer 2000, with essays by Benny
7 Morris, Ilan Pappé, Uri Ram, and Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin.
4
5 Laqueur 1972, 619.
7

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5 See Avni 1991.
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5 See Gorny 2006.
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5 See Ben-Artzi 1996.
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5 See Praver 1972; Ohana 2012.
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5 Neuberger 2009.
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5 See also Metzer 2013.
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5 Smith 1995.
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5 Katz 1983, 1986.
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5 Shalev 1996.
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5 Hartz 1964a, 1964b.
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5 Turner 1998.
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6
5 Ibid., 31, 34.
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5 Kimmerling 1983.
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5 Tartakower 1958.
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5 Shinan 1982.
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5 Rodinson 1973.
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5 Smootha 1978.
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2
5 Shafir 1996, 192.
9
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5 Idem 1989, 1996, 2007.
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4
5 See also Maunier 1949.
9
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5 Rodinson 1973, 92.
9
6
5 Ibid., 65.
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5 Ibid., 38.
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8
5 Ibid., 39.
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9
6 See Hobson 1988; Memmi 1967; Kiernan 1969; Curtin 1971; Césaire 1972; Betts 1976;
0 Fanon 1985; Bitterli 1989; Shenhav 2004.
0
6 Shafir 1989, 1996, 2007; Shafir and Peled 2002.
0
1
6 Fieldhouse 1982, 1983.
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6 Fredrickson 1988.
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6 Shafir 2007, 86.
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4
6 Idem 1996, 192–193.
0
5
6 See Maunier 1949; Kohn 1958; Nadel and Curtis 1964; Balandier 1966; Horvath 1972;
0 Fieldhouse 1983; Osterhammel 1997.
6
6 See Wolfe 1999; Krautwurst 2003; Elkins and Pedersen 2005; Veracini 2006, 2010,
0 2013a, 2013b; Piterberg 2008, 2010.
7
6 Wolfe 1999.
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8
6 Ibid., 1–2.
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9
6 See Memmi 1967; Césaire 1972; Fanon 1985; Loomba 2005.
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6 Wolfe 1999, 1.
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6 See Shenhav 2004.

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6 Wolfe 1999.
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6 Piterberg 2008, 2010.
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6 Prochaska 1990.
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6 Elkins and Pedersen 2005.
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6
6 See Veracini 2006, 2010, 2013b.
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7
6 Denoon 1979, 1983.
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8
6 See Smooha 2010.
1
9
6 See Shapira 1995; Lissak 1996.
2
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6 Sivan 1988; see also Halamish 2005; Efrat 2006, 2010; Sternhell 2010.
2
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6 Sivan 1988.
2
2
6 Benvenisti 1988.
2
3
6 See also Silberstein 1999.
2
4
6 Rodinson 1973.
2
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6 Friling 2003; Gelber 2007; Sternhell 2010.
2
6
6 See also de Silva 1982.
2
7
6 See also Kimmerling 1983.
2
8
6 Maunier 1949.
2
9
6 Elkins and Pedersen 2005.
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6 Aaronsohn 1993, 1996; Lissak 1996; Friling 2003; Gelber 2007; Sternhell 2010.

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6 Rodinson 1973.

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6 Friling 2003; Gelber 2007.

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6 See Gunder Frank 1979; de Silva 1982; Prochaska 1990; Shafir 2007.

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6 Avishai 1990; Aaronsohn 1996; Ben-Rafael 1997.

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6 Avishai 1990.

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6 Maunier 1949; Kohn 1958; Nadel and Curtis 1964; Balandier 1966; Horvath 1972;

3 Fieldhouse 1983; Osterhammel 1997.

7

6 Aaronsohn 1996.

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6 Ibid., 217.

3

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6 Osterhammel 1997.

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6 See also Shamir 2000; Peled and Shafir 2005.

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6 See Jacoby 1999.

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6 Peled and Shafir 2005, 35.

4

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6 See Keller 1908; Maunier 1949; Harrison Church 1951; Tartakower 1958; Lüthy 1964;

4 Finley 1976; Ferro 1997.

4

6 See Avni 1991.

4

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6 See Mailer 1974.

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6 See Tartakower 1958.

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6 Ginossar and Bareli 1996, 3–13.

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6 Katz-Freiman 1996, 124–126.

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6 Ginossar and Bareli 1996, 3–13.

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6 See in length Friedman 1984.

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6 On history as fabric, see Frederic William Maitland: “All history is but a seamless web.”; Michael Joseph Oakeshott: “Historical events are themselves circumstantial convergences of antecedent historical events; what they are how they came to be woven.” cited in Weinryb 1977, 43.

6 Fieldhouse 1981; Gelber 2003, and 2007, 412–416; Bishara 1998.

5

3

6 Gelber 2003, and 2007, 416 refers to Kimmerling and Migdal and words of the American-Palestinian historian Rashid Khalidi. Bareli 2003.

4

6 Gelber 2003, and 2007, 182; Taub 2003.

5

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6 Bishara 1998, 257; Gelber 2007, 416. Back in the 1920s and 1930s the communists rejected the Zionist project for it is “colonial nature.” Followed by Jewish communists were the members of “Matzpen” – a radical anti-Zionist group that operated in 1960s and 1970s – who attributed to Zionism all the sins of the old and the new capitalism together. In the 1960s and 1970s publicist literature criticizing the Zionist past and Israeli present began to see light – still outside of academia. From the late 1970s books appeared also in the West that offered anti-Israel version of the history of the conflict and particularly highlighted the injustice caused by Israel and the West to the Palestinians.

6 British declaration of sympathy for Zionist aspirations, given by Britain’s Foreign Secretary, Arthur James Balfour in November 1917.

7

6 Bishara 1998, 262–264.

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8

6 Ibid., 262–264. There also Gershom Scholem’s words from 1931, cited from Scholem 1989.

9

6 Bishara 1998, 264–266.

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6 Gelber 2007, 413–414; Taub 2003, 234–235. See Silberstein 1999; Bareli 2003.

6

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6 Bishara 1998, 260–261, presents Gershon Shafir’s approach. Bareli 2003, 310–314, on the correspondence between Pappé and his colleagues, analyses of the concept of Zionism of the right-wing (or anti-Arabic) description of Uriel Shelach (the poet Yonatan Ratosh) and the Ancient East researcher Adaya Gur Horon; Gelber 2007, 413–414.

6 Gelber 2003; Shapira 2003; Aronson 2003, among other things on *Theory and Criticism* journal founders’ contribution to this concept; Bishara 1998, 268.

3

6 Bishara 1998, 257–258 conveys Herzl’s Arabic hero in *Altneuland* words and cites a

6 letter from Weizmann to Alfred Zimmern from 1915 (Weizmann n. d.). There also
4 Weizmann's letter to Leopold Amery from 1918 (Weizmann 1977) on the
hardworking, enterprising and education loving Jews in contrast to the lazy,
uncivilized, grubby and aggressive people of the region.

6 Israel Zangwill (1864–1926). Well-known British Jewish author and Zionist activist.
6 One of the founders of the Jewish Territorial Movement.

5

6 Bishara 1998, 259–260, cites Gorny 1985.

6

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6 Bishara 1998, 259–260.

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6 Ibid., 261.

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6 Lissak 2003.

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9

6 Gelber 2007, 414–415, on Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin's dissertation. Raz-Krakotzkin's
7 words rely, inter alia, on Baer's and Dinur's programmatic article in the first volume
0 of *Zion*.

6 Gelber 2003; Taub 2003.

7

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6 Friling 2003; Gelber 2007, 182–183. There on the inception of a trend of
7 radicalization in writing of the Third World's history as expressed by Frantz Fanon:
2 “Comrades, have we not other work to do than to create a third Europe? [...] It is a
question of the Third World starting a new history of man [...]” There also on the
sympathy of the left-wing circles in France to Fanon's perception, in which
colonialism is presented as the original sin and fascism as “[c]olonialism that was
back home, to Europe.” Bishara 1998, 255.

6 Lissak 2003.

7

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6 Horowitz and Lissak 1978, 19–20; Metzger 1998, 214–215; Shamir 2000, ix.

7

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6 Friling 2005, 90–96, 183–189.

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6 Idem 2014, 3–4.

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6 Aronson 2003; on the British economic policy, a policy that maintained the local
7 population's needs, see Metzger 1998, 200–212.

7

6 Friling 2014, 203–210.

7

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6 Alpha Plan: British and American plan designed to end the Arab-Israeli conflict that
7 called for Israel to cede territories seized during the War of Independence, including
9 two triangles in the Negev, to agree to the return of refugees and to pay compensation
to all others.

6 Friling 2014, 221–222.

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6 Aronson 1999, 318; Aronson and Brosh 1992, 17–39.

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6 Gelber 2003, and 2007, 419–420. Palestinian scholars and Israeli post-Zionist
8 sociologists often indicate foreign landlords, like the Sursuq family from Beirut, as the
2 sellers that cause, to their words, to the Palestinian lessee disposition.

6 Gelber 2007, 419–420; Bareli 2003; Taub 2003; Lissak 2003; Kimmerling 1983, 121–
8 133 and also 238: map of state-owned lands during the Mandate period.

3

6 Gelber 2007, 417–420, there data from Baruch Kimmerling, Gershon Shafir and their
8 interpretation to it; several articles from the Arabic press calling not to sell lands to
4 the Jews; and disregarding Yehoshua Porath's two books of the history of the
National Palestinian Movement and Michael Assaf's and Yaacov Shimoni's works.

6 Lissak 2003; Gelber 2003; the martial law was abolished in 1966 by Levi Eshkol's
8 administration. During the 1950s and the 1960s there have been several legislative
5 efforts and other initiatives to abolish it, but all were rejected. See Cohen 2006;
Ozacky-Lazar 2010; Bishara 1998, 267–268, about the martial law, the deportation
and the Zionist takeover of the deportee lands.

6 Gelber 2003; Bareli 2003.

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6 Gelber 2003; Bareli 2003.

8
7

6 Horowitz and Lissak 1978 reject the claim that they ignored the Arabic question.
8 Shapira 2003.

8

6 Gorny 2003; Shapira 2003; both convey numerous evidences of the Jewish
8 community's engagement in the conflict and its constant attempts to seek political
9 and security solutions.

6 Lissak 2003.

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6 Shapira 2003.

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1

6 Lissak 2003.

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2

6 Morris 2010; Bishara 1998, 267–268, on the Zionist disposition and takeover of the
9 deportee lands.

3

6 Lissak 2003.

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4

6 Gelber 2007, 416–418.

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5

6 Ibid., 418–419.

9
6

6 Ibid.

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7

6 Ibid., 415.

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6 Friling 1995, 5–9.

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7 Gelber 2007, 415; Ben-Zion Dinur (1884–1973) wrote numerous books (mainly
0 collections of documents) that became inalienable property in many Zionist houses
0 (*Yisrael BaGeula*, *Yisrael BeArtzu*, *Sefer HaTzionut*), and took part in the foundation
of several journals (*Tzion*, *Kiryat Sefer*). Uri Ram wrote about him: “As for Dinur
writing about the Jewish history was not just a profession but historical mission by
itself. Writing the national history was part of historical national deed he took part in.
Like most of his colleagues in the early days of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem,
he did not put a barrier between his political personality and his academic one. He
was well aware of the role of knowing the past in designing the present and of the role
of historians in writing the national story and teaching it [...]. Knowing the past is not
the historian’s only duty, he should also enroll it to achieve the national missions.” On
Dinur, see Conforti 2009, 95; Merom 2000; Rein 2000; Ram 1996, 131; Schalom
1954, 44.

7 Gelber 2007, 414–416 on Raz-Krakotzkin’s work. There too on the argument that the
0 Hebrew University of Jerusalem represents Zionist colonialism; that from the day it
1 was founded it used to be a colonialist institute that was not destined for the country’s
population but for its new immigrants, and that it prevented the establishment of new
universities designed for the “natives.” Gelber 2007, 416–421. There also Gelber’s
answer to this argument, showing that the Arab students and graduates, in different
stage of education and ages, were required elementary schools and not higher
education. It should also be mentioned that the Hebrew University of Jerusalem
offered teaching and research facilities for Jewish teachers that were expelled from
European universities and to young Jews who were not accepted there because of
numerus clausus.

7 Taub 2003; for a clear example of a connecting line between 1967 to Zionism from its
0 inception, where colonialism is the key explanation, see Bishara 1998, 256–258.

2 Bishara holds to Gershon Shafir’s words according to which “[f]irst there is a
similarity in principle, even if there is a certain difference between Zionist settlement
and European colonization processes overseas, and secondly, the changes in the
Israeli society after 1967 should be understood not as a transition from a socialist
Zionist society to right-colonial society, but as continuation of the colonial project
while moving from one colonization to another [...].” Shafir 1993. See also idem 1989,
135–145. On the typology of colonialism which Shafir required, see Shamir 2000, 16–
17 and lately Nusseibeh 2014.

7 Taub 2003; there too on the American sources of the concept imported by the post-
0 Zionists to the Israeli discourse, including Edward Said’s influence as one of leading
3 preachers for “a state of all its citizens.” On Said’s contribution to the post-Zionist
discourse, see also Gelber 2003, and 2007, 412. According to Gelber Said uses the
“Orientalism” theory as a tool to manage political propaganda when it comes to Arab-
Jewish conflict, and his words were used by Palestinian academics, along with
politicians and academics from diverse fields in Israel and abroad, to prove the
colonialist nature of Zionism especially of “Greater” Israel after 1967. Gelber points to
the fact that in this argument contemporary theories of social science that rest on very
little historical evidences are used – and they often indicate the opposite – and in
particular are based on biased interpretations that confuse between past and present.
They are primarily used as an ideological weapon and as propaganda in the Arab-
Jewish conflict. See also Bareli 2003 on Edward Said and Homi Bhabha, and on the
reasons and motivations that led to the spreading of their messages. Also Grossman
2014, a call not to give up and abandon the efforts to find a way to compromise.

7 Newman 2001.
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7 Don-Yehiyeh 1998.
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7 Ibid.; Gorny 2001, 3–12.
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7 Don-Yehiyeh 1998; Kelman 1998.
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7 Kelman 1998.
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7 Rubinstein 2000.
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7 Ben-Moshe 2005; Aronson 2003.
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7 Kelman 1998.
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7 Newman 2001.
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7 Aronson 2003.
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7 Ibid.; Ben-Moshe 2005; Dalsheim 2007; Don-Yehiyeh 1998; Kelman 1998; Pappé
1 2000; Shapira 2006; Weissbrod 1981.
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7 Segev 2001, 13–41.
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7 Ben-Israel 2002.
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7 Ibid.
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7 Ibid.
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7 Friling 2003, 13.
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7 Ibid.
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7 Ben-Moshe 2005.
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7 Ibid.

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7 Ibid.
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7 Kelman 1998.
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7 Aronson 2003.
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7 Ben-Moshe 2005.
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7 Kelman 1998.
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7 Ibid.
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7 Ram 2007.
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7 Sand 2012, 179–250.
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7 Idem 2008, 71–128; Eisenstadt and Lissak 1999.
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7 Gans 2008, 9–24.
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7 Chowers 2012, 19–71; Eisenstadt and Lissak 1999; Schweid 2012, 9–77.
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7 Shenhav 2010, 60–72.
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7 Pedatzur 1996.
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7 Friling 2003.
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7 Ram 2007.
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7 Newman 2001.
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7 Shlaim 1988; Pappé 1988; Flapan 1987; Morris 1987.
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7 Morris 1988. According to Morris’s definition, the term included works by Uri
4 Milstein, author of a monumental and controversial version of the War of

o Independence, and Tom Segev, author of *1949: The First Israelis* (New York: The Free Press, 1986) and *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust* (New York: Domino Press, 1991). See also Morris 1989. But according to Pappé 1989, journalists who dabble in historical writing do not deserve to be considered members of the guild; a university education alone ensures serious historiographical work (unlike the works of Simha Flapan and Shabtai Teveth).

7 Ram 1994a, 1994b.

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7 Raz-Krakotzkin 1993, 1991; Zeltin 1994.

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7 Kimmerling 1994, 1993, and 1994.

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7 See Levi and Peled 1993.

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7 See Ram 1994a, 1994b. See also Hadari-Ramaj 1993; Pappé 1989, 1993, and 1994.

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7 An exception is Simha Flapan, who was a member of the left-wing Mapam party, an active politician, an ideologue and educated publicist with no academic pretensions, a Zionist of the old school.

7 Historians such as Netanel Lorch, Elhanan Oren and Meir Pa'il have been extensively criticized. See Morris 1989 and 1988b, 19–21; Milstein 1991.

7

7 Megged 1994. The debate lasted some weeks in the press and culminated in a Symposium held at Tel Aviv University in early July 1994. Most of the discussion was published in *Haaretz*, June 17 and 24, and July 1, 8, 15 and 22, 1994.

7 The Palmach was an elite military unit consisting of the best of Jewish youth in Palestine. It took the brunt of the fighting during the early, crucial stages of the War of Independence, suffering heavy casualties.

7 Morris 1988b, 23; Hadari-Ramaj 1993. Except for the period from February to March 1948 and the first three weeks after May 15, 1948 (the invasion of the Arab states' armies following the declaration of the establishment of the State of Israel), Israeli forces were numerically stronger than the Palestinian and even the invading forces. This fact was already known to historians such as Gavriel Cohen and Mordechai Bar-On in the 1950s and was even absorbed into studies by the IDF history division. It has been accepted for years by leading researchers in the field, such as Avraham Sela, and there is nothing new about it. (This information was verified in discussions with Prof. Cohen and Dr. Sela.)

7 Morris 1988a, 385–396, and 1988b, 99. As for challenges to Morris from the Palestinian side, see Finkelstein 1991; Masalha 1991, and Morris 1991 (all in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 21, no. 1 [1991]); and Finkelstein 1992, 61–71.

7 Morris is aware of this and relates to the point in his "Response to Finkelstein and Masalha," 113. See also Teveth 1989, 1990; and Morris 1990.

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7 The story of the Israeli-Hashemite plot is the basis for Shlaim's book, *Collusion across the Jordan*. He and Pappé attribute less significance to the circumstances leading to the war than to its results. On this issue, see Pappé 1986, 1991. See also idem 1993. Raz-Krakotzkin 1991 adopts a similar approach. For a different approach to Israel-Abdullah relations, see Sela 1992.

7 Raz-Krakotzkin speaks of ensuring justice for the vanquished. Shlaim and Pappé question Morris's conclusions and charge Israel with a plan for total expulsion,

4 following the claims by Halid Walidi that Plan D, the military plan to gain control of territories in anticipation of May 15, was in effect an order for total expulsion. Pappé even declared that the establishment of Israel was not worth the expulsion of 750,000 Arabs. See Raz-Krakotzkin 1991 and 1993, 44ff.; Zeltin 1994. For more on the dispute between Morris and those who blame Israel for planning and carrying out the expulsion, see the articles by Masalha and Finkelstein (note 13 above).

7 Statements to this effect recur in articles by Pappé, Raz-Krakotzkin and Peled, and
5 were voiced openly in the many meetings on the debate – hence also the sensitivity to
5 Megged’s critique, since he again used concepts of the classical Zionist Left.

7 On the issue of “Jewish labor,” see Shapira 1977.

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7 See idem 1992.

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7 See, for example, Ram 1994b.

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7 Raz-Krakotzkin 1993.

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7 Ibid., 35.

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7 Ibid., 44–45.

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7 This point is stressed by Ram 1994a.

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7 Pappé 1993, 104–110, and 1994; Kimmerling 1994. See Said 1978.

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7 See Shapira 1994.

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7 Shapira, “Characteristics of Processes of Shifts to the Left,” in idem 1988, 245–247.

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7 Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob 1994.

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7 Shavit 2013b.

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7 Morris 1988.

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7 Sand 2009.

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7 Shenhav 2006.

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7 See Shavit 2013b.

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7 See Trigano 2002a.

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7 Deutscher 1968.

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7 Ibid., 26.

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7 Ibid.

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7 See Trigano 2003.

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7 See Morin 1989.

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7 See Trigano 2002b.

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7 See idem 2004.

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7 Wistrich 1994, 64–67.

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7 See idem 2010 for an overview of the subject.

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7 Taguieff 2010, 143–182.

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7 See Elpeleg 1993.

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7 Wistrich 1985, 172, 176–178, 188.

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7 Bostom 2008, 31ff.

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7 Sivan 1990, 74–82.

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7 On Ahmadinejad and the antisemitic Iranian state ideology of “annihilating Israel,”

8 see the last chapter of Wistrich 2010, 879–938.

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7 Ibid., 600–630 for the globalization of these attitudes.

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7 See Spiegel Online International 2006; MEMRI 2006.

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7 Morris 2009, 31.
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7 Bard 2006, 247.
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7 Morris 2009, 158.
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7 Wistrich 2005, 1–7.
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7 Fallaci quoted in Harris 2004, 361.
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7 Wistrich 2007, 9–13.
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7 Lawrence Summers, Address at Memorial Church, Harvard University, September 17,
9 2002. See also the introduction by Rosenbaum in idem 2004.
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7 Zoloth quoted by Todd Gitlin, motherjones.com, June 27, 2002. Also Eli Muller,
9 yaledailynews.com, March 1, 2003 for an example from Yale. For an updated view of
7 the situation today on the Californian campus of Santa Cruz, see Rossman-Benjamin
2011.
7 Taguieff 2010, 180–205. See also Wistrich 2012, 509–534.
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7 Wistrich 2007, 13–14.
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8 Idem 2012, 60–62.
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8 Idem 2010, 465–493.
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8 Roniger 2009, 1–36.
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8 See Gerstenfeld 2008, 18–77.
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8 Gaarder 2006.
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8 Goldhagen 2012.
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8 Columbani 1981; Fresco 1980.
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8 See the booklet by Cohn 1988, 11–12. The Holocaust deniers of the Institute for
0 Historical Review approvingly published Noam Chomsky’s article, “All Denials of Free

7 Speech Undercut a Democratic Society,” in its house organ, the *Journal of Historical Review*.

8 Givet 1986.

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8 See Guillaume 1986.

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8 Conan 1996, 33; Conan and Stein 1996.

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8 On Nolte, the West German *Historikerstreit*, and its implications, there is a significant literature. See Evans 1989, 24–91. A good example of Nolte’s own approach can be found in Nolte 1985.

8 For a probing analysis of the links between Arab anti-Zionist and antisemitic demonology, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and Holocaust “revisionism,” see Taguieff 1992, 295–363.

8 Nordbruch 2001; see also Taguieff 2008.

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8 See ADL 2001, 5–6. Abu Mazen never retracted his Holocaust denial book despite a request to do so from the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles.

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8 See *Imam* (March 1984 and May 1984) – a publication of the Iranian Embassy in London; also *The Imam against Zionism* 1983, for the Ayatollah Khomeini’s malevolent view of Israel.

8 *The Jerusalem Post*, April 25, 2001. A year earlier, the conservative English-language Iranian newspaper, *The Tehran Times*, had insisted in an editorial that the Holocaust was “one of the greatest frauds of the 20th century.” This prompted a complaint by the British MP Louise Ellman to the Iranian ambassador in London: *Agence France-Presse*, May 14, 2000.

8 Sontag 2000. Sabri added: “It’s certainly not our fault if Hitler hated the Jews. Weren’t they pretty much hated everywhere?”

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8 Al-Agha quoted in ADL 2001, 12.

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8 ADL 2001, 8–9.

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8 The remarks were made at Friday prayers held at the University of Tehran on December 15, 2001 and widely reported in the world press. A day earlier on Iranian TV, Rafsanjani stated: “The establishment of the State of Israel is the worst event in history. The Jews living in Israel will have to migrate once more.”

8 It is no accident that European Holocaust deniers like the Austrian engineer, Wolfgang Fröhlich, and the Swiss Jürgen Graf, are welcomed and resident in Iran. See ADL 2001, 7–8.

8 Garaudy 1996. A former Catholic, then a Communist, Garaudy became a Muslim in 1982 and married a Jerusalem-born Palestinian woman. On the echoes in France, see Taguieff 1996, 215; Igounet 2000, 472–483. See also Igounet’s newly published biography, *Robert Faurisson, portrait d’un négationniste*, which among other things, casts light on Garaudy’s borrowings from Faurisson and the often tense relations between them.

8 *Al-Risala* (Gaza), April 13, 2000. In *Al-Risala*, August 21, 2003, Abdelaziz al-Rantisi – then the second most important leader of the Hamas – insisted that the Zionists

3 had invented and diffused the “Holocaust lie” to divert attention from their wicked crimes against the Palestinians. I heard him say something similar in Gaza in May 2003, when I interviewed him for a British Television *Channel Four* documentary, “Blaming the Jews,” for which I acted as the chief historical adviser.

8 See Litvak and Webman 2009.

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8 See the pioneer and polemic work of Cohen 1984. Among the principal works on the 2 new antisemitism trend that equates Jew-hate with anti-Zionism, anti-Americanism 5 and -imperialism of the Left, see Taguieff 2004; Fischel 2005; Strauss 2004.

8 Klug 2005a, 2005b. I follow the distinction between anti-Israel, anti-America and 2 antisemitism according to the analysis of Klug 2003 and 2005a.

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8 See Raab 2002.

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8 Hirsh 2007.

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8 Carlos Escudé (2013) uses the term “proxy” to characterize the Israeli role as a 2 surrogate state of the US in Latin America during the 1970s and 1980s, applying his 9 theoretical framework of peripheral states in international relations.

8 Chomsky 1999. A revised edition, expanded with new developments that have been 3 incorporated, such as the Palestinian uprising, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the 0 peace process; Edward Said wrote a prologue.

8 Findley 2003. A year after the September 11 attacks in 2001, Findley published an 3 article saying that this attack would never have occurred were it not for the United 1 States’ uncritical support of Israel. Findley claimed that the 2003 invasion of Iraq was launched primarily to benefit Israel, at the behest of the Israel lobby in the United States.

8 Kaufman, Shapira, and Baromi 1978, 48–50; Dobry 2011.

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8 See Fernandez 1990; Armony 1997. See also Klich 1996.

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8 See Ribeiro 2006; Fares 2007; Dávila and Lesser 2012; Bokser Liwerant 1997.

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8 See Baeza 2012; Barrata 1989; Baeza and Brun 2012.

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8 Escudé 1997; Kacowicz 2011; Sznajder 2011.

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8 See Roniger 2010. Relations between Venezuela-Israel soured in 2006, due to 3 President Hugo Chávez’s convictions regarding the 2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict, and 7 partly due to Chávez’s foreign policy relating to Iran and Israel’s political opposition to it. In the wake of the 2008–2009 Israel-Gaza conflict, Venezuela broke all diplomatic ties with Israel, condemning its actions. On April 27, 2009, the Venezuelan foreign minister met with the Foreign Affairs minister of the Palestinian Authority in Caracas, and formal diplomatic relations were established between the two.

8 See Hirst 2010. In January 2008, the Caribbean island nation of Dominica joined 3 ALBA; in April 2009, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was accepted as the seventh

8 member of ALBA; while Antigua and Barbuda, Ecuador and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines formally joined ALBA on June 24, 2009.

8 Hugo Chávez and Evo Morales were the first to break off diplomatic relations with Israel in January 2009, and were followed by Nicaragua in June 2010.

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8 Farrar-Wellman 2010; Noriega 2012. Since Rafael Correa took office in 2007, his relations with Washington have been tense. While less confrontational than Venezuela's President Hugo Chávez, Correa has a history of standing up to the US. In 2009, he threw out a US military base in Manta and high-ranking diplomats. In 2011, he declared the US ambassador persona non grata after WikiLeaks published a cable alleging corruption, and in 2012 he granted asylum to Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks. None of the previous incidents seriously damaged relations between the US and Ecuador.

8 Correa's presidential inauguration on December 4, 2006 was attended by most regional leaders as well as Iran's president Ahmadinejad and the Spanish Crown Prince. Two years later Correa visited Tehran, signing several agreements. In response to the intrusion of Colombian forces earlier in 2008, it was reported that Correa discussed the possibility of an arms deal with Iran. As a member of ALBA, Correa participated in a joint declaration of support to the Ahmadinejad government in June 2009.

8 Lomnitz and Sanchez 2012.

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8 It is not a public opinion poll. Instead, since 1998, it monitors acts of denunciation and complaints placed at DAIA's Department of Legal Issues and classified according to the underlying motifs.

8 See Braylan 2012.

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8 Idem 2013, 67–68. The Middle East is still considered as the principal hypothesis for Marisa Braylan to explain the persistence of antisemitism. In the press conference for launching the last Report on Antisemitism 2012, she remarked: "Toda vez que recrudece el conflicto en Medio Oriente aumentan los registros de hechos antisemitas. En 2012, ese pico se produjo entre noviembre y diciembre, momento en que se desató el último episodio en la Franja de Gaza. [...] Y los discursos que justifican esos hechos discriminatorios se escudan en supuestas críticas a las políticas del Estado de Israel." See <http://www.telam.com.ar/notas/201311/39863-en-el-pais-crecen-las-denuncias-por-anti-semitismo-cuando-recrudece-el-conflicto-en-medio-oriente.html>, accessed November 30, 2012.

8 See Braylan and Jmelnizky 2002; Karol and Moiguer 2006.

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8 See Senkman 2000; for responses to anti-Zionist attacks from the Left during the 1960s, see documented accounts in *Israel, un Tema para la Izquierda* 1968, 14–100; also *Informe sobre Medio Oriente* 1968; see a personal testimony in Itzigsohn 1969, the only prestigious intellectual PC dissident who wrote a book denouncing Soviet antisemitism and anti-Zionism.

8 See *Israel, un Tema para la Izquierda*, 225–227. The Argentine leader, Ismael Viñas, member of the Marxist non-Communist party (Movimiento de Liberación Nacional – MLN) was delegate to the Tri-Continental Conference in Havana. Viñas defended Israel, declaring that Israeli leftist and anti-imperialist forces should have been invited to the conference, and opposed the resolutions condemning Zionism. Senkman 2000, 183; *Nueva Sion*, Buenos Aires, June 16, 1967, 14.

8 Volkov 2006.

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8 Idem 1978, 2006, and 2001.

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8 Idem 2006, 60.

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8 For a criticism against the Left accusation that allegedly Zionist imperatives control
5 US policy in the Middle East, see Lappin 2003. The terms “Jews,” “Israel” and
2 “Zionist” are increasingly interchangeable in contemporary left-wing discourse and
disseminated to a global level, see Goldhagen 2003 and 2013 (especially the second
part); Cohen 2004; Cohen 2007; on the alleged conflation of globalization, Jews and
Israel, see Joffe 2004; for a criticism against both the Left, the radical and global
Islam, see Wistrich 2010; see the recent collection of essays on antisemitism from a
global, transnational and comparative perspective, but some of them are still
ingrained with a “new antisemitism” approach, Rosenfeld 2013, especially the articles
by Harrison, Wistrich, and Küntzel.

8 See Rosenfeld 2013. Although the collective volume is a pioneering contribution to
5 tackle antisemitism as a globalized phenomenon, it lacks the books to examine how
3 race, racism, transnationalism and diffusion of ethno-religious and cultural
prejudices shaped and legitimized antisemitism in the modern and post-modern
world.

8 The idea of this summit was first designed during President Lula’s first term, when
5 Foreign Minister Celso Amorim explored the idea during his first visits to the region.
4 See Brun 2012.

8 Trade between South American and Arab countries has increased from \$10 billion in
5 2004 (the year before the first summit) to around \$30 billion recently. Trade between
5 Brazil and the Arab countries has also significantly increased since 2003: from \$5.5
billion in the first year of President Lula’s tenure, our trade flows reached \$20.3
billion in 2008, soaring fourfold in such a short time. After falling in 2009 due to the
effects of the international economic crisis, in 2010 exchanges almost matched the
historical peak of 2008. In 2011, Arab countries, taken as a single region, were
responsible for Brazil’s largest trade surplus in the world. Trade between Israel and
Brazil slipped below \$1 billion in 2009 from a peak of \$1.6 billion in 2008 – \$1.2
billion of which were Israeli exports – due to the global economic crisis. But there was
a recovery in 2012. See Amorim 2011; Vagni 2009; Duran 2013.

8 Haffner and Holland 2012.

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8 Muñoz de Souza Morteau 2013.

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8 Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Brasil 2010; Baeza 2011.

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8 Baeza 2012, 123–124, 131.

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8 This helps explain why Brazil was one of the few non-Islamic developing countries
6 from outside the Middle East to be invited to the Annapolis Conference in 2007 and
0 to the Conference in Support of the Palestinian Economy for the Reconstruction of
Gaza, in Sharm El-Sheikh in 2009.

8 Amorim 2011, 54–55.

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8 Compare the moderate position of Garcia 2009 with the intransigence of Pomar

6 2009, who accused Israel for allegedly boycotting the peace efforts.

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8 In November 2009, Mahmoud Abbas, president of the Palestinian Authority paid an
6 official visit to Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Paraguay and Venezuela, looking for support
3 to the recognition of a Palestine state. He was stimulated by the assertive position of
Brazil; see Brun 2012, 82–83; Miskin 2010; “Lula Criticizes Israeli Policies,” *Al*
Jazeera, March 17, 2010.

8 Among the few Brazilian popular organizations and grassroots associations attending
6 the meeting were Central Unica Dos Trabalhadores-CUT, Comissão Brasileira Justiça
4 e Paz, Associação Brasileira de Organizações Não Governamentais, Instituto
Brasileiros for Análises Sociais e Econômicas, CIRANDA Brazil, and Instituto Paulo
Freire. See Comitê Internacional Da Coordenação Apoio Fórum Social Mundial-
Palestina Livre, November 29 to December 1, 2012, Porto Alegre.

8 Since its inception in 2001 in Porto Alegre, Brazil, the World Social Forum has
6 endeavored and sustained itself every year to become an open venue for international
5 hotbed topics against neoimperialism, globalization, and oppressive new world
orders. Positioning itself in opposition to all forms of colonialism, racism, and
hegemony, the WSF annually works to create an arena for civil society organizations,
social movements, and activist groups to engage in open discussion, sharing
experiences and proposals, all as alternatives to neo-liberal policies.

8 In this congress participated both grassroots activists and Catholic leaders of the
6 Liberation Theology Movement.

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8 Ciranda 2012.

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8 Middle East Monitor 2012.

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8 “Members of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Rio Grande do Sul to Host the
6 World Parliamentary Forum Free Palestine,” WSF Palestine Website, October 25,
9 2012. The first World Parliamentary Forum Free Palestine was held from November
28 to December 1, 2012, at the headquarters of the Legislative Assembly in Porto
Alegre, coinciding with the dates of the WSF.

8 See letters of readers and bloggers’ replies published in the local Porto Alegre
7 newspaper *Sul21*, during the days from November 26–30 and December 1, 2013.

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8 See the use of transnational advocacy networks in the valuable unpublished article of
7 Wajner 2013.

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8 Keck and Sikkink 1999, 89–100.

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8 Wajner 2013.

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8 Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink explain that activists in transnational advocacy
7 networks often frame issues by identifying and providing convincing explanations for
4 powerful symbolic events, which in turn become catalysts for the growth of networks.
Symbolic interpretation is part of the process of persuasion by which networks create
awareness and expand the constituency. See Keck and Sikkink 1999, 96.

8 See the two articles discussing the Israel-Palestine conflict and the charge of
7 antisemitism, Klug 2008, and the response of Meisels 2008.

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8 El Diario, Montevideo, November 20, 2012.

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8 My translation, *Rebellion*, December 6, 2013, accessed <http://www.rebellion.org/noticia.php?d=177807>.

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8 Finkielkraut 2004.

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8 Galeano 2009.

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8 A *piquetero* is a member of a political faction of social movement whose primary
8 modus operandi is based in the *piquete*, an action by which a group of people blocks a
0 road or street with the purpose of demonstrating and calling attention over particular
social and economic demands. The trend was initiated in Argentina in the mid-1990s,
during the Administration of President Carlos Menem, soon becoming a frequent
form of protest that still prevails on the South American socio-political scene.
Quebracho leader Esteche participated in violent protest street manifestations during
the economic and political crisis in Argentina 2001–2002. See his ideas in the
collective volume *¿Que se vayan todos? A 10 Años del 19 y 20 de Diciembre de 2001*.

8 Esteche was prosecuted for threats to young Jews and also for planning and executing
8 a violent street attack against Jews in Buenos Aires during the celebration of the
1 anniversary of the independence of Israel in May 2009. See Ruiz 2009.

8 See Declaración de Quebracho, January 30, 2009.

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8 Diner 1988.

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8 Additionally it has to be considered that from the 1960s till 1989, the Israeli-Arab
8 conflict in general and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict particularly had some traits of a
4 proxy war between the two superpowers, the USA and the Soviet Union (and their
respective allies).

8 Primor became a highly successful protagonist of closer relations between the EU and
8 Israel, enabling Israel a privileged economic status (comparable to that of
5 Switzerland). He is also very committed to academics, and established Institutes for
European Studies in Jerusalem and Herzliya.

8 Adopted in 1975 by a vote of 72 to 35, the resolution stated that Zionism is “a form of
8 racism and racial discrimination.” It was tabled by the Arab nations, but also backed
6 by the socialist Eastern Bloc and other allies of the Soviet Union. It was repealed in
1991, with the adoption of UN General Assembly Resolution 46/86.

8 Evans-Pritchard 2003.

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8 Zick and Küpper 2006.

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8 Ibid.

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8 One top-down attempt to downplay new tendencies toward antisemitism in Europe
9 appeared in 2003. The European Monitoring Center against Racism and Xenophobia
0 (EUMC), headquartered in Vienna, had commissioned the Center for Research on
Antisemitism (ZfA) in Berlin to conduct a study on new tendencies toward
antisemitism. The study's results were not well received by the EUMC Board,

allegedly because it apportioned much of the blame for the rise of antisemitism to Muslim immigrants in Europe. The report itself was kept under tight wraps for nine months after its completion, causing strong protests by Jewish organizations. See, in this context, Whine 2004, 80–81.

8 In nations of the former Eastern Bloc, remarkable efforts are also being made to
9 clarify their own national responsibilities and collaboration with the Nazis during
1 World War II. In the Socialist era, most of the relevant archives were inaccessible to
independent scholars, and the historiography concerning World War II tended to
highlight national, anti-fascist/communist resistance but to ignore disturbing sources
that could have foiled the official national narratives.

8 For example, in 2005 France inaugurated its Mémorial de la Shoah, combined with a
9 museum, in Paris. In the same year, Germany inaugurated its central Memorial to the
2 Murdered Jews of Europe that is combined with a documentation center below
ground, near the Reichstag in Berlin. Other European countries have established
comparable memorials for the victims of the Shoah.

8 Trigano 2011.

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8 Ibid., 298.

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8 Since the official charter of Hamas, the ruling force in Gaza, calls for Israel's
9 destruction, Israel is understandably in an official state of war with Hamas, rendering
5 the line of demarcation a legitimate measure of martial law.

8 Salzborn and Voigt 2011, 300.

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8 Schwarz-Friesel and Reinharz 2013.

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8 Schwarz-Friesel and Friesel 2012, 34.

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8 Schwarz-Friesel and Reinharz 2013, 271.

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9 Ibid., 317.

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9 Schwarz-Friesel and Friesel 2012, 34.

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9 Schwarz-Friesel and Reinharz 2013, 259.

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9 Schwarz-Friesel and Friesel 2012, 32.

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9 Ibid., 34.

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9 Brandner 2015.

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9 Die Welt 2015.

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9 Zick and Küpper 2006.
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9 The whole list can be found at <http://www.wiesenthal.com/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=lsKWLbPJLnF&b=4441467&ct=12697485#.Vq4pSvnhCUk>, accessed
8 February 25, 2015.
9 Augstein 2012.
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9 Sharon 2012.
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9 All the following percentages are taken from the study's summary report.
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9 Sweden, Italy, France, Belgium, Germany, United Kingdom, Hungary, Romania, and
1 Latvia.
2
9 FRA 2013, 10.
1
3
9 Ibid., 36.
1
4
9 Grabler 2014.
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5
9 Laurin 2014.
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6
9 See <http://bdsmovement.net/activecamps/academic-boycott>, accessed February 25,
1 2015. PACBI is closely connected with the international Boycott, Divestment and
7 Sanctions Movement (BDS) – a network that primarily seeks allies against Israel in
the fields of economics, business and trade, but also attempts to gain a foothold in the
upper echelons of Western societies and to infiltrate universities; see <http://www.pacbi.org/>, accessed February 25, 2015.
9 The international PACBI appeal also makes it clear: “An increasing number of
1 Palestinian civil society institutions are no longer willing to host international
8 academics and cultural workers who insist on visiting or working with boycottable
Israeli institutions, thereby violating the Palestinian boycott.” See <http://bdsmovement.net/activecamps/academic-boycott>.
9 Ben-Solomon 2014.
1
9
9 Created by the merger of the Association of University Teachers and the National
2 Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education.
0
9 Wistrich 2010.
2
1
9 Vollmer 2011.
2
2

9 Schwarz-Friesel and Reinharz 2013, 66.

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3

9 For the BDS movement, see <http://www.bdsmovement.net/>, accessed February 25, 2015.

4

9 The Guardian 2015.

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9 Allgemeiner Staff 2013.

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9 Balmer 2015.

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9 The numbers vary: on the one hand Hungary 70%, and Poland ca. 50%; on the other hand England ca. 15%, and Holland ca. 5%.

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9 Brubaker 2005, 6.

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9 Bokser Liwerant 1991, 2007.

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9 Brubaker 2005.

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9 Senkman 2008; Bokser Liwerant 2007, 2008.

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2

9 Bokser Liwerant 1991; Schenkolewsky 2011.

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9 Bokser Liwerant and Senkman 2013.

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4

9 Bejarano 2011.

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9 Frankel 1981.

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9 Almog 1982; Vital 1978, 1998.

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9 Avni 1976; Bokser Liwerant 1991, 2007.

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9 Shimoni 1987.

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9 Senkman 2007.

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9 Bokser Liwerant 2000.

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9 Lederhendler 2000; Avni 2000.

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9 Lederhendler 2000; Bokser Liwerant 2000.

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9 Danzger 1989, 79.

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9 Sprinzak 1991; Aran 1994; Dieckhoff 2003.

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9 Bokser Liwerant and Siman 2016; Kacowitz 2011; Senkman 2014.

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9 Bokser Liwerant 2013a, 2013b.

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9 Senkman 2014; Bokser Liwerant and Siman 2016.

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9 Volkov 1978, 2007.

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9 Volkov 2007.

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9 Bokser Liwerant 2011.

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9 Senkman 2014; Baeza 2012; Barrata 1989; Baeza and Brun 2012.

5

2

9 Roniger 2010.

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9 Kacowicz 2011.

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4

9 DellaPergola 2009.

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5

9 Chile and Brazil share a pattern dominated by one central political event in the early 5 1970s, and so would be Cuba in the early 1960s. Argentina and Uruguay appear 6 somewhat similar in the sequence of some of their disrupting changes throughout the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s. Venezuela and Colombia share a pattern of more recent destabilization. Occasional economic crises underlie the Mexican experience of the 1980s and 1990s. These data quite clearly throw light on the underlying hierarchy of general political and socioeconomic circumstances in the countries of origin vis-à-vis the changing socioeconomic and security circumstances in Israel. Ibid.

9 Bokser Liwerant 2009.

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9 CCIM 2006.

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9 DellaPergola, Benzaquén, and Beker de Weinraub 2000.

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9

9 Erdei 2001.

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9 Kelner 2010.

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9 Tololyan 1996.

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9 Bokser Liwerant 2013a.

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3

9 Shain, Hecht, and Saxe 2012; Cohen 2014.

6
4

9 Bokser Liwerant 2013a; Cohen 2014.

6
5

9 Wolf 2002; Levy and Sznaider 2002.

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9 Elazar 1989.

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7

9 Casanova 1994; Bokser Liwerant 2008.

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8

9 Avni, Bokser Liwerant, and Fainstein 2011.

6
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9 Vaad Hajinuj Argentina 2014.

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9 Vaad Hajinuj Mexico 2014.

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9 The study comprised 1,379 Jewish respondents mostly reached through an Internet
7 survey. The study covered 606 educators in Argentina (out of 1,497 identified there, a
2 response rate of 40.5%), and 636 educators in Mexico (out of 1,074, a response rate of
59.2%). Another 137 respondents originating from Latin America were interviewed in
other countries, of which 70 in Israel (a response rate of 33.3%) and 67 elsewhere in
Latin America, North America and Europe (a response rate of 27.2%).

9 DellaPergola et al. 2014; Bokser Liwerant et al. 2015.

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9 For an overall and detailed analysis, see Liwerant 2011.

7
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9 Article 2, Sections C and E of the Keren Hayesod laws 5716-1956 (February 3), in

7 Keren Hayesod-United Israel Appeal (KH-UIA), <http://www.kh-uia.org.il/EN/About>
5 [Us/History/Pages/Keren-Hayesod%E2%80%93memorandum.asp](http://www.kh-uia.org.il/EN/About), accessed April 15,
2015.

9 Dovrat in Liwerant 2011.

7
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9 If until 1967 annual collection in Keren Hayesod campaigns had risen to the sum of
7 \$15 million, of which \$2.5 million came from Latin America, the amount would grow
7 tenfold to \$150 million. Latin America's share that year grew even more, up to 12
times and totaled \$30 million, becoming 20% of the total. The following year and
through 1973, there would be a considerable fall in worldwide revenue, to about \$60
million a year but without reaching the \$15 million that were collected prior to 1967.
The contribution of Latin America ranged from \$12 to \$15 million, constituting
between 20% and 25% of the total. An increase of such magnitude would only occur
during the next armed conflict: the Yom Kippur War of October 1973. The fear and
anguish provoked – as in the previous conflict – a dramatic increase in the
campaigns. On this occasion, Keren Hayesod managed to raise \$160 million
worldwide, of which Latin America accounted for 20%. Liwerant 2011.

9 The correlation between demographic and economic trends has to be highlighted.
7 Although in the past four decades the Jewish population in Latin America has
8 experienced a decline of 20–25%, the campaigns' figures in nominal dollar values
have not experienced the same proportional decline, remaining relatively stable.
However, if one considers inflation and the reduction in the value of purchasing
power of the dollar from the 1960s to the present, contributions have decreased
substantially.

9 Thus, from available data, in 1989 the total number of contributors was 27,000
7 whereas by 2008 that number went down to 20,000. This decrease has been extreme
9 in the case of Argentina, where the drop was about 70%, from 9,000 to 3,000. In the
other communities the decline has been less sensible, as, for example, in Mexico, that
has been around 15%, while only 7% in Brazil.

9 Yossi Beilin is one of the political leaders of the Israeli Zionist Left and was deputy
8 foreign minister during the last mandate of Yitzhak Rabin (1992–1995).

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9 See Bayme 2000, 2002; Waxman 2000; Carmon 2000.

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9 See Beilin, "United Jewish Appeal," [http://www.beilin.org.il/lexicon/lexicon_main.as](http://www.beilin.org.il/lexicon/lexicon_main.asp?topic_id=7&sub_topic_id=54)
8 [p?topic_id=7&sub_topic_id=54](http://www.beilin.org.il/lexicon/lexicon_main.asp?topic_id=7&sub_topic_id=54), accessed April 14, 2015.

2

9 See Liwerant 2011.

8
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9 Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004.

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9 Although we do not have precise figures of Latin American Jews in the United States,
8 estimates range between 100,000/133,000 (DellaPergola 2011, core and enlarged
5 definitions) and 156,000 (Sheskin and Dashefsky 2011). For an extended analysis of
the relocation and transnational dynamics of Latin American Jews in the US, see
Bokser Liwerant 2013b.

9 Appadurai 1990; Ben-Rafael 2009, 2013.

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9 Sheffer 1986; Safran 1991.

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9 Van Hear 1998.
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9 Bokser Liwerant, DellaPergola, and Senkman 2010; Bokser Liwerant 2015.
8
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9 Bokser Liwerant 2015.
9
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9 Siegel 2011.
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9 Cohen and Kelman 2009; Sasson, Kadushin, and Saxe 2010.
9
2
9 Cohen and Kelman 2009.
9
3
9 Sasson, Kadushin, and Saxe 2010.
9
4
9 Bokser Liwerant 2015; Della Pergola 2015.
9
5
9 Fischer 2010; Davie 2006.
9
6
9 Fischer 2010.
9
7
9 In his visit to Buenos Aires to explore the convenience of holding the Board of
9 Governors of the Jewish Agency in this city, Sharansky committed Timerman to
8 officially endorse it. This move limited the critique that important sectors of the
Jewish community were publicly advancing regarding Argentine's recognition and
positive vote on a Palestine state, as well as its presence in the Durban conference
(NYC).
9 Gorny 2003, 196–219.
9
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1 Lerner 1986, 5.
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1 Tikkun 1991, 7.
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1
1 Lerner 1998, 33–38.
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2
1 Ibid., 33.
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3
1 Tikkun 2001.
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4
1 Ibid., 49.
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5
1 Ibid., 56.
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6
1 Lerner 2005.
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7
1 Beinart 2012, 192–193.
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8
1 Podhoretz 1995.
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9
1 Ibid., 45.
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1 Ibid., 41.
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1 Idem 2005.
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1 Commentary, July-August 2005.
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3
1 Podhoretz 2009.
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4
1 Forward, March 1996.
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1 Gitell 1996.
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1 Forward, June 2001.

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1 Forward, May 2000.
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1 Forward, November 2001.
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1 Forward, April 2002.
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1 Forward, December 1998.
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1 Forward, February 2001.
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1 Forward, January 2003.
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1 Forward, December 2000.
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1 Forward, June 2002.
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2
5
1 Forward, March 2002.
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2
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1 Forward, April 2002.
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2
7
1 Forward, February 2003; December 2003.
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8
1 Forward, November 2003.
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9
1 Forward, May 2003.
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1 Goldberg 2012.

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1 Lerner 2009.

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1 Yehoshua quoted in Pfeffer, June 5, 2014.

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1 Yehoshua 1992, 16.

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1 Baer 2000, 199, 211.

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1 Ibid., 198.

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1 Yerushalmi 2000.

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1 Ibid.

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1 For Isaiah Berlin, “[t]here are no great Israeli writers. [...] One does not find any great
0 minds, poets, painters, sculptors, composers.” Berlin 1958, 138.

3

9

1 Yehoshua 1992, 100.

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1 Olive 2006. In December 2008, the FBI arrested, among others, Ben-Ami Kadish, an
0 engineer of the American army who admitted having transmitted information
4 concerning nuclear issues to Israel.

1

1 See Auerbach 1990; Birnbaum 2012.

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1 Sarna 1998.

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1 Feingold 2008.

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1 Mearsheimer and Walt 2007.

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1 Brandeis 2009, 28–29. See Cohen 2003.

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1 Weizmann quoted in Auerbach 1990, 157.

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1 Rosenthal 2006.

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8

1 Hirschmann 1970.

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9

1 Birnbaum 1996.

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1 Leff 2006.

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1 Birnbaum 2005.

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1 Joseph Reinach, *Sur le sionisme*.

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1 Theodore Reinach quoted in Abitbol 1989, 127–128.

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1 Herzl 2003.

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1 Tamir 1993. Likewise, Ruth Gavison (1999) insists on the importance to distinguish
0 between the State of Israel and the Jewish people, as well as between Israel and the
5 Jewish religion. These distinctions are necessary to maintain democracy and justice
6 for non-Jews, and to warrant Israel's capability to maintain a Jewish identity, for
those interested – in Israel and in the diaspora. See also Yakobson and Rubinstein
2009, chapter 5.

1 See the presentation of this controversy by Steinfeld 2014.

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5
7
1 Ravid 2014.
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8
1 Yerushalmi 2011. See on this issue Dubin 2014.
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9
1 *Le Parisien*, August 1, 2014.
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6
0
1 Maltz 2014.
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1
1 Sharansky 2014.
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1 LeBor 2014.
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1 Millière 2014.
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4
1 Lipsky 2014.
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5
1 Pfeffer, August 12, 2014.
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6
6
1 *Le Figaro* 2016.
0
6
7
1 Sachs 2014.
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8
1 Taguieff coined the expression “planetary Judeophobia” in 2002 and developed the
0 concept in his book *La Judeophobie des Modernes* (2008).
6
9
1 See the *France Bleu* Radio program by Clément Lacaton, “Les diplômés européens
0 s’expatrient de plus en plus,” [http://www.francebleu.fr/infos/tous-europeens/les-dipl
7 omes-francais-s-expatrient-de-plus-en-plus](http://www.francebleu.fr/infos/tous-europeens/les-diplomes-francais-s-expatrient-de-plus-en-plus).
0
1 77% of French Jewish homes have close or distant relatives in Israel. Over 80% of

0 French Jewish parents would be “thrilled” or “glad” if their children were to make
7 *aliyah*. As early as 2002, Cohen found, 48% of French Jews felt “very close” to the
1 Jewish State, and 38% felt “close.” Only 3% felt “very distant” from Israel. See Cohen
2011, 87–97.

1 Vital 1999, 19.

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1 Moïsi 2014.

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1 Aron cited in Rosenfeld 1997, 286.

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1 Schnapper was one of the first scholars to warn against the expressions “Jewish
0 community” and “Muslim community” as catalysts for the importation of the Israeli-
7 Arab conflict to France. See her study on the repercussions of the First Gulf War in
5 France: Schnapper 1993, 187.

1 About 350,000 or 70% of French Jews are of Sephardic origin. In fact France holds
0 the largest Sephardic community outside of Israel, and the “most disproportionately
7 Sephardi community in the world.” See Cohen 2011, xvii.

6

1 Abitbol and Astro 1994, 251.

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1 Ibid., 250.

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1 Schreier 2010, 2–3.

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1 Rouche 2007, 191.

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1 Abitbol and Astro 1994, 258.

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1 Cited in Judaken 2009, 10.

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1 Marrus 1997, 105–106.

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1 Weinberg 1974, 131.

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1 France's Chief Rabbis René-Emmanuel Sirat (1981–1987), Joseph Sitruk (1987–
0 2008), and Gilles Bernheim (2009–2013) were all trained in Israel and introduced in
8 France a strictly Orthodox practice inspired by their yeshiva studies in Bnei Brak and
5 Jerusalem.

1 Lévy 2012.

0

8

6

1 Cited in Judaken 2009, 9.

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1 Nadjar 2014.

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8

1 Gurfinkiel 2014.

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9

1 Idem 2013.

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1 See, e.g., the volume of *Contemporary Jewry* 30, no. 2–3 (2010).

0

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1

1 See, e.g., the obviously provocative and biased essay by Sand 2009.

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2

1 DellaPergola 2014.

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3

1 DellaPergola, Rebhun, and Tolts 2000.

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4

1 United Nations 2013.

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5

1 DellaPergola 2014.

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6

1 Pew Research Center 2013.

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7

1 DellaPergola 2011.

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9
8
1 Idem 2014.
0
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9
1 See, e.g., Cohen, Miller, and Ukeles 2013.
1
0
0
1 Guttman 1968.
1
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1
1 DellaPergola et al. 2009; Levy 2008; DellaPergola 2010.
1
0
2
1 Levy, Katz, and Levinsohn 2003; Levy 2005.
1
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3
1 DellaPergola and Levy 2009.
1
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4
1 DellaPergola 2013.
1
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5
1 Dufoix 2008.
1
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6
1 Cohen 2006.
1
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7
1 De Carvalho 2002.
1
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8
1 Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc 1994; Glick Schiller and Fouron 2003.
1
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9
1 Govers and Vermeulen 1997.
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1 Tsing 2000.
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1 Antias 1998.
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2
1 Anderson 1991.
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3
1 Cohen 1997; Safran 1991; Tölölyan 1996.
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1 Safran 2004.
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1 Ben-Rafael 2002.
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1 Laguerre 2006.
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1 Thelen 1999.
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1 Pieterse 2002.
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9
1 Calhoun 1994.
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1 See Ginossar and Bareli 1996.
1
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1 See Dror 2011.
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1 Beker 1998.
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1 Hart 2009.
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1 Amir 1997.
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1 Ben-Rafael and Ben-Rafael 2009.

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1 Ben-Rafael et al. 2006.

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1 Ben-Rafael and Ben-Rafael 2013.

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1 Shokeid 1988.

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1 Taguieff 2004.

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1 There is extensive literature on the subject. A good starting point would be the article
1 by Shimoni 2000.

3

1

1 A description of “the negation of the Diaspora” among members of this group and
1 analysis of its place in Israeli culture can be found in Shapira’s “Where Did ‘The
3 Negation of the Diaspora’ Go?” in Shapira 2007.

2

1 For example, Raz-Krakotzkin 1993; Gur-Ze’ev 2004.

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1 Yehoshua 1980, 50.

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1 Ibid., 58.

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1 Ibid., 54.

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1 Ibid., 51.

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1 Idem 2008, 34.

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1 Idem 1980, 45.

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1 Idem 2008, 131.
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1 Idem 1980, 60.
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1 Idem 2008, 39.
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2
1 Idem 1980, 127.
1
4
3
1 Ibid., 133.
1
4
4
1 Ibid., 67–68.
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5
1 Ibid., 66.
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6
1 There are other Israeli intellectuals (Ehud Ben-Ezer, Amos Oz, Assaf Inbari, Uriel
1 Simon) who burden the Israelis with the responsibility for the realization of Judaism.
4 In contrast to Yehoshua, in their case it is mentioned incidentally. See in my book,
7 *About Secularism – A Philosophical Analysis of Secularism in the Israeli Context*,
217–219.
1 On such attempts, see Tzameret, 2006; Stern 2003; Hareven 1992, 216–221; Kellner
1 2005.
4
8
1 Bar-On 1996, 488.
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9
1 Gorny 1996.
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0
1 Ibid., 523
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1
1 Ibid., 525. Gorny’s position in his article is more complex than the way I present it
1 here: “Today, Jews who want to maintain ‘klal Yisrael’ (All of Israel) need an ethos of
unity, which will be based on a compromise between Achad Haam’s idea of the Center

5 and Dubnow's idea of the Centers." Gorny 1996, 529–530. This synthesis is important
2 for understanding his position, but it does not affect its relevance for us.

1 Elboim-Dror 1993.

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1 As can be seen in anthologies on these issues. Good examples would be Ginossar and
1 Bareli 1996; Friling 2003; Oren, Hazoni, and Hazoni 2007.

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1 Brinker 1985, 26.

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1 Ibid., 27.

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1 The following may also serve as an example of my argument: The writer and
1 intellectual S. Yizhar's identification with Zionism has many expressions. In one of his
5 essays from 1979, for example, he writes that Zionism "is among the most pure, moral
7 and humane movements known to the world," and that it had "no appetite and no
fervor" other than "some ugly injustices here and there" (from a typed manuscript,
apparently prepared for a lecture, which appears in his archive without a date, but the
printer's envelope notes Aug. 17, 1979). To this we could add numerous quotes from
his stories, from his essays and from his biography. However, in his stories and in
interviews he expresses the destruction that accompanies the success of Zionism – the
destruction of ways of life and of beautiful landscapes, moral atrocities and the loss of
life in vain. Therefore, there were those who said that Yizhar should be regarded as
the first post-Zionist. It is enough to read Yizhar's own words cited above to reject
this, and to that we could also add the convincing arguments of Shaked 2006, 12–13.
The main point he makes is the following: people are quick to describe Yizhar's
critique of Zionism as a post-Zionist expression, because they are too used to this
division and to the assumptions that accompany it: Zionists are a homogenous camp
of yes-men; those who differ from that line would therefore belong in the other camp.

1 Lyotard 1986, cover text by Peter Engelmann.

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1 Horkheimer and Adorno 1955.

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1 These norms are set as international law in the United Nations Charter of 1948. The
1 Cold War quickly exposed their ineffectiveness.

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1 Minta 2004, 13.

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1 See also Dieckhoff 2003.

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1 Rushbrook Williams 1957, 29.

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1 Benvenisti 2000, 2.

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1 Ben-Gurion 1973, 113.

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1 This contribution is based on the research project of the German Research
1 Foundation (DFG) “Edgar Salin und das Israel-Projekt der List-Gesellschaft:
6 Städtebau(theorie) und Raumplanung der 1950er und 1960er Jahre als ‘Nation
6 Building,’” at the Institute for Theory of Architecture and Urbanism (GTAS) at TU
Braunschweig (Prof. Dr. phil. Karin Wilhelm and Dipl. Ing. Dr. Joachim Trezib); and
also Wilhelm and Gust 2013. Of the 20 individual studies planned within the IESRP,
15 were ultimately completed. Of these, only five could be taken into consideration for
this article. A more comprehensive depiction is planned. See also Trezib 2013.

1 Gollwitzer 1959, 8.

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1 The heading relates to Durth 1992.

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1 Universitätsarchiv Basel, NL, Edgar Salin, 114/A1. The comprehensive biographical
1 description can be found in Schönhärl 2009. See here also Föllmi 2013 and Schefold
6 2013.

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1 Kruse 1999, 74.

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1 Salin 1951. This volume was internationally available during the IESRP.

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1 The membership directory of the West German List Society in 1958 shows some of the
1 most important figures in industry including Hermann J. Abs, who was at that time a
7 member of the board. Abs played a shameful role during the Nazi period; these
2 connections can only be mentioned in passing here. What remains important is that
the Israelis saw the IESRP as a project of the Swiss List Society and their official
contact was Harry W. Zimmermann, who headed the Swiss List Society’s Research
Department.

1 Cohn 1931, 167.

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1 Ibid., 168.

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1 Ibid., 169.

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1 Ibid., 175.

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1 See also Brumlik 2007. In his memoirs, which appeared in German in 1970, Nahum
1 Goldmann stresses that the ignorance of “official Zionism” toward the population
7 living in Palestine was the basic problem of the “homeland idea.” Goldmann 1970,
7 387–388.

1 Halb wachs 2003, 13–14.

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1 Cohn 1931, 196.

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1 See also Nickel 2006, 147–158.

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1 Prof. Dr. Harry W. Zimmermann (Heinz Wilhelm Zimmermann, born in 1903 in
1 Wilhelmshaven), after an adventurous escape with his family in 1933, later received a
8 professorship in Basel. He took over the coordination of the Israel project as the head
1 of the Research Department of the List Society in Basel (as related by Eléonore M.
Zimmermann to the author).

1 Salin presented these considerations in detail. Salin 1957.

1

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2

1 Letter from Josef Cohn to Dr. Amos de-Shalit February 5, 1958, in CZA Nachlass
1 Scheps, TU Braunschweig.

8

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1 It is still unknown if Salin was aware of the Israelis’ nuclear weapons project.

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1 Salin 1959. See also the author’s article “‘Träume, die verwirklicht werden.’ Salins
1 Suche nach Urbanität,” in Wilhelm and Gust 2013.

8

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1 Fischler 1965, 78.

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1 Foerder took on many functions in the development of the country, including being
1 responsible for the state organized food supply and housing development starting in
8 1933. Salin had a close relationship to him.

7

1 Eisenstadt 1973.

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1 Within the DFG research project at the TU Braunschweig, Joachim Trezib worked on
1 part of Bach's estate.

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1 See also the appendix "Das Israelprojekt der List Gesellschaft. Organisation und
1 Stand der Arbeiten im Januar 1963," in Regling and Voss 1963.

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1 Meyer 1967, 11.

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1 This aspect received great praise as "excellent" development aid from the West
1 Germans. Vogel 1969, 110.

9
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1 Pirker 1965, 118. Pirker pointed out that essential components in the Israeli model
1 such as the work ethic and support by the Israeli "immigration and colonization
9 society" are not givens in developing countries.

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1 Ibid., 119.

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1 Pallmann 1966.

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1 Ibid., 51.

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1 See also Kark 2013.

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1 Kallus 2013, 131.

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1 Joachim Trezib pointed out that, "who pays close attention to the Sharon plan, [...] sees the pale outlines of old Arab settlements on the maps taken from the Mandate
1 period and overprinted on in color." Trezib 2011, 17; see also Efrat 2013.

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1 Salin 1963, 16.

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1 Ibid., 15–16.

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1 Letter from Edgar Salin to the Chair of the List Society, Basel dated May 10, 1964.

2 Marion Dönhoff Stiftung, estate of Marion Countess Dönhoff, F1392. The Israeli
0 Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu took up this plan once again in 2012.

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1 Salin 1963, 15.

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1 Spiegel 1966, 57.

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1 Kallus 2013, 126–144. A detailed account of the program for Kiryat-Gat.

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1 Spiegel 1966, 180.

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1 Ibid., 137.

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1 Berndt 1967, 310.

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1 See also Wilhelm 2012, 30–34.

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1 Ibid.

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1 This effect of an image politics which can be directed by the details and high quality of
2 the black and white photography was continued in an overwhelmingly “beautiful” way
1 in the 1976 publication of Arie Sharon’s work in three languages by the Karl Krämer
1 Verlag.

1 Salin 1969, 78.

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1 Edgar Salin to Chaim Pozner, letter dated May 16, 1948, in Universitätsbibliothek
2 Basel, T. MAT 1.

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1 Epstein 1907.

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1 Klausner 1908.

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1 Ibid.

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1 Brenner 1981, 321.

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1 Hermoni 1907, 463–464.

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1 This document is cited by Zu'aytir 1979, 1.

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1 Ibid.

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1 Ibid.

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1 Berent 2009, 311.

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1 As stated by Abu al-'Ala in an interview to the Ma'an website: <http://www.maannews.net/arb/ViewDetails.aspx>.

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1 This subject was raised mainly in the writings of Azmi Bishara, Said Zaydani, Nadim Rouhana, and As'ad Ghanem.

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1 Bishara 2008.

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1 Al-Kayyali, "The Two-Nation State: Initial Attempt at Definition."

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6

1 Ibid.

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1 Ibid.

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1 Al-Kayyali 2010.

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1 Benvenisti 1986, 74.
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1 Day 2008.
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1 Benvenisti 2000.
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1 Abdul Hadi 1997, vol. I, 225.
2
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1 Excerpts from the Dayton Peace Agreement, signed in Dayton, Ohio on November 21,
2 1995, accessed October 2014, <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/bostalk.htm>.
3
4
1 Text of the Ohrid Framework Agreement of August 13, 2001, accessed October 2014,
2 <http://www.ucd.ie/ibis/filestore/Ohrid%20Framework%20Agreement.pdf>.
3
5
1 Text of the Annan Plan for Cyprus, accessed October 2014, http://www.hri.org/docs/annan/Annan_Plan_Text.html.
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6
1 Bar-Tal 2007b; Kriesberg 1998.
2
3
7
1 Golan 2014, 238.
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8
1 Ben-Ami 2004; Morris 2001; Ross 2005.
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1 See some analyses in Bar-Tal 2007a; Bar-Tal, Halperin, and Oren 2010.
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1 Shaked 2014.
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1 The disagreements between Israeli Jews and the Palestinians center on at least five
2 major issues. On the assumption that the principle of dividing the land between the
4 Jordan River and Mediterranean Sea with the establishment of the Palestinian state is
2 accepted by both sides, the first issue centers on the boundaries of the territories that
the Palestinian state will have. The second issue concerns the nature of the future

Palestinian state and especially what kind of security arrangements will be maintained. The third matter deals with the way both national entities will divide and rule the city of Jerusalem. The fourth relates to a solution to the Jewish settlements that have been constructed in the occupied territories since 1967 and include 570,000 Jewish settlers in 125 Jewish settlements. The fifth topic refers to a solution for the refugees of 1948 and perhaps even those of 1967; see Ben-Ami 2006; Morris 2001. In addition to economic issues and disputes about natural resources such as water that also have to be addressed, the recognition of the Israeli state as the Jewish state was added by Israeli Jews a major condition in recent years.

1 Ethos of conflict is defined as the configuration of shared central societal beliefs that
2 provide a particular dominant orientation to a society at present and for the future in
4 the contexts of intractable conflict. See Bar-Tal 2000, 2007b, 2013. It is composed of
3 eight major themes about issues related to the conflict, the in-group, and its
adversary: (1) societal beliefs about the justness of one's own goals, which outline the
contested goals, indicate their crucial importance, and provide their explanations and
rationales; (2) societal beliefs about security stress the importance of personal safety
and national survival, and outline the conditions for their achievement; (3) societal
beliefs of positive collective self-image concern the ethnocentric tendency to attribute
positive traits, values, and behavior to one's own society; (4) societal beliefs of
victimization concern the self-presentation of the in-group as the victim of the
conflict; (5) societal beliefs of delegitimizing the opponent concern beliefs that deny
the adversary's humanity; (6) societal beliefs of patriotism generate attachment to the
country and society, by propagating loyalty, love, care, and sacrifice; (7) societal
beliefs of unity refer to the importance of ignoring internal conflicts and
disagreements during intractable conflicts to unite the society's forces in the face of
an external threat; finally, (8) societal beliefs of peace refer to peace as the ultimate
desire of the society.

1 Collective memory is defined as representations of the past which are remembered by
2 society members as the history of the group. See Kansteiner 2002.

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1 Baumeister and Hastings 1997; Oren, Nets-Zehngut, and Bar-Tal 2015.

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1 Collective narratives are defined as "social constructions that coherently interrelate a
2 sequence of historical and current events; they are accounts of a community's
4 collective experiences, embodied in its belief system and represent the collective's
6 symbolically constructed shared identity." Bruner 1990, 76.

1 Collective emotional orientation refers to societal characterization of an emotion that
2 is reflected on individual and collective level in socio-psychological repertoire, as well
4 as in tangible and intangible societal symbols such as cultural products or ceremonies
7 – as fear or hatred. Bar-Tal 2001, 2013.

1 See Bar-Tal 2007b, 2010, 2013.

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4
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1 Bar-Tal and Halperin 2011, 220.

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1 Kruglanski 2004; Ross and Ward 1995.

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1 Cohrs and Boehnke 2008; Vollhardt and Bilali 2008.

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1 Bar-Tal 1998a, 2007a; Barzilai 1996; Caspi and Limor 1992; Magal et al. 2012; Oren
2 2005, 2010; Podeh 2002; Urian 1997.

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1 Bar-On 1996; Ben-Ezer 1997; Chazan 2006; Rynhold 2007.

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1 Ben-Porat and Mizrahi 2005; Dor 2004; Halperin and Bar-Tal 2007; Hermann 2007.

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1 Dor 2006; Hermann 2009; Streiner 2001; Wolfsfeld 2004.

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1 The detection of the eight themes is based on extensive systematic studies in the
2 Israeli Jewish society involved in intractable conflict. See Bar-Tal 2007b. In addition,
5 these themes were found to be dominant in other societies engaged in intractable
6 conflict such as among Serbs, Kosovars, Albanians, Croats, and Bosnians, see
MacDonald 2002; among Hutus in Rwanda, see Slocum-Bradley 2008; among Greek
and Turkish Cypriots, see Hadjipavlou 2007; Papadakis 2008.

1 Burstein 2003; Ripsman 2007.

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1 Aronoff 2014; Auerbach and Ben-Yehuda 1993; Kaarbo 1997; Mualem 2014b.

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1 Bar-Tal 2013; Kelman 2007.

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1 Arian 1995; Halperin et al. 2010, 65.

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1 Arian 1995; Oren 2005.

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1 IDI 2008, 2.

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1 HaBayit Hayehudi, "Principles of HaBayit Hayehudi," 2.

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1 Yesh Atid, "Full Platform of 'Yesh Atid' Party," 47.

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1 HaTnua, "Founding Principles for Political and Security Platform," 3.

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1 Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, May 24, 2011.

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1 Yair Lapid, October 30, 2012.

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1 Ben-Meir and Bango-Moldavsky 2013, 84–85.

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1 Yesh Atid, "Full Platform of 'Yesh Atid' Party," 47–48.

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1 HaAvoda, "Party Platform for the 19th Knesset," 16.

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1 Netanyahu, May 20, 2012.

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1 Ynet, January 9, 2009.

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1 IDI 2012, 2.

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1 Idem 2014, 1.

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1 Bar-Tal, Jacobson, and Klieman 1998; Ben-Meir and Bango-Moldavsky 2013, 74;

2 Netanyahu 1995; Sharon 2001.

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1 Kahana 2014; Maltz 2014; Reut 2010.

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1 See Ben-Meir and Bango-Moldavsky 2013, 74.

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1 Yesh Atid, "Full Platform of 'Yesh Atid' Party," 46.

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1 Netanyahu, April 15, 2013.

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1 Arian 1995, 65–66; Oren 2005.

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1 Netanyahu 1995; Sharon 2001.

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1 Ynet, January 9, 2009.

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1 IDI 2014, 1.

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1 Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman quoted by Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July

2 15, 2014.

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1 See Bar-Tal and Teichman 2005.

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1 Ibid.

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1 Smootha 2013, 198.

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1 Pliskin et al. 2014, 1689–1690.

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1 Ben-Meir and Bango-Moldavsky 2013, 72; IDI 2014, 2.

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1 Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon, September 8, 2013, quoted in Hirsh 2013.

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1 Netanyahu, July 1, 2014.

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1 Smootha 2013, 207.

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1 Ya'alon, March 15, 2014, quoted in Matzliah 2014.

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1 Netanyahu, June 15, 2009.

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1 Liberman, May 6, 2014.

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1 Hazani 1993; Podeh 2002; Yadgar 2004.

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1 Pliskin et al. 2014, 1689–1690.

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1 Yaar and Lipsky 2008, 2.

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1 HaBayit Hayehudi, “Principles of HaBayit Hayehudi,” 4.

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1 Netanyahu, May 24, 2011.

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1 Ben-Dor, Canetti, and Lewin 2012.

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1 Netanyahu, July 27, 2010.

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1 Bar-Tal, Chernyak-Hai, Schori, and Gundar 2009, 238.

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1 Ben-Shaul 1997; Podeh 2002; Zerubavel 2004.

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1 Pliskin et al. 2014, 1689–1690.

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1 Netanyahu, May 8, 2011.
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1 Liebman 1978.
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1 E.g., Grosser and Halperin 1979; Poliakov 1974.
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1 Pliskin et al. 2014, 1689–1690.
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1 Netanyahu, October 12, 2009.
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1 Klar, Schori-Eyal, and Klar 2013, 140–142; Schori-Eyal, Klar, and Roccas 2009, 3.
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1 Elon 1971, 198–199.
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1 Pliskin et al. 2014, 1689–1690.
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1 Bar-Tal and Teichman 2005, 140–145; Nossek 1994; Segev 2000; Zertal 2005, 173–
3 176.
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1 Bar-Tal and Antebi 1992.
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1 IDI 2010, 1.
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1 Idem 2014, 3.
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1 Liberman quoted by Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 24, 2014.
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1 Netanyahu, May 13, 2009.

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1 Schori-Eyal, Halperin, and Bar-Tal 2014.

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1 Ben-Amos and Bar-Tal 2004.

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1 Hermann et al. 2013, 183.

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1 95% in 2009, 77% in 2012, see Pliskin et al. 2014, 1689–1690; Yaar and Geva 2009, 2.

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1 Ya'alon, December 8, 2010, quoted in Cohen 2010.

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1 Kimmerling 2001; Yadgar 2004.

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1 Netanyahu, July 1, 2014.

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1 Oren 2005; Yadgar 2004.

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1 Ben-Meir and Bango-Moldavsky 2013, 79–80.

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1 Netanyahu 2009.

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1 Yesh Atid, “Full Platform of ‘Yesh Atid’ Party,” 46.

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1 Ya'alon cited by *Nana 10 News*, April 16, 2013.

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1 PM Netanyahu quoted by Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs March 17, 2011.

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1 Bar-Tal, Raviv, Raviv, and Degani-Hirsch 2009, 111–114.

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1 Halperin and Bar-Tal 2011, 646–648.

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1 Porat, Halperin, and Bar-Tal 2015, 19–21.

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1 Bar-Tal et al. 2012, 58–60.

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1 Canetti et al. 2015; Eidelson 2007; Maoz and McCauley 2008; Schori-Eyal, Halperin,
3 and Bar-Tal 2014.

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1 Major event is defined as an event of great importance occurring in a society; this
3 event is experienced either directly (by participation) or indirectly (by watching,
3 hearing or reading about it) by society members, causes wide resonance, has
8 relevance to the well-being of society members and of society as a whole, involves
society members, occupies a central position in public discussion and the public
agenda, and implies information that forces society members to reconsider, and often
change, their held socio-psychological repertoire. Major event can be a war, a specific
battle, major atrocity, reconciling visitor statement of a leader, etc. See Bar-Tal 2013;
Oren 2005.

1 Aronoff 2014.

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1 Bar-Tal 2007a.

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1 Ben-Horin 2013.

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1 Tibon 2014.

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1 Ravid 2013.

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1 Eldar 2013; Mualem 2014a.

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1 Bandura 1990, 1999.

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1 Greenbaum and Elizur 2013.
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1 Schori-Eyal, Klar, and Roccas 2009, 4–5.
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1 Caspit 2010; Klein 2014.
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1 Bronner 2009; Reuters 2009.
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1 Enderman 2013; Khuri and Lis 2014; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, October 21, 2010;
3 Oren, Nets-Zehngut, and Bar-Tal 2015.
5
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1 Lis 2011a.
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1 Azulay 2013; Wolf 2011.
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1 Lis 2011b.
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1 Klein 2014; Ravid 2009.
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1 ACRI 2013; Hass 2012.
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1 See, for example, Schiff 2015. For case studies see Powell 2014 and Cockborn 2014.
3 See also details of Hebrew University Truman Institute’s Conference on Popular
5 Culture and International Conflicts – Management, Resolution, and Reconciliation,
6 March 15–16, 2015.
1 See Aronson 1979.
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1 See Loewenstein and Moor 2012.
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1 See Shemesh 2012; Porath 1978.

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1 For a current version, see Gavriely-Nuri 2012.

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1 See Ben-Gurion 1986, 803.

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1 See Aronson 1992 and 2014, and ensuing publications in English and Hebrew. See
3 Shalom 2004.

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1 See Aronson 2006, 8–49. The Mufti was a loyal officer in the Imperial Ottoman Army
3 until its final defeat, and later he adopted a view of Palestine as “Southern Syria.” At
6 the same time he instigated the riots of 1920 and 1929 against the Jews, the 1936–
3 1939 war against the British and the Jews, having approached the German Consul
General in Jerusalem offering Hitler his support upon his ascendance. See Nicosia
2015; Motadel 2015.

1 See Litvak and Webman 2009.

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1 See Aronson 2014a.

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1 See *idem* 2011.

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1 See Aronson and Yanai, 1984, 11–42.

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1 See “Abbas in Interview: Six Million Refugees Want to Return, and I Am One of
3 Them” quoted by Middle East Research Institute (MEMRI), December 5, 2014.

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1 See Lafon 2006; Pean 1991.

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1 Anderson to the Secretary of State and the White House, November 2, 2004, quoted
3 in Dashiell Schwar 2004, 973ff. Spelling follows the original document.

7
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1 *Ibid.*

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1 *Ibid.*

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1 See Shalom 2013.

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1 See above, note 2.

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1 The speech that was not delivered due to the Golan legislation but published in
3 *Maariv* daily.

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1 Peres 1993. I have refrained from correcting the historical picture as offered by Peres
3 above.

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1 See above, note 2.

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1 See Baidatz and Adamsky 2014.

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1 Delpèch 2012.

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1 Waltz 2012.

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1 Doumani 2007, 52.

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1 Rekhess 2002, 26–32.

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1 Susser 2012, 45–55.

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1 Al-Ayyam, January 2, 2001.

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1 Brown 2008.

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1 Wieseltier 2003.

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1 Tilley 2008, 9.

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1 Ibid.

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1 Abunimah 2006, 109–111.

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1 Eban quoted in Tutunji and Khaldi 1997, 35, 55.

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1 Bartov in Elon et al. 2003.

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1 Avineri quoted in Hermann 2005, 389.

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1 Avineri 2010.

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1 Ibid.

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1 Abunimah 2006, 149.

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1 Pogrund 2008/2009, 91.

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1 Ma'an News Agency, November 22, 2009; Kershner 2009.

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1 Ariqat 2009.

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1 Al-Khatib 2009.

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1 Kershner and Rudoren 2013.

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1 These were Canada, Czech Republic, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru,
4 Panama, Palau, and the United States.

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1 United Nations General Assembly, “Resolution adopted by the General Assembly,
4 67/19. Status of Palestine in the United Nations,” December 4, 2012, sixty-seventh
0 session, Agenda Item 37. [https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/
2 28ead5e67368b9ea852579180070e4d6/19862d03c564fa2c85257acbo04ee69b?](https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/28ead5e67368b9ea852579180070e4d6/19862d03c564fa2c85257acbo04ee69b?OpenDocument)
OpenDocument.

1 Full Text of Netanyahu’s Foreign Policy Speech at Bar Ilan, June 14, 2009, [http://ww
4 w.haaretz.com/news/full-text-of-netanyahu-s-foreign-policy-speech-at-bar-ilan-1.277
0 922](http://www.haaretz.com/news/full-text-of-netanyahu-s-foreign-policy-speech-at-bar-ilan-1.2770922).

3

1 Benjamin Netanyahu Administration: Speech at the State Memorial Ceremony for
4 Benjamin Ze’ev Herzl, June 27, 2013, [http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Po
0 litics/netanyahu062713.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Politics/netanyahu062713.html);Makovsky 2013.

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1 Dekel, Kurz, and Sher 2014; Greene 2014.

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1 Yaari 2010, 61–62.

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1 Khalidi 2005.

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