

# Israel

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## State, Society and Politics

PASSIA

Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs



**PASSIA Seminar 2000**

**ISRAEL**  
**State, Society and Politics**

**PASSIA, Jerusalem**  
**Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs**

PASSIA is a financially and legally independent Palestinian institution in Jerusalem, which seeks to present the Palestine Question in its national, Arab and international contexts through academic research, dialogue and publication.

With its *Education and Training in International Affairs* program, PASSIA has pioneered educational seminars for Palestinian graduates. This seminar program provides a much needed focus inside Palestine for training Palestinian graduates and mid-career professionals in the field of international affairs with lectures and workshops held by the highest quality Palestinian and foreign specialists. Where possible, fellowships or study visits abroad are awarded to the most outstanding seminar participants.

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PASSIA Publication 2000  
Tel: (02) 626 4426 Fax: (02) 628 2819  
E-mail: [passia@palnet.com](mailto:passia@palnet.com)  
Website: [www.passia.org](http://www.passia.org)  
PO Box 19545, Jerusalem

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# Introduction

Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi<sup>1</sup>

Developments in the global arena, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the peace process since the early 1990s have brought the Palestinians and others in the Middle East a new status in international relations. In many respects the Palestinian entity must perform like a state, even though it has yet to attain formal statehood. The pool of Palestinian professionals, experts and practitioners with a working knowledge of the political system, regional policies and external relations with other states is as yet relatively limited, and there is a clear need to increase and develop it.

Against this background PASSIA initiated in 1992 its *Education and Training in International Affairs* program, which has since served as a pioneer in providing educational seminars for Palestinian graduates and professionals. The seminars are conducted by Palestinian and foreign experts of the highest level and aim at enabling the participants to establish and deepen their knowledge and expertise in the field of international affairs, foreign policy and diplomacy, as well as with regard to country-specific studies. Subjects dealt with thus far include *Strategic Studies and Security*, *The European Union*, *Diplomacy and Protocol*, *The Foreign Policies of Arab States*, *Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution in the Middle East*, and *The US and Canada*, and *Japan and the Middle East*.

To date, some 150 Palestinians have participated in PASSIA seminars, adding to the goal of establishing a pool of Palestinians with a specialized working knowledge in foreign countries.

In 1999, having conducted seminars on many other countries around the globe and realizing that Palestinians' knowledge of an entity in its immediate proximity is very limited, we at PASSIA decided that it is time to take on the challenge and responsibility to introduce Israel – the state, the society, and its politics. The large number of applicants PASSIA received for this seminar only confirmed the high demand among Palestinians to gain a better understanding of the components and workings of Israel's internal system as well as of its political culture and historical perceptions.

As previously Americans and Canadians where invited to lecture on the US and Canada and Europeans to present their countries' policies and systems, PASSIA approached a number of Israelis from various backgrounds - ranging from academia, to media to politics and religion - to address the seminar participants and impart their understanding of Israel. It should be noted here that in approaching the potential lecturers - mainly the "mainstream" to ensure the fairest and most objective presentations possible - we did not receive a single negative answer. On the contrary, there was encouragement, support, a bit of surprise, but certainly recognition of the challenge.

We at PASSIA have always believed that no matter what one's attitude is - anti-Zionist, anti-Israel, anti- or pro-peace etc. - anyone can and should learn about the Israelis.

A final note on the participants: in order to make the most out of PASSIA seminars, we always ask that every participant take off his/her political shirt so as to just be a Palestinian who listens carefully and with confidence, provokes, asks, and disagrees where the need is felt, since the ultimate idea is to understand, learn, and maybe become one day an expert on the issues at hand.

The following report contains the proceedings of the PASSIA seminar, including presentations given by the lecturers and summaries of

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi is the founder and head of PASSIA.

the subsequent discussions, where appropriate. In the appendices, one can find information about the lecture program, the Palestinian participants, and a section on "Israel at a Glance".

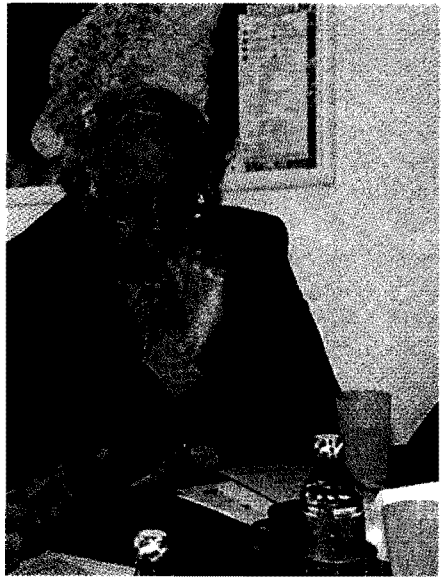
On the behalf of PASSIA I would also like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Ford Foundation, whose kind support - through the Association of Palestinian Policy Research Institutions (APPRI)<sup>2</sup> in Ramallah - made this seminar program possible. Our thanks go also to the lecturers, who contributed greatly to the success of the seminar.

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<sup>2</sup> PASSIA is a founding member of APPRI.

# Origins of Political Concepts and the Zionist Movement (Pre-1948)

Prof. Shlomo Avineri<sup>1</sup>



I would like to start by sharing a true story about politics and poetry. In 1968, when Moshe Dayan was Defense Minister, Fadwa Tuqan from Nablus wrote a nationalist Arab poem on Jerusalem that contained some unpleasant lines regarding Jews and Israelis. Dayan, being a very unusual person, invited Tuqan and some of his friends one Saturday to his home. The next day the Israeli newspapers were full with stories about their alleged discussion during lunch. As a result, the Israeli right-wing raised a motion of no-confidence against the Minister of Defense because they felt he had given an 'enemy' of the Jews some sort of legitimacy by invited Tuqan to his home. At the time, however, Dayan knew he had a majority in parliament and that he had no reason to worry. When he came to the parliament, Dayan rebutted his peers by reading the poem, and explaining, "Look, this poem is as terrible to me as it is to all Israeli Jews. But it inspires: it moves people to kill us and it moves people to put their own lives in jeopardy. So we should listen to the poet. Because if we don't understand the poetry of the other, we will never understand what motivates them and therefore we will never understand how to make peace with them. One day, let's hope that they will listen to our po-

etry, too." I think we are beginning to listen to the poetry of the other.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries, two very important developments occurred which resulted in the current state of affairs. The first was the emergence of modern Arab nationalism. Although people of this region spoke Arabic at that time, they lived under the Ottoman Empire and were subjects of the Sultan in Istanbul. Thus, their primary unifying identification was their Islamic religion, although of course Christians were also subjects of the Sultan. Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, however, there was a significant shift in the sense that people in this region began to self identify as Arabs, regardless of their religion or the ethnicity of the ruling Sultan.

Arabism at that time was dominated by the Arabic language and the common Arab culture, which were the unifying factors across different religious backgrounds. At the same time, the spread of education, secularization, modernization, and the ideas that came with the French Revolution and Napoleon's presence in Egypt greatly influenced thinking in the region. Most of the ideas of the enlightenment were revolutionary at the time, both here and in Europe.

Something similar, though under different circumstances, was happening to the Jews, es-

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<sup>1</sup> Prof. Avineri teaches Political Science at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. He was born in 1933 in Poland and came to Palestine in 1939. He studied at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and the London School of Economics. He has taught in the US, Australia, and Budapest and written several books on Marx, Marxism and Hegel, as well as on Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict, including *Israel and the Palestinians* (1970), which was one of the first books that advocated dialogue and the possibility of a Palestinian state next to Israel, and *The Making of Modern Zionism* (1980). During Yitzhak Rabin's first government, he was director of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, and he previously was a member of the Israeli Labor party.



pecially in central and Eastern Europe. It is important to understand this in order to understand the emergence of Zionism. Zionism was not just a response to anti-Semitism or the persecution of Jews that occurred in many countries. Although in some areas the Jewish situation had not been bad, Jews often found themselves emigrating to places where it was much worse. For instance, in Russia during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Jews found their only comfort in the idea of a religious redemption, in which their Messiah would come to take them to live peacefully in the land of Israel.

While the European Enlightenment and European secularization impacted the experience of the Arabic-speaking people in this area, the question of Jewish identity in Europe was of quite a different nature. Before the French Revolution, for example, if a European was asked about his identity he would have answered according to his religion. Thus, the primary identity of people at that time was based on religion. People related to others in terms of religiosity, especially in mixed populations.

Identities in Europe started to change between the French Revolution in 1789 and the Revolutions of 1848, also known as the 'Spring of the Nations.' People, especially intellectuals and teachers, started identifying themselves according to their nationalities. In other words, they thought of themselves as Frenchmen, Germans, Italians, Polish, Hungarians, etc. The move towards Arabism marked a similar change in the Middle East.

This shift in perception, combined with secularization and liberalism, put the Jewish people in a new and revolutionary situation. Many Jews, however, found this exposure to liberalism and openness problematic. Their new-found acceptance into society led to integration, which threatened long-standing Jewish practices and identity.

Prior to the French Revolution, European countries viewed themselves as Christian. Kings were Christian kings by the grace of God, and schools were instruments of the Church. At that time, Jewish people did not send their children to Christian schools because they would not be accepted. In most cases, Jewish

people were tolerated, but they could not hold public office, buy land, serve in the army, and were limited to certain occupations. After the French Revolution, however, each individual was considered a citizen regardless of his religious or ethnic background. For the first time, Jewish people could send their children to state schools instead of religious schools. Also, they could become doctors or lawyers, and they could study.

However, if a Jewish child wanted to enroll in the new secular school system, he would be forced to attend on Saturday, the Jewish Shabbat. According to Jewish religious tradition, it is permitted to study on Saturdays but not to write, because writing is work. Furthermore, if a Jewish son is sent to university, he will likely live in a different town away from his family and will be expected to eat in a non-Kosher cafeteria. Should his parents tell him not to eat pork, or not to eat in the cafeteria at all, or that it does not matter if he eats pork? Later, the student becomes a lawyer or a doctor and opens an office or a practice. He then faces the question of whether or not to open on Saturdays.

This question of identity touched every part of the Jewish person's life, including his name. Until around 1800, Jews had Jewish names. As the world became more secularized, modern Jews began to adopt two names. When the children were sent to school it was not unusual that Abraham became Albert, or Israel became Isador. This exemplifies the common Jewish condition of living in two worlds and developing two identities. Under the Hebrew model of enlightenment, one was a Jew at home and an assimilated European on the street.

This question of double identity created crises and tensions. When fights erupted between nationality groups such as Poles, Russians, Ukrainians or Hungarians, the Jewish populations were caught in the middle, as they had no national affiliation. Thus, the emergence of the nation-state in Europe, together with liberalism and the opening of the society towards the Jews created a Jewish sensitivity to the question of identity in the modern world.

Furthermore, the emerging modern Jewish intelligentsia in Central and Eastern Europe was constructing an increasingly secular Jewish identity. Although they discarded many traditional religious practices, they were very much aware of their identity as Jews with a common history, language, and belief in their origins in the land of Israel. The intelligentsia was responsible for secularizing the Hebrew language, which had once only been used in Scripture and prayer. They also created some non-religious holidays such as Hanukah, the Festival of Light. The origin of Hanukah is almost nonexistent in Jewish religious tradition, but instead recalls the time when the Greeks came from Syria and the Jews were forced to remain sequestered without provisions. There was no holy oil at the temple, but then a miracle happened and the oil lasted for eight days, which is why Hanukah is celebrated for eight days. Behind this religious-mythological story is the rebellion of the Jews against the pagan Greek kings who wanted to force paganism upon them. Until around 1850 this was a very minor Jewish holiday, especially for very religious Jews. People even worked during this holiday, simply because it was not biblical. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, however, modern, secular, Europeanized, multi-lingual Jews who did not fast nor go to synagogue on Yom Kippur and who did not keep kosher transformed it into a major holiday. This shows how tradition is actually developed and constructed. Hanukah became a symbol of the fight for religious and national freedom, just as the Jews under the pagan kings of the Greeks had fought for religious and national freedom.

The secularized intelligentsia drove this early identity transformation and began to view themselves not as simply a religious community but as a nation dispersed throughout the world. Many Jews in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century wanted to leave Russia for the west, as they were facing increased persecution for their role as revolutionaries, socialists and communists. This post-1881 emigration wave is the root of many of today's 3-5 million Jews in America, as well as those in Latin America, South Africa, Australia, and other non-European countries.

Thus, the beginning of Zionism can be dated back to the 1880s. The First Zionist Congress convened in 1897, marking the first time that Jews decided to create a nation of their own, rather than remain a persecuted minority over many nations. Again, the orthodox rabbis were very much against such a project, saying the creation of a national state was blasphemy. From the beginning, Zionism was thus not just a continuation of the Jewish belief but a break and reinterpretation of tradition. Theodore Herzl, a journalist in Vienna, was the founder of the formal Zionist organization that convened the 1897 Congress in Basle. His book *The Jewish State* had been published a year earlier.

At the time, the Austro-Hungarian Empire was second only to the Russian Empire in terms of its large Jewish population. Though relatively liberal, it was coming under pressure from Hungarian, Czech, Slovak, Polish, and German nationalist movements. Herzl realized that the multi-national empire was going to split into different national states, and that the Jews as a minority would face increasing persecution in each one. Thus, the Zionist movement emerged as a rebellion against religion that oddly employed both historical and religious memory, and as a response to the European nationalization process.

Zionism as a movement was never a monolithic entity, and many of its original factions later transformed into parties. In the early days the Zionist movement had no power and no state, and most of the rabbis and the rich Jews were anti-Zionist because they felt very comfortable with the way things were. An important aspect in these times was the movement's attempt to be inclusive. For example, despite the fact that most of the delegates of the First Zionist Congress were secular, they decided not to convene on Saturday out of respect for the religious minority, who would not have attended.

Membership in the First Zionist Congress was extended by invitation only. At the Second Zionist Congress in 1898, it was decided that a voluntary contribution and a symbolic membership fee of half a dollar would attract as many people as possible. The participants also decided that women could become members. The decision had little to do with feminism but

instead was based on the goal of increasing the movement's membership. Women obtained the right to vote in the elections held at the Third Zionist Congress. This came at a time when no country in the West had yet introduced women's suffrage.

The Zionist organization was successful because it created institutions that became the backbone for the infrastructure of the Jewish State. The British Mandate in Palestine allowed both the Jewish and the Arab communities to organize themselves, but it did not create the infrastructure of a state. According to British Law in Palestine, both communities could each organize their own institutions for the provision of education and health care.

The Jewish community of perhaps 60,000 or 70,000 decided that the electoral process was necessary for the creation of their institutions, which in turn raised the issue of women's rights. The religious parties did not want to grant women the right to vote, so a deal was made which represents the root of some of the problems and achievements of secular-religious relations in Israel today. The religious parties, who perhaps represented 10-12 percent of the population, were ready to accept women's right to vote if the majority in return accepted that only kosher food be served in all Zionist institutions in Palestine. This was an early example of the creation of coalitions.

Under these circumstances a General Assembly of the representatives of the Jewish community in Palestine was first elected in 1923, and regular elections followed every few years. Political parties were established (a number of socialist and social-democratic parties, liberal as well as orthodox and right-wing parties), and since 1932 Labor became the dominant party and its leader, David Ben-Gurion, became chairman of the Jewish Agency for Palestine and thus the leader of the Jewish community in the country, presiding over a coalition made up of a number of left and center parties. The Jewish Agency was responsible for finance, education, development, and settlement activities. In this way it was similar to what the Palestinian Authority is now for the Palestinian Arabs.

The Arab community in Palestine also, mainly through the Arab Higher Committee, organized an assembly of notables stemming from the big families like the Husseinis. It was not as active as the Jewish community in terms of promoting education, founding schools, or creating infrastructures. This was mainly due to the fact that Palestinian society at that time was still very traditional, very much based on notables, tribalism and regionalism.

After the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, the representative assembly of Palestinian Jews elected since 1923 became the provisional government. Within nine months, in January 1949, the elections for the first Knesset returned the same parties that had existed in the pre-state Jewish community and led to the same coalition. It should be emphasized in this context that never within the Jewish community in Palestine or in the state of Israel has one party obtained a majority. This is partly because the Israeli system follows representative visitation, which is more difficult than the British or American system where the winner takes all. However, the goal of national movements is to represent everybody, even small groups with no more than five percent of the population behind them.

A parable ascribed to the Greek philosopher Esau says that the gods gave us two sacks and put one of them in front of us and the other one in the back. The one in front of us has all the sense of the others, which we can always see. The one in the back, which we cannot see, is our own sense. In terms of national movements, this can be read as follows: we see our pain but we do not always see the pain of the other. We see our compromises but not that of the other.

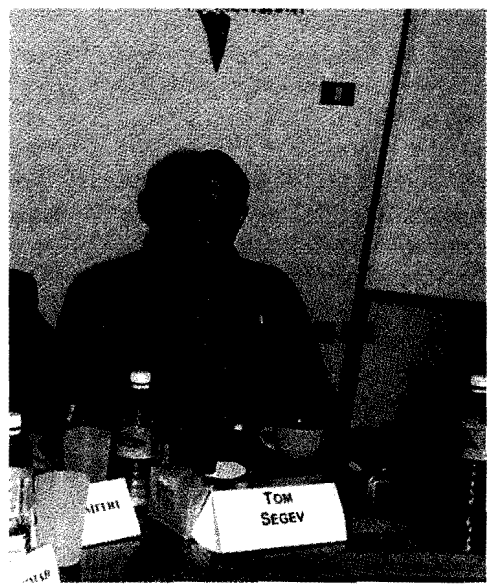
This partially explains why, in the end, Israel was able to survive under difficult conditions with very little outside help. Remember: one percent of the Jewish population was killed in 1948 and not all of them were soldiers. One percent is not easy for any society to endure, but the world of institutions based on coalition, discourse, and representation continued.

# Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate<sup>1</sup>

Tom Segev<sup>2</sup>

The Great War that shoved Europe into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century changed the status of Palestine as well. For more than 700 years the land had been under Muslim rule. In 1917, as part of the British push into the Middle East, it passed into Christian hands; indeed, many of the conquering British soldiers compared themselves to the Crusaders. However, even as the British took control of Palestine the tide was going out on their empire; when they left the country 30 years later Britain had just lost India, the jewel in the crown. Palestine was little more than an epilogue to a story that was coming to an end. In the history of empire, then, Palestine was an episode devoid of glory.

It was an odd story from the start. Altogether, the British seemed to have lost their bearings in this adventure. They derived no economic benefit from their rule over Palestine. On the contrary, its financial cost led them from time to time to consider leaving the country. Occupying Palestine brought them no strategic benefit either, despite their assumptions that it did. Many top army officers maintained that Palestine contributed nothing to the imperial interest, and there were those who warned that rule over the country was liable to weaken



the British. There were early signs that they were getting themselves into a political problem that had no solution. These were reason enough not to take over the country. But the Holy Land elicited a special response; its status was not determined by geopolitical advantage alone. "Palestine for most of us was an emotion rather than a reality", one official in the British administration commented.

At first, the British were received as an army of liberation. Both Arabs and Jews wished for independence and assumed they would win it under British sponsorship. Confusion, ambiguity, and disappointment were present at the very beginning. Before setting out to war in Palestine, the British had gotten themselves tangled up in an evasive and amateurish correspondence with the Arabs, who believed that in exchange for supporting the British against the Turks, they would receive Palestine. Just before the conquest of the country, however, his Majesty's Government announced, in the famous words of the Balfour Declaration, that it would "view with favour" the aspiration of the Zionist Jews to establish a "national home" for the Jewish people in Palestine. For all practical purposes, the British had promised the Zionists that they would establish a Jewish state in Palestine. The promised land had, by the stroke of a pen, become twice-promised. Although the British took possession of "one Palestine, complete," as noted in the receipt

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the following text is a summary of Mr. Segev's oral lecture given at the PASSIA seminar on Israel and is based on Segev's new book *One Palestine, Complete - Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate*. New York: Metropolitan Books, and London: Little, Brown and Co., both forthcoming (November 2000).

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Tom Segev is a correspondent with the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* newspaper. He holds a Ph.D. in History from Boston University and has authored several history books, including: *1949: The First Israelis* (1984), *Soldiers of Evil: The Commandants of the Nazi Concentration Camps* (1987), *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust* (1991), and *Days of the Anemones: Palestine During the Mandatory Period* (1999).

signed by the high commissioner, Palestine was riven, even before His Majesty's Government settled in.

For the most part, the British kept their promise to the Zionist. They opened up the country to mass Jewish immigration; by 1948, the Jewish population had increased by more than tenfold. The Jews were permitted to purchase land, develop agriculture, and establish industries and banks. The British allowed them to set up hundreds of new settlements, including several towns. They created a school system and an army; they had a political leadership and elected institutions; and with the help of all these they in the end defeated the Arabs, all under British sponsorship, all in the wake of that promise of 1917. Contrary to the widely held belief of Britain's pro-Arabism, British actions considerably favored the Zionist enterprise.

In standing by the Zionist movement, the British believed they were winning the support of a strong and influential ally. This was an echo of the notion that the Jews turned the wheels of history, a uniquely modern blend of classical anti-Semitic preconceptions and romantic veneration of the Holy Land and its people. In fact, the Jewish people were helpless; they had nothing to offer, no influence other than this myth of clandestine power.

The British pretended, and perhaps even believed, that the establishment of a national home for the Jews could be carried out without hurting the Arabs. But, of course, that was impossible. The truth is that two competing national movements consolidated their identity in Palestine and advanced steadily toward confrontation. "To be a Palestine nationalist hardly left any room for compromise with Jewish nationalism and its backer, the Western powers," wrote historian Isa Khalaf. From the start there were, then, only two possibilities: that the Arabs defeat the Zionists or that the Zionists defeat the Arabs. War between the two became inevitable.

And Britain was caught in the middle. High Commissioner Arthur Wauchope compared himself to a circus performer trying to ride two

horses at the same time. Of these two horses, he said, one cannot go fast and the other would not go slow. For a time the British clutched at the hope of creating a single local identity in Palestine, common to both Jews and Arabs, and in this context they even spoke of the "people of Palestine." These were empty words. The British were fooling the Arabs, the Jews, and themselves, Chaim Weizmann once commented. He was right. It is a fascinating story, but not always a laudable one. As with national revolutions elsewhere, both peoples in Palestine tended to put nationalism above democracy and human rights. The leader of the Arab national movement even made common cause with Adolf Hitler.

The colonial method of government, wrote District Commissioner of the Galilee Edward Keith-Roach, was "totalitarianism tempered with benevolence." Many of the British brought with them imperialistic arrogance and a powerful sense of cultural superiority. Some saw their dominion as a destiny and a mission. Herbert Samuel, the first High Commissioner, proposed that his government conquer Palestine in order to "civilize" it. When he eulogized one of his men who had died, Samuel honored his with the warmest praise he knew: "as head of the civil service staff he bore the brunt of the work of building up almost from the foundation the structure of a modern state."

There were those in the British administration who identified with the Jews and those who identified with the Arabs. There were those who found both repugnant. "I dislike them all equally," wrote General Sir Walter Norris 'Squib' Congreve. "Arabs and Jews and Christians, in Syria and Palestine, they are all alike, a beastly people. The whole lot of them is not worth a single Englishman!" This was a common sentiment. Police officer Raymond Cafferata put it more politely: "I am not anti-Semitic nor anti-Arab, I'm merely pro-British." So felt many, perhaps most, of those who served in Palestine.

The British had found an underdeveloped country when they arrived, and they left behind much progress, especially among the Jews.

But they also left behind much backwardness, especially among the Arabs. Just before leaving the country one senior official estimated that the British had never in fact had a policy for Palestine, "nothing but fluctuations of policy, hesitations... no policy at all. He was right. Commissions of inquiry came one after the other, studied the Arab-Jewish situation, and left. The British government generally adopted their recommendations, then changed its mind and sent more commissions. "If all the books of statistics prepared for the 19 commissions that have had a shot at the problem were placed on top of one another they would reach as high as the King David Hotel," wrote Henry Gurney, the last of the Mandatory government's chief secretaries.

During the 1920s, Jews and Arabs came into contact predominantly through the Jews' efforts to buy the country from its owners. And the Arabs were willing to sell. Generally, more land was available than the Zionist movement could afford to buy. Some of the landowners lived outside Palestine: some of the sellers were land agents, and some were farmers offering their property directly to prospective buyers. Among the homeland's traders were leaders of the Arab national movement-patriots on the outside, traitors on the inside.

The Arab leaders' willingness to sell land to the Jews heightened the contempt Zionist figures felt for the Arab national movement. After a meeting with Arab dignitaries, Chaim Weizmann concluded, "They are ready to sell their souls to the highest bidder." The compact Weizmann reached with Prince Faisal in 1918 had also been based on the assumption that the prince would make money off his peace with the Zionists. One of Faisal's aides had received a down payment of £1,000 and then demanded more. This experience contributed to the Jews' conclusion that the national consciousness of the Palestinian Arabs could be bought. Indeed, politicians and petty thieves, dignitaries as well as hoodlums-all offered the Zionists their services in espionage and sabotage, in rumor-mongering, defamation, extortion, and all kinds of intimidation; the supply often outstripped the demand.

Twenty years after the British conquest, the Arabs rose up to throw them out. By 1939, the Arab rebellion had brought the British to the verge of a decision to go home. It would have been better for them had they left then, but it took them nearly ten more years to act. In the meantime, World War II broke out, and after the war British forces were hit by Jewish terrorism as well. Thousands of them paid for the adventure with their lives.

While the British were suppressing the Arab Revolt, in cooperation with the Jewish Agency and the Haganah, war in Europe had become more and more likely. British officials in the Middle East began sending warnings to London. In the framework of preparations for war, they cautioned, the Arabs should be taken into account.

Despite Britain's success in defeating the Arab rebellion and the White Paper, the British had a growing feeling that there was nothing left for them to do in Palestine. Montgomery observed that, "The Jew murders the Arab and the Arabs murder the Jew. This is what is going on in Palestine now. And it will go on for the next 50 years in all probability." The British were stuck in a dead end, and they knew it.

"If we must offend one side," Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain said, "let us offend the Jews rather than the Arabs." As war approached, statesmen were inclined to think that holding on to Palestine and Egypt and preserving the link with Iraq were vital. The Jews had no alternative other than to support Britain; the Arabs, in contrast, could choose to support the Germans.

For many years thereafter Israelis conducted an agitated and sensitive debate over the question of who had really gotten rid of the British. Former members of Etzel, Lehi, the Haganah, and the Palmach vied with each other to claim credit for 'ejecting' the British; all invested considerable energy in the argument, enlisting historians and educators, journalists and other shapers of memory and myth. The political stakes were high, the assumption being that whoever had expelled the Brit-

ish had thereby won the moral and national right to lead Israel's government. All the warring parties completely ignored the role played by the Arabs in sending the British packing.

The Arab rebellion of the late 1930s had been cruelly suppressed, but it had brought home to the British that compromise between the Arabs and the Jews was impossible. Only war would decide the issue; whoever won would control the country, or as much of it as they could conquer. The British had drawn the right conclusion. Once the Zionist movement came to Palestine with the intention of creating an independent state with a Jewish majority, war was inevitable. All indications pointed toward a long war that would end without a clear victory. This projection greatly reduced the country's strategic value and increased the risks to the British themselves. With hindsight they could justly say to themselves that they had erred in allowing the Zionist movement to drag them into this adventure. Twenty years after the Balfour Declaration, they could even claim that they had kept their commitment: at least the foundations of the Jewish national home were in place.

The Arab rebellion had made the British sick of Palestine. World War II had delayed their exit, but during the war they continued to discuss how to rid themselves of the country when the war ended. Terrorism and illegal immigration only served to intensify a feeling that had crystallized among many of the British by the end of the 1930s.

After three decades of Zionism in Palestine, there was still no clear timetable for the Jewish state, but no doubt remained that Jewish independence was on the horizon. The social, political, economic, and military foundations of the state-to-be were firm; and a profound sense of national unity prevailed. The Zionist dream was about to become reality.

There is therefore no basis for the frequent assertion that the state was established as a result of the Holocaust. Clearly, the shock, horror, and sense of guilt felt by many generated profound sympathy for the Jews in general and the Zionist movement in particular.

That sympathy helped the Zionists advance their diplomatic campaign and propaganda.

In February 1947, the British government had decided to turn the Mandate over to the successor of the League of Nations, the United Nations (UN). The UN set up its own commission; surveys and reports were prepared and witnesses were summoned and their comments recorded, producing yet more impressive documentation of positions and historic claims set down in meticulous detail. Finally, the commission decided, by a majority, to recommend to the UN General Assembly that Palestine be partitioned. This decision prompted a worldwide diplomatic campaign involving pressure, threats, promises and bribes. The Jewish Agency budgeted a million dollars for its own campaign of bribery; in official parlance the money was allocated to "irregular political activity".

Until the actual vote in the UN there was no way to be certain how the General Assembly would decide. But on 29 November 1947, the UN voted to divide Palestine into two states, one for the Jews and one for the Arabs; Jerusalem was to remain under international control.

The Arabs were as unprepared for battle as the Jews, and thus also had an interest in the continuation of British rule. But they may have believed that ultimately they would win. In any case, still hostage to the rejectionist position they had adopted in 1917, they opposed partition and continued to demand independence in all of Palestine, promising to respect the rights of the Jewish minority. The partition boundaries proposed by the UN assigned the Jewish state almost twice much territory as the British partition plan of ten years prior, and the Arabs had turned down that proposal as well. "They refused at any time to sign their own death warrant," Anwar Nusseibeh wrote. However, in rejecting the UN Partition Plan, the Arabs missed a chance to gain time to prepare for war. They had made a tactical error.

The Zionists' plans for the new state were based on the assumption that a large Arab minority would remain. But the tragedy of the

Arab refugees from Palestine was a product of the Zionist principle of separation and the dream of population transfer. The tragedy was inevitable, just as the war itself was inevitable. The number of refugees reached approximately 750,000. Some planned their departure, some fled, and about half were expelled. "People left their country," Sakakini wrote, "dazed and directionless, without homes or money, falling ill and dying while wandering from place to place, living in niches and caves, their clothing falling apart, leaving them naked, their food running out, leaving them hungry. The mountains grew colder and they had no one to defend them." As always, Sakakini did not shrink from self-criticism. "What breaks our hearts is that the Arab countries see and hear and do nothing," he said. Luckily and in some ways catastrophically-they had places to flee to, which weakened their resolve. Possibly, the lives of many Arabs were saved because they fled their homes, but the mass flight destroyed their national fabric for many years to come.

The war caught the Arabs unorganized and leaderless. They had not recovered from their defeat during the rebellion, they had fewer combatants than the Jews, and those they had were inadequately equipped.

After 30 years of ruling Palestine, the British had still not instituted compulsory school attendance. Education standards differed for city and village children and for boys and girls, and only three out of every ten Arabs went to school. The other seven, mostly in the villages, grew up illiterate. They were a lost generation. The result of this loss for the Arab community was catastrophic. A nationwide system of education would have forged national cohesion. But the War of 1948 found the Arabs rent by regional, social, and economic divisions, with profound differences between city dwellers and villagers. The Hebrew education system, by contrast, formed the Jews into a national community, prepared them for their war of independence, and led them to victory. Had Britain limited its support for Zionism to nothing other than perpetuating Arab illiteracy, His Majesty's Government could still claim to

have kept the promise enshrined in the Balfour Declaration.

The British had come with good intentions and has set the country on a course to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Chief Secretary Gurney claimed. Palestine had become rich. It had first-class roads and water supplies, schools, hospitals, and electric power. There were agricultural research stations, ports, and railways. There was a judicial system unique in the Middle East for its freedom from corruption. "In spite of mistakes we have done an extremely good job," said one Member of Parliament. High Commissioner Cunningham had only to look out his window to see what had been accomplished in Jerusalem in the last 25 years. He regretted, however, that out of a yearly budget of £24 million he had had to spend £8 million on security, and he never stopped thinking about what might have been done with this money for the betterment of the country. Chief Secretary Gurney believed that the problems in Palestine were more fundamental. From the outset, the British edifice had been built on sand. "I thought today," he once wrote, "if Palestine has to be written on my heart, must it be written in Arabic *and* Hebrew?"



## The Creation of Israel, the War of 1948 and Early Institution-Building

*Professor Moshe Lissak*<sup>1</sup>

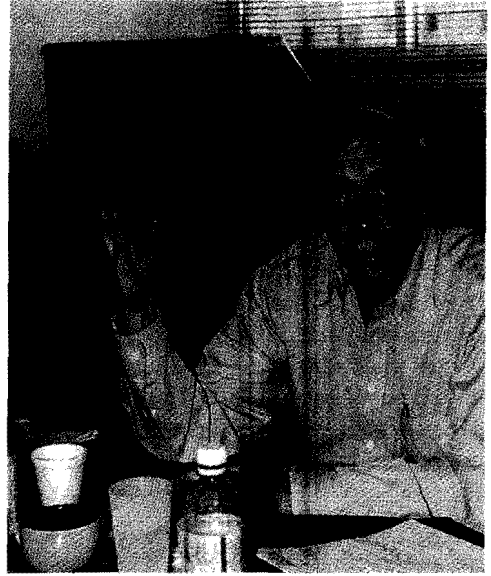
To begin with, there is no direct connection between the War of 1948 and the institution building that followed, because the process of institution building had already begun 30 years before the war, more or less immediately after the British army's occupation of Palestine. There were actually some beginnings even before that during the Ottoman Empire, but the Ottomans did not allow, for good reasons from their point of view, the establishment of national institutions. This not only applied to the Jews but to the entire Muslim world. Therefore the beginnings of institutions were not called national institutions.

The extension of these very early institutions began in 1918, almost immediately after the British forces established the two-year military administration of Palestine that preceded the civil administration of 1920. This was the turning point for institution building of the Jewish community in Palestine.

The first open, democratic elections took place in 1920 and were extended to all sections of the Jewish community, numbering about 55,000-60,000 Jews. Compared to today's situation, this would be like a middle-size town in Israel or the Palestinian territories. Nevertheless this small community was divided and subdivided between different political parties and ideological movements,

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Moshe Lissak is Professor of Sociology and Social History at the Department of Sociology at Hebrew University, Jerusalem. His academic work and writing is concentrated on the political and social history of Jerusalem and Palestine, especially between 1920 and 1948, and on immigration starting from the 1920s, but focussing on the 1950s and the Russian immigration.



between religious and ultra-religious sectors, between Oriental and European Jews, etc.

In the first decade after the establishment of British institutions, there was a very intensive effort to build Jewish institutions. The main organization to do so in terms of success and activism was the General Federation of Labor, which built the foundations for a welfare state, created educational and cultural institutions, and provided housing and services for workers. The cooperative settlements flourished, and by the mid-1930s most of the institutions of a semi-modern state already existed, including a parliamentary system with more or less regular elections, although they were sometimes postponed. The Arab Revolt of 1936 against the British and the Jews was a traumatic experience for all sides, and resulted in an election postponement. Some of the organizations established by 1936 needed more time to develop and institutionalize their activities, but in principle everything was ready for a state by this time. The revolt inspired the establishment of nationalistic semi-underground organizations, which were the last institutions developed before 1948.

The War of 1948 neither created new institutions nor altered those that already existed. Only after 15 May 1948 did the newly de-

clared state establish such new institutions as could not develop under a foreign empire. The war itself required the full mobilization of the Jewish population and all its sources, which was very much facilitated by the fact that most institutions were already in place. Thus, the Jews were much better prepared for this war than the Arab society in Palestine.

Most of the immigrants that came to Palestine in those days (according to the quota imposed by the British) were young men and women. Immigration was planned, organized and executed by the Jewish Agency, which had two centers: one in London and one in Jerusalem.

Due to the quota there was also a high level of illegal immigration, either organized unofficially by the Jewish Agency or by the Revisionist Party, a right-wing opposition group. All in all, no more than 10 or 15 percent of the Jews that came to Palestine before 1939 were illegal immigrants. Between 1945 and 1948 most of those who attempted to immigrate were illegal, but that is another issue.

An important characteristic of the pre-state Jewish community in Palestine was the fact that a high percentage of the newcomers were young; before the Declaration of Independence in 1948, for example, the average age of the Jewish community was less than 30 years. The majority of the population consisted of young men between the ages of 16 and 30, which was also a crucial factor in the War of Independence. Israel was able to mobilize about 100,000 soldiers and to train additional young men and women as volunteers in a very short time.

The most famous unit was the Palmach squads, which consisted of various commandos and was 30-40 percent women. The British had started to train the Palmach, not against the Arabs but against the Germans during World War II. Therefore they had professional military training, as had some 30,000 Jews who had volunteered under the British army and returned in 1945. The question of whether or not to volunteer in the British army was quite controversial among the

Jews, for some argued that it would be better to stay and be prepared for another possible Arab revolt. However, the Jewish Agency decided that serving in the British army took priority, for the war created an opportunity for Jews to gain military experience in a professional army. Other than this, the British government played almost no role in building Jewish institutions in Palestine. This was to a great extent due to their policy of non-interference in civil institutions, except in some economic matters or during cases of civil disorder. Two of the very few things in which they interfered, fortunately perhaps, were architecture and town planning in Jerusalem.

All Jewish institutions were subsidized by the World Zionist Organization (WZO) and therefore did not pay taxes. The Jewish Agency was not allowed to collect taxes, and the British only collected port taxes for import-export related matters.

The two main sources of income were the National Fund – money collected from all over the world (before 1939 especially in Eastern Europe and the US) – and private capital brought by Jewish citizens to Israel. The latter was by far the biggest source. The turning point in terms of quantities of capital inflows was the German Jewish immigration between 1933 and 1936 and, to a lesser extent, in 1939. Private individuals financed most of the private sector and industrial investment, while the national capital was devoted mostly to the education-culture sector, constructing agricultural settlements and defense. All three main streams in education – the Labor style of education, the national-religious and the general stream were financed (salary, facilities, etc.) and maintained by the national institution, thus most of the schools were free. High schools were semi-private institutions.

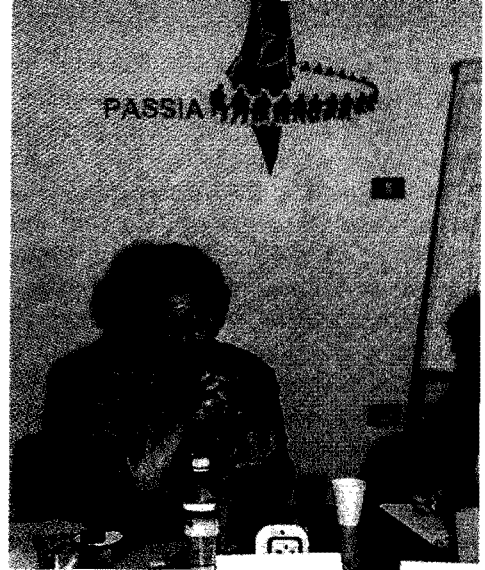
At the time, there was no ministry of planning or similar institution responsible for allocating resources or planning. The Jewish Agency handled these matters, and though its members were not necessarily Zionists, they were determined to help the Jews in Palestine. Furthermore the National Committee, a local

institution established in the 1920s and elected only by the Jews in Palestine, served as a junior partner to the Jewish Agency in terms of autonomy, resources, and leadership. The most important resource – money – remained with the Jewish Agency. The National Committee, which was located only in Jerusalem, primarily dealt with welfare, agriculture and developmental issues, while the Jewish Agency had a double structure with headquarters in London, headed for a long time by Chaim Weizmann, and Jerusalem, where David Ben-Gurion became chairman in 1931. The power shifted gradually from London to Jerusalem for obvious reasons: the intense events in Palestine did not allow for decision-making to await discussions between the two cities.

In the Balfour Declaration, the British stated that they would help the Jews establish a national home within the boundaries of Palestine; they never spoke about a state. The British Mandate was very important from a legal point of view. For example, the British considered the Jewish Agency a legal institution. The Arabs in this sense were less eager to establish institutions equal to those of the Jews, and had different points of view on this matter. Honestly speaking, as far as institution building was concerned the Arabs lagged far behind the Jews, which was one of the reasons why the legal infrastructure that the British established favored the Jewish society.

# The Political System in Israel: Government, Knesset, and Lawmaking

*Professor Naomi Chazan<sup>1</sup>*



The new system of direct elections of the prime minister, implemented with the old list system of the Knesset, has had the dual effect of strengthening the mandate of the prime minister and creating a problem of governance. Because of the weakening of the Knesset, the current and the previous prime minister have adopted very hierarchical, almost dictatorial styles of ruling. At the same time their governments have been marked by continual crisis.

The implementation of direct prime ministerial elections has altered the Israeli party scene, a phenomenon that was especially pronounced during the most recent election. First of all, the two large ideological parties - Labor and Likud - lost a tremendous amount of strength and are now medium sized parties at best. The only ideological party to fare better in this election was Meretz, gaining one seat more than it held in 1996.

Secondly, the special interest parties, which function like pressure groups in the guise of parties, gained in strength. For example, both the Shas and Shinui parties exhibited a tremendous rise. Thirdly, some sectors are rep-

resented by more than one party. For instance, there are three parties representing Russian immigrants and four Arab parties. In summary, there are now many more parties, fewer large parties, and more special interest parties.

Most parties hold internal elections to determine the lists for Knesset seats. Some parties, such as Labor, hold primaries. When I last ran for re-election I called all the party members who had a vote (3,000+) to get their attention. Primary campaigns can be very expensive. To get into politics and high on the list a person needs three things. First, one needs public exposure. Candidates who are a 'household name' have a much better chance of getting elected than those who are not. Second, a candidate must have organizational skills, since she or he will need supporters throughout the country. Third, a potential candidate requires funding to accomplish these things.

Candidates who served previous terms and have proven themselves competent generally have good chances of being re-elected. However, this is not always the case. Candidates who have already served two terms must often have a 60 percent mandate within their parties to serve a third. Otherwise, even if this person obtains the usual requisite number of votes, she or he will not be included. In this situation positioning on the list becomes very important.

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Naomi Chazan has been a Knesset member since 1992 (Meretz); currently she is the Deputy Speaker of the Knesset and serves on the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee (concentrating on issues related to the peace process and Israel's foreign relations), on the Economics Committee and the Committee on the Status of Women. She holds a BA/MA from Columbia University, US, and a Ph.D. in Political Science from the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. Before her election to the Knesset she taught Political Science and African Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where she served as Chair of the Harry S. Truman Institute. Chazan has been Vice-President of the International Political Science Association, President of Israel chapter of the Society for International Development, co-founder of various local Women's organizations, and active member in several professional, human rights and peace organizations.

It is very difficult for women to obtain the exposure, organization and money needed for election, which explains their very low representation in Israeli politics. The only mechanism for overcoming this obstacle is an affirmative action quota system. Consequently most of the parties (with the obvious exception of the religious parties) endorse such a system. Labor requires that one in every ten candidates be a woman, Likud one out of every eight. However these quotas are meaningless. I, along with the other women in Meretz, fought to introduce a minimum 40 percent clause within our party. It is difficult for other minorities, such as Arabs in non-Arab parties, to achieve representation as well.

Once elected, Knesset members are prohibited by law from undertaking additional paid work. This policy was introduced in 1996 for two main reasons: a serving Knesset member should not be under obligation to any other source for his or her income and holding a Knesset seat is a full time job. Nevertheless, the job is temporary, and many Knesset members find themselves unemployed after failing to achieve re-election. Also, fulfilling the obligations of the Knesset often render an outgoing member politically unpopular, further exacerbating the difficulty of finding employment.

The Knesset performs the following three functions; it engages in lawmaking, government supervision and monitoring, as well as the introduction of issues to public debate and the molding of public opinion. Some members choose to add a fourth function: dealing with complaints from the public and helping individual citizens with their problems. This can, however, also be included as an essential component of the first three functions.

The Knesset is in session Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from October until the beginning of April, and then again from mid-May until August. Knesset mornings are generally spent in committee meetings and afternoons in the plenary session, which is broadcast on cable Channel 33. On Sundays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays for the non-religious, members do party work such as touring the country.

The first role of the Knesset is lawmaking. Laws can be made by the government or by private members. For example, if I receive 20 citizen complaints concerning the misuse of weapons, I would begin to recognize that there is a firearms problem, and accordingly draft a law that introduces a system of licensing firearms. After the law is drafted, I would put it on the Knesset table where it would sit for 45 days. After that I would be allowed to raise it and then call for a vote. Immediately, the proposed law would go before the appropriate committee, who would then prepare the legislation for its first vote. It would then return to the plenary for a first reading, and then to the committee for corrections, and so on. In the end, a private member's bill will have four readings in the plenary and two separate sessions in committee.

Fewer people vote on non-controversial laws, while important legislation takes longer to pass. For example, I just passed a new law regarding the opening of all army positions to women that took seven years to clear the Knesset. On the other hand, I expect that my law stating that exact change must be given for a priced product will pass in only three or four months. In legislation the ideas come from the people. In the last eight years I have passed approximately 50 laws, the majority of which came from problems expressed to me by the people.

The second role of the Knesset is supervisory. Most serious supervision occurs in committees; I am on the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. We often meet with the Chief of Staff, whose job is to answer our questions. This position is not subject to review by anyone except the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. Each branch of the government undergoes this procedure; they sit in a committee and have to answer very difficult questions. This process gives the opposition tremendous power, but it is important for maintaining the integrity of the ministers and other officials.

A minister is required by law to appear in committee. However, in the past few months some ministers have not appeared before their

committee when asked. There is a real battle between the Knesset and the government on many issues right now. Since the ministers neglect the Knesset and do not take it seriously as a supervisory body, the Knesset is now beginning to impose a variety of sanctions on the ministers. Two weeks ago the Knesset declared that any minister who fails to appear before his committee will be denied the privilege of raising laws related to his ministry. The Knesset will further block budgets to the ministry until the minister complies. As a last resort the Knesset will not allow him to speak in plenary.

Three tools aid parliamentarians in their supervisory role: the committee, the parliamentary question and the motion for agenda. The questions and motions are televised, so as to simultaneously influence public opinion.

Key issues that arise in the Knesset today include the peace process, social justice, equality, and the question of religion and state.

Of the three Knesset terms I have served, the current session is the most unruly and chaotic. The disorder stems from the large number of parties and from the seriousness of the issues. The primary problem, however, is the friction between the government and the Knesset. Since the introduction of direct elections we have been unable to establish a working relationship. Hence, the institutions, coalitions and opposition are all struggling for power.

The government can fall in four ways, three of which are connected with the Knesset. The Knesset has the power to make or break a government and its prime minister. The first way the Knesset can accomplish this is by a 61-member vote of no-confidence. Only one government in the entire history of Israel fell on a no-confidence vote. The second method is to deny the government approval of the budget (which does not require 61 votes). If, within three months of the first of any year the budget is not approved, the government is dismissed. The third and most common method of bringing down a prime minister in government is by agreement which is a law to

disperse the Knesset along with the government. The fourth method is to impeach only the prime minister by collecting 80 signatures.

Many people are concerned about the stability of the current government. If this government falls within two years of the 1999 elections it will indicate that the system is flawed. Israel is undergoing a serious crisis of government at this time. Any prospective solution will involve reducing the number of parties. So far the government has come closest to falling over religious issues, rather than issues related to the peace process. However, if Barak succeeds in the peace process, he will not be removed from office. He understands the urgency of coming to agreements and implementing them, since otherwise there will be no reason for some members of the coalition, especially Meretz, to support the government. For Barak, success has become both a regional and political necessity.

Is Israel democratic? Our institutions are indeed democratic, despite the current disorder. However, democratic institutions do not necessarily make a democratic society. Therefore, on an institutional basis I will answer yes. On a societal basis I am much more hesitant.

We have a constitution based on the Basic Laws that have been passed. It is not a full constitution, but the laws cannot be changed without an absolute majority of 61. Those are the cornerstones of the constitution, and they have constitutional weight. I believe that constitutions have power and force only if they reflect the basic consensus in society. We essentially have a constitution for institutional matters. On human rights and social affairs, however, a gradual consensus is still developing. We should not force these matters into a constitutional form, but should allow them to develop in a piece-meal fashion.

Proportional representation systems, where one votes for parties rather than individuals, have the disadvantage of creating multi-party parliaments and coalition governments. However, the Israeli system is more representative than almost any other system. Each faction, from racist to communist, is represented

in the Knesset. They fight from inside rather than outside the system. However, there are currently too many parties. The way of limiting this number is to raise the threshold percentage of the popular vote necessary for obtaining a Knesset seat. Currently, the threshold is 1.5 percent; however, for most Israelis, relatives may alone account for 1.5 percent of the population. Raising the threshold to 3 percent, meaning that each party would have to obtain at least four Knesset seats before they are even admitted, would eliminate half the parties in the Knesset today. Most likely the threshold will be raised to 2.5 percent.

Nevertheless, Israeli society is divided, and even if we raised the threshold to five percent, there would still be at least six or seven parties: a party of the right, a party of the center, a party of the left, a religious party, and an Arab party.

Societies cannot be changed, but systems of representation can. Direct elections can either be the best or the worst way to accomplish this change. In the United States and in Great Britain, over 50 percent of any electoral district is not represented, and the leader is essentially handed a four-year limited dictatorship. Therefore, there are advantages and disadvantages to the electoral system. Today, I would not change the proportional representation system, because I prefer to keep the extremists inside the system where their activities can be monitored. If they are outside the system, they may kill another prime minister. One of the most important issues in the democratization process is the electoral system, for it determines the capacity of future governments to govern.

Newly-elected Knesset members do not receive special training. For instance, I am a professor of political science, and when I entered the Knesset I thought I knew everything. It took me one month to realize that I knew next to nothing. Learning to be a member of parliament in terms of the issues takes years. I vote 20 times a day on anything from maternity benefits to educational curriculum, issues I know only a little bit about, but enough to know what I am voting on. Sometimes mem-

bers come running in and ask, "How should I vote?" I say, "Vote for ...". They press a button and then they walk out without the faintest idea of the subject on which they were voting.

What I like from being a Knesset member is the possibility of changing things and sometimes we indeed can. For example, it is my fate to always be in the minority in my party until I succeed. I was one of the first to say that we have to talk directly to the PLO, and we have to say the word 'Palestinian state'. I was one of the first to say that we need a full withdrawal from Lebanon, even if it is unilateral. This is slowly becoming a majority position. Concerning Jerusalem, I belong to a minority now; only 40 percent of my party members say that the city of Jerusalem should be one city, two capitals, for two states. That is a slogan we are using, but I wrote about it for the first time in 1991, and I say it at every opportunity since. We brought it up for a vote in the Meretz Council two years ago, and received some 40 percent of the vote. If my political intuition serves me well, Meretz will be the first mainstream party to accept this position.

I believe it is a mistake to predict Israeli political trends. When Rabin was assassinated some of us said, "Let's have elections now. We do not even want to let four or five months pass because we may lose on another issue." By the time we dispersed and held elections seven months later, several bomb attacks had occurred in Jerusalem and Netanyahu had convinced half the population that he was going to pursue Rabin's course. Nobody would have predicted in November 1995 that Netanyahu would be prime minister in June 1996. All we can do is to follow the trends and the trend today is the fundamental and political need for Barak to produce a peace process without which he will be in real trouble politically.

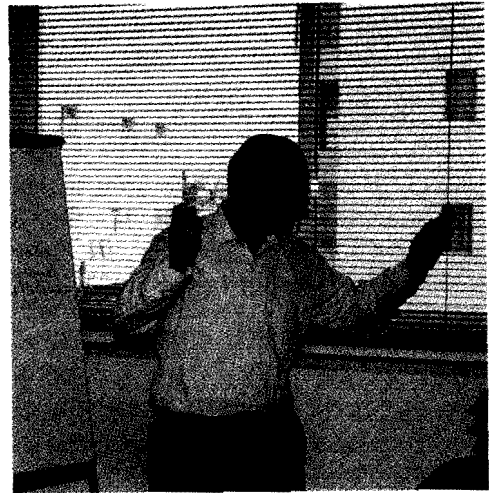
# Social Cleavages and Political Parties

*Dr. Benyamin Neuberger<sup>1</sup>*

**M**y presentation will focus on Israeli parties and their relation to social cleavages and ideological distinctions. My classification of parties will combine two basic approaches. The first approach is sociological, which defines and classifies parties according to social strata and social groups such as working class parties, bourgeoisie parties, agrarian parties, regional parties, ethnic parties or religious parties. All of these parties represent certain social groups in society.

The other is an ideological approach, which focuses on ideas, rather than social groups. Examples of ideological parties include capitalist parties, socialist parties, democratic parties, anti-democratic parties, conservative parties, liberal parties, religious parties, and secular parties. Here, these approaches are combined in order to analyze the Israeli party system by looking at the sociological and ideological cleavages, as well as the differences between them.

Seven basic cleavages in Israeli society are important. One cleavage is between the left and right in a socioeconomic sense. The next is between doves and hawks, and the third is between the religious and secular segments of society. The fourth is the Ashkenazi-Sephardi cleavage, and the fifth the Jewish-Arab/Palestinian cleavage, which of course refers only to citizens of Israel, not the territories. The sixth cleavage is between Zionists and non- or anti-Zionists, and the seventh is between 'Olim' (new immigrants) and 'Vatikim' ('established' citizens). Israeli parties combine these cleavages, and every cleavage has, in addition, a sociological and an ideological aspect.



Most Western countries manifest only one fundamental societal cleavage, and therefore only two major parties. In Britain, for example, the socioeconomic cleavage groups on the one hand - the working class, the ethnic and racial minorities, the immigrants, the poor, the slums, and the religious minorities, all of which are represented more or less by Labor. On the other hand, the middle class, the upper class, the Anglican Church and the establishment are all represented by the Conservative Party.

Israel has not just one but several societal divisions that do not overlap. For instance, doves and hawks are found within both the poor and the rich segments of society. This gives rise to four separate parties, which are then further divided by religious and ethnic cleavages, and so on. This is the primary reason for the numerous parties within Israel. The current Israeli parliament comprises 17 factions, but some factions are a combination of several parties. Therefore, there are currently 23 parties in parliament.

*Israel Ahat* - 'One Israel' - is a faction, but it comprises three parties - the Labor Party and two smaller parties, Geshet, the party of David Levy, and Meimad, a small religious party. These three parties made an electoral alliance and form one faction in the Knesset.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Neuberger is Professor of Political Science and head of the Democracy Studies Graduate Program at the Open University of Israel, Tel Aviv.



Another example: *Ya'hadut HaTora* (Tora Judaism), the ultra-orthodox faction, is composed of two parties - Degel HaTora and Agudat Israel, which are very much hostile towards each other. They agreed to an alliance only because otherwise they would not have reached the 1.5 percent threshold necessary for representation in parliament. A final example: in the former Knesset, the Communist Party allied with Azmi Bishara's National Democratic Alliance, existed for a time as one faction, and then split.

The first cleavage in Israeli society is the classical European cleavage between socialists and capitalists, left and right. This was the most important cleavage in the 1920s and 1930s when the Jewish parties were established, and I would call it the formative cleavage of Israeli politics. It has very much declined in importance today, but it still exists. The Labor Party is still more associated with the trade unions than the Likud. In the 1950s, a leftist party in the socioeconomic sense was a party that promoted social equality, expanded social services, supported progressive taxation, a large public sector, state intervention in the economy, and a utopian just society in the form of the kibbutz and the moshav.

The right emphasized that inequality is normal and natural, and that equality is utopian and unrealistic. They promoted the private economy, private initiative and competition, and opposed the welfare state, the unions, the kibbutzim and moshavim. The rightist party of the early days was called the General Zionist Party, which was later swallowed by the Likud. The labor parties have traditionally represented the left.

Today the situation is completely different, as all parties have moved toward the center in a socioeconomic sense. The Likud, for instance, has accepted the trade unions, which it did not 50 years ago. Labor has accepted privatization, and the market economy. Therefore, the division is no longer as strong as it was before.

Still, research that I conducted during the 1999 election reveals that the differences have not completely evaporated. I examined all the platforms of the parties and singled out traditional code words for leftist and rightist ideology. The code words of what I call 'rightist philosophy' are: free economy, private sector, privatization, competition, efficiency, initiative, reduction of public involvement in the economy, reduction of taxes, and a reduction of foreign workers. The code words of the left in the public platforms were: social justice, solidarity, human sensitivity, equality, equal opportunity, struggle against unemployment, reduction of unemployment, government plans against unemployment, support for old people, for pensioners, for homeless people, for students.

According to the results of my code-word tally, I found that one party, Shinui, included only rightist code words, while Hadash, the communist party, is completely left in its codes. This division does not refer to foreign policy, only social and economic issues. Likud, the National Religious Party (NRP), and the Russian parties are centrist in terms of their code-word use, while the Labor Party and Shas are slightly left of center.

The sociological aspect of the left and right refers not to ideology, but to the social groups that support each party. For instance, some parties are supported by the working class and the poor, others by the middle and upper classes. Things have changed over the years, however. In the 1950s, Labor, which was called at that time Mapai, had some support among the middle class as well as the working classes. Herut, the forerunner of the Likud, had very strong support among the proletariat, even though it endorsed capitalist ideology.

Today, the Likud is sociologically more of a working class party than Labor, since more of the working class support Likud. Labor is regarded as the party of the left in terms of politics and foreign policy, but currently has very little basis in the working class or the poor sections of the population. When I speak of leftist parties with regard to sociological stratification, I am referring to parties that

represent poor people. Parties that are clearly sociologically right-wing, however, represent only middle and upper class and have no support in the working class.

The religious cleavage divides parties and population groups as Haredi (ultra-orthodox), national-religious, traditionalist, liberal and secular in the Jewish sector and Islamist and liberal-secular in the Arab sector.

There are some parties whose programs, politics and leadership are Haredi but their supporters, voters and members are not all Haredi. Again, this represents a gap between ideology and sociology. The best example is Shas. The leadership of Shas is Haredi; all their members of the Knesset are clearly Haredi as is their platform and program. However, empirical research reveals that only 25 percent of those who vote for Shas are Haredi, while the rest are either national-religious or traditional. This explains why Haredi are only 10 percent of the population but hold 20 percent of the Knesset seats, and the national-religious are 20 percent of the population but only 10 percent of the Knesset. Another party without a clear overlap between sociology and ideology is the Mafdal (National Religious Party or NRP). 20 or 30 percent of those who vote for the NRP are traditionalists, not national-religious people. The only party to demonstrate complete overlap is the Ya'hadut HaTorah, which is a Haredi party, supported 100 percent by Haredim. In this case, there is no difference between ideology and sociology.

Most of the voters for Madfal (the NRP) are national-religious, as are some of the voters for Likud and the rightist Ihud Leumi (National Union). From the Arab sector, the Islamic party gets the religious Arab vote. Parties that are overwhelmingly liberal or secular are Shinui, Meretz, the Communist Party, and Shalansky's party.

With regard to the Sephardi-Ashkenazi cleavage, no party ideologically supports Sephardi separatism. The ideology of the Sephardi parties claims that communalism is very important, that they want equality, and that

there is a need for a separate Sephardi party to preserve their culture and identity. We have always had communal parties: the Yemenites and the Sephardi parties in the 1950s, a party called Tami in the 1980s, and Shas today. Shas is a party based on communal origin, meaning that its people come from the Maghreb and other Arab countries, and regard themselves as Sephardi.

Some parties are based on countries of origin such as the Russian parties, which are also in a sense communal. There are three Russian parties currently holding seats in parliament. All the other Jewish parties besides these reject party grouping on the basis of origin, because they say it is contrary to Jewish unity.

Interestingly, the previous analysis was ideological, rather than sociological. Sociologically, there are far more communal parties than those who explicitly present such ideology in their platforms. Shas is a communal Sephardi party whose ideology and sociological basis overlap, as are Gesher and the three Russian parties. The Ya'hadut HaTorah and Meretz are ideologically not Ashkenazi parties, but most of their voters are. Likud, Labor, and the NRP are mixed sociologically, but the majority of Likud is Sephardi, and the majority of Labor Ashkenazi.

The Arab-Jewish cleavage can also be analyzed according to the sociological and ideological approaches. Many people in the past talked about the difference between the Arab parties and the Zionist parties. I think that was never a good classification because it did not take into account the Communist Party, which was mixed, and the ultra-orthodox, which were not Zionist. I prefer to differentiate between parties that emphasize their Arab and Islamic identity (the Arab Democratic Party of Darawshah, the Islamic Movement, and Azmi Bishara's National Democratic Alliance) parties that emphasize their internationalism (like the Communist Party) and Jewish parties whether Zionist or not. In the 1950s and today the Communist Party emphasizes that they are not an Arab but an internationalist party, even though most of their voters are Arabs. They always make sure to have Jewish as well as

Arab members of parliament; even today one of their members is Jewish.

To obtain a sociological analysis, I classify parties according to the number and percentage of Arab-Palestinians voting for each. Some parties, such as Azmi Bishara's, are entirely Palestinian. Furthermore, all the voters for the United Arab List are Palestinian Arabs; no Jewish, Druze or Christian voters. The next category includes parties that are overwhelmingly Arab, such as the Hadash (Democratic Front of Peace and Equality). The Communist Party of the 1950s was equally balanced between Arabs and Jews, although this is no longer the case today. The fourth group contains parties that have a meaningful number of Arab voters, such as Meretz and the Labor Party. The parties for which only a small percentage of Arabs vote are the Likud, Shas, and the NRP. Some parties, such as Ya'hadut Ha'Torah, the Russian parties and the Ihud Leumi have no Arab voters.

It is also possible to analyze and classify parties as one-issue parties, two-issue parties, or multi-issue parties. Shinui is a one-issue party in that it emphasizes only religious issues.

Shas is a multi-issue party. They emphasize the religious issue, the Sephardi-ethnic and the social issue. Another distinction is between parties of integration and parties of representation. Parties of representation are simply political parties who compete every four years for election but do not do anything else, such as Likud or Shinui. Parties of integration run schools and kindergartens, and have housing projects and cultural institutions, like the Haredi parties or the Islamic movement. Additionally, some parties are based on organizations or on personalities, like Azmi Bishara's, Raphael Eitan's, David Levy's, and Lieberman's party.

The historical classification distinguishes between old-established parties who in one way or another emerged in the 1920s and 1930s such as Labor, Likud and the NRP, new parties such as Shas and Meretz, and 'seasonal' parties that exist for three or four years and then disappear, such as the Third Way of the

previous Knesset, or the Center Party in this Knesset (which I predict will disappear in the next election). The final differentiation is between system parties and anti-system parties. System parties such as Labor, Likud, NRP or Meretz are those that accept the current system, and anti-system parties like Ya'hadut Ha'Tora or the Islamic Movement are those that want to change it.

# Economic Growth in Israel, 1948-2000

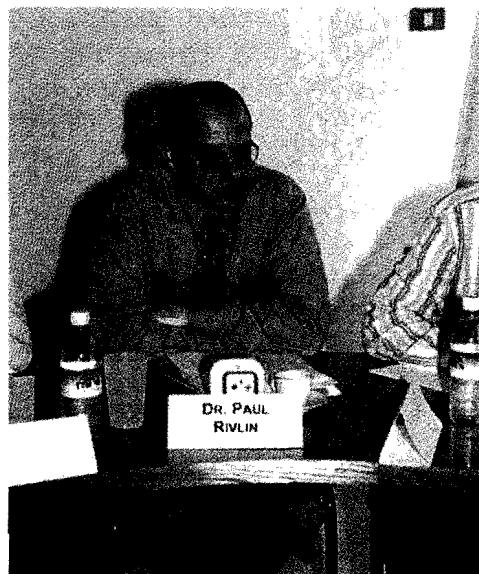
Dr. Paul Rivlin<sup>1</sup>

This lecture will examine Israel's economic growth experience in a historical perspective. It will concentrate on two main periods: that between 1950 and 1973, and the 1990s. The first is of interest to a Palestinian audience because at this time, income levels in Israel were closer to those in Palestine in absolute terms. The second period is of interest because it addresses the current Israeli situation. The lecture will then look at some of the socioeconomic implications of growth patterns in the 1990s. In 1950, national income per head in Israel was \$3,200 in 1999 prices and exchange rates. In 1998, it was \$16,250.

Following the declaration of independence, Israel opened its borders to all Jews wishing to immigrate. Between 1948 and 1950 the population more than doubled, increasing from 600,000 to 1,370,000 people. This huge increase was accommodated only with great difficulty; many lived in tent encampments with minimal facilities for some years. In 1948-50, most of the immigrants came from Europe; from 1951 onward they were mostly from the Middle East and North Africa. The immigration made possible a large increase in the civilian labor force which grew from 343,000 in 1949 to 619,000 in 1955, an increase of 80 percent in six years.

The educational levels (measured in terms of years of formal schooling) of immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa were lower than that of Jews born in the country or those who came from Europe. Over time, however,

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Paul Rivlin is a Senior Research Fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv. His field of specialization is the Middle East economy and its historical development. He has written several papers on defense economics and Arab economies and is the author of *The Dynamics of Economic Policy Making in Egypt* (1985), and *The Israel Economy* (1992).



the educational level of the population as a whole (including the non-Jewish communities) improved steadily. In 1961, 24.2 percent of the population over 15 years of age had 0-4 years schooling. By 1996, this had fallen to 6.1 percent. Measured more positively, the share having 16+ years rose from 9.1 percent in 1961 to 14.8 percent in 1997.<sup>2</sup> Despite major educational achievements, these inequalities still persist between Jews of different origins and between the Jewish and non-Jewish communities. There was therefore an increase in the quantity and quality of labor, something that continues today. One point about education is worth emphasizing. Formal education was a less important source of productivity than informal factors such as knowledge of Hebrew, improved health standards and integration of immigrants.<sup>3</sup>

The second factor was investment, or capital formation. Between 1950 and 1972 the capital stock, that included means of production and housing, increased more than 12 times. Capital per head of the population rose 5 times. The high level of investment was, in large part, made possible by an inflow of

<sup>2</sup> Israel, Central Bureau of Statistics. *Statistical Abstract of Israel*. No. 50 (1999), Table 22.10.

<sup>3</sup> Nadav Halevi and Ruth Klinov Malul. *The Economic Development of Israel*. New York: Praeger, 1968, p. 130.

capital from abroad in the form of reparations from Germany, the sale of Israel government bonds, loans and gifts. Grants from the US government were important in the early 1950s and after 1973.

The final source of economic growth was increased productivity, which resulted from improvements in education, skill levels, the quality of management, the allocation of resources, and the introduction of new technologies.

It is interesting to note that in the 1950s, large increases in labor and capital inputs were accompanied by improvements in productivity (see Table 1). This was more due to the integration of immigrants than to general government policies, which were highly interventionist and protective. Imports were limited by quantitative restrictions and production in the economy was stimulated by numerous government measures which, to use today's jargon, overrode the market.

Despite the nature of government involvement in the economy, taxes and government spending were a much lower share of national income than they are today. Labor flowed into industries built with government assistance, using imported machinery and productivity rose as the labor force adapted itself to evolving conditions. There is no complete consensus as to why productivity growth was high then, or why it is low now.

**Table 1: Productivity in Industry**

Years (Period)	Annual Rate of growth (%)
1955-1960	3.9
1961-1965	6.0
1966-1967	-0.9
1968-1972	7.3
1973-1980	1.3
1981-1985	0.4
1986-1990	1.2
1991-1995	1.5

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, *Jubilee Series*, no. 4, 1998

As well as encouraging immigration - although this was temporarily stopped in the early 1950s when the capacity to absorb them was exceeded - the government encouraged inflows of capital. This was necessary because Israel had a deficit on its balance of payments current account. If funds had not been imported, imports would have had to have been restricted even more tightly than they were, and the level of economic activity would have been lower. By securing sources of finance from abroad, the government was able to maintain a supply of capital equipment as well as basic supplies such as wheat and oil. The main sources of foreign capital in the 1950s were:

1. US loans and grants;
2. Gifts from world Jewish Community;
3. Reparations from West German government to the Israeli government and to individuals;
4. Sale of Israel government bonds.

Most of this capital was channeled through the government, enabling it to maintain a centralist economic system. In the mid-1950s the government realized that the potential for generating employment and increasing output in agriculture was reaching its limit. Diminishing returns were setting in, and the government decided to shift its policy emphasis to industrial development. However, rather than supporting industry directly, it made a very significant decision to promote the private sector. This meant that entrepreneurs had to be recruited from abroad, as the domestic supply was limited. Given Israel's geo-political position and its level of economic development, as well as the Arab boycott, few firms in the West were willing to invest. The government therefore turned to the Jewish community, and located a number of entrepreneurs who were interested in opening plants in basic industries (textiles, clothing etc). They were offered a protected market due to import substitution policies, and a virtually guaranteed labor supply, since the government's major aim in industrialization was to generate employment. Furthermore, prospective entrepreneurs were granted sub-

sidized loans, land, as most land in Israel was and is in effect state-owned, and allocations of a very scarce resource; foreign exchange for importing machinery. Exports were not a criterion for government support of new investment.

By the mid-1960s the limits of the domestic market were being felt in industry, and Israel applied to the newly formed European Economic Community for a trade agreement. It wanted to preserve its traditional markets in Europe, but came to realize that industry, employment and income would only develop on the basis of exports, which would necessitate the opening of domestic markets to imports. The first limited trade agreement with the EEC was signed in 1970, but the more significant agreement that created a free trade area was signed in 1975.

The national water carrier that brings water from the Kinneret to the northern Negev was built between 1959 and 1966. It expanded the amount of land available for agriculture in the south, but did not change the newly apparent emphasis on industry.

Israeli economic development since 1970 had been marked by gradual liberalization, bringing the economy closer to that which orthodox economists favor: the free market. Yet productivity during this time period deteriorated, which can be explained by unfavorable developments in the 1970s. The 1973 war was enormously costly in an economic sense. The increase in oil prices that followed affected Israel more than other importers because it returned oil fields to Egypt after the war and therefore had to import larger quantities of oil. In the 1980s, mismanagement of the economy led to inflation at an annual rate of 500 percent in the first half of 1985 (1980-1985 average annual rate just under 200 percent). In the period of hyperinflation - 1980-1985 - the main economic objective of firms was to survive rather than market abroad, research or develop. The 1980s were known as the lost decade; the economy grew slowly, as did productivity.

## The 1990s

Between 1990 and 1996, the economy grew at an average annual rate of 5.8 percent as a result of huge immigration and investment. The international environment for Israel improved as the peace process began, and as a result foreign investment increased. However, productivity growth remained low, for which a number of explanations have been given.

The first is that with the rapid increase in labor and capital inputs efficiency became less important: the main aim was to find jobs for the immigrants. Even though many of those who came from the former Soviet Union were highly educated, they did not initially speak Hebrew and did not find jobs which matched their skills. As a result, their productivity was lower than its potential level. This implies that low productivity is temporary, and as these immigrants become integrated, with better language and other skills, their productivity will rise.

Another explanation is the inadequacy of Israel's infrastructure is. The roads are congested, and there is virtually no railway network. The amount of time needed to reach a peripheral city such as Beersheva from Tel Aviv is surprisingly great. Greater Tel Aviv is one of the few cities in the world at a per capita level of \$17,000 or more that has no mass transportation system. The water, drainage, and in some places even the electricity systems are inadequate.

Furthermore, macro-economic factors such as the income tax system contain serious disincentives to work for middle earners. The level of tax and government revenue in GDP is high. Monopolies thrive, as is to be expected in a small economy, but the opening to foreign competition has not changed competitive conditions in all sectors. Government bureaucracies are formidable. There is no planning system, or if there is one it is very inefficient, full of uncertainty and overlapping authority. The impression that Israel has strong government with regard to domestic issues is false. It subsidizes water for agriculture where an increasing number of workers are from the

Far East, with low productivity. Importing unskilled labor also lowers average productivity levels. This is permitted largely because the agricultural lobby is strong, and the government is unable or unwilling to stand up to it.

The low productivity growth rates of the 1990s are even more surprising in light of the extensive structural economic change that has been undertaken. Table 2 shows that traditional industries have declined from two thirds of manufacturing output in 1970 to less than half in 1999.

**Table 2: Composition of the Manufacturing Sector, 1970-1999**

Year	Traditional	Advanced
1970	67.1	25.6
1980	56.6	34.6
1990	51.7	40.3
1995	50.1	41.9
1999	44.8	47.1

Source: Bank of Israel, *Annual Report 1999*, p. 9

NB: There was a change in the sample in 1995.

It seems that higher labor productivity in the so-called advanced industries has not been sufficient to raise overall productivity growth, although it did contribute to raising production.

Employment in the advanced sector in 1996: 193,500. This sector accounted for 60 percent of industrial output, two thirds of industrial capital.<sup>4</sup>

**Table 3: High-Tech Shares in Manufacturing**

Year	Product	Labor Force	Exports
1995	45.6	34.6	64.3
1998	50.4	37.4	73.1

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, *Jubilee Series*. No. 4, 1998.

**Table 4: Advanced and Traditional Industries (annual averages, %)**

Year	Advanced	Traditional
<u>1990-1996</u>		
Output	6.7	6.6
Labor Input	2.7	3.4
Capital Stock	8.7	5.1
Total factor productivity	2.2	2.5
Labor productivity	4.0	3.1
Exports	10.4	5.9
<u>1997-1999</u>		
Output	5.0	-1.0
Labor Input	1.0	-2.3
Capital Stock	9.9	6.3
Total factor productivity	1.2	-1.3
Labor productivity	3.9	1.3
Exports	15.1	0.1

Source: Bank of Israel, 1999.

### Socioeconomic Implications of the Pattern of Growth in the 1990s

Between 1996 and 1999 the economy grew slowly, and GDP per capita either stagnated or fell. Between 1990 and 1999, industrial output rose by 45 percent, but employment in industry increased by only about 5 percent. The high-tech sector continued to grow, as is shown in Table 3 and Table 4. High-tech or advanced production increased its share of the total by growing faster than the traditional sector. It continued to draw in labor, albeit slowly, during the recession of 1996-1999; investment grew and therefore the capital stock rose by nearly 10 percent a year. As a result, labor productivity increased, as did wages. Most significant was the rapid growth of exports: 15 percent a year compared with virtually zero in the traditional sector.

Clearly, two industrial sectors were developing. One had high exports, high investment and positive productivity growth rates (measured either by total factor productivity or by labor productivity). The other, traditional sector witnessed falling output and employment

<sup>4</sup> Israel, Central Bureau of Statistics. *Jubilee Series*. No. 4, 1998; and Bank of Israel. *Annual Report 1999*.

and stagnant exports. Placed in a broader socioeconomic context, this has serious implications.

Inequality in the distribution of income measured before taxes and transfer payments rose in the period 1988 to 1997. The Gini coefficient for earnings of families headed by a wage earner or non-working individual rose from 0.3700 to 0.3946. This was the result of higher returns on education on the one hand, and an increased exposure to imports of labor intensive goods from countries with relatively lower wage costs on the other. The presence of foreign workers, including Palestinians, meant that wages tended to fall, or increase more slowly in traditional industries.

Direct taxes and transfer payments reduced inequality over the same period from 0.3221 to 0.3332. Transfer payments increased from 13 percent of GNP in 1988 to 20.7 percent in 1998. Direct taxes rose from 19.1 percent of GNP in 1988-94 to 20.7 percent in 1994-98. The increase in direct taxes had disincentive effects on workers and caused transfer payments to rise, partly because rising unemployment benefits burdened the budget. These measures did not outweigh the increase in inequality caused by the new earnings pattern, and therefore net inequality increased.

The number in poverty also rose. In 1988, 33 percent of families were below the official poverty line; in 1996 the share was 34.5 percent. The population had risen by 28 percent, and therefore the absolute number in poverty rose more sharply.

After direct tax and transfer payments, the share of the population in poverty in 1988 was 14 percent and in 1996, 16 percent.<sup>5</sup> The figure today equals about one million people, which would be higher if foreign workers were included.

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<sup>5</sup> Bank of Israel. *Annual Report 1998*.



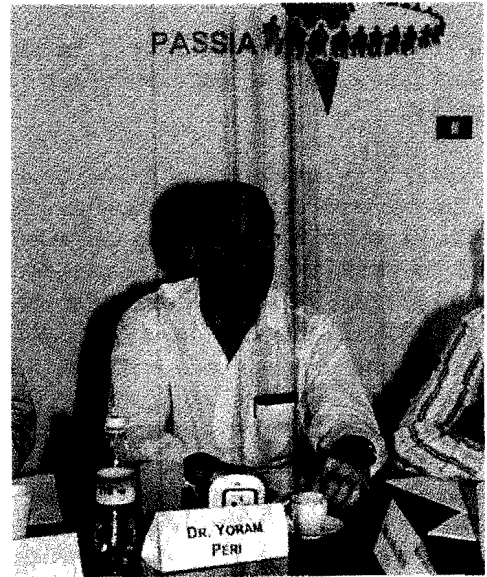
## The Military and Security Establishment

*Dr. Yoram Peri<sup>1</sup>*

In the late 1940s, the American political scientist Harold D. Lasswell argued in what became known as the 'Garrison-State Hypothesis' that during a cold war a society cannot remain democratic, and that democratic values such as freedom of expression and movement will be lost as it becomes a garrison state. In a garrison state, the vast majority of resources are re-allocated to the military, which consequently becomes very strong. Moreover, decision-making power moves from the parliamentary institutions to the government - particularly to the military, and society becomes increasingly closed.

Lasswell wrote this hypothesis immediately following World War II (WWII), when the Cold War between the United States and Russia began, arguing that the US would not be able to survive as a democracy if the Cold War continued. We know now that this was not the case and that the US did not change its nature. However, strong democracies such as France and Britain were less democratic during the period of World War I (WWI).

In the 1960s, researchers began to investigate the military and society in Israel. They were curious as to whether Israel could continue to function as a democracy, because according to Lasswell's hypothesis it could not. People were afraid that Israel would become



a military regime in a similar fashion as other Third World countries after WWII. At that time, very few Israeli academics researched the impact of the military on society. However, the few who did concluded that Israel would not lose its democratic nature, and that Lasswell's theory was incorrect. Their reasoning was as follows:

- 1) Israel was more developed than many of the Third World states;
- 2) Israel was not a very young democracy;
- 3) there was a very high level of political institutionalization;
- 4) the media was independent.

These aspects of Israeli society at that time demonstrated that Israel was a strong democracy, and therefore would not have the same future as the other Third World countries. To a large extent, I agree with this conclusion. For example, research has discovered a similarity in the value systems of western countries' military officers. In my research, I named this common denominator the 'military mind.' For example, a study done on the American army several years ago gave high-ranking officers pictures of men's faces, and asked them who would make a good military officer. In the end, the studies found the following four characteristics in military officers:

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Peri was Professor of Political Sociology and Communication at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. He studied at the Hebrew University and the London School of Economics, from where he received his Ph.D. In his professional career he has moved between journalism, academic, and political work. He is the president of the New Israel Fund, which works since 20 years to strengthen and promote democracy in Israel by helping NGOs in the fields of human rights, women's equality, religious pluralism, Israeli-Palestinian cooperation inside Israel, and environment.

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Western world. However, they had no influ-  
ence in industrial relations. The democratic  
civilian values moved into the security sphere.  
For example, during the War of Attrition in  
1969 there was a long strike in the Ashdod  
Port, and people were very angry because  
soldiers died every day on the Suez Canal and  
these workers had the luxury to strike. The  
general secretary of the trade union federation  
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- social group.
- 2) They are pessimistic about the nature of man. When asked, most agreed that the nature of man is evil. Furthermore, they believe that wars will always be a part of human existence.
  - 3) They are alarmists, who tend to see danger as being right around the corner.
  - 4) They have some totalitarian characteristics, in that they rank people and treat those below them with force and those above them with respect and fear. These are the four basic characteristics of the military mind.

I wanted to determine whether Israeli officers had this military mind and, in 1984, I conducted the same research on Israeli top-ranking officers. When I began my research, I assumed Israeli officers would be the same as other officers in the world, but they differed in that the boundaries between the society and military were less distinct. In other words, the military officer is essentially not much different from the civilian Israeli. Military officers rank high on the nationalism scale, but this is true for all Israelis. Very few of them said that man was born evil or that there will always be war in the world. Their perception of war was very practical: war was seen as a conflict created because of particular situations. In other words, they did not believe that war is part of human nature. For these reasons, I concluded that Israel's officer corps - meaning professionals who go to the military as a career rather than as soldiers - should not be perceived as militaristic. Israeli society is not immune from militaristic values, but the military is not a bastion of militaristic policies, viewpoints, or philosophies.

The perception that Israel would remain a democracy like any other lasted for many years. Later, however, researchers began to notice differences, and argued that social life has to be divided into civilian and military spheres. For instance, the military had grown in strength and power, and Israeli officers were

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In democratic societies the military does not interfere in civilian labor strikes. In Israel, there was only one case where the army was sent in to settle a strike in Haifa Port in 1950, which created an havoc in Israel since then the army is not supposed to be involved in the resolution of strikes. In 1975, during a strike in the tower of the Ben-Gurion Airport, the army was sent to replace the air controller. Defending this action, the minister of transportation claimed that the air control tower served not only the civilian but also the military airfield, which justified military intervention.

In the particular field of industrial relations, civilian values infiltrating into the military institution brings about a very interesting situation. Israel has a very strong military institution, stronger than in other western democratic societies, but its influence is limited to security matters. In all other fields, civilian values are transmitted to the military. Officers who moved into politics in Israel have political orientations ranging from the extreme left to the extreme right. Most, however, are found in the middle. Therefore, the military as such is not a source of militaristic values.

The last ten years or so have witnessed the development of 'new historians' and 'new so-

ciologists'. Ilan Pappé wrote in the *Journal for Palestinian Studies* (Winter 1997) a very good paper entitled, "Post-Zionist Critique on Israel and the Palestinians" in which he discusses these new historians and new sociologists. Also, my article called "Is Israeli Society Militaristic?" published in the magazine, *Israel Studies* presents the research of five scholars who, for different reasons, argue that Israel is a militaristic society. Each scholar comes from a different background, and therefore has a different perception of Israeli militancy.

One of them is a Marxist and argues that Israel became militaristic before the War of 1948 because it transformed from a multi-national, multi-racial, socialist society into a capitalist society. The argument is ridiculous, because it assumes that militarism is a derivative of capitalism, and that one can not be simultaneously communist and militaristic. As we know, there have been some very strong militarists among the communist leaders of the world. Other scholars present additional arguments, which I will not discuss here, but the general consensus is that Israeli society at large is militaristic. I, however, think that they are mistaken, mostly with regard to the theoretical paradigm. For example, the most well-known among them, Uri Ben-Eliezer, wrote a book entitled *The Origin of Israeli Militarism*, in which he defines militarism as the use of violence to solve political problems. However, every society and every state use violence to solve political problems. If all states in the world are militaristic, the distinction is not particularly useful.

This school of thought, which did not exist until about ten years ago, comprises young people who debate well, and the topic is interesting. However, even this school argues that the militaristic aspects of Israeli society have declined in recent years. Furthermore, the value system of Israeli society has changed, exemplified by a decline in what I call the security ethos. The security ethos used to be the major issue in Israeli society, the overarching value that impacted all other values. Security is an obsession for Israelis, which began with the origin of the Zionist movement.

Furthermore, Israeli society has moved away from collectivism and towards individualism. Because of the Zionist movement, early Israeli society had a strong collectivist orientation. Today people do not want that anymore. In the past, Israelis who left Israel used to be called Yordim, which means deserters, a very derogative term. Israelis who went to live in the United States in order to have a better life were scorned for deserting the cause. Today, people are just as likely to say, "Who am I to tell you what to do?"

In addition, prior to the 1960s Israeli newspapers did not criticize the military. Because of the great success in the War of 1967, a 'cult of the generals' developed, which portrayed the military leaders as heroes. Every hero had two or three journalists who wrote about him and praised him to the point that he became a national symbol. After the War in 1973, some people questioned the role of the press concerning the military, arguing that it should be more critical towards the military in the same way that it criticizes any other institution in Israeli society.

In the 1990s, 80 percent of the stories printed in Israeli newspapers concerning the military turned negative. Every day one can now find a story criticizing the military for sexual harassment, misbehavior, bad thinking, mishaps or mistakes. Israel is moving towards what is called post-war society, and the previous values are diminishing.

Following the Intifada and the Lebanon War, the Israeli public has been much more vocal about criticizing the policies of the government. Until 1982, the military was never criticized, and the government as well received very little criticism concerning the wars. In the later stages of the Lebanon War, however, half of the Israeli population began to oppose it. In Israeli political rhetoric, a war that is forced upon Israel is called a 'war of no choice', and therefore considered to be a just war. The Lebanon War was the first that the Israeli population declared to be an unjust war. Prime Minister Menachem Begin argued that although the war in Lebanon was a war of choice, some wars of choice are just wars.

that Israel should not wait until it is attacked to defend itself, and that it had the right to start a war. The majority of Israelis did not accept Begin's statement, however, and instead reaffirmed that a just war is only a war of no choice.

In the current negotiations with Syria, for example, Barak wants to show the people that he is trying his best to achieve peace. If his best proves to not be enough, than Israelis will perceive any future war with Syria as unavoidable, and therefore a just war. Conversely, if the Prime Minister does not try to reach peace, the next war will not be a war of no choice.

Although Israeli society was split over the 1982 Lebanon War, it criticized the Minister of Defense and the Prime Minister but not the military. The first time that Israeli society criticized the military was during the Intifada. At first the left argued that the measures of the army were too harsh; later the right claimed that the military was being too soft on the Palestinians and not crushing the Intifada. This new widespread criticism was a dramatic change. Furthermore, the media has helped to develop a new culture of criticism. Objective developments such as the peace process, ethical changes within Israeli society concerning the values of collectivism and individualism, and changes in perceptions of the military all have resulted in what even the new historians and sociologists agree is a decline in the militaristic spirit of Israeli society.

However, as a result of the prolonged war, the military is much stronger in Israel than in other democratic societies. One expression of military power is the fact that so many generals enter politics: 20 percent of the government is composed of ex-generals. However, the fact that there are officers in the government does not make it more militaristic than a government without officers. Officers, as such, are not inherently militaristic. Militaristic groups, forces, and tendencies in Israeli society come from civilians, mainly from ultra-nationalist orthodox groups.

In Israel, the different schools of thought are frequently battling over the use of power, and every instance of there is an excessive use of violence provokes a reaction, of which the war in Lebanon is an excellent example. After that war, the Israeli public reaffirmed the concept of the just war. So, every time there is a feeling that the Israeli society is moving too far towards a militaristic position, the stronger anti-militaristic forces push it back. This battle within Israeli society is a result of the fact that we live in a prolonged war.

As my point of departure is really the democratic nature of Israeli society, I am not interested in other aspects of the Israeli military, even the intelligence apparatus. The conflict under which we are living is the old conflict between democratic values such as freedom and rights, and security needs. It is easier for the military to uphold the former, because it operates in the public, in the open. The security forces, on the other hand, do not work in the public, and therefore are even less democratic. Indeed, because of the perception that we live under prolonged war, democratic values are considered to be less important in security spheres. When weighing democracy on one hand and security on the other, most Israelis will say that security is more important. Therefore, the Israeli public has been very lenient towards the security forces, allowing them to operate without transparency or public accountability.

Among the security and the military issues, the issue of nuclear proliferation is the most sensitive, to the extent that it is not discussed at all. Revealing the extent of military censorship, until five years ago Israeli newspapers did not print a single word about the nuclear issue, not even questioning whether or not we have nuclear capability. The only word that could be used was 'option', i.e., the 'nuclear option'. However, even in this particular field, the values of the security people are not uniform. Some of the most pro-Palestinian sectors in Israel today are people who come from the Shabak, and some of the most dovish come from the security services. Therefore, generalizations are not only not applicable, they can be dangerous.

Many visitors who came to Israel 20 years ago said it was a militaristic society because they saw soldiers everywhere in Tel Aviv. During the war in Lebanon, however, some of those soldiers returning from Lebanon to Tel Aviv demonstrated against the war. These soldiers were then accused of being anti-nationalist, and were even beaten by young Israelis who had not participated in the war. The soldiers returned to the war, saying that they will continue to fight because as soldiers they must obey orders, but that the war was not for a just cause.

It is a mistake to look only at the institution or the uniform and to assume that soldiers are militaristic and civilians or university intelligentsia are not. As mentioned before, the security services were essentially free to do whatever they wanted. The case in the mid-1980s, in which the Palestinian kidnappers of an Israeli bus were killed shocked the Israeli public, for it was revealed that the operation was an illegal murder. The public was shocked to find that the security services commit illegal acts, deceiving their superiors, the government and the court. The Israeli legal system and the attorney general fought against this case; so much so that he had to resign because the Prime Minister wanted to cover it up. This was the first time that Israelis realized that the security services are not always 100 percent clean. Furthermore, the public is still unaware of the activities of the Mossad, for they report only to a subcommittee of the Knesset. However, the security apparatuses have become more transparent than they were 20 years ago.

## DISCUSSION

*Participant:* What are the characteristics of the people involved in the intelligence agency compared to those of the military officers?

*Dr. Peri:* I can only give my personal impressions because there has been no academic research done on this issue. I believe that there is not much difference between the intelligence services and the military officers. Some people are nasty, others are quite positive.

*Participant:* What is the position of the Ultra-Orthodox who do not serve in the army? How do they effect the military and how does the military effect them?

*Dr. Peri:* The ultra-orthodox position is very interesting because of two factors. First of all, the Ultra-Orthodox were traditionally anti-Zionist. They believed that the Jews should stay in Europe and wait for the Messiah to come and create a state for us. Those who lived here were extreme doves; they were against war, against conflict, and were not anti-Arab. The most extreme group among the Ultra-Orthodox is called the Neturei Karta. They would like Arafat to be the Prime Minister of Israel as well because Israel is sinful, as it is governed by secular Jews. They believe that it is better to be governed by a Palestinian Arab than by a secular Jew. This is the most extreme group, but even other Ultra-Orthodox parties until the 1970s were extreme doves who promoted compromise and peace. It was only in the 1980s that they moved toward the hawkish position and became partners of the Likud Party. This move was not so much because of anti-Arab policies, but because they think Likud is more Jewish, while the left, Labor, is too internationalist and secular. The reason why the Ultra-Orthodox do not enter the military, however, is because they believe they must devote all their time and energy to studying the Torah.

*Participant:* Are there pressures within the military to force the Ultra-Orthodox to join?

*Dr. Peri:* With the widening of the gap between secular and religious Jews in Israel over the past 15 years, the secular elements of society have grown increasingly angry at the fact that the Ultra-Orthodox do not serve. Furthermore, the number of Ultra-Orthodox who do not serve in the army has grown from 0.2 percent of the population in the 1950s to five percent today. Secularists question why service is mandatory for them and not for the religious, which has caused increasing tension. It was a major topic in the 1999 election campaign, and will probably continue to be a major issue that will occupy both religious and secular people. The government has es-

established a committee to discuss this issue. The committee has put forth some ideas, but is currently suffering its own crisis, and some committee members have left. The seculars will not accept that before too long over seven percent of the Israeli population will be exempted from military service. Therefore, change is inescapable and within the next ten years Israel will most likely develop a new law for national service. The military today does not need every Israeli to serve as a soldier, therefore those who do not wish to serve in the army will be able to serve in civilian institutions. This will solve not only the problem of the Ultra-Orthodox, but also will lessen the discrimination against Israeli Arabs. Currently, many Israelis use the fact that Israeli Arabs do not serve in the military to treat them as second-class citizens. If they serve in the national service, they will have the same claim for their rights. This change will take some years to develop, but eventually it will solve the problem.

*Participant:* Do you see a paradox in the fact that the Ultra-Orthodox groups participate in Israeli political life, yet refuse to serve in the army?

*Dr. Peri:* Until 20 years ago orthodox groups did not participate in the system. For example, many of them do not vote and promote this practice. Others do vote and are members of the Knesset, but until the 1980s did not join the government. So, from a sociological perspective, they do not see themselves as full partners. Those who were members of the Knesset never held positions in Knesset subcommittees, or if they did, refused to join the government. Only some years ago under Netanyahu did one of them become a deputy minister, but not a full minister. The Ultra-Orthodox call themselves marginal partners, and some of them do not pay taxes. They do not see themselves as full partners of Israeli society because it is secular. Israeli political enfranchisement can be viewed as a circle with boundaries. Israeli Arabs are outside the circle, and the Druze are inside the circle because they serve in the military, but are very close to the boundary. The Ultra-Orthodox lie just inside the position of the

Druze, but still outside the segment of mainstream popular society. The elite lie in the very center of the circle. Therefore, from a sociological point of view the Ultra-Orthodox are neither in nor out, but are on the margin of Israeli society.

*Participant:* Do you think that Israeli society cannot make decisions unless it perceives that its existence is threatened, that it will act only to uphold Jewish interests? What is the role of the military institution in strengthening Israeli nationalism.

*Dr. Peri:* To answer the first question: there are three groups in Israel, the first of which, approximately 15 percent of the population, holds a more universalistic perception and advocates Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank because the Palestinian national movement is legitimate. The next group, representing 30-40 percent of the population, are motivated by self-interest and are ready to negotiate or to give back territory only if they feel that it is good for their security and existence. They continue to claim moral rectitude, but are willing to compromise and make concessions in order to achieve normalization. The third group, comprising 30 percent of the population, will not compromise. They claim that Gentiles will always want to kill Jews, and that the conflict started 4,000 years ago and will continue for the next 2,000 years.

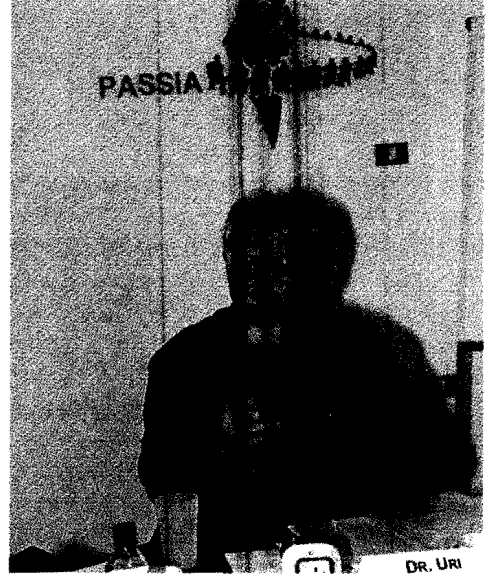
# The Histadrut: Continuity and Change

Dr. Uri Davis<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

The Histadrut ('The Federation') was established in 1920 as the General Federation of Hebrew Workers in the Land of Israel in an effort by the two rival major labor Zionist parties, *Ahdut Ha'Avodah* and *Ha'Poel Ha'Tzair*, to coordinate Jewish labor matters. Until 1948 the Histadrut incorporated the primary economic infrastructure of the Jewish Yishuv (Zionist community) in Palestine, controlling the mainstream Zionist instruments of colonization, economic production and marketing, labor employment and defense (the Haganah), with trade union activity as only one division its activities.

In the period of the British Mandate Government of Palestine (1922-1948) a *modus vivendi* based on a *de facto* division of labor was established between the colonial British Government, the World Zionist Organization (WZO)/Jewish Agency (JA) and the Histadrut. The colonial government was in charge of enforcing 'law and order', security and taxation, the WZO/JA represented the Yishuv before the British Government and controlled foreign relations and fundraising, and the Histadrut managed and developed the economic infrastructure of the Yishuv, directed the political



mobilization of the Jewish workers, and controlled the Zionist organized labor force.

The Histadrut established, among others, the network of the Kibbutz, Moshav and other agricultural cooperative settlements; the General Sick Fund (Kupat Holim Kelalit); the educational network of kindergartens and schools (Workers Section); the daily newspaper *Davar*; a publishing house (Am Oved); construction companies (Solel Boneh); industrial and manufacturing concerns and holding companies (KUR); housing associations (Shikun Ovdim); banks (Bank Hapoalim); insurance companies (Ha'Sneh); tourism (Histour); agricultural marketing companies (Tenuvah); supplies company (Ha'Mashbir); labor exchange offices for unemployed workers.

In other words the Histadrut, rather than being a trade union federation in the social democratic European sense of the term, was founded together with the WZO/JA as a primary forerunner institution of the State of Israel in the making. After the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the Histadrut developed to become the second largest employer in Israel, which also had a Department for Trade Unions. Half a century after its establishment, Histadrut owned enterprises contributed just under 20 percent of Israel's Gross National Product (GNP). Needless to say that in these circumstances it was difficult for the Histadrut to maintain a balance between its

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Uri Davis was born in Jerusalem in 1943. He has been at the forefront of the defense of human rights, notably Palestinian rights, since 1965 and pioneered critical research on Zionism and Israel since the mid-1970s. He has published extensively in these fields, including *Israel: An Apartheid State* (Zed Books, London 1987 & 1990) and *Citizenship and The State: Comparative Study of Citizenship Legislation in Israel, Jordan, Palestine, Syria and Lebanon*, (Ithaca Press, Reading, 1997). Dr. Davis is Observer-Member of the Palestine National Council; Honorary Research Fellow at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies (IAIS), University of Exeter and the Center for Middle Eastern & Islamic Studies (CMEIS), University of Durham; and Chairman of Al-Beit: Association for the Defense of Human Rights in Israel.

interests as the second largest employer in Israel (second to the state) and the trade union interests of the workers, including its own employees organized in the framework of the Histadrut Department for Trade Unions. With the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, however, the Histadrut underwent progressive change, reflecting and responding to economic, social and political changes inside Israel, in the Middle East region and the world as a whole.

The changes began immediately in the wake of the establishment of the State of Israel when in 1948 certain functions hitherto under the control of the Histadrut, e.g., education and labor exchanges, were transferred to the state. Other functions, mainly in the area of agricultural settlements, were intensified.

These changes culminated in 1994 when MK Haim Ramon's New Histadrut list (RAM) won plurality in the May 1994 elections for the 17<sup>th</sup> Histadrut General Congress (46.42 percent of the vote) and Haim Ramon became Chairman. Under his leadership the bureaucratic and corporate structure of the Histadrut was reformed. The reforms were officially launched at the 17<sup>th</sup> Histadrut General Congress convened in two sessions, session one in July 1994 and session two (the "Session of Reforms") in January 1995. At this time, the Histadrut was renamed the New Histadrut (New General Federation of Workers).

The reforms included the overall sale of the Histadrut lucrative industrial and manufacturing assets as well as other holdings (e.g., KUR, Bank Hapoalim) in the private market. The sale allowed the Histadrut to plug its mounting financial deficits and also reduced the degree of conflict of interests between the interests of the Histadrut as employer and the duties of the Histadrut Department for Trade Unions.

This paper aims to consider some milestones in this process of change.

### **Change of Name of the Histadrut and Arab Membership**

True to its name and commitment to Zionist ideology and practice, until 1960 the Histadrut did not allow membership of Arab citizens of

Israel into its ranks. It was only in 1960 at the 9<sup>th</sup> Histadrut convention that legal provisions were made permitting membership in the Histadrut to Arab workers citizens of Israel. In 1966, the 10<sup>th</sup> Histadrut convention introduced the official name change from the 'General Federation of Hebrew Workers in the Land of Israel' to the 'General Federation of Workers in the Land of Israel' and corresponding adjustments were made in the constitution of the Histadrut. The reference to 'Hebrew' workers was removed from the name of this Histadrut and from Chapter One, Article (1) of the Constitution ('The Foundations of the Histadrut'), otherwise leaving the original pre-1966 text intact.

The change of the official name of the Histadrut was strongly debated, and through the debate, the underlying motives for the introduction of the change were revealed. Prominent among the opponents of the change was future Prime Minister, Member of Knesset (MK) Shimon Peres, then representing the Israel Workers' List (Rafi). According to Mr. Peres:

The question of the change of name will become more serious if we recall that though the name of the Histadrut Federation implies no limitation, it does imply a commitment. Are we not a federation aiming - and not just chanting in its anthems - for Aliyah (Jewish immigration)? A federation dealing with the absorption of Aliyah? A federation dealing with the teaching of the Hebrew language? This is clearly a general federation. This is clearly a Hebrew federation in Israel. Let us not make it nameless. Let us not make it devoid of identity. Let us not deny its anthems. Let us not manipulate its challenges. This is not a federation that ends with a question mark. I heard that one of the additional arguments for change of name is: What will they say in the world? I do not consider the proposed apologetics as necessary.<sup>2</sup>

The late MK Israel Yeshaayahu, Chairman of the Histadrut Standing Committee, responded to the comments made by Shimon Peres above assuring him that although a new reality has been created with the opening of the

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<sup>2</sup> Joseph Oliyzi (ed.) *The Tenth Histadrut Convention, 3-7 January 1966, Tel Aviv-Jaffa: Complete Protocols of the Debates*, p. 541.



European non-Jewish spouses of Kibbutz and Moshav members, they have done so in violation of, rather than in conformity with, the law.

When the same principle is directed against Jews, the practice is rightly condemned as anti-Jewish racism (anti-Semitism). For whatever reason, when such racist principles and practices are applied against Arabs, the international cooperative and trade union movement allows itself to be misguided into embracing the Histadrut and the Israeli agricultural cooperative settlements federation as a legitimate affiliate organization, rather than expelling them from their ranks as racist organizations.

### **Haim Ramon's New Histadrut Reforms**

The lever for the reform of the Histadrut was forged by MK Haim Ramon as Minister of Health before he decided to run in the 1994 Histadrut elections. As Minister of Health in the second Rabin Government, he pioneered the National Health Law (1995) which denied the Histadrut one of its major sources of income.

Until the passage of the said law, the Histadrut could legally obligate all subscribers of the Histadrut health insurance program (Kupat Holim) to become members of the Histadrut and pay the compulsory dues of what was known as the 'Uniform Tax' (Mas Ahid). This tax was quantified progressively, relative to income, at something like 4-5 percent of the gross salary of the individual member or member family. Since Kupat Holim was the largest health service in the country with many localities, it was often the only health service available. Therefore, membership in the Histadrut was in many areas of the country less than voluntary.

The new law de-coupled this linkage, allowing citizens of the State of Israel to subscribe to the services of the Histadrut-owned Kupat Holim without having to become members of the Histadrut itself. Consequently, the Histadrut suffered an immediate and massive income drop, which became a primary consideration in its decision to accelerate the sale of its Workers' Company assets to the private market.

The subsequent election of MK Haim Ramon as Histadrut Secretary-General completed the process.

Following the 1994 elections, the 17<sup>th</sup> Histadrut General Congress also endorsed the reform of the Histadrut election law to allow direct voting for the chairman of the Histadrut. Whereas previously the Histadrut was headed by a secretary-general, the system of governance in the now became patterned in analogy to the system of governance of the state, with the chairman of the Histadrut exercising 'presidential' powers. The electoral reforms took effect in the 1998 Histadrut elections to the 18<sup>th</sup> General Congress.

The first chairman of the Histadrut (and the last to be elected under the old system) was MK Haim Ramon, senior member of the Labor Party and former Minister of Health. On the eve of the Histadrut elections he broke away from the Labor Party to launch the New Histadrut list (RAM), which carried him to victory.

The first chairman of the Histadrut to be elected under the rules of the reformed system was Amir Peretz, current Chairman of the Histadrut, who took office following the 1998 elections. (In the 1998 elections Histadrut members placed three separate ballots in the ballot box: one, to elect the Chairman; second to elect their representatives to the region; third, to elect their representative to the General Congress (with women members of the Histadrut having a fourth ballot to the Naamat Working and Volunteer Women's Movement).

In the two years of his chairmanship MK Haim Ramon, steered important and thorough reforms, including changes regarding the name, the structure and the substance of the Histadrut. Having completed the reforms, Ramon returned to the Labor Party, his political home, where he resumed a senior position. The following details exemplify the reforms.

Name: At the 17<sup>th</sup> General Congress the name was officially changed from the 'The General Federation of the Workers in the Land of Israel' ('the Histadrut') to the 'The New General Federation of Workers' ('the New Histadrut'); the logo changed from depicting a combina-

tion of a hammer and an ear of wheat to a logo designed around the Star of David.

**Structure:** The Histadrut General Congress (Ve'idah) remained in place. Elected every four years in general Histadrut elections on a party-political basis, it currently consists of 2,001 delegates. The Histadrut Council (Mo'etzet Ha' Histadrut), however, previously elected by the General Congress, was nullified. Instead, the General Congress now elects a new body named Histadrut Parliament (Beit Nivharei Ha' Histadrut, equivalent to what was until 1994 the Histadrut Executive Committee - Ha'Vaad Ha'Poel). The Histadrut Parliament, currently consisting of 171 delegates, is the highest authority of the Histadrut between one General Congress and the next.

The executive body of the New Histadrut is the Steering Committee (Hanhagat Ha'Histadrut, equivalent to what was until 1994 the Histadrut Coordinating Committee - Vaadah Merkezetz). The Steering Committee, consisting of at least 13 and no more than 27 members, is appointed by the Histadrut Chairman on a party-political coalition basis, in a process very much like the forming of a government coalition by the Prime Minister.

**Substance:** The most dramatic strategic change was the reform of the Workers' Company, most of whose major financial, industrial and manufacturing holdings were sold off to the private market by the New Histadrut leadership. By 1996:

- Workers' Company shares in KUR industries (22.51 percent of the shares and the voting rights) were sold to the US multinational Shamrock for some US\$252 million;
- Workers' Company shares in Bank Hapoalim (3.5 percent of the shares) were sold to the private sector for approximately US\$62.5 million;
- Shikun U-Binui Holdings incorporating Solel Boneh and Shikun Ovdim, were sold for approximately US\$94 million;
- The Histadrut daily *Davar* was shut down.

As a consequence, the paradigmatic contradiction characterizing the Histadrut since its establishment in 1920, the conflict between its

interests as the second largest employer in Israel and its trade union interests was now greatly reduced.

Following the reforms introduced by Haim Ramon the Histadrut of today is much 'leaner' and closer to a trade union in the social-democratic European sense of the term than its earlier form.

Having said that, however, it is necessary to bear in mind that the Histadrut remains very much committed to the values underpinning all Zionist parties, and first and foremost, to the aim of guaranteeing in law an ethnic majority of 'Jewish' citizens in the State of Israel.

### Conclusion

There is no question that globalization and privatization weaken the hold of the Zionist ethnocentric institutions inside Israel and abroad, and in this regard work to the benefit of democratization of the Israeli political establishment as a whole, and the Histadrut establishment in particular, and therefore to the benefit of the Palestinian people as a whole, and the Palestinian citizens of Israel in particular.

There is a limit, though, to incremental reforms in institutions operating in the legal framework of apartheid states. It seems that in order to bring the incremental changes outlined above to full fruition, Israel has yet to undergo the kind of structural legal transition that led to the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990 and the transformation of the Republic of South Africa from an apartheid state into a democratic state.

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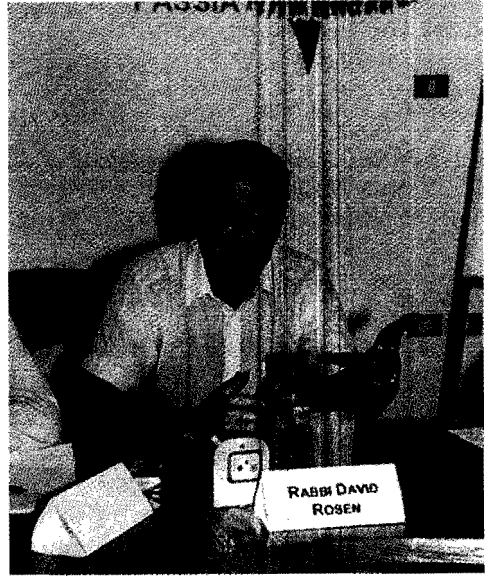
<sup>6</sup> Many thanks are due to the persons listed below, who made time for interviews and assisted me with obtaining such copies of the basic legal documents of the Histadrut as were required for the completion of this paper. Without their assistance at least some factual errors and inaccuracies would have inadvertently remained in the text.

# Israeli Society and Religion: Ethnic Groups, Identity and Nationalism

*Rabbi David Rosen*<sup>1</sup>

I will speak about the diversity of Israeli society from a religious perspective - in other words, how religion plays into the diversity of different Israeli world outlooks. In order to clarify this, I need to briefly go back to the change in the make-up of the Jewish community that actually began in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and continues on even today. In reality, the Jewish world generally started changing in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Until then, the lives of Jews all over the world were similar in that they were principally regulated by their religion. Traditional Judaism is based primarily on the Torah (the five books of Moses) as the revelation of God through Moses, and in addition the belief that the Torah was written in an abbreviated form, therefore requiring traditions and expositions, which we call the oral Torah, or, in written form, the Talmud. From the Talmud that expounds the Torah, codes were formulated to enable Jews to lead their lives in accordance with the Divine Will as they understood it. This religious way of life was led by Jews in different part of the world, similar to the way their ancestors had lived before them.

Within this way of life and its world outlook, the land, Palestine, Eretz Yisrael played a special role for Jews, even when they were living away from it. For example, The Jewish religious calendar is regulated by the seasons here in this land. Jews who live in Australia or Argentina pray for rain according to the seasons here in Palestine. When all Jews pray, they face holy Jerusalem. Every Jew knew until the 19<sup>th</sup> Century that he/she should be living in Palestine, but this was in many



cases either too difficult to accomplish or people were happy with where they were. Instead, they used to send money for charities supporting those who were prepared to rough it here. In that way Jews felt connected to the land, even if they lived far from it. This relationship featured as part and parcel of daily prayers and grace after all meals. We continued to live as all generations before us lived: governed by the Torah, aware of a distant promised land but generally living elsewhere, dreaming and praying for the Messianic age when we would no longer be dependent on other nations but would be able to take our destiny into our own hands.

What brought the change in Jewish life was modernity, which consisted of two elements: emancipation and enlightenment. Until the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, even if Jews wished to assimilate, the Gentiles<sup>2</sup> would not let them. The Jew was generally hated, he was the 'other', and society's problems were blamed on the Jews. This animosity towards the Jew was rooted in certain Christian theology; Christianity taught that the Jews were cursed and rejected by God for failure to recognize Jesus as the true Messiah. Therefore they would

<sup>1</sup> Rabbi David Rosen is Director General of the Anti-Defamation League, Jerusalem, and its representative to the Vatican.

<sup>2</sup> The word 'Gentile' comes from the Latin 'gens,' which means nations, and is used within Jewish tradition in the Pentateuch to mean all the rest of the world. Anyone who is not part of the people of Israel is a Gentile, or *Goyim* in Hebrew.

suffer forever, and wander forever. That is why the idea of the return of the Jewish people to the land to reestablish their independence in it was originally opposed. It is also the reason why hostility towards the Jew was so much greater in Christian Europe than in Muslim lands<sup>3</sup>, where Jews and Christians were protected minorities and not treated poorly as long as they knew their place.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, however, through the process of democratization and the concept of equality of franchise, the European attitude became more accepting of diversity within society, including Jewry. For European Jews themselves, the enlightenment revealed new worlds and ideas. Until the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, not only was there a general European exclusion of Jews from their society, Jews did not wish to participate in the latter. European Christian society seemed to them rather uneducated, barbaric and violent, and Jews felt that their own world of religious life was far more valuable, holier and more peaceful. With emancipation and enlightenment, however, they began to discover a new and attractive world of science, art, philosophy, etc.

There were three main reactions to the challenge of modernity. The first was a movement of assimilation. Jews were somewhat naive about the ease of assimilation, but the psychological possibility was at least opened. On the other extreme was the anti-assimilationist reaction. This is the ultra-orthodox outlook, which is a historically new phenomenon for the Jews. In the past, Jewish sages in the Middle Ages, often living in Muslim lands, interacted with non-Jewish culture and thought. The new, ultra-orthodox mentality, however, feared modernity. It is a reactionary withdrawal from the modern world, without a sense of historical perspective. Most of the Ultra-Orthodox probably think that Moses came down from Mount Sinai with a big black hat and a long black coat, pouring with per-

spiration. They may study technical subjects such as mathematics or perhaps even computer science, but fundamentally they want as little as to do with general studies of the outside world; they want to be as isolated as possible.

Most European Jews lay somewhere between these two extreme positions, wishing to benefit from the modern world while maintaining a sense of tradition. This produced different forms of modern Judaism. However, to generalize broadly, all of them are different attempts to balance tradition and modernity.

However, another response to the challenge of modernity emerged that was not based on religious adaptation. Recognizing the social and cultural character of the Jewish people as distinct from other peoples, intensified by their historical persecution, they insisted that a modern Jewish nation-state was the only means by which Jews could ensure their security and preserve their identity in the modern world. This was political Zionism, which was essentially a secular movement, born out of 18<sup>th</sup> Century rationalism and 19<sup>th</sup> Century nationalism, but which could not have succeeded without the religious and historical attachment to the land described above.

Political Zionism had an ambivalent and sometimes even contradictory relationship with religion. Neither the assimilationists nor the Ultra-Orthodox were interested in participating in political Zionism, which contradicted their basic tenets. However, political Zionism gave rise to a new religious outlook, namely Religious Zionism, which asserted that even if many Zionists were themselves irreligious, they were in fact fulfilling the vision of the prophets. By fulfilling the dreams of traditional prayers and prophetic vision, these secular Zionists were perceived to be doing God's work, bringing about the religious ideal of the return to the land. In the Holy Land, the Jews would be able to fulfil their religious dreams and their human potential in a society where they would be free from persecution. Thus, religious Zionists viewed secular Zionists as bringing about the fulfillment of their religious goals. Religious Zionism was bitterly opposed

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<sup>3</sup> The term 'Semites' includes all the sons of Shem and therefore, in Jewish perception, all Arabs and probably all the Near and Middle Eastern peoples. The term anti-Semitism is therefore an unsuitable term; it is used in the sense of anti-Jewish, and thus 'Judeo-phobia' would be a much more appropriate term.

by the Ultra-Orthodox, who rejected the secular aspects of the movement. For them, religious Zionism was legitimizing the illegitimate; because Zionism was secular, this legitimization was like putting a kosher stamp of approval on a piece of pork! In Herzl's time, the majority of religious Jews were anti-Zionists, and only a minority considered themselves to be religious Zionists. By World War II, even before the establishment of the State of Israel, a majority supported religious Zionism, which an Ultra-Orthodox minority still bitterly opposed.

Jews of Muslim lands, of the Middle East, North Africa and Asia did not experience the tensions and cultural wars that existed within the Jewish community in the Christian lands of Europe. As opposed to the tensions produced in Europe by modern secular movements conflicting with religion, in Muslim lands the impact of modernity did not create the same divisions. Therefore, the Jewish communities in these various countries were more organically unified. Everyone, despite his or her level of religiosity, tended to be part of one community, unlike in Europe where different secular and religious components were far more separated from one another. Other aspects of modernity within the European society, e.g., the question of the status of women, altered the character of the Jewish community. Within the Reform and Conservative movements of Judaism today, not only do men and women sit and pray together, but women also serve as rabbis. This is a consequence of modernity. Nothing similar happened within the Jewish communities of the Muslim world. Even the most modern Jews in Muslim countries never imagined the idea of men and women praying together, let alone allowing women to become rabbis. Similarly, the traditionalism of Jews in Muslim lands affected the way they viewed Zionism. This was not seen as an expression of any tension between modernity and tradition, but simply as a political movement that was fulfilling the traditional relationship between the people and the land. Therefore, the reaction within 'Sephardic' Muslim lands was generally positive toward the idea of Zionism. Any negative response was due to the lack of desire to

leave one's home, rather than disapproval of the idea. When Sephardic Jews came to Israel, the ideology of religious Zionism naturally appealed to them.

With the advent of World War II and the Holocaust, the Ultra-Orthodox community concluded that despite Zionism's secular nature, it would be better to live even under secular atheistic Jews than to live under non-Jews. As a result, in time the Ultra-Orthodox became somewhat more pragmatic in their attitude toward a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Nevertheless, even when the State was established it was viewed at best as an "undesirable necessity". Thus the Ultra-Orthodox were not actively involved in the political life of the emergent state, and remained aloof to a large degree until 1977. Their basic interest was preserving their own community and institutions, isolated from the rest of society.

The election of Menachem Begin as Prime Minister in 1977 brought a change in their position. For the first time, the Likud Party came to power. However, no one party has ever won an absolute majority in Israel's electoral history, and therefore each winning party has had to form coalitions to establish a government. Begin persuaded the elected representatives of the Ultra-Orthodox that if they supported his government, they would benefit from the national fiscal cake. Because of these financial incentives for their own communities, the ultra-orthodox parties made an enormous ideological compromise. Although originally they wanted to have nothing to do with Zionism, they slowly discovered that not only could they receive benefits from the State, but could even influence the State in terms of their own ideology. Indeed, they had to believe that they could do the latter, in order to justify their dependency on the Zionist State.

In order to describe the make-up of current Israeli society it is necessary to explain some of the social-political nomenclature. The word 'secular' is particularly important, as it has the potential to be very misleading and confusing. I will give you two examples of the 'secular' Israeli. The first Israeli, who may come from

an old Palestinian family or a family who immigrated here from Syria, Egypt or Morocco, might describe himself as secular by saying, "Saturday I went to synagogue to pray but sometimes we pray for three hours! Who has patience for three hours? And there is a football game I want to see so I only stayed in synagogue for half an hour, I got in the car, God forgive me, I went to see the football game. It was a great game. God will forgive me." For this person, being secular means that he does not keep Jewish law as his grandparents did or as I think I should. However, he is religious in as much as he believes in God and his religious tradition. In the West, a man like that would never be called secular.

My second example of a secular Israeli is the classic Ashkenazi example. Let us say, his great-grandparents were among the pioneers who came here and drained swamps to make a kibbutz in the Galilee. Obviously, two generations later he is not on a kibbutz, but in Tel Aviv, perhaps working in real estate selling property. When asked if he is religious or secular, he says, "Are you crazy? Me, religious? Do you think I'm abnormal?" When asked if he is Jewish, however, he replies, "Of course I'm Jewish, I work for six days of the week. My day of rest is the Shabbat - when I go to the beach! My calendar is a Jewish calendar, my language is the Hebrew language, and my children can recite from the prophets. I gave three years of my life to defend my country, and then many years more of reserve duty. How can I be more Jewish than that?" For him, Jewishness is characterized by culture, ethnicity and nationalism. Even then, his national character is taken from religious tradition. It is impossible for him to cut himself off from it. It is actually very difficult to be an Israeli atheist, with so much Jewish tradition around. This is why the word secular is very misleading within the Israeli context.

Today, Israeli society can be divided into the following groups:

a. No more than seven percent of Israelis are Ultra-Orthodox. In Jerusalem they

may number as much as 30 percent, but Jerusalem is not representative of Israel.

- b. Religious Zionists, i.e., modern orthodox religious Zionists who keep the Shabbat and pray daily, are probably 20-25 percent of the country. As a general rule, anyone who is modern orthodox is a religious Zionist, and anyone who is a religious Zionist is modern orthodox. However, religious Zionism traverses a vast spectrum, from people like me who are on the left of the Israeli political spectrum to the most militant political elements in Israeli society today. However, that whole spectrum can still be called modern orthodox and religious Zionist. The essential message is one of commitment to religion and tradition while still living in the modern world, and to meet the responsibility of being part of modern Israeli society. Different people have very different interpretations of what that responsibility means. Not all settlers are religious Zionists though the majority would certainly define themselves as such.
- c. Approximately 15 to 20 percent of the people in Israel today are aggressively secular.
- d. The remaining 50 percent of society describes itself with various sorts of words but is essentially, to different degrees, traditional.

One fascinating political group that reflects a particular social/cultural constituency is Shas. Most of its supporters are not ultra-orthodox, but the movement is led by a thin layer of Ultra-Orthodox Jews who have been substantially influenced by Ashkenazi haredim. They have studied in Ashkenazi institutions, have begun to wear Ashkenazi-style clothing, and were influenced by the spirit of intolerance for secular society (as opposed to traditional 'Sephardic' leadership). The majority of the people who vote for Shas are 'secular' Sephardim, who support this party because it is primarily a social protest movement. In many ways it is similar to the Islamic movements in different Arab societies. It is a

movement that sees its adherents as marginalized by the secular Ashkenazi elite who led the country. Although Sephardi immigrants were provided for by the State, they still came to resent the Ashkenazim, who seemed to have achieved greater success. While the Likud profited from that sense of resentment, Shas turned it into a much more successful movement through the tool of religion. Religion is a very powerful means by which to distinguish oneself from the secular elite, both in terms of culture and identity. Nevertheless, although the leaders of Shas may raise an outcry over public work on Shabbat, they will not try to stop football games for example, which are attended by their constituents (This just reflects the hypocrisy of politics!) Shas is a unique phenomenon; an amalgamation of a protest movement and religious revivalism, very much like the Islamic movements in certain Arab countries.

On the political level, there is great competition between Shas and the Likud because both of them and even the National Religious Party to a large degree are competing for a common constituency.<sup>4</sup>

In my opinion, the influence of the ultra-orthodox parties is actually peaking, and for several reasons will now decline. The two most important among these reasons are economic factors and the Russian immigrants. Of Israel's one million Russian immigrants, some half a million are non-Jewish. This has happened because, according to Israel's Law

of Return, Israeli citizenship only requires that one has a Jewish grandparent. The presence of these non-Jewish Israelis will be a big influence in favor of greater separation of religion and state in Israel. Within five years, I believe we will have civil marriage, which will be beneficial for Israel, because the current situation of the Turkish millet system that only provides for religious marriage is unacceptable in democratic terms and it is also religiously counter-productive, because coercion alienates people from religion.

The third factor in the diminution of ultra-orthodox power is the peace process. Even though this may be moving slowly, I believe the peace process is inexorable. The only question is how soon and at what price peace will be achieved. In the coming years, the dialogue within Israeli society will focus less on territory and more on the inner fabric of our own civil society. Then, the small orthodox parties will not be able to manipulate the system in the way they did before. In my opinion, the situation will actually be healthier both for religion and democracy, with greater separation between religion and politics.

However, there is still the potential to set the peace process back through violence from both sides.

In this part of the world, one crazy person can do a lot of damage, which is a dangerous fact. The most potentially sensitive location in this regard is Haram Ash-Sharif, the Temple Mount. Orthodox Jewish Tradition teaches that not only can we not presently rebuild the Temple that twice stood on the site, but that we cannot even go onto the site because of its intrinsic holiness. However, while most Orthodox opinion is against any change in the *status quo*, there is general recognition that the prohibition applies only to the area of the Dome of the Rock and north of it, and not to the south of the mosque. Attitudes towards the Muslim presence and control on the Mount differ. While most Jews are reconciled to it, there is a tiny fringe minority that would like to wrest control away. A significant group of religious Zionist Jews would like to share the space with the Muslims, some of whom

<sup>4</sup> Additionally, Israeli society has experienced a 'return' to traditional religion that takes the form of a search for a purer spirituality, particularly on the part of the better-educated, younger generations in Israel. Often this emerges from within 'secular' society, which increasing numbers of young people find materialistic and empty. In recent times, a new phenomenon has developed in which young people travel the world, encounter Hinduism and other religions and, although they cannot relate completely to these, are consequently more open to different possibilities for self-identification, a 'new spirituality'. They sometimes express this in what might be called 'New Age Judaism'. Those people are alienated by politics, politicians and political ideologies. They want to rediscover a spiritual world, to be at peace with the world. This movement or mentality is similar to that of the hippies of the 1960s, but now re-attached to a Jewish identity.)



would like institutionalize Jewish prayer on the site. In my opinion, this institutionalized prayer is a legitimate religious desire and it would be wonderful if we could do that. However I believe that the political reality prevents the implementation of such an ideal, and therefore we must accept the current *status quo*. This is also the position of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel.

The Bible contains three different definitions of the Holy Land. The minimal definition includes the east bank of the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, and from Dan, (not including the Golan Heights) to Beersheba (which excludes Eilat). As a religious orthodox Jew, I believe that those are the biblical boundaries. However, this historical attachment does not necessarily demand absolute sovereignty over all of that land, especially when it is inhabited by others. Indeed Judaism teaches that we must respect the dignity and right of all people and peoples. As far as the question of whether or not the Jewish presence here can be justified, I believe that it is a tragedy for all of us that we were not able to find a way in which we could all live peacefully with one another in this area. We must make every effort to find such a way that is respectful to all inhabitants of this land. According to my own religious teaching, the belief in my historical relationship to the land does not allow me to deny the relationship of others to this land, or, above all, to deny their human rights. Thus I believe that territorial compromise is a religious obligation and necessity for the well-being of everyone in the region.

## Israel and the Mediterranean Option

Dr. David Ohana<sup>1</sup>

Zionism sprang up against the background of the rise of nationalism, the spread of secularism and the dominance of Eurocentricity. One of the chief cultural ambitions of the Zionist movement was to create a 'new man' - an idea which made its appearance in the period of the Enlightenment at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, at the time of the historic encounter between the Jewish Diaspora and European culture. It was thought that the Jew could be transformed by the adoption of secularism and modernism, and so be made fit to join European society. However, the myth of the 'new Jew' came into being only when the idea of a separate Jewish nationality was accepted and realized in Israel. It was believed that there was an affinity between the people and the land: only in the land of the forefathers, in the east, would the desired change in the image of the Jew come about. Jabotinsky, in the Zionist Congress of 1905, spoke of the "Palestinian personality", and Martin Buber believed in a mystical connection "between the people and the land." The realization of Zionism in Israel linked ideology to geography, history to a spatial identity.

One of the paradoxes of the situation was that, from the 1920s onwards, one of the models for the creation of the 'new Jew' was the Arab. The Arab was seen by some of the Zionists as an exemplar of belongingness, of an existential and natural connection with the land, and he was the antithesis of the stereotype of the exilic Jew. The Jew was weak in body, over-spiritual and physically uprooted, while the Arab was active, independent, authentic and lived in harmony with nature. The east was not only a place of refuge from the Jewish exile in Europe, but also a source of vitality



and a place where the individual and national personality could be renewed.

Zionism was from its early days characterized by a highly ambivalent approach to the east. Theodor Herzl was among those who rejected the eastern option, claiming in his pamphlet *The Jewish State*: "For Europe we will constitute a bulwark against Asia, serving as guardians of culture against barbarism." This approach was contested by some Zionist ideologues, who discerned vital values in the east; thus Ben-Gurion stated (in 1925) that "the significance of Zionism is that we are, once again, becoming an Oriental people."<sup>2</sup>

The Zionist approach to the east is a particular instance of the orientalist ideology; that is, the way in which the west relates to the eastern region of the Mediterranean<sup>3</sup>. It is, however, an approach far more complex than the classic European orientalism, since the east is conceived not only as the locus of the ancient history of the Jewish people, but also as the supreme aim of the people's envisaged return to itself. It is the source, it is the cure to the national plight of the Jewish people, in-built in its national identity - but to an equal extent it also represents 'the other', fundamentally exterior to the Zionist Jew and identified as 'there' whether as an alien, even

<sup>1</sup> Dr. David Ohana senior fellow at The Van Leer Institute, Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> Zalona (1998).

<sup>3</sup> Said (1978); Julien (1977).

antagonistic, entity or as the object of an unquenchable aspiration. The increasing lure of the east in the eyes of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century's European romantics and the prevailing sense among the intelligentsia of the west's decline, together with a yearning for primordial 'true' and 'sound' foundations prompted Jews with Zionist inclinations to see in the east not only the cradle of their national identity or a safe haven, but also a source of values, strength and moral regeneration for their people.

Until the 1930s, Zionists saw in the east an object of longing and desire, a source of power and an opportunity for redemption. At the same time, however, they started out from a position of western arrogance, an attitude of fear and suspicion, which also made them see the east as a threat. In the wake of the 1929 Arab riots, a rift was created between Jews and Arabs and a period of Jewish separatism began, during which all signs of orientalism were suppressed. Since then, the east has been perceived as a political reality, a place of 'otherness', a sort of absence or gap, rather than as an object of identification emanating positive values. Thus, the perception of the east has been tainted by the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The east was and remains foreign to many Israelis - whether to those who wanted to touch it, become a part of it and internalize it, or (all the more so) to those who wanted nothing to do with it. The oriental tradition was never adopted by the Zionist settlers in Eretz-Israel, but was simply a spice in the new national-popular recipe. The pioneering society remained essentially Eurocentric and regarded itself as an extension of European culture and not a product of Mediterranean culture and certainly not of Arab culture. The Jews, like the Europeans, felt culturally superior to the Arabs and saw Middle Eastern culture as backward and inferior in comparison with western culture. With the founding of the state, *mamlachtiut* (statism) became the order of the day, which meant an enormous concentration of power in the hands of the ruling elites. Processes of social standardization began to form a national community, as was reflected in expressions like "the in-gath-

ering of the exiles" and "the fusion of the exiles". In practice, this represented the abandonment of eastern culture in favor of western values and modernity.

The establishment and consolidation of a coherent and distinctive Israeli identity has been a remarkable historical feat. It would have been virtually impossible without the ability to harness such potent 'myths' as the in-gathering of the exiles, the up-building of Zion as a model society, the creation of a new Hebrew of 'Jewish' type and an overarching vision of national redemption.<sup>4</sup> Even without the devastating blow of the Holocaust and the wall of Arab-Muslim hostility that confronted the new Israeli state, the challenge of constructing a collective identity in Israel would have been formidable. To convert an urban-based diasporic people whose cohesion had already been significantly eroded by cultural assimilation into a 'normal' nation rooted in its own land and with Hebrew as its language was a huge task even under the most optimal set of circumstances. The ideological synthesis of socialist Zionism and the driving myths that shaped Israeli society in its early years reflected many of these imperatives, constraints and challenges. The emphasis on national security, unity, rootedness, pioneering settlement and military virtues as well as the priority attached to a 'melting pot' ideology, seemed appropriate to the immediate imperatives of survival under adverse conditions.

The ideology of the melting-pot and the Zionist concept of the 'new man' later gave way to the old-new idea of a non-ideological Mediterranean melting-pot, blending together immigrants from east and west, from the Christian countries and the Muslim countries. This new identity was not ideologically based, but was formed by geography and culture.

New forms of integral nationalism and religious fundamentalism related to the sanctity of the Land of Israel began to change the contours of the Israeli identity. The balance between the constituent elements of Israeli col-

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<sup>4</sup> Ohana and Wistrick (1995).

lective identity were further affected by the erosion of the dominant Zionist-socialist pioneering ethos in the early 1970s, by the gradual rise in influence of Israel's underprivileged Sephardim who helped bring the Likud to power in 1977, by growing settlement across the green line and violent confrontation with Palestinians in the territories and by the sharpening divisions between the religious and secular segments of Israeli society. The decline in the internal national consensus and the increasingly harsh criticism and condemnation of Israeli policies abroad were two of the most obvious symptoms of malaise in the 1970s and 1980s. Inevitably, they too began to change the contours of Israeli identity, the focus of its collective consciousness and memory and the perception of Israel's role in the world. This was the context in which the Zionist ideology itself came to be called into question from within and the older nation-building myths, which had already lost much of their mobilizing power, were challenged. Israel's international isolation and the successive traumas of the Lebanon War, the Intifada and the unaccustomed Israeli passivity during the Gulf War provided important external stimuli for this fundamental debate about the place of Israel in the region and its geo-political orientation.

With the progress of the peace process the southern shores of the Mediterranean are now open for Israel to pursue cultural relations with the entire Mediterranean Basin. It is time now to explore the concept of a Mediterranean culture by comparing images, symbols and myths of Mediterranean societies and by searching for whatever is shared or different in various cultural arenas. The Mediterranean links three continents, three religions and thousands of years of civilization. Throughout history the Mediterranean has been the conduit for reciprocal influences and cultural exchanges, and these processes have always affected Jews and Israelis. As Israel is emerging from its isolation in its immediate cultural environment, the cultural identities of the Israelis need to be re-thought. Through the exploration of Mediterranean Culture and the place of Israel in it, the Israelis also hope

to be able to gain an insight into the various elements that make up their own culture.

The Mediterranean option is not a call for ethnic isolation or a return to roots, but for an Israeli ethos which would constitute a common cultural platform for the discussion of tensions and separate identities. It is too ancient, important and central to be one more reason for ethnic denial, for the nursing of sectorial interests, folkloristic tendencies or sentimental longings.

The Mediterranean is not the Levant. It is the Levant as well as other things. The Mediterranean includes both the Levant and the west, and out of this synthesis it created the European space and western culture. The Mediterranean did not give rise to a hegemonic, all-inclusive culture with a single, homogeneous character. It created a variety of historical models of cultural meetings and exchanges of intellectual goods, such as the Italian Renaissance or Christian-Muslim-Jewish Andalusia. In the words of the French historian Fernand Braudel: "To sail in the Mediterranean is to discover the Greek world in Lebanon, prehistory in Sardinia, the cities of Greece in Sicily, the Arab presence in Spain and Turkish Islam in Yugoslavia"<sup>5</sup>

It is true that, from the 1960s onwards, hotels were built on the neglected shores of the Mediterranean, concealing it from the view of the inhabitants of Tel Aviv. For many years, there was a feeling that the Mediterranean identity had been laid aside, that it was an option that had been passed over. The Jewish Israelis had a suspicious and hostile attitude to the sea, perhaps because they had been urbanized in the countries of exile (there was no sea in the Polish *shtetl* or the Atlas Mountains), perhaps because it symbolized wandering or perhaps because the Israelis had an ethos of conquest of land.

The feminist essayist Jacqueline Kahanoff, a Jewish immigrant from Egypt, had insights on the Levant and the Mediterranean which

<sup>5</sup> Braudel (1985, 1994)

were ahead of their time.<sup>6</sup> Levantinism, which developed in the Eastern Mediterranean, was not in her opinion "a new craving for monolithic unity which denies all differences", but a phenomenon that originated

"in places where there is an interaction between cultures-where there can be a flowering, where there can be amorphousness, but there must be interaction. Just as there are experiments in genetic hybridization, so one must experiment with synthesizing cultures in order to create one that is living and successful. This will obviously not arise out of stagnation and rigid cultural polarities. If there is to be any relationship between ourselves and our neighbors, it will come about through the Levantine cultures."

Levantinism represents a culture with an independent existence, a culture in the process of formation, the configuration, which will result after many years from the encounter of Europe and the east. With the decline of colonialism, the idea began to take the form of a genuinely new culture. As Kahanoff wrote:

"I am a typical Levantine, inasmuch as I give equal value to what I have received from my Eastern origins and what I have now inherited from Western culture. I see this cross-fertilization called Levantinization in Israel as an enrichment and not an impoverishment!"

From many different sides, people began to envisage the goal of developing and disseminating a cultural policy and regional strategy for the Mediterranean Basin, in order to produce the cultural content for understanding between the various peoples and states of the entire Basin, and of its eastern end in particular. Many voices in Israel society began to seek to strengthen the Middle East peace process by creating cultural understanding among the states of the Mediterranean Basin and destroying barriers between peoples. Thus the Mediterranean option is not only a creative and innovative proposal, but also an aspect of regional cultural dialogue in its own right.

Why should we speak about dialogue, pluralism and tolerance between peoples in general and between Jews and Arabs, specifically in the Mediterranean context?

The historian Shlomo Dov Goitein claimed that the Jews were a Mediterranean people, open, free, mobile, not shut up in their corner of Southern Asia but dwelling in the countries which had inherited the classical culture and assimilated it into the Islamic culture.<sup>7</sup> In his monumental five-volume study entitled *A Mediterranean Society* Goitein described a mediaeval Jewish society living within a Mediterranean geographical and cultural framework. The unity of the Mediterranean area is also the starting point for Fernand Braudel and Henri Pirenne. Braudel believed that similar natural and climatic conditions throughout the Mediterranean Basin produced a basic Mediterranean civilization. Pirenne stressed the emergence of Islam as the main cause of the split of the former Latin Europe into two parts: a larger part concentrated on the shores of the Muslim countries and a smaller part which was Christian.<sup>8</sup>

Why do we have to mention the dark side, the "shadow" to use Albert Memmi's term, that lies over the Mediterranean Sea?<sup>9</sup> Because it is necessary to try and avoid a tendency towards sentimentalism and *kitsch*, and because an effective debate about tolerance and pluralism can be significant only where they do not exist.

It must be possible to mould a new regional culture, in which the stress would be on awareness of the role and importance of the other as part of the inter-regional fabric. The Mediterranean Basin is a mosaic of interlocking influences; it has been the most important region of cultural, artistic and religious cross-fertilization in the world. The consequences of these influences and collaborations are manifest in all its sub-regions and countries. The Mediterranean as a whole

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<sup>7</sup> Goitein (1960).

<sup>8</sup> Sivan (1968).

<sup>9</sup> A. Memmi: "La tête à l'ombre, in: Notre Méditerranée", *le Point*, special issue (15 August 1998), p. 86.

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<sup>6</sup> Kahanoff (1978)

comprises centers of multifaceted contact; trade routes and markets, in which commercial and cultural dialogue have flourished for thousands of years. In our own days, however, this vital dialogue has not found an appropriate expression.

My basic assumption is that cultural ties can lay the groundwork for and lead to long-term political relationships. The most outstanding example is German-French relations in the period after World War II, when de Gaulle and Adenauer recognized the importance of mutual cultural relations for political understanding between the two countries. The 1995 Barcelona Declaration reaffirms "that dialogue and respect between cultures and religions are necessary precondition for bringing peoples closer."<sup>10</sup>

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, the 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 create common themes and messages based on shared problems and interests.

What really is a 'civil society'? It is not simply a case of all the citizens forming a political community, nor is it, as is frequently said, merely 'public opinion'. What we describe as 'civil society' is the meeting of the autonomous subjects of the state and its institutions, united not only by values and cultures but also by the desire to act together and to assume specific responsibilities in projects of general interests. So 'civil society' is the sum total of voluntary associations, local communities, cultural and research institutions, representative bodies in the private enterprise and business sectors. Civil society, both by

its attitudes and its actions, must support governments in their struggle against the common enemy: radicalism and extremism. Furthermore it has to do so with its own instruments: dialogue, tolerance and moderation.<sup>11</sup>

The Oslo Accords created a revolutionary opening for dialogue. They were based, in principle and in fact, on two parallel channels: the immediate bilateral channel which focuses on resolving the disputes of the past and ending the state of war between Israel and its Arab neighbors, and the multilateral channel which provides a basis for and strengthens the bilateral channel by creating a safety net along with other factors, developing common interest and coping with common problems. These common problems - water, economic growth, disarmament and environmental issues - cannot be solved by one side alone or even in concert with our next-door neighbors, but only on a broad regional basis.

Building on the interdependence of the bilateral and the multilateral channels, we must develop the next phase and move ahead from Oslo to Barcelona: promoting the 'Mediterranean option' on the level of civil society rather than among governments. As such it can create a reservoir of common interests among peoples and especially among the civil societies of the region. The recognition of common interests and resolution of common problems, which can be accomplished only on a regional basis, must proceed at a pace and with a critical mass that assure its immediate visibility in the field. It is imperative that the nations of the region replace the perceptions of animosity and distrust with a new climate of cordial relations that reinforces the collective hope for peace.

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<sup>11</sup> Taylor (1990); Shils (1991); Walzer (1991).

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## **Palestinians in Israel: Integration, Autonomy or Secession**

*Dr. Said Zeedani<sup>1</sup>*

As is commonly known, the State of Israel is both a democratic state and a Jewish state, and has been since its establishment in May 1948. It is a Jewish state in the sense that it is for the Jewish people wherever they reside, whether inside Israel or in the Jewish Diaspora. The Jews inside Israel are 'actual' citizens of the state, while the Jews outside Israel are 'potential' citizens. The Israeli Law of Return is designed and intended to bridge this gap between potentiality and actuality. Needless to say, the Law of Return has been one of the defining features of the state of Israel from the very onset, and applies only to Jews.

Israel is also a Jewish state in the sense that it is committed to Jewish/Zionist values, aspirations, projects and interests; in that it gives priority to Jews over non-Jewish citizens of the state; and finally in that it excludes non-Jews from obtaining equal citizenship and from taking part in major momentous decisions that affect the nature, the future, or the order of priorities of the state.

The state of Israel privileges Jews regardless of their ideological orientation (whether religious or secular, Zionist or non-Zionist), and privileges those Jews who ideologically oppose its existence.

As a democracy, Israel is committed to treating all its citizens (whether Jews or non-Jews) equally, with equal consideration and respect. This mandate conflicts with its imperatives as a Jewish state, however, and gives rise to



competing and conflicting commitments in its behavior. The practices and policies of the successive Israeli governments reflect and express these conflicting commitments. It is no accident, then, that the Palestinian citizens of Israel have been, and still are, the victims of racial discrimination for over 50 years. They have been, and still are, condemned to the inferior status of semi-citizens. That is to say, they are more than residents (or *metics*, in the parlance of ancient Athens) but less than equal citizens. The basic democratic principle of single and equal citizenship does not apply to Jews and non-Jews alike. This denial of equal membership in the political community is responsible for the train of abuses that pervade all spheres of allocating and redistributing socially meaningful goods (security, wealth, office, honor, grace, and political power).

Israel is a democratic state that does not even pretend or claim to be neutral toward its citizens. It is a democratic state dedicated to the Zionist idea and project, the realization of which have been at the expense if not the ruin of the Palestinians, including Israeli-Palestinians. Pervasive discrimination against the Palestinians in Israel is the necessary by-product of the marriage between Zionism/Judaism and the idea of democracy in the state of Israel. From the perspective of the

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Said Zeedani is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Al-Quds University, Jerusalem. Previously, he was Dean of the Faculty of Arts at Birzeit University.



Palestinians in Israel the state is more an ethnic than a liberal democracy, more a national than a procedural republic, and more a purposive than a neutral state. The basic structures of the state manifest this bias without ambiguity or equivocation.

Israeli-Palestinians are those Palestinians who remained within the borders of Israel, and hence under Israeli sovereignty, following the tragic events known as the *Nakba* (catastrophe) of 1948. Immediately following this war Israeli Palestinians numbered approximately 150,000; today they exceed one million and constitute approximately 18 percent of the population of the state, according to the most recent official Israeli statistics. About two-thirds of them reside in scores of townships and villages in the Galilee where they still constitute a numerical majority, despite intensive efforts by successive Israeli governments since the late 1950s to 'redeem' the land and 'Judaize the Galilee'.

The remaining one-third reside in the 'Triangle', i.e. Arab towns and villages around and between Um Al-Fahm, Taibeh and Baqa Al-Gharbiyyeh where the Arab population numbers around 150,000, the Negev (with less than 120,000 Arab inhabitants), and the mixed cities such as Haifa where some 100,000 reside. Nearly 75 percent of Israeli-Palestinians are Sunni Moslems, more than 15 percent are Christians, and less than 10 percent are Druze. More than 15 percent of the Palestinians in Israel are so-called 'internal refugees', i.e. people originating from villages that were demolished in 1948, whose lands were confiscated, and who were labeled 'present absentees'. Until this day, these displaced persons have yet to be compensated for the loss of their homes and property, or for any other form of related suffering.

Israeli-Palestinians are an inseparable part of the Palestinian people. Additionally, they are an indigenous and distinct national minority in Israel. Instead of trying to come to terms with the far-reaching implications of these two 'brute facts', Israeli authorities have engaged themselves, tenaciously and consistently, in a

two-fold project of denying the above statements. The Israeli policies of control and containment, of divide and rule, of sticks and carrots and of treating Palestinians as religious sects or confessions rather than as a distinct national minority are all part of this denial. Whether and to what extent these policies have succeeded or failed is a worthy topic for a separate discussion. Success or failure aside, Israeli-Palestinians have not advocated or struggled for secession from the state of Israel. Secession, therefore, is not on the political agenda of Palestinians in Israel, and never has been.

The struggle of Palestinians inside Israel has been, and still is, for just peace and for full equality. Just peace entails peace between Israel and the Palestinians on the one hand, and between Israel and its Arab neighbors on the other. Full equality must allow Israeli-Palestinians to overcome their political marginalization and to escape discrimination, deprivation and neglect. It is on the struggle for equality that the following concluding remarks will focus.

Equality, as I conceive of it, entails overcoming the discriminatory distribution and redistribution of economic and social goods, and sharing in political power at the level of central government, in addition to other lower power centers. These two conditions are not likely to be adequately met unless Israel becomes a genuine liberal democracy; a state for all its citizens regardless of race, sex, color or religion.

Even if Israel becomes a genuine liberal democracy, however, the problem of the Palestinian national minority will not evaporate, as is evidenced by the predicament of indigenous national/ethnic minorities in such liberal democratic countries as Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the USA. Ethnic minorities, especially indigenous ones, resist assimilation. Ethnic majorities, in contrast, tend to utilize their numerical weight or power to their advantage. Hence, for the idea of full equality to be realized, reallocation of certain powers within the state is also required, and some

form of autonomy or self-government is called for.

Israeli Palestinians have been struggling for more 'integration' with the manifest and clear emphasis on individual liberal rights and entitlements, and for recognition by the state that they constitute a distinct national minority, with the resultant emphasis on group or collective rights.

It is my firm conviction that group or collective rights go beyond cultural rights, and include property rights and rights to internal self-government. In other words, the enjoyment of group rights by Palestinians in Israel requires more than cultural autonomy; it requires autonomy with a territorial dimension. The distinction between such jargon as 'institutional autonomy plus' and 'territorial autonomy minus' is immaterial.

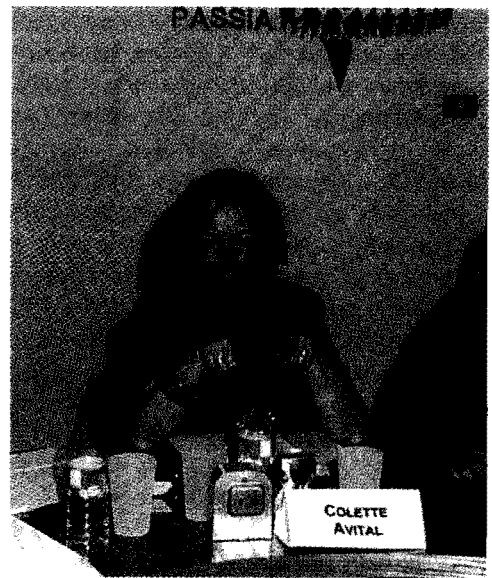
To conclude, Palestinians in Israel are a distinct national minority, not a mere collection of sects or confessions. Their manifest struggle for more integration in the Israeli state and society complements, rather than contradicts, their latent struggle for some form of autonomy. In both cases, equality is the regulative idea and the desired and desirable end. In both cases, the challenges to Israeli democracy are enormous. In any case, however, neither assimilation nor violence nor secession is on the political agenda of Palestinians in Israel.

# The Israeli Lobby and US-Israeli Relations

Colette Avital<sup>1</sup>

To begin, I would like to set up the general framework of Israel's relations with the United States. There is no doubt that in terms of Israel's existence, relations with the United States are a strategic asset. However, this was not always the case. Looking at various issues in our short history, it is clear that there has been a progressive change in America's attitude towards Israel. In 1948, when Israel was born, the United States and Russia were the two superpowers and both immediately recognized Israel. At that time, Prime Minister Ben-Gurion was under the illusion that Israel could remain neutral in the Cold War, and thus he wanted to conduct a neutral foreign policy not in alliance with either of the superpowers. However, due to the beginning of the Cold War and of the division of power between Russia and the US, Ben-Gurion's dream of neutrality was not feasible.

In the first years, Israel's relations with Russia were much closer. The aim of Russia in supporting Israel at that time was to get the British out of the area. From 1948 to 1956 Israel did not think that peace would be possible, so the main thrust of Israel's foreign policy was defense. Israel's support came primarily from European countries. In 1955 and 1956 the big 'love affair' with France started, as a result of common interests. Relations with the Soviet Union began to cool, but in 1957 they were still important. Other countries of the Soviet Union bloc, such as Bulgaria, opened their gates and allowed immigrants to come to Israel - the only country where people were



allowed to live outside of the Soviet socialist paradise. For these reasons, the US was not very favorable towards Israel in the early years.

However, a deeper understanding of US foreign policy toward Israel involves a combination of several factors. One of these is its moral commitment to the survival of the Jews and to Israel's existence as an independent country. At the same time, the US was interested in entering, permeating and gaining influence in the area. Up until events of 1955 and 1956, the US still believed that it would be possible to maintain a foothold in the area. In 1955, US Foreign Secretary John Foster Dulles pursued a policy of trying to establish pacts and alignments. He tried to organize what is called the Baghdad Pact of 1955, which failed. The backlash of the Baghdad Pact was that he literally threw the Arab countries into the arms of the Soviet Union. As a result, from 1955 on the US started to lose the illusion that it would have a direct influence in the Arab World.

At this time, competition between the superpowers - US and the Soviet Union - grew. Because of that competition, the United States' attitude toward Israel started changing. In a way, between 1948 and 1956 Israel was perceived as a burden, rather than as an asset.

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<sup>1</sup> Colette Avital has been a Member of the Knesset (One Israel) since 1999. She is Chairperson of the Knesset's Parliamentary Inquiry Committee for the Location and Restitution of Assets of the Holocaust Victims, and is a member of several other committees, incl. the committee for the Advancement of the Status of Women.

The moral obligation to ensure Israel's existence was seen as an obligation because it did not leave the US the freedom to maintain good relationships with the Arab World, collectively or individually. However, with the failure of the Baghdad Pact in 1955 the US felt free from its obligation to develop pacts with the Arab World, and gradually gave Israel increasing support. This did not happen immediately, however, as a result of the 1956 Suez Campaign. During that crisis Israel aligned itself with England and France against the weight of the superpowers. Both the United States and the Soviet Union posed an ultimatum, demanding that Israel withdraw from the Sinai. The US threatened Israel not only with a military blockade, but also with an economic boycott. Unless Israel complied by withdrawing its forces from the Sinai, the US further threatened to expel it from the United Nations.

The United States' desire to play a role in the area and to bring the sides together was at odds with its competition with the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The amount of aid given to Israel at different times reflects the various stages of the attitude of the US. During the War of Independence, for instance, America donated to Israel no more than \$100,000. Furthermore, the US maintained an arms embargo against Israel until the end of 1968, therefore Israel received its arms supplies from the Europeans. This is an indication of how, up until 1967, Israel was a marginal factor in shaping US conceptions of the Middle East. Israel did not play a very big role in US foreign policy or in the American mind.

From 1967 on, a complete strategic change gradually brought Israel from a marginal factor to a central point in developing American conceptions of the Middle East. The Kennedy administration of the 1960s attempted to understand Israel a little bit better. However, the real policy change and the beginning of the reassessment of the role of Israel in this area occurred in 1967. After the Six-Day War, Israel suddenly seemed to be an important asset to the Americans; not only because it managed to win the war and to change its whole strategic position in the area, but be-

cause it had captured some of the Soviet Union's best equipment during the war.

However, the biggest change occurred in 1973 after the Yom Kippur War. Israel's victory in this war had two major results. It enabled the United States to have a certain amount of influence in Egypt and to end the war at will. At that time, Henry Kissinger was the US Secretary of State, and he opposed the old attitudes towards Israel as embodied by Rogers. In deciding exactly where and when the war was to end, Kissinger achieved two things. First, he established that negotiations between Israel and the Egyptians were necessary in order to initiate any disengagement. Moreover, the fact that Kissinger decided where the war ended gave the US a different role in the area, proving beyond a doubt the extent of American influence.

I would like to return to the concept of the US 'moral obligation' to Israel. Europeans do not understand that in the US the term 'moral' has significance, and is actually one of the issues most debated among foreign policy makers. Although a dichotomy is often perceived between this 'moral' role and the strategic one, I contend that in fact these concepts should be taken as parts of a whole. Without a strategic motive the moral rationale would not stand, and at times the moral helps justify the strategic. The combination of the two produces the most significant results.

Syria's attempted invasion of Jordan in September 1970 caused the US to realize Israel's potential strategic role. Israel's strong move forward stopped the Syrians, and allowed the Jordanians to avoid a war. At that point, the United States became interested in a different kind of a partnership, and this is reflected directly in the level of foreign aid it gave to Israel. For approximately the first ten years of Israel's existence it received only \$500,000 from the US was. In the period between 1970 and 1973 it received \$360 million. The perception of Israel as a strategic ally changed even more radically with the end of the Yom Kippur War of 1973, for the US began to believe that it could play a role in peace-making in the area, facilitating negotiations between

Israel and its neighbors. Political leaders from both parties felt that only a strong Israel could make concessions. Furthermore, from 1967 onwards Israel's continued possession of conquered territories was intrinsically connected with the instability and lack of peace in the area. The US also perceived that only if Israel was strong and felt safe in terms of security could peace lead to land concessions, which is the basis of the American policy to strengthen the state of Israel.

From the day in 1977 when President Sadat came to Israel, the foreign policy of the United States became increasingly supportive of Israel. Since that time there has been a direct correlation between Israel's willingness to make peace and the amount of support or tension between each Israeli and American administration. When Israel had a policy of peace-making, America became more and more involved. All American administrations have been very consistent in that facet of the two countries' relations. This was clearly the case with President Carter, who moved from a silent partner to an active partner from 1977 onward. If Carter had not been so eager and involved in the Camp David negotiations, Israel probably would not have been able to sign an agreement with the Egyptians. America became a full partner in peace with Israel from the moment it signed the Camp David Accords, which also meant increased American aid to Israel. Up until 1985 the US gave small packages of aid, which despite their size were very important. Beginning in 1985 when peace became tangible and Israel left the Sinai, this aid changed from a loan to a gift. After 1985 American participation gradually increased, as did the perceptions of real partnership and the notion that America had to become a guarantor for the peace in the area.

The low points in Israel's relationship with the United States undoubtedly occurred during the Bush years, when Yitzhak Shamir was Israel's Prime Minister. A serious crisis and extreme mistrust developed between Mr. Shamir and Mr. Bush, arising directly from the settlement issue. Mr. Shamir asked the United States for loans to support the new immigrants arriving from the ex-Soviet Union, and Bush very spe-

cifically told him that unless he agreed to stop building settlements in the West Bank, the US would not give Israel loan guarantees. Even at this low point a certain consistency marked the American policy, for when peace moved forward the Americans supported Israel. When the US perceived that Israel was stalling the peace process, relations deteriorated.

A second example, closer to the present time, is the government of Binyamin Netanyahu. At the beginning of this period I was in the United States and noticed a feeling of guilt on the part of the administration; they had been too obvious in supporting Shimon Peres during the elections. At the beginning of Mr. Netanyahu's term the American policy makers attempted to be objective. They further sent a very clear message to the new Israeli leaders that if the peace process continued and Israel became endangered as a result, America would strongly support Israel by minimizing the dangers and increasing security. However, that support was connected to the progress of the peace process. The Netanyahu years were a succession of incidents that actually brought about confrontation between Israel and the US, even to the extent of Netanyahu's open defiance of American demands.

The fluctuation of American support at that time is once again indicative of the extent and nature of America's interest in Israel, and of the change in perceptions of that interest over time. America has over the years perceived Israel as an asset, because it thinks that Israel can do by proxy some of the things that the US itself cannot do in this area. On the other hand, there is no doubt that various Israeli administrations, beginning in 1975, have dealt differently with American demands. I mention 1975 because that was Rabin's first term as Prime Minister, and Israel did not comply with the American view of its agreement with Syria, which brought about a period of reassessment. Undoubtedly, the US attempted to pressure Israel. This gives rise to another issue: today many Israelis think that the aid we get from America limits our independence in terms of our decision-making process. For example, just yesterday the Chinese President visited Israel to discuss an

arms deal in which the Chinese would purchase Israeli technology. The technology is not American, yet both the US Congress and the administration resent any kind of transfer of technology to China. This example highlights how Israel must frequently take American interests into account when dealing with other countries.

Any discussion of American policy towards Israel must also take into account the following three domestic factors: public opinion in general, the Congress and the Jewish community. Each of these has a direct impact on the American way of thinking and on US policy-making. If and when, as is the case now, the American President is a democrat and the majority of Congress is Republican, foreign policy decisions are much more difficult, especially those involving foreign aid. Israel has always understood this very important domestic balance of decision-making in America, and relations with Congress and Senate have always been considered just as important as relations with the Administration. Resultantly, in cases where the Administration has tried to put pressure on Israel, or to make decisions not considered very helpful to Israel, Congress has opposed the Administration. Thus, Israeli policy has always tried to cultivate relations with both Congress and the Administration, and since support for Israel has been bipartisan, Israel has traditionally tried to maintain equally good relations with each party.

The second important point is the Jewish community, which has always been instrumental in the interplay between Congress and Administration, i.e., the Jewish lobby. There are approximately 5.5 million Jews in America today, barely one percent of the population, yet this one percent manages to wield tremendous influence. This is one of the big riddles of the American political scene. Not every American Jew is wealthy or in a position of influence, but the Jewish community has managed to gain much more power than its percentage alone would indicate.

Early on, the Jewish community learned to be involved in the American political system. Of course, the relative power of different lobbies

changes with time. During the 1970s the oil lobby was very powerful and had a lot of influence in foreign policy (1973-76). At that same time, the Jewish lobby was not very influential. Jews had to learn how to get involved in the political parties, but their main involvement has been in the campaigns of candidates; financing, fundraising and helping. This is a tremendous job of organization all over the US. The result has been that the Jewish lobby has managed to become close to most of the candidates in both parties. This is part and parcel of the whole interplay in American politics.

Interestingly, even the Egyptians have used the Jewish lobby to secure their demands and interests in American policy. It is the Jewish lobby that usually gets the aid package for the Egyptians, because it is connected with Israel. For a long time, the withholding of the first aid package to the Palestinians was 90 percent attributable to the Jewish lobby, who strongly opposed such a measure. These examples demonstrate the extent to which Israel works with the Jewish lobby, not only to secure aid for Israel but also to aid others.

The American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) is par excellence the Jewish Lobby in the US. AIPAC has branches in eight major American cities, and each branch of the local Jewish leadership decides which political candidates they want to support. They usually do that by checking the voting record of a candidate who has already served, and by discussing the candidate's attitude toward different issues with those who have not. It is made clear to the candidates that the support of AIPAC is tied to these issues. Money is raised through fundraising dinners and other functions, and financial support is given. Some money is also raised for the functioning of the main AIPAC offices, but none of the money is allowed to go to Israel or to candidates in Israel.

AIPAC is trying to be supportive of every Israeli government, regardless of its orientation. However, some of AIPAC's representatives are uncomfortable with this approach, simply

due to the awkward position in which this places them. If AIPAC fundraises for one Israeli government on the platform of supporting continued Israeli presence in the Golan Heights and the next Israeli government adopts a position of compromise on the Golan issue, AIPAC's credibility may be damaged. Since the policy of the current Israeli government is to try to promote the peace process, AIPAC will help convince Congress that they also have to support the peace process.

In addition to the registered Jewish lobby, another lobby coming from Israel, claiming to represent the Israeli public, is adamantly against withdrawal from the territories. A group of right-wing Israelis here in Israel are working hard in Congress, and have done a lot of damage.

Last but not least, the third factor is American public opinion at large. By every single count, American public opinion has been very supportive of Israel over the years. No American Congressman or Senator could help Israel or vote for Israel without the backing of a very strong public opinion. Because Israel is a democracy, US citizens have expressed a good deal of sympathy and support for Israelis in general and the Israeli democracy in particular, which they considered to be a "shared value". Many Israeli may not realize the extent and importance of public opinion and lobbies in shaping American foreign policy. Yet for this reason every Israeli embassy or consulate has always had American public opinion as its main focus; particularly among the media.

The Intifada, for example, was harmful in that it tarnished the lofty Israeli image and changed perceptions of the Palestinians both in America and in Israel. The Madrid Conference was one of the results of the Intifada, as was the gradual recognition of the PLO. Around the time that the Intifada started in 1987, CNN developed the concept of broadcasting news 24 hours a day. Therefore, images from in Intifada were repeated 15, 20, 30 times a day, and those images undoubtedly had a strong impact on the public opinion.

Public opinion is also important because some US citizens point to America's own problems and question the need for foreign aid. It is very easy to convince the American public not to support any foreign aid. Lobbyists take a public opinion poll with 'leading' questions, bring the results to their congressman, and claim that the vast majority of the American public does not support foreign aid. The congressman will naturally agree, and will stop supporting our peace agreements with aid. This is exactly what is happening right now in America, which is why work on public opinion is so important if we want America to support the peace process.

I do not know of any relations between a superpower and a small country that can be compared to those between the US and Israel. In the whole history of diplomatic relations, the relationship between Israel and United States is totally unique. Relations usually occur in two different dimensions. The first is bilateral relations, which are multifold and include every part of the two civil societies. The second dimension is via third parties or perceived common interests. The only comparison that may approach Israel's relations with the United States would be the relationship between the US and England, due to a common heritage and the role that England is playing in Europe. However, relations between Israel and the United States are totally outstanding by any criteria, and beyond comparison with any other relations. I would consider this one of Israel's most important strategic assets.

In the late 1980s Israel signed a strategic memorandum of understanding with America, giving it the benefits of American technology. This allows for the possibility of conducting strategic talks with America about our area, and open communications regarding policies. Thus, the Israeli and American Ministries of Defense have had certain joint programs and developed certain technologies together. I am certain that neither side has stolen information from the other. This is why the Pollard issue came as such a shock both for the Israeli government and the Americans. There are various levels of cooperation between all

sorts of institutions in Israel, including secret services. Pollard was put in place by a scientific attaché by a man who did not coordinate his efforts with the Mossad. In other words, the big scandal in Israel at that time was that the Mossad had no knowledge that someone working outside of the Mossad was utilizing Pollard. You can imagine the embarrassment both of the Mossad and the Israeli government, because the way Pollard was being used was unprofessional.

The discovery of Pollard's activities had a negative impact on US-Israeli relations, because the US had been double-crossed and felt stabbed in the back, which is one of the reasons why Pollard is still in jail. Pollard did not transfer technology to an enemy, yet he has had more punishment than any man who spied for Russia. It was very difficult to explain to the United States that most of the people in charge in Israel were unaware of this situation. With the exception of Pollard, however, there is no secretive spying between Israel and America. On the contrary, there is a relationship of trust.



# Israel's International Relations: The US, Europe and International Organizations

*Dr. Shlomo Aronson*<sup>1</sup>

I shall offer a general survey of Israel's relations with Europe and the United States in terms of the cultural political infrastructure of such relations. Of course, this relates also to the particular economic and other assets, which directly influence the ongoing peace process. Israel's relations with Europe and the US are based on a cultural and political infrastructure. A number of elements support Israeli foreign policy, one among them regarding Europe is its Christian heritage. This is a complicated matter because the Christian heritage has also included anti-Semitism. However, Europeans in general have been sensitive to Jews and to Israel, and this stems from Europe's Christian culture, which includes the Old Testament of the Bible. This fact is well known and appreciated by both Christians who use it to work for or against the Jews and Israel.

The European nations are still very much historical nations, and for them the most important event in the last 50 years, even more than the Cold War, was World War II (WWII), which shaped the boundaries in Europe and created many of the states that currently comprise it. WWII also created a number of norms, which work both for and against Israeli interests. The first norm, established during and implemented immediately after the war, was punishing the Nazi and fascist regimes. This included, among other things, changes in boundaries and the removal of large numbers of populations from their birthplaces. For example, about 15 million Germans were removed from the former territo-



ries of Germany in 1937, including East and West-Prussia, to West Germany. Germans were also removed from the former Czechoslovakia and territories that became Poland. There was also the very major change of Polish boundaries from East to West on account of the Germans. The relations of the countries that were involved in WWII have been changed to a degree that works both for and against Israeli interests. On the one hand, for most Europeans the Nazi experience justified the creation and existence of a Jewish state. On the other hand, the Nazi experience also brought to light issues of the rights of minorities and the rights of occupied peoples. In Europe, the question of minorities under occupation was solved by force when the German minorities in practically every European country were simply pushed out. Therefore, there are no Germans anywhere anymore except in Germany itself. In this regard, we should examine the Palestinian problem from an Israeli point of view. My goal here is not to justify or to criticize the realities, but to present them as objectively as I can.

The fate of the Jews in Europe has been solved by Israel. In this sense, the Jews who survived in Europe after WWII had the right to go to Israel as a kind of compensation for their experiences in the Holocaust and as a result of the transformations that took place in

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Aronson is Professor at the Department of Political Science, Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

Europe after Nazism and Fascism were defeated. Because the Jewish question was solved in such a way that the few surviving Jews could not and would not stay in Europe, the creation of their own state, based on the already existing foundation laid by the Zionists in Palestine, was a matter of political-moral truism for most Europeans.

The Palestinians perceive those who have come here since 1917 as foreigners or aliens. The Europeans will never accept this concept, because for them Jews, the Bible and this country are connected. On top of that, the Jewish question in Europe has been resolved by the two contradictory measures of the Holocaust and the transfer of survivors to Israel. This has to do with most of the Jews who came here after WWII, and is not the case with regard to the Jewish communities that exist in Europe now. The largest Jewish communities to remain in Europe are the North African Jewish community in France and the large and influential Jewish community of Great Britain. The other European countries, including Germany and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, are essentially free of Jews as a result of the Holocaust and the immigration of Jews to Israel.

At the same time, Israel's goals with regard to the Europeans and the Americans are clearly to enhance its interests, to secure its existence, to bring about the recognition of secure and peaceful boundaries, to maintain the unification of Jerusalem under Israeli rule, and to serve the Jewish people wherever they might remain. Israel sees itself as the guardian of the interests of Jews everywhere in the world.

The other dimensions of Israeli foreign policy with regard to Europe and to the United States are the enhancement of the Israel economic interest through technological development, the creation a favorable balance of payment with Europe, and the prevention or neutralization of any anti-Israeli activities among the Europeans within the ongoing peace process. From both our and the European point of view, the Arabs' advantage is their oil. The relative dependence of the European countries on

Arab oil is still a major trump card for the Arabs, and although it can be played down it cannot be eradicated completely. Countries such as France, however, are now less dependent on oil and are more self-sufficient in terms of nuclear power. Germany is still dependent on oil, but Germany is especially supportive of Israel. The issue of the Holocaust still looms high on the horizon even for younger Germans, and no German government would be able to totally avoid or ignore it. As a result, Israel and Germany have special relations that are anchored in the legacy of the Holocaust and the degree of responsibility of every German government for things that occurred in previous generations.

Israeli-German relations are complicated by the question of refugees. Germany absorbed a large number of German refugees and accepted the removal of millions of Germans from their homelands. However, the millions of re-settled Germans are not claiming any right of return to West Prussia or other areas from which they were removed. When the right of return of Palestinians is brought up, the Israelis argue that because the German solution was acceptable there, so the Palestinian refugee problem has also been solved in its own way. The Europeans argue that the German problem has been solved, but Israel has a refugee problem that still exists. The compromise solution which seems to be acceptable to the Europeans, and the one which I believe they will support, is the right of return of the Palestinians refugees who were forced to leave in 1948 to areas within the West Bank and Gaza. There would be no right of return to Jaffa or Haifa or anywhere outside of the West Bank and Gaza. In practical terms, the question is: how can this occur when Palestinians in Lebanon, Syria and the US would like to return to the Palestinian state? How can such a movement be controlled? What will be the role of the Lebanese and the Syrian governments in this regard? These are very major issues, and when the Oslo Agreements were negotiated and finally signed, one of the questions raised by our European colleagues was why the Israeli negotiators did not mention the issue of the refugees with regard to the Arab govern-

ments. From the Israeli point of view, such a major issue should not have been left to the end of the discussions. There will not be a final agreement without a solution to refugees and the Jerusalem problem.

When we discuss this with Europeans, the issue is practical but also historical. For the younger generation, the events of 1940s belong to the ancient past, and they prefer to focus their attention on the realities of Palestinians sitting in refugee camps, the Israeli occupation and the question of Jerusalem. Very few people understand why the Jews should control Jerusalem when the city belongs to the three major religions. These are our problems when discussing policies with the Europeans in terms of their interests, which are oil, the vast dimensions of the Arab world, the number of the Arab states, and the importance of the Arab Middle East and of Islam.

Europeans still have problems in creating a common foreign policy of the European Union. However, the negotiations between Israel and Syria and the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians are two fields in which Europe can demonstrate a unified foreign policy. Behind this unified front, however, are significant differences. For example, Germany wants to maintain its special relationship with France, but its post-unification situation is delicate. Furthermore, the future of the former Soviet Union is still uncertain. The nature of European unification relates to the possibility of a future united Middle East in matters such as open borders and a common economy, but these matters have not yet cemented far enough in Europe itself.

One of the issues in the former East Germany is preventing cheap labor from migrating into the country, which would marginalize the elderly workforce and undermine the German economy. The free movement of people, capital and trade over borders is still somewhat problematic. The prospects for the common monetary union and the role of the European Central Bank are still a matter of gathering experience, learning to cope with, and creating something similar to the US in principle.

In the European case, the principle does not work as well because its economies are different. The welfare state is a problem because it is too expensive and creates in many European countries a high degree of joblessness - 13 percent in Germany and 14-15 percent in France. As a result, the Europeans as a sort of a united whole are less able to influence world events than the United States.

The relationship between Israel and the United States is based on common ground. First of all, the US perceives itself at the largest democracy in the world, and because Israel is also a democracy, it shares a common base in this regard. Second, both nations share a heritage based on the current generation's pro-Zionist interpretation of Christianity. Americans are still religious to a large extent. Sometimes only superficially, but at other times seriously. Religion is not dying in America as it is in Europe. In the South, 40 million Americans worship and study the Bible. American Christians view Judaism as the origin of Christendom, and remember that Jesus was a Jew. Furthermore, some of them actually believe that once Jews occupy or re-win the whole country, Jesus will return. These people supported Netanyahu, because they represent the most conservative reactionary element in the right wing of the Republican Party.

On the other hand, Jews and everything Jewish is known in America. There is a degree of sympathy and of interest in Judaism found among Christian Protestants from the US all the way to New Zealand. It is a part of the Protestant tradition, and in this sense is perceived to be natural. At the same time, there is a large Jewish community in the US that plays a very important role in American politics. Jews are concentrated in the key states - New York, California, Illinois, Florida and more. I am referring to the American ballot system, which is, in principle, based on a majority-constituency system. One vote makes a difference in a state such as California or New York; when one candidate to an official job gets just one more vote he or she is elected. In Israel we have a different system of proportional vote, which lets every minority be represented in the elected bodies. The US

or Great Britain have a two-party system based on a territorial constituency - which in America is based on the states. Since the Jewish communities are organized and are politically interested, number-wise they are large minorities and can swing a vote; a political fact that no American politician can ignore.

Jews are also very much now a part of the American political elite, serving as senators, congressmen, and key personalities in American politics. Once they were emancipated and allowed to break out of the ghettos, many Jews made the most out of the American opportunities and climbed the ladder to occupy key positions wherever they could. This became possible after WWII and as a result of the Holocaust, which destroyed the discriminatory system in America, not only against Jews but also finally against Blacks. I cannot imagine black emancipation without WWII and the war for equality and freedom, which was finally working in favor of Blacks, Hispanics, Jews and Catholics, all of whom were discriminated against before WWII. No one of Catholic origin would have ever made it to the White House before WWII; President Kennedy was the first Catholic who did. WWII was, in this sense, for the Americans a watershed of their own politics.

As a result of the Holocaust, Jews were very much united among themselves and adopted Zionism and the State of Israel as their most important self-identification. This was the case until recently, and paradoxically what is happening now is that the Holocaust is replacing Israel, to an extent, in the consciousness of American Jews seeking their own identity. Many American Jews, especially the liberal element among them, disapprove of Israeli politics since 1967, in particular the occupation, the Intifada, and the exclusive Israeli control over Jerusalem.

In addition to the role played by politics in shaping Israeli-US relations, strategic and economic roles have also been important. With regard to the strategic aspect, Israel is perceived to be a reliable American ally in a volatile region. At the same time, the Ameri-

cans were very interested in a deal between Israel and Syria because they wanted to open Syria to free trade, to modernize it, and to bring about the end of the overall Arab-Israeli conflict. Syria's participation in a general agreement, along with the Palestinians, will make it easier for Saudi Arabia and everybody else to say that the situation in the Middle East has been settled. At the same time, the fact that President Hafez Al-Assad might not live much longer introduces uncertainty. The US would love to bring about an agreement, but Mr. Assad is worried about it. What his son Bashar may do is a matter of wait and see.

Compared to Syria and other countries Israel is a stable democratic society, but its democratic image is tarnished when it occupies or rules over others who do not want to be occupied. Therefore the occupation must be ended to preserve Israel's public image, and to uphold a principle of US foreign policy. The American-initiated UN Resolution 242 and the supplementary Resolution 335 never accepted the annexation or permanent occupation by Israel of territories beyond the 1967 boundaries without an agreed solution. American public opinion disagrees with the occupation of Jerusalem and the territories, which relates to the democratic character of the US itself.

Tactically, Israel's pre-1957 solution to its security problems was based upon three principles:

- the partition of the country within the 1967 boundaries;
- the *de facto* acceptance of the partition of Jerusalem;
- the production of nuclear weapons.

These objectives guided Israeli policy, including the purchase of intermediate range ballistic missiles, and only ended in the early 1970s when Israel deployed the Jericho II nuclear missiles. The partition of the country and the expansion of Israel into the empty Negev Desert was given up in 1967, and has a lot to do with Israeli domestic politics.

At the same time, Israel was always unable to dance between the US and the USSR, at least to guarantee its conventional arms needs, and the political clout related to it.

The game that Egyptian Presidents Gamal Abdel Nasser and Anwar As-Sadat, as well as Syria's President Hafez Al-Assad played with the Soviet Union pushed the US behind Israel much more than the Americans had originally intended. Thus even these leaders had to reckon with American interests and basic support of Israel. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States is increasing pressure on Israel to accept an arrangement with both the Palestinians and the Syrians. Therefore, Israel is not controlling American politics. They have their own interests, and for them the tactical game depends upon the reasonableness of the demands of both sides.

For instance, if during the final status negotiations the Palestinian side insists upon the Palestinian refugees' right of return to Jaffa, they will lose the support of the Americans. That argument is self-defeating and can only be understood in terms of domestic Palestinian politics. On the other hand if the Israelis claim the whole country, or there will again be no agreement. Furthermore, Israel's demand for the entire city of Jerusalem as its united capital is also unacceptable to the Americans. The Americans are the only remaining great power, whether Israelis like it or not.

A final point has to do with economy. Israel has managed since its creation in 1948 to become a mini-economic power. As a result of this, its weight in the US is also very much a function of its economic muscle which, though not terribly strong, cannot be denied. We have preferential economic agreements with the EU and the US, and as a result we can work as a bridge between both for joint preferential treatment. On the other hand, Israelis have undertaken high-tech activities because we do not have any other sources of gaining wealth from the traditional professions such as agriculture. For better or worse the Israeli society has become very competitive, a significant break from its so-

cialist origins, and this competition is now occurring in the context of the global economy. Globalization has created enormous differences within Israeli society, and enormous tension at the top with the rise of a very successful international high-tech elite. This new class is very influential because it knows everyone in the field worldwide and because it is respected and of political significance.

The problems of former Prime Minister Netanyahu with the Europeans were political, but had economic consequences. Europeans always combine politics with economics, and in order to achieve economic preferences, one has to make political concessions. When Netanyahu froze the political process, Europeans formed a coalition against him. When the Barak government returned to the negotiating table, the Europeans were ready to reopen their gates to Israeli economic initiative.

The founding fathers of Israel such as Ben-Gurion never negotiated anything without the backing of the parliament. Netanyahu, however, did it the other way around. First of all, he formed an unstable coalition. Secondly, he signed agreements that were hated by very many members of his own parliamentary coalition, which brought about his downfall.

# Israeli Politics: From the Intifada to the Peace Process

*Prof. Asher Susser*<sup>1</sup>

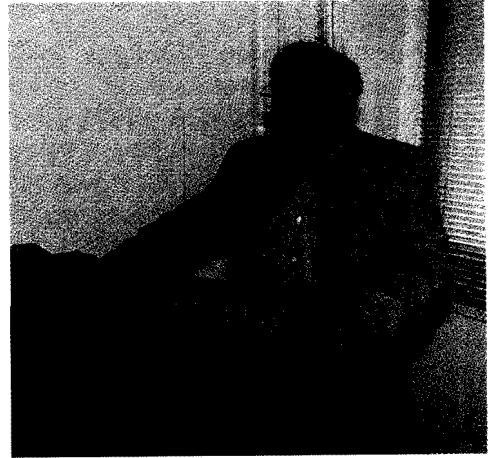
## The Regional Context

In the last decade or so a series of regional changes have created a window of opportunity for comprehensive Middle East peace-making. The regional balance of power has generally shifted in the last 10 or 15 years in Israel's favor. The fact that Israel has, generally speaking, become more powerful has given rise to a new Israeli willingness to negotiate and to concede in negotiations with its Arab neighbors.

The changes that have brought about this shift in the balance of power are multifold. First of all, the peace established between Egypt and Israel has lasted for over 20 years.

Second, the end of the Cold War has had a significant impact on the Middle East. With the Soviet Union out of the picture as a major superpower, waging the conflict with Israel has become far more difficult for players like Syria and the PLO, which historically have been very dependent on the Soviet Union. The United States, Israel's closest ally, remains the world's sole superpower.

Third, there has been massive Jewish immigration from the former Soviet Union to Israel. The Jewish population in Israel has increased by about 20 percent in the last ten years, which has had an impact on the way Israelis see themselves, tending to reassure them about their future. Similarly it has also had an impact on the way the Arab World tends to view Israel. It has undermined the traditional radical Arab position that time and history are



essentially on the Arab side. The massive Soviet immigration to Israel has given Arabs cause to recognize that Israel is not a declining concern, but rather a thriving state that has increased in population and augmented its economic and technological power advantage.

Fourth, the defeat of Iraq in the Gulf War and its consequent decline as a military power has further altered the regional balance of power in Israel's favor.

Finally, the Intifada had a significant, albeit mixed, effect on the balance of power in the region. On the one hand, it forced Israel to recognize the limitations of its increasing power. Israel gradually began to accept that it could not control a large and disaffected Palestinian population indefinitely. The Intifada, however, also forced the Palestinians to conclude that if they wanted to transform the Intifada into a real and tangible political gain, they would have to negotiate with Israel.

The combination of all these factors revealed two main points to the Israeli body politic: the extent of Israel's power and regional dominance, and the limitations thereof. Thus, Israel may very well be the most powerful state in the region, but at the same time the Israelis can not change the fact that they are only a minority, and a small one at that, in the Mid-

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<sup>1</sup> Prof. Asher Susser is a Senior Fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv.

dle East. Although Israel is a regional power, its use of force is severely constrained. Israelis would probably be amazed by the often-mentioned Arab and Palestinian belief in the almost unlimited power of Israel to do as it pleased in the region. The manipulative prowess attributed to Israel and the Jews contrasts in the extreme with the much more modest conception the Israelis themselves have of their actual capabilities.

Israelis are acutely aware of the fundamental lack of symmetry between Israel and the Arab states. There is, after all, only one Israel, but there are many Arab states. The relationship of the Arab states and the Palestinians to Israel is mainly bilateral. Conversely, Israel's relations with each one of its Arab neighbors are almost always part of a multi-lateral equation. Relations with Egypt are linked to Israel's views and concerns about other Arab states. Palestine is intimately connected to relations with Jordan. Ties with Jordan are connected to Iraq. Syria and Lebanon are obviously inter-related issues, and so on. Israel's relations with its neighbors are hardly ever strictly bilateral. Consequently, in the Israeli frame of mind it is never simply an Israeli-Palestinian equation, but one in which it is incumbent upon Israel to relate to Palestine within a context that includes other regional players, above and beyond the Palestinians.

In conclusion, therefore, the peace process is not the product of an ideological metamorphosis in the sense that the Arab World has fundamentally changed its attitudes towards Israel. Nor have most Israelis dramatically altered their ideological perceptions. Instead, the peace process is a 'window of opportunity' based on a pragmatic recognition of both sides of their respective limitations.

Why is this only a window of opportunity? It is but a window because there are certain elements on the regional horizon that might alter this balance of power and make the Middle East less conducive to the pursuit of peaceful negotiations. The reemergence of Iraq as a great regional power and/or the dissemination of weapons of mass destruction may shift the

balance of power in the Arabs' favor. As a result, they might perceive negotiation with Israel as a less attractive proposition.

In facing this window of opportunity, Israel is geo-politically situated at the core of two concentric circles. The inner circle surrounding Israel contains those countries that are engaged in the peace process. The outer circle contains countries like Iran and Iraq (or the less important states of Libya and Sudan), that are not involved in these negotiations and still maintain positions of extreme hostility towards Israel. Israel, therefore, seeks to create a zone of peace with the inner circle of states, in the form of peace treaties with Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. This inner circle of countries would thus serve as an area of peace and security, separating Israel from the outer circle of states, with which relations are potentially hostile, and thereby significantly reducing the chances of Iraqi or Iranian involvement or intervention in matters that impinge upon Israeli security.

### **The Domestic Israeli Debate**

The crux of the Israeli domestic political debate is how to actually go about accomplishing this zone of peace. Basically, there are two schools of thought in Israeli society, broadly categorized as the right and the left. The supreme historical principle and objective of the right was the redemption of the territory of *Eretz Yisrael*. They consequently refused to accept the land for peace formula and did not believe that Israel should concede territory for the sake of peace. This, they argued, was not only ideologically unacceptable but also extremely dangerous for Israel in the present circumstances. After all, since there is still a danger that the radical elements in the region might regain power, they feel that conceding territory would prove to be too big a risk for the future of Israel. The country, the right fears, might find itself indefensible after major withdrawals from territories taken in the War of 1967, whether in the West Bank or the Golan Heights.

The ideological point of departure of the left has always tended to emphasize the principle

of the redemption of the people rather than the redemption of the land. For the left, territory was an essential means to achieve the end, but it was never the ultimate objective in and of itself. Territory was an essential prerequisite for the creation of a state for the Jewish people, but it did not have to include all of *Eretz Yisrael*. From the left-wing point of view, therefore, the partition of Palestine was a legitimate option from very early on.

The argument made by the left was, and is, that there was no choice but to concede land if Israel wished to create this inner circle of peace with its immediate neighbors. Moreover, peace in and of itself was a form of reassurance against radicalization of the region in the future and thus a key component of Israel's security.

In the past, Israeli society was deeply divided between right and left on this issue of partition. Today, however, the real material differences between left and right in Israeli politics are much narrower than they used to be. Much of the ideological right, which consistently believed in the inviolable principle of 'Greater *Eretz Yisrael*,' has accepted, however grudgingly, the Oslo process. The debate in Israel now is no longer on the principle of withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza, but rather its extent. That is, it has become a matter of degree rather than one of principle. This is a most significant historical shift, whereby the majority in Israel, including much of the right, has accepted the logic of partition. The question is no longer whether Israel accepts the idea of a Palestinian state, but rather its extent and future relationship with Israel.

Israel's current policy towards the occupied territories is an attempt to balance the demographic and territorial requirements of Israeli security. Most Israelis have arrived at the conclusion that making concessions to the Palestinians is important for Israel's long-term existence and that coercing millions of disaffected Palestinians to live under Israeli rule does not serve Israel's own self-interest. The notion of 'separation' has to do with Israeli reluctance to construct its socioeconomic

future based on Palestinian labor and the subjugation of the Palestinian economy to that of Israel. According to this frame of mind, Israel has an interest in the development of the Palestinian economy to allow for the Palestinians to have a viable state of their own, reducing the Israeli economy's dependence on Palestinian workers. The solution, therefore, lies in the creation of a Palestinian state, narrowing the economic gap between Palestine and Israel, reducing Israeli and Palestinian mutual dependence and hopefully attaining security in terms of economic justice, social equilibrium and lack of friction, all of which will be essential for a lasting peace.

Yet matters do not end here. There are two critical historical phases in the evolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: the War of 1948 and its consequences, and the War of 1967 and its aftermath. The first relates to Israel's creation, the second to its expansion. It is much easier for Israel to negotiate 1967 questions, such as the future of the West Bank and Gaza, the future of Jerusalem, the settlements, and the 1967 refugees, which only touch upon Israel's size. Israel can negotiate the 1967 issues without compromising its existence as a state as defined in the Israeli Declaration of Independence in 1948. However, Israel cannot negotiate the 1948 questions with the same ease. There are two 1948 questions which impinge upon the existence of the Israeli state as presently defined: 1) the status of the 1948 refugees, and 2) the status of the one million Palestinian citizens of Israel whose key spokespersons are campaigning for an alternative to the current definition of the Israeli state as the state of the Jewish people.

Israeli politics are therefore being redefined as a result of the peace process. The cleavages are no longer primarily between the Zionist left and the Zionist right. Today, the key differences are between secular and religious, and between Zionists and non-Zionists, symbolized so clearly by the emergence of Shas as the main ultra-Orthodox non-Zionist party. New battle lines are being drawn in the domestic Israeli debate. The new divisions are between the Zionists, who wish to maintain



Israel as a secular Zionist liberal democratic state, and the non-Zionists, who contest the status quo and would like to see it replaced either by a de-Zionized secular state or a less secular and more theocratic Jewish state.

There are two major constituencies of non-Zionists in Israel. The ultra-Orthodox Jews and the Palestinians. They share a common ethos of dissent towards Israel as a secular Zionist state. The Orthodox object to the secular nature of the state, whereas the Palestinians are increasingly critical of Israel's exclusive designation as the state of the Jewish people. These are the issues that are rising to the top of the Israeli domestic agenda. As the Arab-Israeli conflict winds down and Israel approaches the creation of the two-state solution, the question of its own identity is becoming ever more acute. As long as Israel defines itself as the state of the Jewish people (and one may assume that most Israelis will continue to regard this designation as the authentic expression of their national aspirations), the complete resolution of all the historical bones of contention between Israel and Palestine might prove to be an elusive goal. Israelis may be willing to concede considerable amounts of territory. They should not be expected to concede their identity as well.

## Israel and the Middle East Peace Process

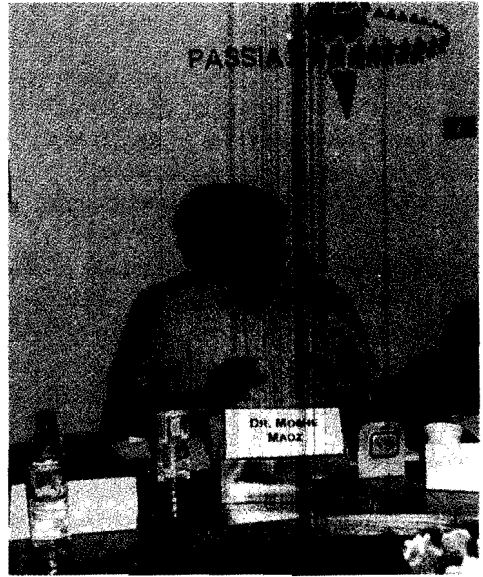
*Dr. Moshe Maoz*<sup>1</sup>

**T**he peace process between Israel, Syria and the Palestinians is in very bad shape. For example, the recent negotiations with Syria halted over seemingly negotiable issues such as who is going to control a strip of land in the northeast part of Lake Tiberias. I think we will need a miracle to get together again. We need creative ideas for new solutions.

The crux of the problem between Syria and Israel is mutual mistrust. When Barak came to power approximately 11 months ago, the two leaders exchanged compliments. However, while Barak continued to express goodwill, Assad stopped because he felt that Barak was trying to manipulate him as Rabin, Peres, and Netanyahu had all done previously. Assad questioned what kind of game Barak was playing. Barak is not a saint, for there are no saints in the Middle East. Everyone contributes to this mess.

The two parties also misunderstood each other. Assad and Barak are somewhat similar, as they both come from tough, cold, military backgrounds, and they are both very stubborn in demanding the other's submission. Domestic issues within Israel added to the problem, for as Kissinger once said, "Israel does not have a foreign policy. Only a domestic policy". Syria is not democratic, and therefore Assad is not as constrained by the need to appease public opinion. In any case, there is mutual mistrust between Syria and Israel and within Israel regarding domestic issues.

The Palestinian track has also not been a great success, and is currently stuck. The parties are still talking but this is not exceptional, for meaningless rhetoric abounds in



Middle East politics. The crux of the matter is that Israel is not magnanimous; it is not generous. Israel makes a great mistake by being very shortsighted, especially with regard to the final status issues that are now being discussed. Perhaps, now that the Syrian track has been stalled, attention will be re-focused on the Palestinian track. In fact, several people in the government were pressing to focus on the Palestinian track rather than the Syrian because they felt it was more important.<sup>2</sup> Their desire to negotiate with Palestinians does not stem from empathy towards the Palestinians; instead, Israel understands that it is in its best interest to have a happy, stable neighbor in the form of a Palestinian state. It is also in Israel's best interest to make peace with Syria and Lebanon since otherwise the prospect of violence from the Lebanese and Palestinian sides remains.

In the 1970s, Kissinger said that in order for the Arabs to present a credible military threat to Israel, they needed Egyptian participation. However, he also felt that Syria would have to be part of any stable peace in the region. At the time, Kissinger forgot about the Palestinians, although he later said that both the Palestinians and the Syrians were very important. I believe that the Palestinians are particularly important to stability and peace in

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Moshe Maoz is Professor at the Department of Middle Eastern Studies, Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> Since the presentation of this paper in April 2000 Israel has indeed stepped up its efforts to reach a final settlement with the Palestinians.

the Middle East. Peace with Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinians will ease Israel's way into integrating with the Middle East and the Arab/Islamic world. I think that peace must also be built between the peoples, based on strategic and economic cooperation and cultural understanding. This is a long-term goal, however, and is a far cry from the present situation. The struggle will be long and tough, but Israel must have the motivation to accomplish it.

Can we achieve all these aims and dreams? I believe it is possible, for when there is a will, there is a way. While all sides are responsible, peace depends particularly on Israel, because it is a strong and powerful country technologically, militarily, and economically. In addition, Israel controls occupied territories, and therefore is capable of doing a lot to bring about peace.

The Arab World sees Israel as a foreign element in this region, and Israelis also perceive themselves as foreign. The main objective, therefore, is to change both this image and the reality so that we as Jews can become more integrated with our Arab neighbors. This does not require that we become Arab or Muslim, but that we learn more about the Arab culture, language, and society. This is a big challenge, however, because even Israelis who come from Arab countries and have a Judeo-Arab culture are not willing to integrate. Although we all have a lot in common, people have pushed our commonalities aside because of the conflict. We must return to these commonalities, and the risk involved in this is outweighed by the need of peoples on all sides to live and to co-exist. The majority of the people on both sides are pragmatic, moderate, and want to live peacefully.

I want to briefly outline the relations between Israel and the Arab World over the last 50 years. During the first 20 or 25 years, Arab nations, by and large, wanted to do away with Israel, owing to ideological or cultural motives. Attitudes shifted, however, and from 1967 on Arab leaders wanted to establish correct relations with Israel, provided it withdrew from the territories occupied in/since 1967. By this

point, however, Israel refused, and the two sides reversed roles.

For example, on 19 June 1967, just after the Six-Day War, the Israeli Government unanimously decided to offer peace to the Arab nations by withdrawing to the international boundaries. The Arab nations rejected Israel's proposal, and Israel abolished their decision. Israel's offer to Jordan, however, did not include withdrawal from East Jerusalem, and they did not understand that no Arab leader could make peace without retaining a segment of Jerusalem. Even King Hussein, with all his good will and strategic relations with Israel, would not have been able to do that.

After the 1973 War, however, the Arabs began to change their attitudes and started moving towards peace. For the first time, Syria adopted UN Resolution 338. The Palestinians also changed their strategy, and in the 12<sup>th</sup> session of the Palestinian National Council in June 1974 they decided to continue their struggle also by political means.

By this point, however, Israelis viewed this as a tactical maneuver designed to destroy Israel by stages. Israel was stubborn and did not want to change the *status quo*, particularly in regard to their relations with the Syrians and the Palestinians. Egypt and Jordan were a different story because Israel initiated the Kissinger step-by-step policy, which meant a progressive move towards peace starting first with Egypt, then Jordan, and finally with the Palestinians. However, both the Syrians and the Palestinians of the PLO showed a desire to come to terms with Israel - not out of love, but due to their constraints, limitations, and strategic interests. For example, by 1987 Syria came to the conclusion that a military solution would not be feasible and, instead, turned to a diplomatic solution. One reason for this was that Syria's doctrine of strategic balance with Israel failed.

The same situation applied to the Palestinians. For instance, on 19 November 1988, Arafat appeared in Geneva and, for the first time, the PLO accepted UN Resolutions 242 and 181. This had profound implications that I

am not sure even Arafat himself recognized at the time. UN Resolution 181 speaks about the division of Palestine into two states - an Arab and a Jewish state. Thus, by accepting this resolution, Arafat was indirectly recognizing the right of the Jews to a state; a significant ideological change from the PLO's previous position. Accepting 242 was a condition for American recognition and relations with the PLO. From this point onward, both Syria and the Palestinians began making steps towards a pragmatic solution.

This was not the case in Israel however. Israel was still stubborn, perhaps because the Likud government was in power at the time. The Israeli position towards the Palestinians was structured in terms of the desire to possess territory for Greater Israel. The settlement movement spread throughout the country because the Likud wanted to avoid the possibility of a Palestinian state. This was done deliberately, and this attitude prevailed for many years.

The Israeli policy only began to change after the Americans applied a significant amount of pressure, and the Intifada changed the Palestinian image among the Israeli public. The public in Israel, for many years, was completely estranged from the Palestinians and looked down on them with contempt. The Intifada, however, showed the Israelis that Palestinians were fighting for their own national goals and that they were willing to sacrifice to achieve those goals. I think that a kind of admiration-hate relationship developed between the Jews and the Arabs at that time. Rabin and Peres both changed their attitudes towards the Palestinians, although it is unfortunate that it took force to accomplish this. I think that when Rabin came to power in 1992 there was a breakthrough in relations between Israel, Syria, and the Palestinians. For the first time, Rabin acknowledged that 242 also applied to the Golan Heights.

Perhaps the more important turning point, however, was the Oslo Agreement, which was a social and psychological breakthrough for both sides. For the first time, both Israelis and Palestinians expressed their desire to

live in peace, reconciliation, and cooperation. Accordingly, all kinds of provisions were made. Unfortunately, Oslo did not address the major issues that have now become final status issues. Nevertheless, with all the criticism, the Oslo Agreement was implemented. Not fully or on time, but implemented. What was important at that time was the momentum. The fact that the Likud agreed to Oslo means that there was a compromise. Likud finally recognized the principle of partition.

A new era began with Barak because, for the first time, Israelis understood that Likud practices could not continue. Barak was not elected because he was leftist or liberal, but because he showed that he is tough. He was perceived as 'Mr. Security' who could take care of Israeli protection and defense, which is a very important issue - if not obsession - for Israelis. However, the concessions he has made since he came to power have not been very generous. He squeezed the Palestinian soul before offering any concessions. This shows, in my opinion, a lack of vision, owing partly to the position of his right-wing partners in the government.

Nevertheless, these issues must be solved, as only a final settlement will bring peace, security, and integration into this region. Most Israelis agree to a Palestinian state. In fact, recent figures show that 55 percent support it and another 20 percent believe it is going to come. The question of the nature and size of that state still remains. Hopefully we can negotiate some exchange of territories based on 1967. I cannot imagine that Israel will give up all the settlements, but perhaps we can exchange territory so that approximately 90-95 percent of the West Bank would go to the Palestinians. Thus, the Palestinians would get not only the corridor, but also some other places as well. Regarding the issue of settlements, since 70 percent of the settlers live along the 'Green Line,' the boundary could be moved further east to include them in Israel and we could compensate the Palestinians with other territories. As for the remaining settlements, ideally all of them should leave the Palestinian state because they are a time bomb. Many of them are militants who

came to make trouble, and ideally they should go. If this does not happen, however, the second best alternative that many Palestinians agree to, would be to place these settlers under Palestinian sovereignty. They would be residents rather than citizens.

Another critical issue is Jerusalem, but I think that a solution can eventually be found. There is no problem with separate Palestinian and Israeli municipalities working under a coordinating umbrella organization. In my opinion, one undivided city is feasible. With regard to religion, the Haram Ash-Sharif would remain Muslim territory under autonomous Palestinian-Islamic jurisdiction. Everyone could benefit from this arrangement. Ideally, there should be free access to everything. This would win the good will of Muslim countries because Jerusalem is not only an Israeli-Palestinian issue but also a Muslim issue, and Israel has an interest in coming to terms with all Muslim countries.

The main issue is sovereignty. Recently, a group of Israelis and Palestinians published a joint Israeli-Palestinian paper entitled "The Future Relations Between Israelis and Palestinians," in which we stated that Jerusalem should be undivided. Jerusalem should be a capital of two states; an Israeli capital in the west and a Palestinian capital in the east. The problem is that many Israelis are not going to accept this solution. There is a lot of work to be done in this respect, especially on the Israeli side, and Israelis must be willing to embrace creative ideas and demonstrate courage.

With regard to the issue of the Palestinian refugees, those of us who wrote this paper cannot deny the idea of the right of return. However, it was agreed that the implementation of return would apply only to the Palestinian state or whatever the Palestinian state can absorb. Israel would take only a token number - up to 100,000. The rest of the refugees would be resettled in Arab countries, whose governments would receive financial compensation from Israel, and the international community. Everyone agrees that there will be a collective compensation for the refugees. The Palestinians also demand individ-

ual compensation, which is the basis for some negotiations. I think that Palestinians know very well that even leftist Israelis would not accept masses of Palestinians coming into Israel proper.

The greatest challenge for Israel is integration. This is not easy. Israel has said that in order to achieve peace we have to be strong. However, to really attain a meaningful peace, Israelis need to change the character of their beliefs to be less patronizing towards the Palestinians. In conclusion, the issue is very difficult, but the solution can be achieved, for none of us want to continue another one hundred years of war that nobody can win.

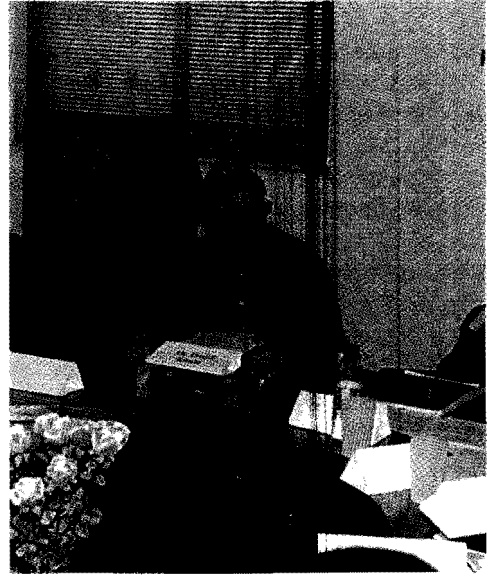
# Israel's Future in the Region: Conflict or Cooperation?

David Kimche<sup>1</sup>

I will get to the subject of Israel's future in this region - conflict or cooperation - in a round-about manner. Since the beginning of Israel's existence as a state, it has had the following four fundamental foreign policy objectives:

- 1) to obtain peace and security;
- 2) to establish the economic well-being of its people;
- 3) to politically consolidate its legitimacy (i.e. to achieve acceptance, understanding, and alliance with as many countries in the world as possible); and
- 4) to fulfill the Zionist ideology and in particular to encourage Jewish immigration.

Specific governmental policies, implemented by Labor or Likud, have reflected different emphases of these four national objectives. In the early days of Ben-Gurion, nation building and the fulfillment of the Zionist ideology were on top of the list; today peace and security are the first priority. Throughout most of Israel's history, the goal of obtaining peace was an unrealistic fantasy rather than a clear, achievable objective, due to the complete and utter enmity between Israel and the Arab countries. The conflict between Israel and the Arab World was so deep that peace was not considered possible. The PLO's declarations in the 1970s and early 1980s reveal the depth of the enmity and hatred that the PLO felt towards Israel. Although peace had been one



of Israel's four objectives, to a large extent it had been merely wishful thinking for some far, distant future.

The big change came in 1977 with President Sadat's incredible visit to Jerusalem. There was absolute ecstasy in Israel at Sadat's reception; people went out of their minds. From that visit, Israel moved toward the peace agreement with Egypt. This was an extremely important step for Israel and, due to the longevity of this treaty the relationship between the two countries serves as a useful model. Shortly after that visit I became director general in the Foreign Ministry and was largely responsible for the negotiations between Israel and Egypt both for the establishment of the Multi-National Force in the Sinai and, more importantly, for the normalization agreements between our two countries. In my first year of this position I went to Egypt 13 times, and in 1981 we made more than 40 different agreements, which shows the intensity of the dialogue. There was great enthusiasm on both sides, and besides the political negotiations there was much talk about exchange of youth, academic cooperation and other cultural initiatives. In the first euphoria there was no limit to the extent to which Israel was willing to cooperate with Egypt. However, for various reasons, the situation changed very rapidly.

Israel began to see that Egypt did not have the same enthusiasm for cooperation. I spent

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<sup>1</sup> David Kimche, President of the Israel Council for Foreign Relations, one of the founding members of the International Alliance for Arab-Israeli Peace ("the Copenhagen Group") and a member of its steering committee, former Director-General of the Israeli Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and Ambassador-at-large.

many hours asking the Egyptian foreign minister and other officials why not more effort was being made to eradicate the scars that fifty years of wars and hostility had left on both of our societies. I felt there was need to incorporate peace education as part of the school curricula in both countries, to initiate positive television programs and articles in the press. We complained about the lack of television time allocated to the Israeli ambassador to Egypt. One of the earliest agreements involved the establishment of an Israeli academic center in Cairo, and we invited Egypt to set up a similar academic center in Tel Aviv or Jerusalem, offering all kind of help in establishing a strong Egyptian academic presence in Israel. However, the Egyptians rejected the idea and the Israeli academic center in Cairo became limited. We also began to notice that any Egyptian who wished to trade with Israel would be questioned by the *mukhabarat*, which reflected the hostile climate towards peace within Egypt.

At that time, the Egyptian intellectuals under the leadership of the left-wing parties decided that Egyptians should not have anything to do with Israel, and should reject any normalization of relations between the Egyptian and Israeli people. Normalization became a hated word in Egypt, and many Egyptian intellectuals consequently refused contact with all Israelis, even with those who believed strongly in peace such as the Peace Now organization. The lack of warmth in the peace with Egypt has become a weapon in the hands of those Israeli extremists who oppose the peace process; they point to the cold peace with Egypt as proof that Israel cannot hope to have normal relations with its Arab neighbors.

Given the hostility between Palestinians and Israelis, many Palestinians consider the Egyptian attitude to be justified. However, the Egyptian rejection of Israel was a very complex process, not only or even mainly due to the Palestine Question. Many Egyptian intellectuals used Israel as a stick with which to hit the Egyptian government. Though many of these intellectuals were against the Sadat regime, they were unable to openly display their opposition. Thus Israel was used as a way of

criticizing the government. Additionally, many Egyptian intellectuals felt very strongly that Israel was a rival and a threat to Egypt's leadership in the Arab World. The fears of Egyptian intellectuals are vividly expressed by the journalist Mohammed Heikal in an article that appeared in *Al-Ahram*:

Israel's position on the question of Egyptian leadership is clear. Israel has always wanted to sideline Egypt, and has partially succeeded. The imposition of an Israeli peace on the region necessarily implies that Egypt will eventually be totally isolated. It will be ignored because all the focus will be on the Fertile Crescent region and the Gulf. Egypt will find its sphere of influence confined to Africa, made unwelcome by the North African group, and forced to look south to the Sudan. We have a real conflict of interests here, which will give rise to an ongoing, long-term conflict. In the case of Egypt and Israel, conflict exists of necessity, irrespective of our wishes. The contradictions between Egypt and Israel will exist even if we disregard the usurpation of Palestine and the dispossession of the Palestinians. For many years to come, Egypt will be obliged to manage a conflict of fundamental contradiction with Israel; one that has not ended and will not end in peace, at least not in our time.

For real cooperation, there has to be willingness from both sides. After 20 years of peace with Egypt, Israel has not managed to obtain cooperation from the Egyptians to the extent that they desire. However it must be stressed that the peace is solid, there are numerous contacts between Egyptians and Israelis in the economic field, Israeli tourists to Egypt are received warmly and there are no security problems between the two countries. This situation is likely to improve even more when Egypt realizes that Israel is not a threat to its leading position in the Middle East. Such change for the better is beginning with groups like the International Alliance for Arab-Israeli Peace, of which I am a member. This group was initiated in 1997 in cooperation with the Danes and functioned as a dialogue forum for Israeli and Egyptian intellectuals. After more than a year of regular meetings in Copenhagen Jordanians and Palestinians were invited to participate, and this has brought about real communication between intellectuals from each of these countries. Today many Egyptian

intellectuals have turned their backs to the ideology of silence toward Israelis, and there is a very lively dialogue going on through this Copenhagen Group.

In terms of dialogues between Israel and other Arab countries, I have had the opportunity to meet with many Arab leaders. In my discussions with them, I have been able to witness first-hand how they view the subject of cooperation or conflict. Surprisingly, I have found curiosity instead of hostility in many countries in the Gulf and North Africa. I have explained Israel's viewpoints and striven to improve its relations in numerous encounters with Arab ministers and heads of states. Although it cannot yet emerge openly, the Arab World's perception of Israel is clearly changing.

Cooperation serves the interests of both the Palestinians and the Israelis. There is no conceivable alternative to cooperation. However, this is much easier said than done. Unfortunately, both sides have displayed a tremendous amount of prejudice, ignorance, hostility, and stereotypical thinking. The average Israeli has virtually no knowledge about Palestinians in particular or Arabs in general and, *vice versa*, this is the case for Palestinians as well. The average Israeli equates "Palestinian" with "terrorist", which is the unfortunate result of years of enmity and hostility. Both peoples will have to work diligently in order to think in terms of the future and not in terms of the past. Only by thinking in terms of the future can proper cooperation be reached. There has certainly been injustice, but sometimes one has to put a big X on the past. That is what Germany and France did after World War II, what Israelis are doing with regard to Germany for all the pain and suffering experienced there, and what has to be done here. Shared civil activities and cooperative efforts in NGOs such as the Copenhagen Group will pave the way toward true cooperation and the overcoming of prejudices.

In Israel we have an additional problem which is important to understand. The Jews are a peculiar people. Due to hundreds of years of persecution and of being considered as alien in many countries, they have developed an

attitude of suspicion towards non-Jews. As a result of having lived together in ghettos, apart from others and unaccepted by the outside world, the Jewish people have developed an attitude of self-reliance: rely on other Jews, but not on other people. This is deeply embedded in the Jewish psyche and makes it all the more difficult for many Jews to accept close relations with non-Jews. Because of this and because of the years of enmity between us and the Palestinians, a very thick layer of suspicion has built up; suspicion which Israelis have to cut through in order to ease their relationship with the Palestinians.

When Moses led the people out of Egypt he spent 40 years in the Sinai desert before he reached this country. The understanding was that the generation that had left Egypt had to die off, and that a new generation had to come in before they could live in this land. This is what has to happen in this country today as well. The old generation, that is, the people who came from Europe, the remnants from the Holocaust, and the people who came from other Arab countries are the generation of the desert. The new generation that is born in this country will be able to reach out to the Palestinian neighbors. This task will be much easier for them, as they will not have all the psychological burden that a person who survived Auschwitz still bears. The younger generation bears hope.

Another important factor in the future relations is the changing world. Today's world is very different than that which existed even 10 years ago. The Internet has brought a completely new attitude, and in the new world of globalization, national borders and nationalism are becoming less important. In this global village, one has to learn to cooperate to avoid being left far behind. When compared with other parts of the world, the Middle East is already being left far behind. This can only change by looking ahead, and this is inherently connected with issues of regionalism in its various meanings and in particular in the move toward the Mediterranean region, both in terms of trade and the Barcelona concept of 'Mediterraneanism' linked to the European Union. Regionalism should thus relate to a



Middle East that includes Israel, Turkey and maybe one day Iran, or even the Mediterranean region as a whole.

Ultimately, the key will be cooperation, particularly between Palestinians and Israelis; everything else is secondary. The fundamental issue is about this land and the inalienable rights of both the Palestinians and the Israelis. It is about finding a solution and I am optimistic in this regard, mainly because we are much closer to each other in ways of thinking, attitudes, and sense of humor than many people realize. I remember during the Oslo negotiations our legal expert once said, "It is unbelievable how close we became in those negotiations." It may sound preposterous, but there is a great affinity between Palestinians and Israelis, we are much nearer to each other than we are to Europeans or Americans, and I believe that fact alone will eventually lead to mutual understanding.

### Discussion

*Participant:* What are the fundamental things that changed your tradition from a man who worked in the Mossad to a man who works for peace and cooperation?

*Dr. Kimche:* In the founding meetings of the International Alliance for Arab-Israeli Peace, one participant had spent 17 years in an Israeli prison. I asked him exactly the same question - "What brought you to Copenhagen to look for ways to find peace with Israel after you have spent 17 years in an Israeli prison" - and he replied, "It is *because* I spent 17 years in prison. I was a fighter. I did everything I could for my people, and when there was a need to fight, I fought. And now I know that there is a need to make peace."

It is exactly the same for me. When I was in the Mossad, I thought that what I was doing was good for my people. Today, I am also doing what I think is good for my people. In those days the PLO was our enemy, and we were frequently at war. I was working for my country in the same way that I am sure all of you would be willing to work for your own country. I believe it is time for peace now but

even when I was in the Mossad I knew that one day we would have to live side-by-side in peace with the Palestinians.

*Participant:* How do Israelis perceive Islam?

*Dr. Kimche:* The tragedy is that Islam is hostile to Israel at the moment, and hopefully we can change this in the future. I know a bit about Islam from my studies and I do not consider it to be an extremist or violent religion *per se*. In its purest form Islam does not condone violence as many Islamic movements do. Islam can be a moderating force, and I see no reason why Judaism and Islam cannot live together. However, the growth of the extremist Muslim movements is a great danger. One of the reasons for the strength of these fundamentalist movements is the economic situation of their adherents, which will not change until there is real economic growth. A person who has no hope in the present world will look toward the future, the world to come. The economic problems in the Middle East region are one of the principal causes of the growth of Islamic fundamentalism.

Israel is making a big effort, in its own way, to encourage countries in the West to give economic assistance to its neighbors in this region. If you had said to an Israeli Likudnik 20 years ago that Israelis would be begging the Americans, French and English to give more help to the Palestinians he would have thought you were crazy, but this is exactly what is happening today. We understand that to achieve real peace everything must be done to improve the economic situation - especially among the Palestinians.

*Participant:* Have you ever thought about Palestinian security?

*Dr. Kimche:* In my opinion, the Palestinians are double victims: victims of the Jewish history and victims of the last 50 years of enmity. This is not completely the Israelis' fault, but is also due to the terror acts perpetrated against Israel and Israelis for so many years. The Israelis who want peace try to do what they can, although it is not very much at the moment. However, I do believe very strongly that before the end of the year 2000 you will

have your independent Palestinian state, not least because of the pressure those peace activists are putting on Israel. There is almost a consensus in Israel that there has to be a Palestinian state.

*Participant:* What does peace mean to you?

*Dr. Kimche:* For me peace means that we can develop close relations and cooperation with our neighbors. It means that the dangers of another war will diminish, people will have greater freedom of movement, and there will be better economic development. It means that we can become an integral part of this region and that eventually Arabs and Jews will become real cousins, neighbors who can live side by side in peace and tranquility without fearing one another.

Israelis have been brought up to yearn for peace. In the Jewish religion, the word 'peace' and the need for peace is very strong. This may sound paradoxical because it is often the religious Jews who are the most outspoken anti-peace faction in Israel. Many Israelis have lost relatives in the wars, and the people long for the day when it will no longer be necessary for every Israeli boy to join the army for at least three years and every Israeli girl for at least two. Unfortunately, there are still many who do not see the need for peace. For example, the majority of the Russian immigrants are against giving back the Golan Heights to Syria. To them the mere idea of giving back land is very strange. This is different from mainstream Israelis.

*Participant:* Why should the Palestinians allow the Israelis to benefit more than they do in the peace process?

*Dr. Kimche:* A large number of Israelis would say this exactly the other way around: "Why are we going to allow the Palestinians to benefit more than we do? Why should we give back tangible things like land for the sake of something we actually have already?" One must understand that people are living fairly well in Israel, even without the peace. We do not have the same problems of road-blocks and things like that. We need security and we have security, not because of peace,

but because we have a strong army. Consequently, many Israelis feel that the Arab neighbors are benefiting more. The truth is that both sides are going to benefit, because peace is a win-win situation.

Peace will ease the Palestinians' situation because they will be living in their own state. With regard to the settlements, it is a tragedy that many Israelis are prisoners of the settlement policy. However, everything must be viewed in perspective. Although settlement activity may be increasing at the moment, with the advent of a Palestinian state some of the settlements will have to be disbanded, others will have to live under Palestinian law, and the rest will have to become a part of Israel. In other words, there is a solution and I hope in September a capable PA will enable you to develop a strong dynamic country next to Israel, and that we will live in peace and cooperation.

While there is no ideal complete solution under which everybody can live happily ever after, there has been a gradual move forward towards a solution. With regard to the refugees, for instance, there is no possible way that all the Palestinians who want to return will be able to do so. It is a physical impossibility, which most Palestinian leaders understand and accept. Thus, there has to be a different solution, beginning with the removal of refugees from camps. It is a great shame that the refugee camps have remained for so many years despite the enormous wealth of the Arab world. Israel certainly has a responsibility to help find a solution for the Palestinian refugees.

The majority of Israelis want peace and understand that in order to get there they have to give back territory. What I beg of you, as Palestinians, is to not be influenced by the extremists among the Jewish people whom you see on television. They make a lot of noise, but they are a minority and not representative of all Israelis. The majority of Israelis feel revulsion for the extremists among the settlers, especially for those in Hebron. The strongest element of Israeli society is still the secular element.

# Appendices

*Appendix A:*

Israel at a Glance

*Appendix B:*

Lecture Program and  
Palestinian Participants



# APPENDIX : Israel at a Glance<sup>1</sup>

## Geography

**Location:** Middle East, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Egypt and Lebanon

**Geographic coordinates:** 31 30 N, 34 45 E

**Area:** - total: 20,770 sq km

- land: 20,330 sq km

- water: 440 sq km

**Land boundaries:** total: 1,006 km

**Border countries:** Egypt 255 km, Gaza Strip 51 km, Jordan 238 km, Lebanon 79 km, Syria 76 km, West Bank 307 km

**Coastline:** 273 km

**Maritime claims:** - continental shelf: to depth of exploitation

- territorial sea: 12 nm

**Climate:** temperate; hot and dry in desert areas

**Terrain:** Negev desert in the south; low coastal plain; central mountains; Jordan Rift Valley

**Elevation extremes:** - lowest: Dead Sea -408 m

- highest: Har Meron 1,208m

**Natural resources:** copper, phosphates, bromide, potash, clay, sand, sulfur, asphalt, manganese, little natural gas and crude oil

**Land use:** - arable land: 17%

- permanent crops: 4%

- permanent pastures: 7%

- forests and woodland: 6%

- other: 66% (1993 est.)

**Irrigated land:** 1,800 sq km (1993 est.)

**Natural hazards:** sandstorms during spring and summer

**Environment - current issues:** limited arable land and natural fresh water resources pose serious constraints; desertification; air pollution from industrial & vehicle emissions; ground-water pollution from industrial and domestic waste, chemical fertilizers, and pesticides

**Environment - international agreements:** party to: Bio-diversity, Climate Change, Desertification, Endangered Species, Ship Pollution, Ozone Layer Protection, Nuclear Test Ban, Hazardous Wastes, Wetlands; signed, but not ratified: Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Marine Life Conservation

**Geography - note:** there are 216 Israeli settlements and civilian land use sites in the West Bank, 42 in the Golan Heights, 24 in the Gaza Strip, and 29 in East Jerusalem (Aug. 1998 est.)

## People

**Population:** 5,749,760 (July 1999 est.)

**Note:** incl. about 166,000 settlers in the West Bank, 6,000 in Gaza, 19,000 in the Golan, and 176,000 in East Jerusalem (Aug. 1998 est.)

**Age structure:** (in years; 1999 est.)

- 0-14: 28% (m: 822,192; f: 783,905)

- 15-64: 62% (m: 1,792,062; f: 1,783,755)

- 65 +years: 10% (m: 244,438; f: 323,408)

**Population growth rate:** 1.81%

**Birth rate:** 19.83 births/1,000 pop.

**Death rate:** 6.16 deaths/1,000 pop.

**Net migration:** 4.42 migrant(s)/1,000 pop

**Sex ratio:** - at birth: 1.05 male(s)/female

- under 15 yrs: 1.05 male(s)/female

- 15-64 yrs: 1 male(s)/female

- 65+ yrs: 0.76 male(s)/female

- total pop.: 0.99 male(s)/female

**Infant mortality rate:** 7.78 deaths/1,000 live births

**Life expectancy at birth:** - total pop: 78.61 years

- male: 76.71 years

- female: 80.61 years

**Total fertility rate:** 2.68 children born/woman

**Nationality:** noun: Israeli(s); adjective: Israeli

**Ethnic groups:** Jewish 80.1% (Europe/US-born 32.1%, Israel-born 20.8%, Africa-born 14.6%, Asia-born 12.6%), non-Jewish 19.9% (mostly Arab) (1996 est.)

**Religions:** Judaism 80.1%, Islam 14.6% (mostly Sunni Muslim), Christian 2.1%, other 3.2% (1996 est.)

**Languages:** Hebrew (official), Arabic used officially for Arab minority, English most commonly used foreign language

**Literacy:** (age 15+ able to read and write)

- total population: 95%

- male: 97%

- female: 93% (1992 est.)

## Government

**Country name:**

conventional long form: State of Israel

conventional short form: Israel

local long form: Medinat Yisra'el

local short form: Yisra'el

**Government type:** republic

**Capital:** **Note:** Israel proclaimed Jerusalem as its capital in 1950, but the US, like nearly all other countries, maintains its Embassy in Tel Aviv

**Administrative divisions:** six districts (mehozot): Central, Northern, Southern, Tel Aviv, Haifa, Jerusalem

**Independence:** 14 May 1948 (from British Mandate)

<sup>1</sup> Source: World Fact Book 1999; figures are 1999 estimates unless otherwise stated.

*National holiday:* Independence, 14 May 1948; (since the Jewish calendar is lunar the holiday may occur in April or May)

*Constitution:* no formal constitution; some of the functions of a constitution are filled by the Declaration of Establishment (1948), the basic laws of the parliament, and the Israeli citizenship law

*Legal system:* mixture of English common law, British Mandate regulations, and, in personal matters, Jewish, Christian and Muslim legal systems; in Dec. 1985, Israel informed the UN Secretariat that it would no longer accept compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

*Suffrage:* 18 years of age; universal

*Executive branch:*

- chief of state: President Ezer WEIZMAN elected by the Knesset for a 5-year term;
- head of govt.: Prime Minister Ehud BARAK elected by popular vote for a 4-year term
- cabinet: selected from and approved by the Knesset

*Legislative branch:* unicameral parliament (Knesset) with 120 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms

*Judicial branch:* Supreme Court, appointed for life by the president

*International organization participation:* BSEC (observer), CCC, CE (obs.), CERN (obs.), EBRD, ECE, FAO, IADB, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC, ICFTU, IDA, IFAD, IFC, ILO, IMF, IMO, Inmarsat, Intelsat, Interpol, IOC, IOM, ISO, ITU, OAS (obs.), OPCW, OSCE (partner), PCA, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNIDO, UPU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO, WTrO

*Flag description:* white with a blue hexagram (six-pointed linear star) known as the Magen David (Shield of David) centered between two equal horizontal blue bands near the top and bottom edges of the flag

## Economy

*Overview:* Technologically advanced market economy with substantial government participation; depends on imports of crude oil, grains, raw materials, and military equipment. Despite limited natural resources, Israel has intensively developed its agricultural and industrial sectors and is largely self-sufficient in food production. Diamonds, high-technology equipment and agricultural products are leading exports. Current account deficits are covered by large transfer payments from abroad and by foreign loans. Roughly half of the government's external debt is owed to the US, which is its major source of economic and military aid. The influx of Jewish immigrants from the former

USSR added scientific and professional expertise of substantial value, which, coupled with the opening of new markets at the end of the Cold War, energized Israel's economy.

*GDP:* (1998 est.)

- purchasing power parity - \$101.9 billion
- real growth rate: 1.9%
- per capita: ppp - \$18,100
- composition by sector:
  - agriculture: 2%
  - industry: 17%
  - services: 81% (1997 est.)

*Household income or consumption by percentage share:*

- lowest 10%: 2.8%
- highest 10%: 26.9% (1992)

*Inflation rate (consumer prices):* 5.4% (1998 est.)

*Labor force:* 2.3 million (1997)

- by occupation: public services 31.2%, manufacturing 20.2%, finance and business 13.1%, commerce 12.8%, construction 7.5%, personal & other services 6.4%, transport, storage & communications 6.2%, agriculture, forestry & fishing 2.6% (1996)

*Unemployment rate:* 8.7% (1998 est.)

*Budget:* - revenues: \$55 billion

- expenditures: \$58 billion

*Industries:* food processing, diamond cutting/polishing, textiles and apparel, chemicals, metal products, military/transport/electrical equipment, potash mining, high-technology electronics, tourism

*Industrial production growth rate:* 5.4% (1996)

*Electricity:* -production: 28.035 bill kWh (1996)

-consumption: 27.725 bill kWh (1996)

*Agriculture:* products: citrus, vegetables, cotton; beef, poultry, dairy products

*Exports:* - \$22.1 billion (f.o.b., 1998)

- commodities: machinery, equipment, cut diamonds, chemicals, metals, agricultural products, textiles and apparel
- partners: US 32%, UK, Hong Kong, Benelux, Japan, Netherlands (1997)

*Imports:* - \$26.1 billion (f.o.b., 1998)

- commodities: raw materials, investment goods, military equipment, oil, rough diamonds, consumer goods
- partners: US 19%, Benelux 12%, Germany 9%, UK 8%, Italy 7%, Switzerland 6% (1997)

*Debt—external:* \$18.7 billion (1997)

*Economic aid—recipient:* \$1.241 billion (1994); [note: \$1.2 billion from the US in 1997].

*Currency:* 1 new Israeli shekel (NIS) = 100 agorot

*Fiscal year:* calendar year (since 1 Jan. 1992)

## **Communications**

*Telephones:* 2.6 million (1996)

*Radios:* 2.25 million (1993 est.)

*TV broadcast stations:* 24 (in addition, there are 31 low-power repeaters - 1997)

*Televisions:* 1.5 million (1993 est.)

## **Transportation**

*Railways:* total: 610 km

*Highways:* total: 15,464 km (1997 est.)

*Pipelines:* crude oil 708 km; petroleum products 290 km; natural gas 89 km

*Ports and harbors:* Ashdod, Ashqelon, Eilat, Hadera, Haifa, Tel Aviv/Jaffa

*Merchant marine:*

- total: 23 ships (1,000 GRT or over) totaling 736,419 GRT/855,497 DWT
- ships by type: cargo 1, container 21, roll-on/roll-off cargo 1 (1998 est.)

*Airports:* 54 (1998 est.)

- with paved runways: total: 31

*Heliports:* 2 (1998 est.)

## **Military**

*Military branches:* Israel Defense Forces (air, ground, naval), Pioneer Fighting Youth (Nahal), Frontier Guard, Chen (women)

*Military manpower:*

- military age: 18 years of age
- availability: males age 15-49: 1,474,046  
females age 15-49: 1,439,569
- fit for service: males (15-49): 1,206,320  
females (15-49): 1,173,818
- reaching military age annually: m: 50,737  
f: 48,546

*Military expenditures:* \$8.7 billion (9.5% of GDP)

## Lecture Program

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### DAY ONE: Monday, 10 April 2000

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- 8:30-9:00 Opening Remarks and Orientation  
**DR. MAHDI ABDUL HADI**, *Head of PASSIA*
- 9:00-10:30 Origins of Political Concepts and the Zionist Movement (Pre-1948)  
**PROF. SHLOMO AVINERI**, *Department of Political Science, Hebrew University, Jerusalem*
- 10:30-11:00 Coffee Break
- 11:00-13:00 Social Cleavages and Political Parties  
**DR. BENYAMIN NEUBERGER**, *Head, Democracy Studies Graduate Program, Open University of Israel, Tel Aviv*
- 13:00-14:30 Lunch
- 14:30-15:45 Zionists and the Palestinians under the British Mandate  
**TOM SEGEV**, *Correspondent, Ha'aretz*
- 15:45-16:00 Coffee Break
- 16:00-17:15 The Creation of Israel, the War of 1948 and Early Institution-Building  
**PROF. MOSHE LISSAK**, *Department of Sociology, Hebrew University, Jerusalem*

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### DAY TWO: Tuesday, 11 April 2000

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- 9:00-10:30 Arab-Israeli Wars and Peace, 1948-1987 - A Critical Israeli Point of View  
**DR. RON PUNDIK**, *Director, Economic Cooperation Foundation, Tel Aviv*
- 10:30-11:00 Coffee Break
- 11:00-13:00 The Political System in Israel (I): Leadership, Parties, Pressure Groups  
**PROF. MENACHEM HOFNUNG**, *Department of Political Science, Hebrew University, Jerusalem*
- 13:00-14:30 Lunch
- 14:30-15:45 Participant Assignments  
**PARTICIPANTS**

15:45-16:00 Coffee Break

16:00-17:15 The Political System in Israel (II): Government, Knesset and Law-Making  
**NAOMI CHAZAN**, *Member of the Knesset*

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### DAY THREE: Wednesday, 12 April 2000

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- 9:00-11:00 The Israeli Economy  
**DR. PAUL RIVLIN**, *Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv*
- 11:00-11:30 Coffee Break
- 11:30-13:00 The Military & Security Establishment  
**DR. YORAM PERI**, *Faculty of Social Sciences, Hebrew University, Jerusalem*
- 13:00-14:30 Lunch
- 14:30-15:45 The Histradut and Other Labor Institutions  
**DR. URI DAVIS**, *Chairman, Al-Beit: Association for the Defense of Human Rights in Israel.*
- 15:45-16:00 Coffee Break
- 16:00-17:15 Israeli Society and Religion: Ethnic Groups, Identity and Nationalism  
**RABBI DAVID ROSEN**, *Director-General of the Anti-Defamation League, Jerusalem, and its representative at the Vatican*

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### DAY FOUR: Thursday, 13 April 2000

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- 9:00-10:30 Israeli Society Towards a Mediterranean Identity  
**DR. DAVID OHANA**, *The Van Leer Institute, Jerusalem*
- 10:30-11:00 Coffee Break
- 11:00-13:00 The Palestinian-Arab Minority in Israel  
**DR. SAID ZEEDANI**, *Al-Quds University, Jerusalem*
- 13:00-14:30 Lunch



# Palestinian Participants

- 14:30-15:45 The Israeli Lobby and US-Israeli Relations  
**COLETTE AVITAL**, *Member of the Knesset, Jerusalem*
- 15:45-16:00 Coffee Break
- 16:00-17:15 Israel's International Relations: The US, Europe and International Organizations  
**DR. SHLOMO ARONSON**, *Department of Political Science, Hebrew University, Jerusalem*

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## DAY FIVE: Friday, 14 April 2000

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- 9:00-11:00 Israeli Politics: From the Intifada to the Peace Process  
**DR. ASHER SUSSEER**, *Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv*
- 11:00-11:30 Coffee Break
- 11:30-13:00 Israel and the Middle East Peace Process (different negotiation tracks: Palestine; Syria/Lebanon)  
**DR. MOSHE MAOZ**, *Institute of Asian and African Studies, Hebrew University, Jerusalem*
- 13:00-14:30 Lunch
- 14:30-15:45 Israel's Future in the Region: Conflict or Cooperation?  
**DAVID KIMCHE**, *President of the Israel Council for Foreign Relations*
- 15:45-16:00 Coffee Break
- 16:00-17:15 Wrap up  
with **DR. MAHDI ABDUL HADI**

### **ABU AMSHA, Muin**

- \*1957, Beit Hanoun; living and working in Gaza
- Diploma, Education; BA English Literature, Zagazig University
  - Teacher of English Language, Abed El-Fattah Hmoud Secondary School, Gaza

### **ABU AWAD, Iyad Abdulleh**

- \*1972, Gaza; living and working in Gaza
- Diploma, Accountancy; BA, English Literature, Al-Azhar University, Gaza
  - Finance Assistant 'A', UNRWA HQ, Gaza

### **ABU SHAMSEYEH, Abdel Halim**

- \*1966, Jerusalem; living and working in Jerusalem
- MA, Middle East Politics - Jerusalem Studies, University of Exeter
  - International Relations Department, Orient House, Jerusalem (in charge of the Israeli file)

### **BAKER, Samar**

- \*1973, Gaza; living and working in Gaza
- BA, Architecture, Birzeit University
  - Planner, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

### **EL-BAKRI, Tareq**

- \*1971, Jerusalem, living and working in Jerusalem
- BA in Business Administration, American University, Cairo; MA, Peace and Development, Goteborg University
  - Program Coordinator, International Peace and Cooperation Center

### **BATARSEH, Aline**

- \*1977, Jerusalem; living and working in Jerusalem
- BA, Communication Studies and Peace Studies, Gustavus Adolphus College
  - Communications Assistant, World Vision, Jerusalem

### **DILIANI, Dimitri**

- \*1973, Jerusalem; living in Jerusalem, working in Ramallah
- B.Sc., Human Resources, Uppsala College; MA, Finance/ Economics, Fairleigh Dickinson University
  - Director of Administration and Development, Institute of Modern Media, Al-Bireh

**DWEIK, Ammar**

- \*1972, Hebron, living and working in Ramallah
- BA, Law, Al-Yarmouk University; Diploma, Police Science, Police Academy in Cairo; MA, Birzeit University
- Advocate, Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights (PICCR), Ramallah

**DWEMA, Rami**

- \*1977, Gaza, living and working in Gaza
- BA, English Literature, Al-Azhar University, Gaza
- Managing Editor, Palestine Post, Gaza

**HAMMAD, Suzanne**

- \*1971, Kuwait; living and working in Amman, originally from Nablus
- BA, Sociology, American University, Cairo; MA, Social Policy and Administration, University of Nottingham
- Social Work specialist, UNRWA Headquarters

**AL-HASAN, Hana**

- \*1973, Nablus; living in Nablus, working in Ramallah
- BA, Languages, University of Jordan; MA, Management of Economic Systems, Université de Bourgogne
- Head, Projects and International Relations, Ministry of Education

**HMAID, Suzan**

- \*1975, Gaza, living and working in Gaza
- BA, English Literature, Al-Azhar University, Gaza
- Secretary, Thalassemia and Homophilia Center, Palestine Avenir Association

**IJLA, Akram**

- \*1968, Gaza, living in Gaza and working in Ramallah and Gaza
- BA, Architecture; MA, Urban and Regional Planning, An-Najah National University
- Director, PLO spokesperson office (President's Office), Gaza

**JADALLAH, Ahmad**

- \*1977, Nablus; living and working in Nablus
- BA, Business Administration, An-Najah University, Nablus
- Strategic Planner, Aswaq Advertising & Marketing Consultancy Co.

**KADOUIM, Adel**

- \*1962, Gaza; living and working in Gaza
- B.Sc., Zoology, Rutgers University, Associate, Essex College
- Director, Islamic Relief Worldwide, Gaza

**KAWASMI, Hazem**

- \*1965, Jerusalem; living in Jerusalem, working in Ramallah
- B.Sc., Science, Yarmouk University; Diploma, MA, International Business, Birmingham University

**EL-MASHHARAWI, Iyad**

- \*1974, Gaza; living and working in Gaza
- Higher Diplomas, English Literature; BA, English Literature and Education, College of Education
- Coordinator, Assessment Department, Ministry of Higher Education

**YOUNIS, Imad**

- \*1955, Beit Sahour, living and working in Beit Sahour
- B.Sc. Information Science and Business Management, Northeastern Ill. University; MA, Computer Science, Depaul University, Chicago, Ill.