

Tables

Table 1: The Big Project Investments in the Palestinian Territories (US\$ million)

Investment	1994	1995	1996	1997
Investment in the West Bank	12.8	9.4	96.6	54.3
Investment in Jerusalem*	5	5	5	6
Investment in Gaza	30.8	48.1	19.1	21.4
Big Project Investments	48.6	62.5	120.7	81.7
GDP at Market Prices US\$	3048.045	3564.928	3890.037	4031.466
Percentage of GDP	1.6	1.7	3.1	2

Source: Ministry of Economy and Trade

* Estimation from my survey in Jerusalem conducted in June 1998

Table 2: Investment by Sectors (US\$ million)

Sector	1994	1994-1995	1994-1996	1994-1997
Industry	10.547	31.883	76.652	62.181
Percentage	29.2	55.4	44.3	28.7
Agriculture	0	0.620	1.480	0.5
Percentage	0	1.1	0.9	0.2
Tourism	2.510	5.442	45.705	41.524
Percentage	7.0	9.5	26.4	19.2
Construction	16.1	9.778	20.770	16.094
Percentage	44.6	17.0	12.0	7.4
Service	6.950	9.778	28.254	96.451
Percentage	19.2	17.0	16.3	44.5
Total	36.107	57.501	172.861	216.750
Percentage	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Ministry of Economy and Trade

Table 3: Industrial Projects in West Bank

Project	Declared Capital	Declared Foreign Portion	Nationality of Investor
Mill Flour Arab Co.	761	33%	Jordanian
Medical Boxes & Bottling Factory	180	100%	Jordanian
Miyamin Co. for Marble & Investment	300	33%	Jordanian
Co. for Marble Cutting & Polishing	9561	50%	Jordanian
Ready-Made Clothing Co.	2480	33%	American
Food Processing Factory	4500	50%	Saudi
Co. for Iron Manufacturing	223	100%	Jordanian
Factory for Electronic Circuit Boards	145	100%	Jordanian
Co. for School Bags	79	75%	German
Co. For storage of Vegetables	225	33%	Jordanian
Factory for Stone and Marble Polishing	200	49%	Italian
Co. for the Production of Textile and Leather	110	50%	Jordanian
Co. for Marble	350	50%	Jordanian
Storage of Vegetables	250	100%	Jordanian
Factory for Electric Lamps	915	100%	American
Factory for Plastics	188.7	100%	Jordanian
Factory for Animal Feed	574.8	75%	Jordanian
Factory for Building Stone	100	50%	Brazilian
Sand Mining	1170.1	25%	Kafr Qasem
Factory for Water Pipes	1200	100%	Jordanian
Factory for Juice	4519	100%	American
Factory for the Production of Films for Printing	140	100%	Jordanian
Brick Factory	282.3	100%	Jordanian
Factory for Milk Production	220	50%	Jordanian
Factory for Storage of Vegetables	200	100%	Jordanian

Garment factory	102.3	100%	Egyptian
Production of Stone and Marble	112.8	50%	Jordanian
Factory for Galvanization and Painting of Metals	128.4	100%	Egyptian
Factory for Gifts	133.7	100%	Egyptian
Ceramics	386	50%	Jordanian
Brick Factory	208	100%	Jordanian
Pharmaceutical Products Factory	3157	50%	Lebanese
Food Processing Factory	810	33%	Jordanian
Factory for Plastics	1367.2	100%	Jordanian
Cement Production Factory	200	100%	Jordanian
Factory for Satellite Equipment	1700	100%	American

Source: Ministry of Economy and Trade

Table 4: Employment Due to Investment in 1997

Sector	Volume of Investment (US\$ million)	No. of Employees
Industry	62.181	1434
Percentage	28.7%	45.1
Agriculture	0.5	10
Percentage	0.2%	0.3
Tourism	41.524	548
Percentage	19.2%	17.2
Construction	16.094	189
Percentage	7.4%	5.9
Service	96.451	1002
Percentage	44.5%	31.5
Total	216.750	3183
Percentage	100%	100%

Source: Ministry of Economy and Trade

Table 5: Investments by Three Largest Diaspora Holding Companies (US\$ million)

Holding Companies	Investment During 3 Years	Investment in 1996	Investment in 1997
PADICO (without PALTEL)*	134*	44.66	44.66
APIC	15.5	5.166	5.166
Salam International	7		7
Total	156.5	49.826	56.826

* Investment without PALTEL (PADICO invested in PALTEL US\$16 million in 1996 and again in 1997)

Table 6: Palestinian Diaspora Contribution to Investment (US\$ million)

Type of Investment	1996	1997
Investment from diaspora	134.3	114
Transfers for Family & Relatives for Construction	169.5	197.1
Total	303.8	311.1

Table 7: Total Financial Contribution of the Palestinian Diaspora (US\$ million)

Total Contribution	1996	1997
Total Investment	303.8	311.1
Expenses of Diaspora Visiting Palestine	96.4	90.9
Philanthropic Aid - Welfare Association	3.806	4.211
Philanthropic Aid - Other Associations	4.0	4.0
Total Contribution of the Diaspora	408.006	410.211
Donors' Foreign Aid	549.414	432.259

15 September 1998

The Challenges of Civil Society in Jerusalem: An Israeli Perspective

Speaker: Professor Shimon Shetreet, Religion for Peace Organization (RPO), West Jerusalem

Participants: Mr. Christian F. Jouret, French Consulate General; Mr. Benoit Guérin, French Consulate General; Professor Akiba Cohen; Rabbi Naftali Rothenberg; Rabbi Josef Harel; Mr. Yousef Al-Herimi, Professor, Al-Quds University; Sheikh Abdel Salam Abu Shkeidem, Deputy Assistant, Waqf Ministry; Dr. Mustafa Abu Sway, Professor, Al-Quds University; Sheikh Jamil Hamami, Researcher, Al-Quds University; Mr. Michael Heyd, Professor, Hebrew University; Mr. Jawad Boulos, Advocate; Mr. Danny Sapir, Religion for Peace Organization; Mr. Fadi Khamash,

Researcher; Dr. Said Zeidani, University Professor; Dr. Mohammed Jadallah, Physician; Ms. Myriam Rashid, Researcher; Mr. Ahmad-Hashem Az-Zughayar, PLC Member; Ms. Conny Mayer, American Consulate General; Mr. Zakaria Al-Qaq, IPCRI; Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi, Head of PASSIA; Ms. Deniz Altayli, Research Director at PASSIA; Ms. Sawsan Baghdadi, Project Assistant, PASSIA; Ms. Ubah Hersi, Intern at PASSIA.

Dr. Abdul Hadi: We at PASSIA are always pleased to receive people with open minds and hearts who are seriously interested in finding a way for Palestinians and Israelis to share the future together. Today, you will be telling us a little bit about the Israeli society in West Jerusalem, a subject about which we are ignorant. We know about the Labor, Likud, Netanyahu's stubbornness and the Israeli right-wing position, but we do not really know much about inter-politics in Israel today. I welcome you and your friends and colleagues who have traveled from the other part of the city, and I hope to learn from your ideas and your experiences concerning who the Israelis are today in West Jerusalem and why they are so divided.

I would urge you, however, not to use this meeting to talk about the Israeli elections, which do not concern us; we have never been part of the elections, and this is still an occupied territory. I am sure that as always you will be very provocative and very open, and I hope that in the future we will receive a Palestinian academic or activist to tell us how he sees the East Jerusalem society today in relationship to the rest of the Palestinian house, just as you will hopefully project your opinion concerning how the Israeli society in West Jerusalem compares to the general Israeli society.

Prof. Shimon Shetreet: I will say a few words in Arabic and then switch to English. I am very happy to be here once again to exchange views and to present to you the current situation within the Israeli society, including the current challenges and future challenges, not to mention the positions of the various sectors *vis-à-vis* the Jewish religion and its influence on Israeli society. I hope that my coming here to PASSIA will benefit us all; knowledge is the source of understanding whilst ignorance is the source of hate, and if we are hoping to understand each other, we must continue this exchange.

According to the established meaning of the concept 'civil society', civil society means commitment to democracy, human rights, and a structure of liberal values that assume freedom, equality, a rule of law, access to courts, and an independent judiciary.

Every society faces its own unique challenges in keeping up with the requirements of civil society. In the Israeli society, in terms of the issue of an independent judiciary and access to the courts, the standards are high. There is of course a controversy with regard to the scope of the courts in Israel, according to which some people complain that every single issue could eventually arrive on the doorstep of the court. Whether or not the court will actually intervene is an entirely different subject, but in general, every person and every organization can claim to have the right to bring a matter for adjudication in the court. In recent years, however, the religious sectors have been attacking the Supreme Court of Israel on grounds that it intervenes in religious matters, which they consider should remain in the hands of politicians and policy-makers, not those of adjudicators. These attacks, in my opinion, have had chilling effects on the independence of the judiciary. The closing down of Bar Ilan Street here in Jerusalem is one example, in my opinion, where the court tried not to adjudicate; it suggested the establishment of a committee, but the failure of the committee to find a solution resulted in the matter being returned to the jurisdiction of the courts. Generally speaking, the Israeli judiciary is independent and its standards are acceptable in international thinking and analysis.

The Israeli society has been in conflict over the last century with the Arab World in general, and with the Palestinian society in particular, which has had an impact on what we refer to as the concept of civil society. This conflict has, for example, limited the rights of Israeli citizens in the sense that national security considerations are used to justify the government's limitation of the rights of every citizen. Examples include forcing each Israeli to go to the army, or preventing certain people, particularly Arabs, from working in certain areas. When we talk about civil society, we can say that one of the great challenges of the Israeli society is to develop an attitude toward security considerations whereby the issue is regarded not as a holy cow, but as an ordinary matter; one that is subject to public scrutiny, public debate and when necessary judiciary review.

Over the last fifty years, the idea of security considerations as something that no one could challenge or question, whether in private, in the press, in parliament or in the courts, has gradually faded. I would say that this development began in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War when Israelis realized that the Israeli military establishment could fail,

that the military intelligence analysis could fail, and that preparedness could also fail and therefore, the concept that some things are beyond public criticism or investigation collapsed. From that point on, security considerations were subjected to the type of investigation and review that other subjects were subjected to, and Israeli society was able, more or less, to overcome the weakness of not being sufficiently self-confident to review matters of national security.

Unfortunately, whereas the approach to human rights and democratic values in the civil society context underwent a positive change, the approach to religion and the impact of religion on what we call civil society is a different matter. Event today, both the approach and the impact continue to be the focal point of problems, particularly in Jerusalem.

Using as a basis the statistical analysis that I believe is representative of the generally accepted view in terms of the distribution of the Jewish population, I would say that the Israeli society is composed as follows:

- About four percent of the total Israeli population is Ultra-Orthodox.

1. About twelve percent of the population define themselves as religious.
2. Forty percent or so define themselves as traditional.
3. Over forty percent define themselves as secular.

In Jerusalem, however, the figures are different: of the total Jewish population in the city, twenty-seven percent are *Haradim*, about fifteen to twenty percent define themselves as religious, and about thirty percent define themselves as secular, while the rest define themselves as traditional. However, one has to bear in mind that adult *Haradim* over the age of eighteen make up only seventeen percent of the twenty-seven percent total figure of *Haradim*, which means that it will not be long before the *Haradim* represent a much higher percentage of the total population.

What are the differences among these three or four groups? First of all, the *Haradim* and the religious are not the same, with the former distinguishing themselves from the latter in many ways. First of all, ideologically the *Haradim* do not recognize the State of Isra. According to the *Halachic* view, they take part in parliament, they vote, they participate in the life of the state, etc, but they believe it is too early to establish renewed sovereignty, which, according to their interpretation of the *Halacha*, should only occur when the Messiah comes. They believe that by creating a state of renewed sovereignty, we are challenging the divine order, and therefore, they do not see the flag in the same way as the religious do.

The religious, on the other hand, have found a *Halachic* way to recognize and accept the State of Israel and the flag even from a normative point of view. *Shas*, for example, is a totally unique creation in terms of political, sociological and *Halachic* definitions. Its members call themselves not *Haradim* but *Ohaveh Hasher*, or *Ovedeh Hasher*, terms used by Rabbi Ovadi Yosef meaning 'the works of God' or 'the lovers of God'. Yosef himself recognizes the State of Israel, and about six months ago he responded to a question by saying that there is a certain prayer said on one of the holidays – perhaps Independence Day – that confirms this recognition. We can say, therefore, that there are ideological differences between the various religious parties concerning the expression of the *Halachic* point of view.

Now, the four percent actually have a great deal of power because many of the traditional vote, for example, for *Shas*. Their approach towards religion - the way they dress, the way they behave, and what they do on *Shabat* – allows us to classify them as traditional, yet they vote for *Shas*, especially those who came from North African and Middle Eastern countries. Nevertheless, in terms of their approach and attitude towards religion they are in fact traditional. What is traditional? Religious people follow the rules of religion and abide by the commandments, but politically they recognize the State of Israel and ideologically they do not accept the point of view of the *Haradim*. The traditional Jews are those who are usually referred to by other Jews as the ones who go to the synagogue on Saturday and then take the car and drive to the football stadium. I would stress here that they are Orthodox Jews; they go to Orthodox synagogues and their rabbis are Orthodox rabbis. In the past, they came mainly from Middle Eastern and North African countries, but today there are many non-*Sephardi*, that is *Ashkenazi* people who also behave similarly. They go to the synagogue, they keep kosher, they build a *sukka*, they light the candle, they say *Kiddush* on Friday night, but they drive on Saturday.

So, this is the sociological division. The challenge now facing Israeli society and the state itself is how to balance the fact that there is commitment towards the religious characteristic of the state against the requirements of democracy and human rights, which is civil society. One major problem today concerns marriage and those people who cannot marry in religious marriages, and yet have the right to marry - particularly if they come from Russia and are not 'full' Jews, particularly if they are foreign workers and have been here for many years and need to marry. There is also the

problem of burials. Most burial societies are religious, so what should happen when someone who was born a non-Jew or whose 'Jewishness' is doubtful according to the *Halacha* dies? How can he be buried in a respectful manner? When I was Minister of Religious Affairs and the influx of Jews from Russia began, there was more than one case where a dead person remained in hospital for a week or more until we could come to some agreement over the burial arrangements, which totally violated the rights of the deceased and his family. Marriage, divorce, kosher food, and religious education: these are the four points where there was some commitment in the agreement between the various sectors, but from my point of view, it should now be modified to make it consistent with the requirements of civil society.

In West Jerusalem, there is an even more acute conflict because of the disproportionate number of *Haradim*. The elections of 1993 gave power to the *Haradim* simply because a high percentage of the *Haradim* voted whereas a high percentage of the secular stayed away, the result being that the *Haradim* secured a number of seats in the City Council that did not reflect the number of *Haradim* living in Israel, or even in Jerusalem. The *Haradim* were thereafter able to use their democratic power - legitimately from their point of view, illegitimately from the point of view of the meaning of democracy, i.e., that the majority takes into account the rights of the minority. In Jerusalem, the minority does not take into account the rights of the majority. Accordingly, the sharing of both power and resources has become unbalanced. In terms of sociological analysis, this is inconsistent with the concept of civil society and one of the major challenges in Jerusalem is how to maintain a civil society in Jerusalem given the demographic structure and the current voting patterns, especially amongst the *Ashkenazi Haradim* who go to vote in droves upon the orders of their rabbis, unlike the secular, who do not belong to structured groups and whose attitude towards voting varies from person to person.

How can we maintain the values associated with democracy and human rights? For some thirteen or fourteen years now, the society for secular or civil burial has been trying to obtain land in the Jerusalem area in order to carry out civil burials, but without success. Even though the Supreme Court issued an order, and even after the issuance of the Alternative Civil Burial Law, a suitable piece of land has not been obtained. The values are there, the normative statements are there and accepted, but the implementation of the values is beyond the power of those who rightfully and justifiably require it because of the fact that the other group uses delay and avoidance tactics in order to prevent implementation. So normatively, there is acceptance of the rights, but in actuality there is a problem.

In conclusion, I will say that there are still complaints with regard to the non-compliance with civil society values in the areas of security, but the main thrust of the argument, more or less, was positively responded to by the Israeli society over the past fifty years. The challenge of responding to the approach of religion and the rights that are adversely affected by religion is something else. The situation in Jerusalem is acute because of the destruction of the social and political equilibrium that took place in recent years, and the challenge today is how to maintain a type of balance or equilibrium that for centuries allowed various religious communities to live together. The same concepts that applied to these communities have to be studied in order to deal with the intra-Jewish relations.

One way in which this issue was dealt with in the past was to develop separate neighborhoods; in the religious areas, keeping *Shabat* is no longer a problem because those wishing to keep *Shabat* were separated from those not prepared to keep *Shabat*, so we ended up with Giva'at Mordachai for the not strictly religious, Arnof and of course Mea Shearim or Ramat Shlomo for the Ultra-Orthodox, and mixed and totally secular areas for the others. Yet still today there are competitions for territory. For fifty years now there have always been struggles over the opening of a pool, as the opening of a pool has always been regarded as a reason for a struggle between the secular and the religious. Opening a new road has always been another reason for a struggle. Jaffa Street, for example, is considered a territorial border between the area that keeps *Shabat* and areas that do not keep it, but now the Ultra-Orthodox are trying their best to demarcate or redemarcate this line. This is the picture of the challenge of the Israeli civil society as I see it today.

Dr. Abdul Hadi: Thank you very much. We will now open the floor for questions and comments but allow me to start by saying that I was at a conference about ten years ago and one of the Israeli scholars, who works with the gover, stood up and said in front of many of the religious leaders of the world that Israel is not a religious state. Is he right or wrong?

Prof. Shetreet: From a normative point of view, Israel has not defined itself as either secular or religious. The French Constitution, for example, says that France is a secular republic, whereas the American Constitution gives no indication as to whether or not the US is religious or secular, and although the Church and State are clearly separated, the new president is sworn in using a Bible.

Dr. Abdul Hadi : Do you see Israel today as a religious state or as a non-religious state?

Prof. Shetreet: No, it is not religious

Dr. Abdul Hadi: Would every Israeli agree with you?

Prof. Shetreet: In my opinion, most people would agree that it is not religious. In my opinion, it is a civil society.

Prof. Akiba Cohen: I understand what Professor Shetreet said. I think that one of the key elements in a civil society is the separation of Church and State and I believe that Israel has failed in this regard. The synagogue does not govern, the Knesset governs, but the Knesset has given the religious institutions certain absolute monopolistic privileges in certain areas of life, such as marriage, divorce and death.

Rabbi Naftali Rothenberg: So the source of the power of religious establishments is a secular law, secular power. The right of all Knesset members, including Arabs, is to define who we are, but the matter is very complicated because the Ultra-Orthodox see the state as a secular state, the secular, of course, see Israel as a secular state, but a part of the national religious group wants to see the state encompass all the spiritual values and theologically they think that the state is a religious state.

Mr. Danny Sapir: I think it is extremely important for the Palestinians to see Israelis in a proper light *and vice versa* because there is a lot of misunderstanding on both sides.

The interesting thing is that the Zionist movement itself, the State of Israel and the establishment of the State of Israel all had religious sources, yet the establishment of the State of Israel was essentially a secular enterprise. The ironic thing is that the religious circles in Israel today regard themselves as those who are upholding the, so to speak, Zionist ideals. In the first generation it was very different, because it was the Labor movement, the predominant movement, that established the State of Israel, which to a large extent was established by people who were non-Orthodox and anti-Orthodox. So, although the issue is very complex, I think it is wrong to regard the State of Israel as the result of a religious movement.

Said Zeidani: I think that Arabs and the *Haradim* are both reluctant to distinguish between the Jews as a people and the Jews as members of a religion. For a long time the Arabs could not understand that someone could be a Jew without being religious, and the same applies to the *Haradim*, many of whom cannot comprehend the idea of someone being a Jew without him being religious in some sense or another.

I think that that you have skipped over some very basic issues, including the contradiction that exists between Israel referring to itself as a democratic state committed to human rights, liberal values and Israel as a Jewish state, according to your sense of Jewishness. That contradiction reflects adversely on the status of Palestinian Arabs inside Israel, because we are not being treated equally, not only because of security problems, but also because of the commitment of Israel to Jewish values and of the discrimination that resulted from that. So, it is not only the conflict between the religious and secular inside Israel, but also the conflict between Arabs and Jews inside Israel and the bias toward everything that is Jewish at the expense of everything that is Arab.

Something else I would like to raise is the fact that Tel Aviv is very close and you see this movement of people between Jerusalem because secular Jews living in Jerusalem feel obliged to go to Tel Aviv to enjoy themselves, because it is so difficult for them to do so in Jerusalem. Since you are running in the elections for Mayor of Jerusalem, I think you should worry about whether or not the Arabs of East Jerusalem - if they take part in the elections - will vote for these liberal, secular Jews or if they will affiliate themselves with the *Haradim* community. I think that it is wrong to assume that the Arabs will vote for Meretz or Shimon Shetreet. If they do so now, it is only because of the absence of peace, not because of your position on social, religious and economic issues. I think you should come to terms with this fact.

Dr. Mustafa Abu Sway: I tend to agree with Said. Arab East Jerusalem is predominantly a Moslem society, and I personally would have much in common with the person who does not want to have, let's say, a casino in Jerusalem or to have nude or semi-nude pictures stuck all over bus stations. It is true that because of the political situation, I am more likely to support the party that really gives me as a Palestinian the maximum rights, but were the situation more 'normal', I think you would see the religious going along with the religious.

I once read that Ben Gurion wrote a letter in 1948 in which he basically assigned a comfort area, a comfort zone for religious institutions. Thus there is a monopoly that was initiated by the secular leadership. It is the secular leadership

that gave the religious institutions a place, a role to play within Israel society, in order to guarantee support for the creation of the State of Israel. If we talk about the *Ashkenazi* and the *Sephardi* Jews and the *Halachic* position towards the blacks - the *koshi* – what can be said about the Ethiopian Jews, knowing that there is such a position towards black people *per se*?

Rabbi Rothenberg: I know nothing about this problem with the blacks.

Dr. Abu Sway: Israel Shahak spoke about this.

Dr. Abdul Hadi: But he is not recognized on this side

Rabbi Rothenberg: He is known, but his ideas do not necessarily reflect the realities.

Dr. Abu Sway: We are not talking about his ideas; he quotes from the Talmud!

Rabbi Rothenberg: May I add only one short note. You are absolutely right about Ben Gurion; later on a decision was made by the national committee and later on by the Knesset in Israel. So, the source is a secular source, but to an even greater extent it is a non-Jewish political source, because the first to establish a Jewish religious establishment was the Turkish Sultan - the *Hanbashi* - first in Istanbul and later on in Israel, in Egypt, Damascus and other places. This is the source of the Chief Rabbinate; the British adopted it and established the Chief Rabbinate in Great Britain, then the relations with Britain were cut and the Chief Rabbinate was made Israeli.

Dr. Abdul Hadi: If the *Haradim* do not recognize the State of Israel or its flag, why do they vote?

Professor Cohen: I think that you need to make a distinction; we are talking about the *Haradim* as if they are one seemingly unified group, which is not the case. You have the Natorei Karta, for example, who do not vote, who do not participate in Israeli politics or anything, and who have their own institutions. Their percentage in the population is very small, but they are the ones we mistakenly often refer to as examples of the way in which the *Haradim* behave.

Then we have the *Agoudat Israel* or *Agouda*, who are members of the *Knesset*, who participate in Israeli politics, and who get more than their fair share when it comes to the allocation of budgets and so on. They do not, for example, serve in the army, whereas members of Shas do, and they do not stand still on Memorial Day when the sirens sound. But they have learned – and I think that this is the critical thing - that the democratic system will work for them and that is why they have adopted it, not least of all because it is the only way they can benefit from the resources that the government has to offer.

Mr. Zakaria Al-Qaq: I conducted many interviews with the late Sheikh Hassan Tahboub who told me that in late 1967 and early 1968, the *Haradim* approached him several times in order to form a kind of alliance and confront the secular on both sides.

Dr. Abdul Hadi: Who exactly are the traditional? If the religious are not the traditional and the *Haradim* are not the traditional and if the secular are not the traditional, who are the traditional?

Prof. Shetreet: The majority.

Dr. Abdul Hadi: But you said that twenty-seven percent are *Haradim* and thirty percent are religious.

Professor Shetreet: I am more optimistic than you appear to be regarding the joining of forces between the civil societies in both parts of the city, because I believe that the traditional Islamic society would follow more or less the moderate, let's say, Moroccan Jewry or Iraqi Jewry or Turkish Jewry that lived within an Islamic society, given that the middle class would be strong enough to maintain certain social and economic rights. Assuming that the Palestinian society has the power to maintain a middle class, its commitment to education, and its commitment to free enterprise gives me hope that the middle class will remain in a position to be the leader of the trend and that the civil societies of both our societies will join together, even after the peace issue is settled.

Dr. Abdul Hadi: In our lifetime?

Prof. Shetreet: Yes, I believe that it will take place in our lifetime because I know what we thought ten years ago; I was in the Rabin government when Rabin shook hands with Arafat, and I know what we talked about in the Labor Party and I know what changes took place. Assuming that we will be able to pass the peace stage, I am hopeful that the civil society on both sides will be able to join with the other and develop a partnership. You asked who is traditional.....I am.

Dr. Abdul Hadi: Define traditional.

Prof. Shetreet: I will give you an example. The people who came to establish the *kibbutzim* at the beginning of the century did not bring with them the Torah, nor did they establish synagogues in the *kibbutzim*, not because of negligence, but because of a conscious decision to revolt against what was considered to be old. These pioneers were consciously secular.

Later on, however, a compromise was reached between the group that was consciously secular and the group that was religious, which resulted in a middle of the road result in matters of religion. What many Palestinians have failed to understand is the dual nature of the Jewish people - that at the same time, there is religion and there is nationality. Many of the things that are accepted by the social consensus in the Israeli society are accepted not as religious matters, but as matters of social heritage. The Jewish religion or the Jewish nationality is color blind - there are black Jews and white Jews and yellow Jews, but the colors do not count. There are, however, problems associated with defining who is a Jew. The Ethiopian Jews were not considered Jews until Rabbi Ovadia Yosef decided that they should be, but the same thing could happen with Jews who are white, and in some cases there would still be a question mark hanging over their 'Jewishness'. But once they are accepted, then there is the nationality aspect and the religious aspect. If you look at Judaism from the dual concept perspective, then you must admit that it can be totally secular, albeit with certain characteristics that could be considered the result of the national heritage of the Jewish people. Many of the things that are maintained from a religious point of view are maintained by social consensus, which is based on the national concept - that is we look at certain things, such as marriage or keeping kosher or *Shabat* because there is national heritage, which is not necessarily religious. This is why you see the traditional going to the synagogue on *Shabat* in the morning, coming back home, praying, resting a little, then taking the keys and driving to the football stadium, and without any fear that they will be expelled from the synagogue the following Saturday.

Why do I say that there are some common patterns of behavior amongst traditional Moslems and traditional Jews, according to which certain patterns of conduct are tolerated? Some Moslems fast and some do not, some drink wine, the majority do not, but nevertheless, those that drink are not expelled from the community. When Jews were expelled in European countries the result was Reform Judaism and Conservative Judaism and look what happened. The unity in the Eastern, Middle Eastern, and North African Jewish communities was a result of the tolerance and this unity was maintained because of the tolerance and not because of the fanaticism. Where there was radicalism and fanaticism, you had divisions, whereas where there was moderation, there was unity. This gives me hope that the traditional community in the Israeli society can serve as the bridge to solve the problem that we are currently facing.

Yousef Al-Harimi: Academically, I would say that many Palestinians would be easily convinced that Israel is a Jewish state rather than a religious one and that there is a need to compromise on this. But when you talk about the layman in the Palestinian state, I do not think that he is fully aware of these divisions amongst the four sectors of Israeli society, and even if he is, he will still believe that there is something like an unleashed Israeli organized policy that is very aggressive, specifically towards the religious sides, especially in Jerusalem. What I am trying to say is yes, probably the State of Israel is not exactly a religious state, but isn't the Israeli policy towards Jerusalem a religious policy, especially when it comes to the infrastructure, services to the Old City etc.? Are you saying that you strongly reject the idea that Israel's policy in Jerusalem and East Jerusalem is a religious policy?

Prof. Shetreet: It has to be recognized that there is inequality. It is a fact of life that when you go from the Talpiot area where it is nicely paved 200 meters down to the area of Jabal Al-Mukaber, you find no pavement, no road, no proper infrastructure. I do not think that the point is to give it a color in terms of conceptual definitions. Is it Jewish or is it religious? I cannot tell you.

Mr. Jawad Boulos: Why didn't the Labor Party finish what is set out to do in 1948 and finish building the civil secular society in Israel? This dual situation that you spoke about - the national and the religious - helped the Labor Party to rely on the religious claims in order to justify so many other claims, such as that of the right to establish the state. The Jews' historical right in this land was, after all, the main claim of those who came here, even though they were secular. Members of the Labor Party never attempted to disconnect themselves from this argument, and it is hard to talk about civil society in Israel unless its members disconnect themselves from this concept. This is on the

ideological level and we can add also the political games - the coalitions – whereby people pushed themselves into the game in order to gain money. Such games will only serve as a barrier in front of developing a real democratic civil society in Israel.

Prof. Shetreet: There could be an Islamic society that is civil but respectful of religion or that uses religion as the basis of certain laws.

Dr. Abdul Hadi: Are you talking about Syria?

Prof. Shetreet: I am not talking necessarily about Syria. I can give examples on the theoretical level without giving a territorial example. This does not make that country illegitimate or in need of change. The fact that Israel is respectful of its national heritage or religious heritage doesn't make it objectionable. The more you can accept that the Israeli society is a civil society in spite of the fact that it has a respect for a certain Jewish heritage, the better it is for understanding. At least we should understand that the word secular is not a magical word for something that is very good. The term civil society is better, in my opinion, if we want to indicate the values we want to exist because France defines itself asecular, but in France a girl who wanted to wear a scarf to school was prevented from doing so. In England, there is no separation between the State and the Church, but there is freedom of religion. In the United States, there is separation, but on the dollar there is "In God We Trust" and in Congress, they start with a prayer. Israel is a secular state according to the ordinary meaning, yet it is also respectful of the Jewish heritage and culture. Does that make it insufficiently secular? No, it doesn't; it is still democratic and there is no contradiction, according to my analysis, if it maintains certain aspects of a national heritage or Jewish heritage. From my perspective, the word secular is something that if misunderstood had and continues to have the potential to erase Judaism from the nature of the State of Israel. Some Western writers looked at Islamic countries in a critical way, which I find unacceptable because there is no one way of democratic style; some countries respect democratic rights and it does not make them less respectful of civil society concepts.

Sheikh Jamil Hamami: Israel is a Jewish religious state – this is not a secret. Mr. Beilin who is from Moledet gave a speech on behalf of the Israeli Government in which he said that he supported the building of the temple where Al-Aqsa Mosque stands now.

According to my understanding, the State of Israel was established on a religious basis and the Zionist movement used religious belief to regroup Jews from all over the world and to bring them to Palestine. Menachem Begin and various other Israeli statesmen always confirmed the fact that they supported the idea of the State of Israel as a Jewish state with a pure Jewish character, and as far as I can see, Israel has done everything it can to remain a religious state.

Prof. Shetreet: The idea is not necessarily that each one of us will agree with the other; the idea is to listen and to learn. I hope that I have been able to convey my optimistic analysis and that we will have the opportunity to meet again. Thank you very much.