
THE PALESTINE POST

STATE OF ISRAEL IS BORN

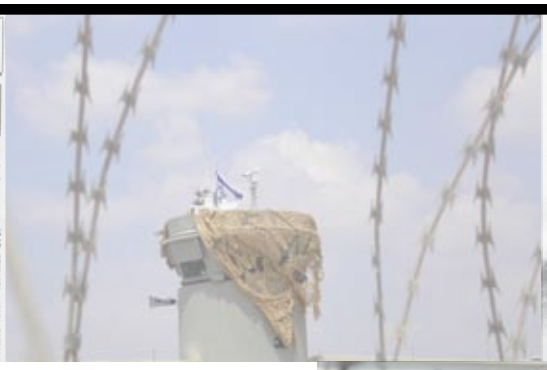
Most Crowded Hours in Palestine's History

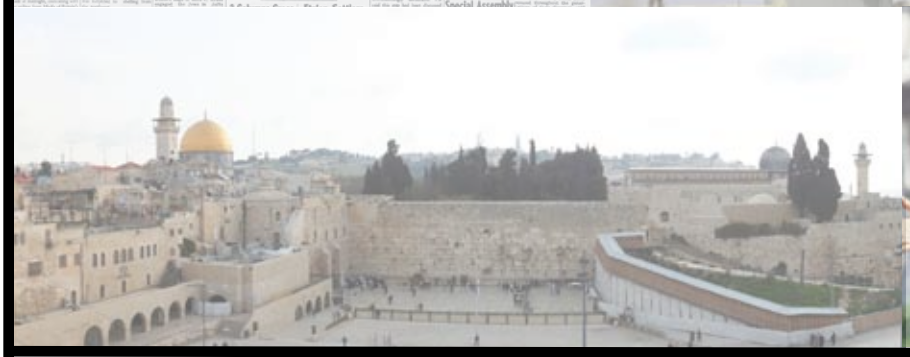
JEWS TAKE OVER SECURITY ZONES

Egyptian Air Force Spitfires Bomb Tel Aviv; One Shot Down

U.S. RECOGNIZES JEWISH STATE

Proclamation by Head Of Government

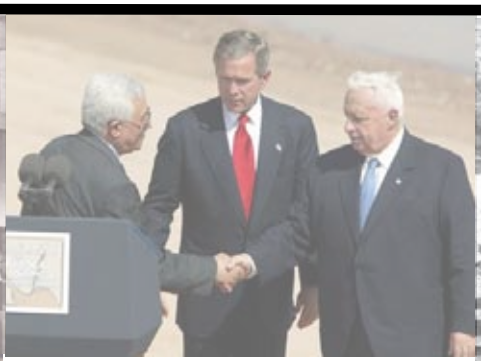


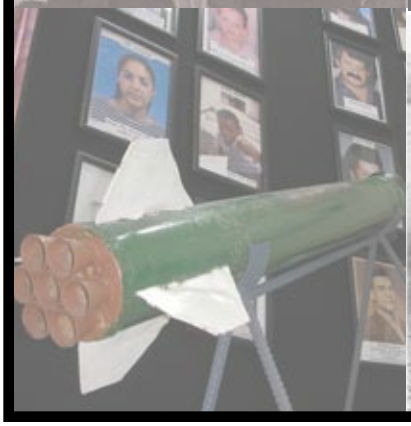


Viewpoints Special Edition

Israel: Growing Pains at 60

The Middle East Institute
Washington, DC





Middle East Institute

The mission of the Middle East Institute is to promote knowledge of the Middle East in America and strengthen understanding of the United States by the people and governments of the region.

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Viewpoints Special Edition

Israel: Growing Pains at 60

Israel: Growing Pains at 60

A Special Edition of *Viewpoints*

IV. Domestic and International Affairs

V. Religion and Society

Maps

Statistics

Preface

Paul Scham

Within a mere few years after World War II the Middle East was remade. The creation of the State of Israel in 1948 and its consequences helped propel that part of the world to what seems to be a permanent and unenviable spot on any list of world crises.

Paul Scham, Adjunct Scholar at MEI, is co-editor of Shared Histories: A Palestinian-Israeli Dialogue *(2005) and formerly a Research Associate at the Truman Institute of Hebrew University, Jerusalem.*

Shortly before that momentous year, two other events of rather lesser moment that have nonetheless had a continuing impact on the Middle East occurred, namely, the establishment of the Middle East Institute in 1947 and Don Peretz's arrival in Palestine the year before, to begin his studies in the then minuscule field of the modern Middle East. The two have been associated for almost the whole time since, both providing an eclectic perspective on the Middle East, but each starting from a very different point. MEI was founded by Arabists (back when the word had some meaning), most of whom had served in the State Department, and some of whom had grown up in the Arab world themselves. Don Peretz, in contrast, was the scion of an old Middle Eastern (Sephardi) Jewish family, whose interest in the region was piqued by his Jewish connection.

Much of Don's work throughout a lifetime of teaching and publications has been dedicated to the Arab-Israeli conflict and its ramifications. What particularly distinguishes his contributions is his hard-headed empathy for both sides — a quality that was (and in some respects still is) rare and refreshing. From almost being tried for espionage by Palestinians in 1948 (when they discovered he was Jewish) to being regarded with suspicion by much of the Jewish establishment for most of his career for being too open to Arab viewpoints, Don has put forward a perspective informed by the conviction that recognition of the real grievances of both sides is essential for successful peacemaking, an insight that is still the key to any possible settlement. MEI is proud to have been associated with Don Peretz through its entire history and his distinguished career.

MEI's contribution has been to provide a forum for responsible, yet widely diverging views through policy-relevant scholarship and education. From its beginnings, and more fully from the 1960s on, *The Middle East Journal* has published Israeli and Israel-oriented scholars on any number of topics related to the country and its issues as part of its mission to cover the entire region. In the last few years, it has hosted as Resident Scholars such distinguished Israeli academics as Moshe Ma'oz and Yoram Peri, while also providing an intellectual home for me when I returned from Israel, as well as for many others.

This collection of essays follows in that tradition by presenting a variety of subjects and viewpoints from a distinguished group of scholars to mark Israel's 60th birthday. Most, quite properly, are directed at issues other than "the conflict," but its presence, of course, informs almost all of them, as it does so many aspects of life in Israel. And, no one could reasonably claim that they represent a limited perspective on anything.

As the field of Middle East scholarship is shaken by political and methodological rifts, and as many academic institutions are establishing separate "Israeli Studies" and "Middle Eastern Studies" institutes, MEI maintains its insistence on providing a variety of viewpoints on issues. While by no means any longer the sole institution in Washington focused on the modern Middle East, it has preserved its mission to provide different perspectives to inform policy, scholarship, and the education of the general public, as the region has become ever more visible to Americans.

Introduction

Don Peretz

My first visit to the country before it became Israel was in 1933 when I was eleven. My family had lived there for generations, since the expulsion of Jews from Spain during the Inquisition in 1492. By the 20th century, just a remnant of Ladino-speaking Sephardim remained in the Ottoman Empire. Today only a handful can remember the Ottoman era. When my father came to America in 1915 his immigration papers identified him as a Syrian refugee from Jerusalem, Turkey. During the short-lived era of the British mandate all residents of the country, Muslim, Christian, or Jewish, Arab, Armenian, or Greek were called "Palestinian." The large Jewish fundraising organization in America was the United Palestine Appeal (UPA). Not until 1948 did leaders of the Yishuv (Palestine Jewish community) decide to call their new state Israel.

During the latter years of the Ottoman Empire members of the Yishuv and a few Jewish immigrants established the first small Jewish settlements (called colonies) outside towns and cities like Jerusalem, Jaffa, or Tiberias. My grandfather was among them, a *muktar* of Beer Tuvia and Gadera. An important function of the *muktar* was to maintain relations with the nine surrounding Arab villages like Faluja. During World War I, my grandfather, like many of the Jewish and Arab muktars, was imprisoned in Damascus by the Ottoman authorities. After the war his family settled in Tel Aviv where he was in charge of issuing various kinds of licenses. When I visited in 1933, his house was among the first on Hayarkon Street, then a sandy beachfront, now a site of fancy boutiques, restaurants, and nightclubs. The road from the Haifa port to Tel Aviv, at the time not much more than a one-track rural camel path, is now a major several lane highway.

I next visited two years before mandatory Palestine was divided into Israel, Jerusalem, and a proposed Arab state, as a student on the G.I. Bill at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The day I arrived for classes, Menachem Begin's Irgun Zvai Leumi (ETZEL) blew up the King David Hotel. Thereafter not much studying was done! Many Jewish students volunteered or were drafted into the Haganah, Etzel, or Lehi (Stern Gang) outlawed by the British Mandatory authorities. When fighting between Jews and Arabs intensified I became a "stringer" (local reporter) for NBC, working with its Middle East correspondent, John Donovan. As the date for partition approached, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem became the gathering place of the world's leading reporters and journalists — George Polk, Homer Bigart, I.F. Stone, Robert Capa, and others. Although classes at the University on Mount Scopus were irregular and uncertain, I became acquainted with several professors who influenced my thinking about the situation — Norman

Don Peretz is Professor Emeritus, State University of New York, Binghamton, where he was Director of the Middle East Program and a professor of political science. He has published over 200 articles and 10 books, including The Government and Politics of Israel, Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising, The Middle East Today, *and* Israel and the Palestine Arabs.

Bentwich, Alfred Bonne, Ernst Simon, and Edwin Samuel (son of Lord Samuel, the first British High Commissioner of mandatory Palestine). Among those who helped shape my perspective on the impending conflict were Martin Buber and the president of Hebrew University, Judah Magnes, both ardent proponents of conciliation between the country's Jews and Arabs. Their proposal was to establish a binational (Arab-Jewish) state rather than separate ethnic enclaves. The bi-national approach to a solution seemed more credible then and was supported by Hashomer Hatsair (later Mapam), one of the larger Jewish Zionist parties.

Although nearly all contact between Jews and Arabs was severed as a result of the conflict, I was able to maintain some connection with the "enemy" as a journalist. One of my best sources was Said Jundi, a commander of an Arab military unit and a former football star. He often had played against Jewish teams and had a Jewish Yemenite girlfriend with whom he remained in close touch despite the conflict.

As fighting intensified and increasing numbers of Arabs either fled or were driven from their towns and villages, it soon became obvious that the partition of the country created a refugee problem that was to become a major, if not the major obstacle to any resolution of the conflict. I wanted to make a contribution by helping to alleviate the refugee plight. Having returned to New York during the first truce I became a volunteer with the American Friends Service Committee (Quakers) as one of their UNRPR representatives, before UNRWA was formed. The Quakers had a large unit working with thousands of refugees in Gaza. I joined a small outpost in Acre distributing UN rations to Arab refugees who fled from one village to another within the newly established Israel. Israeli military authorities were ambivalent about the work of AFSC. Some, like the military governor of western Galilee, were sympathetic, even helpful. Others, like Baruch Noy, the appointed mayor of Acre, resented what they perceived as Quaker interference in their affairs.

My association with Palestinian Arabs and Jews drew me into academia and graduate work in Middle East studies at Columbia University where I wrote my Ph.D. thesis on Israel and the Palestine Arabs supervised by Professor J.C. Hurewitz. While researching, I became acquainted with the Middle East Institute in Washington, DC which published my thesis as *Israel and the Palestine Arabs*. As one of the first books on the subject it was rather controversial. Lebanon once banned it; Israeli officials were none too enthusiastic about it. Since then many others have written on the subject, notably Benny Morris, whose works often have been disputed.

During the next 50 years *The Middle East Journal* printed nearly a score of my articles on developments in Israel and the Middle East. Several election articles were prepared in collaboration with Israelis, Sammy Smooha of Haifa University and Gideon Doron of Tel Aviv University. Doron was also co-author of my *Government and Politics of Israel* (Westview Press).

In 1998 the AFSC sent me and my wife, accompanied by former *Haaretz* Arab affairs correspondent Atallah Mansour to survey villages in Western Galilee where the Quakers had worked in 1949. According to the UN partition plan, this area was to have been part of the Arab state. However, as a result of the 1948 war, it became incorporated into the new state of Israel. In the half century since AFSC began relief operations there, the region has been transformed into a relatively modern site of Arab and Jewish cities, towns, and villages. Sixty years ago cities like Haifa and Acre had

large Arab populations that effectively made them bi-national. There were few Jewish settlements in western Galilee. Acre, then mostly an Arab town, as well as the bi-national Haifa, though still "mixed," have become Jewish rather than Arab. Now, there are nearly as many Jewish as Arab settlements in Galilee, a result of the government's campaign to "Judaize" the region. Formerly small Arab villages have turned into towns, and towns into cities, largely because of population increase, from about 150,000 in 1949 to several times that today. Overwhelming construction, paved streets, electrification, municipal water and sewage facilities, and paralyzing traffic jams caused by thousands of motor vehicles of all kinds evidence "modernization." Whereas 60 years ago horses, donkeys, mules, and even camels were widely used for transportation, today they are as rare as the automobile half a century ago when the Quaker jeep was often the only motor vehicle to be seen. Now multi-lane highways with connecting roads have considerably shortened distances between population centers. Signs on shops and offices appear in both Hebrew and Arabic, and often in Russian, due to the large Jewish immigration from the former Soviet Union.

The changes over the last 60 years are too numerous to count. In this special edition of MEI's *Viewpoints* series, we have asked Israelis, scholars of Israel, and members of the Diaspora community to reflect on Israel's beginnings, growing pains, and future prospects. This anthology asks Israeli intellectuals to turn their lens on Israel — an act of self-reflection in a precarious and important time.

I

Culture and Media

Reflections on Israeli Literature

Glenda Abramson

Israeli literature has matured and developed almost, but not quite, from a standing start. It had the grand tradition of pre-state Hebrew literature to draw upon, but from the beginning proclaimed its youth and independence from its literary forebears. Now, no longer so young, it has its own story to tell.

Glenda Abramson has recently retired as Professor of Hebrew and Jewish Studies at the University of Oxford. Her latest book (2008) deals with Hebrew writing of the First World War. She is editor of the Journal of Modern Jewish Studies.

In the years after the establishment of the state, the Israeli writer was regarded as part-artist and part-politician. At that time the boundaries between art and life were blurred. The writers themselves both welcomed and rejected the prophetic role that had been thrust on them, because they knew that within the Jewish tradition prophecy and national endeavor are always linked. It was this element of social commitment, exemplified by the generations of the novelists S. Yizhar in the 1950s and Amos Oz and A.B. Yehoshua from the 1960s that defined the literature in its nascent stage. The voice represented by these authors predominantly belonged to the political left: a male, Ashkenazi, and perhaps secular voice. It was a voice that retained the morality that underlay the prophetic ideal.

Political engagement remained a central phenomenon of the literature until comparatively recently. In its reflection of the contemporary condition, Israeli culture, with some youthful bravado, claimed to have replaced Jewish culture. Yet in one area this boast is not entirely valid. However hard they tried, Israeli authors could not ignore their tradition, which resides in the very language they used. The negotiation with Hebrew is still one of Israeli literature's greatest achievements. Writers became adept at taking passages of sacred literature and modifying, distorting, and secularizing them. This allusion signalled a confrontation with the cultural power of tradition. For example the story of the *Akedah*, the near-sacrifice of Isaac, became a code which many Israeli writers used to express their views of victimization and war.

In many ways the development of the literature has been marked by Israel's wars. Following the War of Independence, the literary protagonists spoke about the disparity between the Zionist dream and Israeli reality. After the Six-Day War in 1967 they worried about the state's relationship with the Palestinians, and after the Yom Kippur War in 1973 they were driven into a painful self-examination as individuals and as a nation. The Lebanon War in 1982 made a large crack in the wall of the Zionist consensus in Israel. It was after this war that a new generation of writers began to be noticed, producing a new wave of literature which, with hindsight, we call "postmodern." This is

a literature that no longer has an ideological center, a consensus, an agreed system of norms and values, but that reflects the real relationships among the various parts of Israeli society. Above all, this new "postmodernism" defines an eclectic group of young Israeli writers with no apparent political agendas, some of them even living and writing abroad.

These writers have abandoned the old literary obsessions. Israel's literature now allows itself to speak about everything. In an essentially urban literature — perhaps a reproach to the Zionist ideal of a romantic, agrarian culture — the topics are less confined. They deal with subcultures, race, identity, families, youth, women, Jewish and other immigrants, and Israeli Palestinians, through a range of experimental techniques often drawn from outside Israel. For example, Yoel Hoffman includes elements of Buddhism and Japanese culture in his experimental fiction; Yuval Shimoni plays with textual layout and unmatching chronology; while Etgar Keret, the literary High Priest of the incongruous, writes ironic, anarchic prose that defies categorization. A new literature is already emerging, written by neither Jews nor Arabs, but Israelis of a variety of different origins.

Textual sources, no longer exclusively classical, are derived from television, cinema, comics, and pop music. The new literature re-examines the Israeli condition from its own ironic, sometimes profound, sometimes banal, often violent, point of view. The political obsession is in the past; yet while contemporary Israeli literature may appear to be wholly detached, a national crisis will pull it right back to its social roots.

Israel's literature now allows itself to speak about everything.

In the past two decades the literature has seen remarkable changes. Early on, it thought of itself, and was thought to be, strictly secular, according to Israel's idiosyncratic use of the term. Religiously-oriented writers were ignored. But this absence of religion, or faith, or spirituality is another one of Israel's literary myths: Poets like Yehuda Amichai and fiction writers like S.Y. Agnon could not be described as secular, using today's terminology. Yet now, when writers allude to the sacred texts, they do so not as a witty, allusive exercise, but from within their faith. A group of Israeli writers has shown an inclination towards a metaphysical idiom; whether they are writing "religious," "metaphysical," or "spiritual" literature, it seems that for many of them these terms mean a return to "Jewish" literature.

Over the years, certain groups were overlooked in favor of the Ashkenazi mainstream, but now just about every national, ethnic, and gender group is represented in the literature. This period has seen the emergence of Mizrahi (from North Africa and the Middle East) writers who were always overtly or covertly classified as "the other" in Israeli society. Now authors such as Sami Michael, Shimon Ballas, Ronit Matalon, Dorit Rabinyan, and many others are telling Israeli readers about the Mizrahi experience, a cultural lacuna which is being redressed. Also, a number of Israeli Arab novelists and poets have become key literary figures; for example, Anton Shammas for his globally acclaimed *Arabesques*, written in Hebrew, and Emil Habiby, who won the Israel Prize in 1992 for a critique of Israel written in Arabic. Sayed Kashua, a young writer and journalist, moves easily within serious fiction about Arab/Palestinian life and Israeli popular culture.

Women writers in Israel were also, from the start, a comparatively neglected literary group. This also has

changed due to the sudden growth, in a short space of time, of prose fiction, poetry, and drama by a new generation of women writers. The question is whether the advent of feminism, together with multiculturalism and postmodernism in Israel is due to the influence of foreign literature — whether these are imported fashions, like the designer clothes beloved by trendy Israelis. Doubtless, American cultural influence is obvious everywhere in Israel, and highlighted in an article about current Israeli fiction entitled "Inniut and Kooliut" (What's in and what's cool). On the other hand, these trends may reflect the spirit of the time, changes within Israeli society, and the Israeli mood. For example, women's writing reflects the need to withdraw from the "big" issues of politics and ideology.

At sixty, Israeli literature is sophisticated and modern, stylish and profound, flippant and serious. Its topics range from the Holocaust to American movies and its style from jazz to prophecy. It is a fractious, difficult, idiosyncratic literature. Amos Oz once wrote that the history of Hebrew literature is full of sound and fury. So is the literature itself.

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The Israeli Media: Future Challenges

Gabriel Weimann

The Israeli media environment has changed dramatically in recent years and is still changing. The changes included the introduction of new communication technologies (from digital cable television and new satellite channels to sophisticated cellular phone and Internet services); privatization of the communication industry, primarily of broadcasting; enrichment of the channels and sources offered; and a growing concentration of media ownership. Thus, at its 60th birthday, Israel has a media system that is complex and advanced. However, some of the changes that have taken place in the media environment are alarming, namely the processes of commercialization and privatization and their sociopolitical and cultural implications.

Gabriel Weimann is a Full Professor of Communication at the University of Haifa, Israel. He is the author of six books on communication as well as over 130 scientific publications.

FROM STATE-CONTROLLED MEDIA TO PRIVATIZATION

The process and challenges of nation-building encouraged the leaders of the young Jewish state to control the media in various ways. It started with the control of the press, which originally was mostly a party press. In addition to the party press, privately owned newspapers were established, notably *Ha'aretz*, *Yediot Achronot*, and *Ma'ariv*. However, in the early years of Israeli statehood, they, too, tended to publish information that fell largely within the accepted parameters of the Zionist ideology and supported the government's views and actions.

An even tighter and more powerful control of media was in the realm of broadcasting. Both radio and early Israeli television were under public, rather than governmental, authority (the Israel Broadcasting Authority or IBA). However, that did not reduce political control of broadcasting in Israel: Instead of directly supervising the electronic media from the Prime Minister's office, the government appointed 31 "representatives" to maintain control through the IBA's public council. Direct intervention in programming by the Prime Minister, other ministers, and by politicians or their proxies in the IBA's public council became almost a daily occurrence. Control over the IBA was enhanced by power over its budget. Because the law did not permit commercial advertisement on television (it did permit it on radio), the IBA's operating budget in effect came from the government. Everyone who owns a radio or a television pays an annual tax for its use. But since this amount could not cover the IBA's expenses, its budget became a product of intensive bargaining with the Bureau of the Budget.

The public demand for enriched television offerings, combined with the growing criticism of the broadcasting monopoly, led to several changes. The introduction of

cable television and the enactment of the Second Authority for Television and Radio Law facilitated the establishment of a second national television channel and the development of regional commercial radio. It meant a move towards a market-based model where operating costs are covered by advertising revenues. Formally launched in 1993, Channel Two quickly captured the lion's share of television viewers. By 2008, its regular ratings were running at more than four times those of the IBA's Channel One, and all top ten programs (in terms of ratings) are, week after week, those of Channel Two. The Channel Two authority is also responsible for commercial radio: by 2008, it had licensed 14 regional stations. In theory, control over the new stations should be ensured by limiting their news broadcasts to local bulletins and by establishing a series of regional regulatory committees. This stage also involved the death of most of the party press and the concentration of the newspaper readership in three private papers, namely *Yediot Ahronot* (enjoying a 60-70% share of the readers), *Ma'ariv* (20-30%), and *Ha'aretz* (7%). But these papers belong to huge media concerns, controlling most of the Israeli mass media including print, broadcasting, telecommunications, and Internet services.

Finally, computer-based communications infiltrated the Israeli scene rapidly: by 2005 there were 3,200,000 Israeli Internet users, constituting 45.8% of the population. Israel has one of the highest household broadband penetration rates in the world, building on even higher Internet penetration. Market competition is fierce, both between cable and DSL infrastructures and between ISPs. Israel's very high broadband penetration rate provides great potential for triple play and digital media market development. Both Bezeq, together with its satellite TV subsidiary YES, and HOT, the merged operating entity of the three Israeli cable TV companies, have the potential to deliver triple play services easily, as each possesses both content and delivery mechanisms. According to surveys, of all Internet users in Israel, approximately 75% of them use the Internet to search for information, 73% use it to e-mail, 59% for downloading files, 39% for joining chat rooms, and 29% use it to read online newspapers. Of all Internet users in Israel, 89% access the Internet at home, 32% at work, 21% at school, and 9% in other places.

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CAUSES FOR CONCERN

The increased commercialization and privatization of the Israeli media could have led to a free media market, multi-ownership, and competitive environment. But in fact, it went the opposite direction — towards growing concentration and monopolization. Several media moguls now own most of the Israeli media. The three major dailies anxiously sought ways to persevere, consolidating themselves as media conglomerates and expanding cross-ownership of other media. At first, each conglomerate intensified its hold on the local press, seeking the financial prospects of local advertising. Subsequently, the media barons joined forces with other economic powers and went after other media. Soon, the conglomerates accumulated a significant share in all media — print, cable TV, Internet companies, cellular communication, the Channel Two franchisees, and almost every form of media that Israelis see, read, or hear. For example, the Mozes media empire has owned in recent years, in addition to *Yediot Ahronot*, Israel's leading daily, a chain of local weeklies, an economic daily, a freely distributed daily ("24 Minutes"), two women's magazines, a youth magazine,

a weekly television guide, the *Vesti* group of Russian-language newspapers, an outdoor advertising company, book and music publishing houses, a stake in Channel Two franchises, a stake in one of the cable television companies, the most popular Internet news site (Ynet), and a share of Netvision (Israel's leading Internet service provider). The Nimrodi family used to control similar holdings: *Ma'ariv*, Israel's second leading daily, a chain of local newspapers, a women's magazine, a youth magazine, a book publishing house and a music publishing house, a stake in the Channel Two franchise, a popular Internet news site (NRG), and more. Even the new communication technologies, namely online press and online broadcasting, are dominated by the major media barons.

Finally, the "ratings race," the tough competition over audiences and profits from advertising revenues, has a negative impact on all aspects of Israeli culture — from political discourse to "ratings culture," the desperate seeking of the lowest common denominator. The Americanization of Israeli media painted our newspapers in yellow, trivialized our political discourse, and turned our television into "chewing gum for the eyes" with the cheap combination of game shows, reality programs, entertainment news, sports, soap operas, and movies. The collapsing public broadcasting, abandoned by the viewers rushing to the fun and low-key commercial media, is fighting to keep the governmental and public support while losing the reasons for such support. Thus, when faced with their new media environment, Israelis may look back at the early days of their controlled, limited, and centralized media and wonder if today they are indeed better off.

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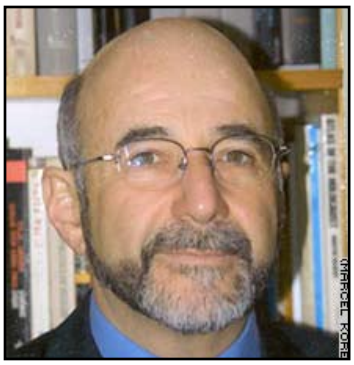
Green Lines of Imagination

Ronald W. Zweig



Ronald W. Zweig, Taub Professor of Israel Studies, New York University.

Israel at 60 can celebrate many achievements. It has survived generations of hostility; provided refuge for distressed Jewish communities and safe haven for Jews that needed it; achieved stable and enduring peace with Arab states along most of its borders; enabled Hebrew culture to thrive; allowed centers of Jewish religious learning to flourish and fill the void brought about by the Holocaust; created a prosperous economy based on advanced industries and agriculture; and fostered a presence in the world of science and technology that belies its tiny size and small population. Problems that once seemed unsolvable in our life time have withered to much smaller proportions — the Ashkenazi/Mizrahi divide is being bridged by a second and third generation of Israeli-born citizens that freely inter-marry across communal divides.

It is true that old concerns are being replaced by problems that were once marginal but are now center stage in public concern — relations between the secular and the ultra-orthodox, the role of Arab citizens in the Israeli state, and growing economic inequalities in what was once a proudly egalitarian and collective society. Given the dynamism of Israeli society we can safely predict that these newly significant problems will also wither — whether as the result of conscious policy or more likely, if history is any guide, the result of good luck — and be supplanted by another round of newly-urgent social concerns. In fact, the best one can wish for Israel for the next 60 years is that old problems will fade as new ones emerge.

However, and as everyone is aware, not all the issues confronting Israel at 60 can be resolved by the simple passage of time. Despite appearances, Israel is a country that has not yet defined its borders or even its population. It must do so before it can envision its own future. There are three possible paradigms for the future of Israel: partition of the land west of the Jordan; a bi-national state; or a Jewish state encompassing all of the land after the transfer of all or part of the non-Jewish (Palestinian) population. Historically, none of these solutions appealed to all Israelis, although partition always has enjoyed a clear majority support. Bi-nationalism and transfer always have been solutions advocated by small, radical fringe groups. But today it is a sobering fact that almost 80% of the current population of Israel has no adult memory of living with the borders of 1967. They were either born after that date, or were children in 1967, or did not then live in Israel.

The task of re-inventing the Green Line is one of the biggest problems facing Israeli society. The primary reason to tackle this problem is the belief that peace and

coexistence is still possible with our Palestinian neighbors. The vast majority of Israelis desire that objective. Today, however, 40 years since 1967 and after 20 years of direct conflict with the Palestinians living under Israeli occupation, few Israelis believe that peace is possible. So the biggest challenge facing Israel at 60 is to reclaim the majority support for a peace that no one believes in any more and for a border that has no reality for most of the population.

Borders are not only spatial facts. They are also states of mind. Jews and Arabs existed alongside each other during the pre-state years. Although the two communities functioned separately, and their interaction was often violent (even terribly so) there were nevertheless many junctures of coexistence and an overwhelming awareness of the reality of the other community. After Independence, the physical borders of 1948/49 allowed Israelis to create a perceptual border as well in which the Palestinian other was absent, gone, irrelevant. For Israelis, the Arab "other" was always Egyptian, Syrian, Jordanian, or Lebanese, while the Palestinians were essentially transparent, not experienced, not present. It took 20 years, until the outbreak of the first Intifada in December 1987 (almost a whole generation after the collapse of the actual 1967 Green Line) for Palestinians to gain any real presence as a collective in Israeli awareness. The borders of the mind lasted longer than the borders on the ground.

Two intifadas brought the realities of cohabitation in the same land back into Israeli consciousness in a brutal and brutalizing way, and have made urgent the revival of a suspended debate on envisioning the future. Palestinian intellectuals have been arguing for some time that the absence of the Green Line will lead eventually to a bi-national solution with an inevitable Arab majority in the foreseeable future. Prime Minster Ehud Olmert made the same point, after the Annapolis summit, in only slightly different words — the absence of a two-state solution (partition) will mean the end of the Jewish state. Palestinian intellectuals and the prime minister of Israel all agree. He wishes to avert that outcome, while they wish to bring it on.

Borders are not only spatial facts. They are also states of mind.

As a first step in recreating the Green Line in Israeli public awareness, the "settlement issue" must be defused. The settlers have consciously attempted to magnify the size of the settler population, just as they have attempted to intimidate and manipulate public opinion by escalating the level of violence whenever there is an attempt to dislodge them. The settlers have successfully created an image of a problem that can only be accommodated, not excised. However, if the settlement reality on the ground is broken into its component parts — suburbs of Jerusalem, settlements just across the border, and settlements in the middle of the West Bank beyond the Separation Barrier — the settlement enterprise need not be an obstacle to peace. Voluntary evacuation in exchange for compensation, small border adjustments in exchange for a land corridor (between Gaza and the West Bank) that would allow for the inclusion of the large majority of the settlers inside Israel's borders, and arrangements to permit small numbers of Jews to remain close to Jewish holy sites in Hebron within a Palestinian state — as well as other similar moves — will be a huge step forward to re-imagining the borders of 1967.

This step will require leadership and political will, premised on a renewed belief that peace *is* possible despite the experience of Israelis and Palestinians. Otherwise, why would anyone bother? But only if it is possible to imagine coexistence across a future border can Israel look forward to the achievements of the next 60 years.

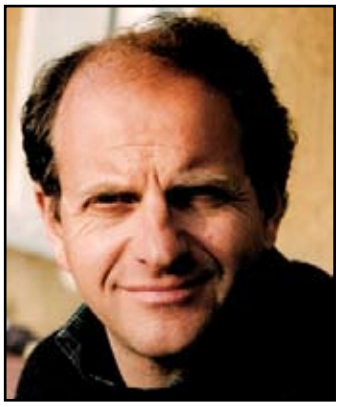
II

Economy

The Israeli Economy: Past Achievements, Future Prospects

Paul Rivlin

The achievements of the Israeli economy over the last 60 years have been immense. The population has grown from some 600,000 Jews and 150,000 Arabs at independence to 5.3 million Jews and 1.3 million Arabs in early 2008. The national income rose from under $5 billion in 1950 to $160 billion in 2007 (in 2005 prices and exchange rates). As a result, GDP per capita went up from $3,500 to about $22,000 in the same period, a more than six-fold real rise.



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The early ideological emphasis on agriculture that preceded the creation of the state served the economy well, providing for basic needs, employment, and inputs for industry. From the 1950s, industrialization, within the framework of import substitution, encouraged very fast economic growth. At the same time, Israel also began the move from socialism with a mixed economy to a much more capitalist economy. In due course, inequality grew and the bonds that held society together weakened. The Labor Party, which ruled until 1977, favored a mixed economy and, given the limited number of entrepreneurs available locally, brought in entrepreneurs from the Diaspora to encourage the development of industry in the 1950s and 1960s.

By the early 1960s, the benefits of import substitution were declining, and the policy was gradually abandoned in favor of an export-oriented one. Between the mid-1960s and 1990s, as free trade agreements were signed with the European Community, the US and other countries, restrictions on imports were unilaterally reduced or abolished.

Economic pressures resulting from the Yom Kippur War (1973) and the extreme mismanagement of the economy in the early 1980s led to hyperinflation and near economic collapse. The July 1985 economic stabilization program reduced inflation to international levels almost overnight and the economy has been managed much more conservatively ever since. Many economic reforms have been introduced in the name of stabilization in the public sector, labor markets, foreign trade, and payments. As a result, much of Israel's economy was liberalized without an explicit public discussion.

One of the distinguishing features of the economy is the large volume of resources devoted to defense. Not only are there large budget allocations to the defense sector, there are also sizable extra-budgetary costs. This is the result of the conscription of tens of thousands of school-leavers into the army for up to three years. They are not paid a market wage and bear the costs of conscription through a loss of earnings. US aid reduces the budget burden, and a few hundred million dollars of aid each year is spent

on military projects in Israel. The 2008 defense budget is $14 billion or 6.8% of GDP. If hidden manpower and other extra-budgetary costs are included, then the total comes to $17.6 billion, equal to nine percent of forecast GDP. If the value of US aid ($2.4 billion) is removed, then it comes to $15.2 billion, 7.8% of forecast GDP.

In the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War, the budgetary burden of massive defense spending rose to crippling levels. In 1975, major reductions were implemented and the share of defense spending in national income has fallen almost continuously since then. The cancellation of the Lavi fighter aircraft project in 1987 gave a boost to the civilian high-tech sector by releasing highly skilled manpower from the defense sector. While the 2006 war had only a small, negative impact on economic growth, the rise in defense spending did put pressure on other public spending programs.

Partly because of its large defense effort, Israel has developed a world class high-tech sector not only in qualitative but also in quantitative terms. This has been done by investing in military technology and creating a domestic production base. Most significantly, this involved training manpower inside and outside the armed forces; and the importance of technological education spread throughout Israeli society. The benefits of a hands-on approach to technology and learning-by-doing are very apparent and also have helped the civilian sectors of the economy.

The achievements of the Israeli economy over the last 60 years have been immense.

Since 2003 Israel has, for the first time, had significant and continuous surpluses on the current account of the balance of payments. In 2003-2007, they averaged $4.4 billion a year compared with an annual average deficit of $1.1 billion in 1998-2002. Furthermore, this turnaround has taken place against the background of rapid economic growth that in the past has drawn in more imports and constrained exports. In 2004-2007, the economy recovered from a deep slump and grew by an average annual rate of 5.3%. With a population growth of 1.8%, income per capita rose by 3.4%. Large foreign investments, a significant proportion of which is long term, have transformed the capital account of the balance of payments. These developments have freed the economy from one of the major constraints operating since 1948. As a result, foreign debt has been reduced and Israel now has a net surplus of foreign assets. This bodes well for the future.

Major economic losses have been incurred in building settlements in Gaza and the West Bank, including the heavy cost of guarding them. Many or all of the West Bank settlements will have to be dismantled if a peace agreement is reached and the costs will be huge. Another self-imposed political burden is the failure of Israeli society to ensure that ultra-orthodox (Haredi) Jews take financial responsibility for their (often very large) families by fully participating in the labor force and the defense of the country.

There are a number of storm clouds on the horizon, apart from the effects on Israeli exports of the recession developing in the United States. The first is a possible deterioration of the security situation. The second is the long-term economic and social ill effects of the inequalities and inadequacies of the educational system. The third is instability in the political system, which has weakened decision-making processes, thereby compounding the difficulty of tackling major issues. Finally, there is the problem of corruption, which threatens to damage Israel's economy, weaken its society, and tarnish its international image.

Much Accomplished, Much More to Be Done

Avia Spivak

Dr. Avia Spivak, Department of Economics, Ben-Gurion University and the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute.

If told in 1985 that 23 years later the balance of payment would show a $5 billion surplus, and that the problem for Stanley Fischer, the Governor of the Bank of Israel, would be an over-valued Shekel, the listener would have believed that the economic Messiah had come.

The year 1984 saw 440% inflation, and a 500% devaluation of the Shekel. The country was almost bankrupt. The year 2007 ended with 3.4% inflation, the country a net lender to the world, and the liquid reserves at the Bank of Israel approaching $30 billion dollars. About half of the country's exports belong to the high-tech industry, and *The Economist* hailed Israel as second only to the Silicon Valley in its technical prowess.

But this improvement in the fiscal and macro fundamentals of the country came at a heavy price. The level of inequality is the highest in the developed countries, similar to that of the United States. A third of all children in Israel live below the poverty line. The periphery — The Negev, Galilee, even parts of Jerusalem — was left behind, suffering from education, health, and infrastructure services deficiencies. The worst condition is that of the "non-recognized" Bedouin villages in the Negev. Even the average level of education has deteriorated to unthinkable lows. In the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) common Piza examination, Israelis of 15 years of age ranked 39th out of 57 in the sciences. At the universities, where the golden years of the 1960s inspired three Nobel prizes in the early 2000s, the faculty are getting older and have very limited research funding.

Besides education, there are problems with other governmental services. Social services are in poor shape. The police force is weak: Organized crime is prospering and gang shootings in the streets are commonplace. The police almost never inquire into property crimes. The physical infrastructure (i.e., roads and railroads) is lagging behind that of the more advanced countries. Health services are good, but the poor sometimes find it financially hard to pay for their prescribed medicines. The telephone and Internet are the only infrastructure on a par with the advanced world.

The unifying explanation for these conditions is the takeover of Israeli public policy by a small group of economists who embrace a free market ideology. This small professional elite is mostly concentrated at the Bank of Israel and the Finance Ministry. It is supported by a new generation of business and economics journalists with formal

training in economics, often with a BA in Economics and an MBA.

Influential journalists such as Nehemia Strassler and Guy Rolnik popularized the approaches favored by this elite in their economic columns in *Ha'aretz* — an important newspaper of the educated elite that always has been anti-labor. (One of its established reporters told me in a private conversation that after writing a pro-workers article he was rebuked by an editor, who exclaimed, "That it isn't the union's paper here.") *Ha'aretz* practically never endorsed any strike in all its 80-some year history. Since the 1990s, this newspaper has wholeheartedly endorsed business freedom.

The other influential newspaper, *Yedioth Aharonoth*, which has the highest circulation, was less dogmatic. Its columnist, Sever Plocker, is perhaps the most influential and esteemed economic journalist in Israel. He is very much pro-business, but not anti-government. He simply knows more economics, and he is more open to different views.

The professional elite received wide legal powers to control the budget and carry out reforms of the economy. These efforts were undertaken in order to curb inflation. The Bank of Israel was granted independence in determining the money supply, the exchange rate, and the short-term interest rate. The Bank gradually deregulated the foreign exchange market, which is now freely floating. The Wage and Labor Accord Unit in the public sector at the Finance Ministry acquired extensive legal powers to oversee wages in all budgeted bodies. The budget division received the authority to append to the yearly budget law an omnibus law that included scores of reforms in many areas. Thus the legislative power of the Knesset was severely limited.

A third of all children in Israel live below the poverty line.

Both the Bank and Treasury believed in the Washington Consensus.[1] Consequently, many government-owned firms were privatized, and the size of the government in the economy and the tax share in GDP were reduced. The latter is now approximately the OECD average.

This policy was helped by two highly influential external events: 1) the end of the arms race with Syria in 1988, and the peace with Egypt; and 2) the immigration of a million Jews from former Soviet Union countries beginning in 1989.[2]

Why did this ideology have such a devastating impact on public services? In the education sector, for example, the increased power of the Finance Ministry and decreased power of the teachers' union caused a decline in the wages of teachers, relative to alternative employment in the private sector. At the same time, budget cuts in the system kept the size of classes high relative to Western standards — thus, teaching conditions worsened. Consequently, as any Israeli will attest from personal experience, the intellectual level of teachers deteriorated.

A poor education system creates and broadens social gaps that tear apart the social fabric. Furthermore, a knowledge-based economy must create its own knowledge and not count on miracles of Jewish immigration. America

1. See: John Williamson, "What Should the World Bank Think about the Washington Consensus?" *World Bank Research Observer,* Vol. 15, No. 2 (August 2000), pp. 251-64.
2. The definition of Jews was rather broad.

will always be more attractive to Jews with valuable knowledge.[3]

There are already some influential persons, in and out of government, who realize that a change is needed in the system of economic governance. The power must be shared with the professional ministries and not be a monopoly of the Treasury. There should be a planning body that will look at the longer horizon, possibly in consultation with an "economic and social council," that will have the employers, unions, and NGOs as social partners.[4] All this can be done without losing the ability to control the budget deficit and maintain fiscal and financial stability — a marked success of the current regime.

Change is urgently necessary because the challenges are enormous. In addition to the problems discussed above, labor participation is low, especially for the ultra-orthodox men and Arab women. Productivity in the non-high-tech sector is low. All research and development is concentrated in high-tech. The country is not ready for the next wave of technology in water treatment, alternative energy, biotech, nanotech, etc. The universities do not lack specialists in these fields, but rather the specialists lack money for research. The army has money for research, but no interest in these areas.

As a result, GDP per capita has not closed the gap with the most developed countries in the last 25 years. And unless the government gets its act together and mobilizes all sectors of the economy and society for change, Israel will continue to lag behind.

The challenge for Israel is to close the gap within the country and the gap between itself and other advanced economies. With the right mindset, this challenge can be tackled effectively. It is encouraging that some of the people who are leading the call for change are veterans of the Finance Ministry.

The challenge for Israel is to close the gap within the country and the gap between itself and other advanced economies.

3. The US and Israel agreed in the late 1980s to block the entrance of Jewish immigrants to the US — this is why they came to Israel.
4. This is the so called "Irish Model," that also was adopted by the Czech Republic, Finland, and Denmark.

III

Identity

Why Celebrate?

Mark A. Heller

Dr. Mark A. Heller, Principal Research Associate, Institute for National Security Studies, Tel Aviv University

Observers of the run-up to Israel's celebration of 60 years of independence have been struck by the exuberance that isn't there. Many Israelis have questioned the logic of an extravaganza for a year that has no symbolic significance apart from the fact that it ends in zero. Others— especially in less prosperous parts of the country — have carped at the huge outlays in the face of other, arguably more worthy demands on the public purse. Local manufacturers have even complained that the importation of hundreds of thousands of cheap Israeli flags from the Far East has hurt their business and soured their mood — never mind that private citizens are not bothering to fly the flags in great numbers anyway.

Given the inordinate interest of the international media in Israel's 60th anniversary — indeed, in all things Israeli — it is possible that the image of collective angst has been exaggerated. Still, by Israeli standards, this year's festivities seem to be marked by unusual sobriety.

There are several possible explanations for this. The first is that the week of Independence Day this year coincided with some particularly dispiriting news: police sources revealed that another investigation into Prime Minister Ehud Olmert (the fifth in the last two years) uncovered serious matters that might well result in an indictment; the Attorney General told the Speaker of Parliament that a former Minister of Finance would be indicted for embezzlement, money laundering, bribery, and other crimes and misdemeanors; three members of the Pensioners' Party (the only one to inject some vibrancy into the Israeli party system in recent years) defected to the arms of a billionaire who wants to set up his own party; and everyone's favorite basketball team (Maccabi Tel Aviv) lost the Euroleague championship to its hated rival, CSKA Moscow. All in all, a bad week. Still, Israelis have become inured to far worse news, and these kinds of developments are hardly the thing to put such a damper on the public mood.

A second explanation, much more compelling than the first, is that an anniversary, especially one that ends with a zero, inevitably becomes an occasion for stocktaking. Israelis are no less introspective than others, and 60 years after their national renaissance, they — at least, Jewish Israelis — are perhaps focusing less on what has been accomplished and more on what has not yet been done. The list of unfinished business is long. Most foreigners would put peace with Israel's neighbors at the top of the list.

But it's not at all clear that Israelis share this rank ordering. Certainly they long for recognition and acceptance and the sense that their national status has been normalized, "like all other nations." But the regret that this has not happened is mitigated to some degree by the conviction that the failure is not solely or even mainly because of what Israelis themselves have or have not done. Rather, it is because of the refusal of most of their neighbors — not just to agree to peace terms also acceptable to Israel, but even more basically to acknowledge and internalize Israel's rightful existence. As a result, this item on the check-list actually prompts less regret of the "would have, could have, should have" sort than do some others more closely identified with the ethos that is thought to have prevailed in 1948 and withered away in the ensuing six decades.

Once, it is believed, Israel was an egalitarian society, perhaps one less prosperous than now but one in which the burdens of scarcity and deprivation were shared far more equally than now. Once, it is believed, Israel was a society based on voluntary organizations dedicated to mutual help, where self-sacrifice (or at least modesty) was a virtue; now, it is a consumerist society in which the "we" has long since been trampled by the "I." Once, it is believed, Israel was a society dedicated to the promotion of education, research, and "real" culture; now, it neglects its educational system at all levels, starves it research institutions, and wallows in the tasteless mass culture of globalized media. Once, it is believed, Israel was an honest society with a functioning political system led by a selfless political class dedicated to the public good; now, it is governed by self-promoting mediocrities operating in a dysfunctional system and dedicated only to their own welfare and that of their rich friends. Once, it is believed, Israel was a decent society, virtually free of both white-collar and violent crime; now, its news broadcasts are dominated by murderers, muggers, spousal and child abusers, embezzlers, drug dealers, and leaders of organized crime, all of whom are given a "Get out of jail" card by incompetent or corrupt police and overly lenient judges.

Now, it is a consumerist society in which the "we" has long since been trampled by the "I."

Does this sound like nostalgia? Well, it is. Of course, not everything is caricature. There are very real problems that Israelis cannot reasonably blame on anyone else: great and growing inequalities, the unresolved problems of religion and the state as well as the status of its Arab citizens, the declining performance of the school system, and others. Nevertheless, nostalgia does very often distort perspectives and make what was look better than it really was and what is look worse than it really is.

With a bit more time and maturity, Israelis may one day discover that David Ben-Gurion (like George Washington?) fiddled his expense account — and they may even come to terms with that. They also may learn to set the undoubted shortcomings of Israel against its equally undeniable achievements: an entrenched democracy, the rule of law guaranteed by an independent judiciary, a thriving economy driven by cutting edge technology and entrepreneurship, world-class universities and hospitals, vibrant media, and the tolerance of diversity. But while the politicians can be relied upon to recall all that has been done, ordinary people, for whom the miracle of rebirth and survival is now taken for granted, can be forgiven for beginning to brood after six decades about the promises still unfulfilled. Perhaps that, after all, is the real significance of 60.

Majoritarian Despotism and the Hollowing Out of Citizenship in Israel

Amal Jamal

The growing alienation between the Jewish majority and the Arab minority in Israel reached a turning point in the last decade. At the center of this destructive process have been efforts taken by the Jewish majority to intensify the nationalizing policies of the state and thereby hollow out Arab citizenship. These efforts — in the political, legal, economic, cultural, and housing fields — have had far-reaching negative effects on the Arab-Israeli citizenry and have cast a dark shadow over both the future of Jewish-Arab relations as well as over the future of Israeli democracy.

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Over the years, Israeli leaders repeatedly extolled the democratic character of the state, something that has not been questioned by most Israelis. Nonetheless, Zionism always has been exclusivist, subordinating state institutions and resources to the well-being of only part of Israeli citizenry. From the very start, Israeli citizenship was normatively subordinated to the national affiliation of the hegemonic Jewish majority. In an attempt to "normalize" Jewish life, public space was constructed to reflect modern Hebrew national identity alone. As a result, the Arab presence has been de-normalized and fragmented, emptied of its historical and cultural past and separated from substantial connection with its homeland.

The Jewish majority in Israel has rendered the normative value of basic civil rights of non-Jews/Arabs void. These attempts are legitimated by ethnic majoritarian despotism in the legislative process, the lack of constitutional protections for the subordinate Arab minority, and the Western understanding of what has been coined as Israeli exceptionalism. Jewish hegemony in Israel has been turned into a super-constitutional axiom that not only undermines the substantial meaning of the democratic political game but also endangers the mere Arab presence, especially in light of the continuous weakening of liberal public institutions, the corruption in the political system, and the indifference of most media and civil institutions to Arab basic civic rights.

The more Israel strived to become a developed state and acquired the characteristics of a wealthy country, the wider the gaps became between the Jewish and Arab sense of "homeness" in the state. The more that Jewish life was normalized through the settlement of the land and the building of modern transportation and communication infrastructures, thereby leading to the homogenization of their collective space, the more the Arab citizenry became fragmented and alienated from the state.

This negative dialectics was facilitated by investing much majoritarian energy in blocking any challenges to Jewish hegemony. In 1985 the Jewish majority in the Knesset made any challenge to the Jewish identity of the state illegal, by passing an amendment

to the Basic Law. The exclusive Jewish character of the state thereby became a supra-constitutional principle. As a result, the democratic game became a procedural instrument to enforce the national normative system in all state institutions and policies. Arab representatives are invited to play the game, but ever as a minority that legitimates the process by its mere symbolic participation.

This reification of Israel's identity as a Jewish state was reinforced by immutable legislation in the form of Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty and the Basic Law Freedom of Occupation. The opening paragraph of the law reads: "This Constitutional Law is meant to protect human dignity and liberty (or freedom of occupation), in order to anchor in the Basic Law the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state." These principles give a clear normative priority to the Jewish essence of the state over the democratic one. In effect, this law precludes the Arab minority from effective democratic participation: by conferring upon this minority inferior status in the conceptual normative order of the state, the law makes Arabs' participation contradictory to their basic interests. This explains the growing alienation of Arab citizens with the democratic process.

Any Arab demand for liberalizing Israel and turning it into a civic state is perceived by the Jewish majority as offending the right to the self-determination of the Jewish people and, therefore, by extension, threatening the security of the state and its right to exist. The official and public reactions to the publication in 2007 of "The Future Vision Documents" of the Arab community gave a clear indication of the extent of the hollowing out of Arab citizenship. The Jewish majority viewed these documents, which can be implemented only with their consent, as a "declaration of war."

The state is primarily engaged in fragmenting and controlling the Arab minority, conceived as a demographic threat that should be eliminated.

Recently, the Jewish majority legislated changes in the citizenship law that limit the right of Arab citizens to live with their spouses if those spouses originate from Palestinian occupied areas or from some of the Arab states. Whereas Israel's Citizenship Law enables a gradual process of naturalization for aliens (non-Jews) who marry Israeli citizens, this right is denied to Palestinians who reside in the Occupied Territories or in Arab countries. Since Israeli citizens of Palestinian origin are those most likely to marry a Palestinian from the Occupied Territories, the amendment is unmistakable evidence that Israeli legislators targeted a particular group of people based on their national affiliation.

When the spirit of the law is compared to the liberalism of the Law of Jewish Return, which allows those with one Jewish grandparent — a "Jewishness" in question when judged by traditional *halakhic* definitions — to immigrate to Israel and acquire Israeli citizenship, as did hundreds of thousands of immigrants from the former Soviet Union, the real intentions behind Israeli policies towards the citizenship of the Arab population become even more clear.

Instead of political devolution that might empower the Arab community, increase its trust in state institutions, and meet its expectations for equal citizenship, the state is primarily engaged in fragmenting and controlling the Arab minority, conceived as a demographic threat that should be eliminated. One of the ideas invented to reach this goal is the revocation of the citizenship of hundreds of thousands of Arab-Israelis and the transfer of jurisdiction over them and their limited landholdings to the Palestinian Authority in exchange for official annexation of large Israeli settlements in the West Bank. The threats to implement such ideas may lead Arab citizens to *fear* the Israeli state, but they cannot cause them to feel any patriotic attachment to it, or to celebrate with any genuine enthusiasm the 60th anniversary of its independence.

Israeli Citizenship

Yoav Peled

As a democratic frontier society, Israel has operated historically under two partially contradictory imperatives: the exclusionary imperative of colonial settlement and nation-building; and the universalistic imperative of democratic state-formation. The dynamic relations between these two imperatives have resulted in two profound transformations.

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The first transformation that Israel has undergone, which began in the mid-1970s, has been the change from a corporatist, relatively egalitarian society in conflict with its Arab neighbors to a liberal, highly inegalitarian society seeking accommodation with them. The second, since 2001, has been the change to an even more harshly inegalitarian society engaged in an open-ended war with the Palestinians. Israeli citizenship has evolved in accordance with these transformations.

THE SYSTEM OF 1948

Israel's citizenship discourse has consisted of three different layers: 1) an ethno-nationalist discourse of inclusion and exclusion; 2) a liberal discourse of universal civil, political and social rights; and 3) a republican discourse of community goals and civic virtue, that mediated the other two.

The pre-1948 Jewish community in Palestine was an ethno-republican community organized to achieve a common moral purpose — the fulfillment of Zionism. The pioneering civic virtue of its members was manifested through the performance of three "redemptive" activities: physical labor, agricultural settlement, and military defense. Thus the foundation was laid for distinguishing between the virtue not only of Jews and Arabs, but also of different groupings within the Jewish community, based on their presumed contributions to the project of Zionist redemption.

Since 1967 the differential allocation of entitlements, obligations, and domination entailed by the notion of citizenship has proceeded in the following manner. First, the liberal discourse functioned to separate Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel from the non-citizen Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. Then, the ethno-nationalist discourse was invoked to discriminate between Jewish and Palestinian citizens *within* the sovereign State of Israel. Lastly, the republican discourse was used to legitimate the different citizenship positions of the major Jewish social groups: *Ashkenazim* (European) versus *Mizrachim* (Middle Eastern), males versus females, and secular ver-

sus religiously orthodox.

Palestinian residents of the occupied West Bank and the besieged Gaza Strip possess no citizenship rights. (The "citizenship" provided by the sham Palestinian National Authority has no practical meaning.) Since 1993 these Palestinians have been excluded from the Israeli labor market as well. Much of their land and water resources have been diverted to use by Jewish settlers. While the latter have enjoyed the extra-territorial protection of Israeli civil law, the Palestinians live under arbitrary military rule.

The privileged position of the settlers is understandable in view of their pioneering commitment and their demographic presence in the disputed areas. But ultra-orthodox, non-Zionist Jews, who neither serve in the military nor perform any other pioneering activity, also have been granted privileges beyond any proportion to their electoral strength. Their privileged position stems exclusively from their service as living symbols of Jewish historical continuity in the Land of Israel.

Until 1966 Israel's Palestinian *citizens* were ruled through a military administration which suspended their citizenship rights in practice. Since then, they have enjoyed civil and political rights on an individual, liberal basis, but have been excluded from political citizenship in the republican sense — participation in attending to the common good of society. As most Palestinian citizens are not called up for military service, this has been used, in a truly republican manner, to justify the abridgement of their social rights as well. Only recently has an alternative form of national service been instituted for them on an experimental basis.

Since the second intifada Israel has been involved in its own version of the war on terror.

Among Israeli Jews, *Ashkenazim* have legitimated their dominance by designating themselves as idealistic pioneers and the *Mizrachim* as merely "natural" workers. Thus, as Jews immigrating under the Law of Return, *Mizrachim* have been granted all civil and political rights; as "natural workers," however, they were settled in the periphery and used to provide unskilled labor for the country's industrialization drive.

Official, public religiosity combined with militarism and with Jewish demographic anxieties to confine women to their traditional role as mothers and homemakers. As a frontier society, Israel has valued military service as the highest form of civic virtue, and has been greatly concerned with the demographic balance between Jews and Palestinians. This resulted in defining maternity as women's prime contribution to the common good, undermining their quest for equality.

LIBERALIZATION AND PEACEMAKING

With time, Israel's economic development, funded largely by unilateral transfers, had weakened the public sector economy in favor of private business interests. This shift was enhanced by the 1979 peace treaty with Egypt. Under the Labor government of 1992-1996 that signed the Oslo Accords, drastic neo-liberal reforms were instituted in key areas of the economy and society.

Economic reform, meant to facilitate Israel's integration into the global economy, reflected the liberal discourse of citizenship and benefited mostly upper middle class *Ashkenazim*. Since the Arab-Israeli conflict was an obstacle to globalization, settling the conflict — decolonizing portions of the Occupied Territories through accommodation with the PLO — became an economic necessity for this social sector. Since the Oslo Accords, the global market has indeed opened up to Israeli capital, while direct foreign investment in the Israeli economy skyrocketed, leading to unprecedented economic prosperity.

THE NEO-LIBERAL WARFARE STATE

Since the second *intifada* Israel has been involved in its own version of the war on terror. Surprisingly, perhaps, this war has coincided with the acceleration of the dismantling of the welfare state. The republican discourse of citizenship that had legitimated the old corporatist socioeconomic regime and served as the basis of Jewish solidarity (and Labor Party power) has lost its position of prominence. Meanwhile, the liberal discourse has become more prominent in the economy, and the ethno-nationalist discourse more so in politics.

Liberal economic policy has led to extensive privatization of public services and the neglect of those that cannot be made profitable enough to be privatized. The maintenance and supply of public bomb shelters in times of war is one activity that cannot be privatized. So these services were not provided at all during the Lebanon War of 2006, or were provided very inadequately by private charities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Furthermore, out of fear of hurting Israel's international credit rating, the state failed to declare a state of emergency in the northern part of the country that came under constant bombardment. Short of such a declaration, the needs of most residents of that region could not be met.

Public trust in the institutions of government is at an all-time low, and the country faces its worst crisis of governability.

The enhanced position of the ethno-nationalist discourse in the context of the second *intifada* found its expression in a new citizenship law enacted in 2003. This law prohibits the granting of residency in Israel to Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories, even those who are married to Israeli citizens or have Israeli parents or children. The duration of the law, which in effect deprived Israel's Palestinian *citizens* of the right of family unification, was to have been one year, but has been extended repeatedly.

The weakening of the republican discourse has deprived Israel's citizenship structure of its coherence. Both the social rights of all citizens, as well as the civil and political rights of Israel's Palestinian citizens, have deteriorated. This resulted in growing political instability, marked by five national elections and six Prime Ministers (including Yitzhak Rabin, assassinated in 1995) since the signing of the Oslo Accords. On Israel's 60th anniversary public trust in the institutions of government is at an all-time low, and the country faces its worst crisis of governability.

Majority-Minority Relations in the Jewish Republic

Ilan Peleg

A political struggle has been fought in Israel for the last 60 years. It is the result of the tension between the commitment of most Israelis to the "Jewishness" of their state and their loyalty to the state's democratic ideals.

The historical record of the state in regard to its dualistic existence is mixed. The tenets of universalistic democracy have been met by the establishment of an elected legislature, the adoption of most "Western" freedoms, the formulation of Basic Laws, the recognition of an independent judiciary, and the conduct of vibrant and open public debate on most political issues. Acting particularistically, however, the state has sponsored the immigration of millions of Jews, and acquired land and established hundreds of settlements to absorb them, developed an educational system to inculcate Jewish and Zionist values, adopted nationalist myths and symbols, and granted special recognition to Orthodox Judaism.

This universalistic-particularistic tension is at the very center of Israel's political life; and it is likely to remain at that very center in the foreseeable future. This tension determines the relationships between the Jewish majority and the country's sizable Palestinian Arab minority, it shapes the controversies between religious and secular Jews, it is at the basis of the attitudes of many Israelis toward the "territories," and it informs their perception of the outside world.

The tension between "universalists" and "particularists," as dominant as it might be, is not static. While evident in the foundational Declaration of Independence of May 1948, it has evolved, deepened, and has even come to determine the very essence of the state. It is especially important in regard to the definition of the State as "Jewish and democratic," a definition that is included in several Basic Laws and Supreme Court rulings. This definition of the state has emerged as somewhat of a sacred formula in the last two decades.

While the Israeli political scene is extremely complex, three political-ideological camps could be discerned in relation to this definition of the state that encompasses the universalist-particularist tension. On the particularistic end of the spectrum there are those who believe that Israel ought to be committed primarily or even exclusively to its Jewishness. While members of the camp might recognize democratic ideals as a desirable common good, they view those as decisively secondary to the country's Jewishness. If and when the requirements of democracy and the interests of the Jewish people are incompatible, the interests of the Jewish people and their state — Israel — take precedence. This position is common among nationalist, and especially religious, circles.

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The second camp in Israel includes those who believe that Israel needs to transform itself from a "Jewish and democratic" state to a "state of all its citizens." Such a formula would presumably turn Israel into a typical Western liberal democracy, dealing equally with all citizens as individuals and adopting a neutral position toward each of its ethnic, national, or religious groups. Some members of this camp propose that Israel becomes an Arab-Jewish bi-national entity; thus, they represent a nationalist Palestinian position.

The third and easily the largest political camp endorse the definition of Israel as "Jewish and democratic." Members of this camp believe that Israel's commitments to both Jewishness and democracy are fundamentally compatible, that the formula is a reasonable compromise between two competing sets of values, and that the state has, in fact, kept both of its commitments.

The reality of Israel's first 60 years, particularly in regard to Jewish-Arab relations, requires a fresh, bold re-examination of the arguments of the third camp, which is dominant in the country's political life. There is a general agreement among Arab and Jewish scholars, heavily documented by official Israeli sources and even the state's bodies (such as the Or Commission that investigated the riots of 2000), that discrimination toward and neglect of the minority has been a characteristic of the system for decades. There is also an increasing recognition on the part of many Israeli Jews, led by Israel's Supreme Court, that this situation must change toward greater equality in the interest of both the Palestinian minority and the Jewish majority.

The sacred formula of "Jewish and democratic" has not worked particularly well to date.

If Israel's Jewish majority decides to establish a more inclusive polity, it could move in an integrative-liberal direction, strengthening a "Western" democratic order based on individual equality, or toward a "consociational" order in which Arabs and Jews share power as collectivities. While both liberal and consociational changes could ease the inter-ethnic clash within Israel's body politic, they are neither likely to nor should they turn the country into a bi-national entity. Such an outcome would contradict the foundational UN Partition Resolution of 1947, which called for the establishment of a Jewish state and an Arab state in Palestine; it will never be accepted by Israel's Jewish majority.

The sacred formula of "Jewish and democratic" has not worked particularly well to date. It might be salvageable if the existing balance between its two components changes. One way of transforming this formula is to increase the weight of "democracy" by eliminating all forms of material discrimination against minority members in a variety of areas such as land purchases, housing, employment, monetary allocation to municipalities, and so forth. At the same time, the precise consequences of the state's "Jewishness" ought to be reexamined. Such reexamination will not amount to the elimination of the Jewish character and/or a redefinition of the state. The particularism of the majority could prevail without seriously injuring the country's democratic quality.

A way of reconstructing the polity is to withdraw all substantive and material forms of discrimination — that is, insisting on the equality of all citizens — while sustaining the Jewish character of the state on the symbolic level. Such a future Israel will still have a Jewish majority (a condition that will require withdrawal from the territories), the dominant language will remain Hebrew and the culture both Jewish and Hebraic, and most if not all symbols and holidays will continue to be rooted in the Jewish tradition. This model — a liberal democracy with deep historic, symbolic links

to the majority's cultural heritage — will transform what some have called an "ethnic democracy" into a liberal democracy. Although it might not eliminate completely the Jewish-Palestinian tensions, it will contribute significantly to their reduction, thus enhancing both justice and stability in the Jewish Republic at 60.

This model — a liberal democracy with deep historical, symbolic roots to the majority's cultural heritage — will transform what some have called an "ethnic democracy" into a liberal democracy.

Is Israel in the Middle East?

Elie Podeh

Sixty years after its establishment, Israel seems to be in the process of extricating itself from its state of schizophrenia with regard to its place in the region. Yet, the quest for a natural space, in which Israel would see itself — and be perceived — as a legitimate actor in the Middle East is not yet over. This search is all the more meaningful since it penetrates deeply into the core issue of Israel's identity.

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For many Muslims and Arabs this search is superfluous, as Israel is a foreign element in the Middle East, closely tied to the West and serving its interests. According to this view, Israel is an extension of the colonial experience and its Jewish character accentuates its "foreignhood" in an area predominantly populated by Muslim and Arab communities. This Arab perception and the long duration of the Arab-Israeli conflict largely excluded the possibility of Israel's integration into the region. However, it also seems that ideological reasons in Israel led to its exclusion, as proven by the early decision to separate Judaism, Zionism, and Israel from Middle Eastern studies in the academic institutions. Yet, in spite of the seeming inevitability of Israel's Western orientation, other options have existed.

In general, and with the risk of over-simplification, it is possible to identify three schools in the Israeli discourse. The first, and most dominant one, is the Western or Separatist school, which has opposed integration in the Middle East as a result of political, economic, and cultural reasons. The most outspoken and influential voice of this school was the first Israeli Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, who thought that the Arab countries — characterized by backwardness and dictatorial regimes — have little to offer the Jewish people, who aspire to become like Western, civilized countries, such as the United States, Britain, and France. This orientation dovetailed with the Iron Wall strategy, which was preached by Ze'ev Jabotinsky and other elements on the political right. In fact, this strategy, as shown by Avi Shlaim, has been adopted by many Israeli governments regardless of their political affiliation. The Iron Wall was not only a strategy of dealing with the Arabs in a protracted conflict, but also a clear message about Israel's desired association with the Arab Middle East. In recent years, Ehud Barak (Labor) and Benjamin Netanyahu (Likud) — the former perceiving Israel as a villa in the jungle and the latter emphasizing Israel's place among the Western nations — can be seen as typical representatives of this school. The wall recently built by Israel, though primarily aimed at forestalling terrorist operations, and the disengagement from Gaza

can be seen as further testimony of Israel's desire, however unconscious, to separate itself from its neighbors.

The second school is the Middle East or Integrationist school, which has advocated some association between Israel and its neighbors. Since this option has hardly been viable during the years of conflict, it was usually expressed as a desire, hope, or dream. Most advocates of this school came from the political left. From this school emerged some interesting voices, such as the Canaanites and advocates of Jewish-Arab cooperation on the basis of their Semitic origin. The most typical representative of the Middle East school was Moshe Sharett, the first Israeli Foreign Minister. In his first speech in the Knesset, in June 1949, Sharett articulated a vision of a foreign policy network that included Cairo, Damascus, Beirut, and Amman. Fearing Israel would become an island in the region, and in line with his image of the Jews as Asiatic people, Sharett favored Israel's integration in the Middle East. A similar view was voiced by a leading Labor politician, Yigal Allon, who wrote in the 1960s:

> The whole world — first and foremost Jews and Arabs — should know that Israel does not see itself as a guest in the region or as a proxy of some outside force … A Commonwealth of the eastern nations with the active participation of Israel for the sake of economic, political, scientific, cultural and security cooperation will not only ensure the economic prosperity of all peoples of the region but will also serve as a guarantee for their security and sovereignty. Surely, achieving this goal is remote, unfortunately ... nevertheless, posing a clear target, even if it is too far to accomplish in the near future, may serve as a compass, guiding our way toward a sublime destination, preventing us from making mistakes and wandering helplessly in global politics.

Israel seems to be in the process of extricating itself from its state of schizophrenia with regard to its place in the region.

The most eloquent representative of this school in the 1990s was Shimon Peres, former Prime Minister and current President, in his celebrated book *The New Middle East*, published in the wake of the Oslo agreements. Yet, the cool Arab response and the failure of Oslo was the kiss of death. Most of the advocates of this school — perhaps because of their European-Ashkenazi orientation — rejected Israel's cultural integration, which was tantamount in their eyes to the Levantinization of Israeli society, opting only for political and/or economic association. Only a small group, mostly of Sephardic-Arab origin, also advocated a cultural fusion.

The third school, oscillating between the West and the Middle East, is the Mediterranean school. This view considered the sea as constituting a major factor in the evolution of the Jewish identity, as a result of the commercial, cultural, and historical links with the countries lying on its shores. In particular, the ties of Jerusalem with Athens and Rome, the two pre-modern centers of Western civilization, were emphasized. Accordingly, Israel was linked with the West but not divorced from its geographical environment. This school particularly appealed to those who advocated a regional approach but realized that Arab objections to accepting Israel as a legitimate player and the cultural differences existing between the Jews and the Muslim-Arabs would undermine the Middle East approach. Two recognized voices of this school were Abba Eban, the legendary Israeli Foreign Minister, and Ya'acov Hazan, leader of the leftist Mapam

Party. This school was less influential in political circles than it was popular among intellectuals and certain segments of society.

The Israeli quest for a specific orientation stemmed from two basic needs. The first was the need for a defined identity for a people that came from various cultural settings in the Diaspora. The second was what can be termed as the "desire to belong" syndrome: Feeling ostracized, isolated, and insecure in the Middle East, Israel always has sought to be a part of larger groupings.

However, Arab and Muslim opposition prevented Israel's inclusion in the Asian group of the United Nations. Not until 2000 was Israel accepted as a temporary member of the Western European and Other States Group — a decision that dovetailed with the dominance of the Western school. Moreover, in spite of the peace treaties with Egypt (1979) and Jordan (1994), the rise and spread of Islamic fundamentalist voices in the Middle East put another obstacle in the way of Israel's integration in the region. Conveniently, by rejecting Israel as a legitimate regional actor, the Arabs helped to substantiate their claim that Israel is indeed part of the West.

In addition to the Arab rejection, it should be noted that the dominance of Israel's Western orientation has also been the result of its leaders' preferences. Indeed, the Israeli leaders felt that the nation's progress truly depended on close attachment to the West, politically, economically and culturally. Thus, two parallel processes reinforced the separation of Israel from the Middle East.

Since Israel cannot ultimately divorce itself from the region, its decision makers and public should rethink its orientation in a manner that would dovetail with its geographic reality.

It's about time that Israelis acknowledge the fact that however forced Israel's separation from the Middle East might have been, it was also a conscious decision on the part of its leaders. But, since Israel cannot ultimately divorce itself from the region, its decision makers and public should rethink its orientation in a manner that would dovetail with its geographic reality. On its sixtieth anniversary, Israel should realize that these orientations are not mutually exclusive and that it can, indeed should, play a role in the three circles surrounding it — Middle Eastern, Mediterranean, and Western.

Russian/Soviet Jews in Israel

Larissa Remennick

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Jews from the Russian Empire (mainly from Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Ukraine) formed the backbone of the pre-state Jewish *Yishuv* (community) in Eretz Israel and later became founding fathers of the State. Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, an ardent advocate of Hebrew as the vernacular and state language of Israel, and most key figures of the Zionist movement and early Israeli politics (Vladimir Jabotinsky, Shaul Tchernihovsky, Menachem Usyshkin, Nachum Sokolov, Yitskhok Katsenelson, David Ben-Gurion, Menachem Begin) were all Russian- and Polish-speaking Jews, as were writers and poets such as Haim Bialik and Shai Agnon and actors Hanna Rovina and Alexander Penn. The *Habima* National Theater was formed from the group of actors who fled Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution. During the early decades of the state, the Russian language, literature, music, and artistic traditions were ubiquitous in the everyday life of Ashkenazi Israelis, and the traits of Soviet socialism were omnipresent in the Israeli economy and political life. Many Israeli homes featured the volumes of Alexander Pushkin and Ivan Turgenev, along with Hebrew poetry and perhaps some Yiddish books by Shalom Aleichem and Peretz Markish. The epoch of Russian/East European cultural and political hegemony came to an end by the late 1960s, along with the departure of the older generations and their replacement by the brave new *Sabras* who were building the new Israeli culture, negating the Diasporic legacies. Rapid changes in the ethnic composition of the Israeli population reflecting several major waves of immigration of Jews from North Africa and Asia over the 1950s and 1960s entailed the further decline of the Russian themes in culture and society.

During the early decades of state socialism, among the emigration of Jews to Palestine and Israel was a small but permanent trickle of activists whom the Bolsheviks were glad to get rid of to avoid the spread of Zionist ideas among Soviet Jews. A small peak of Soviet Jewish emigration occurred soon after the founding of the State of Israel, allowed by the Soviet government in hopes of fostering communist tendencies in the new polity and adding it to the camp of "progressive socialist states" in the Middle East. Yet, in view of the growing American influence on Israel, this affair soon ended, and Soviet authorities froze Jewish emigration until the beginning of Détente in the early 1970s. The euphoria of the Six-Day War victory in 1967 was conducive to the rebirth of the Zionist movement in the USSR and a growing number of requests by Jews to immigrate to Israel. Giving up to various political pressures, the Soviets had to allow many Jews to leave, and between 1970 and 1980 about 130,000 of them made *Aliyah* to Israel

(a similar number ended their journey in the United States and other Western countries as so-called "drop-outs"). In the early 1980s hard-liners returned to power in Moscow and granted few exit visas. However, from 1987 on, Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms brought about a more liberal approach to emigration. Since the late 1980s, the trickle of émigrés turned into a stream, with the majority wishing to move to the West. Yet, after 1990 entry to the US, Canada, Australia, and Western Europe (except Germany) became increasingly limited, which effectively redirected the major post-Soviet Jewish exodus to Israel. For most émigrés, the "push" factors (i.e., political and economic crisis in the USSR/Former Soviet Union (FSU)) dominated over Zionist sentiments; combined with their secular lifestyle and tenuous Jewish identity, accommodation to the Jewish state tended to be difficult.

Thus, over the early 1990s Israel faced a mass influx of Russian-speaking Jews, whose number reached almost one million and increased the Jewish population by 20%. The tide gradually subsided after 1995, and subsequently turned into a trickle. The integration of the last immigration wave posed major difficulties, as opposed to the previous wave. To begin with, the 1970s wave was much smaller and spreadout over a decade, while about half a million of the recent newcomers arrived in just three years (1990-1992). The Israeli labor market of the 1970s had been ready to absorb the educated Jewish professionals from the USSR due to many shortages in the skilled workforce in the fields of medicine, education, technology, and science. In contrast, by the 1990s Israel had trained enough professionals of its own, and the market was rather saturated. Hence, tens of thousands of Soviet-trained teachers, doctors, scientists, engineers, artists, etc. found out that their former professional experience was irrelevant in Israel; they had to seek retraining into more demanded semi-skilled occupations (e.g. in banking, tourism, insurance, sales, etc.) or make a living by manual work in construction, industry, security, cleaning, and personal services (mainly geriatric care). Occupational downgrading compromised the income and living standards of Russian immigrants, causing their concentration in poorer urban neighborhoods and social isolation from their potential Israeli peers. Indirectly, it also discouraged many Russian Jews from learning Hebrew beyond the basic minimum and getting closer to Israeli culture and society. On the psychological level, the immigrants' failure to find work as professionals severely harmed their self-esteem, leaving them to wonder whether the whole immigration venture was worth the effort. Given the gradual improvement of the economic situation in Russia and Ukraine from the mid-1990s on, this also propelled some educated and/or business-minded immigrants to return to the FSU or re-migrate to North America (about 10% of the 1990s wave eventually left Israel).

Tens of thousands of Soviet-trained teachers, doctors, scientists, engineers, artists, etc. found out that their former professional experience was irrelevant in Israel.

Another challenge that awaited ex-Soviet immigrants in Israel was finding permanent housing, given growing costs on the private market and the lack of public housing (especially needed for the elderly, single parents, and the disabled), often causing the co-residence of three generations in small apartments. Many mixed families that included partly Jewish or non-Jewish members experienced additional alienation from the host society due to their second-class status in the matters of religion, marriage, divorce, burial, visas to their relatives from the FSU, etc. Only a small frac-

tion of non-Jews (under 3%) could convert to Judaism via full Orthodox *giyur* — the only possible conversion type recognized by Israeli authorities. Reflecting all these pressures, many immigrants of the 1990s felt estranged from the mainstream Hebrew society and found a solution to their social and cultural needs by creating a thriving system of social institutions of their own (schools, libraries, clubs, theaters, small businesses), as well as media in the Russian language (several daily newspapers, a TV channel, radio stations, etc.). Although the hegemonic majority detested the Russian sub-culture thriving side-by-side with the mainstream, they could hardly stop it from emerging and giving the "critical mass" of Russian immigrants their political clout (in the form of greater electoral weight, immigrant parties, and politicians).

However, despite the difficult integration and many mistakes made in *Aliyah ve Klita* (immigration and absorption) policy over the last 20 years, the last wave of Russian immigrants made a deep and lasting impact on Israeli society. It significantly fortified the educated and secular sector of the population and added new facets to the range of Jewish identities already existing in Israel. Due to a significant influx of skilled professionals (trained elsewhere — a pure economic gain), the Israeli economy experienced an upsurge in many sectors, such as high-tech, engineering, and applied science. Russian immigrants also enriched Israeli education (both as teachers and students), culture (especially theater), competitive sports (winning a number of Olympic medals), and made many Israelis perceive cultural diversity as good news. By spurring the comeback of Russian culture in Israel, former Soviet immigrants turned Israeli into a *de facto* multicultural society, forcing it to put aside its "melting pot" aspirations towards every new immigrant wave.

By spurring the comeback of Russian culture in Israel, former Soviet immigrants turned Israeli into a de facto multicultural society.

Israeli-Jewish Diaspora Relations

Gabriel (Gabi) Sheffer

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There is no doubt — as some Israelis and Diaspora Jews admit openly — that Israel and the Jewish Diaspora are experiencing major transformations which influence their relations. These include demographic changes, especially in the Diaspora; shifts in the centers of the Jewish Diasporic communities (the creation of new communities on state and local levels and the reemergence of communities especially in Eastern Europe); improvement of the political, social, and economic positions of Diaspora Jews, but at the same time an increase in anti-Semitism and enmity in certain states; and the emergence of new cultural, social, political, and economic forces in Israel that strongly impact Israeli society and, consequently, its relations with the Diaspora. It should be added that all these changes occur against the background of globalization, individualization, and the substantial use of sophisticated communication systems by Israelis and Jewish Diasporans.[1]

As a result of these changes, the entire Jewish people, both in Israel and the Diaspora, confront several major challenges: 1) redefining and maintaining Jewish identity; 2) ensuring continuous close connections among all Jews worldwide while defining the delicate issues of center and periphery in world Jewry as well as the loyalties of Israel and the Diaspora toward each other; 3) developing and enlarging Jewish-Israeli education in both Israel and the Diaspora; 4) dealing with Jewish immigration to Israel and to other hostlands; 5) grappling with Israelis' attitudes and policies toward prosperous, reemerging, and declining Jewish communities; 6) struggling against anti-Semitism; 7) resolving the reparations issue; and 8) implementing far-reaching reforms in the Israeli organizations and institutions that deal with the Jewish Diaspora.

Not all the news is bad. In general, Israelis care especially for Diaspora Jews in despair, are ready to extend help to Jewish communities facing difficulties, and for the first time have allocated resources for these purposes. On the other side, Diaspora Jews still show interest in what is happening in Israel, donate money, and lobby on behalf of Israel and Israelis.

Yet, as aforementioned, some basic matters require attention. From the Israeli perspective and given space limitations, let us consider these:

1. On all the issues discussed in this article see especially Gabi Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics: At Home Abroad* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Gabi Sheffer and H. Roth-Toledano, *Who leads? Israeli-Jewish Diaspora Relations* (Tel Aviv: Hakibutz Hameuhad, 2006)

• Most Israelis, particularly younger Israelis, lack deep knowledge of the situation of the Diaspora. Even those Israelis who have traveled abroad and visited Diasporic communities know little about the general situation of world Jewry or the specific situation in the communities they have visited. Even worse, most of them are not interested in the Diaspora. This is not surprising since the Israeli school system and the media do not invest much in teaching and reporting about the Diaspora. Consequently there is almost no public discussion and debate about Israeli attitudes, positions, and policies concerning the Diaspora.

• The vast majority of Israelis have an archaic, Israeli-centric ideology or mindset that strongly influences the actual policies of Israeli governments and organizations. These views, which are sharply at variance from the current situation of the Diaspora and its relations with Israel, have not been re-examined or even discussed for a very long time.

• There is a lack of formative leadership that is willing and capable of overcoming the inertia in Israeli formal and informal positions in a way that might lead to new attitudes and consequently to policies which will be more suitable to the Diaspora's current situation and will lead to the required changed relations between the two parts of the Jewish nation.

Most Israelis, particularly younger Israelis, lack deep knowledge of the situation of the Diaspora.

• Most of the statements made by a few Israeli politicians and bureaucrats who deal with Israeli-Diaspora relations are devoid of serious meaning. Such statements are merely lip service to the need for close relations between Israel and the Diaspora.

• Despite the statements made by some politicians and mainly by Israeli "professionals" emphasizing the good performance of the various organizations dealing with the Diaspora and the need for reforms, actually all these institutions face severe financial, personnel, and other constraints that impede their ability to conduct effective relations with the Diaspora.

• There are severe problems in policy formation and implementation in Israel. Most decisions are made not by senior Israeli politicians but rather by the "professionals" in accordance with their personal and institutional agendas; and most decisions deal with marginal matters, rather than with meaningful steps to buttress Israel-Diaspora relations. Regarding some critical issues (e.g., Jewish identity, immigration to Israel, Jewish and Israeli education and requested support for Israel, and communities facing difficulties) there is no clear cooperation between the government and the organizations active in Israel, as well as between the various governmental ministries and the various departments in the organizations dealing with Diaspora matters.

• Cooperation and coordination between the Israeli government and organizations, on the one hand, and the main organizations in the Diaspora, on the other, is inadequate. Successive Israeli governments have failed to create proper mechanisms for addressing this deficiency. This situation is pretty obvious with respect to the solicitation of donations and other resources for Israel, and the order of priorities in the use of available resources.

To address this multitude of challenges, several suggestions come to mind. First and foremost, there is a need to adopt new patterns and means, some of which are known, to deepen and widen Israelis' knowledge and understanding of what is currently happening in the Diaspora. Thus, the number of classes in Israeli schools and courses in universities and colleges should be expanded. The Israeli media should be encouraged to increase its continuous coverage of developments in the Diaspora. In this context, Israeli organizations should begin supporting the research and development of non-conventional approaches to these issues, including the study of the vast literature on the general Diasporic phenomenon, which can shed new light on various questions facing Israel and the Diaspora.

Despite the widespread skepticism concerning the significance of ideologies that are expressed in the parties' platforms and in the Israeli government's publications and announcements about its basic policies, there is a need to reformulate them. Most importantly, if there is a genuine belief in and desire for unity in world Jewry, the above-mentioned Israeli-centric basic approach of most Israelis and institutions must be critically re-examined. Thus, when basic policies are made, the wishes and needs of the Diaspora should be given due consideration.

In this connection, there is an urgent need to redefine and consolidate Jewish identity — to resolve the highly contested question of "who is a Jew?" It should be noted that the widely accepted notion of the religious nature of Judaism has given way to an increasing number of Jews in the Diaspora and in Israel who define Judaism in terms of ethnic-national-religious identity.

There is an urgent need to redefine and consolidate Jewish identity — to resolve the highly contested question of "who is a Jew?"

Such a reexamination of the Jewish identity should include the issue of center and periphery in the Jewish nation. Many in the Diaspora, especially younger persons who have been fully integrated in their host countries, question Israel's centrality to the nation. In order to avoid the estrangement of such Jews, the implications of these changes must be seriously considered.

Consequently, it is necessary to reorganize the structure of organizations such as the Jewish Agency (which is now in a crisis), or perhaps to establish new organizations in which Israel and the Diaspora are on an equal footing in terms of representation, control, and management. This will entail greater involvement of the Israeli government and representative organizations in the Diaspora.

Israeli-Diaspora relations are at risk of further deterioration without a clear Israeli acknowledgment of the problematic issues previously discussed and without the willingness to invest unconventional thinking and action in tackling them.

Demography and Environment

Arnon Soffer

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The issue of demography has been Zionism's constant companion. From the very start, it was evident that without a critical mass of Jews in Palestine the Zionist dream would not come to pass. Accordingly, every wave of Jewish migration to Palestine was a blessing, a step towards the fulfillment of that dream.

In this regard the years prior to the creation of the state of Israel in no way differ from the 60 years of its existence. Israel continues to be obsessed by demography, and for several reasons:

- The foremost goal for which Israel was created was to be a home for all the Jews of the world; without this aim and its realization, the state of Israel has no *raison d'être*.

- Israel needs a large population from which to draw its military strength in order to meet the challenge of defense against those Arab states that have refused to recognize its right to exist.

- Within Israel there exists a large Arab population that does not identify with the Zionist dream. In recent years in particular, this portion of the population has posed an existential challenge to the state of Israel.

- Since independence, Israel has been concerned that it might be compelled to accept the return of some, if not all, of the 1948 Arab refugees, which would lead to a critical demographic challenge.

- At the end of the Six-Day War, Israel found itself in control of a large Arab (Palestinian) population whose natural increase has accelerated as a result of the success of Israeli health services in drastically lowering mortality rates among this portion of the population, whose birthrates have not changed for decades.

The fear that the Jews of Israel will lose their majority is the main factor that has prevented the annexation of the territories of Judea and Samaria. The data presented in Table 1 illustrates the source of this fear.

Table 1: Composition of the Population of Palestine in 2008 and 2025 (in millions)

	2008	%	2025	%
Jews	5500	50.8	6510	43.5
Others (non-Arabs)	0.320	2.9	0.390	2.5
Arabs in Israel	1450		2300	
Arabs in West Bank	2140		3550	
Arabs in Gaza Strip	1400		2570	
Total Arabs in Palestine	4990	46.36	8420	55.0
Total pop. in Palestine	10810	100	15320	100

Sources: Israeli and Palestinian Central Bureaus of Statistics, 2007/8.

This demographic reality was the chief factor that caused former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to disengage from the Gaza Strip; indeed, without the Gaza population the proportion of Arabs in the remaining parts of Palestine currently stands at 38.2%; however, in 2025 the situation will again be critical for a Jewish Israel, as the percentage of Arabs is expected to climb to 45.9% of the population of all of Palestine.

Clearly, if no significant geopolitical turn of events occurs and the creeping annexation of Judea and Samaria continues, Israel will find itself in about 20 years with a Jewish minority throughout mandatory Palestine.

Clearly, if no significant geopolitical turn of events occurs and the creeping annexation of Judea and Samaria continues, Israel will find itself in about 20 years with a Jewish minority throughout mandatory Palestine: This has terminal implications for Israel as a Jewish state. Indeed, this will mark the end of the Jewish community in the Middle East — replicating the demise of the Christian communities of the region that is taking place at this very moment.

Israel faces a second demographic challenge, which arises from the inversely related population trajectories of Jewish and Arab Israelis. Currently, Arabs constitute 18.4% of Israel's population. (The latter figure does not include the Druze but does include the Arabs of Jerusalem, who are not citizens of Israel though they are citizens of Jerusalem.) In 2025 the Arab population of Israel will be about a quarter of the total population. As Arab Israelis' demographic weight increases, and as they come to constitute an absolute majority in several important areas in Israel (e.g., the central hilly Galilee and across tracts of the northern Negev, home to a Bedouin population that is increasing at a world-record rate of 5-5.5% annually), so their call to turn Israel into a bi-national state will grow louder.

Meanwhile, natural increase among the Jewish secular communities is declining, while emigration in this group in rising. In parallel, high natural increase continues to rise in the ultra-orthodox and national-religious population. Therefore, voices and demands of the religious circles are becoming ever louder on every matter and issue, primarily in propelling a welfare policy — one which grants large allowances to families with many children (characteristic of the religious population) — that is having a ruinous effect on the Israeli economy. The ultra-orthodox populations recoil

from the Zionist ethos, refusing to serve in the Israeli armed forces or to shoulder their obligations to the state.

The demographic strengthening of the national-religious sector also has manifested itself in increased migration to areas in Judea and Samaria and the consequent enlargement of "settler" communities. The annual rate of growth of the number of settlers has soared to 3-5%! In 2008 the number of settlers in Judea and Samaria (excluding Jerusalem) is estimated to have reached about 280,000. The settlers, more than any other group or factor in Israeli society, are bringing about the creation of a bi-national state in Palestine, while believing and hoping that the Arabs of Palestine will leave the country.

These demographic trends have been accompanied by yet another disturbing change — increased population density. As of 2007, Israel has become the second most densely populated country in the Western world after Holland, where density is 399 persons per km,^{2} compared to Israel's 350. Discounting the Israeli desert (the Negev), which covers about 60% of the country's area, Israel is almost twice as densely populated (845 persons per km^2 in 2007) as the densest Western states such as Britain, Japan, Belgium, and Holland.

This condition already has contributed to environmental degradation and has created havoc in the educational system and national planning. Proximity to carrying capacity causes collapse of the water regime. (Most of Israel's watercourses have turned into sewage canals or have dried up. The quality of the water in the aquifers has declined. The Sea of Galilee is at an unprecedented low level, and the demand for water is rising owing to population increase and a rise in living conditions). Drought and fear of climate change will worsen the shortfall.

As of 2007, Israel has become the second most densely populated country in the Western world after Holland.

The collapsing transport regime is perhaps the worst case of disintegration, because it exacts a high price in the economy and in the quality of life.

We cannot ignore the non-enforcement of the law, the deterioration in relations between people, and the yawning social gulfs between the Tel Aviv population and the populations of the country's center and periphery. Particularly as the weight of the poor populations (e.g., the Arabs and ultra-orthodox, who are anti-Zionist) increases, the magnitude of these problems will grow. The courts in Israel have not digested this new reality. In fact, the Israeli Supreme Court delays every development enterprise, and thus speeds up the collapse of systems in Israel.

Under these conditions, quality Jewish Israeli youth will emigrate, while quality Jewish youth in the West (an important source of potential immigrants) will not come to Israel even in times of distress. With its pool of talent thus depleted, Israel would face the prospect of gradually turning into yet another developing Middle Eastern state.

The immediate threat to Israel of 2008-2030 is not the Jewish-Arab conflict on its various levels but population density, which is leading to the disintegration of Israel. The urgency and enormity of this challenge notwithstanding, with responsible leadership, a great deal could be done to turn Israel into a flourishing Singapore or Hong Kong.

IV

Domestic and International Affairs

A Society in Denial?

Galia Golan

Regrettably, Israel at 60 is more a source of concern than one of pride, at least for me. One cannot, of course, deny that a modern, vibrant state was created, which, in comparison with others of its age, produced remarkably stable, working democratic institutions, a lively and broad civil society, a generally thriving economy, and a social system on par with most Western European states.

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Yet the concerns are many — and worrisome: flagrant abandonment of any hint of the socialist ideals of many of the founders of the state; unabashed embrace of crude capitalism and globalization at the expense of welfare, services, and the public good; and "liberal" individualism without the attendant respect for individual rights, human rights, and the most essential element, equality. Add to this a national paranoia born of centuries of persecution and oppression, reinforced by regional rejection and chauvinistically manipulated by all-too fallible leaders. The result: a blind and often cruel society, tainted by growing racism, permeated by militarism, denial, and indifference.

On a recent visit to Provence, I was struck once again by the slogan of the French Revolution inscribed in innumerable public places: *humanité, égalité, fraternité*. These universal values are the very values that we seem to have lost over the past 60 years. There may be those who contend that we never enthroned them as guiding ideals. It may well be the case that they could never have been attained within the framework of the Zionist dream. It may be that elements beyond our control, outside and inside the country, from adversaries and, in fact, enemies, rendered the realization of such ideals impossible. Or it may be that tragic, gross mistakes were made all along the way, bringing us to the point at which we find ourselves today.

One amazing, comprehensible yet not so comprehensible mistake, in my view, was the treatment of those Palestinians remaining in the new state as if they were a fifth column. Not only the initiation and continuation of holding them under military rule for 14 years, the destruction of villages, confiscation of lands, expulsions, and other early measures, but also continuing to deny them equal resources and opportunities in comparison with the Jewish and emigrant citizens of the state. This marginalization occurred particularly in the area of education, refusal to recognize villages (including also those of the Bedouin — considered loyal citizens, who even serve in the army), harassment by security officials, and unofficial discrimination. Few would deny that the Palestinian citizens of Israel continue to be treated as second-class citizens even with their representation in the Knesset and active social/political life in the country. And so

what conceivably could have been considered an understandable policy in the wake of a war, in 1949, becomes not only incomprehensible but alarmingly short-sighted and self-destructive in the ensuing years.

The injustices became still greater in the aftermath of the 1967 war and the occupation. It would take more than a few lines to discuss the mistakes and negative effects of the occupation on Israeli society and the evolution of the Jewish state, as well as on the Palestinians. The cardinal mistake is the failure to take the steps necessary to end the conflict with the Palestinians. In most of the post-1967 years, when there was no possibility of maintaining the state of Israel and accommodating the right of the Palestinians to self-determination, i.e., when the Palestinian objective included all of mandated Palestine, Israel turned to Jordan for the solution. But even then, Israel, under a Labor government, was unwilling to forego sovereignty over East Jerusalem in the interests of a peace agreement with Jordan and later, under a right-wing government in the 1980s, unwilling to reach any compromise with Jordan.

It is doubtful that the "Jordanian option" constituted a solution, but even when a solution did appear in the form of the PLO's acceptance of the idea of a Palestinian state next to, rather than instead of, Israel, in 1988, Israel was not forthcoming. While a few years later Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin subsequently appeared — albeit reluctantly — to comprehend the need, and the opportunity to move toward this solution, the Oslo period unfortunately still saw many mistakes, not least of which was the continued building of settlements, sending what could and was interpreted as a signal to the Palestinians that Israel did not in fact intend to leave the Occupied Territories. Still more serious mistakes were made in the negotiations conducted by Prime Minister Ehud Barak, compounded by the subsequent outbreak of the Al-Aqsa intifada and the total breakdown of hopes for peace amongst Israelis and Palestinians alike.

The cardinal mistake is the failure to take the steps necessary to end the conflict with the Palestinians.

But the mistakes continue. Having in the past, pre-Oslo, supported Islamists while deporting PLO moderates and jailing Fatah activists, more recently Israel not only rejected the Palestinian unity government of 2007 that promised a resumption of popularly supported negotiations, but the government subsequently failed, and continues to fail, to meet Israeli commitments that might strengthen the government of Abu Mazen (Palestinian Authority President Mahmud 'Abbas) and his capacity to make the compromises necessary for a peace agreement. Moreover, we have done virtually nothing in response to the offer of the entire Arab world to make peace with Israel — the Arab Peace Initiative launched by the Arab League in 2002 and repeatedly reaffirmed to this day.

Instead, this first decade of the 21st century, the sixth decade of Israel's existence as a state, has seen unprecedented violence between Israel and the Palestinians: from the Israeli side, the building of the fence/wall, bombings, artillery shelling, "targeted" assassinations. This is in addition to the stalwart hallmarks of the occupation: settlement building, arbitrary arrests, torture, searches, curfews and checkpoints, apartheid roads, separation of families, land confiscation, uprooting of trees and crops. From the Palestinian side, there have been suicide bombings, terrorism, and daily Qassam and mortar shelling of southern Israel. To these tactics the Israeli government argues, legitimately, that it must defend its population, but it sees defense only through the path of military incursion and killing.

Indeed, while the majority of the people on both sides support negotiations and the two-state solution, both also seem to be convinced that only violence/force will make the difference. Yet common sense and our own experience have demonstrated repeatedly that violence and the use of force have only given rise not to moderation but to greater resistance and violence. In fact, it is this violence that strengthens the radical elements in our midst, weakening the political capacity of the leadership on both sides and apparently driving a solution still further away. Thus, even as we find ourselves in the process of peace negotiations with the PLO, neither Prime Minister Ehud Olmert nor Abu Mazen appears able to "deliver" an agreement.

Yet, for all that has been said, the 60 years have in fact brought us closer to a solution. The majority of both peoples and their official leadership have abandoned the idea of territorial maximalism in favor of a peace based on two viable states side by side. Both have agreed to the principle of land exchanges to make this possible. They also have agreed to the idea of some kind of international presence to guarantee the peace. And both, without officially acknowledging it, appear to understand that significant compromises must be made on the highly sensitive issues of refugees and Jerusalem. Furthermore, the Arab world is prepared to back up such a peace with normal relations and security for Israel — an end to the conflict, thereby providing crucial backing for the Palestinian peace-makers as well as added incentive for reluctant Israelis.

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Thus maybe the 60th anniversary is more hopeful than it first appears …

The Rise and Possible Fall of Partition West of the Jordan, 1948-2008

Motti Golani

When the last British High Commissioner, Sir Alan G. Cunningham, left Palestine in May 1948, he was asked to sum up his opinion on Jewish-Arab relations. Cunningham said that repeatedly, when speaking with him, each side made sure to ignore the other. The Jews would talk about a land without a people for a people without a land, while the Arabs spoke about the bond between the Palestinian Arab state and the other Arab countries. The Jews were preoccupied with immigration: who, when, and most importantly, how many. The Palestinian Arabs were concerned with King 'Abdullah of Transjordan's increasing interest in their land west of the Jordan. Neither thought that satisfying the other, even a little, was in their own interest.

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During the period of the British Mandate in Palestine, some experts tried to dress up the need for mutual Jewish-Arab recognition in geopolitical garb. This idea was known as "partition," and it mainly focused on two separate nation-states west of the Jordan. In 1948, when the Mandate came to an end and Israel was founded, the idea of partition was already more than ten years old. Now it is more than 70. Does it still have a chance?

The British were the promoters, even the creators, of the concept of partition. Before the Mandate was signed, the British Colonial Office decided to divide the historical territory known as "Palestine" into two parts along the Jordan River: The eastern portion, Transjordan, was handed over to 'Abdullah bin Husayn, Britain's Hashemite ally. And west of the river was to be the Jewish national home in accordance with the Balfour Declaration of November 1917. To the British, this decision fulfilled the "dual obligation" that they had given the Zionists and the Hashemites during World War I.

However, escalating Jewish-Arab national conflict and an Arab revolt against the British that erupted in April 1936 led the British government to advance the idea of partition: a state for the Jews, a state for the Arabs with a connection to Transjordan, and a separate solution for Greater Jerusalem. This principle, formulated by a royal commission headed by Lord William Peel, which spent the winter of 1936/37 in Palestine, was and still remains the basis for all the partition suggestions made since then.

The parties' reaction to the idea of partition oscillated between support and rejection. From a historical perspective, it may be argued that as of now the graph of support for partition shows a steady rise on both sides. The Zionists were the first to respond positively to the principle of partition west of the Jordan, but not to the specific

plan of the Peel Commission. The Higher Arab Committee rejected the principle of partition out of hand in 1937. With its weak political organization, the most that the nascent Palestinian national movement could achieve was an internal consensus about what they did *not* want.

When the principle of partition came up again for discussion, this time at the United Nations in November 1947— in a slightly different form than the Peel Commission's proposal— the two sides responded as might almost have been expected. World War II and the Holocaust had hardened the position of the Zionists and the Yishuv. But with the end of the war and fear that Britain would suppress the Yishuv as it had the Palestinian Arabs during the Arab revolt in the 1930s, the Zionist leadership accepted the 1947 partition plan (UN Resolution No. 181) both in principle and in practice. Their agreement was a historic milestone; most attempts, even today, to actualize the "Peel principle" of 1937 follow the partition plan of 1947. This plan was validated further when Israel's Arab neighbors accepted the outline of the 1947 partition — but by then, towards the end of 1948, it was too late.

When the dust had settled after the decisive Israeli military victory in June 1967, the most significant result of the war turned out to be an Israeli-Palestinian return to the Mandate situation but without the British, without a "father" to maintain order. Under the circumstances, the Palestinians once again became significant players in the question of the country's future, and the issue of partition was back on the agenda, as in 1937, as in 1947, just as if Arab countries had not ruled over land west of the Jordan from the end of the 1948 war until 1967.

The Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty (1979) and the first Lebanon War (1982) made it clear to the Palestinians that they were not being taken into account either in peace or war.

Israel after 1967 was caught up in the euphoria of the return to "the complete land of Israel" (basically, Mandatory Palestine). Out of this context emerged the new Israeli right — the religious Zionists who settled the Occupied Territories with (and even without) the tacit consent of the government. These people (350,000–500,000 strong, depending on whom you ask and how you count) were and still are the most significant obstacles to partition.

In 1977–79, during the peace negotiations between Israel and Egypt, the latter tried to put the discussion of partition back on the agenda of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but to no avail. Nevertheless, one result of the internal Israeli debate in those years was the emergence of the Peace Now movement. If settlers (by means of Gush Emunim) were the most important extra-parliamentary obstacle to partition, Peace Now was the leading organization outside the Knesset advocating partition.

In the 1980s, the road back to partition was paved slowly and hesitantly on both sides. The Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty (1979) and the first Lebanon War (1982) made it clear to the Palestinians that they were not being taken into account in either peace or war. Their frustration led to a popular uprising in late 1987, but more importantly, to recognition of the Palestinian leadership (PLO) in Israel for the first time in history, i.e., the principle of partition. It is no coincidence that in the same year Jordan relinquished its demand for sovereignty in western Palestine.

In Israel, as a delayed reaction to the debacle of the Yom Kippur War (1973), to peace with Egypt, to the protests over the failed adventure in Lebanon, and to the moderation of the Labor party, which had experienced its first years in the opposition, something similar occurred. This made possible the Oslo Accords and the attempt to implement them

in 1993–97. If after 1967 the idea of partition appeared to have suffered a mortal blow, it now had its finest hour even in Israel. The revival of the idea of partition was perceived as being good for the Palestinians and therefore — and here is the great novelty — good for Israel as well.

After the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in November 1995, it seemed as if aside from taking steps mandated by the Oslo Accords, both sides had done everything they could to prevent the principle of partition from being put into practice. The situation — a cross between partition and occupation — intensified Palestinian terrorism, promoted a second *intifada*, and led to unprecedented Israeli investment in settlement infrastructure, a wall, and roadblocks. All these greatly detracted from the stature of advocates of partition on both sides.

Moreover, these circumstances engendered a strange, unholy coalition of supporters of a return to the "one state solution" of pre-1937. They include many Palestinians in Israel and in the Palestinian Authority, Gush Emunim and its supporters on the right, and the Israeli far left, with plenty of help from outsiders and self-styled moralists, especially in Europe. The ostensibly fringe conference held recently in London on behalf of the one-state solution represents a stance that is no longer limited to the fringes. A Palestinian advocate of partition would have difficulty today stating his views in public. In Israel it is once again being said that "there's no one to talk to," i.e., there's no one to divide up the land with.

According to the latest surveys, a silent majority of both Palestinians and israelis still favor the principle of partition.

We have to hurry. According to the latest surveys, a silent majority of both Palestinians and Israelis still favor the principle of partition. But on both sides, faith that it is possible to implement this principle has declined sharply. If we drag our feet in the current sluggish political negotiations between the two sides, if we don't have the courage to pay a political price today, we will pay a terrible price in blood tomorrow. A political attempt at a "one-state solution" will not be accepted in Israel, and for good reason. It would levy a terrible price in blood on both sides, would wipe out the dream of a Palestinian state for years to come, and would greatly undermine Israel's ability to exist. The only chance we — all of us — have is to partition the land. Those who dream of one state west of the Jordan would do best to be patient. It will happen, if ever, only after many years of evolution, and definitely not through a political decision. Both sides have to want partition very badly.

A Success Story

Efraim Inbar

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Israel was successful in parrying several military challenges intent on destroying the Jewish state. Over time the power differential between Israel and its regional foes has grown, enhancing Israel's capacity to deal successfully with security problems. While Israel has become stronger, its enemies, with the exception of Iran, have become weaker. The Jewish state is widely recognized as an entrenched reality in the Middle East by most of the world, and even within the Arab and Muslim states there is growing acceptance of Israel.

The common image of a deeply-torn Israel is inaccurate; as on many issues that were divisive in the past, there is a coalescence of views. An analysis of the political, social, and economic dynamics within Israel indicates that time is on Israel's side. This is good news for the ability of Israeli society to withstand inevitable tests of protracted conflict in the future.

Significantly, the ideological debate over the future of the territories acquired in 1967 is over. The Sinai was relinquished in 1979. Gaza is no longer a bone of contention after the 2005 unilateral withdrawal. Over two-thirds of Israelis oppose any territorial concessions in the Golan Heights. Concerning Judea and Samaria, there is a great majority in favor of partition, the traditional Zionist position, and in favor of retaining the settlement blocs, Jerusalem (the Temple Mount), and the Jordan Rift.

The current territorial debate revolves around the percentage of historic homeland that should be relinquished to Arab control. The discussion is not couched in ideological reasoning, but in a pragmatic assessment of Israel's security needs and domestic political costs. Similarly, the Israeli public no longer opposes the establishment of a Palestinian state, once seen as a mortal danger, although skepticism over the ability of Palestinian state-building is widespread.

Furthermore, the expectations of the Left for peaceful coexistence with the Palestinians after the Oslo agreements, which elicited ridicule and anger on the Right, were replaced by a more realistic consensus that peace is not around the corner. Israeli society has reconciled itself to the idea that it will have to live by its sword for the foreseeable future.

Similarly, economic policies that were once a source of domestic discord are no longer debated. Nearly all Israelis agree that capitalism is the best way to create further

wealth. Israel's strong, vibrant economy is a result of wise economic policies stressing market values, and adapting to globalization. Currently, all economic indices point to bright prospects despite continuous security problems. A strong economy reinforces Israel's social capacity to withstand the protracted conflict with its neighbors.

The Ashkenazi/Sephardi social rift also has become much less divisive than in the past. The number of "inter-marriages" is on the rise, obfuscating ethnic differences. The political system has responded positively to complaints of discrimination by significantly increasing the number of Sephardi politicians at the local and national levels. The past three decades have seen an influx of Sephardi Jews into the middle class and into the ranks of the senior officers of the Israeli military.

The only rift within Israeli society which is still of great social, cultural, and political importance is the religious-secular divide. However, this situation does not differ greatly from the afflictions of identity politics faced by other Western societies. Moreover, this divide is not impassable. A growing number of Israelis identify themselves as traditionalists, situated in the middle of the Orthodox-Secular continuum. The conflict is not between two clearly defined camps, leaving room for finding a reasonable *modus vivendi*.

The common image of a deeply-torn Israel is inaccurate; as on many issues that were divisive in the past, there is a coalescence of views.

In the international arena, developments have been similarly positive. The American victory in the Cold War and in the 1991 Gulf War bode well for Israel, a valued American ally. The November 1991 Madrid conference, convened by the US, marked greater Arab acceptance of Israel. The Arab League peace initiative (2002) and the Arab states' presence at the Annapolis gathering (2007), indicate the continuation of this trend.

Many important countries decided to improve relations with the Jewish state due to the perceptions of it as a good conduit to Washington and its military and technological strength. The year 1992 marked the establishment of ambassadorial relations by important states such as China, India, Turkey, and Nigeria. Jerusalem nourished new strategic partnerships with Ankara and Delhi, alliances which significantly impact the region.

The ups and mostly downs in Israeli-Palestinian relations have hardly had an impact on how states conduct their bilateral relations with Israel. Actually, the failures of the Palestinian national movement and the ascent of Hamas in Palestinian politics have elicited greater understanding for the Israeli predicament. 9/11 was an event that also sensitized much of the world to Israel's dilemmas in fighting Palestinian terrorism.

Palestinian terrorism was successfully contained since the large-scale 2002 offensive in the West Bank. Gaza will in all probability be subject to a similar military treatment to limit its nuisance value. The IDF learned its lesson from the 2006 fiasco in Lebanon and seems better prepared to deal with Hizbullah.

In contrast, Israel's foes in the Arab world display weakness and their stagnant societies are beleaguered by

problems. The United Nations Human Development Reports underscore their huge deficits entering into the 21st century. Their ability to challenge the *status quo* militarily is limited.

The only serious security challenge is a nuclear Iran. It is unclear how the international community will deal with this issue, but the world seems more attentive to Israel's perspective on this matter. Possibly, Israel might be left alone to deal with the Ayatollahs, but the obstruction of the Iranian nuclear program is not beyond the capabilities of Jerusalem.

Israel is a vibrant democracy that prospers and maintains strong social cohesion.

Finally, the *Zeitgeist* of this epoch, which stresses democracy and free market values, favors Israel rather than its Muslim opponents, who continue to grapple with the challenge of modernity.

In conclusion, Israel is a vibrant democracy that prospers and maintains strong social cohesion. Significantly, it built a mighty military machine able to meet all regional threats. In parallel, Israel's international status has improved, while support for Israel in the United States, its main ally and the hegemonic power in world affairs, remains high. Israel is a success story. If the country continues to inculcate the Zionist ethos into the next generations, its future looks bright.

Historical Success in Danger

Menachem Klein

While Israel celebrates its 60th anniversary, the Zionist movement that founded the state marks 120 years of existence. By any standards the Zionist project is an extraordinary historical success.

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The Zionist enterprise has two complementary aspects. The first includes the Zionist motivations, ideologies, and excuses. They are used to explain why Zionism oriented itself to Palestine to justify the national project, to accuse its opponents, and to defend its wrongs. This aspect is well known and too often used in domestic and external debates. The second aspect, however, is less discussed in public. It relates to the goals that the Zionist movement and Israel have and the means they use to achieve them. Hereafter I wish to examine the latter aspect.

It should be noted that the Zionist enterprise could not succeed without massive Jewish and international financial and political support. Since Zionism did not originate in Palestine nor encompass the Arab Middle East, it heavily depends on outside (i.e. outside Palestine/Israel) resources. Zionism and Israel succeeded in creating Hebrew culture and tapping outside manpower, funds, political backing, and national identity sentiment to support the project and to assure its existence.

Classical Zionism used three tools to achieve its goal of establishing a democratic Jewish national home in Palestine: immigration of the maximum available number of Jews to the historic homeland; acquisition of land in the free market with the permission of the political authority; and the establishment of colonies, towns, and institutions separate from those of the Arab majority. The architects and practitioners of the Zionist enterprise were aware of their demographic inferiority *vis-à-vis* the Palestinians. They aimed to overcome it by creating an asymmetric military and educational power balance with the majority in addition to the massive external support. Immigration was aimed at creating a critical demographic mass of Jews in the historic land of Israel; land acquisition was meant to create a continuous territorial entity where the Jewish state would be sovereign and from which it can expand; the establishment of colonies and institutions were meant to create a well-governed counter-society to that of the Palestinians. Until the end of the 1948 war, the Zionist movement acquired land and expanded its territory by purchase from Palestinian or Arab owners; by building settlements and cultivating the land as an act of ownership; by military conquest; and by administrative fiat — the nationalization of Palestinian land that Israel took in 1948 war.

With the establishment of Israel's external borders at the end of the 1948 war, it looked as if purchase and military conquest would become things of the past. Thereafter, within its borders Israel used settlement building and administrative means to achieve its classic goals. But the 1967 war opened up new territories for the pursuit of classic Zionism. The expansion of the state into the occupied territories became Israel's national project. It is a mistake to see the settlement movement as the process of repeated waves of young enthusiasts, or as a marginal group of religious eccentrics dragging the country along behind it. Even though the inner kernel of the settlers is motivated by a messianic Jewish ideology, they act in the name and with the help of the Israeli government. The state encouraged Jews to move to the new territories and build settlements, with the purpose of gaining control of the land there and redefining the state's borders. Since most of the territories occupied in 1967 (the exception being East Jerusalem) were not formally annexed to Israel, the military administered them and became the dominant factor in the day-to-day life of the Palestinian inhabitants. As Israel broadened the settlement project after 1977, the links between the settlements, the army, and the state bureaucracy grew tighter, to the point that it is difficult to make out where one ends and the other begins. A military-settlement-bureaucracy complex arose that suffocates not only the Palestinian inhabitants of the territories, but also the future of the state of Israel. With its territorial success, the classic Zionist method endangers the Jewish state.

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Israel's pre-1967 war borders with the Palestinians exist only in international law textbooks. Through its settlements, army bases, security zones, the separation wall, and the roads serving them exclusively, Israel *de-facto* expended. It contains 1967 land without annexing most of it. Israel created an ethno-military regime over Mandatory Palestine — the area from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea. If it does not exist already, then in a few years a Jewish minority will rule over the Palestinian majority. Based on a power asymmetry that works for them, the Jews rule the Palestinians through implementing differential levels of state supervision, security control, bureaucratic limitations, legal status, civil rights, and benefits. The Israeli Palestinians enjoy maximum rights and benefits compared to their compatriots in the 1967 territories. They are Israeli citizens represented in the Knesset, though systematically discriminated against by the Jewish majority that dominates development plans, budgets, education, housing, and ruling institutions. Below them are the Palestinians in East Jerusalem. They are permanent residents only, enjoying fewer benefits and suffering from more restrictions than the first group. However, with their right to move and work in Israel and to get health and national insurance they are above the West Bank Palestinians. Israel divides physically the Palestinians of the West Bank into several geographical units, and heavily restricts the movement between them by a huge system of roadblocks, checkpoints, and permits. Israel established this system prior to the Intifada of 2000, and developed it as the conflict escalated. The Palestinians in the Gaza Strip are the worst off, especially since the blockade put on them following the 2006 elections that brought Hamas to power.

Although many Israelis see the disadvantages of their system, they are unable to change it. The many actors deeply invested in this project can lose too much once it changes. To prevent this, they exercise veto power on a seriously fragmented political system and weak civil society. Therefore, the system will continue as long as the Palestinian subjects inside and Israel supporters outside accept it, and the cost of maintaining it is less than that of changing it.

Between Samson and Jeremiah

Ian S. Lustick

Dr. Ian S. Lustick, Bess W. Heyman Chair, Political Science Department, University of Pennsylvania.

Israel's existence in the Middle East is fundamentally precarious.

Twentieth century Zionism and Israeli statehood is but a brief moment in Jewish history. Indeed there is nothing more regular in Jewish history and myth than Jews "returning" to the Land to build a collective life — nothing more regular, that is, except, for Jews leaving the country and abandoning the project. Abraham came from Mesopotamia; Abraham left for Egypt. Jacob left for Hauran, then returned, then left with his sons for Egypt. The Israelites subsequently left Egypt with Moses and Joshua, and "returned" to the Land. Upper class Jews who did not leave with the Assyrians left with Jeremiah for Babylon; then they returned with Ezra and Nehemiah. In the period of Greek and Roman rule, massive numbers of Jews left the land to inhabit a Diaspora where more Jews lived than in the Land, even before the Roman expulsion. In the 19th and 20th centuries, a minority of Jews returned to the Land, but so far in the 21st century, more Jews have left than have arrived. Currently Jews are a minority, or very close to it, of the actual inhabitants of the Land of Israel, even excluding the territories of Reuven, Gad, Naphtali, and Asher (in Lebanon and Jordan).

All this coming and going, going and coming, points to the danger and ahistoricity of imagining that a Jewish state can be considered a "permanent" feature of the region, even if it is as muscular, as domineering, and as capable of producing a wealthy upper class as the Hasmonean kingdom.

The same point can be made by stripping away ideological prettifications and considering Israel in comparative terms, as a settler/pioneering state established by Europeans that did not annihilate or render irrelevant the indigenous population. In North America, parts of South America, Australia, and New Zealand, European "fragment" societies sank deep roots, overwhelmed indigenous populations, and appear today as unproblematic, permanent parts of the regions where they were planted. Where these fragments survived but did *not* annihilate or render irrelevant the indigenous populations, European-style societies have been less fortunate. Considering the category broadly (but omitting tiny enclaves such as Hong Kong, Macao, and Goa) we may include the Crusader kingdoms, South Africa, Rhodesia, French Algeria, and Israel. Israel, of course, is the only survivor. Counting from the state's establishment it is 60 years old. Counting from the first arrival of Zionist settlers in Palestine it is 125 years old — compared to almost 200 years for the Crusaders, about 80 years for the white version of the Union, then Republic, of South Africa, 120 years for French Algeria, and

34 years for independent (white) Rhodesia.

In the context of Jewish history, Israel's biggest challenge is to break the cycle of abandonment, return, and abandonment. In the context of comparative politics, that means escaping the fate of all other polities falling within the category of Israel's creation by establishing itself as a commonsensical, naturalized, and permanent feature of a non-European landscape. Can this be done?

Few Zionists were as clear-eyed about the imperative of reaching an agreement with the Palestinians in order to solve this problem as Ze'ev Jabotinsky. His solution was to reach an agreement with the "Arabs of Palestine," but only after they had been taught to abandon what he explicitly acknowledged were their natural, normal, and even inevitable struggles to eliminate the Zionist project. In his justly famous, but almost always mistranslated and misquoted 1925 article "On the Iron Wall," Jabotinsky emphasized three points: that Zionism needed peace with the Arabs of the Middle East to succeed in the long run; that Palestinians were acting rationally by violently resisting Zionist objectives to transform the country through massive Jewish immigration and Jewish state building; and that a fair compromise, "based on national equality and guarantees not to drive them out," could be negotiated only after decades of war had proven to Arabs the indestructibility of the Jewish presence.

In the context of Jewish history, Israel's biggest challenge is to break the cycle of abandonment, return, and abandonment.

From Ben-Gurion to Jabotinsky, Dayan to Begin, this has been Zionism's hopeful and rational response to the fact that Arab opposition to the "alien settlers," as Jabotinsky referred to Zionists, was neither barbaric nor fanatic, but perfectly normal for an indigenous people. The Iron Wall plan was that after decades of bloody defeats, the Arabs would divide among themselves. Some would be ready to accept half a loaf, rather than continue a fruitless battle for objectives that would still be understood as just, but more like a dream than an attainable reality. Extremists would continue to fight under the "No, Never," slogan. But according to Jabotinsky, Jewish political leaders behind the Iron Wall would be able to begin negotiations with the moderates, thereby isolating the extremists, and then use those negotiations to establish a permanent peace for both nations.

The first part of the strategy worked brilliantly. Bravely and effectively the Jews built and defended an Iron Wall by inflicting defeat after defeat on the Arabs. And although signs of a split were present even earlier, in the aftermath of 1967, and certainly in light of Jordanian and Egyptian initiatives in the early 1970s and the split between the "acceptance front" and the "rejection front," the stage was set for the next phase of the Iron Wall plan — outreach to Arab moderates to isolate the extremists and drive a fair and permanent bargain.

It was here that Jabotinsky's vision clouded. He did not realize that while a normal nation does produce moderates willing to compromise when it is regularly and painfully defeated for trying to achieve what it feels is just, a normal nation (such as the Jews) that experiences victory after victory over an apparently impotent foe will tend to eliminate moderates within itself, empower maximalists, and search for reasons to avoid negotiations and compromise in the

expectation that fulfilling all its dreams simply requires the dogged and ruthless exercise of power.

Only when the Arabs, including the Palestinians, erected their own "Iron Wall," and began teaching Jews painful lessons about the impossibility of eradicating the Arab problem by force (the War of Attrition, the Yom Kippur War, two Intifadas, two Lebanon Wars, etc.), did the Israeli populace gradually split between "moderates," grudgingly ready for a two state solution of some kind, and extremists adhering to the "No, Never," slogan. What ensued from the mid-1970s through the 1990s was a period of a "hurting stalemate," during which opportunities for reaching an historic agreement based on the kind of compromise that classical Zionism was aiming for in principle were lost.

Now that period is over. Triumphalist Jewish redemptionism, the bait and switch tactics of Ehud Barak at Camp David, the cumulative effect of Islamist trends in the Middle East, and Arab fury and disgust with Israeli tactics against the Palestinians have opened an ominous new era in which Muslims in the Middle East hate Israel more than they love the Palestinians, while Israelis see the Middle East as a whole as akin to the Lebanese "*botz*," (mud) encouraging those who can to prepare future lives for themselves and their children in Europe, America, or Australia. Instead of moderates on each side exploiting the rational human desire to avoid losing everything in order to save something, extremists on each side are prevailing. Reinforced by despair at the apparent inhumanity of the Arab/Muslim or Jewish/Zionist enemy, their messages of "No, Never!" have helped turn both Israelis and Arabs toward styles of thinking that avoid even contemplating a future in which Israel is an integral part of the region.

The fundamental challenge is existence, with peace as a requirement to meet that challenge.

Time is running against Israel. The elite knows it. Note how often Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni speak of "time running out" for the two state solution that they, so belatedly, have realized is the country's only hope. By now, even if Israel rends itself to offer the Palestinians a real West Bank/Gaza/al-Quds state with a satisfying solution to the refugee problem, this may no longer matter to the masses of Middle Eastern Muslims, or to the governments bound to replace decrepit regimes in Cairo, Riyadh, 'Amman, and Damascus. That will mean the end of the Palestinian option. Then peace really will be only attainable via abandonment of the Jewish state or the arrival of the Messiah.

What I am arguing, however, is that the stakes have changed. At the outset of the Zionist project, and still in 1948, the question was not peace, but whether a Jewish state (in whatever form) would exist in the Middle East. For decades following 1967, "progress," of a sort, was registered by the substitution of "peace" for the country's existence as its fundamental challenge. Now, again, the fundamental challenge is existence, with peace as a requirement to meet that challenge.

It may be too soon to say all hope is lost that Israel, via a generous Palestinian state solution, might escape the tragic patterns of both Jewish history and comparative politics. But for any Israeli to believe that time is on the side of the Jewish state, or to bet the future of the country on a contest in brutality with the rest of the Middle East, is actually to endorse one of two options — Samson, or, eventually, Jeremiah — to die with one's enemies or leave.

The Globalization and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Uri Ram

Israel is frequently discussed in terms of the Israeli-Arab conflict, the occupation of the Palestinian territories, or the launching of terrorist attacks against its citizens. Less frequently discussed is Israel as a capitalist society in the era of globalization. Yet since the 1990s Israel has undergone an extensive and intensive process of globalization, which has fundamentally altered its economy, society, culture, and politics. All this bears substantial effects on the Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Arab conflict and the prospects of its resolution. What, then, has been the overarching effect of globalization on Israel at its 60th year of independence? The short answer is — bifurcation. Under the impact of globalization, Israeli political culture has become simultaneously more universalistic and more particularistic, more constitutional and more tribal (or communal), more (neo-) liberal and more (neo-) fundamentalist and hence also more pragmatic and more nationalist in terms of Jewish-Arab relations.

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Geopolitically, Israel straddles the West (by being or being viewed as a protégée of the United States) and the Middle East (the heart of world Islamic resistance to the United States). Employing Benjamin Barber's colorful terms, Israel straddles "McWorld" and "Jihad." Meanwhile, within Israel itself there is a tension between the market and tribe. That is to say, the same two contending forces in the world at large are also present in Israel: a global, capitalist, civic trend on the one hand, and a local, national-religious, ethno-centric trend on the other.

The global-local or McWorld-jihad dialectic is the source of the confusing impressions that Israel has cast in recent years. Viewed from one vantage point, Israel is a stable parliamentarian democracy, is highly advanced economically, and is a Western-style consumer society. Viewed from another, Israel is an occupying and oppressive power, its Arab citizens suffer severe civic inequality, its population as a whole is polarized between a strong, rich upper class and mass of a peripheral underprivileged population, and it mixes state and religious affairs.

Thus, while Israeli society is undergoing socioeconomic "marketization" it also is experiencing cultural-political "tribalization." Moreover, in the case of Israel, the tension between McWorld and jihad is rendered as a tension between the Jewish and the Israeli facets of its identity. The official Zionist ideology depicts Israel as a "Jewish and democratic" nation-state. Yet the global dialectic of McWorld-jihad has driven a wedge between the "Jewish-democratic" Israel, producing two diverging trends — Jewish ethno-nationalism (neo-Zionism) on the one hand, and Israeli pragmatic-liberalism (post-Zionism) on the other. This bifurcation overlaps with class divisions in Israel, whereby

the socioeconomic winners of globalization have tended to become politically and culturally more "global," while the losers of globalization have tended to react more "locally." Significant sections of the upper classes in Israel, mostly of European descent (Ashkenazim), today are more concerned with the prospects of their business, the returns on their investments, their professional careers and their standard of living, than with national myths and military heroism. Large sections of the lower and marginal classes in Israel today — whether Mizrachim (of Eastern descent) in development towns or semi-Jewish new immigrants from Russia — find that the only channel open for their upward mobility and political integration passes through the adoption of exactly those myths and habits that the upper classes are now leaving behind them: ethnic solidarity and military service. The center-left political wing in Israel represents today the upper classes; the right-wing and religious political wing represents the lower and middle-lower classes.

There are manifold cleavages in Israel: nation, class, religion, ethnicity, and ideology, to name just the major ones. Yet much of this divergence coalesces around a global-local or civic-ethnic bifurcation. Observing Israeli society through the prism of the globalization paradigm thus sheds light on the most important changes that have reshaped it in the last two decades: the simultaneous development of two interwoven yet conflicting political cultures — the culture of the market and citizenship, which attracts the upper classes, and the culture of identity and communality, which attracts the lower classes.

Under the impact of globalization, Israeli political culture has become simultaneously more universalistic and more particularistic.

One offshoot of the socio-economic and political-cultural bifurcation described here is that the resentment of the lower classes against what they perceive as a threat to both the resources of their welfare and their sense of identity is directed against the Israeli-Palestinian "peace process," which they identify with the elite and the "Left." Thus, paradoxically, the globalization of Israel boosts the interest of some segments of its upper classes and political elites in reaching a "solution" to the conflict, while at the same time fostering the alienation of many in the lower classes from the pursuit of non-belligerent stabilization in Israeli-Palestinian relations, driving them to support nationalist-populist political actors who object to the process of withdrawing from the occupied territories and establishing there a Palestinian state. Thus globalization both facilitates and obstructs the pursuit of a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The social and cultural bifurcation it generates coalesces with the political and ideological divisions in a way that blocks those pragmatic elites in Israel and in Palestine who already reached the conclusion that the division of the land to two states along the Green Line borders of 1967 is the only solution to the century-long conflict. The same process has taken place in Palestine, where the rise of Hamas echoes belatedly the rise of Jewish religious-nationalism. As long as the jihadists on both sides have the upper hand, the prospect for a solution based on historical compromise and reconciliation looks very dim indeed.

Transformations in Israeli Politics since the 1990s

Doron Shultziner

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Israeli politics have gone through many structural and ideological transformations during the sixty years since Israel's declaration of independence on May 14, 1948. Some of the most interesting and far reaching developments have occurred since the 1990s. Israel's 60th anniversary invites an opportunity to reflect upon these developments in Israeli politics and predict possible developments.

Since the 1990s, the Israeli political system has undergone speedy structural reconfigurations and adjustments. Political polarization, on the one hand, and political stalemate, on the other hand, provided the context of these changes. This duality accelerated after the First Intifada (1987) and the onset of the peace process in Oslo (1993). Growing distrust in politicians and corresponding growing disengagement of the public from politics were the negative implications of political stalemate and polarization, which manifested in declining rates of voter turnout reaching its nadir in the 2006 elections.

While the Parliament and governments sank into disrepute, other political players began shaping important decisions that Israel's elected representatives were unable or unwilling to take. This tendency has had mixed results with regards to the Israeli democracy. The negative side was that the Knesset, Israel's symbol and body of democratic sovereignty, lost power to unelected professional bodies. The positive side is the heightened enforcement of the rule of law by these professionals.

This point may seem counterintuitive in light of the increasing exposure of corruption and other political scandals in Israel. An explanation for this paradox is not that actual levels of corruption have increased; in fact, they have probably remained stable or even declined. Rather, the normative context of politics became more sensitive to common political practices and the latter became intolerable by non-partisan political players. The State Comptroller's investigations and critical annual reports received increasing weight and public exposure, thus weeding out illegal practices and strengthening Israel's rule of law. The Attorney General became a powerful independent political player deciding on legal-political issues ranging from the indictment of Israeli ministers and prime ministers, state positions on the security fence, state relationship with the Jewish National Fund, and the indictment of the President. When the Netanyahu government made a dubious political deal to appoint an unqualified person to this position, the newly appointed Attorney General (now a politician) was forced to resign by

public discontent and mounting pressures from nonpartisan professionals. The appointment resulted in a legal investigation that jeopardized the Prime Minster's own position.

The champion of the rule of law in Israel, however, has been the Supreme Court. Under the leadership and influential philosophy of Chief Justice Aharon Barak, the Israeli Supreme Court took a leading role in shaping and redefining constitutional arrangements in Israel. Compromises and power struggles in 1992 bore two (quite ambiguous) Basic Laws. The Supreme Court's extended interpretation of these laws led to a full-fledged 'Constitutional Revolution'. The Supreme Court redefined itself as an active and assertive branch of government, and following the American model, took on the responsibility to check and balance the actions and legislations of the government and the Knesset, and to provide heightened (yet incomplete) protection of human rights. The Supreme Court sounded the drumbeat of Israel's march to become a liberal democracy and ensured its loyalty to the universal norms promulgated in its Declaration of Independence.

Through the actions of these various non-partisan political players, Israel's democracy has indeed improved, at least in terms of internal rule of law. The continued occupation of the West Bank (and until 2005 the Gaza Strip), however, has posed a mounting challenge to Israel's liberal-democratic values and achievements. The occupation led to Palestinian resistance, swaying Israeli public opinion to the right at several critical moments and strengthening political parties that supported the occupation. The First Intifada (1987) gave the Likud party a small plurality in the 1988 elections; the terrorist attacks in the heart of Israeli cities in 1995-1996 led to Netanyahu's razor-thin victory over Labor's Peres. The Second Intifada (2000) brought to power none other than one of Israel's staunchest hardliners, Ariel Sharon, and kept him there until he suffered a severe stroke in 2005. A similar sway to the right occurred after the Second Lebanon War (2006). Indeed, one of the paradoxes of Israeli politics is that violence is seen as proof of the bankruptcy of the left wing's soft-line ideology and a vindication of the right wing's hard-line ideology, instead of vice versa. In the context of these political psychological factors and a contentious (and often violent) reality since the Second Intifada, the Israeli left wing (Labor, Meretz, and the Arab parties) have been unable to win a plurality in parliament.

The champion of the rule of law in Israel, however, has been the Supreme Court.

The only way out of this deadlock had to come from within the right wing itself. It is an irony of history and a pathological sign of Israeli politics that Ariel Sharon – who ridiculed Amram Mitzna (Labor's chairman for the 2003 election) for his proposal of unilateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip – implemented a far more radical disengagement plan after he was elected. Politically, the Israeli right defeated the Israeli left. Ideologically, however, the left's policies triumphed as the right wing's Greater Israel ideals proved disastrous and detrimental to Israel's strategic needs and jeopardized the whole Zionist enterprise of a Jewish state, with a Jewish majority within internationally recognized borders. This realization gradually permeated even Sharon's political mind.

These ideological transformations within the right wing in Israel are one of the most important political developments of recent years because they make obsolete and irrelevant the long-standing dichotomous distinctions between the right and left. This new era in Israeli politics has already manifested itself in the disengagement plan, the

breakup and crisis of the Likud party, the creation of the center Kadima party, and talks of the latter's potential merger with Labor. Former Likud hardliners, including current Prime Minister Olmert, now implement a once far left ideology. They use radical vocabulary to emphasize that continued occupation and a lack of clear borders threaten to transform Israel into an apartheid state should the situation persist.

The ideological convergence on the Palestinian question is likely to bring to the fore other political dilemmas that are currently overshadowed by, and shelved due to, the conflict.

These major transformations in Israeli politics hold promises and new challenges for the future. Israel's elected representatives are trying to reassert their power vis-à-vis the Supreme Court. Yet, the norms and mechanisms of the rule of law will continue to improve. The ideological convergence on the Palestinian question is likely to bring to the fore other political dilemmas that are currently overshadowed by, and shelved due to, the conflict: Arab Israelis' demands for full recognition, hundreds of thousands of overseas migrants who want citizenship, socio-economic inequalities, the ultra-orthodox monopoly over marriage and divorce, the enactment of a constitution, and Israel's place in the Middle East's politics. The bargaining power of the religious parties is likely to decrease, ultra-national parties are likely to disappear, and mergers between several center-left parties will occur. The end of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will release Israeli politics from its central complex and will lead to the realignment of the system, the disappearance of the old politics and long-standing politicians, and the entrance of a new generation of politicians who will deal with a new set of political challenges of a state and society that look nothing like those from 60 years ago.

Debating the Failure of the 2000 Camp David Summit

Mark Tessler

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The Declaration of Principles signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in September 1993 raised hopes that a breakthrough in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict might at last be in sight, and during the next year or two there was indeed dramatic progress toward peace. However, this early momentum did not last long. By the middle of the 1990s the tide had turned both in the diplomatic arena and with respect to facts on the ground. In light of the deteriorating situation, including an impasse in the official negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, Ehud Barak and Yasir 'Arafat agreed in April 2000 to initiate secret talks, which began in Jerusalem in May and then continued in Sweden. Participants in this "Stockholm channel" drafted multiple versions of a framework agreement, and although no consensus was reached, these talks were a step on the road to the critical meeting at which, finally, there would be real and intense bargaining over all of the final status issues on which discussion had been repeatedly deferred. This meeting was the Camp David Summit of July 2000. The most important of the final status issues to which the summit devoted attention were borders, settlements, security, Jerusalem, and refugees.

While there are a number of very well-informed accounts of what transpired at Camp David, as well as a general consensus on the broad outlines of the positions and proposals that were advanced, there are also competing narratives and sharply divergent points of view about exactly what was offered by each side, and in particular about who is responsible for the failure to reach agreement on any of the final status issues. Many of these differing perspectives were brought together at a June 2003 conference held at Tel Aviv University, and organized in cooperation with Al-Quds University in Jerusalem. With presentations by Israelis, Palestinians, and Americans, including participants in the summit and other scholars and specialists, the proceedings offer both strong endorsements and strong criticism of the behavior of each of the negotiating teams at Camp David.

Opening remarks at the Tel Aviv conference were made by Itamar Rabinovich, a leading Israeli specialist on the Arab world who at the time was president of Tel Aviv University. Rabinovich used the occasion to propose a categorization of the competing narratives about the summit. Noting that there is neither a single Israeli version nor a single American one, to say nothing of one by Palestinians, Rabinovich divided the writing and pronouncements on the summit into four categories. The two most important are those he labeled the "orthodox narrative" and the "revisionist counterclaim."

The so-called "orthodox narrative" reflects the assessments offered by Prime Minister Barak and President Clinton, as well as some of their deputies. It holds that the Israelis made unprecedented and indeed revolutionary concessions at Camp David. For example, Barak crossed traditional Israeli red lines by agreeing to Palestinian sovereignty in the Jordan Valley and some parts of Jerusalem. More generally, as expressed by Barak himself, "For the first time in the history of this conflict, the Palestinians were offered … an independent contiguous state in more than 90 percent of the West Bank and in 100 percent of the Gaza Strip, access to neighboring Arab countries, the right of return for Palestinian refugees to any place in the Palestinian state, massive international assistance and even a hold in a part of Jerusalem that would become the Palestinian capital."

Thus, according to this narrative, the summit failed not because of any deficiencies in what the Israelis offered but, rather, because the Palestinians, and 'Arafat in particular, were not seriously interested in concluding a peace agreement. After describing what the Israelis offered, Barak stated that "Arafat refused to accept all this as a basis for negotiations, and [later] deliberately opted for terror. That is the whole story." Similarly, according to Gilead Sher, one of the Israeli principals at Camp David, "It was Yasir Arafat who critically failed … The Camp David talks could have paved the way toward ending the occupation. What the Palestinians called a conspiracy or a trap was in fact a genuine invitation to negotiate, to have a real give and take process, unlike their wish to automatically obtain the totality of their demands." Dennis Ross, one of the American principals at the summit, also blames the Palestinian leader for the failure to reach an agreement. He writes that "Arafat has made being a victim an art form; he can't redefine himself as someone who must end all claims and truly end the conflict." At Camp David, Ross asserts, "Only one leader was unable or unwilling to confront history and mythology: Yasir Arafat."

Fall 2000 brought lethal and sustained confrontations that soon put to rest any hope that the peace process might be resurrected.

Rabinovich's second narrative, the so-called "revisionist counterclaim," advances two interrelated arguments: that there were serious shortcomings in what the Israelis offered, even if the proposals did break new ground from the Israeli perspective; and that responsibility for the failure to conclude an agreement does not rest solely with 'Arafat and the Palestinians. These arguments are advanced by some Israeli and American analysts, as well as by Palestinians, and they do not accept that theirs is a "revisionist" narrative. Rather, they contend that the summit was followed by a campaign of disinformation and spin, led by Israeli and American allies of Barak, emphasizing Israel's "generous offer" and 'Arafat's "rejectionism." According to Robert Malley, another important member of the American team at Camp David, "the largely one-sided accounts spread in the period immediately after Camp David have had a very damaging effect." Malley adds, however, that these accounts "have been widely discredited over time."

With respect to Barak's offer, Palestinians contend that it was not generous at all, primarily because it failed to give them 22% of historic Palestine, as they believe had been agreed to in the Oslo Accord, but also because it remained vague on many details. As expressed by Akram Haniyeh, a close advisor to Arafat and a member of the Palestinian team at the summit, "Israel's goal at Camp David was to obtain the Palestinian 'golden' signature on final recognition and the 'end of conflict' at a cheap price — without returning all the land, without acknowledging full sovereignty, and, most

dangerous of all, without solving the refugee issue." Ron Pundik, an Israeli critic of the "generous offer" thesis, offers a similar assessment: "It was only generous compared to the traditional position of Israel's right-wing, which never seriously wanted peace, or to Barak's opening position in the talks which, as even he himself subsequently realized, was unrealistic." With respect to the charge of Palestinian intransigence, Pundik adds, "Contrary to the perceptions that have now taken root due to the Israeli spin, the Palestinians actually did display during the negotiations understanding for Israel's needs and interests." Malley writes in this connection that "all three sides are to be indicted for their conduct" at Camp David, including the Palestinians, but the summit did not fail because of Palestinian rejectionism. "If there is one myth that has to be put to rest," he contends, it is that the American-backed Israeli offer "was something that any Palestinian could have accepted. One should not excuse the Palestinians' passivity or unhelpful posture at Camp David. But the simple and inescapable truth is that there was no deal at Camp David that Arafat, Abu Mazen, Dahlan or any other Palestinian in his right mind could have accepted."

The collapse of the Camp David summit was followed by efforts to revive negotiations and break the stalemate. They included a dinner meeting between Barak and 'Arafat at the Israeli Prime Minister's home and Israeli-Palestinian talks at Taba, Egypt in January 2001. However, none of this produced lasting results. On the contrary, fall 2000 brought lethal and sustained confrontations that soon put to rest any hope that the peace process might be resurrected. Nor did subsequent events improve the situation. There were important changes in the political map of both Israelis and Palestinians. These included 'Arafat's death, Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, a stroke that removed Ariel Sharon from the political scene, the emergence of a new centrist government coalition in Israel, and the victory of Hamas in the 2006 Palestinian elections. But clashes between Israel and the Palestinians continued throughout this period, fueling anger and deepening distrust. Accordingly, in the judgment of most observers, a peace agreement was as remote at the end of 2007 as it had been at the end of the Camp David summit seven and a half years earlier.

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Israel and the Arab World between War and Peace

Eyal Zisser

During the past 60 years, Israel has had to fight constantly for its independence, indeed for its very existence. In the course of this struggle it has become the strongest, most prosperous state in the Middle East — stronger than all its Arab neighbors combined. Furthermore, Israel has struck roots in the region and established a set of relations, sometimes close and intimate, with some of its neighbors, even with some those with whom it had been locked in conflict for many years. Even so, Israel has still not reached a condition of peace and security.

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An important element in the Zionist idea that led to the establishment of the State of Israel was the desire to turn the Jewish people into "a nation like all the nations," a "normal" nation — something the Jews were unable to do during the long period of their *Galut* ("Exile"). The Zionist founders of Israel envisioned and aspired to the establishment of a Jewish state living in peace with its neighbors, assuming that achieving this would ensure the existence of the state and the security and welfare of its citizens.

This goal has been achieved only in part. Israel's military power may be able to ensure the Jewish state's independence and sovereignty. However, in the eyes of many of its neighbors, Israel is still a foreign element that must be uprooted at all costs. Strong feelings of animosity, hostility, and outright hatred towards the Jewish state lurk just beneath the surface, and sometimes break out into the open. To see this, one need only recall Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinejad's recent statements, which included calling Israel an infectious germ that must be destroyed — terminology that reminds many Israelis of the much darker days of the not so distant past.

In order to come into existence the State of Israel had to engage in a bloody struggle against an Arab world that refused to accept the idea of partitioning Palestine and establishing a Jewish state on part of it. Israel's main problem for many years was the hostility of its neighbors. Israel's adversaries were led by Jamal 'Abd al-Nasir's Egypt during the 1950s and 1960s, and Egypt was perceived in Israel as the main threat facing the country.

However, most of the Arab states, and perhaps even all of them, eventually changed their attitude. The years of bloody struggle had taken a heavy toll on the countries actively involved in the conflict. Furthermore, most of the Arab states had to face significant social and economic crises of their own that could no be ignored. As a result, Arab leaders, beginning with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, came to realize that

their own state interests dictated an end to the conflict with Israel. In November 1977 Sadat launched an historic peace initiative that led to the signing of a peace treaty with Israel. Many others followed in Sadat's steps, so that by the early 2000s the Arab League was able to adopt a peace proposal approved by all of its members that expressed readiness to recognize the State of Israel's right to exist and to establish peaceful relations with it.

The front-line confrontation states of Egypt, Jordan, and to a certain degree, even Syria, have shifted their position and are now prepared to establish peaceful relations with Israel. However, the removal or reduction of this threat to Israel has taken place under circumstances in which other menaces, old in their roots and new in their character, have increased.

First among them is the Palestinian question, which has plagued Israel from the moment of its establishment, and even earlier. During Israel's first two decades, it seemed as though the problem had been limited to the question of the future of those Palestinians in refugee camps scattered across the Arab world. However, in the wake of the June 1967 Six-Day War the Palestinian question reemerged — driven in large part by the growth of the Palestinian national movement — and became a prominent item on Israel's and the world's agenda.

In the current clash with Iran, Israel finds itself in the unusual and interesting position of having allies among the Arab states.

The Palestinian national movement unequivocally opposed at first Israel's right to exist and called for the destruction of the Jewish state. In time this position changed, culminating in the movement's readiness to recognize Israel's existence and reach a peace settlement. At the end of the Six-Day War, Israel had expressed a readiness to relinquish the territories over which it had gained control in exchange for a peace agreement. Over the years, however, the idea that Israel should encompass all of the Land of Israel west of the Jordan River, including the whole West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Greater Israel) gained strength. This approach found expression in the construction of settlements in the disputed territories.

The Palestinian *intifada* of 1987 and growing concern over the demographic aspect of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict led many Israelis to call for abandoning the "Greater Israel" idea in favor of arriving at a settlement with the Palestinians based on the notion of two states for two nations. These people warned that the failure to reach such a settlement might enable Israel to remain a single state, but it would also compel it in time to become bi-national in character. Such an eventuality, they noted, was far removed from the Jewish and democratic entity envisioned by the Zionist thinkers and founders of Israel.

The process of disengagement from the Gaza Strip led by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon culminated in September 2005 and gave expression to the "two states for two nations" solution, or at least a solution based upon Israel withdrawing into borders that would ensure the maintenance of its Jewish and democratic foundations. Recall that Israel came into being when its first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, decided that the partition plan — the main feature of which was the establishment of a Jewish and democratic state in part of the Land of Israel — should be accepted. As the country reaches its 60th birthday, Israel's Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, seeks to follow in Ben-Gurion's path and reach

a decision no less momentous.

Ironically, however, the deep changes taking place in Israeli society have been met by a radical turn of events in Palestinian society whose main feature is the rise to power of Hamas — an Islamic movement that refuses to accept the existence of the State of Israel or to establish peaceful relations with it. Thus the Palestinian question remains unresolved. And Israel will continue into the foreseeable future to ponder whether this tangled and complex conflict with the Palestinians, involving sensitive issues such as refugees and Jerusalem, can really be settled. Perhaps all that is realistically achievable at the present time is a reduction of the acuteness of the conflict.

The Arabs living within the State of Israel who hold Israeli citizenship constitute an additional element of the Palestinian question. They continue to waver between carrying on a civil rights struggle aimed at improving their conditions as citizens and waging a nationalist struggle that will widen the already great gap separating them from the Jewish citizens of Israel.

It is also ironic that the withdrawal of most of the Arab states from the calamitous conflict with Israel has taken place at the same time as the emergence of new forces intent on fuelling it, most notably Iran and al-Qa'ida. Israel perceives Iran as a clear and present threat because of the latter's efforts to achieve nuclear capability and because of its leaders' unrelentingly hostile rhetoric towards Israel.

This has led some observers in Israel to assert that the Middle East conflict is no longer between Arabs and Israelis, but between moderates and radicals.

In the current clash with Iran, Israel finds itself in the unusual and interesting position of having allies among the Arab states. The 1950s witnessed a parallel situation, when Iran and Turkey joined Israel in the so-called "alliance of the periphery" in order to confront the Nasserite threat from Egypt. Today, Arab states, led by Egypt and Saudi Arabia, are joining Israel, if only covertly, to advance their mutual interest *vis-à-vis* the threat from Iran. This has led some observers in Israel to assert that the Middle East conflict is no longer between Arabs and Israelis, but between moderates and radicals. The war in Lebanon in the summer of 2006 presented a good example of this configuration: while not everyone who opposed Israel was Arab, not all of the Arabs opposed Israel.

Without doubt, Israel possesses sufficient military power to defend itself against any military threat. However, this is not enough to achieve the recognition, peace, and quiet security that Israel longs for, or the normalcy for the Jewish people that the Zionist thinkers and founders of Israel sought. This goal can be achieved only through a combination of military might and effective statecraft aimed at a peace settlement. The lesson for Israel of the past 60 years — marked by both bloody fighting and breakthroughs to peace — is that the goal of living in peace and security in the region *is* attainable.

V

Religion and Society

Challenges on the Road to Tranquility

Ralphael Cohen-Almagor

We cannot expect Israel to be normal, as the country is constantly under threat and stress. But we can expect Israeli leaders to have some knowledge and expertise in dealing with the main challenges that lie ahead. These challenges include resolving the conflict with the Palestinians; integrating Israeli-Arabs into society; and changing the relationship between the state and religion.

In order to address these challenges effectively, Israeli leaders will have to summon the courage and apply their skills to the pursuit of several objectives: 1) dividing the land and ending the occupation, thereby facilitating a two-state solution; 2) accommodating the interests of the Israeli- Arabs — striving to safeguard equal rights and liberties for *all* citizens notwithstanding nationality, religion, race, or color, while insisting that citizens fulfill their duties as such; and 3) ensuring the separation between state and religion.

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RESOLVING THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Between the Jordan River and the sea there are now about 7.2 million Israelis (among them 1.3 million Israeli-Arabs) and 4 million Palestinians. The annual growth rate of the Palestinians is among the highest in the world. Israel faces the danger of becoming another Bosnia, or another white South Africa, or a combination thereof. Therefore there is an existential need to realize a two (hopefully not three) state solution.

In the Camp David talks of 2000, Israel proposed giving up 92% of the West Bank and 100% of the Gaza Strip. Yasir ʻArafat insisted on the Right of Return, which meant suicide for Israel. In the following Taba talks, Israel was willing to acknowledge family unification on humanitarian grounds, arguing that it cannot accept a full-scale right of return for all Palestinian refugees. By insisting on this, ʻArafat insinuated that he wished the demise of Israel as a Jewish-Zionist state.

The occupation should be minimized if not terminated, and the sooner the better. Every person aspires to be free. As the historian Lord Acton (1834-1902) stated so eloquently: "Liberty is not a means to a higher political end. It is itself the highest political end ... liberty is the only object which benefits all alike, and provokes no sincere opposition."

Generally, I favor bridges rather than fences. However, when during the March of 2002 Passover terrorists attacked Hotel Park in Netanya, where people convened to

hold their traditional meal, Israel's understandable response was to erect the fence in order to defend its population.

The effects of the partial construction of the fence have been stunning and conclusive. Whereas there had been an average number of 26 terrorist attacks per year, the number of attacks has dropped to three per year. Meanwhile, the death toll has fallen by over 70% (from 103 to 28), and the number of injured has dropped by more than 80% (from an annual average of 628 to 83). Terrorist penetration into Israel from the northern West Bank, where the initial portion of the fence was completed, has dropped from 600 per year to zero — as Israel was able to foil every suicide bombing originating from the northern West Bank and specifically from the cities of Nablus and Jenin, areas that had previously been infamous for exporting suicide bombers.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that the route of the fence is discriminatory. Large parts of the fence pass inside the Green Line. 16.6% of the West Bank land is expected to serve as a buffer between Israel and the fence. These are the most fertile lands of the Bank. Upon the fence's completion, 160,000 Palestinians are likely to be locked in buffer zones. Forty-seven gates are supposed to enable the movement of farmers to their lands. However, these gates are opened at the discretion of Israeli guards; Palestinian freedom of movement is extremely limited.

The fence should have been built along the 1967 Green Line, with some accommodations necessary to include large cluster settlements in the Jerusalem area and Ariel, with compensation for the Palestinians in other areas. The idea of using the fence to create geographic-political facts through the *de facto* creation of a "greater" Israel and a "lesser" Palestine is unwise and unjust. The fence should be moved, and it will be. The questions revolve only around time, money, and blood involved. In the Bible, there is one word for both money and blood: "Damim." Israeli politics eloquently and forcefully explains why.

Israel faces the danger of becoming another Bosnia, or white South Africa, or a combination thereof.

INTEGRATING THE ISRAELI-ARABS INTO SOCIETY

After the Holocaust, the goal was to found a safe haven for Jews from all over the world so as to avoid the possibility of another horrific experience of that nature. Indeed, the United Nations acknowledged the need to establish a Jewish state. Yet, by its nature a Jewish state discriminates against Israeli Arabs.

To assure an equal status for the Arab minority, which constitutes some 19% of the Israeli population, the Declaration of Independence holds that Israel will foster the development of the country for the benefit of *all* its inhabitants; that it will be based on the foundations of liberty, justice, and peace; that it will uphold complete equality of social and political rights to all of its citizens irrespective of religion, race, or sex; and that it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience; language, education, and culture.

There is a lot to do in order to realize these ends. Israel needs to strive for equality in housing, in municipal budgets, in allocation of resources; fight against racism, bigotry, and discrimination; introduce changes to accommodate the interests of Israeli-Arabs so that they would "feel at home" in their own country. Delegates of the Arab minority should be represented, in accordance with their size in society, in the Knesset and in the government. Studies of *all* religions that exist in Israel should be made available.

SEPARATING THE STATE AND RELIGION

Democracy is supposed to allow each and every individual the opportunity to follow their conception of what is good without coercion. Israel today gives precedence to Judaism over liberalism. I submit that on issues such as this one, the reverse should be the case. Israel, being the only Jewish state in the world, should strive to retain its Jewish character. The symbols should remain Jewish, with some accommodations, in order to make the state a home for its Palestinian citizens as well. Shabbat should remain the official day of rest. Palestinian villages and towns may make Friday their day of rest. Hopefully, one day, Friday and Shabbat will become the two official days of rest.

However, the preservation of the Jewish character of the state should not entail coercion of the predominant secular circles of Israel. We need to differentiate between the symbolic and the *modus operandi* aspects. Regarding the latter, there must be a separation between state and religion. People are born free and wish to continue their lives as free citizens in their homeland. Coercion is alien to our natural sentiments and desires to lead our lives freely.

Hence, while Shabbat should be observed, malls and shopping places outside the cities should be available for the many people who work during the week and do their shopping during weekends. Public transportation should be made available for all people. Kosher shops and restaurants should be available, as should non-Kosher shops and restaurants for the secular, agnostic population. Most importantly, the significant events in one's life — birth, wedding, divorce, and death — should be handled in accordance with the people's own choices. If they so desire, people may involve the rabbinate and other religious institutions in their private lives. If people wish to have secular ceremonies, then they should have the ability to conduct them and not be forced to undergo practices that mean very little, if anything, to them. The state should have as little say as possible in intimate, family affairs.

Israel today gives precedence to Judaism over liberalism.

CONCLUSION

Israelis yearn for tranquility — for normalcy. In the short term, at least, this will surely be difficult. Nonetheless, the surest path to ensuring that the country survives and thrives as a democracy is for Israeli leaders to maintain a zero tolerance posture toward all forms of terror while seeking to build trust and good will with Israel's neighbors, and between Israeli Arabs and Israeli Jews. It will further require them to ensure that liberalism prevails over Judaism.

The Intergenerational Split Between Secular and Religious Jews

Eva Etzioni-Halevy

A major component of the socio-political scene in Israel concerns the relations between secular and religious Jews. Israel's 60th anniversary is an opportune time to take stock of the recent changes and long-term, not easily reversible trends in this arena.

To some extent Israel is a multicultural society, portions of whose population are distinguished from each other by country of origin, length of stay in the country, and more.

The central axis of differentiation among Israeli Jews is between the secular (about 35-40%) and the religious (about 15-20%, including the ultra-orthodox) segments of society. The "traditional," comprising the remaining 35-40% of the Jewish public, lie between these two camps.

The secular-religious divide overlaps with the political cleavage between the "right" and the "left." Most (though not all) religious Jews are right-of-center in their political leanings, while about half of the "traditional" and only a minority of the secular are political rightists.

The conflict between the secular and religious camps, which overlaps with the political struggle between the "right" and the "left," has recently softened. At this juncture, the character and tone of the conflict is no more virulent than what is legitimate, indeed necessary, in a democracy. To use Samuel Huntington's terms, there is no "clash of civilizations" but rather a parting of them.

By contrast, the gap between the secular and religious camps is a long-term phenomenon that is becoming more pronounced from generation to generation, while the commonality between them has steadily eroded.

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THE ATTENUATION OF CONFLICT

The conflict between religious and secular Jewish Israeli forces has become milder in recent years for two reasons: 1) the disappearance of "Shinui," a secularist party that had fanned the flames of secular-religious conflict for its own political aims, and 2) the fear that the confrontation between the camps might erupt into violence.

The clash between the camps reached its most violent expression with the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995. The murderer, Yigal Amir, did not in any way represent the religious right, but he originated from this camp and his motive was that of preventing a "left-of-center" policy (the Oslo Accords) from being implemented. Hence the fear that something of this nature might happen again has led

to the attenuation of the most vitriolic mutual vilification, which had included referring to one's opponents as Nazis, fascists, Arab terrorists, enemies of the Jewish people, or traitors.

The most recent physical confrontation between a left-of-center government and the religious right concerned the evacuation by the security forces of settlers from the Gaza Strip in 2005, and from the unauthorized West Bank settlement of Amona in 2006. Although these events involved violence, it was of a restrained character — resulting in a few minor injuries, but no loss of life.

Since then, the government has been drawing back from confrontation with settlers in unauthorized settlements, opting, instead, for a compromise whose outcome is not yet clear.

Thus, in comparison to previous years, conflict has been more subdued than before. As noted, such conflict, as long as it proceeds within the guidelines of democratic rules and the diversity of opinion that underlies it, is not only legitimate, but is the oxygen that flows through the veins of a democracy. Without it, no meaningful elections would be possible.

THE GROWING INTERGENERATIONAL SPLIT

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Paradoxically, the split between the secular and the religious has increased. This is a long-term, intergenerational, and possibly irreversible trend in Jewish Israeli society.

Whereas the ultra-orthodox have long lived in towns and neighborhoods of their own, the other religious segments of society have tended to live in "mixed" environments. In recent years, however, an increasing number of the young religious have separated themselves from the secular by moving into neighborhoods, towns, and settlements of their own, where religious law governs conduct in public spaces. Meanwhile, the public spaces they leave behind, in which the secular form the majority, have become more and more secularized. At the beginning of the state era, all Jewish shops and entertainment venues were closed on the Sabbath and the Jewish holidays. Today, many remain open on those days.

There also has been an increasing split in the observance of national holidays: public Independence Day celebrations, which used to form a ritual of unity for the entire nation, have moved from the public into the private sphere. Jerusalem Day, marking the unification of the city following the Six-Day War, is celebrated mainly by the religious, while the day of mourning in memory of the Rabin assassination is observed almost exclusively by the secular left.

Most importantly, there is a growing intergenerational split in Jewish identity: The religious, as well as almost all the traditional and first generation secular (i.e. those who have been raised in religious homes) define themselves as possessing a strong Jewish identity. This identity remains strong among the second and third generation secular, but is substantially less than it is among the religious and the "traditional." Furthermore, knowledge of Judaism among the secular is declining from generation to generation.

The memory of the Holocaust, which has long served as a common denominator binding the entire Jewish people together, is gradually fading as the number of survivors — those best equipped to hold the memory alive — di-

minishes. Soon there will be no one left to recount the Holocaust from first-hand experience.

COUNTERVAILING FACTORS ARE INSUFFICIENT

Factors that work in the opposite direction include the previously mentioned "traditional," along with the Conservative and Reform movements. All of these stand in between the religious and the secular camps. But the Conservative and Reform movements have not been taking off in Israel. The traditional group alone can mitigate, but cannot reverse, the trend of a widening abyss between the secular and the religious.

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The growing separation between the camps is not on the verge of leading to Israel's breakdown. But the deeper the cleavage, and the narrower the common ground between them, the greater the difficulty they will have in cohabiting in the same political system.

What could bridge the chasm to some extent would be if Judaism were to reinvent itself as a set of values, ideas, symbols, and cultural contents that are meaningful not only to the religious and the "traditional,' but also to secular Jews. In fact, although there are some rabbis who have been making valiant attempts to render Judaism more "user-friendly" for secular Jews, the goal of making it truly significant to this group is still far from being realized.

Israeli Civil Society at 60

Tamar S. Hermann

On the face of it, the concept of civil society[1] should have come naturally to Israeli society based on past experience. After all, the Diaspora's Jewish communities around the world were in many ways classical civil society formations — voluntary, always set apart from the state apparatus, and in charge of their members' various identity, economic, religious, educational, and other necessities on a non-profit basis. Like most other civil society organizations, these communities also functioned as social centers, and in this capacity they molded the shared values and defined the acceptable codes of behavior.

The Yishuv (Jewish pre-state society in mandatory Palestine) was also a fully developed civil society formation, with the sovereign political authority lying in the hands of the British Mandate authorities. Nevertheless, the facts on the ground suggest that as of today, Israel's 60th year of independence, Israeli civil society — despite its significant volume[2] and its impressive performance on a wide range of highly necessary social, political, and economic functions — is not generally perceived as a main pillar of Israeli democracy. In fact, presently, the civil society is widely perceived by Israeli politicians, the general public, and even some of its own activists[3] as a "temporary order" that will give way to the state if and when the latter reclaims its role as the main provider of social services and as the chief regulator of the socio-economic sphere.

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1. For lists of civil society's functions and characteristics, see, e.g., Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992); Ernest Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1994); Adam B. Seligman, *The Idea of Civil Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); and Thomas Janosky, *Citizenship and Civil Society* (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

2. According to the government's records, in 2006 Israeli civil society encompassed more than 25,000 registered organizations and already in 2002 it made use of 236,000 jobs, most of which were voluntary (i.e., unpaid). See http://www.pmo.gov.il/PMO/Communication/Spokesman/2008/02/spokemigzar240208.htm.

3. A classical example of many civil society activists' expectations that at critical moments the state takes over issues that they took upon themselves to deal with could be found recently in the heated dispute over the African (mostly Sudanese and Eritrean) illegal migrants. While the official Israeli policy was and still is of closing its gates, and while Prime Minister Ehud Olmert goes as far as calling this incoming influx of migrants a "human tsunami," http://www.haaretz.co.il/hasite/spages/957863.html, the Physicians for Human Rights — Israel (PHR) organization, closed down its medical clinic in Tel Aviv where for years it provided medical services to illegal residents as well. In their closing statement, PHR ignored the fact that the state made a decision not to let the migrants in and demanded that the health authorities take responsibility for these illegal residents medical needs. See "On the 23rd of March: PHR-Israel Closes the Open Clinic; Demands Responsibility of Israeli Health Ministry," Physicians for Human Rights — Israel, March 16, 2008, http://www/phr.org.il/phr/article.asp?articleid=557&catid=64&pcat=-1&lang=ENG.

Clearly, in recent years, the Israeli state has exhibited massive withdrawal from many of its "traditional" roles as a self-declared welfare state.[4] This was partly the result of the world-wide phenomena of globalization and privatization, and partly the consequence of the ongoing change in the top leaders' definition of the state's basic responsibilities for its citizens' wages, job security, education, personal security, medical needs, etc. Although certain free market advocates present some figures suggesting otherwise, the prevalent sense in Israel today is that the state has neglected some of its basic duties to the point where the weaker public sectors, especially but not exclusively, are unprotected and unattended. Thus, although the official position fosters the idea of limiting the (direct) involvement of the state in the socio-economic realm,[5] the empirical data indicate that the Israeli public considers this limited involvement of the state as a malfunction and widely expects it to come back into the picture to act as a strong regulator as well as provide extensive services and cater to a wide range of needs and wishes of its citizens (and in certain cases even of non-citizens).

Thus in a recent focus group-based study conducted in 2007,[6] the majority of the participants in all groups acknowledged the critical need of Israeli society for the services and support presently provided mainly, and by default, by civil society organizations. As one participant put it, "at least they are doing things and help people [as opposed to the state]," while another participant maintained in the same spirit that, "the very fact that they actually provide when someone is in need is highly valuable under the circumstance." Most, although not all participants also expressed high appreciation for the quality of the services given by these organizations and even more so to the warmth and attention they offer to the needy: "When I had to weep over a severe case of cancer in my family, the only shoulder I could cry over was that of the people of the Israel Cancer Association." At the same time, in almost all focus groups the participants expressed their concerns about the absence of a regulatory body which could monitor the activities and functioning of the civil society organizations and particularly the salaries of their top managers (following several revelations by the media of mega-earning by some of these managers). These positive attitudes towards civil society notwithstanding and apparently contrary to the free market-small state logic, all participants favored a future state of affairs in which civil society organizations would be "nice to have," but where the state would regain a strong

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4. Even prominent politicians acknowledge this dismal situation. For example, Yuli Tamir, Israeli Minister of Education, said in so many words that Israeli civil society takes upon itself missions that are classical duties of the government. See Yuli Tamir, "Instead of the Government and the Knesset," *Haaretz*, January 26, 2007, http://www.haaretz.co.il/hasite/pages/ShArtPE.jhtml?itemNo=112412&contrassID=2&subContrassID=3&sbSubContrassID=0.

5. The often-heard official counter-argument is that significant amounts of money are being transferred (indirectly) to the weaker sectors via the civil society organizations. See e.g., http://www.pmo.gov.il/PMO/Communication/Spokesman/2008/02/spokemigzar240208.htm.

6. The study included nine different focus groups constructed by gender, age, class, religiosity, ethnic origin, nationality, date of immigration to the country, and place of residence. Each group included 8-9 participants (all together around 80 people, not a statistically representative sample of the population but quite a good selection of the common "opinion clusters." The discussions took about two hours each and were conducted in the native language of the group's majority (Hebrew, Arabic, or Russian). For more details see Hermann, Lebel, and Zaban, *The Politics of Antipolitics* (Jerusalem: Israel Democracy Institute, forthcoming).

presence in its citizens' lives. A typical example of this dominant position can be found in one participant's statement: "It is the state that should administer the society. The government is your representative. This is the best and normal way of taking care of the majority of the people. Other bodies can perhaps be of help but cannot replace it because the people must have some[body] which will be accountable to them, someone to whom they can come with their troubles and who will have to deal with their problems." Similarly: "We are all Israelis and we call for the guidance of the state and wish to bond to the state."

Thus it is apparent that the Israeli state must redefine, and indeed expand its relevant spheres of activity in order to maintain its public legitimacy. At the same time, Israeli civil society — despite its success in terms of growth in volume and role expansion — should invest more effort in establishing itself as a legitimate and permanent actor in the democratic arena and not as a substitute service provider.

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Israel and the Jews from Arab Countries

Avi Picard

Why did Jews immigrate to Israel? And how were these Jews received after they settled into the young state? These central questions are the subject of continuing debate among scholars from various fields.

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On one side of this debate are those who have taken the "establishment" approach. They argue that Jews from Arab countries were persecuted in their homelands, just as Jews in Europe had been. They were brought to Israel in rescue operations, where upon arrival they received equal treatment from state authorities, and, along with their children, were afforded a modern education.

On the other side of the debate are those who have adopted a "critical" approach. They contend that Jews had lived harmoniously with Muslims in Arab countries until Zionism destabilized their status. That is, Jews in Arab lands came to be identified with Zionism while Muslims came to be identified with Palestinian Arabs. Nonetheless, Jews from Arab countries were not enthusiastic about moving to Israel. In fact, were it not for the campaign waged by the Jewish Agency and the Israeli government, they would not have left their Arab homelands. Moreover, when they did immigrate to Israel they faced discrimination, served as cannon fodder and cheap labor, and their cultural identity was suppressed.

It is difficult to generalize the attitudes and behavior of Muslim Arabs toward the Jewish minorities in their midst. While Jews tended to be humiliated in Yemen, they were treated relatively fairly in Iraq and in some places in Morocco as well. Compared to Christian European attitudes in the Middle Ages, Jews in Arab countries faired reasonably well. But things changed in Western Europe as a result of the Enlightenment: Jews there were emancipated, and most of them became equal citizens (except for the Russian empire in which half of world Jewry lived). In contrast, Jews remained second-class citizens in Muslim countries.

When part of the Muslim world came under colonial control, Jews preferred the egalitarian attitude of the European rulers over the humiliating attitude of their Muslim neighbors. Jews in those colonial countries saw the Europeans as liberators while the Muslim majority saw them as occupiers. At this point, a significant disruption of the relationship between Jews and the Muslim majority started to emerge. But Zionism was not the principal cause of it. Even without Zionism there was no safe future for the Jewish minority in Arab countries.

Israel was created to serve as a shelter for persecuted Jews. The visionaries of the state had in mind especially the persecuted and humiliated Jews of Europe, but with its creation Israel fulfilled this role for the Jews of Arab countries as well. If Israel had not been created, what country would have opened its gates to the immigration of more than 120,000 Iraqi Jews? Where could 50,000 Yemenite Jews escape to? Could Egyptian or Moroccan Jews remain in those countries that were under the influence of extreme Arab nationalist views?

Escaping persecution was not the exclusive determinant of the immigration of Jews to Israel. Many wanted to improve their economic situation, and many others had strong religious ties to the land of the patriarchs, the Holy Land. However, for the majority of Jews in Arab countries (and the majority of East European Jews) Israel was the default choice. Most of them probably would have emigrated to one of the Western countries had they been given other options, as had Algerian Jews by virtue of holding French citizenship. But this is exactly the point. They had no option.

What, then, of the attitude toward the Jews from Arab countries after they arrived? At the heart of this question is what might be termed the "ethnic factor," more specifically the gap and the tension between Ashkenazi/European Jews and Sephardic/Eastern Jews (the latter are mainly the Jews from Arab countries). European Jews, including those of them who immigrated to America, were 90% of the Jewish people when Israel was declared. They did, and to some extent still do, have hegemonic power in Israel. They constituted almost all of the Israeli leadership in the formative years. And they hold important positions in the Israeli economy, culture, and academia today. This is the case even though the mass immigration from the Muslim world changed Israel's demography. In fact, Jews from Arab countries constituted the majority in Israel (55% of Israel Jewish population) from the 1960s to 1990s, at which point immigration from the former Soviet Union reduced their size to 40-45%.

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The attitude of Israel toward the Jews from Arab countries can be characterized as patronizing solidarity. This approach is shaped by two contradictory states of mind. On the one hand, Israel sees itself as the state of the Jewish people and thus emphasizes the right of all Jews to become Israeli citizens. On the other hand, most of Israel's leaders and citizens at the time of independence were of European origin and a Eurocentric orientation that led many of them to develop a kind of superiority toward the inhabitants of the third world. This superiority was encouraged by the fact that, in the colonial era, Europe ruled the world. Accordingly, Jews from Arab countries were viewed as culturally backward people who needed guardianship in order to advance. The very fact that Israel made an effort to bring all these Jews to Israel was an expression of the solidarity between Jews from different diaspora.

However, these new immigrants encountered structural discrimination. They were sent to inhabit the undeveloped part of the country without being consulted. They were employed in low-status and low-income jobs. For most Middle Eastern Jews, educational opportunities were limited, though education in Israel is equal, public, and free. This situation brought about gaps in the level of education and average income: Whereas Israelis of European origins are still

heavily represented in the upper strata, Israelis from Arab countries (and their Israeli-born children and grandchildren) are overrepresented in the lower strata. These gaps were the reasons for waves of public protests and political turbulence.

This picture would not be complete without emphasizing that the Israeli middle class is ethnically mixed, and many of the Jews from Arab countries are successfully integrated into it. The high level of interethnic marriage has narrowed the ethnic gap. Israel's declared ideology encourages ethnic integration, and over the past three decades, the culture of Jews from Arab countries has been legitimated and has begun to regenerate. Nevertheless, the ethnic question hasn't disappeared from the Israeli agenda.

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Ba-Tipul [In Treatment]

Donna Robinson Divine

Israel was created not only as a state but also as a trope of self-sacrifice, solidarity, and a redemption, lifting up a bruised and battered people to become a model for the entire world. In its six decades, Israel, with its limited natural resources, has created a robust economy that takes full advantage of the global market and generates unprecedented growth. Technological changes have been rapidly integrated to provide its citizens with the most modern of infrastructures and access to the most sophisticated means of communication.

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Having paid dearly for their independence and shadowed ever since by threats and attacks, Israelis have understandably channeled considerable capital and initiative into their military to produce one of the most proficient armies in the world. But the language that guided the country through shortages, rationing, and the constant dread of the dangers on its borders cannot quite accept the achievements so inequitably dispensed or admit into the public discourse the psychological costs in building the Jewish state.

In the past, Israel was filled more with the voices of its leaders than of its people, whose feelings were shrouded in what was interpreted as a self-imposed silence. That silence, however, was actually the outcome of a heavily regulated dominant culture determined to organize the view of what was happening in the country. Perhaps because Israelis were afraid they lacked the emotional resources to withstand the suffering, they agreed to deny public expression to their feelings. When despair about life in Israel did surface, it was typically suppressed by recalling the heroic Zionist past. Emotional restraint thus became both a value and a sign of the commitment to national purpose. But now that the country's capacity can satisfy the personal ambitions of a significant number of its citizens, the stoic survival that once held Israelis back from expressing their feelings seems a quaint but unnecessary relic that has so outlived its time that it can be easily discarded without any negative repercussions.

While the wounds of war were always acknowledged in literature, the darker dimensions of Israel's strategic predicament did not compel the same attention in the political arena nor alter a decorum that forged a solidarity requiring no explanation. But that silence did not hold. In recent years, an ethos of self-restraint has given way to a discourse obsessed with how people feel about events, policies, army service, themselves — all dissected in every conceivable way in the media. Not surprisingly, America's new television hit "In Treatment," about the experience of psychotherapy, is an Israeli transplant. With their emotions under constant surveillance, Israelis find it increasingly

difficult to wrest meaning from the institutions and activities once celebrated as fulfilling the purpose of the Jewish state. Massive introspection may have shifted the priority once accorded to duty over personal interest, but it also has changed the cultural temper. Silence was taken as synonymous with confidence in Zionism's fundamental assumptions about history and the security a Jewish state could provide for the Jewish people. Full disclosure of the trials and tribulations of living with Jewish sovereignty could not help but loosen the grip of the Zionist truths once so deeply planted in Israel's culture.

At its origins, Israel managed the burden of the Jewish past by projecting a unified story that was supposed to serve as the basis of its imagined future. Israel has many battlegrounds that might have been turned into sites of mourning; instead, they became places of memory and for glorifying and memorializing the fallen as exemplary figures who supposedly exhibited neither fear nor hesitation about the circumstances thrust upon them. Today, newly opened archives make Israel's past less a story of people propelled simply by the overarching idea of perfection than by the goal of self-interest, and the traditional narrative of Israel's history is presented as one among many competing points of view. Without the imperatives of the Zionist past, the future becomes less easily imaginable and the present more open to question.

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Not so long ago, Zionism posited its own ascendancy in expectation of supplanting a Jewish religious belief and practice it deemed moribund and doomed to eventual extinction. Today, Zionism has been refitted and redefined by Jewish theology claiming the firm authority of national idealism and religious obedience and given impetus by the 1967 War. Once sanctity resided in Zionist projects; today, holiness seems rooted in ancient historical sites.

The Zionist project was also once cast as a powerful antidote to the condition of exile. In exile, Zionists described Jews as weak in body and mind in contrast to the strong, healthy, and beautiful Hebrews. Powerless in the face of hatred and discrimination and presumably closed off from options for self-fulfillment, Diaspora Jews were expected to assimilate where possible, loosen their bonds with religious belief, and consciously or not, impoverish Jewish culture and identity. Today, the interactions between Jews in Israel and in the Diaspora communities are crucial to sustaining an array of creative developments in literature, religious practice, and economic ventures in both domains. A significant number of Diaspora Jews is drawn into an engagement with Israel. For many Jews, including those who live in Israel, the very polarity between Diaspora and Homeland is anachronistic.

Political dislocations have deepened the sense of uncertainty in Israel. Israel once had a stable set of political institutions. Political parties achieved dominance without winning a majority of the votes in any election. Authority within the dominant political party often substituted for the coherent rule of state institutions. But over time authoritative institutions have been nibbled away by social and economic changes beyond their power to control.

Finally, Israel's 60-year history is also the story of the end of its consensus on security and on the value of military action. How that consensus was shaken by the outcome of particular wars and battles is well known, but less understood is the fact that its demise has effected a remarkable dispersion of the once unimpeachable authority of the military. Soldiers now speak freely about their experiences in military actions — even in training exercises — and particularly

about their feelings when wars are simply paused and never concluded.

The loss of confidence does not mean that Israelis are unwilling to rally to their country's defense in times of crisis. But Israelis are acutely aware that what they see as a matter of life and death is often viewed differently and condemned across the globe. Thus while most Israelis feel perfectly comfortable — even happy — with their homes and homeland, they are made constantly aware that their society has failed to live up to its early utopian dreams. Israel, in other words, has become normal but hasn't quite figured out how to cope with it.

In recent years, an ethos of self-restraint has given way to a discourse obsessed with how people feel about events, policies, army service, themselves — all dissected in every conceivable way by the media.

Religious Thought as a Promoter of War or Driver of Peace

Avinoam Rosenak

Avinoam Rosenak, Department of Jewish Thought, The Hebrew University.

At a meeting I attended some weeks ago, a leader of the Palestinian administration argued that the quarrel between Jews and Palestinians had been made more intractable by becoming a matter of theology and religion. If only the dispute could be analyzed exclusively through secular, political tools, it could seemingly be resolved much more readily. This argument is commonly heard from Israelis and Palestinians alike. Among Palestinians, the concern is about the religious ideology within Hamas, Hizbullah, and other groups — an ideology expressed, in the Israeli experience, through murderous terror. Among Israelis, there is concern about elements within the messianic religious right, who maintain a "Greater Land of Israel" ideology that rejects all compromise and makes negotiation difficult.

This dichotomy is widespread among analysts of Middle Eastern politics, but I want to challenge it through a deeper examination of Jewish religious thought —specifically, that of Rabbi Abraham Isaac ha-Kohen Kook (1865-1935), regarded as the father of Religious Zionist thought.[1] An examination of his teachings —which have already attracted scholarly interest[2] — can call the dichotomy into question and clarify the downside of secularizing the conflict.

First, however, it is important to note that attempting to resolve a conflict that has tightly intertwined cultural, historical, religious, and existential roots by disregarding its religious and cultural components can be compared to trying to solve a murder by disregarding motive or attempting to bring about an economic revolution without taking account of the society's customs and beliefs. Anyone trying to change or even study the conflict without understanding its embedded religious components will be left in the dark, unable to comprehend the powerful and fundamental driving forces that are central to the dispute and underlie its widely analyzed political, economic, and social aspects.

1. See Avinoam Rosenak, *The Prophetic Halakhah: Rabbi A.I H. Kook's Philosophy of Halakhah* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2007) [Hebrew]; Avinoam Rosenak, *Rabbi A.I.H Kook* (Jerusalem, Zalman Shazar Center, 2006) [Hebrew].

2. For example: Binyamin Ish-Shalom, *Rav Avraham Itzhak HaCohen Kook: Between Rationalism and Mysticism*, trans. from the Hebrew by Ora Wiskind-Elper (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993); Yosef Ben-Shlomo, *Poetry of Being: Lectures on the philosophy of Rabbi Kook*, trans. from the Hebrew by Shmuel Himelstein (Tel-Aviv: MOD Books, 1990); Aviezer Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism*, trans. from the Hebrew by Michael Swirsky and Jonathan Chipman (London & Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

RABBI KOOK: SHAPING THE VISION OF THE RETURN TO THE LAND OF ISRAEL

At first glance, Rabbi Kook is an impediment to thinking about peace. His theological and *halakhic* teachings convey the heart of the Zionist vision and the return of the Jews to the Land of Israel. His historiosophic exegesis of the events of his day (the First World War, the Balfour Declaration, and Jewish immigration to the Land of Israel) were marked by a note of the divine will to bring Israel back to its formative crucible. He explained the blossoming of the Land of Israel as a miracle associated with Israel's return to its natural home. And because that return would enrich all of humanity — through Israel serving as "a light unto the nations" — he believed all nations would support it.

Rabbi Kook's writings speak of a profound, ontological correspondence among the Land of Israel, the People of Israel, and the Torah of Israel. Naturally enough there arose within his school a position that unambiguously denies all retreat or compromise and that assigns vast importance to every new settlement in the Land. These ideas became the ideological foundation of the Religious-Zionist right.

RABBI KOOK: A THEOLOGY OF PEACE

One can understand why the pilots of the peace process are horrified by all this. By and large, however, they are unaware of the strongly pluralistic arguments implied by the kabbalistic underpinnings of Rabbi Kook's thought. I am referring to the "doctrine of the unity of opposites," which argues that even though the world encompasses antitheses and contradictory positions, they all share a common source in which the contradictions disappear. To clarify: the conventional view holds that two contradictory claims — such as liberalism vs. conservatism or universalism vs. particularism — cannot coexist and that one must triumph over the other. Antitheses (such as between secularism and religion, east and west) are absolute, and all one can do is decide between them.

In the divine world, the antitheses are resolved, and there is no contradiction between them.

Rabbi Kook, though understanding what motivates people to make such choices, had reservations about doing so. In his view, "opposites" stem from a single, monotheistic unity. The one divine Source *embraces* all opposites and is their *origin*. In the divine world, the antitheses are resolved, and there is no contradiction between them. The opposites appear to be irreconcilable contradictions only because we do not see them from the divine Source's perspective. But an all-embracing theological perspective will not renounce any side of a dispute, for all contain a *kernel of truth that must not be forgone*.[3]

APPLICATIONS AND RISKS

We have identified two antithetical strains in Rabbi Kook's thought: a strongly ideological stance that links

3. Interestingly, this argument is a version of religious post-modernism that is regarded as far removed from Rabbi Kook's modern thought. See on this Tamar Ross, "Rabbi A. I. H. Kook and Post-Modernism," *Akdamut*, Vol. 10, pp. 187-223 [Hebrew]; Avinoam Rosenak, "Seeds of Post-Modernism in Modern Jewish Thought," *Common Knowledge* (forthcoming).

Israel to its Land in a way that undercuts any attempt at compromise; and a metaphysical stance whose negation of ideology flows from an awareness of humanity's narrow perspective in relation to the all-encompassing divine, in which opposites are joined. Many of Rabbi Kook's disciples stressed the ideological tendency, downplaying the theology of peace that is so central and vital in his thinking.[4]

If theological peace-talk is to be renewed, there must first be an internal Jewish conversation[5] (among people having many varied viewpoints), which will examine the non-ideological quality of religious thought. This internal conversation must be grounded on three principles: 1) the "Other" is not to be stigmatized; 2) my own positions need not be disregarded for the sake of the "Other;" and 3) the various positions are presented as inherent to a dialogue that is sensitive both to my existential and cultural needs and to the possibility of conducting an empathetic conversation with the "Other." A parallel conversation must take place among religious Muslims.

The very existence of this sort of dynamic with respect to the contradictory spiritual forces within both faiths will prepare the ground for an encounter between religious scholars from both sides at which the issues can be examined anew, in a non-ideological manner and out of a desire to enhance God-sanctifying life.

The extended effort to reach a peace settlement without taking account of the religious energy inherent in the cultures that are party to the conflict is simply unrealistic.

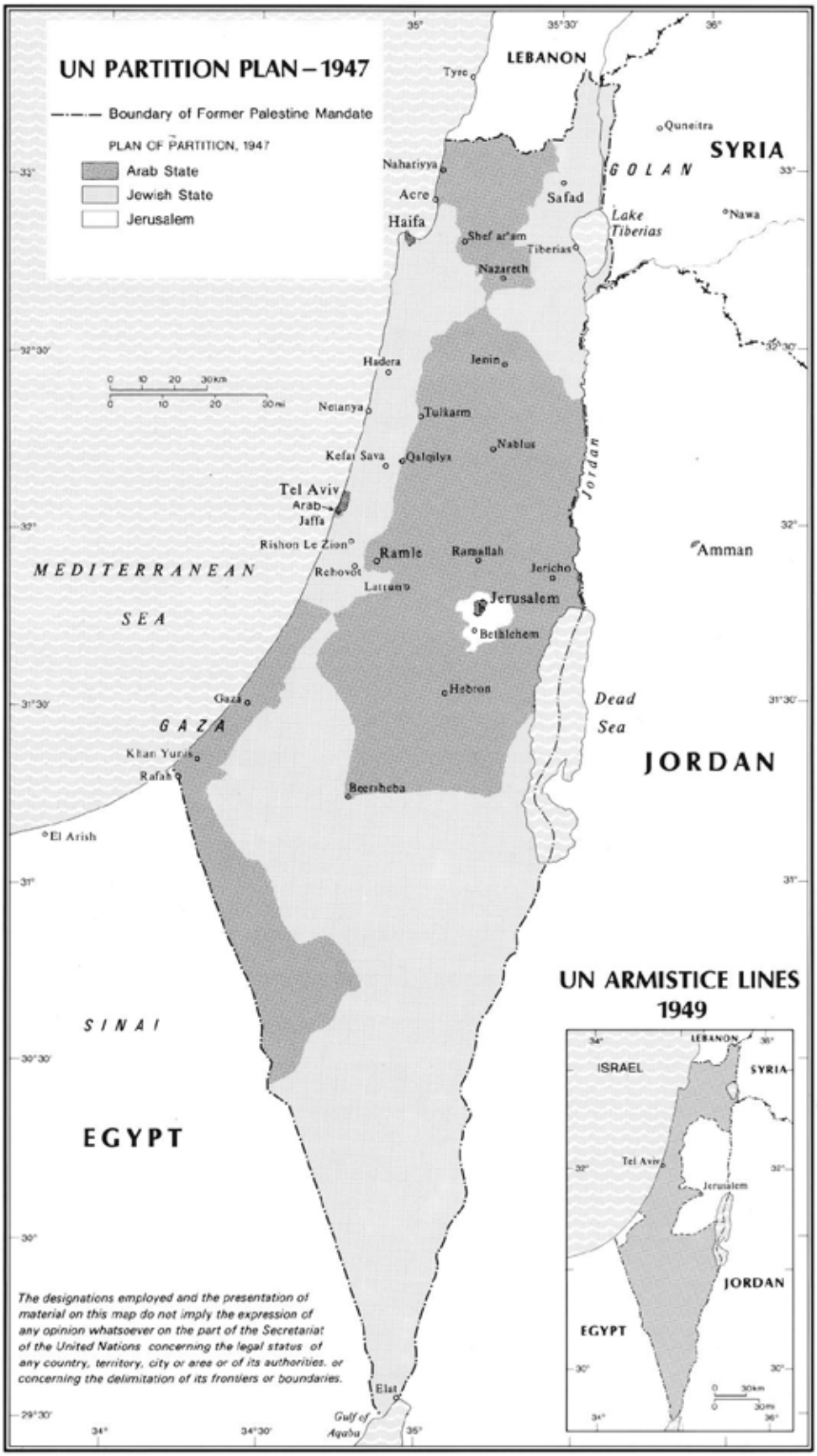
SUMMARY

This proposal is only a precursor to intra- and inter-religious dialogue, something that is vital even though its success cannot be guaranteed. The extended effort to reach a peace settlement without taking account of the religious energy inherent in the cultures that are party to the conflict is simply unrealistic, for peace is not reached solely between leaders but also between nations and cultures. Moreover, secular political thought, lacking a theology of peace and knowing only the pragmatism of compromise, is too willing to forgo available cultural and metaphysical energies — energies that encompass a profound pluralism on the basis of which novel peaceful solutions can be forged through interreligious dialogue.

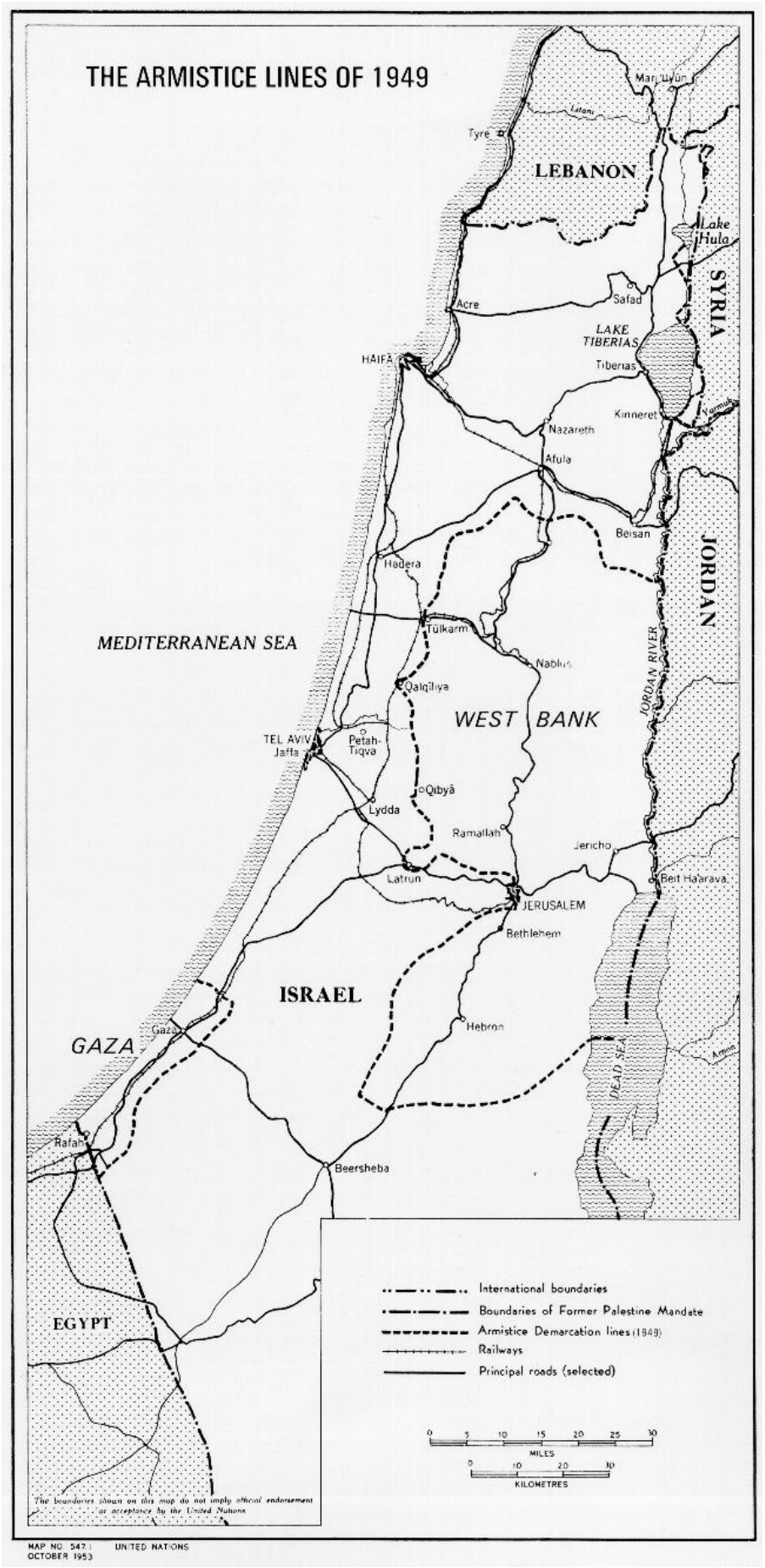
4. See Avinoam Rosenak, "War and Peace in Jewish Thought in the Face of the Other," *Da`at*, Vol. 62 (2008), pp. 104-105 [Hebrew].

5. Together with my colleagues Dr. Alec Isaacs and Ms. Sharon Leshem Singer, I am organizing a project along these lines; it is scheduled to take place in Jerusalem early in 2009.

Maps



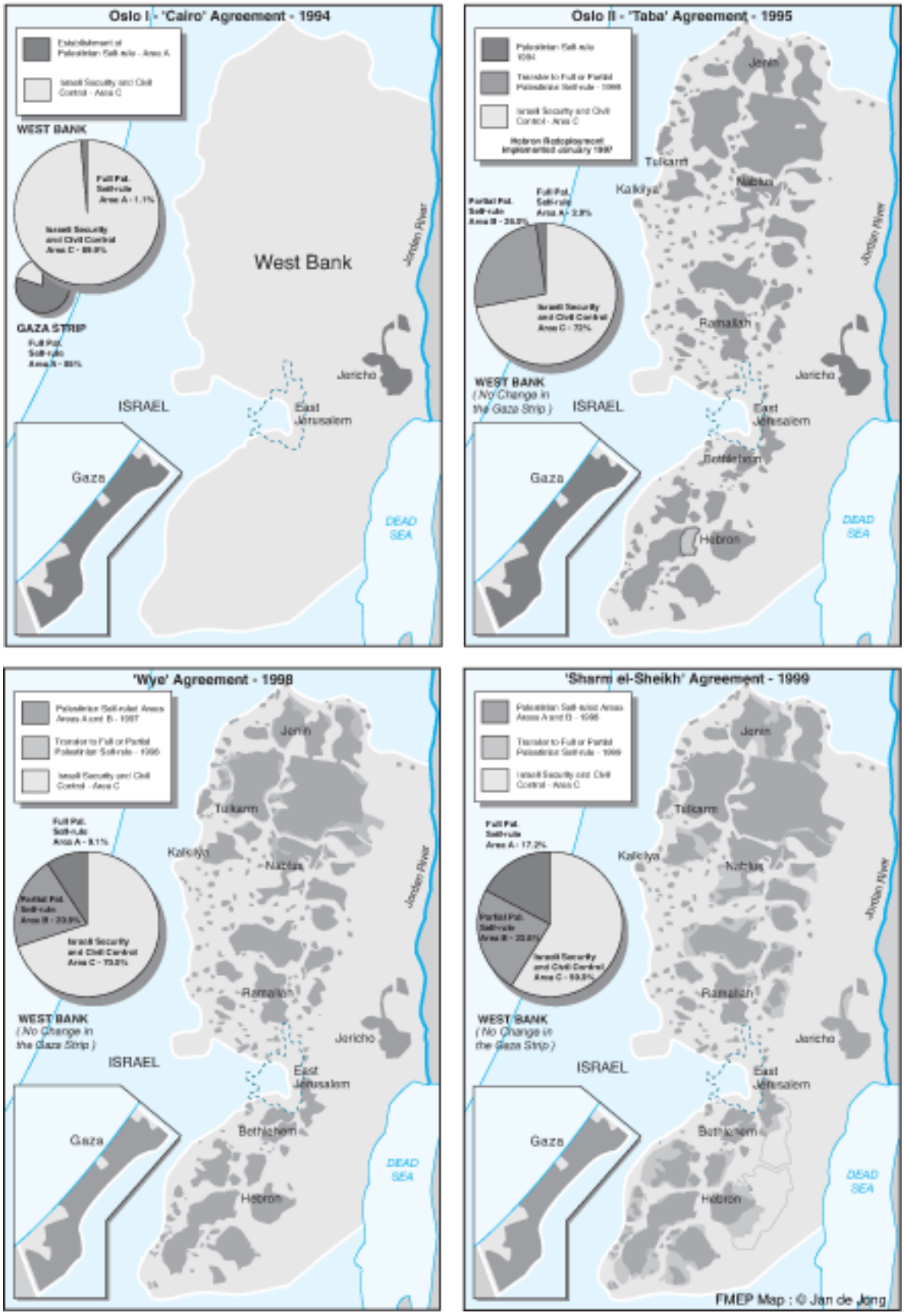
MAP NO. 3067 Rev. 1 UNITED NATIONS
APRIL 1983


THE ARMISTICE LINES OF 1949
LEBANON
SYRIA
Lake Hula
Safad
Acre
LAKE TIBERIAS
Tiberias
HAIFA
Kinneret
Nazareth
Afula
Beisan
JORDAN
Hadera
Tulkarm
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Nablus
Qalqilya
JORDAN RIVER
WEST BANK
TEL AVIV Jaffa
Petah-Tiqva
Qibya
Lydda
Ramallah
Jericho
Latrun
Beit Ha'arava
JERUSALEM
Bethlehem
ISRAEL
Hebron
GAZA
Gaza
DEAD SEA
Rafah
Beersheba
EGYPT
International boundaries
Boundaries of Former Palestine Mandate
Armistice Demarcation lines (1949)
Railways
Principal roads (selected)
MILES
KILOMETRES
The boundaries shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations
MAP NO. 5471 UNITED NATIONS
OCTOBER 1953

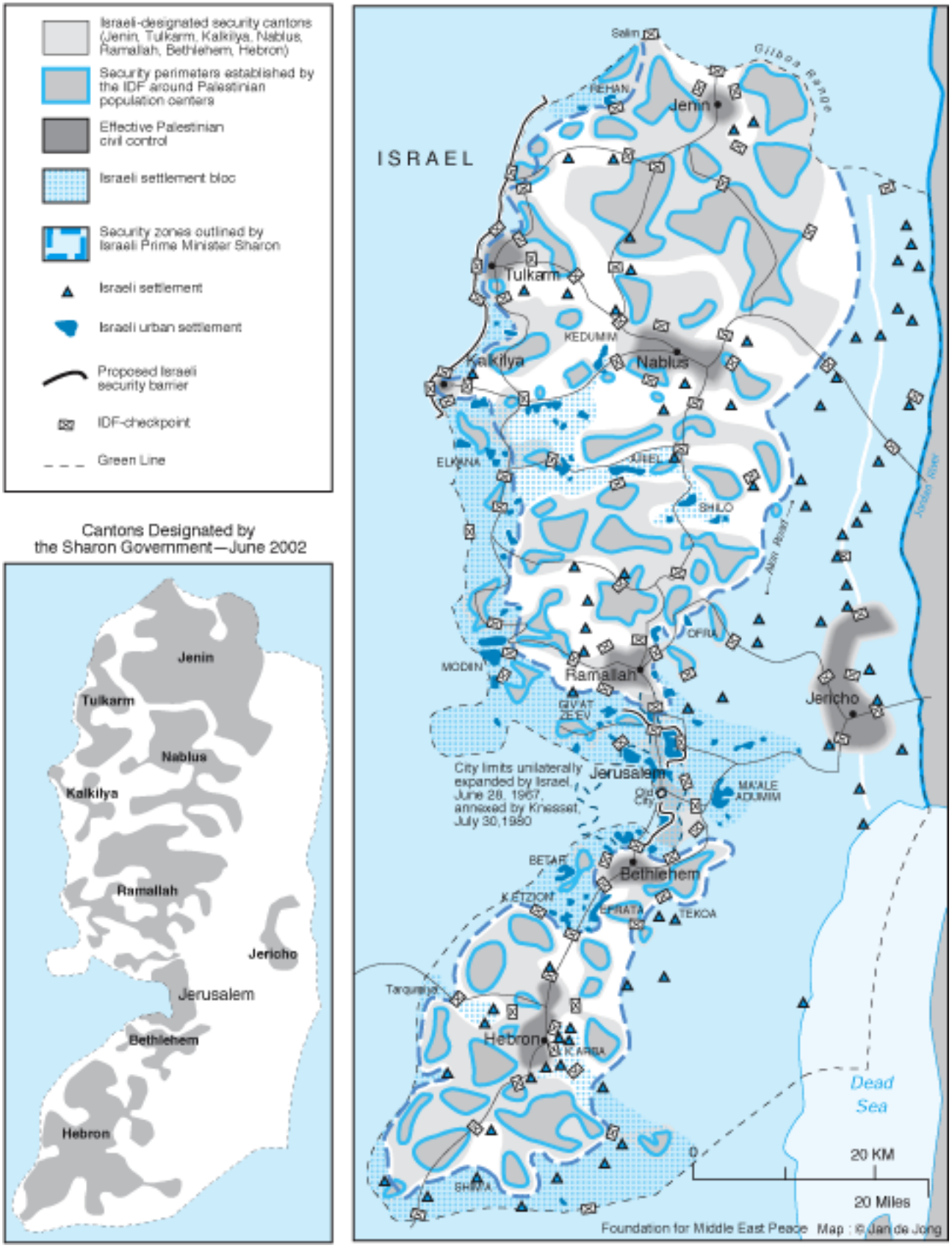
Map No. 3243 Rev.4 UNITED NATIONS
June 1997

Department of Public Information
Cartographic Section

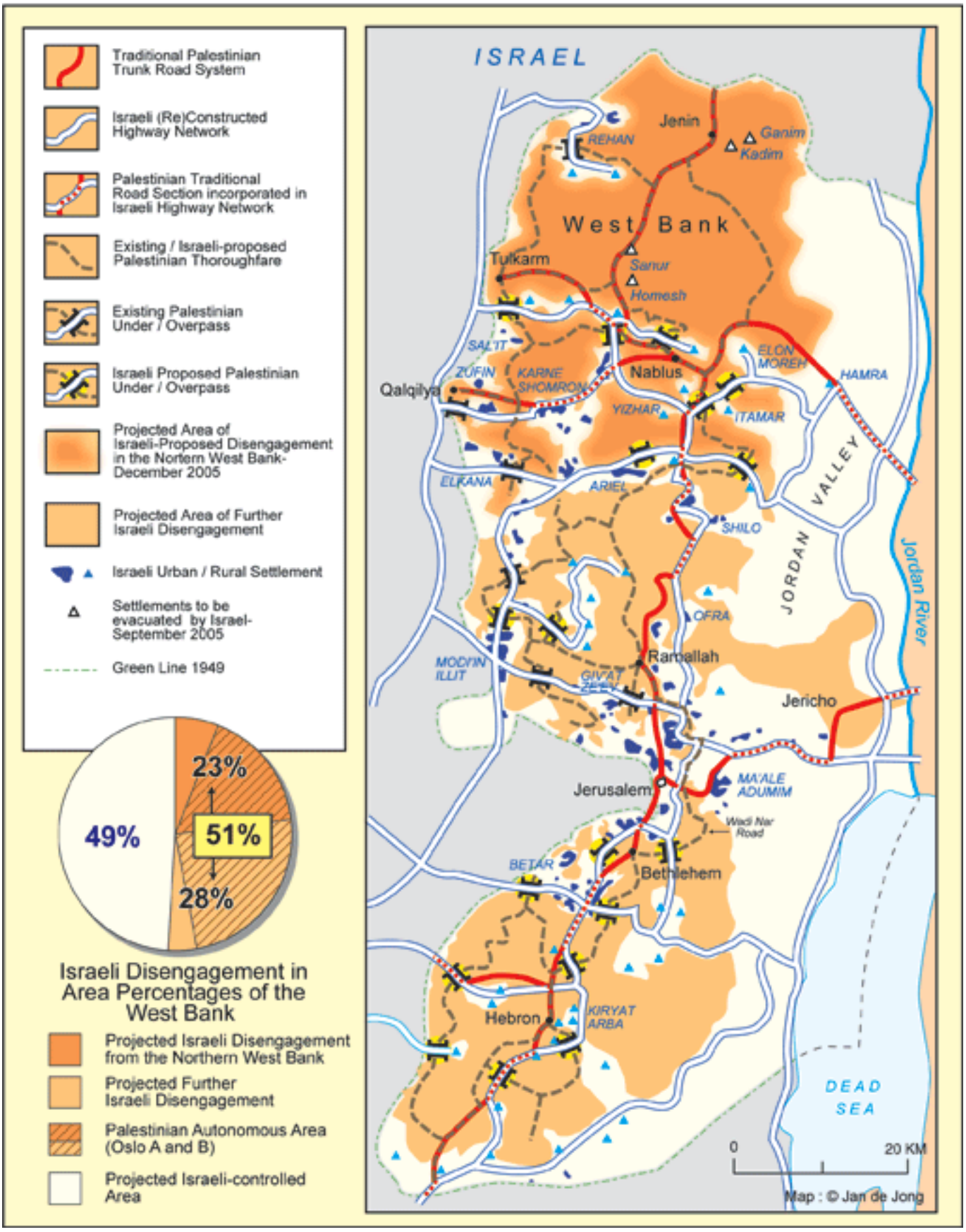
Staged Israeli Transfers of West Bank Territory to Palestinian Self-Rule During the Interim Period, 1994 - 2000



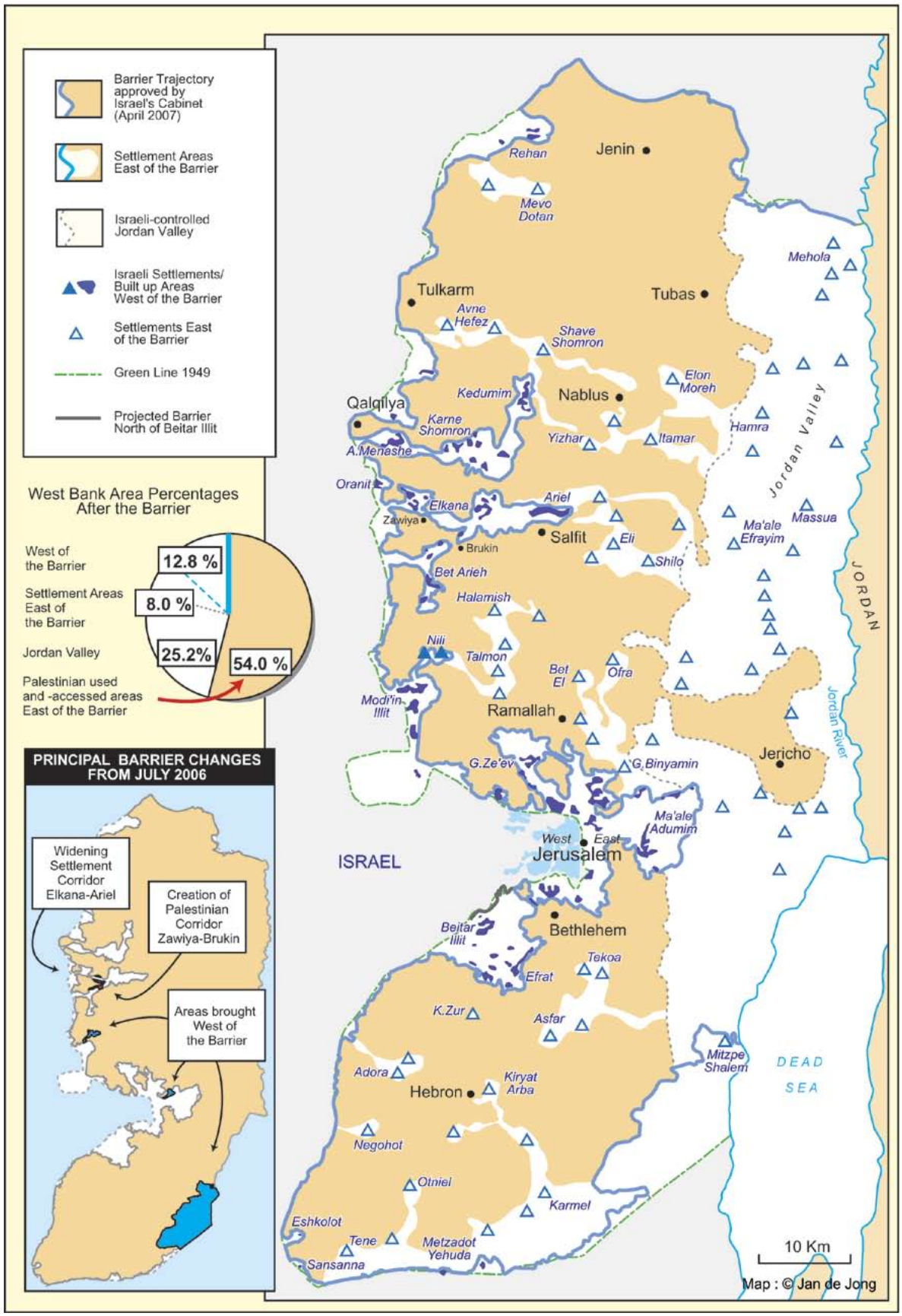
The West Bank After Oslo: Control and Separation—June 2002



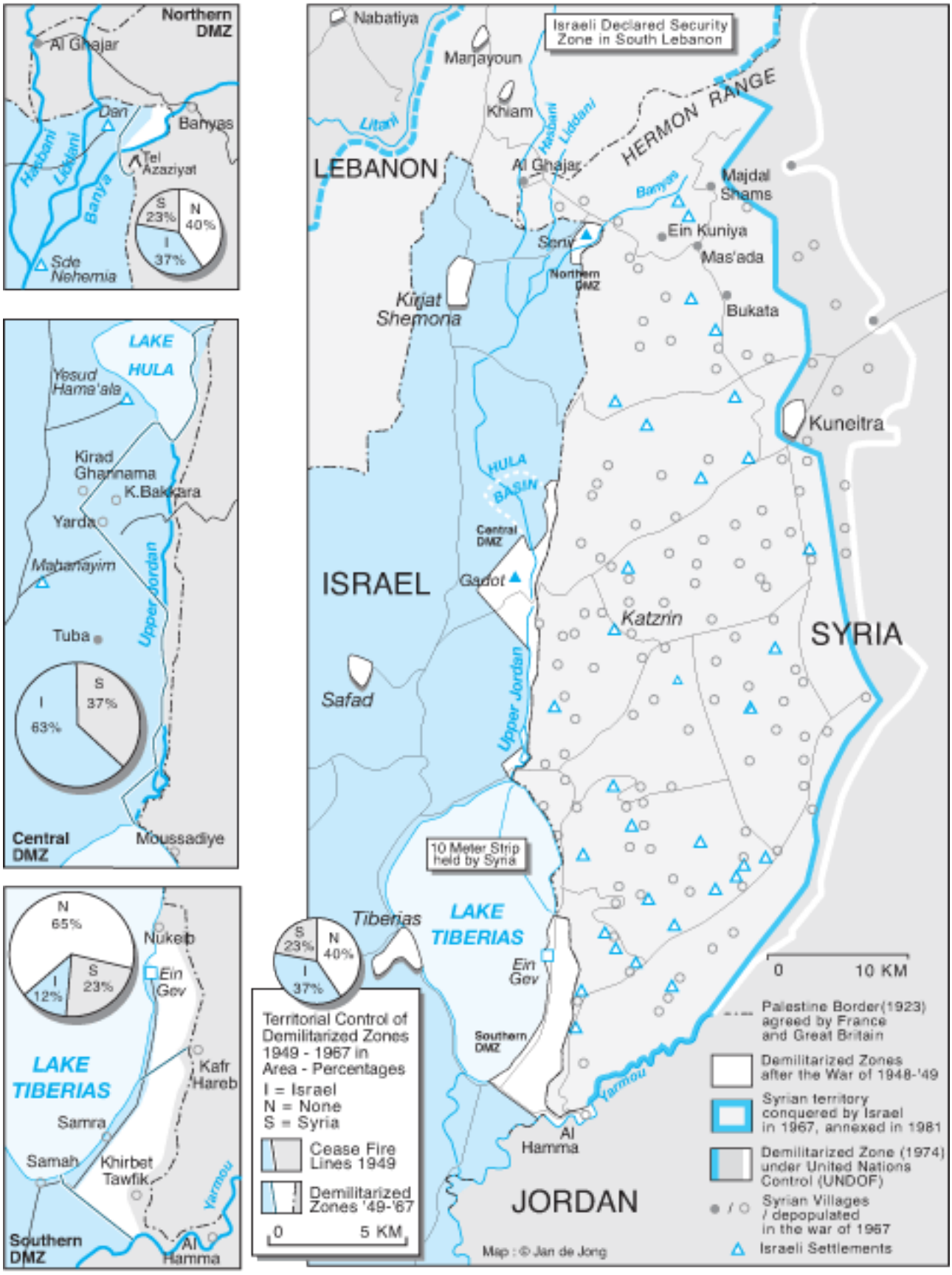
Facilitating Disengagement - Israel's West Bank Road Plan - 2004

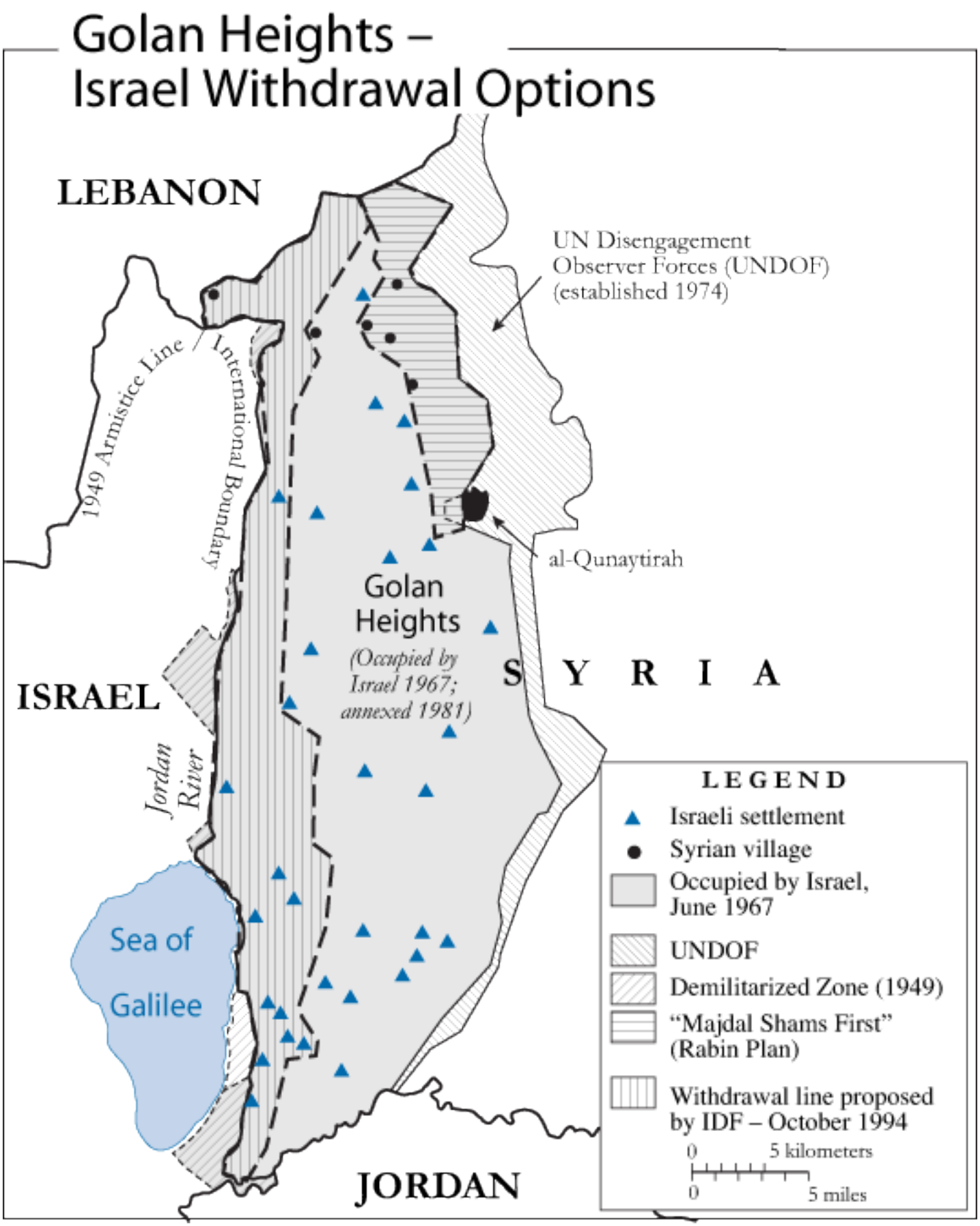


West Bank Separation Barrier - April 2007

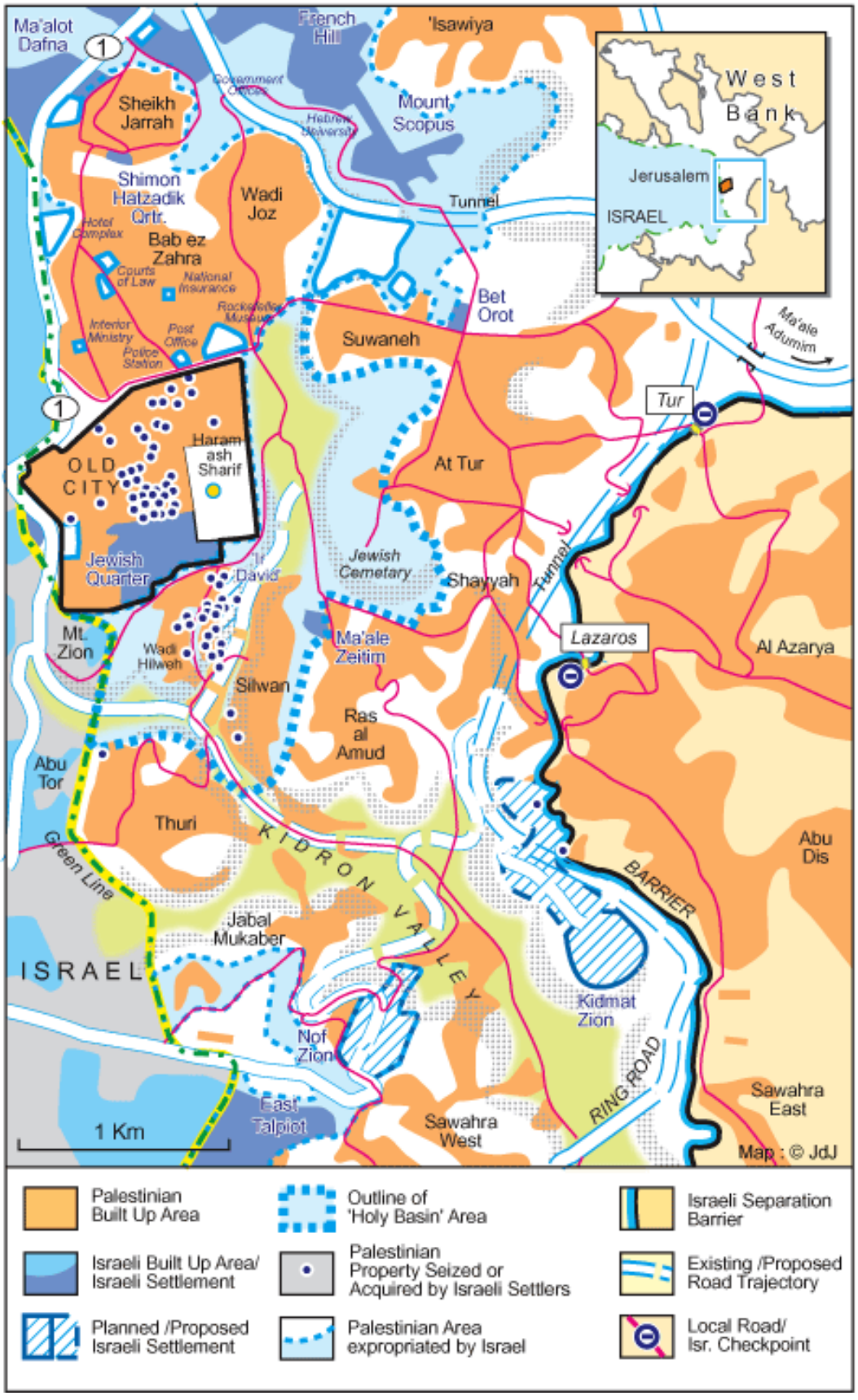


Golan Heights 1923-2000

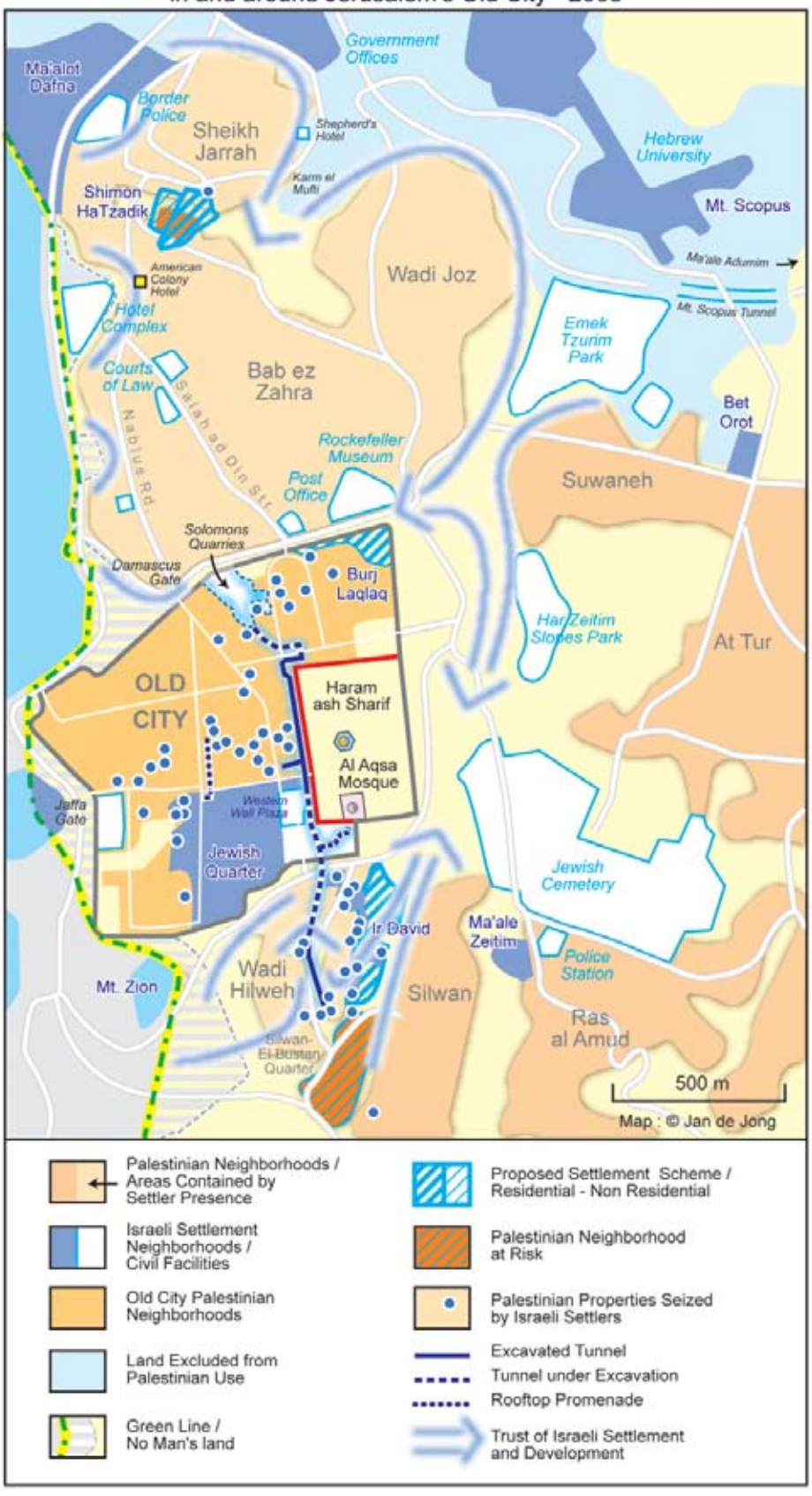



Golan Heights –
Israel Withdrawal Options
LEBANON
UN Disengagement
Observer Forces (UNDOF)
(established 1974)
1949 Armistice Line
International Boundary
al-Qunaytirah
Golan
Heights
(Occupied by
Israel 1967;
annexed 1981)
S Y R I A
ISRAEL
Jordan
River
Sea of
Galilee
JORDAN
LEGEND
Israeli settlement
Syrian village
Occupied by Israel,
June 1967
UNDOF
Demilitarized Zone (1949)
"Majdal Shams First"
(Rabin Plan)
Withdrawal line proposed
by IDF – October 1994
0
5 kilometers
0
5 miles

Israeli Settlement in and around
the Old City of Jerusalem - August 2006

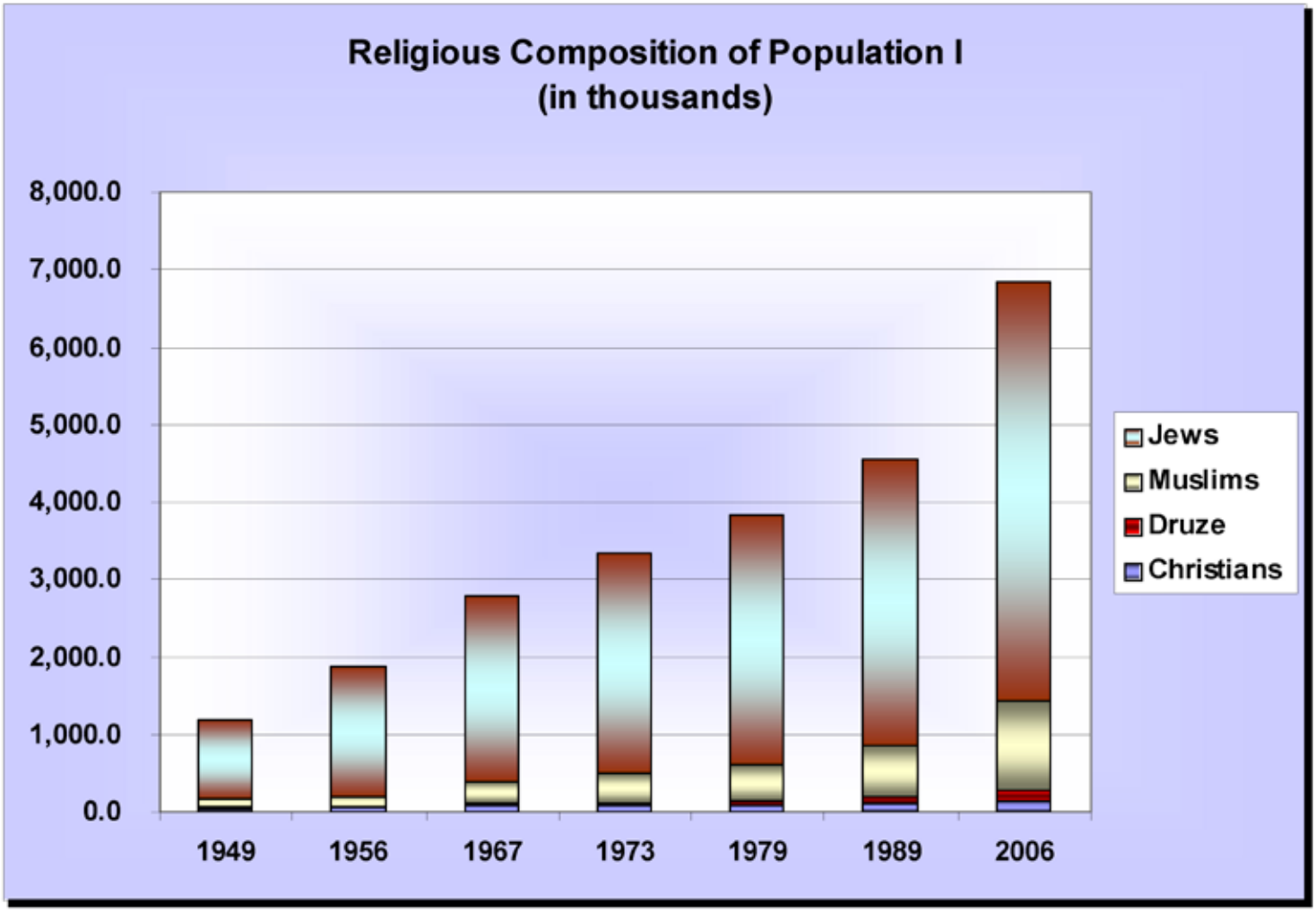


Containing Palestinian Neighborhoods
in and around Jerusalem's Old City - 2008

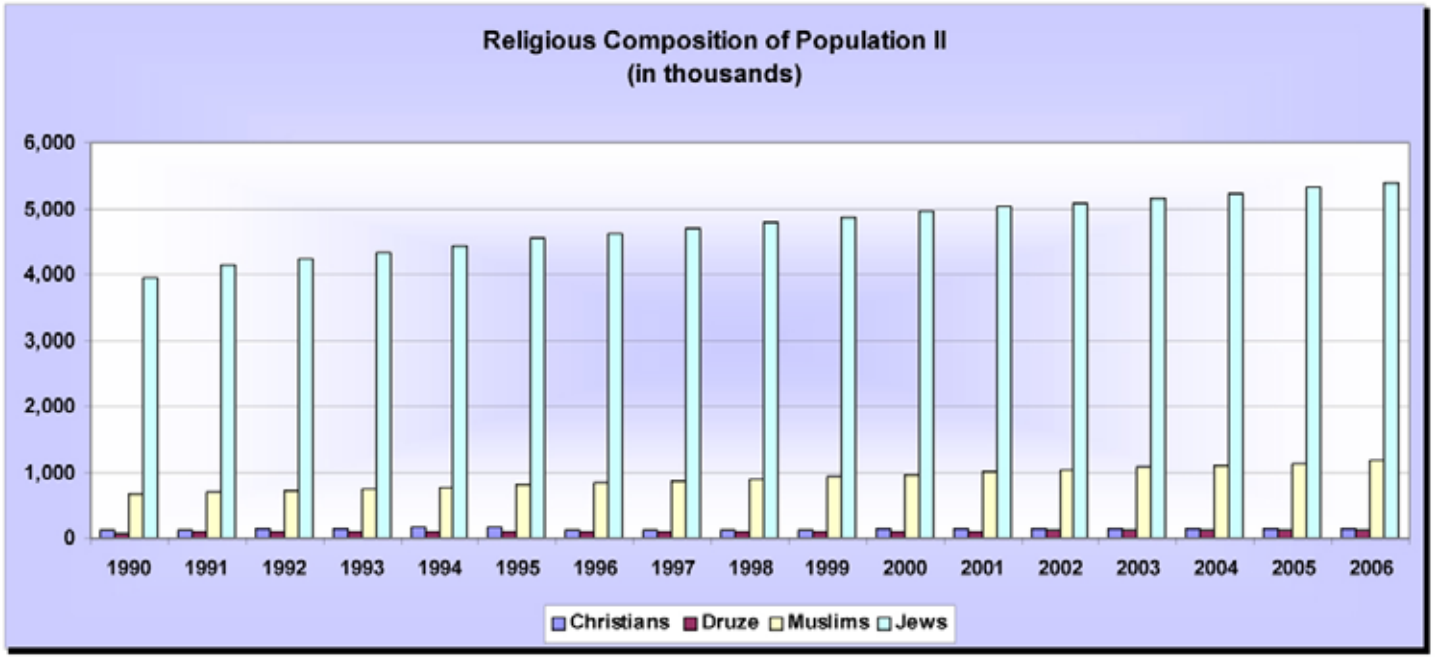


Statistics

Demographics



Source: Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics



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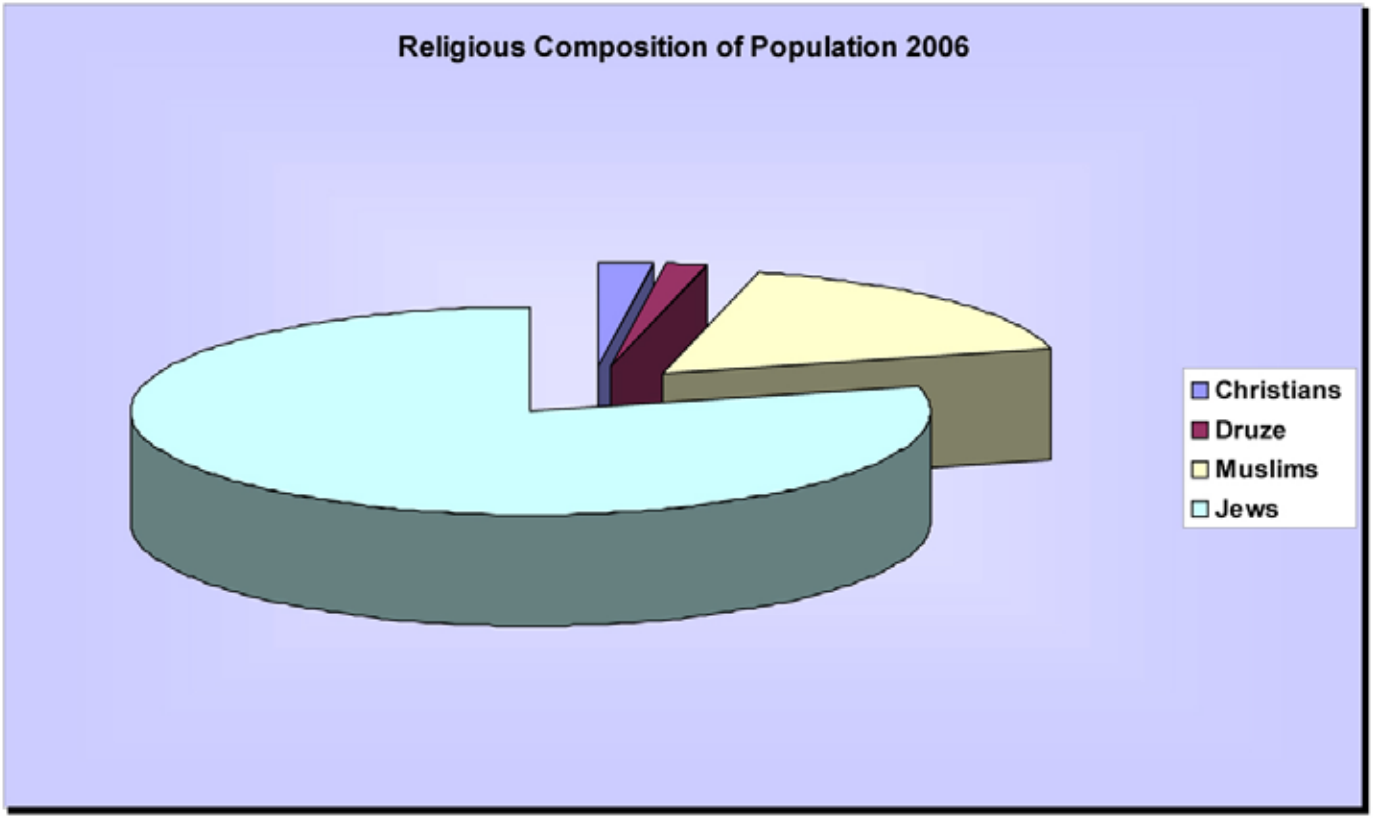
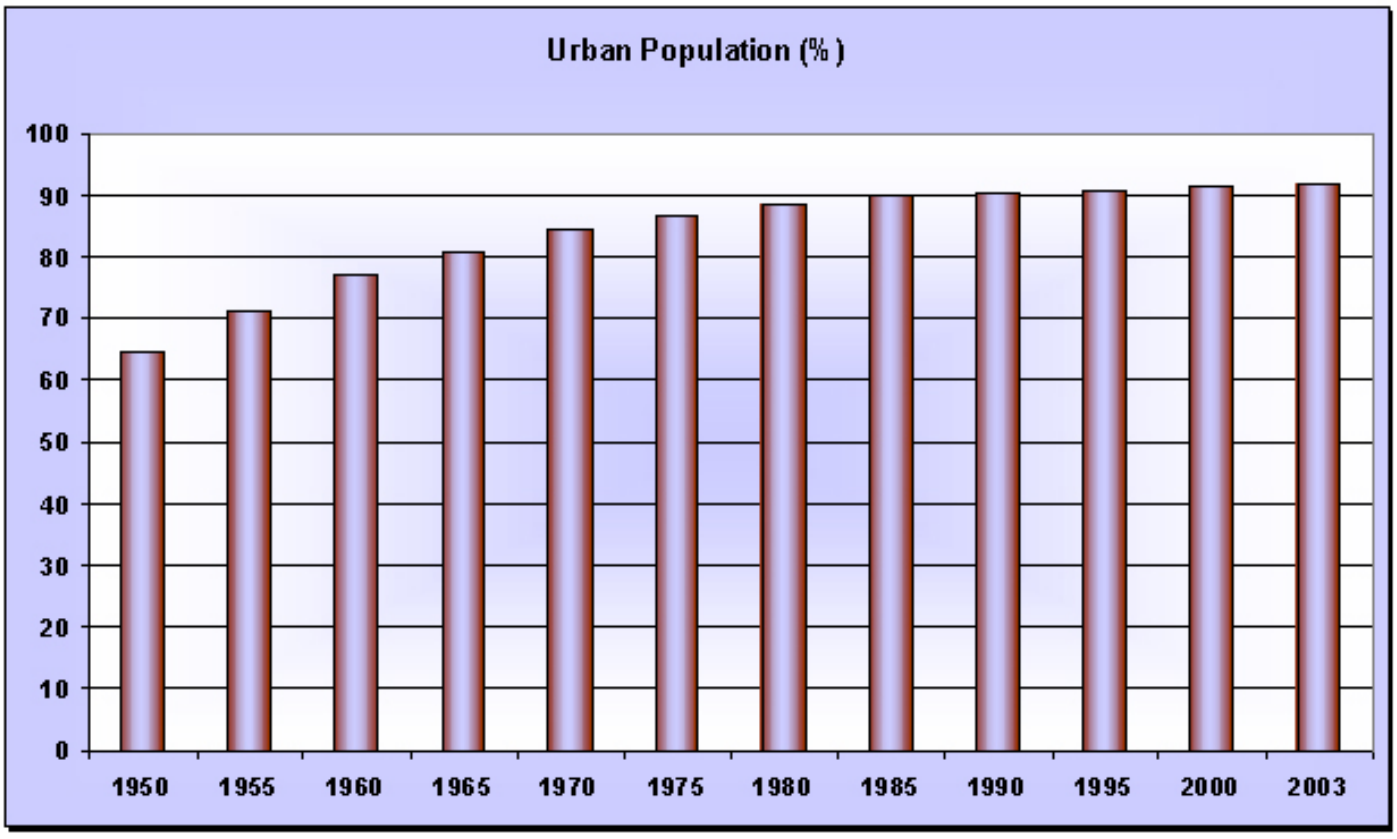


Source: Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics



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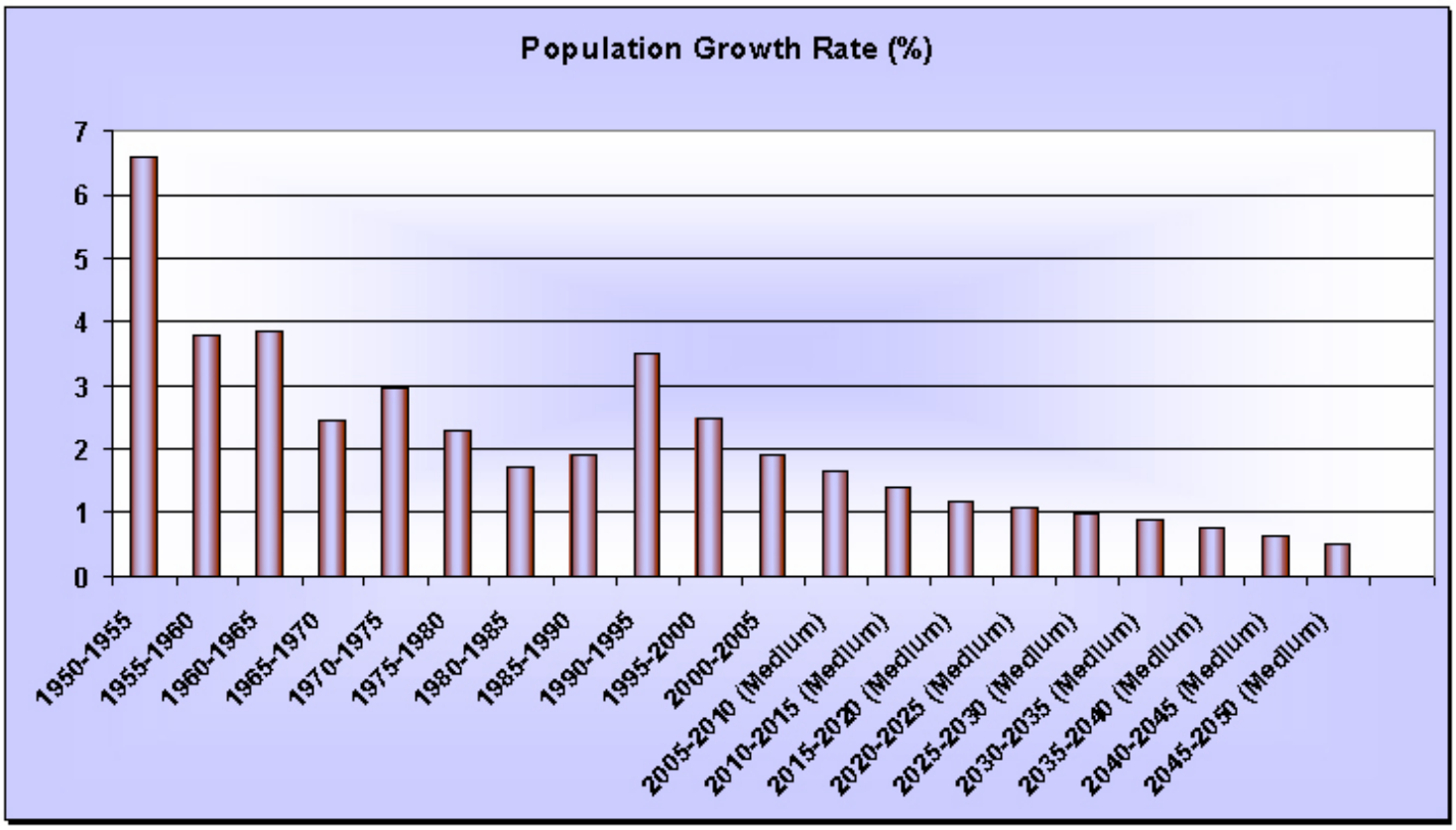

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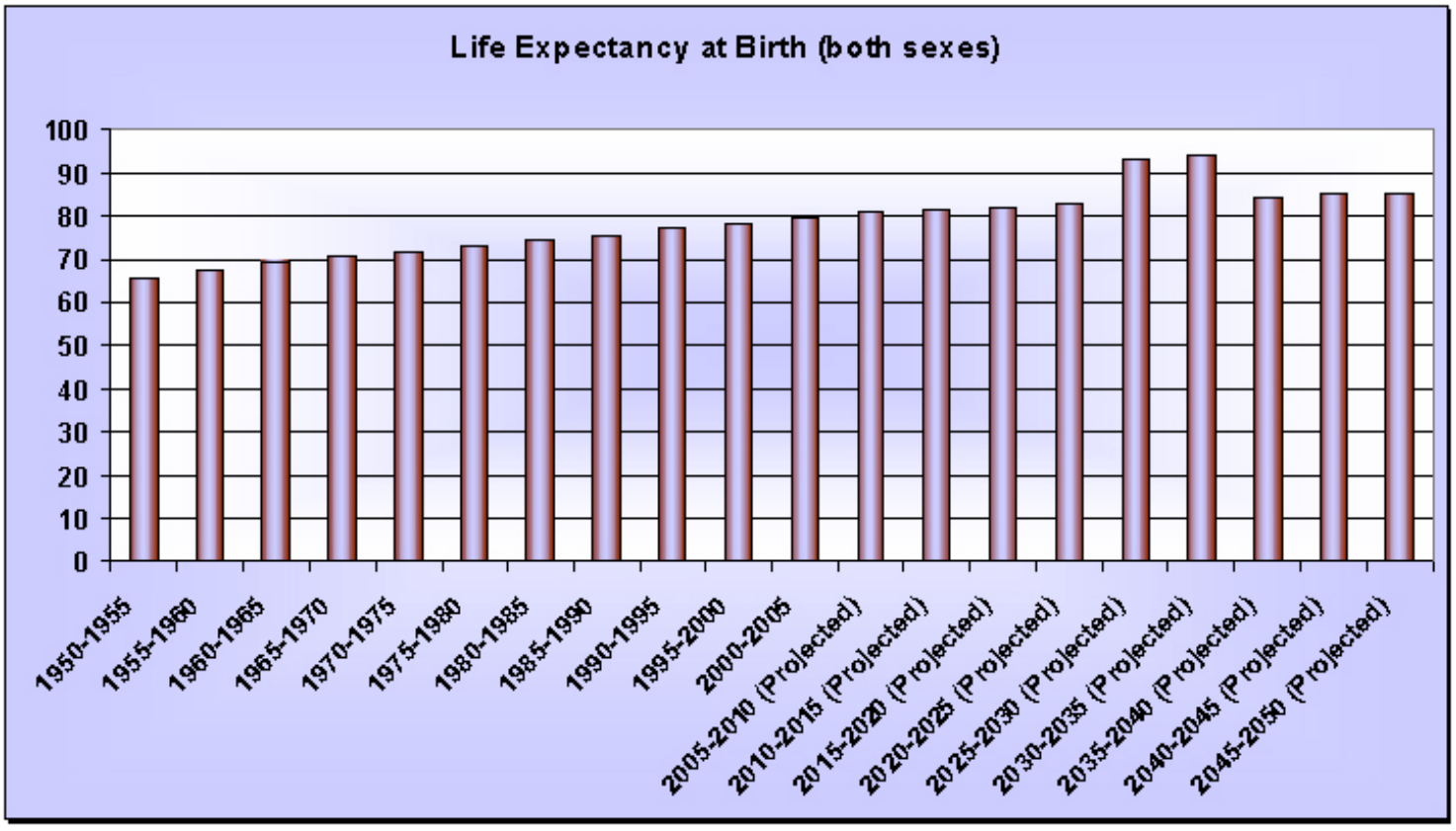

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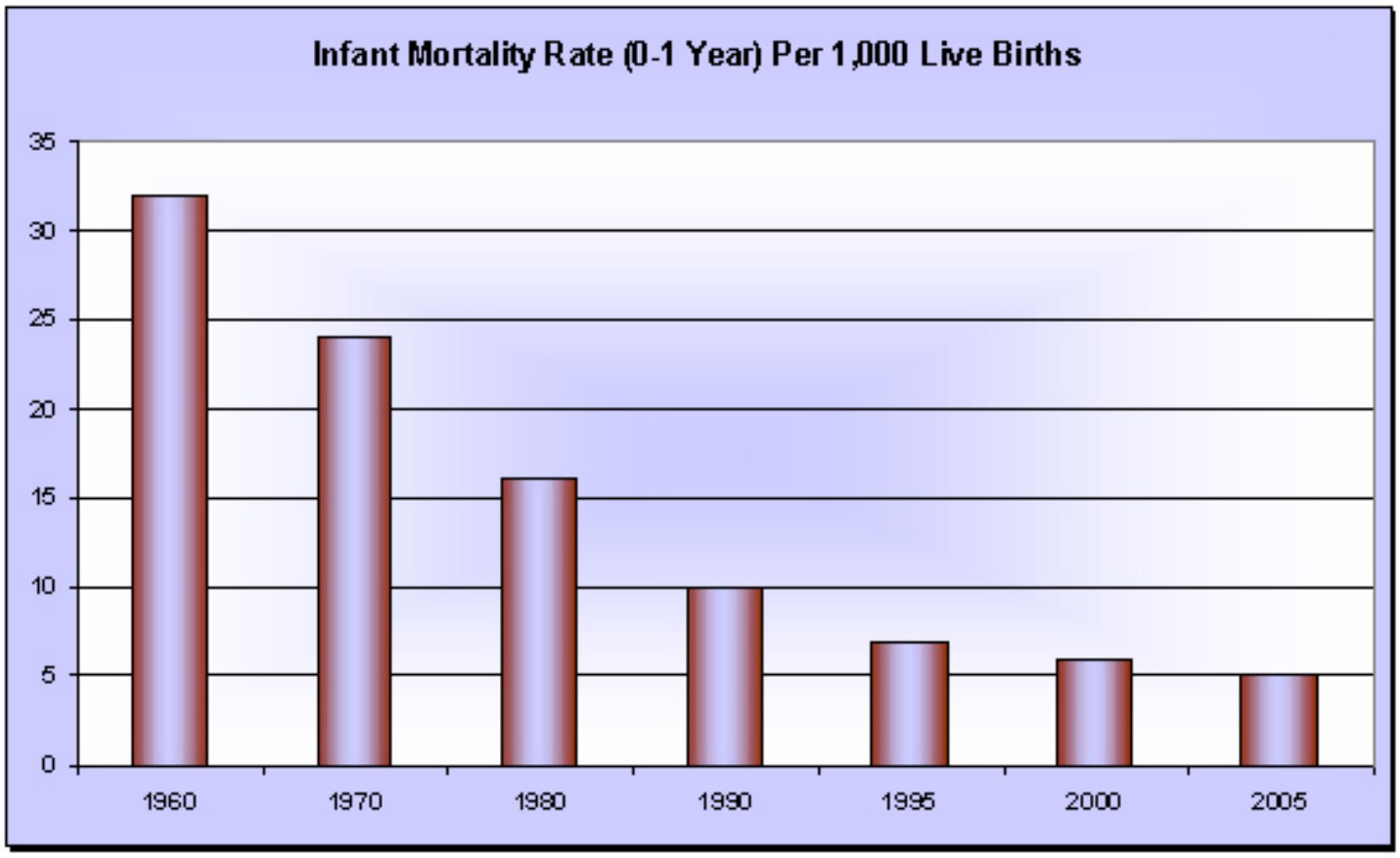

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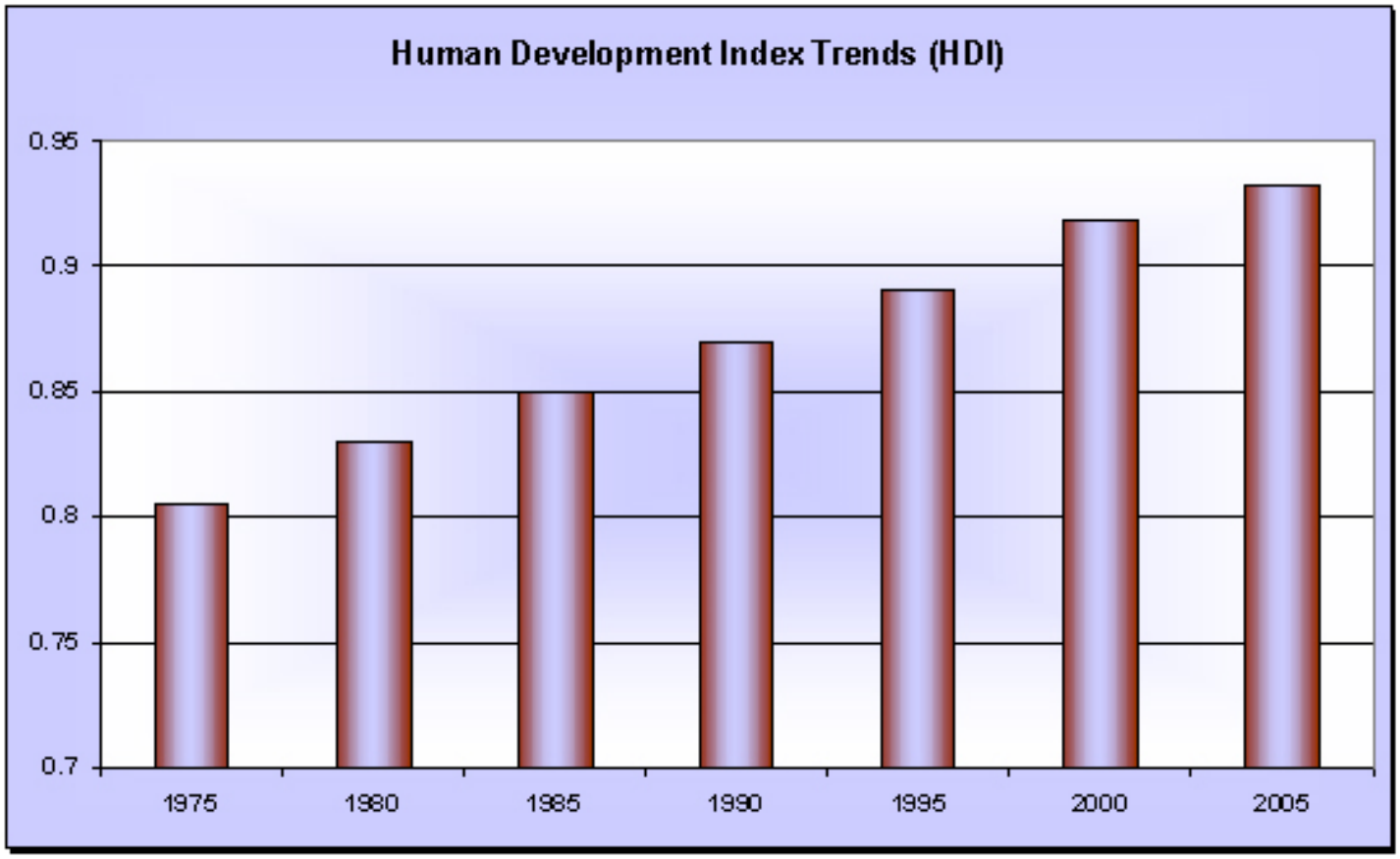
Economics



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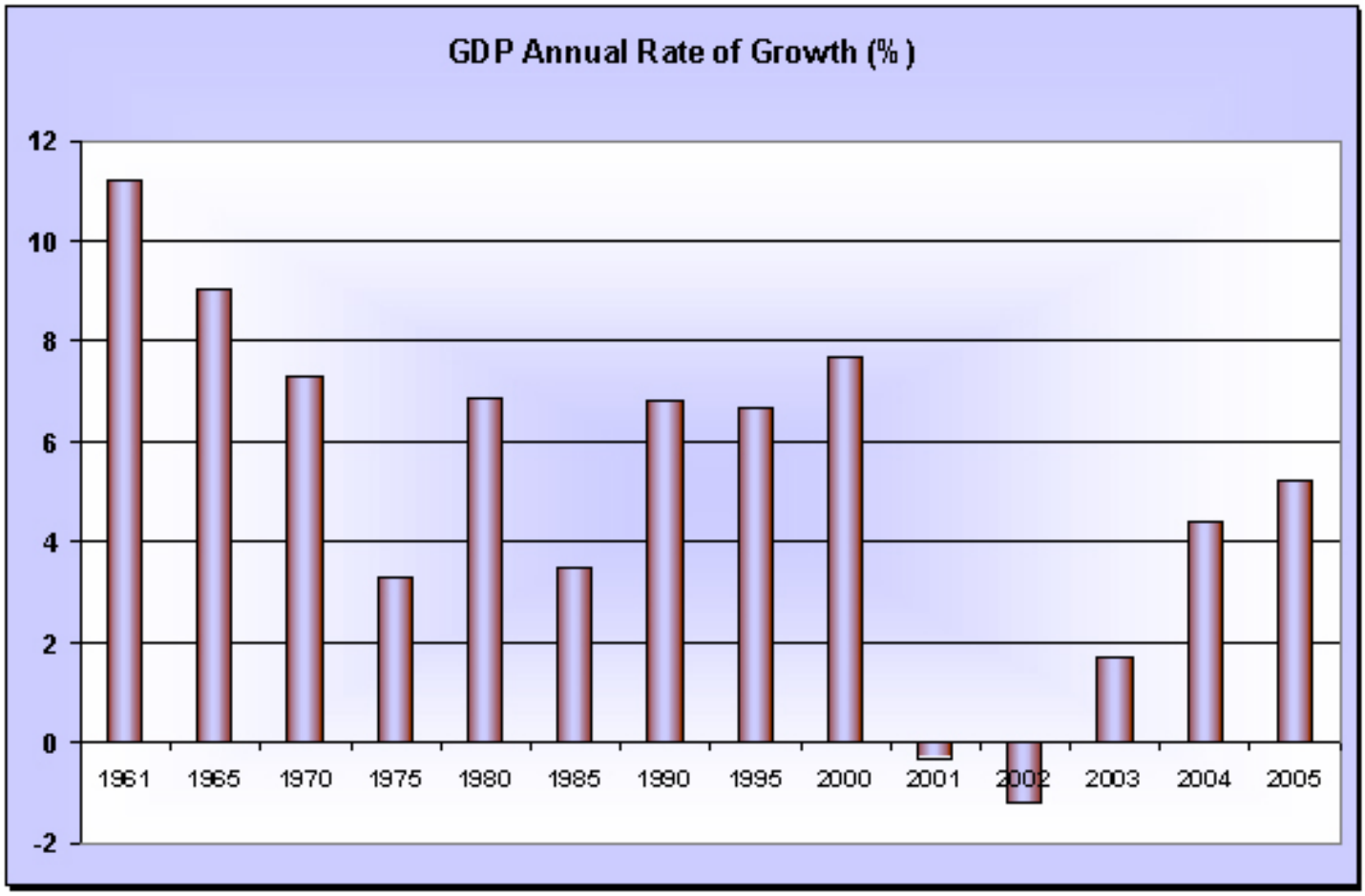

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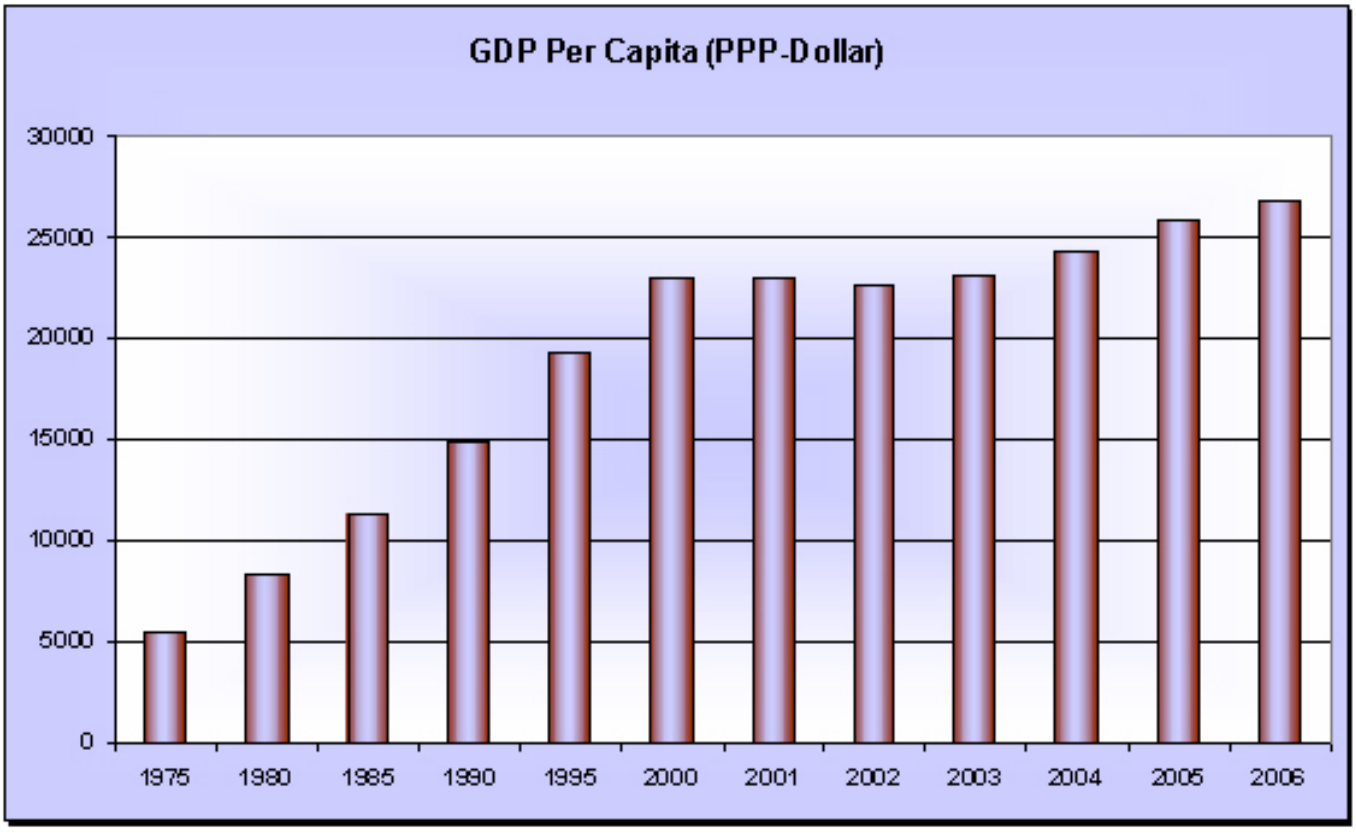
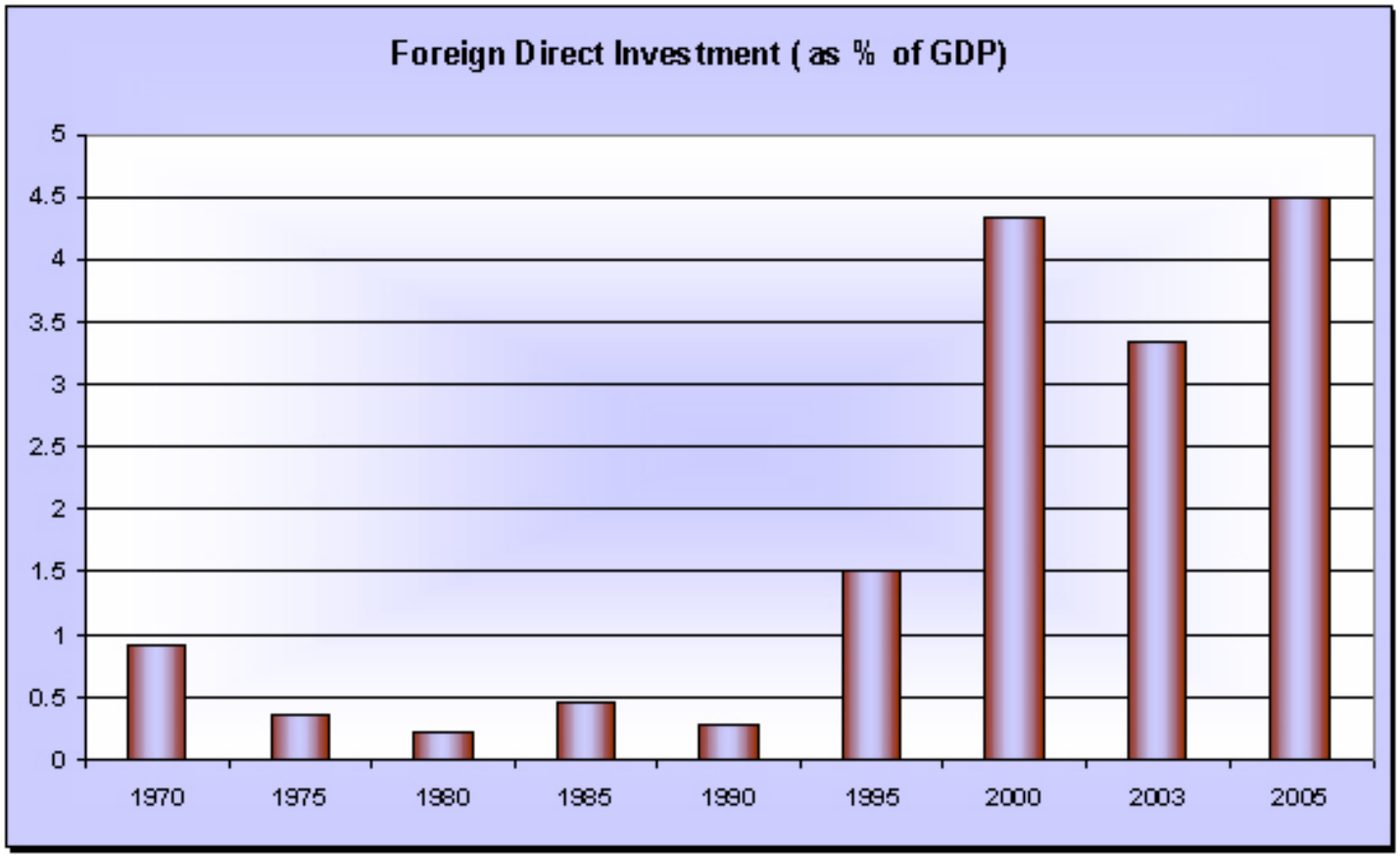
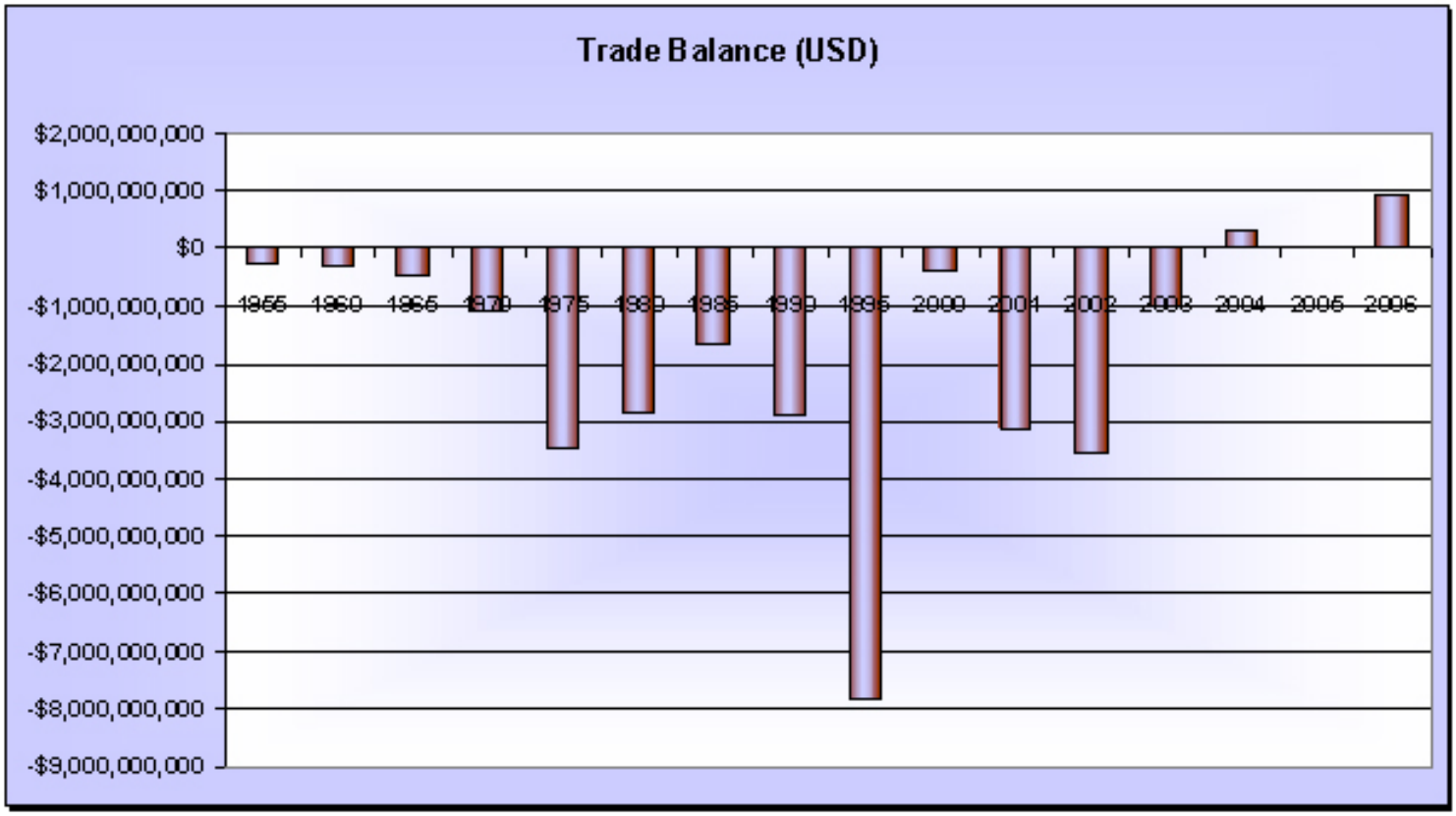


Source: UN, CIA World Factbook

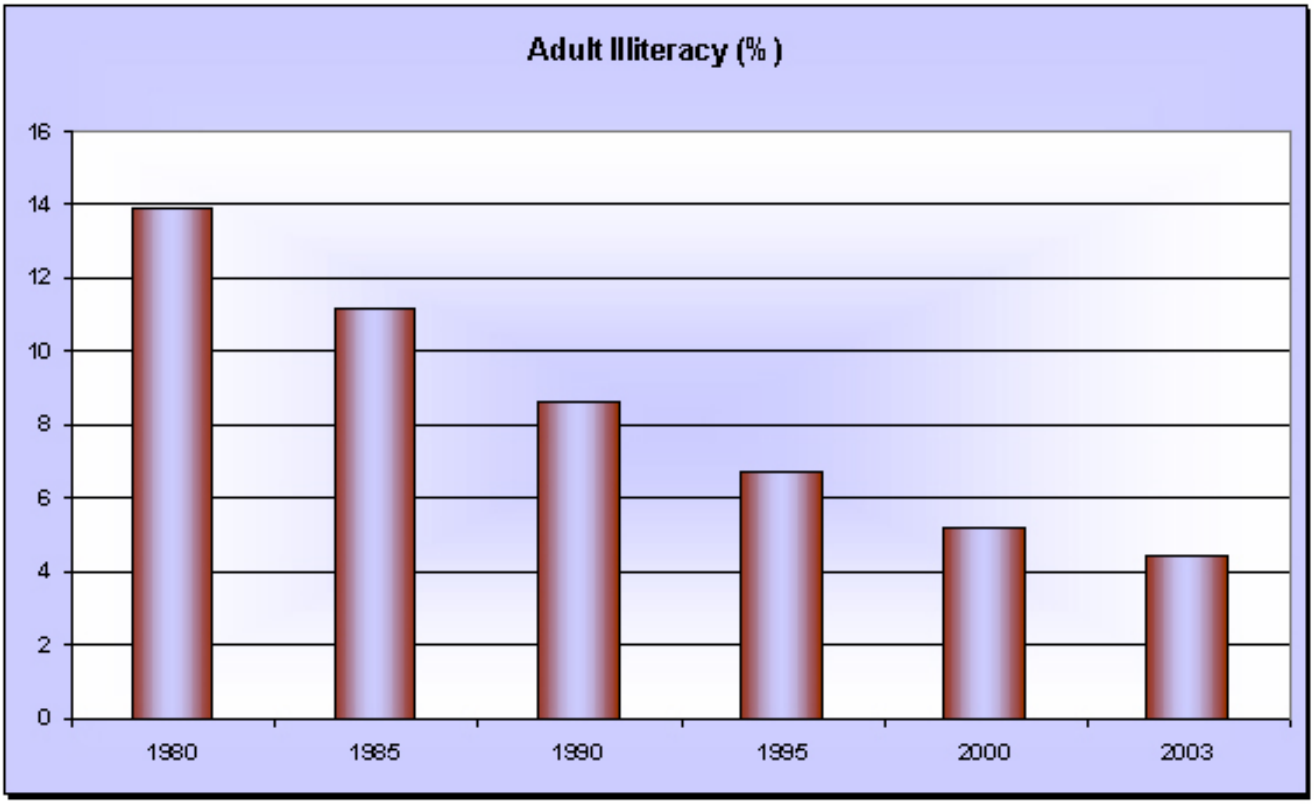


Source: Globalis, UNDP



Source: UN/IMF

Education



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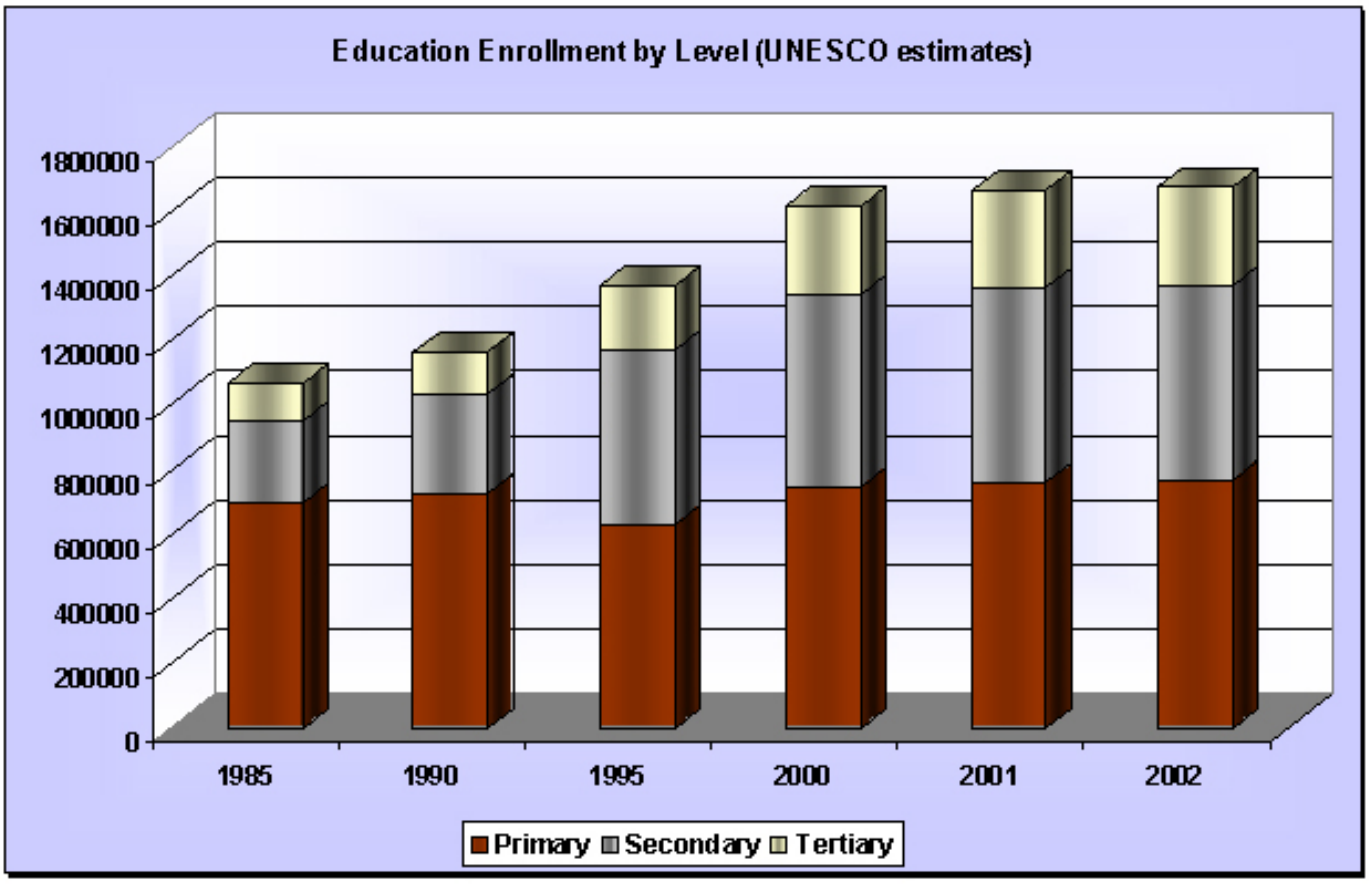
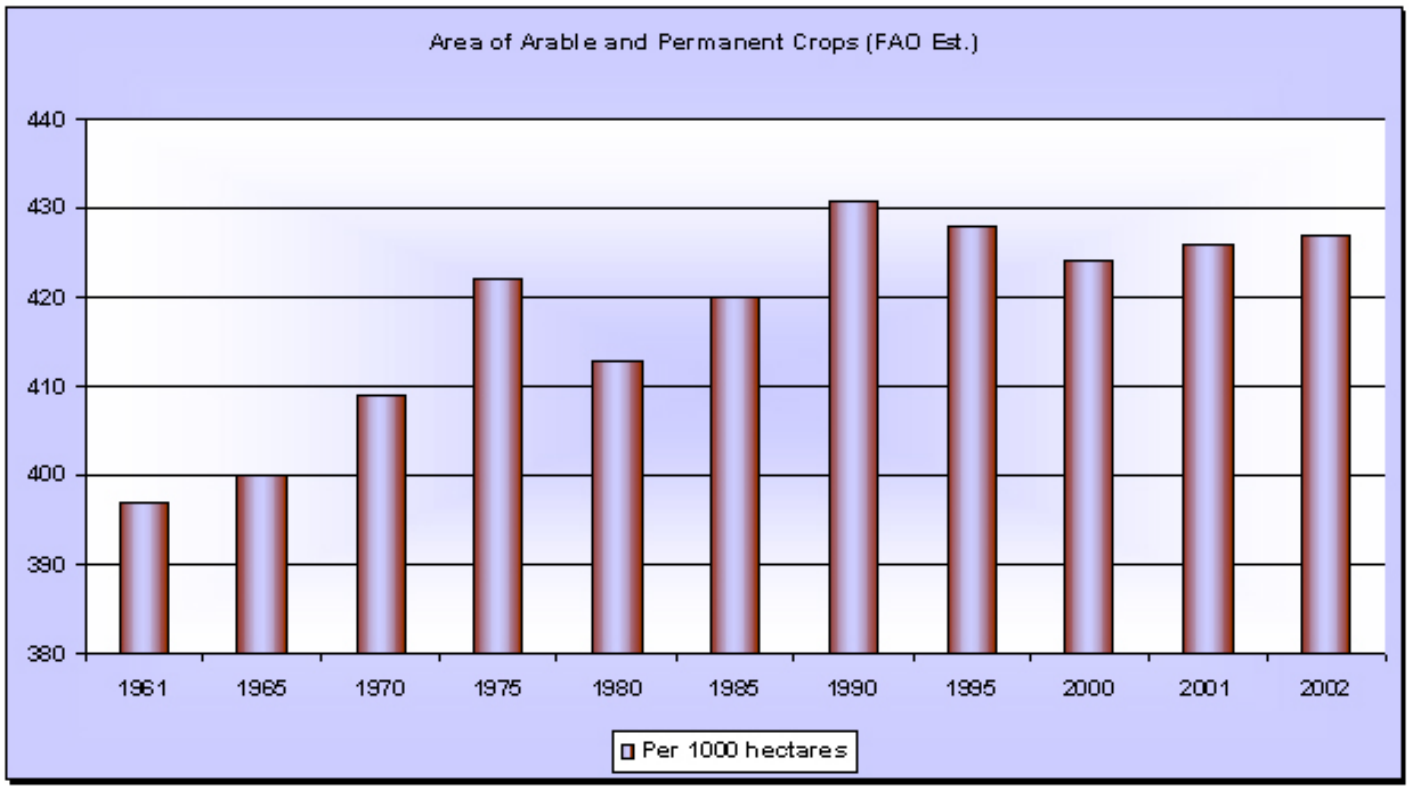


Source: UN

Note: From 1994, change in classification of one or more national programs of education

Environment



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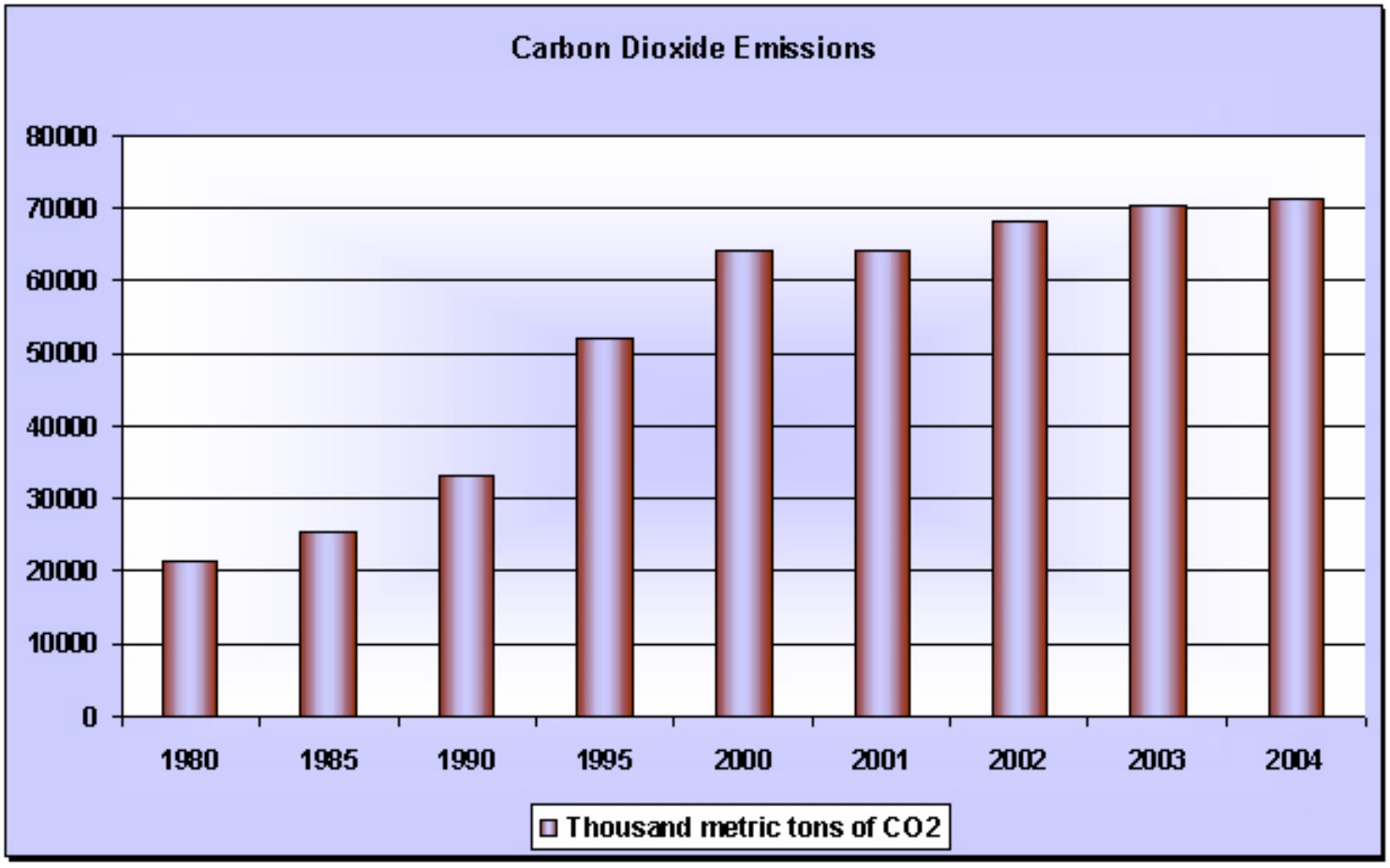

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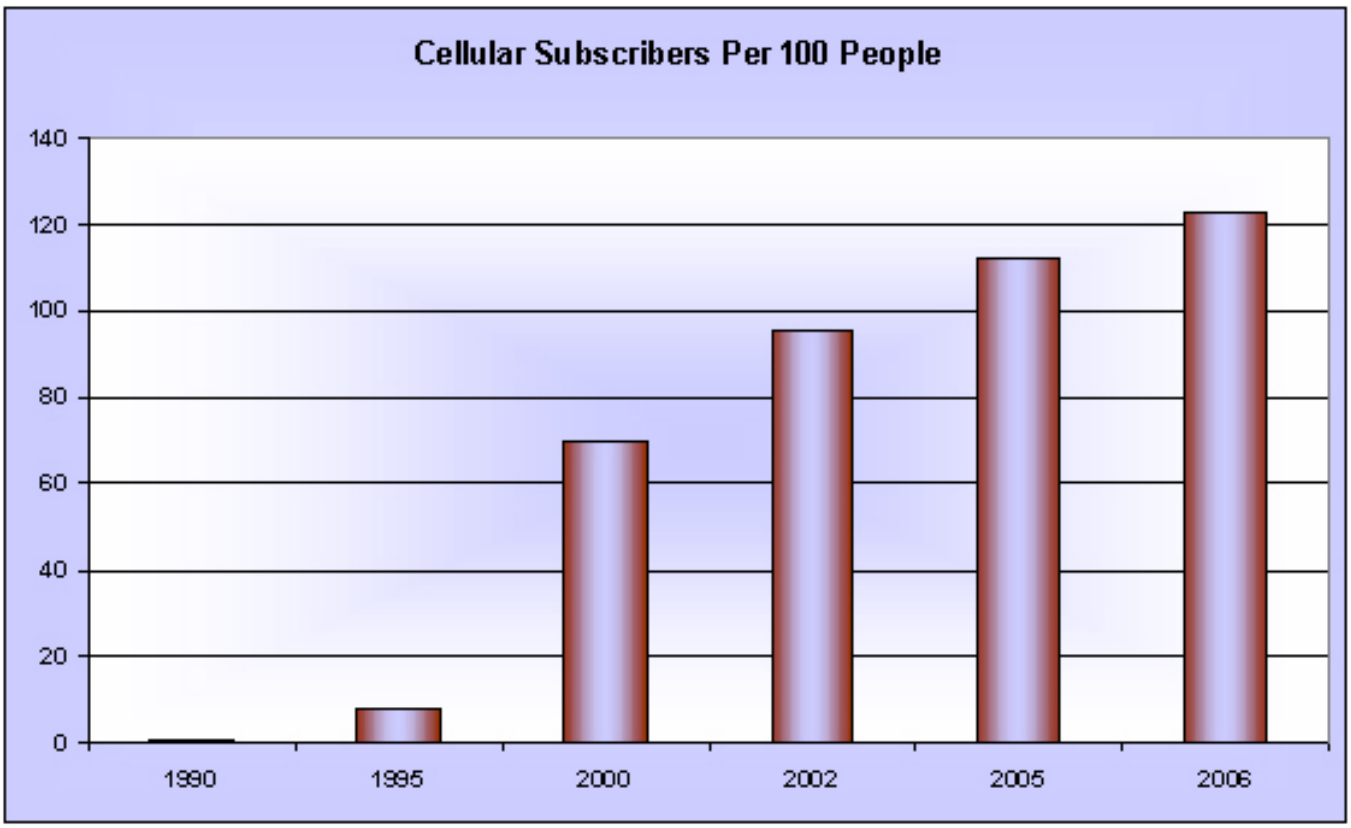
Technology



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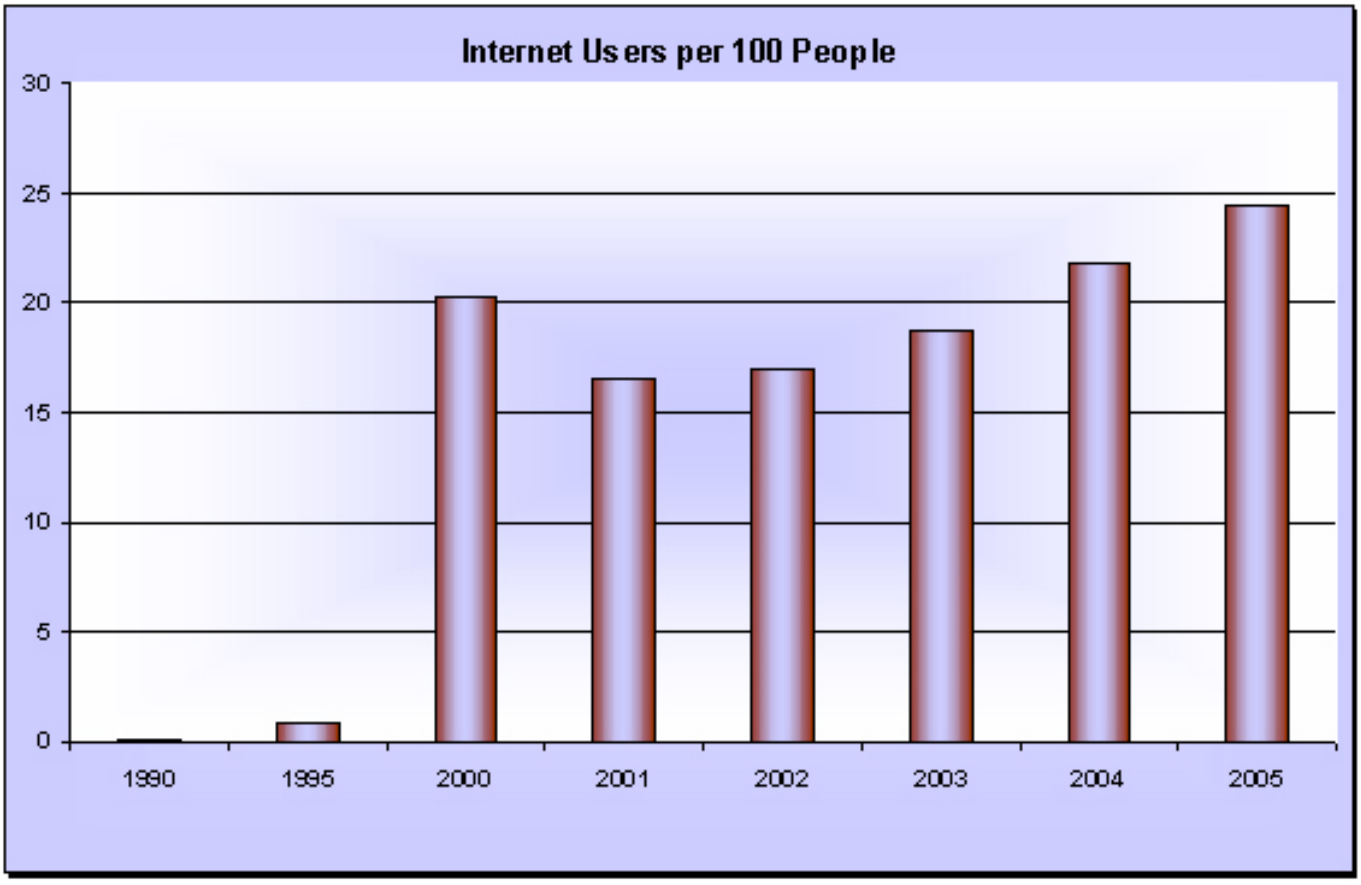

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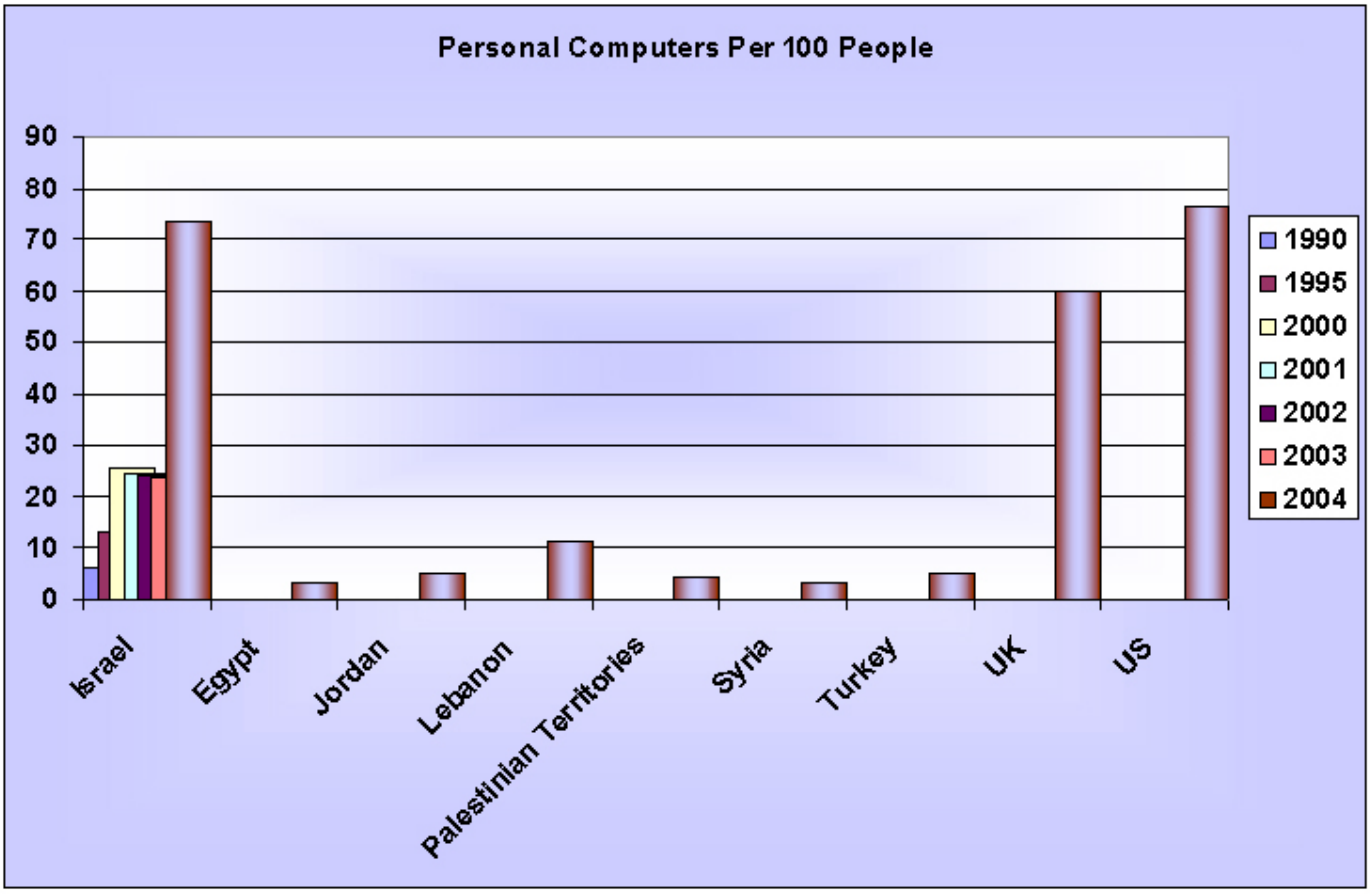

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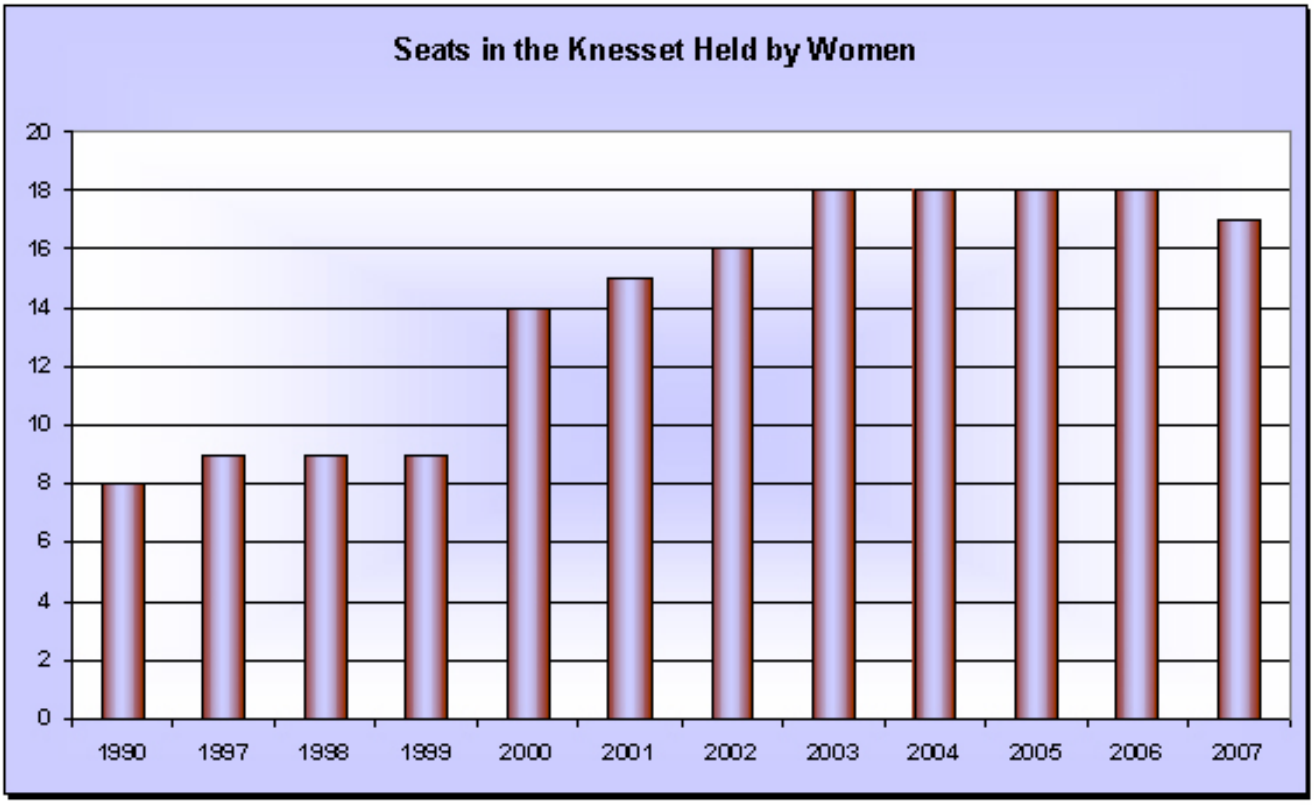
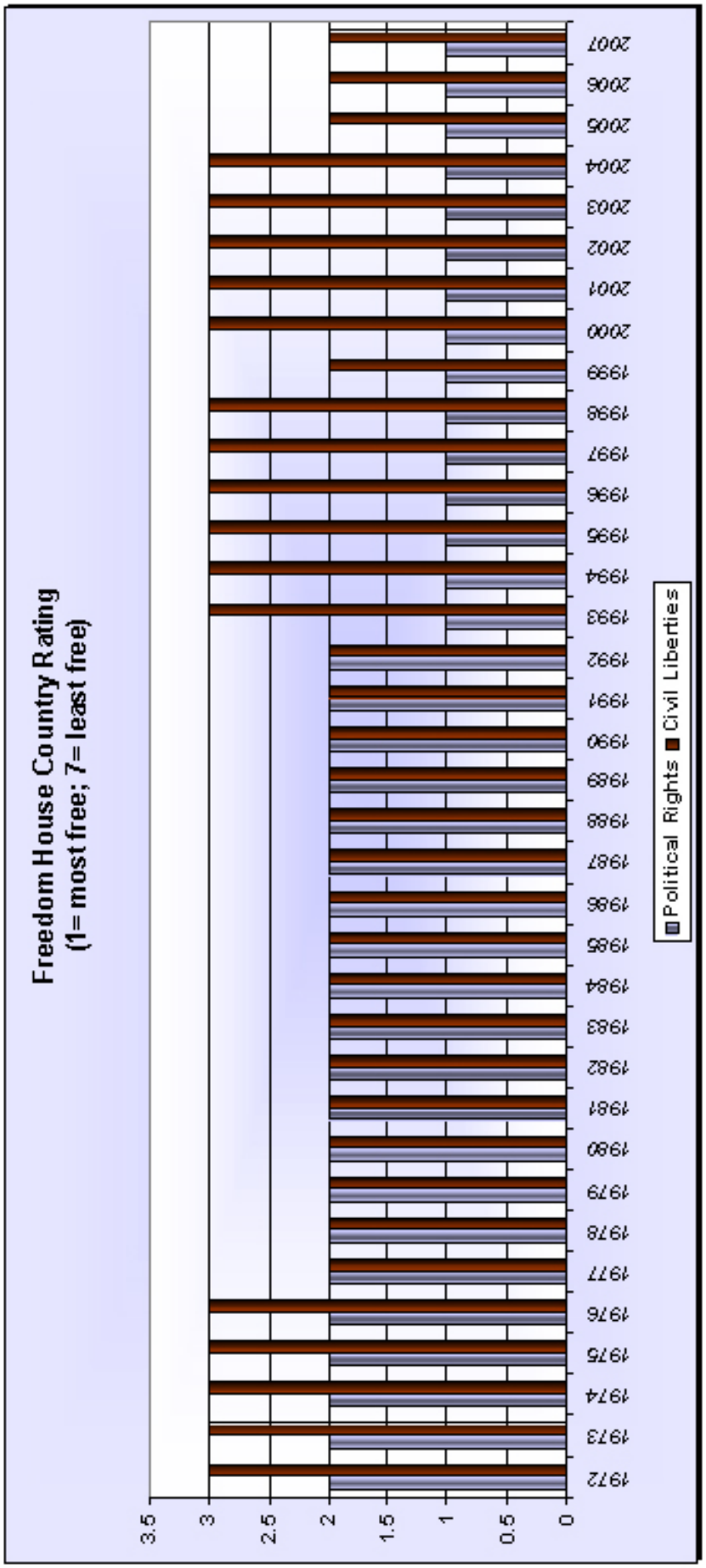
Women



Source: UN

Freedom House Rankings



Source: Freedom House

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GLENDA ABRAMSON

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