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ISRAEL AT A CROSSROADS BETWEEN CIVIC DEMOCRACY AND JEWISH ZEALOTOCRACY

ILAN PAPPÉ

Mainstream Zionism (now comprising both Labor and Likud) is increasingly being challenged by the Right and Left. Post-Zionism has exposed the intellectual fallacies underlying traditional Zionism's attempt to combine ethnic segregation with an open society, but it is the moral and ideological substitute offered by neo-Zionism, opting for ethnic segregation as an ultimate goal, that is mounting the real political challenge. This article argues that while mainstream Zionists will delineate the space of a future Israel (by drawing the borders in a settlement with the Palestinians), the neo-Zionists will cast the ideological content into this space (by defining the identity and orientation of Israeli society).

THE VICTORY OF EHUD BARAK in the May 1999 Israeli general election was hailed locally and internationally as the return of the Jewish state to the peace track. As the international media were quick to note, the final stage in the long road begun in Oslo was at hand. And yet, thus far, we have witnessed the conclusion of another version of the Wye accord, the Sharm al-Shaykh agreement, and preliminary negotiations on how to negotiate the final stages. In short, for all the dramatic announcements and sanguine interpretations, there has been very little progress.

But more significant, and on the face of it quite surprising, is the virtual absence of internal debate in Israel at this "moment of truth" in the state's history. As the last phase in the negotiations supposedly gets underway, the debate that several years ago was so heated as to result in the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has totally subsided. The Israeli government called upon to make this final peace is based on a large majority of Jewish members of the Knesset, and even the opposition accepts with few reservations the basic outlines of the settlement likely to be offered to the Palestinians. From Peace Now on the Left to Gush Emmunim on the Right, there is a wide consensus on the nature of the conflict's solution.

What is clear is that the old dichotomy between Labor and Likud no longer serves as an appropriate indicator of the nature of the internal Israeli debate on the crucial issues of national concern and particularly on the solu-

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tion of the Palestine question. Indeed, Labor (the hegemonic representation of Zionism from 1882 until its fall from power in the 1977 elections) and Likud (inheritor of the alternative, more ethnocentric and segregative variant of Zionism known as Revisionism that rose to challenge Labor Zionism as of 1922) can be said to have coalesced into one major ideological stream. For despite the bitter antagonism that has separated them historically, and despite Labor's loss at the polls in 1977, it is Labor's vision that has prevailed over Revisionism's commitment to total sovereignty over the whole of historical Palestine. It is Labor's vision, in which Likud has essentially acquiesced, that has remained the principal prism through which the political center and professional elites in Israel view the Israel/Palestine reality. For the purposes of this article, we shall call this now-shared approach mainstream Zionism.¹

THE IDEOLOGICAL STREAMS

Despite the convergence of the two megaparties into one stream, Israel, not unlike societies in the Balkans, remains very much a society torn by ideology. The leading ideological outlook represented by mainstream Zionism is challenged by two opposing streams: post-Zionism and neo-Zionism. It is our purpose here to try to assess the sites and contours of the ideological debate underway since the last elections, its present balance of power, and implications for the future, not only on the state of Israel, but for the future of the Palestine question.

From the Left, mainstream Zionism has been challenged since the 1980s by post-Zionism. This movement represents a cultural view that strongly criticizes Zionist policy and conduct before and during 1948, accepts many of the claims made by the Palestinians concerning 1948 itself, and envisions a non-Jewish state in Israel as the best solution for the country's internal and external predicaments. As such, it represents a point of view acceptable to large numbers of Palestinian citizens in Israel. Indeed, whether it can ever become a meaningful political alternative depends largely on its ability to form a lasting political alliance with Israel's Palestinian national minority. This alliance has not been formed as yet, and thus we cannot now talk about post-Zionism as a political challenge. The post-Zionist success so far has been in legitimizing hitherto taboo topics of great relevance to the present debate in Israel: the nature of Zionism, Israel's moral conduct in 1948, the refugee problem, policies toward Sephardic Jews (henceforth Mizrahim), and so on.² More significant for the future will be its influence in the universities and, more importantly, in the educational system, as will be discussed later in this article.

The main *political* challenge to traditional Zionism comes from the Right, from a fundamentalist Zionism that Uri Ram has termed "neo-Zionism."³ Neo-Zionism is a violent and extreme interpretation of Zionism. It existed as a marginal variant of Zionism both in the Labor and Revisionist camps and

was nourished in the teaching centers controlled by the religious Zionist Hapoel Hamizrachi (which became the National Religious Party, Mafdal). It burst forth as an official alternative after the 1967 war, pushed forward by expansionists among the Labor movement, leaders of the newly established Likud, and leading rabbis. In the 1980s, neo-Zionism widened its constituency by forming alliances with the settlers in the occupied territories and with deprived and marginalized sectors of society. It is an uneasy alliance comprising expansionist nationalists, ultraorthodox rabbis, and ethnic spiritual leaders of the Mizrahi Jews, all presenting themselves as champions of the underprivileged Mizrahim. As an electorate, the Mizrahim until recently supported this alliance, but today have a far more complicated and sophisticated view that defies placement on the ideological map we are trying to draw. Quite probably, the Mizrahim are divided, very much like the rest of the Jewish community in Israel, among the three ideological streams.

The ideological debate in Israel involves a struggle over the collective memory and the past, the present, and the vision of the future. The debate over the past primarily involves the challenge to Labor Zionism's version of history mounted by post-Zionist scholars. It is here that post-Zionism has made its mark, having won an important following in Israeli academia and centers of cultural production, and—despite the fact that every known historian of the traditional Zionist camp has been recruited to refute post-Zionist theses—it has won wide legitimacy in the West and therefore in large segments of Israeli society. The battle continues, its acuteness and indeed acrimony undimmed because of its connection to the policies of the present and posture of the future. That the post-Zionists will ultimately win—indeed have already largely won—is no longer in doubt. Nonetheless, as I have addressed this battle over the past in earlier articles in this journal,⁴ we shall focus the discussion here on the remaining areas of contest: the present and the future.

MAINSTREAM ZIONISM AND DRAWING THE POST-OSLO MAP

While post-Zionism has impressive support in academia, and to a certain extent in the press and other cultural media, its vision of a secular, democratic non-Zionist Israel (or Israel and Palestine as a unitary state) has but a marginal following in Israeli Jewish politics.⁵ In contrast, while traditional Zionism has limped unconvincingly into the new century as a scholarly interpretation of Palestine's past, it remains the major factor in shaping the Jewish perception of the present.

The mainstream Zionist view has been translated into practical terms in the Oslo agreement or, more precisely, in the Israeli interpretation of Oslo. The first part of this position is that pre-1967 Israel is not negotiable; hence the future of the refugees or Israel's role in creating the refugee problem are excluded from the negotiating table. Another aspect of the ban on pre-1967 Israel is the categorical refusal to include Israeli Palestinians in any Israeli-Palestinian dialogue on the future.

Thus, for Zionism's mainstream, the geographical space of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is confined to the areas occupied by Israel in 1967, apart from East Jerusalem and its environs and most of the territory controlled by the settlers. This is the space in which the permanent, not temporary, solution of the question will eventually be implemented. The formula, involving Israeli overall control and some functions handled by the Palestinians, is a hybrid between two old Israeli "peace" plans presented in the 1970s: the Yigal Allon plan and the one offered by Moshe Dayan. Allon sought a territorial compromise with the Jordanians based on the demographic distribution in the territories. Dayan wanted to keep all the land but to divide the functions of authority between Israel and Jordan, with Israel holding mainly security functions in the West Bank and the Jordanians keeping the others. A combination of these approaches, with the Palestinians replacing the Hashimites as partners, is the basis of the permanent settlement proposals offered by Labor and Likud in the post-Oslo reality.

This is a shared vision. Labor and Likud, this combined ideological movement, likewise share the vision of its implementation. Like all the agreements since the conclusion of Oslo, it will be a dictated solution. The notion of dictation enjoys wide support among the Jewish population.⁶ Indeed, Likud's victory at the polls in 1996 showed that the majority of Jewish voters are willing to impose an even harsher version of the Oslo reality on the

Netanyahu's fall had nothing to do with reservations about dictating to the Palestinians, a policy that in many ways Barak promises to imitate.

Palestinians: Netanyahu's fall from power had nothing to do with reservations about this policy, that in many ways Barak promises to imitate. Even though Likud did not join the new government, Barak's principal negotiators (retired generals such as Vilnai, Yatom, Peled, and Stauber) and his government's composition promise a similar approach.

Oslo is attractive for the Israelis because it appeals to the political center. Immediately after the 1996 Israeli elections, Yossi Beilin, a leading figure on the Labor's left wing, commented that he believed Labor and Likud could find a common ground for peacemaking.⁷ And indeed, Beilin, together with Michael Eytan, considered to be on the right of the Likud, hammered out a document that showed, even then, the extent of the overlap between the two parties. Despite their positions on opposite ends of the spectrum in their respective parties, they found it quite easy to formulate a document that could serve as the basis for a permanent settlement to be dictated to the Palestinians.⁸ In it, almost all the settlements were to remain under Israeli control and sovereignty; Jerusalem would remain a "single unified city" under Israeli sovereignty; the Jordan Valley would be a "special security zone"; and Israel would control border crossings. No refugee return would be permitted into sovereign Israel, and limits on refugee entry into the Palestinian entity would be discussed during final status talks. The document left open the possibility of a semblance of "statehood" in the areas—less than 55 percent of the West Bank and 60 per-

cent of the Gaza Strip—that would remain under Palestinian control, although even under the most liberal interpretation what would be offered was far from normal statehood.

This vision has an economic dimension too, which cuts across national boundaries. Part of this vision is the introduction of a capitalist and free market economy both in Israel and in Palestine. Under the Paris Protocol, the economic component of Oslo signed in May 1994,⁹ Israel and Palestine were to form one economic unit. This can be seen in the way the customs outfits are connected and the way a joint taxation policy is being exercised. Furthermore, the agreement grants Israel the right to veto any development scheme put forward by the Palestinian Authority (PA). Israel's monetary and currency exchanges play a commanding role in the Palestinian economy, and Israel totally dominates the PA's foreign trade and even industry.

The introduction of the Israeli version of a capitalist economy into the PA areas can only have a disastrous effect. With the absence of democratic structures and a very low GDP, the integration offered by Oslo can only turn the PA areas into the slums of Israel. An excellent example can already be seen in Erez, the buffer zone between Israel and the Gaza Strip. There, the Israelis, with the blessing of the Americans and the European Union, opened an industrial park. Let the name not mislead the readers: it is a production line where all the workers are Palestinians and all the employers are Israelis benefiting from the very low wages they pay the workers. Israel has plans for similar parks on the border between Jordan and the West Bank. This is why Israeli industrialists consider themselves part of the peace camp. The other aspect of the capitalization of the peace process, of course, is the benefit derived from such economic transactions by a small number of Palestinians.

While this double burden of economic misery and lack of a satisfactory political solution could lead to a Palestinian attempt to revolt against the post-Oslo reality, it is difficult to see why the Israelis should make an effort to alter the current situation. For the majority of Israeli Jews, this peace is based on an unbeatable logic, one that was many times pronounced by the late prime minister Rabin. According to this logic, the Palestinians were in a dismal situation before Oslo and are now offered an improvement. Not a very impressive one but, still, one that can be defined as N+1—"N" being the previous situation, and "1" being Gaza, Jericho, and Ramallah covered with Palestinian flags and policed by Palestinian security services. This is peace for most Israelis, provided there is no terror or bombs. For most Israelis, peace is their daily security, and this has been enhanced by the Oslo process.

NEO-ZIONISTS AND THE MAKING OF AN ISRAELI ZEALOTOCRACY

With this geopolitical vision, even the ultraorthodox parties of Shas and Agudat Israel are willing to go along. But the vision of the future is not just a matter of defining borders or containing Palestinian national aspirations. It is also a matter of identity and the essence of a society. And here we encounter

the neo-Zionist vision, shared by the settler community, supporters of Mafdal, the ultraorthodox parties, and a new secular Right (including a new party of Russian immigrants called Yisrael Beiteinu, or Israel Is Our Home) closely associated financially and ideologically with the New Right in the United States.

Unlike the post-Zionists, the neo-Zionist alliance has representation in the new government formed after the 1999 elections. They have six ministries, although compared to Netanyahu's government they have of course lost power. They can join the Barak government because they shifted from an interest in territory and political borders to sociocultural questions. The mini-state offered by Barak to the Palestinians frightens them, but they accept their inability to put forward an alternative.¹⁰

In elementary sociological terms, neo-Zionists thrive on the margin between decreased external tensions and rising internal ones. Post-Oslo Israel is multiethnic, multicultural, and deeply divided on issues of culture, law, morality, and education. The divisions do not reflect clear positions, but rather, confusion and insecurity. The various groups constituting Israeli society increasingly tend to stress their particular identity at the expense of the state's identity. A change in the electoral law before the 1996 elections encouraged such trends: voters could now vote separately for the prime minister and the Knesset, allowing them to vote "realistically" for the premiership and more "emotionally" for the party representing their particular interests. And indeed, the 1996 elections made clear that Ethiopians, Russians, North Africans, secular Tel Avivians, Palestinian Israelis, and so on believed that

their particular interests could best be served in sectarian voting. The 1999 elections only strengthened this trend.

Neo-Zionism's greatest attraction for the Jewish majority in Israel is its simplicity. Ironically, its growing power is partly and inadvertently assisted by the confusion arising from post-Zionism's deconstruction of traditional Zionism. Neo-Zionism conveys confidence,

not confusion, about the future. Its main tactic is to present itself as having the key for unifying the disintegrated and polarized Israeli society—the key being a clear version of Judaism as a national movement, something the articulators of Labor Zionism never succeeded in doing. The neo-Zionists can thus pretend to be the unifying force bridging the gap between conflicting interpretations of Judaism both as a religion and as a national movement. While the post-Zionist scholars saw the fractured reality as indicative of the need to make Israel a state for all its citizens, the neo-Zionists proposed a Jewish religious and nationalist cement that would prevent further fragmentation and disintegration.

Four parallel processes are taking place that forge this neo-Zionist option: (1) the fanatization of the national religious groups (whose strongholds are in the settlements and in the wide network of state-funded yeshiva centers);

Neo-Zionism's growing power is assisted by the confusion arising from post-Zionism's deconstruction of traditional Zionism.

(2) the nationalization or Zionization of the previously anti-Zionist ultraorthodox Jews; (3) the ethnic insulation of segments of the Mizrahim caught in the geographical and social margins of society; and (4) Israel's rapid integration into capitalist globalization—which adds to the alliance an intellectual neoconservative center, à la the New Right. The groups emerging from these four processes share one vision: an ethnic religious theocracy as the best means of confronting Israel's external and domestic problems. The dominant force among these groups are religious leaders, be they rabbis, magicians, healers, politicians, or educators. This elite shares an extremely pejorative perception of secular Israeli Jews. According to a recent book by Sephi Rachlevski exposing these views,¹¹ this alliance sees the secular Jews as the "Messiah's Donkey": they did their job in carrying the Jews back to the Holy Land, but they are obsolete now and can be treated like non-Jews. (Non-Jews are like beasts that can be utilized and exploited, at times feared, but always inferior.) As this book shows, medieval Jewish thought, developed to counteract and provide solace in the face of a deeply hostile gentile environment, has been recycled here as the basis for a modern racist ideology positing a clear exclusion/inclusion axis—a future Israel without secular Jews and non-Jews.

This concept has been formulated by the national religious thinkers (mainly rabbis). It is presented as Zionism, not Judaism. It is connected to the Zionist concept of fulfillment, *hagshama*, which in its old interpretation meant only one thing: settling the land. At first, neo-Zionism saw settlement of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and the Golan as the ultimate act of patriotism. But settlement is now fading due to the Oslo accords. Fulfillment has come to mean strictly observing the Jewish laws and struggling against traditional (secular) Zionism in the realm of the judiciary and legislature; its main target is Israel's High Court because of its attempts to safeguard the public sphere from religious impositions.

The neo-Zionists' view of the past is nationalistic and romantic. Israel of the Second Temple era is the glorious past that is to be reconstructed. Their resemblance to the BJP in India is striking. Both groups wish to demolish the past of a few hundred years for the sake of a distant past of a few thousand years. Hence, the neo-Zionists take seriously the idea of rebuilding a Third Temple to replace the Haram al-Sharif, and they prepare cadres of would-be priests to serve there when the time comes. Where the neo-Zionists differ among themselves is on whether to achieve their goal by blowing up the two mosques on the Mount or wait for divine intervention to clear the way.¹²

Their greatest success to date, apart from their leading role in the Netanyahu government, was their long control of Israel's educational system.¹³ In the new Barak government, they share the office with Meretz, a traditional Zionist party. This dual control over the educational system by a leftist minister and a neo-Zionist deputy is less absurd than it seems and reflects the current confusion about Israel's past, as traditional Zionists fight a rear-guard (albeit largely losing) battle in the academy against post-Zionist challengers.

During the Ministry of Education's long period under neo-Zionist control, which has now temporarily ended, several educational kits (textbooks, curricula, etc.) were produced that continue to circulate, particularly in schools within the neo-Zionist population centers. One item in the kit, for example, is a textbook chronicling the state's first fifty years¹⁴ that hardly mentions Palestinians. They are not mentioned with regard to the 1948 war, nor as Israeli citizens under military rule until 1966, nor as an occupied population in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip since 1967. The existence of Palestinian refugees is something the readers of this book will not know about. They will only be aware of the existence of Palestinian terrorism, which emerged somewhere in the 1960s for unknown reasons.¹⁵

Just before Netanyahu's government fell at the end of 1998, a new plan was announced aimed at "linking pupils more closely with the army."¹⁶ This Spartan/Prussian scheme was to prepare children from kindergarten through high school for a "military environment and values: coping with situations of pressure and developing leadership skills in a battlefield." Army maneuvers and military indoctrination were to be integral parts of the educational system along with enriched lessons on Zionism and Erez Israel studies. Specific programs for each of the last three years of high school aimed at "increasing motivation for the IDF" and strengthening "commitment to homeland."¹⁷ Though elements of this type of program always existed in Israeli schools, they constituted a marginal part of school life and their content was designed by traditional Zionists. The kits formulated according to the neo-Zionist interpretation, on the other hand, would be bound to shape the pupils' vision of the future in such a way that would be difficult to undo even by the most persuasive post-Zionist lecturer—if they were even lucky enough to hear different opinions in the future.

Such elements are no longer official policy due to the change in government, but they continue to be available for teachers alongside a new set of kits issued under the new government in September 1999.¹⁸ The alternative educational kits mainly include new textbooks that have received front-page coverage in the *New York Times* because of their willingness to incorporate a Palestinian perspective in their historical presentation and cast some doubt on the moral rightness of Zionist actions.¹⁹ These books, like the TV documentary "Tekumma,"²⁰ were written by scholars influenced by the post-Zionist critique and therefore include some reevaluation of the past, but they are still basically faithful to the traditional Zionist narrative; their inclusion of Palestinian elements is primarily to explain why Zionism was and continues to be opposed. The approach of the authors of the new books is well expressed by Avnet Ben-Amos, a member of a committee preparing the books:

In the past the teaching of history [in Israel] was dominated by a version that claimed that we [the Israelis] had an unquestionable right to the land to which we returned after 2,000 years of exile and that we reached an empty land.

Nowadays we cannot divorce the teaching of history from the debate inside academia and in the professional literature. We have to insert the Palestinian version to the story of Israel's history, so that the pupils will know that there is another group that was affected by Zionism and the [1948] war of independence.²¹

The lack of clarity in the educational system arising from the coexistence of diametrically opposite educational materials—some shaped by neo-Zionists and others influenced by post-Zionists—is compounded by another factor: the minister of education himself. Yossi Sarid accepts some of the alternative postures suggested by post-Zionist scholars and seems to dislike the neo-Zionist kits. However, he allows only a modicum of criticism to enter the curriculum. As a traditional Zionist, he has no clear objective of orienting the educational system toward a new look at the Palestinians or human and civic rights issues. His deputy, however, is determined to introduce more Jewish content—both national and religious—into the system.

This uneasy coexistence of two contradictory approaches to Zionist history is yet another manifestation of the extent to which the ideological center's view of the past has been undermined and the impact of this on the present. One can either challenge fundamentally the truisms of Zionism in the name of democracy and liberalism, or one can remain committed to these truisms at the expense of democracy and liberalism. The Labor movement wanted to square the circle and find a way of reconciling the contradictions by concluding peace and turning Israel into a democratic and liberal entity. As it turned out, it is impossible to do both. The realization that it must be one or the other is at the heart of the post-Zionist position, but it is also the motivating force behind neo-Zionism.

So a balance sheet of present Israel reads as follows. In the political field, the center is dominated by the two main parties of traditional Zionism, closely connected to the professional elites in the country. This center sees no need to make decisions about Israel's future development apart from the realm of Israeli-Palestinian relations: what parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (the tendency is to give up at least half) are to be given to an autonomous Palestinian Authority that could be called a state if necessary. The rest of the area will be settled by Jews and annexed to Israel, with Jerusalem remaining united and the capital of Israel. The refugee problem will remain unsolved or at least postponed to the very distant future.

This political center's vision of the past makes it blind to the link between ethnic and group identity on the one hand and economic poverty and social deprivation on the other. It refuses to be concerned about (or even accept) the fragmented nature of society. Its main concern is to enhance Israel's nuclear capability and high-tech prosperity as the guarantees for Israel's future survivability. In contrast, the post-Zionist reading of the past renders a just solution to the refugee problem as a far better guarantee for security.

The domestic scene is thus effectively abandoned, and this is where neo-Zionism as an option thrives. With their programs replacing government services (providing financial aid, child care, and schools with extended hours) in deprived areas, the neo-Zionists are steadily increasing their electorate. While they adopted the traditional Zionist discourse of “one people” that excludes the Palestinian citizens of Israel, they gave it new meaning by excluding as well purely secular Jews, foreign workers (estimated at about 300,000), and non-Jews (estimated as another 300,000, mainly from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia). There are, of course, internal power struggles among the various components of the neo-Zionist interpretation. However, the common ground is wide, and thus far the coalition has not broken down. On the contrary, it has gained momentum and force.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Israel at fifty is a society at several crossroads. One, obvious and well reported, involves decisions about how much of the occupied territories must be given up in order to move on with the peace process. But this is a small junction, and if it is crossed Israel will be confronted with far more meaningful and confusing crossroads. The most important of these is the ethnic-civic dichotomy of Israel. It is, as mentioned, already clear that mainstream Zionism’s option of reconciling the contradictions through peace cannot succeed. The “post-Zionist” scholars, with the help of the media, have already hinted at the other choices. One is an ethnic state that allows no compromise with the Palestinians and denies equal rights to Israel’s Arabs and social justice to Israel’s deprived populations. This is an ethnicity closely associated with an inflexible interpretation of Judaism—an ethnocracy or, indeed, a zealotocracy. As far as can be judged, this option is also fixated on the free market economy and capitalism already widespread in Israel. The other option is a civic society accepting the historical verdict of the post-Zionist scholars and connecting the wrongs of the past to the positive possibilities in the future. These include a comprehensive peace in Palestine, a genuine democracy without discrimination, and a more egalitarian society able to offer hope to deprived groups and wronged minorities. This could be a formula not just for Israel proper but preferably (albeit in a more distant future) for a new political entity between the Jordan and Mediterranean—a secular and democratic Palestine.

Between these two options, the neo-Zionists so far have the upper hand. They have the advantage of being disassociated in the public mind from the deeds of the past. Hence, unlike the traditional Zionists, they have no qualms about describing the unpleasant chapters in the history of Zionism and Israel: the massacres and expulsion of Palestinians (which they advocate implicitly today) and the discrimination against Sephardic and Orthodox Jews. Unlike the traditional Zionists, they are able to offer a clear future, not a future torn between secular democracy and ethnic theocracy but a future built

on an unquestionable preference for the latter. In short, unlike the traditional Zionists, neo-Zionists are not occupied with trying to square the circle by presenting a reality based on oxymorons such as “enlightened occupation,” “pure arms,” “liberal ethnocracy,” or “ethnic democracy.”²² They are also helped by a confused Israeli academia, where traditional Zionists, despite the undermining of their official “version” of history, continue to control the major required introductory courses in the human sciences and are still struggling to keep the illusion of a society capable of being both ethnic and civic.

Three factors can affect these admittedly gloomy prospects. One is a bolder definition of objectives by all those who count themselves as belonging to the civic and democratic camp in Israel. Thus far, the objectives have not been clarified, and such clarification would inevitably reopen the question of what kind of entity could replace the Jewish nation-state in order to safeguard both Israeli and Palestinian human and civic rights. On these issues, there is more confusion than determination in the post-Zionist camp. This is why I use the term “post-Zionism” advisedly, because, for better or for worse, this approach is not totally liberated from the Zionist ideology with all its limitations and problematics.

The second factor is willingness on the Palestinian side to engage openly on a democratic basis in a search for a joint solution. Post-Zionism is a Jewish phenomenon, but it is a transitional phase *out* of Zionism. But into what? It seems pointless to define the final destination without first exploring Palestinian aspirations. Can a civic and democratic state serve both peoples? Are both peoples’ goals best served within a federated structure that could satisfy national identities? Or is it necessary to have two states (if the latter is even possible in a meaningful way, given the post-Oslo reality)?

The third factor is the position to be taken by the United States and Europe, for without pressure on Israel there is little hope for change from within. Sanctions or boycotts could be counterproductive, creating an even more entrenched neo-Zionist approach, but the West needs to redefine agents of progress, stabilization, and human welfare in the region. Israel’s distorted self- and external image as the “only democracy in the Middle East” has to be challenged by Americans and Europeans by pointing to *persistent* patterns of behavior ever since 1948. A continuous Western portrayal of Israel as a Western democratic island in an Arab wilderness has been one of the major obstacles faced by those in Israel working for the establishment of a humanistic and civic society that benefits everyone living in Israel and Palestine.

NOTES

1. When referring to Labor and Likud, I refer not only to their platforms but also to the attitudes of their electorate as manifested in opinion polls and the political

discourse of individuals regarding themselves as belonging to the “silent majority” or “mainstream” Israel.

2. Even the present manipulation of Holocaust memory has become a legitimate topic for debate, not only in academia but in the public discourse. A measure of the change is the fact that the Knesset for the first time has agreed to debate proposals to transform Israel from a Jewish state to a state for all its citizens. This has no chance of being endorsed, but in the past it was forbidden by law to present such bills. Now, without even changing the law, they have been allowed on the Knesset's agenda.

3. Uri Ram, "Post-Nationalist Past: The Case of Israel," *Social Science History* 22, no. 4 (Summer 1989), pp. 513-45.

4. See Ilan Pappé, "Post-Zionist Critique on Israel and the Palestinians," parts 1-3, *JPS* 26, no. 2 (Winter 1997), pp. 29-41; 26, no. 3 (Spring 1997), pp. 37-43; 26, no. 4 (Summer 1997), pp. 60-69.

5. In the 1996 elections, 6,000 Jews voted for Hadash, which represented such an option. About 12,000 voted for Hadash in the 1999 elections.

6. After Rabin's assassination, the "Peace Index," which measures general support for the peace process, reached its zenith, 73.1%, but after a series of terrorist attacks in Israeli urban centers, it declined to 58.1%, its nadir. It has since remained steady, between 58% and 62%. This index has been tracked by all of the daily press since 1994.

7. *Ha'aretz*, 4 June 1996 [in Hebrew].

8. The document was finalized on 22 January 1997. See *JPS* 26, no. 3 (Spring 1997), pp. 160-62.

9. For the official text of the Paris Protocol, see *JPS* 23, no. 4 (Summer 1994), pp. 103-18.

10. See, for instance, the issue of *Nativ* 2, no. 67 (March 1999) [in Hebrew], which is devoted to the question of the Palestinian state.

11. *The Messiah's Donkey* (Tel Aviv: Yedi'ot Aharonot, 1997).

12. Ehud Sprinzak, *The Ascendance of Israel's Radical Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

13. The neo-Zionists had control of the Ministry of Education in the last unity government, 1984-88; in the Shamir government, 1989-92; and again in the Netanyahu government, 1996-99.

14. The Ministry of Education, *Israel's Jubilee* (Jerusalem, 1998). The book was the subject of Associated Press bulletins when it came out, and a book review on it can be found at the Hebron Institute for Political and Religious Studies Web site at <http://www.hebron.com>.

15. *Yedi'ot Aharonot*, 19 April 1999 [in Hebrew]. For an analysis of Israeli textbooks and curricula, see Eli Podeh, *The Portrayal of the Arab-Israeli Conflict in Israeli History and Civics Textbooks, 1953-95* (Jerusalem: Truman Institute, 1997) [in Hebrew].

16. Interview with the Ministry of Education director general, *Yedi'ot Aharonot*, 9 September 1998 [in Hebrew].

17. *Ibid.*

18. Under the Israeli system, teachers can choose from several approved kits for classroom use.

19. *New York Times*, 14 August 1999. Throughout September 1999, the Israeli press was full of debate on the books mentioned in this report by Ethan Bronner, particularly a book entitled *The Twentieth Century*, by Eyal Naveh, commissioned by the Ministry of Education in 1999.

20. See my review in *JPS* 27, no. 4 (Summer 1998), pp. 99-105.

21. *Ha'aretz*, 29 March 1998 [in Hebrew].

22. These attitudes have been analyzed by Oren Yiftachel, *The Research on the Arab Minority in Israel and Its Relations with the Jewish Majority: Survey and Analysis* (Givat Haviva: Institute for Peace Research, 1993) [in Hebrew].