

Session 1

A COMPARISON BETWEEN ZIONISM AND PALESTINIAN NATIONALISM

Chair: Hans-Georg Fleck

Discussions of papers by As'ad Ghanem (University of Haifa) and Moshe Ma'oz (Hebrew University, emeritus). The papers are in the printed volume of *Shared Narratives*.

WALID SALEM: This is the second Shared Histories project, and we are happy to have you all here.

I want to say on behalf of my Palestinian colleagues, how difficult it was to get here, in order to have Palestinians participating in this process. Unfortunately, of twelve Palestinians who were supposed to come, only eight could be here. Two could not get permits to get to Ben-Gurion Airport, and were not able to go via Amman because it is time-consuming and very difficult. We missed one other because he could not get a visa due to a security check, and another whose wife is sick. So here we are, eight people, but I hope that it will be a good meeting with fruitful results.

PAUL SCHAM: Those of you who were at Shared Histories 1 know that the genesis of this project was way back in the Oslo period when we thought that we could talk about the present and future, but the past was too hot to handle. Unfortunately, now it is much more difficult to talk about the future, but the past is still frequently off limits.

So I think it is particularly important that we continue this process. There has been a significant growth of interest in the importance of historical narratives, but not nearly enough. So I hope we all share the goal of trying to disseminate beyond the people in this room the importance of understanding both narratives. And one of the themes here, beside Palestinian nationalism and Zionism, is how we are going to create some understanding among Israelis and among Palestinians, and the interested outside world as well.

I also want to acknowledge Jeff Helsing of the U.S. Institute of Peace, who has also provided support for this conference, and we very much appreciate it.

BENJAMIN POGRUND: Welcome. Our thinking has moved on since our first Shared Histories conferences. We have come to realize that if we want to change people's attitudes, we must give attention to an extra element – dissemination. We need to make information and views known as widely as possible.

HANS-GEORG FLECK: I ask our first lecturer, Dr. Ghanem, to take the floor.

AS'AD GHANEM: I would like to start with a few comments before I go to the

issues. First, I believe that it is much more important now than it was a few years ago to start thinking about a concept of Shared Histories. That is because we are in a time when the very concept of two states is very problematic. It is much more important when two entities live under one sovereignty, to understand the other, rather than when you are separated entities. It is much more relevant to the new face of history, to the Israeli and Palestinian new phase of history.

The other comments I want to raise now are relevant to the whole discussion about nationalism, but they are also relevant to Palestinian or Jewish nationalism.

The first thing that I want to stress is the fact that I believe that nationalism exists primarily in the consciousness of the people. Thus, it is very important that this belief should be acknowledged by the other side, the world community, and so on.

I could discuss many different national groups and national identities, and how they lack what some consider essential to the definition of national groups. I mean the rhetoric can be important sometimes, but sometimes not. The language: sometimes it is important and sometimes not. The history is sometimes important and sometimes not. But what is indeed significant is what we believe that we share as a group, that we share a history. We share a land. We share a language. The issue of what we believe is the issue of the consciousness. The issue of what really we believe that we share. This I want to say: It is not important if the Jews have an ancient history in Palestine.

What I mean is that it is important for me, as a political person, that they believe that they have some ancient history in Palestine and Jerusalem. That belief was used by the founders of Zionism in order to stress the connection between that history and the current situation of Palestine. So the question of legitimacy is related to that issue of what the group believes, and their own presentation of themselves, of their own identity. The most important thing is the question of what they believe about their own consciousness.

The second point is that identity, as with other beliefs related to the issue of consciousness, is a changeable thing. It can go from one phase to a second phase and to a third and fourth phase. So it is very important to stress that when we speak about Palestinian nationalism in the 1930s, it is something really different than what we consider now as Palestinian nationalism. I want to raise a point about the Husseini and Nashashibi family clashes in the 1930s and 1940s which were very important to the Palestinian national movement at that time. We cannot discuss Palestinian nationalism as it is without this clash. The conflict between these families serves to emphasize the uniqueness of Palestinian nationalism.

The third point is the different types of nationalism. Basically we can distinguish between two types, and they are crucial to understanding the difference between Zionism and Palestinian nationalism, and what the difference is between being a Palestinian nationalist and an Arab nationalist. The two types of nationalism are Territorial and Civic.

Civic nationalism relates to the ability of the group to achieve the needs of the core group values. For example, being French means being a person who has internalized the values that were developed in Paris in the 14th and 15th centuries. It is an imperialist concept. Those who went out from Paris and imposed their values on others internalized them to their national movement, to the French national movement and the concept of being French. The most important component of it is the domination

of French culture, of the language, of the behavior, of the way that they present themselves.

It is clear to me that the Syrian or the Iraqi identity is a territorial one, albeit with many problems. But Palestinian nationalism is also supposed to be territorial nationalism as it is understood in the PLO Charter, that you can be a Jew or an Armenian or whatever, but if you live in Palestine and you believe that you are a Palestinian, then you are one.

Because of the clash with Zionism, and because of the refusal of the Jews to accept Palestinian nationalism, it is very complicated to say that Israeli nationalism is territorial. It can be considered territorial nationalism, but still it has some elements of ethnic nationalism, excluding the Arab, not because of the Palestinians, but because of the refusal of the dominant Jewish group to accept it.

The other type of nationalism is ethnic. Ethnic nationalism is related overwhelmingly to the clash with the "other".

Ethnic nationalism describes those people who believe they have an ancient father, like being a Jew, an Arab, or a German. As part of the narrative, we believe that we have an ancient father, but we believe it was crystallized through the clash with the other, as German nationalism was with French nationalism, so we end up with two concepts which developed under different circumstances of nationalism. Thus, in practical terms, we have different national movements for the Palestinians and for the Israelis, or the Jews, but we also have some common values, some shared basic values.

It is very important to stress here that the notion of nationalism is a European concept. Nevertheless, we frequently use the same tools to understand Eastern nationalism or national movements. For example, much of the literature stresses that Palestinian nationalism is rooted in the economic, social, and cultural changes that occurred in Palestine in the 19th century. In other words, they used the same concept of being part of a national movement as they would in Europe. Being part of that national movement in Europe means being an individual who belongs to the whole group of the French or Germans. Thus, this literature uses the changes that occurred in Palestine to stress that we are similar to the Europeans.

Also, I should note that we went through the social and cultural and historical changes of the 19th century after the industrial revolution in Europe. We want to stress that we are similar to them, that we have the same concept of nationalism. However, it is very important to consider what is unique for the national movement in Iran or a national movement in India or in China or in the Arab world.

I am not sure that only individualism is the cornerstone of being a Palestinian nationalist. It is important to think about being part of the collective, although that might be considered primitive. It might be something that we don't like, but it is still part of being a Palestinian and being part of the Palestinian national movement.

Many Palestinians, in writing about the 19th century, don't want to see our national belief as a reaction to Zionism. We have something much more unique, from before they came to Palestine. It is a way of saying that we have something much more legitimate in Palestine.

Usually, we use a historical approach to understand nationalism. We start with some specific point such as the clash with Zionism, and go on to describe Palestinian

nationalism from then on. Let's try another way.

Let us think about what are the main components of being a Palestinian, a Palestinian now, and see if these components are rooted in the historical development of being a Palestinian.

What is being a Palestinian? What are the main components of being a Palestinian now? It is something that is shared, and it is part of the whole history of being a Palestinian since its beginning. The Palestinian is a person who believes that he has, in his mind, this territory that we call Palestine. The homeland in his mind is this part is the territory as it was when it was created.

It was created by the British Mandate. There was no Palestinian territory before that except for the Jerusalem *Sanjak* under the Ottomans. But Aqaba wasn't part of this. So the truth is that Palestinian territory, what we consider as the Palestinian territory from the beginning, since the end of the First World War, is territory that was created by the others. We have to deal with the fact that the main component of being a Palestinian, the territory, was created by somebody other than Palestinians.

The second thing that I want to stress is the specific demands of establishing a Palestinian entity in this territory. When did this demand begin? It started at the third Arab-Palestinian Conference in Haifa in 1921. There is no call for a Palestinian entity in this territory before 1921.

So it is important to say that this is the territory, and this is the specific call for a Palestinian nation or people. We are a national group because we demanded a right for self-determination.

The third component among the Palestinians is being a victim. We were victims before 1948 and we continued to be victims of Zionism, of British control, of an imperial American invasion, whatever it is called, and also the Arab reaction to Palestinian demands for self-determination from Syria and from the rest of the Arab world. How Syria reacts to the Palestinian demand for self-determination is something important to understand.

The fourth component, and one of the most important, is the clash with Zionism. I am not saying that changes in the 19th century are not important. They are important to cultivate the ground for Palestinian nationalism. But these four elements are dominant. They are part of our history since the beginning until now. I would like to hear from you if there are any other joint or shared values as parts of our history which I have missed.

It is clear to me that beside these four elements, in every period of our history, there are other different elements that underscore the difference between the periods. Let's say that until 1948, from the end of the First World War until the Nakba in 1948, there are other elements besides these four. Let's say the elite and family domination and the clashes are very important. Not only in a negative way, but in a positive way, as part of Palestinian nationalism.

There were the National Congresses that were held by Palestinians in Palestine, the political structures created by the Mufti and the political parties which belonged to the families of Husseini or Nashashibi. Arab nationalism was dominant at the time. When the First World War was finished, many believed, at least those members of the elite connected to the Sharifian Hashemite family, that now was the time to create one Arab state, as had been promised during the war.

After the short-lived Hashemite Empire in Syria was crushed by the French army, Palestinians started to think about their situation and the new occupation of the British, and the new circumstances.

After that we faced the question of Abdullah and Jordan. The British Mandate was offering Abdullah a kingdom in Transjordan, and at least a few Palestinians considered this part of Palestine, so this was also a clash. And the next thing is the means that were used by the Zionists to control Palestinian territory, and to build their own institutions under the British Mandate. And the British Mandate, of course, was a cornerstone in our basic struggle of the Palestinian national movement.

Then there is the second period, from 1948 until 1967, until Yasser Arafat came to power in the Palestinian national movement. This includes the refugees and the Nakba and the Arabization of the Palestinian problem under Nasser's control, the partition of Palestine, or the rejection of partition control, if you wish, by Israel, Jordan, Egypt, the separation resolutions and fragmentation of the Palestinian homeland between three states.

And the main thing I want to stress is the role of the refugees. We cannot consider Palestinian nationalism as it is now without examining the role of the refugees. The re-emergence of the Palestinian national movement is viewed as being initiated by the refugees. The segregation of the refugees is the crucial difference between being a Palestinian and being a South African. Our national movement in these 20 years was initiated and empowered by the refugees who lived outside of Palestine. And every means that the Palestinians used, in the 1950s, the 1960s and 1970s and the 1980s such as the PLO, the demand for a state, they are only tools to let the refugees go back to their homes. Thus, it is essential to stress the role of the refugees. In fact, the Palestinian national movement was created as a tool for the refugees to go back to their home.

From 1967 to 1988, we have the third period of Palestinian history, the discussion about a democratic, liberal state, a state in Palestine. The PLO and Arafat are very important in this as symbols. Our struggle is part of our myth of being a Palestinian. It is our right to rule ourselves, to liberate our homeland, and it was a major clash with Gamal Abdel Nasser, with the Syrians, and as everybody knows, with the Jordanians, and now with the entire Arab world. Institutional bending in the diaspora and in the West Bank and Gaza and, in this period, the rejection of Camp David I were all very important.

And of course we speak about 1988 to 2006 in the context of the two-state solution, compromise with Zionism and Israel, Intifada, the establishment of the Palestinian Authority and the decline of the PLO until this slows down, and the centrality of Israel. Israel is much more central in our political behavior and political thought than before 1988. Because we have now some agreement and the Palestinian national movement moved from the outside to the inside, and they are in daily contact, the Palestinian institutions and Palestinian leadership, with the Israelis.

It is clear to me that Israel lives in the post-Oslo era. I mean, Israel knows Oslo is something that is dead, that it has been finished since Ariel Sharon came to power. Israel is not ready to meet the demand of establishing a fully sovereign state beside Israel. So we are in a new era, and the fact that Hamas was elected in the West Bank is also another – and no less important factor. That means that we are now emerging

into a new stage in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian national movement in history, and this is why I think it is much more important to start this discussion about Shared Histories, now much more than it was a few years ago. Because it may be, as I see it, that the two-state solution is a dead notion, and now we have to think about how to live together in one entity, in some arrangement that preserves the right of each side to deal with its internal issues and to think about how to solve common issues between Palestinians and Israelis. Thus, understanding this history of the other is much more important than if we were truly to separate into two states.

HANS-GEORG FLECK: Thank you. Let's proceed to the second lecture, by Professor Moshe Ma'oz.

MOSHE MA'OZ: I was asked to do a paper about the issue of legitimacy. I come to this as an Israeli who has always been more inclined to study Islamic history rather than Jewish history. Also, I should mention I don't like the idea of an "Israeli historian" or a "Palestinian historian" but instead, I prefer the concept of a scholar, who may happen to be Israeli or Palestinian. He can do the same for both sides and that's what I am trying to do.

In any case, I have divided the issue of legitimacy into self-legitimacy, the legitimacy of the other, and international legitimacy. And of course, they are intertwined, and there is symmetry and asymmetry on both sides, individually, or sometimes they switch the symmetry.

We'll start with the symmetry in the self-legitimacy of the people of two different movements. As I wrote in my paper, both draw their legitimacy from the same sources, history and society, or in fact I would say myth more than fact, and religion, even in the Zionist movement, which was secular. But even then there were some religious symbols, and the mere fact that it is called Zion is significant. I connect this with "education", meaning the Bible is the source of legitimacy for the Jewish people.

And it runs through the educational system, even in the diplomatic circles. I was amused the other day to listen to the Israeli ambassador to the U.S. on CNN. He was asked something about the occupied territories, and he said, "What occupied territory? It is ours. It is written in the Bible." I mean if it comes from a rabbi or a politician, that is one thing, but for a diplomat to say it, I find it illuminating.

Anyway, on the question who was first in this land in the Bible? The Palestinians will say they were first. There were the Canaanites, the Jebusites, the Philistines, the Phoenicians, and others. Of course, officially the Canaanites. A very interesting thing happened at an event when Yasser Arafat was crowned as the first Canaanite. They had a sort of a cart with a horse in front of him, and he put on a dress and he was the first Canaanite. Of course, considering that the Canaanites were pre-Islamic, there might be some problems here. But as I say, I take it with amusement. It is a myth, and I am not sure whether there are historical facts behind it. But of course, there is a very serious claim by Palestinians of historical continuity, coming from the time of Islam.

With regard to self-legitimacy, of course both sides draw support from international legitimacy. Historically, the Palestinians draw from the Islamic world, the Arab world and the Soviet Union. Zionists draw from the Christian world, of course, those who adhere to the Bible, especially in England and the United States. They gave the Zionist movement very strong backing. Britain, which issued the Balfour

Declaration, was a very strong source of Jewish nationalism, and it is a very important issue. I don't know how many of you know that in Britain it was not just a strategic decision. After all, the Jews in Palestine were 60,000 strong, and at the time of Balfour there were 600,000 Palestinian Arabs and millions of other Arabs in the neighbouring countries. I think it wasn't so much strategic but religious.

The generations of public opinion in Britain, going back to the 17th century, the millennial movement, and the religious Americans today -- the evangelists - all felt the Jews should go back to their country, the land of the Bible. This is I think the main background basis for the public opinion that led to the Balfour Declaration. It was very, very strong. I want to read you a quote from *The Times* of August 26, 1840.

"The theory of the restoration of a Jewish kingdom, which a few years ago was laughed at as fantasy is now calculated as the most practical achievement of diplomacy."

This is just one example. I have also a letter from the foreign minister of Britain to the ambassador in Istanbul about the idea of encouraging Jews to go to Palestine. This was also in 1840. Britain supported this idea before the Zionist movement. This was a very strong background for the Zionist movement.

Now, of course, jumping forward, as I mentioned in my paper, the Holocaust also helps the Jewish claim of legitimacy. It helps because of what happened and the need to establish a state to give refuge to Jews. Among other issues, it was a background for the 1947 partition decision and the support of the world community.

Later, when the issue was not only Jewish nationalism but also the State of Israel, you have the support of the United States for this movement, and not only strategically, but rather it was an emotional issue. The emotional issue is very significant. I mentioned the evangelists and also the U.S. Congress -- some of the presidents have admitted that they were very much inclined to support the Jewish national enterprise. Clinton spoke about his feelings, as did Reagan and Carter to some extent, and George W. Bush, very much so.

Anyway on the other side, the support of Islam for Palestinian nationalism was not very effective vis-à-vis the Christian support. Because Islam was for many years not strong under colonial rule, and it has also been a kind of an instrument for the elite and the regimes vis-à-vis the public. The public supported the Palestinians and their movement, and still supports them, but the regimes have a different agenda.

As far as the Soviet Union is concerned, it initially supported the Jewish national movement in 1947, and then went on to support the Arab movement. And in this, ironically, its effect was to strengthen the Western support of Jewish nationalism and Israel because Israel was seen by the Soviet Union as part of the Western camp. By contrast, the Jewish/Israeli affiliation to the West, especially Britain and the United States, I think gave the Palestinians more impetus to delegitimize the Zionist movement, arguing that the Jews in Israel are an extension of imperialism such as in the Balfour Declaration, namely: who were the British to decide that Palestine belongs to the Jews? It is ours, the Arabs contended.

And then of course, in the 1947 partition, the Palestinians argued that they were the majority, why should 55 percent of the land go to the Jews, and only 45 percent to

the Palestinians, although the Palestinians were more numerous, 1.2 million, and the Jews were half of that number.

Then again, I am concerned that Israel is so much dependent on support from the outside. Sharon for example gave it considerable importance. He got a letter from George W. Bush in February 2004 indicating there would be border adjustments to include many settlements. Everybody was happy, but Israel needs to get a letter from the Palestinians, not the Americans, because Israel happens to live in the Middle East not in America. Anyway, so this is just a continuation of the idea of Western support. Don't misunderstand, it is important, but it is no less important than to have reconciliation with the Arabs.

Now, speaking of reconciliation, the main issue, of course, is the mutual recognition or the line of recognition of the legitimacy of one another. And as you see in these papers, there was a very brief period of symmetry between these two national movements. This was the time of the Feisal-Weizmann agreement, which some Palestinians deny ever existed. But let's assume it did exist. Note, it is a long document that discusses the kinship and ancient bonds existing between the Arabs and the Jewish people -- and I am saying the Jewish people, not the Jewish religion, and it is very interesting to read. But this was the only episode in Palestinian or Arab-Jewish relations that spoke about a possible reconciliation between the two national movement. Until this day we haven't had anything of this kind, not Oslo, and not Camp David.

The question is, why Feisal did it? Here, I think you can see that there was symmetry for a while, and then asymmetry developed until 1948, and after 1974 the asymmetry changed upside-down, as I'll try to show. Of course what is also important is ideology, vis-à-vis politics, and often the asymmetry between leaders and the people, the common people. To give you an example of the Feisal-Weizmann agreement, Feisal, with all due respect to his being the descendant of the Prophet, with the Hashemite family coming from Mecca, he didn't represent the Palestinians or the Syrians. I quoted a report by him in the Palestinian conference of 1919 in which he denied having anything to do with Zionism. So he didn't represent them. But sometimes leaders can help the people to change their minds. This is the role of a leader, to lead, not to be led by sentiments of his people.

Now for many years there was an asymmetry between Palestinians and Zionists in the ideological sense, each side delegitimizing the other side, except for granting human civil rights. You are not a nation, one would say to the other, but you can stay in our country as citizens.

Still, within the Zionist movement, both the leaders and the public, the majority, the mainstream, acknowledged the existence of an Arab-Palestinian national movement. Not that they recognized its legitimacy, but they acknowledged its existence. But the minority, the rightwing Zionists, denied the legitimate national rights of the Palestinians in the Land of Israel.

But among the Palestinians it was the other way around. The majority -- at least until 1974 -- denied the rights of the Jews as a national movement in Palestine. Yet smaller parties accepted this, and some even supported the right of the Jews to live in Palestine among Palestinians.

On the Zionist side, the first acknowledgement of Arabs as a national movement was in 1921. There is a document in which Ben-Gurion initially said, "No, they have

nothing to do with this land", but then he changed his mind and he said "It is a national movement without a positive content", whatever that means.

Even Jabotinsky, the leader of the Revisionist movement, was among the first in the 1920s to recognize an Arab national movement in Palestine. He said that we cannot buy them off, the Palestinian movement, but we have to fight them. At the same time he was ready to grant Arabs full citizenship as a minority inside a Jewish state on both sides of the Jordan. But his disciples forgot what they learned from Jabotinsky and until several years ago, when Sharon discovered the Palestinian nation, they denied it. Jabotinsky was the first to recognize it -- not that he was happy about it -- but called to put an "Iron Wall" between us and the Arabs.

And then, on the other side of the spectrum, Brit Shalom and Hashomer Hatzair on the left, recognized the rights of the Palestinians, the national rights, and legitimacy, and called for cooperation in a bi-national state. But they weren't very strong. The founder of Brit Shalom was the first president of the Hebrew University, Yehuda Magnes.

Among the Palestinians, as you know, the mainstream denied any Jewish legitimacy, and for them ideology and policy intertwined. There was no gap. Ideology was a policy too. They also used violence against the Zionist enterprise, and against the opposition, the Nashashibis and others. The opposition to the Husseinis didn't recognize Zionist legitimacy but they acknowledged the fact that there was a Jewish national community, and that they had to come to terms with it. They were also linked to the British and the Hashemites.

Among them there were Palestinian Arabs who supported cooperation with Zionism on the basis of affinity, Jewish-Arab affinity. There were not very many, but one of my students, Hillel Cohen, for his PhD and in a book, gives an example: in 1937 a Palestinian wrote an article about the common bonds of cooperation between the two nations during the Golden Age of Spain and in other periods, and that the Palestinians should not rely very much on the other sources of support so they have to stop fighting the Jews. This was during the Arab Revolt, and the article advocated a peace alliance with the Jews and maintained that only through this can the two peoples prosper and live together in the Middle East. But his article was ignored, and he was excommunicated, and left for Beirut. Cohen's book is *An Army of Shadows: Palestinian Collaborators in the Service of Zionism* (published in Hebrew by Ivrit-Hebrew Publishing House, Jerusalem, 2004).

Now, from 1948 to 1974, the asymmetry turned to symmetry, both sides denying the legitimate rights of the other's national movement. Palestinians unfortunately continued this line of denial, reflected in the Palestinian national charter of 1964, and 1968, and also Palestinian violence or terrorism, which was not very helpful for Jewish recognition. Most Israelis, Zionists, went back on what they had recognized earlier, to deny the right of Palestinians to a national movement. Bear in mind there were new generations and new immigrants coming to Israel. Israel changed tremendously after 1948. But it denied Palestinian nationalism, a) because of terrorism and, b) because there was no Palestinian nation any longer at this point, as Gaza was under Egyptian control, and in the West Bank, Jordan was in control. Everywhere there was a pan-Arab tendency after Gamal Abdel Nasser came to power in 1952

Golda Meir was very blunt, and wrong. "There is no Palestinian people," she said

in 1972. And the Labor Party, even later, recognized some sort of Palestinian people implicitly, but they spoke of the Jordanian option for the Palestinians. Only a small group of Israeli Jews supported the idea of Palestinian nationalism and legitimacy. Communists continued all the time to do it, but they were always small in number. The Israel-Palestine Council for Peace spoke for the first time about the two-state solution in 1975.

Then a change occurred in 1974 among the Palestinians to a more pragmatic position. This was the mainstream of the PLO -- except for the Popular Front and the General Command -- and very careful and gradual recognition, not of the *right* of Israel or Zionism to exist, but the *fact* that Israel exists. Also the Democratic Front spoke for the first time in 1974 about the emergence of a Jewish nationalism in Palestine and about a solution like Yugoslavia or some sort of confederation. But in 1974 the 12th PLO National Council conference decided to establish a national authority on any part of Palestine liberated from occupation. It was very vague, not a recognition of a right but a sort of acknowledgement of the other side.

Later, in the 1977 Gromyko plan, the 1981 Brezhnev plan, 1982 in Fez, in 1985 the "Confederations of Jordan": all of these were indirect recognition of the fact that there is a nation of Israel. Then on top of that was Arafat's "Declaration of Independence" at the 19th Palestinian National Council (PNC) meeting on 15 November 1988 in Algiers recognizing UN Resolutions 242 and 181

Significantly, Resolution 181, the partition resolution of 1947 which speaks of an Arab state and a Jewish state, meant indirect recognition of the right of the Jewish national movement.

I want to stress the difference between the acknowledgement of the reality of Israel and its right to exist. When Egypt made peace with Israel, it still did not recognize the right of the Jewish people to exist. It recognized only the reality. So did Jordan although Jordan was a great ally of Israel. The Palestinians were the first in 1988 to recognize the right of Israel as a Jewish nation, not directly but indirectly.

I want to stress also that the first Intifada, beginning in 1987, created pressure by Palestinians in the Territories who fought the occupation, on the PLO on the "outside" to moderate their views on Israel. The PLO in Tunis was more extreme and militant, but the people who suffered in the Territories were more moderate, vis-à-vis Madrid and then Oslo.

The Oslo accord in 1993 proclaimed that Israel and the PLO mutually recognize each other's legitimate and political rights. So for the first time you have the political symmetry in which they wish to live and co-exist in peace and to reach a historic conciliation. After so many years you had for the first time a mutual recognition, but unfortunately, although there were some achievements, it didn't work.

After Oslo the PLO Charter was changed to eliminate phrases which were anti-Zionist. Years later, Sharon spoke in the U.N., saying the right of the Jewish people to a country doesn't mean to ignore the rights of the others. The Palestinians are forever our neighbors. We respect them; we don't want to dominate them. They are entitled to freedom, national freedom, and sovereignty in their own state. It took him so many years to acknowledge it.

Now, according to the polls conducted by the Truman Institute, we find that 72 percent of each side recognizes each other. Palestinians recognize the rights of Israelis

to a two-state solution. But Hamas denies the right of the Jews to any part of the land.

HANS-GEORG FLECK: Thank you very much. We will start the discussion, and we have the privilege to first listen to the contribution of our much-appreciated journalist sitting at this table, Mr. Rubinstein.

DANNY RUBINSTEIN: I am not sure it is a contribution. I have a question for As'ad Ghanem. Since I was a child I have studied about the conflict – and of the clash between the Husseinis and the Nashashibis. It destroyed the Palestinian society. It lasted more than 20 years until 1948, and it created a lot of problems for the Palestinian social structure, to the political structure, and it was the major factor that weakened Palestinian nationality, and you related to this as a positive component. What positive thing is there in it?

BENJAMIN POGRUND: I have never fully understood the 1948-1967 period: What happened to Palestinian nationalism at that time? It was repressed by the Jordanians and Egyptians, but what happened? Can you expand on that period, and what led to a resurgence when the Jordanians left? Was it the Israeli occupation? What happened in 1948 to 1967?

AS'AD GHANEM: Actually, I think that the conflict between the Nashashibis and the Husseinis has very negative elements. But we cannot imagine what Palestinian national institutions would be like if there had been no competition between these two families. The role of the Husseinis was to establish political parties and to mobilize the Palestinians. Part of the competition was also a way to mobilize the people to be against Zionism.

And I am not saying that it didn't have a negative effect. It had, but sometimes we exaggerate that. Although Husseinis has been attacked by the secular parts of the Palestinian National Movement, he was still one of the main personalities so that you cannot imagine the national movement without him. So it is not only to see him as something negative, but also to try and to re-evaluate the history of the Palestinians.

Let's take another period. The period of Palestinians in Lebanon, that left problems between Syria and the Arab world. This is a very important factor in Palestinian history, and to the Jews also, having to do with Palestinian terrorism. And not only Abu Musa and others. It is a very important factor in Palestinian history, and it includes many Palestinian casualties.

So we have to determine not only how we regard Haj Amin el-Husseini, and the basic conflict between him and the Nashashibis, but also to see the emergence of the new Arab parties in Nablus and Haifa as a reaction to this conflict, which is positive. There were also other parties that were created between 1932 and 1936 as a reaction to this conflict between the two families, so we have to think again about the complexity of the structure in Palestine.

MOSHE MA'OZ: I want to answer Benjamin's question, too. As I said, from 1948 to 1967 there were a number of trends. One trend was, apparently, the disappearance of the Palestinian nation because of the refugees, because of pan-Arab tendencies, and also Jordanization. And then the nationalism became a more important force with the Israeli occupation after 1967. Israelis contributed to the Palestinian national movement twice, once in the early times, and once after, 1967.

ADEL MANNA': While I agree with As'ad that it is always good to rethink and

reassess what we say about the past, I would like honestly to disagree totally with what As'ad says about factionalism and the conflict between the Nashashibis and Husseinis. But actually this factionalism during that period is a symptom of the factionalism of the whole of Palestinian society. And the Nashashibis used this factionalism in order to get support from the opponents of the Husseinis.

So if you read the history of Palestinian society during this period, whenever there are two families in one village or one town, if one family went to the Husseinis, the other family immediately went to the opposition, to the Nashashibis. Which means that it was not only the Nashashibis and the Husseinis in Jerusalem, but in the whole Palestinian society. The factionalism represented the weakness of the society, the weakness of the Palestinian movement. So it is good to rethink and reassess and to be critical to what is written, but I cannot see anything positive in this factional conflict in the Palestinian society as a whole, and between Haj Amin el-Husseini and his party, on the one hand, and the Nashashibi party on the other. It is important, yes, but there were reactions to that; the *Istiklal* and the *Qassam* and other movements and parties which were established because of this conflict and because they were fed up with it.

So yes, it is important to read it and understand it and analyze it, but to say that there are positive components in something that is very clearly a negative thing, I cannot understand that.

RONI STAUBER: I have two questions. One is a more principled question and the second is a more informative one.

You started by saying that as a political scientist, you don't think that historical facts are important. If I understood you correctly, you claim that the national consciousness and its impact should be in the center of focus, regardless of the historical facts. Based on this contention, you argued that the question whether the Jews really lived in ancient Palestine or not is not important because this is what the Jews believe to be the historical truth, even if it is only a myth. In fact this argument is the denial of an important part of Jewish history. I believe that the claim that an important part of the history of the other is only a myth is an obstacle towards reconciliation between the two nations.

I'll just give you one example from one of my latest projects, editing a book about the Roma, the Gypsies, in Eastern Europe. Here you are actually dealing with a nation-building process that is happening today. For them, the history of Gypsy nationalism started in India. And when someone claims that this is only a myth, for them it's an insult. They consider it a denial of Roma nationalism.

My second question is about the Palestinian charter. You said that the Palestinian charter belongs to the first type of nationalism, if I understood you correctly.

AS'AD GHANEM: The territorial element of nationalism.

RONI STAUBER: I would like to ask you, when they composed the charter, did they really think about new Palestinian nationalism in Palestine with equal rights for all ethnic groups? My understanding from reading the charter is that the idea is domination by the Arab Palestinians over the Jews.

AS'AD GHANEM: I partially agree with this estimation. But I still think that we cannot see the roles of the institutionalization of the Palestinian national movement under the Mandate without this conflict between the two families. The role that was played by Haj Amin el-Husseini as the head of the Supreme Muslim and Arab and latter

Supreme Committee, I think was extremely important.

When we consider Palestinian or Iraqi or Syrian or other nationalism, it is not only about the individual. It is also related to the collective, to the basic primordial collectives that are there. I am not saying from my own judgment that it is positive or negative, but I am saying it is part of what happened, it is part of our history. It is really part of the basics. It is like seeing Hamas factions and other factions, secular and religious. The religious aspect, as seen by those who came from the West, is a negative thing. I am not sure. For Palestinian nationalism, I am not sure. It may be a transformation of Palestinian nationalism. But still it may be a positive thing. I think that is positive.

On the second point, I do not deny the effect of historical component. I think that what is important is that I agree that you have this consciousness that you lived here. The importance is not of the history of the Palestinian national movement. It is the historians who are mobilized by Herzl to write a book about that. What is important to understand is that these people believed that this is the truth, although I might think that it is not true at all. It is not true for you as a Jew, in my opinion.

For me, the most important thing is that you should acknowledge me, now, as part of the Palestinian national movement. And I know that it is very difficult for historians to think this is the issue. That is where we start: from the basic consciousness that we have.

I will give you another example: The Armenians who live in Jerusalem. I don't care if they are Armenians or not. What I care about is that they now consider themselves Palestinians.

With regard to the Palestinian Charter, I agree with you. In the first charter, the Palestinians wanted to create a particular democratic state. They thought that they are going to create a Palestinian state, and the Jews would be second-class citizen in the state. That is true. Just as mentioned by Moshe, in 1974 they start understanding that there is a Jewish people and that they want to preserve their own national identity and national belonging, and they can dream about maybe joining the state with this collective, or find another way to achieve a two-state solution, but they cannot create a new territorial concept of being Palestinian, Palestinianization for the other side. Thus, the charter is much more an ethnic than it is a territorial notion.

DALIA OFER: I have some comments regarding the two issues of historical narrative, and also the components that you talked about regarding the structure that are real factors in Palestinian self-understanding of the Palestinians' national movement. I think that the question is not whether the Nashashibi/Husseini competition had a major impact on the situation of the Palestinian society, political institutions, etc., but I had a feeling that you assumed that if there had not been such a clash between the two families, many things would not have happened.

But with regard to the other forces that you mentioned that were also as important, the question is evaluation. How does one evaluate the influence of the factors that were shaping the reality -- the Zionist movement, Jewish immigration and the international arena, etc? So the question is not whether the Palestinians would have had the Supreme Council or not but, rather, how do you evaluate their conduct in connection with what Adel and Danny said, and in the context of the factionalism and the social issues that emerged within the Palestinian community that at least some of the literature evaluates as a weakness of the national movement.

So what you say is certainly right. This is a factor, a structural factor, but how to evaluate it in a historical perspective, I don't know. The historical evaluation is another issue, so I think that we should really separate it.

And in relating to what you said, Roni, what we are really dealing with is historical narrative rather than historical fact. I'll go to the issue of the Jewish people who lived in Egypt, the Exodus. When I studied at the university for my BA, I learned the debate of scholars about the story of the Exodus. It was completely different from the narrative that we grew up with. Scholars examined whether there was an Exodus, when it was, who were the Israelites and such. So this is a kind of historical discussion. Did it change anything in my personal narrative as a Jew? As a Zionist? As an Israeli? No, it didn't change anything in the narrative. It didn't shatter anything. For me as an historian, I found it very interesting to learn these kinds of discussions. So I think that in this aspect it is very right.

For me, what is important today, for all of us what is important today, is how Palestinians in Israel and in the West Bank perceive their own national movement, and how Jews, both Israelis and Jews outside of Israel, perceive their national identity. I don't care now whether Abraham was there or the story was true. For me this is my legacy and it will always remain my legacy. But I don't think that it is a historical narrative.

RONI STAUBER: Okay, but if someone will tell you that the Holocaust is a myth?

DALIA OFER: Well, that is a different issue.

AS'AD GHANEM: This is because the Holocaust only became an issue after Zionism was initiated. This is very important.

RONI STAUBER: The question is can we respect the legacy of the other. I mean, this is a meeting between researchers, but we are also dealing with dialogue between people. So when we are telling members of another nation that in your eyes their past is only a myth, when you deny their history, you deny their past, their legacy.

AS'AD GHANEM: No, I respect it. I respect that belief. I don't have to believe in it. You don't have to believe that I am Canaanite.

DALIA OFER: Well, what we see now is that since 1948 was the Nakba, the catastrophe, 1967 in a way was the beginning of the progress of the Palestinian national movement into a new phase, and I would say that since then, they are really succeeding extremely well, taking into account all of the sacrifices. Everybody agrees today that there is a Palestinian national body. They have the legitimacy to have their own self-identity, they have the legitimacy to become some kind of political entity, two states, part of the states, I don't care now how. I mean here we have the debates, but since 1967, unlike from 1948 to 1967, since 1967 until today, the Palestinian are going in a direction of great progress in realizing their goals.

And it is very important to notice that polls show that a large majority on both sides agrees that each side has the right to realize its hope and become what it wants to be. So I think that what we have to learn from this progress and from these two papers is that we are now in a stage where we must formulate this understanding into the details of agreements of both Palestinian and Jewish states, taking into account the price of the past and prices of the future. I am not a Marxist, but I strongly believe that there are crucial historical forces that are at work and we cannot deny them. So this

should now be the course that our discussions should take, rather than just describing what occurred until now.

WALID SALEM: I have three comments. The first is that I am afraid that the discussion about the history from 1948 was restricted to the contradictions between Husseinis and Nashashibis. Palestinian nationalism was diminished to this. This is not the only story of the Palestinian nationalism of that period. We need to think about the whole civil society and what the standards of that period were for the whole society.

In that period, in my studies about the Palestinian civil society, I found that various strong Palestinian associations were in existence. Women's movements, student movements, Christian movements, Muslim associations and so on. So why are we restricting ourselves to speaking of Husseinis and Nashashibis and the thinking about them?

Then the other component will be the role of the people. Many were underdeveloped peasants at that time, and there were some kind of feudal families leading them. But we can find at least among them that there were positions, there was some kind of urban middle class of the families at that time. Why are we excluding them and just talking about the Nashashibis and the Husseinis? So I suggest taking a broader view and in this way we can decide if there was a diversity, or whether it was pre-democratic fragmentation at that time. Let us widen the scope of the discussions.

After that I have two or three problems with our discussions, that we are not going to the real questions. I have two real questions to raise. First, how can we solve the following contradiction? On the one hand, the Palestinians are not good at recognizing Israeli verbally, okay. Even though the PLO recognized the right of Israel to exist, now Hamas is not ready to do that verbally.

How can we elaborate the contradictions between the difficulty of the Palestinian on verbal issues while, on the other hand, we have a real ability to deal with the verbal issues if Israelis recognize the Palestinians? But when it comes to the facts that are created on the ground, if you ask the Palestinians what is their fear, it is their fear of a new Nakba. So how can we understand and deal with this contradiction, that Israel recognizes the Palestinian rights verbally, but on the ground it is creating facts that make the Palestinian territory smaller and smaller, and therefore there is a real fear of another Nakba.

The other question that I have is regarding Islam. That is a component we have not discussed and that we must. Islam was there from then to now and is now arising. So what is the influence of the Islamic component on the future development of Palestinian nationalism? Where are we heading?

PAUL SCHAM: I would like to relate some of the comments already made, especially the one that Roni brought up about whether it matters what happened in history. I felt that there was a dichotomy set up that says either it matters completely or it doesn't matter at all, and I think the Holocaust illustrates that.

There are also the differences brought up between history and narrative. As Dalia pointed out, and I suspect that it is true for most of us here, we separate implicitly, if not explicitly, our feelings about something we care about, such as the Exodus, from our historical judgment, and we are aware we are doing so.

But I would say that this difference is illustrated very much by the Holocaust because the Holocaust is provable. The Exodus was more than 3,000 years ago, and

one can legitimately argue that there was no Exodus. You cannot legitimately argue that there was no Holocaust.

That, I think, is an example of a deliberate denigration of the narrative of the other side. I would also turn it around and say that the same is true of the Nakba. Not how did the Nakba come out, was it planned, was it not, all these are legitimate disagreements; but to say, especially after the research of the last 40 years, that there were no expulsions and no atrocities, that is hard to deny. I am not, of course, at all comparing the magnitude or the intentions behind the two events, but I think they are both intrinsic to the respective narratives of our two peoples and one side's rights are delegitimized if either is denied. So the history of the other is not irrelevant, but there can be an acknowledgment of it, and I think that is what we are talking about.

I would also like to relate this to something Moshe said. Moshe thought that there were two sorts of recognition. I think is very important, and this is something that history can really give a perspective on. There is a recognition, as he pointed out, that Jordan and Egypt gave, you are here, we see that, we are not going to throw you out, and then there was a deeper recognition of saying you have a right to be here.

My question is, is this deeper recognition really something that Israelis or Palestinians should be striving towards? Is this too much to ask? I am not sure what the answer is to this, because if you're saying that if Jews or Israelis ask Palestinians to say Jews have a right to be here, you're asking for an acceptance of the Zionist narrative. And the reverse is also true: if Jews recognize that Palestinians have some fundamental right here, that is, for many Israelis, an attack on the Zionist narrative. So should we ask for this deeper recognition, especially now, when true acceptance and peace seem so distant? Or, is it more fruitful to say, you're here, we understand that you're here, we accept that you're here, and we accept that you're going to be staying here. But why you think you're here, we can disagree with.

SAID ZEEDANI: I think ideological tolerance is fine provided that the fact you believe in X does not reflect negatively on me. So Zionists can believe what they want. They can believe they are a nation, that they are the best nation, that they are the chosen people, and that they have a right to their own state and to sovereignty. But the question, when it comes to one's sovereignty, and control in this place, my place, then I have the right to challenge that.

AS'AD GHANEM: I agree with you.

SAID ZEEDANI: And I think the same goes for recognition. Zionists have been asking too much in terms of recognition. They want the Palestinians to recognize the fact that they are, fine. They want the Palestinians to recognize their right to exist here, they want Palestinians to recognize their historic rights to be here, and they want Palestinians to acknowledge too much and recognize too much.

I think when we are talking about recognition here we are talking mainly about facts. The question really is how to understand these facts, or structure them. I mean the fact that in this place are these numbers of Jews, who have these feelings or created these structures, or have these aspirations and so forth. So this is a kind of reality that we have to know how to live with. I mean, there are people who have rights as humans, as individuals, as part of a political structure, but you should not ask me to believe that you have the historic right to this place. That is too much to ask.

ILAN TROEN: Let me offer a kind of methodological issue that has to do with the

language in which we are speaking -- English. My observation is stimulated by your paper, a very interesting paper, maintaining that there are two types of nationalism. I don't think that is true. I think the issue is far richer, and who would know that is particularly the people here.

What I mean is the following: We are speaking in English, but actually we think in Hebrew and Arabic. The way which we would say "people" in English has a certain kind of currency in the language of 21st century political science, which is what we are also reading, using and speaking. But what we really mean is something else.

If you are thinking in Hebrew, when you say "people" you may be thinking of the word *am*. If you are thinking in Arabic, you are thinking about the word *uma*.

PARTICIPANTS: *Sha'ab, sha'ab, sha'ab*.

ILAN TROEN: *Sha'ab*. Nation, people. But those words mean something different in Hebrew and Arabic. They have no equivalents in English. We have a kind of distortion that is built into this discussion.

I will give you an example. Look up the word "people" in English in Webster's Dictionary of the American Language rather than the Oxford Dictionary, because it's the American language that really dictates the language of world academia today. Around the seventh meaning of it you get to the word *folk* rather than an individual or a collection of individuals. But for anybody who uses the word *people* or *nation* in Arabic or in Hebrew, they are thinking first of a collective. And here is a language of nationalism that is correct. There is no kind of collective without some kind of a national consciousness rooted in something beyond the present, and in fact it goes back to the past and tries to project into what the future might be.

So we are using a language that is derived out of a particular historical experience when we talk about nationality and peoplehood, that reflects the experiences of a people who are relatively recent on the world stage, rather than those of us who have other languages and histories. And that is terribly important. Because to talk about Jews and Muslims and Christians is to discuss people who have a longer history that goes well beyond the idea of an "imagined community" to a narrative that has genuine historicity.

So whether or not the Exodus story is true – Ben-Gurion said there were 600 people, not 600,000. He may not have liked the Exodus story, but he took literally the event as well as the military campaigns of the Bible. The fundamental historicity of the Bible was really important to him. Belief in the fundamental historicity of traditional or sacred texts is what it means to be an Arab Muslim or an Arab Christian or a secular Jewish Zionist. People actually believe in their beliefs. To overcome them, to deal with them, to recognize them, is really an obligation required of all of us.

The problem is not that people have their own beliefs, but what to do when those beliefs exclude others. That is the issue that has to be dealt with and overcome, and I think we have to develop strategies for dealing with people who have genuine beliefs that are not modern, but are rooted in the experience of generation after generation, and in a collective or communities that are bonded to and resonate with those beliefs.

Can we live on more than one plane of beliefs at a time? Can we yet recognize people who have different beliefs? Some of them may be contrary almost by definition to what we believe, and some of them may be hostile to our own beliefs. But can people who hold different beliefs find another area or place from which to operate? I

think that is really the challenge that the discussion of legitimacy as well as of belief in nationalism really places before us.

So somebody has to talk to us about what it means to be Jewish and what it means to be Arab Muslims or Arab Christians in terms of trying to come to this kind of ability to work together. Not to deny the other. Not to change necessarily, but to work together.

YUSUF NATSHEH: I have a question for Moshe.

As historians, how can we Palestinians accept the rights of Israeli Jews and Palestinians? For me I think that means like who came first, the chickens or the eggs? It is not an easy question, but what can we say to the students on both sides?

TAMAR HERMANN: I have one remark and one question.

My remark relates to surveys. It goes very well with the differentiation that Moshe made between recognition of Jewish presence and recognition of "rights." Surveys (in the mid 2000s) said that the majority of Palestinians actually recognized the *de facto* fact of the state of Israel as an entity, and that 70% of the Israeli Jews saw the Palestinian state as a *fait accompli*. It doesn't mean that 70% recognized each other's *right* for a state, at least on the Jewish part of this equation which I have studied very closely for many years. Rather, we are talking about 45% that recognized the other side's *right* for a state, and this actually correlates with the portion of Israeli Jews still very much in favor of this two state solution. So politics gets very deeply into sociological issues. Do they have this right? Do they have the moral right or not? And this difference should be taken into consideration when discussing these issues.

AS'AD GHANEM: You have to differentiate between having the right and agreeing that they have the *legitimacy*.

TAMAR HERMANN: My question relates to another issue, and that is the content of Palestinian nationalism as presented by As'ad. We often differentiate between positive peace and negative peace, and when you say negative peace, that means only the absence of violence. When we are talking about positive peace, it means that both sides, or all collectivities involved, can really use their full potential and develop positively.

In your list of the components of Palestinian nationalism, I see only that it relates to the conflict, Zionism, the definitions of the relevant territory and so on and so forth. As I am no expert on Palestinian nationalism, would you mind telling me the positive content of Palestinian nationalism? What is in there besides the conflict, Zionism, colonialism, and so on? Because otherwise, I'll perceive that it is contentless.

Note that I am not saying it is contentless, but I am saying, would you mind stating, please, what is there positively that actually creates Palestinian nationalism?

MICHAEL ROSEN: I am reminded of the story of a righteous man who died, and came up to heaven and was met in the heavenly courts, and they told him, "You are a righteous man". Take 15 steps up and take the door to the right, but not the door to the left."

So naturally he asked, well, what is the door to the right, and what is the door to the left. And he was told, if you take the door to the right, you enter into the Garden of Eden, you'll live forevermore. But the door to the left is for academics. They have a symposium about what it is like to be in bliss or happiness forevermore.

I don't mean by this vignette to denigrate the historical approach, but just to

suggest that my feeling is that we should also be aware of focus. Maybe what we need are psychiatrists as well as historians. So let me play the role for a moment of the psychiatrist.

One of the four components that As'ad mentioned about Palestinian consciousness, and I agree with Tamar, we seem to be very much dependent on the other. One of them was the sense of victimhood.

I think this may be a key to understanding what is happening today because you might be surprised to know that Jews and Israelis have this tremendous sense of victimhood as well. And this is key.

Now, what are the characteristics of a victim? Essentially they are that I am not responsible for what happened. I am the result of something, and if you feel you are not responsible, then there is no onus on you to try to change because you are not responsible. So I would suggest that if you think you are a victim, then you will continually need the recognition of something, because there is a deep lack of self-confidence. You may be surprised to know that while Israelis show bravado, it reflects a deep lack of self-confidence, always wanting to be recognized and wanting the other to love me.

But also, if you are a victim, very often your responses are not measured. Let me just state the obvious, while we are speaking English around the table. Because if you listen to your language, I'll give you a thought. I am sure anybody else would say this. "They only understand force." You ask, who is saying it about whom? The answer is, it is perfectly symmetrical. If you take the phrase "after all we have given them, they still won't recognize our legitimacy," and we say who is talking to whom? It is symmetrical. This suggests that we need a shake around the table.

YOSEF GORNY: I would like to share with you some paradoxical thoughts that I had while listening to the discussion and to the presentations. I think, looking at the conflict of about a hundred years, that two peoples -- the Palestinian Arabs and the Jewish people - they became more and more estranged. They built two different societies involved in a struggle and a war between them.

But on the other hand: From the symbolic point of view, we are finding now that the two peoples have in some ways, common symbols. For example, as you said, for the Palestinian national movement, Palestine is important. So for the Zionists, as a Jewish national movement, Eretz Israel was the main thing. It is the symbol of Palestine and the symbol of Eretz Israel.

And now I'll give you another example. The Zionist symbol, the Jewish symbol, of exile, of *galut*. This is symbolic in our history. Now you have among the Palestinian people the symbol of refugees. That is, from the Palestinian point of view, a symbol of exile.

Now, the symbol of Diaspora, which is a symbol in Jewish history, becomes a symbol in Palestinian history. Because even if there will be a Palestinian state, there will continue to be a Palestinian Diaspora.

So there is a symbol of a Diaspora and another Diaspora, and the connection between the state and the Diaspora. The two Diasporas are not the same. Although from the historical point of view and in the perspective for the future, the two Diasporas are different -- yet this is a symbol.

Now, there is the symbol of the Holocaust on the one hand and the Nakba on the

other hand. They are not the same. But every nation has its own symbol of some kind of national disaster. It was not so at the beginning.

And the last, the most problematic one, the symbol of return, which is a Zionist symbol. The return. Now, as a result of the misfortune of the Palestinian people, it became theirs as well.

We are talking about different historical situations, caused by different historical reasons, but the symbols are becoming in some way similar. My question is, and I don't have an answer: Can we start from the symbols? Are the symbols constructive for some kind of solution, or are they destructive? And this is an answer in some way for us. In some ways. Not for the politicians, but it is an answer for us not as politicians.

Again??? Should this be deleted????

YUSUF NATSHEH: I am a little bit lost, but I have a comment and a question. I have a comment about symbolism. Taking into consideration Palestinian and Israeli longterm history, sometimes legends provide more than facts, while our task as scholars is to deal with facts.

Some claim that Omar never came to Jerusalem. No one cares. All Muslims believe that Omar came to Jerusalem and took it.

Similarly, the Israeli archaeologist Israel Finkelstein created a stir when he said that we have no physical proof whatsoever proving that Solomon lived as represented in the Bible. So in my opinion, then, it seems, in dealing with history, we are looking for two levels. One, the level of the general people, or of folkloric history, the difficulty is to differentiate between what is history and what is folklore. And what is history, this is not easy. I feel as a person that I belong to my culture. Fine. Even if I will be a very, very reasonable democratic or unbiased scholar, still I am a reflection of my culture and my society. So we have really to take this into consideration.

Now, the question which really also integrates with Walid's comments: I am especially interested in what you have mentioned, Dr. Ma'oz, about the acknowledgement by Sharon of the Palestinian people [p.9 above]. This is good, but in the eyes of the Palestinians this must be proved by acts.

For our evaluations as scholars, we have to take into account not just a verbal declaration but also one's acts in order to reach a solution, or to have at least a proper and a correct estimation of our problems.

MOHAMMED DAJANI: I would like to share with you some ideas that may shed light on the issues discussed.

I was born in Jerusalem and had lived in the West Bank before 1967. Between 1948 and 1967, the Palestinians were divided into five groups. First, there were those Palestinians living in Israel; second, there were those living in the Gaza Strip under Egypt; third, those living in the West Bank under Jordan; fourth, those hosted by a number of Arab countries; and, fifth, those living in the diaspora in countries such as the United States, Europe, South America, Canada, etc.

Those who had skills and needed professions were integrated in the host society because those societies needed their skills such as the doctors, engineers, scientists, teachers, and others, but those who did not, lived in refugee camps. There was a lot of difference between the haves and the have-nots and the ones integrated were better off. Neither Israel nor the Arab countries made any effort to gain the loyalty of those Palestinian refugees living under their jurisdiction. Thus the refugees had an exclusive loyalty to Palestine and Palestinian nationalism. Those integrated in host societies had double loyalties, to Palestine and the host country.

Arab nationalism became popular among Palestinians because the ideology encompassed the concept of Arab unity which many believed was the only way to liberate Palestine from Zionist colonization.

The basic thing was that between that period in 1948 and 1967, Palestinian nationalism was very weak because the Palestinians felt that they did not have the ability to face up to the Israeli power, or whatever power that decided their fate by dividing what they perceived as their land as a whole. So they did not accept any idea of sharing it with the Jews and looked to the Arab armies to help them regain their homeland.

Between 1948 and up to the founding of Fatah in 1959, they put their hopes on Arab rather than Palestinian nationalism. When the Fatah movement stressed Palestinian nationalism, it was speaking to deaf ears because between 1956 and 1967, Arab nationalism ruled supreme. The main slogan raised was "Arab unity is the road to the liberation of Palestine."

So the focus was that Arabs had to be united first and then the liberation of Palestine would consequently materialize. The 1967 Arab-Israeli war shattered this myth and Palestinians started to think that if Palestine is to be liberated, we have to do it ourselves and thus they supported all the *fedayeen* movements headed by Fatah, and only then did Fatah emerge as a national movement for the liberation of Palestine. Palestinians felt that had been dependent on the Arab regimes long enough; the Arabs didn't do enough to support the cause and the Arab armies of the confrontation states were defeated in six days. The Battle of al-Karameh that took place in March 1968 between Fatah and the Israeli army in which the Palestinian *fedayeen*, supported by the Jordanian army dealt a big blow to the Israeli army, emphasized the idea that Israel is not invincible, that Palestinians can achieve liberation through armed struggle.

So basically what I am interested in during this period, is what did the "other" mean to us? The Jews or Zionism -- what did they mean to us? Basically, during that period, and I believe it may still be true till this very day, we do not know much about the other - Jews/Jewish nationalism/Zionism. All we know is that Zionism is an ideology that incites Jews to think of themselves in terms of national identity rather than in terms of a religious identity such as Islam or Christianity.

Between 1948 and 1967, I remember very well that there wasn't one single book that talked about Israel from an Israeli point of view or reflecting the Israeli perspective, that could have enabled us to understand the perspective of the other. What we read about Israel was written by Arabs. So that is the culture that we have had of pretending that the other does not exist -- simply that no one is there on the other side of the fence.

I don't believe that the Arab world is aware even today what Israel is, what Israel stands for, what is Israeli culture or traditions, or what are Israeli hopes and aspirations. If you go into an Arab library or bookstore you may find a Bible, but until very recently you would never find the Jewish Talmud in Arabic, or an Arab who read has it and knows much about it. You may find someone who may have read the Bible because there are Christians in the Arab world, but if you go through the Arab world you will not find many Arab experts on Judaism even among those teaching about Israel in Arab universities.

I think a very important issue related to the goals of this workshop is the widespread ignorance of the other. I believe that this is very pervasive in the Arab world and in Israel. There was a conference in Beirut, with an Arab book fair, boasting that all Arab publishers were represented. So I went there to look and I couldn't find one single book about Israel. But also, to my surprise I couldn't find books which portrayed accurately the American democratic experience. Since America supports Israel and Israel is the enemy then America is an enemy.

Many of the books were about US foreign policy gone berserk, or the high rate of crime in American society, or the prejudice against Islam and Muslims. I found about many books about how the Jewish lobby controls American decision-makers and the media.

But I could not find any books explaining the structure of the American civil society or how does the lobby works. How does the American system work? What is the role of a lobby in such a system?

So I wonder if a large part of the negativity from the Arab world against the West is simply out of ignorance?

DAVID HARMAN: I have one question.

Listening to the presentations and the papers, I come to the observation that the parties to a conflict, or to a disagreement, begin to develop mutual dependency, and each one needs the other. And continuing with Mickey Rosen's observations -- how much is necessary, Moshe and As'ad, for each of you to have the other in order to make your own argument and create your own identity?

If you were to remove the other, where would you find yourself?

So you start building a self-definition which, to no small extent has to draw on how you see that the other sees you in order to be able to define yourself. Now, were it not for the fact that we were conveniently located in the same region, and we are conveniently destined for the same piece of territory, who would we start looking for in order to define ourselves? And if we look inside both societies, there are ample examples of internal conflicts which all of us require within our own communities to define ourselves.

A Jewish community may divide between the various degrees of religiosity. In Mea She'arim, in Jerusalem, you can walk into what appears to be a very homogenous area, into one building, and go into four different apartments, and you'll discover that there are four Ultra-Orthodox families who live in the building, but none of them will eat with each other. It is completely out of the picture, because the *kashrut* there is not acceptable. So the conflict is necessary for substance. You don't have the one without the other side, so you have to create or invent some other side in order to be able to make your argument.

ADEL MANNA': Since As'ad spoke about the 19th century, and because this is my specialty, the history of Palestine in the 19th and 18th centuries, I would like to note that it is not that easy to say that what was before was nothing. You can also go to the opposite extreme and say that the 1834 rebellion has many commonalities with the 1936 rebellion, and it is possible to compare them, though these are two totally different eras and two different ideologies. You can take the elites, you take the society, you take the factionalism, you take some of the cooperation between elites and some factionalism in the society and many other things. So not everything starts with Zionism and with nationalism, and you have to see the continuity in history, and we don't have to start with our view that everything begins with nationalism and with Zionism on the one hand, and Palestinian nationalism on the other. And we have to take into consideration, as one example, several times in the 19th century Palestine was united. Not as Palestine, but the whole area, from Akka to Gaza, was one land.

So Palestine became a country, a separate country, controlled from Istanbul rather than from Damascus. You can see the continuity of a country with Jerusalem as a capital, even before the First World War. And I can go ahead and tell other things that historically are of the 19th century. I'll finish with that, and say only one comment concerning what Moshe Ma'oz said about Hillel Cohen's book, which I read.

I know that Hillel Cohen also said in his book that some of those who collaborated with the Zionist side explained their collaboration as an ideological thing.

You can see it also today, those collaborators that work with the Shin Bet and other security forces of Israel. They say I am doing this ideologically, not because of money or because of personal things, but I believe this is the way to live in peace or something like that. But shall we take that at face value? Because I don't believe that 99 percent of the collaborators before 1948 or after 1948 collaborated because of ideology but rather because of personal and other reasons.

DANNY RUBINSTEIN: Adel, Adel, the entire Nashashibis --

MOHAMMED DAJANI: The Nashashibis were not collaborators. Their leaders headed the opposition to the authoritarianism of Hajj Amin al-Husseini, the Mufti of Palestine then, who led the Palestinian national movement.

DANNY RUBINSTEIN: They were not collaborators?

MOHAMMED DAJANI: No.

AS'AD GHANEM: My point was the issue of consciousness. Not by accident. I think that this is something very important if we agree that the other has the right to build his own consciousness.

However, if I agree that you have the right to do this, I don't have to agree that those Jews who live in Palestine now are the grandsons of the Jews who were expelled 2,000 years ago. But I have to agree that you have the right to think that this is your story, and to start from there.

For me, the reconciliation, as a person who thinks the only solution is a joint state, also reflects in my way to see things here. I think that I don't have to agree about the history of each side, but I have to agree, let's say, that when you say "Acco", the city, you mean "Akka", that is what I mean in Palestinian terms. And if we agree to that, then there is a big step forward in reaching some understand about history, about joint history. Of Be'ersheva, if you want to call it Be'ersheva, and I say Be'ir Sabe'a, and we mean the same thing, that's a big achievement in my view. I don't have to take you back, but you have to agree that it is Be'ir Sebe'a only. But -- I don't mean that.

So actually I think that this is the way -- this is my own way to see how we can agree about the history of the two national groups or nations.

Actually, Tamar and many others' identity is something that we cannot understand; it cannot be there without the other. I am a man because there was a woman. I am an Arab because there are others. And so on and on. It is very clear that you are not a German without the French beside you. It doesn't mean that you don't have objective narratives as part of you, but it is related to the consent that you see the other, you imagine the other. You not only imagine your nation, but you also imagine the other nation and its borders with you. And they are not only always geographical borders. I don't think that it is negative to see that the basic elements of being a Palestinian are related to this interaction with Zionism, but not only with Zionism.

What is it to be a Palestinian as opposed to being a Lebanese or a Syrian? This is much more important. But if you take this into consideration, our history before the 20th century is part of the whole history. It is a different part of history. It is important that there was an event in 1834, but it is not related to the question of Palestinian nationalism, and that is what I mean.

It is clear if we agree that Palestinian nationalism existed only after the First World War. I think that this is only a modern notion. Those Jews who were Zionists in the 20th century didn't have anything to do with the religious Jews who lived in Palestine

before. But if you want to take it as part of your history, go ahead, that is fine. But if you want me to believe that these people continue from the same people who were here before 2,000 years ago or something like that...

SAID ZEEDANI: But nationalism is a recent phenomenon. If you are talking about the 19th century, it probably reaches the ordinary people much later. But even in Europe, you are talking about a 19th century phenomenon.

AS'AD GHANEM: Exactly. That is my point. There is no relation between the current Zionism and the ancient Jews who lived in Palestine. Today, this is a modern thing. It is a modern thing that was developed in only in the 20th century. This is the truth.

And this is also related to my answer regarding the positive component. Tell me one thing, one thing that is the same between us and the Jews or us and the Syrians, that is considered positive. A positive element. One. Literature? Language? History? Islam? What? Which differentiates between us and the Syrians. Which is very important to Palestinian nationalism. Not Arab nationalism, Palestinian nationalism.

There is not one thing, nothing except what we created after the clash with Zionism, except our own literature that we created in the 1930s and the 1940s and the 1950s. So I want somebody to tell me one thing.

I have only two small additional comments.

One is about Michael Rosen being a victim. There is another way to present being a victim. Arafat came and he said "I was a victim, but I want to take responsibility for my future." This is another way of being a victim.

RONI STAUBER: But then you remain in the status of a victim. This is exactly what Ben-Gurion tried to change.

AS'AD GHANEM: I am not sure that being a victim stopped when Ben-Gurion said that.

RONI STAUBER: The idea was to utilize the disaster but to leave behind the idea of victimhood..

AS'AD GHANEM: Well, it is also true for Palestinians.

The only thing that I want to say to Walid is that this difference between acknowledgment of the facts and behaving accordingly is related to the power relationship between the two groups; who has the power and what can we do as Palestinians in this power relationship. At least we can say no.

MOSHE MA'OZ: I would say to Mohammed Dajani that you raised a very important point about the ignorance of Palestinians regarding Israel, and that is true of both sides, vice versa too. This is what Sadat said, a psychological barrier that produces ignorance in humans on both sides. That produces fear, prejudice, stereotypes, and this is really the main issue. He said that 70 percent of the conflict is psychological.

Now, Paul and Michael, I think you pointed out the psychological issue, and this is also true for what I said earlier. Not only peace, but equal recognition. This is what is needed for generations, to educate on both sides.

And Michael says Jews especially want to be loved. I don't know why, but I remember Sadat, everybody melted down when Sadat came to visit. And then King Hussein came to visit.

Then I move to what Adel said about Hillel Cohen, and I am really surprised

regarding the role of the Nashashibis. First, they were not collaborators according to you? But if they were collaborators for financial gain, perhaps among Palestinians there were really people who believed in coexistence. What is bad about it?

Now, Yusuf, about this issue of who came first to Palestine, this is what the Palestinians believe, this is also what the Jews believe, and this is a myth and this is history. This is very important for a nation, whether it is real or true or not true. Ben-Gurion for example had this great idea that the Palestinians, 90 percent of them, are descendants of the ancient Jews.

YOSEF GORNY: Somebody even suggested to encourage marriages between Bedouins and Jewish girls, to create a strong generation...

MOSHE MA'OZ: Tamar, with regard to 70 percent of each side recognizing the other, I asked Khalil Shikaki the other day and he said, "Yes, Palestinians would recognize the right of Israel to be a Jewish state provided there is a two-state solution, two capitals in Jerusalem."

DANNY RUBINSTEIN: Moshe, Moshe, he also predicted that Fatah would win the election in 2006 that brought Hamas to power.

MOSHE MA'OZ: Walid, you mentioned the Islamists and Hamas, and this is not good news, especially for Christians living under the Palestinian Authority. But let's hope that as the PLO changed, which was very difficult, so also the Hamas may change and become more pragmatic, and still retain ideological objectives, especially for a religious movement, but be pragmatic in daily events, because Hamas is not a free agent. Israel controls the entire land, the water, their electricity and their food and everything. They cannot do what they want, and they must consider Egypt and Jordan and Turkey. There is a dichotomy between the ideology and the reality

Now finally, the issue of Palestine, as Adel mentioned, this territorial identity was there in the 19th century. There was a grain of it that developed from the 19th century, and it developed into a national group.