## Session 2

## APPROACHES OVER TIME TOTHE 'OTHER NARRATIVE'

**Chair: Jeff Helsing** 

Discussion of papers by Yosef Gorny (Tel Aviv University, Emeritus) and by Mohammed Daoud-Dajani (al-Quds University. The papers are in the printed volume of *Shared Narratives*.

YOSEF GORNY: I'd like to start with a personal confession which may surprise some of you who are old veterans of Israeli-Palestinian encounters. This is the first time that I am sitting together with Jewish and Arab historians and social scientists. I wrote a book about Zionism and the Arabs and the Arab confederations, but I've never had such an experience. So I want to thank you.

The title of my paper is "To Understand Oneself; Does it Mean to Understand the Other?" I would like to give some reflections about the paper and explain what is behind it and what is beyond it. Behind it is me striving to understand the other; me with my personal history. I think that among the Jewish section here, I am the only one who was once part of a minority, and was not an original Israeli.

At the age of fourteen, I came to Israel.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You came to the land, not to Israel.

YOSEF GORNY: To Palestine, all right. We will not argue,

We came from Russia as refugees. We were in Russia during the war, luckily, and from there we went through Poland and Germany and then came here by illegal immigration. I am very proud to have been arrested by the British and to have been in a prison concentration camp, a British prison camp from their point of view.

I am a part of this national striving, of this Jewish national effort, of thinking and looking at this country, Eretz Yisrael, as a part of myself.

Without any hesitation, I confess that we lived in Germany, not in Nazi Germany. After the war we lived in a very ideological atmosphere. Because to say something about the Jews you must understand, after the Holocaust and what happened, afterwards at the camps the Jews immediately started to quarrel about politics. In our small camp we had three parties. We had Mapai, we had the Left, and we had the Right. But the Arab question, the problem that there are Arabs in this country, never arose among us at that time because it was natural for us that we were coming back to our homeland.

And now, from this point of view, am I able to understand the other?

Paradoxically, yes. That is what I am trying to say. Because of the way I am nationalistic, meaning I have my national ideology and feeling -- I can understand the national feeling of the others. I am not saying that every Zionist is ready to understand the others. This is not true.

Now I am coming to the historical differentiation.

There was never one homogeneous Zionist nationalism, never. From the beginning, there were always different kinds of Zionist nationalism. From the beginning, there were always different kinds of Zionist nationalism, but there were some decisive common principles. Like: the return to the historical homeland; the revival of the Hebrew language; and the establishing of a Jewish majority, at least in a part of the land.

Now, what was the difference?

You can say there was no difference. You can say, reading my paper, that at the bottom line, Jabotinsky and Ben-Gurion were the same. Yes, in many ways you can say that there is no difference, that the striving, the wish of the Jews to come back to their country, this was the common denominator among the Zionists. But here we come to history. The question is, can you continue living in history and achieve something in history without a compromise?

I don't mean a compromise as a political moral principle, but as a political pragmatic solution to the historical process. And the difference between the right and the left wing in Zionism was in their readiness to accept or to reject the historical compromise.

There was a part of the Zionist movement, though not at the beginning, that was against any compromise. Like the extreme right wing and the very religious radical wing. On the other hand, Weizmann and Ben-Gurion understood, facing the political situation, that you cannot force yourself on the historical process and therefore you have to come to a political compromise.

I look today at the political structure of Israel, and I must ask if there is still a Labor Party. And I ask myself, is there any continuity between this Labor Party and the past? The famous Mapai, the Left, etc. There is one thing that shows a continuity of the Labor movement, of those people who feel they belong to it. That is their readiness for a historical compromise. A historical compromise, which started from the beginning.

At this point I am coming to the main argument of my presentation: the Arab principled political rejectionism; and as opposed to it, the pragmatic Zionist way of compromise. I mean the rejection by the Arab leadership of the establishment of a consulting Palestinian assembly in the beginning of the 1920s. And, of course, I refer to the first Partition plan in 1937; then to the White Paper in 1939; and to the partition decision of the United Nations Assembly in November 1947. All these plans were in favor of the Palestinian majority. But they were rejected completely by the Arab leadership which led the people to their national disaster - the Nakba. As for the Jews, they had also denied extreme political ideas. For instance, even the radical left like Hashomer Hatza'ir advocated the immigration of five million Jews to Palestine and its surrounding territories. Each similar idea was based on a political plan to establish a binational state.

Even Jabotinsky, before his death in 1940, who preached a Jewish state of five million Jews, was ready to grant full equal rights to the Arab minority of two million citizens. He was even ready to consider an Arab prime minister in the Jewish state.

At the end of the day, as is well known, the Zionist movement accepted the

compromise of the partition. Was it a genuine permanent pragmatic solution or only a tactical position? It was for some of them genuine and for another part not. But this isn't important from the historical point of view. Because without the Six-Day War in 1967, who can be sure that a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital wouldn't have been established? But again, the constant rejection after the war gave the extreme political and religious Zionist right wing the opportunity to establish the settlers' society in the West Bank and in the Golan Heights.

Of course, most or all of the Palestinians at this gathering will think that my presentation is a false Zionist narrative. Perhaps so! But at this historical point, the narrative is less important than the striving for a compromise, based on the historical circumstances and the national realistic aspirations of both nations.

At this point I am coming to a paradoxical conclusion. In spite of the extremely critical approach towards nationalism among Western intellectuals in the academy and the media, I am convinced that nationalism in its constructive sense is the only way to solve the Arab-Palestinian and Jewish-Israeli conflict.

I think that this is also the recipe to establish decent relations between the Jewish majority and Arab minority in the state of Israel. Here a great responsibility lies on the shoulders of the intellectuals. I am not so naïve to think that intellectuals can decide the future of a society or a nation. But no doubt they have influence, especially in our times, on its spirit, which has an important effect on politics. I mean the extreme political ideologies of the "new denials" of the existence of Israel as a Jewish democratic state. I am very worried about the denial trends among Arab intellectuals and Jewish extremists, which might lead in the future to political dangers and national disasters.

Therefore, instead of that, I am looking for a new compromise, based on the political solution of two national states and an Arab national cultural autonomy in the state of Israel. I would accept in principle and politically the same solution for those Jewish settlers who will choose to remain in the Palestinian state.

I also have no doubt that when peace will be established the question regarding the legal status of the Palestinian cultural autonomy in the state of Israel will become a central political and ideological public issue. In this regard, I don't see any reason, in should there be an atmosphere of peace, why the Arab society shouldn't get the same status as the Jewish ultra-Orthodox religious society. I mean especially in education. From this point of view teaching about the Nakba is necessary, but in the right historical perspective, as I have tried to indicate

JEFF HELSING: We will now hear from Mohammed Dajani.

MOHAMMED DAJANI: What I would like to focus on is the history, to discuss the two terms, history and narrative. Often, when we are talking, we use the terms interchangeably. I find it so important to make the distinction between both terms, and to see their implications for peace. If we can think of history as science, maybe it is or maybe it is not science, but if we try to think of the narrative as science, it cannot be science, and the question is why.

For example, if I would want to teach American history it may be taught the same way here -- if I am teaching it at al-Quds University it will be the same way as in Texas or South Carolina or any other university, if I am using the same books and the same approach. At the Hebrew University they are teaching Israeli history, and at al-Quds

University we are teaching Palestinian history, and we are covering exactly the same ground. However, they are totally different histories. Though the events are the same yet they are being described differently. The terms used don't have the same meaning to each party. Patriotism and nationalism have conflicting meanings to each party. The substance is not the same and even the language will not be the same.

So basically, what is it that is being taught at Hebrew University and what is being taught at al-Quds University about the 1948 Jewish-Arab confrontation? How is that history being taught in a European university or an American University? At al-Quds we will say they are not teaching history, they are teaching their narrative of historical events as constructed by their elders or their perception or myth of history or the historical narrative. At Hebrew University a similar process is taking place. They are teaching their historical narrative, and that is why we note that the history of the other is a denial of one's own. Why is this happening? The answer is simple, because what is being taught is not history, but rather the historical narrative.

Now, here we have to make this connection between history and historical narrative and see what role each plays, first, in constructing the history of the conflict; second, in perpetuating it; and third, in resolving it. So, I believe, unless we put our finger on the pulse, what remains is perpetuation of the conflict, even when there is dialogue to resolve the conflict. It will be dialogue over semantics, not substance, and much more about the myths than the reality.

That is why I feel that in order to create an atmosphere of peace and reconciliation, we need to overcome the obstacles created by the narrative myths we so much value about each other. Because even if we sit at the table to negotiate, but we are suspicious of each other and we do not trust each other, and we are fearful of each other, and each believes that the other wants to obliterate him, then there is no way that we can achieve real peace, even if we sign a peace agreement like what happened with Egypt and Jordan. For instance, if I say, as has been said this morning, "I'll accept what you are saying", you may say, "No, I don't want you to accept what I am saying, I want you to agree and believe in what I am saying". I say I cannot agree and believe in what you are saying because what I believe is totally different than what you believe. I would respect what you believe but do not have to believe in it in order for you to be satisfied.

So basically then we are back to the argument, and the conflict is actually being perpetuated rather than resolved. And even given what happened with the Oslo peace process, I don't believe Oslo is dead. I think that Oslo was a very important historical transitional stage that we went through. But the problem was that we had high expectations and did not give the process the time it needed to give fruit. The hostile environment was not ready for fertilizing peace, given the suspicion and the animosity and the unresolved problems that followed Oslo, with radical groups on both sides trying to undermine it, resulting in having the Oslo train derailed. But it wasn't derailed before it actually accomplished its purpose, which was to make us sit with each other and recognize each other and to try understand each other, at least, where the problems were. And that is a very, very important role that Oslo played, because Oslo made us recognize the other, and made us recognize that the other has a story to tell.

Here the question is not whether we would believe the narrative of the other or whether we believe that narrative is something we can live with, but rather to be able to say, "Fine. I have my narrative. You have your narrative. Where do we go from here?"

One step forward would be to make a distinction between history and narrative. I can respect your history. I can respect your narrative also. If your narrative is actually constructed according to a scientific standard, in the sense that if it is not biased, then I may not only respect it but move further and accept it. If it doesn't dehumanize or demonize me, then I can live with it. But if your narrative demonizes me, and if your narrative dehumanizes me, then how can I accept such a narrative?

That is why in this clash of narratives, I think we should sit down and look at history with the eyes of the other, and bisect the narratives with a doctor's skills, and see how can we construct a code, or rules of the game, or rules of engagement in which you can make your own narrative, a narrative that I can live with, one that meets the test of time. Similarly, I can make my own narrative, a narrative that you can live with. As for those narratives that actually divide us, we can look at them and try to find explanations, and in this way we can either correct the perception or try to live with it.

To give you an example, few years ago I was invited to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem to participate in a conference on anti-Semitism. I was supposed to make a presentation on the role of media. The Israeli professor speaking before me was talking about anti-Semitism in the Arab world, and the role of Islam in creating this anti-Semitism, and he said that the Quran states that "God has turned Jews into pigs and monkeys."

To me, as a Muslim, it was extremely shocking for me to hear that, because for the first time I was confronted with the claim that the Quran had something this negative to say about Jews. And I thought there was something wrong and I didn't understand it. So I was emotionally reactive, and when it was my turn to speak after him, and in an emotional reaction, I said that I don't believe that this is true, and I don't believe that the Quran has such a statement.

So the professor was very upset and I saw him leave the hall, so I thought he had withdrawn in protest but some time later he came back holding a copy of the Quran in his hand. He interrupted me, asking for permission to speak, explaining that he went to his office to fetch the Quran but couldn't find it, so he went to the bookstore and bought a new copy and came back to prove his point. He said, I would like to read to you the verse which Professor Dajani says is not in the Quran. It was verse 92 in the Cow surah, which states: "And you know well those amongst you who transgressed in the matter of the Sabbath: We said to them: Be you apes, despised and rejected."

After he finished, I explained that what he read is a verse in the Quran which warns that God punished the Sabbath-breakers, turning them into apes. First, it is a punishment; it doesn't say that God turned all Jews into apes and pigs. Second, in the early days of Islam, Muslims used to have Saturday as their holy day, so this statement would include Muslims, since their holy day was on Jewish Sabbath. Third, it is not a statement about all Jews in general but those Jews who break the Sabbath, whom the Jewish scriptures also say should be killed.

Also you can take it more as religion, not about Jews and monkeys or apes or whatever, but rather about God's wrath against those who break his word and that God would punish people whenever they break His word.

So if this is in the Quran and God says that your punishment is this, it is totally different from coming into a seminar and saying, "Well, the Quran says God turned Jews into monkeys." So this is where the narrative can be examined and where it can

be explained, and in this way, rather than taking this narrative and perpetuating it, we can listen to the "other" and hear the point of view of the other, in order to understand what the interpretation of that narrative is.

Actually, the narrative helps us in two ways. First, it helps us to see how the other views us, which is very important. At the same time, it helps us to open our eyes to see how we view ourselves. So this event about Jews in the Quran got me interested to read the Quran again to study my own faith. It made me question what I hear about my faith, because I felt this is not the way God looks at his creation. If he has created animals, then was it as a punishment? Or was it to create variety, which is actually the theme of the Quran; that God has created man, plants, and the animals in order to create a rich world, or what we call multiculturalism. The Quran says God created us different people with different languages so that we may get to know each other and be acquainted with one another. In more than one surah, the Quran affirms that, had God willed, He would have created one nation believing in one religion and speaking one language.

So, what is so important about the narrative is to be able to learn to look at the mirror image in which we see ourselves, but also that we see how others view us. Narratives are divided into different categories. One set of categories includes religious narratives, political narratives, historical narratives, psychological narratives. Another set includes personal narratives and collective narratives. The religious narratives are based on what is believed that God had said; God said it so we cannot question the words of God. But the interpretation of the text raises questions since they may vary and even contradict each other.

Usually the political narrative is very biased, and is fully loaded. For example, yesterday, I was on the plane and was reading the *Jerusalem Post* and there was this cartoon about Israel, and it was particularly interesting for me to read it because yesterday was Israel's Independence Day. It showed Israel surrounded by enemies, bombed by terrorists, and then it says the brave little democracy remains a light to the nations. There was a little dog in the cartoon saying, "True", but then he thinks, "But the nations have their eyes tightly closed". So I thought that this is a very interesting political narrative, in which actually Israel sees itself as a democracy and sees the others around it as not so.

Now, the Palestinian narrative would be different, that there may be a democracy for Israelis and for Jews, but Israel may not be a democracy for the minorities living in it, such as the Arabs or the Ethiopians. Also, how would Israel compromise between being a religious Jewish state and a democratic secular state? How, for instance, can Iran be a religious state and a democratic state at the same time? Or can Hamas run a democratic state and a religious state at the same time? If Israel claims it can be a Jewish state and a democratic state at the same time, so would the others.

So this is how we may look at these narratives and investigate how they clash and how they view the others, and this will also help us to see ourselves. For instance, this political narrative that Israel is a democracy, an island of democracy in a continent of dictatorships, perhaps played a very big role in actually having the other states move more towards democracy. Perhaps Arab authoritarian regimes in the region didn't want to be viewed as dictatorships while Israel is viewed as a democracy by the West, and so many Arab states instituted seeming democratic structures or processes. Although the

content may not be democratic, at least they serve as a window dressing to be viewed as a democratic state. If you are looking from the outside in, it is very nicely democratic, but once you walk into the street you'll find it like a Pandora's box, everything jumps up from inside the box.

Basically I think that it is very important in any peacemaking that if we can look at narratives, and if we can study and analyze them, and be able to put a code or rules of engagement for narratives, then this will go a long way toward creating an environment that will eventually lead to peace.

Although national narratives are not required to meet certain standards of impartiality and objectivity, yet the question remains, should they, for the sake of peace, meet the requirements of sensitivity and empathy? I believe they ought to. Collective narratives as national narratives help unify the various communities within a country. Thus it becomes essential to set the rules of engagement and then to assess whether each national narrative meets the basic requirements of those rules. This way we will be able to actually listen to the other's narrative and to respect it rather than deny it. This will have happened when I can teach Israeli history at al-Quds University the same way they teach Israeli history at the Hebrew University, and when they teach Palestinian history at the Hebrew University the same way it is taught at all-Quds University.

JEFF HELSING: Thank you very much. We will begin with questions or comments.

ADEL MANNA': I'll start with Mohammed's concluding sentence about teaching the same history in the same places. I don't believe that is the case, neither in the Palestinian case nor in the American or Mexican, nor in any place in the world.

It is not only that you can't teach the same history in different places, but that you have different histories in the same place. I just came back from Texas and Mexico, where I was visiting, and you have different histories there. Is it the history of the Indians or the history of the white man, or the history of the Hispanics or the history of the political elite or the history of the blacks? So there is no one American history even. There are different American histories.

So we can't speak even about teaching American history the same in different places. It is even more true for a conflictual place like Palestine or, for that matter, it could be Rwanda or the Balkans or Yugoslavia or wherever.

Then I come to the issue of narrative. I think we put too much emphasis on this issue of narrative as if today the narrative is causing the problem, that if we have different narratives we don't understand each other and so on and so forth. But what I do think is that the narratives are reflections of the different interests, the different beliefs, the different identities that we try to construct. Because if those interests and beliefs and identities and so on are conflictual, then we have different narratives. Conflicting narratives.

So if I study the narrative of the other on the principle that it is always better than ignorance to know about the other, it doesn't mean that I and the other, who will study the same thing, will reach the same conclusion politically. For example, Yosef Gorny and I may have the same facts, but we come to different conclusions. What should we do on the issue of the Palestinian state or the two-state solution or whatever solution, because we have different values, we have different beliefs?

So once again, I have a problem with the issue of the narrative and the issue of

the history and where are the borders and what do we do with that. And also sometimes we mix issues of narratives, different narratives and different stereotypes and prejudices that we have about each other. Those are two different things. There is something in common between the prejudice and the stereotypes and other things that we get about the other, and the narrative of the other, or our narrative and the narrative of the other, and the image of the other, and we have to differentiate between those things.

Concerning Yosef Gorny's paper, I read toward the end of it about the status of the Arabs in Israel, and I was amazed that our system of education is almost autonomous and almost ideal according to his paper. While it is separate, and it is in Arabic, that is in order to control it, not in order to be equal to the Jewish educational systems. And you say that we are studying our poetry or things like that, but I don't teach in Israel, so you don't teach Palestinians their own history.

That is why, whenever our students in the university meet the Jewish students, the Jewish students know much, much more about Palestinian history than the Arab students. The Arab students at the university have never had the chance to study their own history, their own culture and their own poetry and so forth.

However, there is an educational system in Israel that is democratic. I do believe it is a democracy. It is not perfect, it is not an ideal democracy, but it is a democracy, unlike the dictatorships in the neighboring Arab countries.

MOSHE MA'OZ: Yossi Gorny, you mentioned that the Labor movement was already ready to compromise, but I want to emphasize that it was not ready to recognize legitimate rights of the Palestinians. They were ready for a compromise based on facts, but not on rights.

Ben-Gurion, before the Peel Commission, repeatedly said, "This is our right over Eretz Israel because of the Bible", denying the right of the other. Accepting the political fact of the other is not the same, as we discussed in the last session.

Now, there was another period from 1948, as I mentioned, to 1988. Golda Meir, what was her recognition of the Palestinian right? Even Yitzhak Rabin the first, in the 1970's. Rabin in his second term was different. Rabin first recognized the Palestinians as a political fact in the 1970s, but he was going forth with the Jordanians, which was dubious.

Then you say, Yossi, that the religious movement doesn't accept compromise. I am not sure about that. Because we have the NRP, the National Religious Party. It depends on the nature of the religious party. It was very moderate for decades. With regard to Hamas, there could be a way of *de facto* recognition -- not that I have to defend Hamas, somebody else can do it better -- but even Ahmed Yassin said time and again that once there is a withdrawal to 1967 and Jerusalem, we are going to accept Israel as a fact in the *hudna*.

There are all kinds of ways. It is not determined. It is not an absolute position. But Mohammed Dajani says that both in Al-Quds and Hebrew University they teach narratives and not history. I am not sure about Al-Quds but I am sure about Hebrew University. They don't teach the narrative, they teach history. Even professors are human beings, not all of them, of course, but they have their inclinations.

Adel wrote a book about it called *The History of Palestine*, and I thought it was very objective. You can aspire to be objective, to present the history, the narrative of all

sides. One history where you can include everybody. And we teach Islam. Jihad. I mean there are a number of quotations, not only holy war but also a social effort, and we teach these nuances. So I think it can be done.

YITZHAK REITER: I have three comments. First I disagree with Gorny's argument that the Arabs were not ready to recognize or acknowledge Israel or the Jewish entity because of the Islamic approach, whereas nationalism is more recognizable. I am not sure that the religious outlook is irrational.

I believe that the religious outlook is rational, and it is also a kind of a nationalism. I mean that the religious ideology is employed and used by nationalist groups to express their view. And in this sense I believe that religion is a sort of nationalism. It is one of the types of modern nationalism nowadays.

Now, what happened during the pre-1948 period was not that the Arabs resisted the Israelis because of their Islamic outlook, but because their evaluation of the political situation was -- today we can say -- mistaken. It was wrong. They thought that they would have the upper hand at the end of the day, and they resisted until they lost the war. King Abdullah in Jordan, for example, represented a different strategy. He understood that in order to establish an Arab entity in Transjordan, or in Greater Syria, as was his vision, he would be better off to comply and cooperate, or collaborate if you like, with the British power and with the Jews, and to come to a compromise with them. I think his strategy proved to be the right one because he established an entity, even if you can say an artificial entity, in Transjordan, which is modern Jordan. Whereas Haj Amin al-Husseini had a different strategy and lost completely because his vision was not only political, but it was a wrong evaluation of the political situation, the geopolitical situation at the time.

Now, coming back to the issue of religion, I think in Mohammed Dajani's talk, we could find proof that even what is perceived today as irrational, the religious matters of Islam, is a matter of interpretation. And what Mohammed presented to us is an interpretation of the Quran, and of how religion could develop constructively, and even legitimize the other by using a mechanism of interpretation, and to adapt the holy text or the historical text to the new circumstances.

One example is in a *fatwa*, a legal opinion issued by the Mufti of Egypt after President Anwar Sadat signed the peace accord with Israel in 1979. He issued a 20-page fatwa arguing that jihad is not war. Jihad is an effort, and you can reach the same political goals by recognizing the other or by signing a peace agreement with the other. So I do not see the Islamic or religious approach as a necessary obstacle to acknowledging the other, but it is a matter of interpretation. The question is whether we have people, clerics, who will be able to provide this new interpretation.

There is another point which struck me in your paper. As historians, we usually make a difference between facts and interpretation. Sometimes we filter the facts and we choose those which fit our interpretations. Now, we can find here a mechanism, for those who are interested in changing the process of delegitimizing the others, by taking a different approach towards delegitimizing the other by filtering the text and underlining specific facts while de-emphasizing other facts.

I'd also like to address what you said about Ben-Gurion and Jabotinsky in the 1920s and 1930s, that they suggested parity with the Palestinian Arabs to share the country in a confederation, a Jewish-Arab confederation. So if one, on the Jewish side,

can use such information by filtering facts, and use some forgotten ideas from the history of the Jewish national movement; on the other side, Palestinians like the one that you quoted, can choose those Palestinians who in the past expressed ideas of compromise with the other, this could be a basis to construct a process of legitimizing the other by citing some authorities in the past who supported this approach.

ILAN TROEN: I would like to endorse what has been said, but phrase it in different language. To get to the bottom line, it is the notion of a "usable past". It used to be a phrase that was current in historiography, the recognition that historians couldn't cover everything, particularly if they weren't writing an encyclopedia. But the direction and significance of events are the product of the historian's choice and are made without embarrassment. If you look at the history of the reform movements, they generally take up the histories of their predecessors as in the Whig or progressive interpretation of history. "Alternative history" is a big bag of tricks that could be used for a good purpose and it has to be germane to what we are assembled to do.

The question that I have for both of you is, can you imagine when we leave here, if you could write together or separately a text that would draw upon the past of both the Palestinian experience and national movement, and of the Jewish or Zionist national movement, those elements in the past that would be useful in granting mutual legitimacy and accommodation?

In fact, some of what we've heard is about traditional compromise. What are the elements that one could take out of Palestinian history and experience and share with others and say that this is something that can become part of our common heritage? I suppose that part of the context for this is that I know that history cannot only be used but it can be abused.

There is an interesting and relevant case of a debate about how professors and scholars ought to teach America. It has to do with a dispute between the Canaanites, the influential intellectual movement in Israel in the 1950s, and the historian of the United States. Yehoshua Arieli.

Canaanites claimed America is a wonderful example for those of us who live in Palestine/Israel, because it exemplifies a case of Europeans who came to a new land to become an entirely new people. But if you went to the Hebrew University and you studied with Yehoshua Arieli, he would say that is not at all what America means. Rather, it is an instance of Europeans who were transformed on coming to America. Both the Canaanites and Arieli considered the same phenomenon, but they used that American experience in diametrically opposed ways. Historians have an opportunity to select and interpret. How they do that, and to what end, is an enormous responsibility.

So my question is, what would you suppress, and no less importantly, what would you emphasize?

SAID ZEEDANI: It is not the case that Zionism has been with us all along. Zionism is a new invention; it is a 19th century phenomenon. It is not an eternal phenomenon. I think it is very important that the rise of Zionism should be seen in the context of the rise of nationalism in Europe, and the experience of the Jews in Europe. And I think that this part of the experience should not be omitted.

And it is very important, the treatment of the Jews in Europe, the discrimination against the Jews in Europe, the organizations of Jews in Europe, etc.

But the point really that I want to make is about your suggestion that nationalism

was probably the cause of a conflict, but it might be also the way out. It may be the solution.

So first, what kind of solution? If you have two national movements, then we are talking about this specific solution rather than any other, so we have to be careful because there are other options that are excluded when we are talking about two national movements, two competing national movements.

But the other thing, the more relevant thing for our purposes, is the question to what extent really can nationalism be rational? I think that the two things that you identify, and which better account for the rationalism, are the liberalism of Jabotinsky on the one hand, and the socialism of Ben-Gurion on the other. It is not their nationalism which accounts for their rationalism, but it is the other components of their ideological commitments.

And I have something to say to Mohammed. It sounds to me like moralizing, how we should treat each other, and how we should make others live with us, how we should divide our narratives so that we facilitate living with the other. I want to talk about brute facts in history. Facts bear fruit. They are events and they are there, uncontested facts. And sometimes we misinterpret events. It is our duty as scholars to be impartial, to be scientific, but there are facts that you cannot change unless you are going to intentionally misrepresent reality, and then other problems arise to the discipline itself.

PAUL SCHAM: What do you mean? Do you have an example of "brute facts"?

SAID ZEEDANI: We know about facts about dates, about casualties.

PAUL SCHAM: But what they need is interpretation.

SAID ZEEDANI: Of course. We are not talking about literature here, where you do not have anything without an interpretation. And history is not literature. I can give you a lecture about that if you want, but I mean there are brute facts, dates, events. Yesterday I was delayed at the checkpoint for a number of minutes. I mean you can measure that. You can photograph that. It is not just a narrative. It is not just a story that can be true or false. It can be tested. Not all historical events are like that, not all presentations are like that, so I think there are degrees.

We have to beware of these degrees. What happened in this case, to this specific individual, and on this specific occasion. It can be verified.

PAUL SCHAM: If I just pick up on that point, were you delayed at the checkpoint because the Israelis were legitimately afraid of Palestinian terrorism, or were you delayed at the checkpoint because Israel wants to harass Palestinians and prevent them from having their rights? That is what is important, and that is the result of how we interpret your delays.

SAID ZEEDANI: But it is easy. It is not difficult. It is not always possible, but in most cases it is possible to make the distinction between facts and interpretation.

RONI STAUBER: I have two comments. One is to Yossi, and one to Mohammed. The first is about the readiness of the Labor Party to compromise. So first, let us mention *Achdut Ha'Avodah*, which was an integral part of the Labor Party. Their members were against compromise. Yitzhak Tabenkin and his followers who established Achdut Ha'Avodah were not less determined on this point than was the Revisionist party. Also Mapai, as I think Moshe said, from 1948 was not ready to compromise. Not about the right of return. Moshe Sharett and Ben-Gurion were all

against it. In addition, for many years the Labor Party was against the idea of two states "between the sea and the river."

Let me also relate to what Mohammed said about the interplay between narrative and history. I teach history as an academic field and thus I would always send my students to read different theses to give them the widest perspective. My students read opposing views. I am trying to teach them critical reading, mainly on what documents the scholar based his thesis. My only concern is whether we are dealing with good or bad historians. Is it a good academic book based on documents or is it political or propaganda?

ESHEL KLINHOUSE: My remarks relate to some of the rejection of opinions of the others. This session I see myself, as a high school teacher, in the things that we are doing here, that is, promoting peace. Because one might ask himself whether the study of history is promoting peace. The notion that they may be dealing too much with history may be stuck somewhere in our minds, with everyone arguing who started the war, who did this and that.

But after a few meetings with the Palestinian teachers, you know that you cannot just ignore history and you have to deal with it somehow. You have to dismantle it like a bomb because it is like a part of your identity, and the notion of narratives which was introduced here is an excellent example of how you can deal with history, because history itself doesn't allow any place for another history to enter, because history is fact, in the classical meaning of history. This history is based on European history of the last centuries; history is fact, and facts you cannot argue. But the notion of a narrative allows us to enter another's story to your story, and that is why it is so important, and it should be added.

I ask my students to write a narrative on the first day in high school. So it is so easy to combine the history of what happened. You receive different kinds of histories.

So this is my narrative, and my concern is the pedagogical aspect of this meeting. A narrative approach might promote this. Now, it is true that not all narrative moves towards peace. For example, when we met with the Palestinian teachers, we thought about how to characterize the clashes in Hebron in 1929.

Obviously, as Israeli history teachers, we gave a long description of how the Arabs were killing us. Then the Palestinian teachers asked us if we knew that most of the families in Hebron were saved. And we accepted that, because most of the families who were rescued in Hebron were rescued by Palestinian families who hid them. And they said to us, we want you to put this in your narrative.

But the question is, which narrative do you embrace in order to note the other's? And I think one of the main advantages of a narrative approach is that you get to know the other. This is the name of the booklet that we are working on, and the fact that you get to know the other, not the first time that you meet him when you are guarding a checkpoint through bombs and shells, but you meet him as a person. You invite them into your room and you ask him to tell his story. That doesn't mean you accept his story, it doesn't mean that you are leaving your own stories. It doesn't mean that you immediately love him, but at least I get to know him and the next time I go and see him I am going to discuss his methods and he is someone, he has his own story, and his own face, not just something that I hear from the outside.

MICHAEL ROSEN: I have to make a point to Mohammed, which is, if you come

to the issue of the religious world in Israel today, whether it's pragmatic or not pragmatic, let us examine the question of whether you can give back territory for peace.

On that issue, every Haredi, every ultra-Orthodox Jew or halachic law exponent will say, yes, to give back land for peace. Not discussing whether it is racist or not; I am talking about both pragmatic issues of land for peace. For all true descendants of Rav Soloveitchik, who represents modern Orthodoxy, the rationale is clear that you can give back land for peace. Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef, who is the leader of the Shas Party, asks explicitly, can you give back land for peace? And he says explicitly, yes, you can; ergo, the overwhelming majority of religious authority in Israel today says you can give back land for peace.

There are two exceptions, one is the Lubavitcher movement, which always seems to be a work of its own, and the other is the yeshiva of Rabbi Zvi Yehudah Kook, which was totally and utterly irrelevant before 1967. His yeshiva, Merkaz HaRav, had five people and a dog, no more. He was the prime example of how history makes the man. And since then his pupils, his *talmidim*, have dominated religious Zionists in this country. They are the most vociferous, and therefore you could come to your conclusions. Please don't give up hope.

Now to say something to Mohammed and to Roni. What I am picking up, there seems to me to be a tendency to say, well, actually your narrative is nonsense, but if you believe your narrative you have a right to believe nonsense. I respect that, because you go on to say, as historians we can clarify the substance. So I really want to be provocative to you all, and you can shout and scream and tell me how I am not a historian.

If Jesus Christ was alive today, he could eat at my table but he couldn't eat at anybody else's of this group. Why do I say that? Because the basic laws of kashrut are in the Mishna, a second century document, and its development was much earlier. I know that the Jerusalem church, led by James, Jesus's brother, was halachic, and therefore the assumption is that Jesus would have been so as well; ergo, Jesus could not have eaten the meals upstairs [in the hotel dining-room], but he could have shared my sandwiches, which seems to me to suggest that that is historical fact, with which everybody else has to come to terms.

DALIA OFER: I am overtaken by Jesus now. I will also go back to a few things, the issues of narrative and history, despite Jesus.

I also had a feeling that we are missing the point, and I agree with what Said says, that it is true that the interpretation of the facts is important. But it is very, very important to know that when we are teaching our history we have to teach also the things that are unpleasant to us. Because history is full of unpleasant, painful things. As I always tell my students, everybody takes examples from his own life.

When I get up in the morning, and look in the mirror, I think well, this is not so beautiful, so I put on some make-up. We can't put make-up on history; we have to be very straight about it. However, Roni, what would you do when you have two historians, Adel and myself, who have perfect facts, our references will be one hundred percent. We are never one hundred percent, but let's assume it for this example. We will present to our students a piece of history, and it will be totally different. Although we are both Israelis, we come from different points of view.

When Moshe talked this morning I thought of Lord Acton in the 19th century. He

opened up a new phase of modern history when he wrote that he wanted the French historian and the English historian to write the same history when they deal with the French Revolution or the Glorious Revolution. Carr showed a few years later that it is impossible to have objectivity when you open a book of history, so look at the biography of the historian. But there is a methodology. It is true that we have to be very conscientious about methodology. The narrative is not against history; every history has a narrative. And we create a narrative with all our consciousness and trying to be very true to the facts and to the methodology.

RONI STAUBER: I agree with you, but if two historians are going to the same archives and they are going to see the same documents -- myself and Adel, for example -- we can come to different conclusions. That is okay. But then I would ask myself or my students, does the conclusion of Adel or the conclusion of Stauber reflect the documents, or maybe it's a distortion of the documents? Is it something that the historian imposes on the documents?

DALIA OFER: Roni, nothing comes directly from anything, all comes directly from the head. And our head is already part of our biography, of our culture, of what we are. Now, we don't do it because we have bad intentions. We do it with all of our honesty, and this comes up in our classes all the time.

MOSHE MA'OZ: Speak for yourself. There are different approaches.

DALIA OFER: I'll give an example from my experience, I don't give an example from your experience. So I think that we must be very much aware of it, and therefore we cannot choose the nice things about history, that it is always pleasant things that we will show our students. I think we must be aware of the painful things that happened. And I would like to take the example of Hebron. I think it is an excellent example.

The fact that the story of who rescued the Jews who were not murdered, some of them, not all of them, in Hebron, was not told to me when I studied or when you studied or is not told today, is not because it was not known, and not because somebody had bad intentions. It was because the main issue that those who wrote the history of Hebron in 1929 wanted to show was the Arab intent towards the Jewish community that was not a Zionist community, but it was a Jewish community that had lived there for years, etc., etc, and to explain the clash from this perspective.

MOSHE MAOZ: They are bad historians. You have to mention both.

DALIA OFER: The fact that we can, today, put in the issue of rescue makes it a better history because this was the situation. But they were not bad people. They were living in their times and we are living in our times, and I think that we made a great step forward, that we can put it in.

RONI STAUBER: But Dalia, you are making this effort to bring not only your side, not only the Israeli narrative, but also the Palestinian narrative. As a professional historian you are obliged to bring all facts if you are aware of them, whether you like them or not. So this is what I am saying. If you are a good and honest historian, if you are a professional, if you have integrity -- I think the main word here is integrity -- if you have integrity as an historian, you'll not ignore facts that are against your belief or political outlook and you'll be open to accept any interpretation that is based on documents. And of course there can be more than one interpretation. This is my mission as a historian.

DALIA OFER: Roni, it is not a matter of facts. I would bring the different

interpretations. I think that what we have to do, and now I am not talking about pedagogy, because it is different in elementary school and high school and I don't want to go into this, these are different issues. But when I talk about university seminars, university classes; if you want to teach them to be good historians, we don't teach them different facts. We teach them different approaches to the interpretation of history. This is the issue.

What we are talking about here is that we want to use the past, but a usable past will not be a usable past if I am not aware, completely aware, with all of the pain that it entails, of what happened in 1948, or what happened in Kafr Qassem or what happened in 1967 or whatever.

ILAN TROEN: I agree that a usable past also includes pain, but it does have a question and a purpose. And the purpose can be to use a tragic event or a glorious event. A usable past is not a celebration. That is essentially what I meant, and I thought there was a concern here to find a usable past for a particular purpose. And that particular purpose was not to justify war.

DALIA OFER: I don't want to justify war, but I have a feeling that if we are not completely honest on this point and really try to describe the wholeness, it may be that we don't really respect the other narrative. I think that there is something very basic, not in relation to agree to each other but to respect each other's views. I am sure I am far away from Said's opinions about the conflict but I think that the first thing is that we should be able to respect it, and therefore we should not be taking and molding the past as it pleases us in order to show it like this and that. I am not sure I express myself well, but....

SAID ZEEDANI: Can I help you a little bit?

I think there are two issues that we are facing here. One has to do with what is this thing that we call the science of history. I mean, this is humanistic, not only history, but the whole category of human sciences is different from the hard sciences; they are sciences in a different sense.

I think the more relevant issue to these sessions is how to treat this material, these documents and so forth. Here we are talking really about the qualities of a good historian. That he should be objective, that he should be impartial, that he should be without prejudice, that he should be meticulous, and that he should try to deal with his emotion with his biases, etc. I think this is what we are talking about.

PAUL SCHAM: I would like to focus on a point in this interchange which I think is particularly important, the difference between narrative and history, which has to some degree been lost sight of. I am more of Dalia's opinion that history changes over time. But deciding what is an important fact is much of what history is. For example, the Hebron Massacres of 1929. Would it be very important if there were only one family that was saved? Perhaps not, perhaps that won't show much. Would it be wrong to ignore it if 80 percent of the families were saved? Of course it would be.

Where do you draw that line? That is a matter of judgment. It is not clear. At some point it becomes clearly wrong to ignore this, but usually these choices are in gray areas.

Stepping back to the broader issues, perhaps the project should have been called "shared narratives" because, in my view at least, our function here is to look at the larger narratives of the two societies, not only what the historians write. Obviously,

what they write is an element of the narrative. Nevertheless, it is rarely the case that when a historian writes a book, it is immediately adopted as the view of the society, unless that view is already there. And the societal view filters through politicians, educators, journalists and others, all of whom have a role in creating and perpetuating the narrative.

Historians, however, should be the gold standard of sorts, so if you read a reputable historian you should be able to trust the facts and the interpretation he or she provides, even if you know you will find other views when you read another historian. But I think that who we are trying to affect, in the larger sense of the narratives of society, are the people who are not going to go and read various historians. They will say simply "I hate the Zionists", or "I hate the Arabs". They will say they hate the Zionists because they stole our land, because Zionism is an ideology of expropriation, or they hate the Arabs because they will never cease trying to kill Jews.

Maybe we can do something about teaching over time what Zionism is and isn't, not that we will agree among ourselves exactly what it is, but to look at it in a way that doesn't demonize it. The same, of course, for Palestinian nationalism.

DAVID HARMAN: I'd like to continue your point. This conversation seems to be shifting from the narratives to a discussion of the function and role of a historian.

There is an underlying assumption that, to paraphrase the New York Times, if we get all of the facts and just the facts, it would be possible to adjudicate the conflict, as if we were looking for someone to adjudicate it. But, if we stick to the initial idea of dealing with narratives, then the role of a historian becomes secondary and he certainly loses his position as an adjudicator in the situation. I think it contributes to the discussion though, because we have to expect that there are different narratives. In the same breath we have to accept the fact that the narratives are not going to change because somebody goes into an archive and finds a document. The narratives are there, in the society.

What we have to do is, and this goes to the issue that was discussed earlier with regard to dissemination, is to accept the fact that there are diverse narratives, and that aspects of these narratives conflict with one author, and other aspects don't. All historians know, and not being one, I can assume that you know that there is very little objectivity in historians, in that you base your work on what is available to you, and not on what is not available.

A brief anecdote. I know from one small instance that one matter that I was a witness to in recent history looked totally different when it was looked at by a historian. I asked the historian why that was the case, and he said he had examined all of the documents in the archives and this is what he came back with. But what he couldn't, of course, examine, were the documents taken from the archives before he got there.

There is a spate of books coming out recently about what really happened in Camp David, with a bunch of people writing books, each one, and the aim is not so much history, but to establish the writer's role in history.

MOSHE MAOZ: They are politicians.

PAUL SCHAM: Some of them are.

DAVID HARMAN: But not only do they present themselves as recorders of history, because they were there so they know, but future historians will use those materials in order to write so-called "objective and impartial" histories.

SAID ZEEDANI: But I understood that you are saying that historians are much worse than politicians.

DAVID HARMAN: I am not saying they are better or worse. They have a distinct function, and they do it well, but the important question is, what is the contribution to this discussion.

SAID ZEEDANI: They are better.

DAVID HARMAN: But that is the issue.

Yes, it is a component of the discussion, but it is just that, a component and not the totality of the discussion. There are other things that are involved. Rabbi Rosen raises the issue of the religious aspect, which is also a part of the discussion.

When you started in with Jesus, if he were alive I wonder how he would react to the recent book that came out on Judas Iscariot, showing him more favorably. And will this alter history? No. The Vatican made it very clear that it is not going to change its perception of him.

So our issue, as we march ahead, is that we understand this. We understand perhaps more than we did at the beginning of the session what the source of some of the narratives are, and what the source of some of the histories are.

DANNY RUBINSTEIN: Well, I am not a historian, and I don't know if I am a lackey or not.

DAVID HARMAN: A hundred years from now historians will go to your stuff and interpret it in different ways.

DANNY RUBINSTEIN: Well, I would like to tell you some episodes, one of them at least as a historical background. We are now in Istanbul. The American ambassador to the Ottoman Empire here from 1913 to 1916 was Henry Morgenthau.

He was a Jewish American, and once he asked permission of the sultan to visit Jerusalem. And he knew that Jews were not allowed to visit some of the Muslim holy places in Jerusalem, so he asked the sultan to give him permission to enter the tomb of King David on Mt. Zion. This was a very important and famous area, and it belongs to the Dajani family. And he got permission and went to Jerusalem and came to one of the great-grandfathers of Dr. Mohammed Dajani, and asked, "Can you show me this? It is written here that I can go in to see it."

And the sheikh said to him, "Yes, it says that you can go in, but in, but it doesn't say that you can come out." So he gave up his intention.

I tell you this because the Dajani family is one of the most prestigious families in Jerusalem, and in order to differentiate them from the other Dajanis in Palestine, they call themselves Dajani-Daoudi because of King David, and in Jerusalem it is well known that they are tough people. This story about this sheikh is why sometimes they used to say, "Better Yahudi than Daoudi". I should note that I got permission from Mohammed Dajani to tell this story.

MOHAMMED DAJANI: I hope you publish this now.

DANNY RUBINSTEIN: I tell you this story because I have spent much of my life among Palestinians. We have a different narrative and we have different issues. We have conflict over everything, but I am not sure this is the major component of our differences. Because Mr. Dajani and every Palestinian here has very deep roots, which are totally different from mine. And it is a totally different experience.

Dajani, for me, is part of David/Daoud on Mt. Zion, and maybe that connection

will last for ever. Every Palestinian has an identity of belonging to a special area, family, clan, tribe, village, whatever, which I don't have.

The main component of my identity is the language. The Hebrew language. Sometimes I will say my homeland is Hebrew. I talk here to you in English, or I can speak in Arabic, too, but I think in Hebrew. When I speak Hebrew I feel I am in my homeland. So it is totally different from the Arabic language. In Arabic you can understand, or you can at least read what is written in Morocco, even. It is huge.

MICHAEL ROSEN: And if you spoke Hebrew in another country in Europe?

DANNY RUBINSTEIN: If everyone in New York spoke Hebrew, maybe I would feel at home there. Why not?

So I am not sure that it is a matter of belief or narrative, sometimes it is a matter of your identity.

The second episode is about Hebron in 1929. I am quite familiar with the narrative, with the material, with the Israeli and Jewish narrative, and with the Palestinian narrative. There is a book written by the settlers of Hebron which collects all of the stories of the event, the riots, the massacre that took place, and everything. There is one chapter that was written by the British police about the families who rescued Jews, and it is written very clearly. It gives the names of about fifteen to thirty Arab families who hid Jewish families and it gives the names of the Arab families and the Jews whom they saved, with exact details of what they did.

And one day, several years ago, in Palestinian Jerusalem, I met a fellow who asked if I knew about this list in this book about Hebron? I said yes. Can you copy it for me and bring it to me? And I said yes. I was sure he was a historian doing research about what happened in Hebron. So I made several copies and brought it to him, and I asked, "Why do you need this?" And he said, "When I cross the checkpoint and the soldiers say you cannot pass, then I show him here that it was my grandfather who rescued Jews. He was good to you but you do not let me cross the checkpoint." And I said, "Was it really your grandfather?" And he said, "Whose grandfather? There are 10,000 with that name. But there is no Israeli who knows that that family is twenty or 25,000 strong."

So the Israeli soldiers saw this paper, and gave him permission to pass. And I asked him why he needs the second paper, and he said because I also have problems with City Hall.

I tell you this episode because it shows the difference of the perception or conception of understanding, or the ignorance of one side of the other. So, in my view, the components of our identity are so different that I see it as the major obstacle to understanding each other.

PAUL SCHAM: Do you know if it worked with both the soldiers and with City Hall?

DANNY RUBINSTEIN: It worked, yes.

I have met many Palestinians from Lifta, on the way to Jerusalem. They now live two or three or four miles north of Lifta in the Palestinian Authority. And many of them tell me, "We are in exile". And I say, "What do you mean you are in exile? You are in your homeland, in Palestine, under an Arab regime. That should be exciting for you."

The father of Professor Gaby Baramky, the former president of Bir-Zeit University, used to live in Musrara and they moved from one side of the road to the

other side in 1948. That is today Road No 1. They were uprooted, they were displaced, they lost all of the property. So it is a disaster. But they moved from one side of the street to the other side. And the father of Professor Baramky used to say, "I am in exile". He didn't use the term "diaspora", but he said "I am not in my place". Why? I never feel that if I move from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv or to a kibbutz...

ADEL MANNA': But you decide to move. They moved him. But you moved on your own.

DANNY RUBINSTEIN: For me, once I am in my country, and there is a Jewish government, and they speak Hebrew, that is my homeland. For you it is different.

ADEL MANNA': I was born in Majd al-Kroum and I left there. I live in Jerusalem and I feel at home in Jerusalem. I don't want to go back to Majd al-Kroum again, and my language is the main component of my identity, and so on and so forth. You are making a stereotype of the Arab identity, that everyone is part of a clan and of a tribe, and which is not true.

SAID ZEEDANI: Since I am the only refugee here among the Palestinians, I can enlighten you about this. And probably I can make you better understand how the settlers from Gush Katif in Gaza were affected also, because you cannot only not relate to that, but you cannot relate to them.

DANNY RUBINSTEIN: I can assure you that not one settler would stay under Palestinian regime, not one.

SAID ZEEDANI: There is a basic difference between moving from one place to another voluntarily because of education or economics or so forth, and being ejected from your place, from your property, from your memories. There is a trauma here.

DANNY RUBINSTEIN: So you are saying you understand the settlers from Gush Katif.

SAID ZEEDANI: Of course. More than you do.

DANNY RUBINSTEIN: All of the time they scream that they are uprooted.

SAID ZEEDANI: I can understand how they feel much better than you do.

JEFF HELSING: Let me interject here, please.

It is particularly difficult to generalize from the situation of the larger group to the individual, to translate general to specific feelings, to posit how one person in one situation feels. And I think that is when it becomes even more difficult, when you are talking about just the individual, whether there is somebody who moves across the road or Gush Katif or wherever it happens to be.

YUSUF NATSHEH: I think we are emphasizing an important issue of different aspects of history. We can use the religious dimension to try to solve certain aspects of the problem, for example. There has been talk here of Solomon and David. Now, if you look at the al-Aqsa mosque you will see monuments named after Solomon and David and after vother prophets.

But there are two narratives. Since we are balancing the two narratives, I think we should have to use both.

For almost 10 years we have been doing cooperation with Israelis. But speaking for the Palestinian community, I tell you that Palestinians are losing faith in such activities. Every Palestinian knows this. So what is the result? What is the outcome? And I know, it is very complicated, so it is not solved in 24 hours. But at least if you would like such an activity to continue, what else can we do? Can we depend on

education? Are we really conveying what we believe? And if someone gives advice, will the political elite take our advice? I still believe that this is a good way and we have to continue, but where and when? This is a big question mark. I am not criticizing this discussion, but if it represents something in the reality, in political reality, it will help more people who are discussing this. Thank you.

TAMAR HERMANN: Yossi said at the beginning of his presentation that he is privileged to be taking part in such a meeting for the first time. Unfortunately, I lost my innocence many, many years ago. I have been participating in such meetings for fifteen years perhaps, and I have in my past had over one hundred meetings, based on which I have reached two conclusions: Never try to examine narrative through the prism of historical facts. This has been discussed thoroughly with a post-modern literature. Is there a factual history at all? Is the Manhattan phone book a text as relevant as Toynbee's history text?

So I think that we should leave some questions outside of this room because we are wasting time, and we get nowhere because there is no consensus over the question of what is history: figures and points and so on, or interpretation.

Second, never argue about the narratives themselves because, again, we will never reach an agreement on that. Therefore, my expectation of this meeting was, and I go back to what Rabbi Rosen said in the beginning, to share history, not Shared Histories.

What I wanted, and I think that we should all aim at, is just having each side presenting their own story, trying to compare the stories, looking at the discrepancies, and perhaps at meeting points of the stories. We can also try and see if there is anything there that could serve as a bridge, and do we have a potential there to reach a better understanding of why the other is operating this way or another. We will not come out of here with a solution to the conflict, and this is not what we are aiming for. But understanding of the other's state of mind, and the other's stories, may lead us eventually to the development of some mutually acceptable directions to examine.

This relates to the question that was raised right now, that is, "What for?" We have been meeting so many times. I think that we should realize that things may change, but very slowly. Because narratives change very slowly. Thus, indeed the Israeli narrative of the War of Independence is not the same before and after Benny Morris. His work left its mark on the Israeli discourse of the 1948 war: because of it nowadays the mainstream historical analysis of this period is completely different than it used to be twenty-five years ago, even ten years ago. And if we limit ourselves to really deconstructing our own narratives, and understand the analysis of the other side of their own narratives, I think we will find something more tangible than if we expect to bridge the huge differences over this.

MOSHE MA'OZ: I hate to break your heart but I have been doing this for thirty years. I don't want to brag, but that is the truth. This is part of what is called the "peace industry", and it is helpful but it doesn't really influence the rulers, the leaders on both sides. It is enough for one leader to take a political action to change everything, but it goes from top to bottom, not from bottom up, unfortunately. According to a study made by one of my daughters, three percent of Israelis meet Palestinians in this kind of meeting, only three percent, which is very little.

It is important that there is dissemination in education, but we are not going to

change leaders unless there is some pressure on the leaders, or maybe there is some great change in the mind, as I mentioned earlier. But from the bottom to the top, I don't know how to do it. So many of these dialogues have been sent to leaders. For the most part, it is simply and completely ignored. Nevertheless, we have to do it.

YUSUF NATSHEH: What do you know about what is recommended to the leaders? Or what is told to the newspapers?

I don't think most of the Palestinians care, provided that they have dignity, integrity and welfare. If someone will be a little bit frank and will follow the rumors, a few years ago, during Oslo, when there was a rumor that Jerusalem would be divided, all of the Jerusalem Palestinians in the area that would become Palestinian started to worry. But what I would like to say is that I am sure that we don't have miracles, we don't have something to convince the politicians, but as intellectuals this is our challenge, how can we move what we are discussing here to a wider audience?

AHLAM ABBASI-GHANEM: Luckily I am a non-historian. As a civil engineer I never know numbers by heart. 1967, 1968, 19.. whatever, I don't care.

I care about facts. And as a normal Palestinian who also grew up in Israel, who was educated not to know her own history due to the Israeli system of education, I have a lot to teach my daughters of our history. That is why I have my daughter in a bilingual school in Misgav. And I hope she will learn both narratives, both views of history.

I accompanied her once on a trip to Saphuriya, a village near Nazareth, now called Tzipori. It was occupied in 1948 and it was demolished. Some of the people were killed and some were exiled to another place. So I accompanied her, and we had a Jewish guide who was from the Ministry of Environment. And he told the history of 2,500 years ago of Romans who killed Jews and there was a massacre, and those are the ruins, and the trip was over. I was expecting him to mention also the recent village, those people who are killed recently, fifty or sixty years ago, and those who were exiled into another area.

What I expect from those here who are educators and teachers, that they should bring that history into education, so you can really teach children their history even at younger ages. That is my recommendation.

BENJAMIN POGRUND: As a young reporter in South Africa, I covered train accidents and car accidents, and you get there after it had happened only minutes before and there would be five or six people around who had witnessed it. You try to write a story based on what they have just seen. You get five or six different versions.

So I feel sorry for historians who are trying to recreate the past. Reporters who write today, to record human events, find it is very difficult because it is done through the eyes of the beholder, and it changes a great deal all the time. But I am impressed by what Mohammed Dajani said in his paper about all the pieces of collective memory that stand as an obstacle to reconciliation. That is really what we are trying to do. We are trying to examine the situation and see what has gone wrong. What images people have got, what is being taught in the schools.

And that bothers me because, as we know in the well-known phrase, history belongs to the victors. After the conflicts in Rwanda or South Africa, history is being revised. In South Africa you had the white man's history – about the black barbarians and the white victims – but now books are being written to tell a different story.

Walid spoke about brute facts. As a non-historian, this also bothers me, because

we are again looking at Mohammed's paper. He talks, for example, about Deir Yassin, and he uses the figure of 240 killed.

ADEL MANNA': The paper says 240, which is not true. That's the point.

BENJAMIN POGRUND: That is the point. I have read studies by an Arab group that revised the figure right down. The historical point to be made about that is that both Arabs and Jews, for totally different reasons, exaggerated the figure. The Arabs will tell you what terrible people the Jews were, and Jews can show you what they were capable of doing.

But even more that that, harking back to Shared Histories I, we had two different people presenting papers on 1948. They were basically different versions. Moshe spoke about Plan Dalet not being a pre-conceived plan to drive Arabs out. Walid said Plan Dalet was prepared beforehand, and it was a pre-conceived plan to chase the Arabs out. Diametrically opposed views. And that is where we are today.

We have two opposite versions of a crucial action in our history in this part of the world. Is one of them wrong? Are they both wrong? Are they both liars? Are they bad historians or what? These are different narratives, and what I want to know from Moshe and others, when you teach 1948, are you also teaching Walid's version?

MOSHE MA'OZ: Yes, sure.

BENJAMIN POGRUND: So they are not brute facts, but different interpretations.

SAID ZEEDANI: Then if we are not talking about 1948, we are returning to 1994, what happened about Baruch Goldstein? This number of people who were killed, this number of people were injured on this day. These are brute facts, but what are the things that you call interpretation?

DANNY RUBINSTEIN: How many people died there?

PAUL SCHAM: 29.

BENJAMIN POGRUND: On the Israeli side, I find that, since moving to Israel, the pure, simple, loving Zionism that I grew up with as a youngster in South Africa is being challenged all the time because of the details pouring out. Books written by Israelis have been quite extraordinary, and I have to face up to my past and reassess what I know and what I believe in. And I wonder, is it happening on the Palestinian side also? Because on the Israeli side there is a great deal of sympathy for the Palestinians, and an awareness that we did not behave well all the time. Is it there on that side?

ADEL MANNA': That happened forty years after the establishment of Israel, and you have to wait forty years after the establishment of Palestine in order to see that.

BENJAMIN POGRUND: That is a good point.

Years ago I ran a seminar on religion, with a rabbi and an imam. It was roughly along the lines of the Muslim and Jewish views of God. And the imam said, all of this is very well, discussions like this are very good. But what are you going to do for me and my community about access to Muslim graveyards, access to mosques that have been taken over that are used as storage areas? What are you going to do to help me with Muslim education, and with training scholars?

The rabbi got up in a state of emotional consternation. He said, "I came to talk about God. What is this about?" He was flummoxed. And of course, the imam was correct. That is the point, that discussions are good, but we have to work out where we go with them. We have to take another step. That is one of the issues of dissemination. We have reached that conclusion at the end of the day, and we have to

get into that.

May I quote also from my South African experience. Over the years, the same questions were being asked of whites and blacks at meetings, but those meetings were crucial for changing South Africa. What it meant was that over the years, despite apartheid, when the government discouraged blacks and whites from meeting, there were still people meeting and forging personal links and sharing ideas and arguing and disagreeing and getting unpleasant with each other. And yet, when circumstances changed there were enough blacks and whites around who had been in contact with each other and this formed a basis for going forward. So in spite of the years we have been doing this here, we have to keep going on.

And to round off a final point, I used to find whites in South Africa who would say, I know the black man, I talk his language. I know him, I know the way he thinks. And they were some of the worst racists I ever knew, because they *didn't* know. It is a combination of factors that causes one person to understand another person or another group. It is a strange combination of all sorts of things. Language is one of them, but it is an empathy, a sympathy.

I was one of the first whites who had an empathy with black power and black consciousness, and I never really understood why until a friend referred me to Pinsker's *Auto-Emancipation*, written in 1884. Somehow, I had instinctively picked up that Jewish idea that if you want to have regard from the rest of the world, you must start off with self-respect and have regard for yourself.

JEFF HELSING: We'll turn briefly to our two presenters.

YOSEF GORNY: First of all, Michael, I am to blame because I didn't say there was sincerity in religion. My intention was to indicate religion involving itself actively in politics. This is my point.

To give you an example of the difference between sincerity and politics, I'll mention Rabbi Kook. In 1928, there was a terrible dispute about the Wailing Wall, and Rabbi Kook was invited to a meeting and he said there: "Leave this matter for the Messiah and don't start to argue now about the possession of the Wailing Wall."

The other example refers to Rabbi Maimon, the head of the Mizrachi party. In 1946, when the question of partition was raised in the Zionist high committee, he supported the idea. In one of the meetings he said: "God, I know I am a sinner because I am giving up a part of Eretz Israel, but we have to save the Jewish people, so I admit that I am a sinner."

But today the stand of the religious Zionist leaders is different. This is the reason that religion in politics can be very dangerous, and it doesn't matter if it is Christian or Muslim or Jewish..

Now, Adel, I knew that my last sentence about it is problematic. But I am also very careful, and I went to my friends who are not Jews, to Arabs who are very involved in Arab education, because we have a kind of federation of a Jewish college and an Arab college in Beit Berl, and I spoke with them.

So at the Arab college, where the Arab teachers are completely autonomous, in their curriculum and in the way of teaching, there exists an educational and cultural autonomy. I must confess that, knowing something about the Jewish national movement in Eastern Europe between the two world wars, the status of Arab education in Israel today was an idea for the Jewish nationalists in Eastern Europe, either Zionists,

anti-Zionists or non-Zionists.

DANNY RUBINSTEIN: That is a sign of the times. The revival of Hebrew is a sign of the times.

YOSEF GORNY: No, but for the Bundists the language was the only meaning of nationalism. Now, my impression is that the situation of Arab education in Israel, in the nation of Israel, was the dream of the Polish Jewish nationalists. Zionist and anti-Zionist alike. Their cultural political dream was to have a different educational system based on a national language, Yiddish or Hebrew, and financed by the government. But the Polish government refused to accept this demand.

Now some additional remarks about the compromise.

We are talking about political movements. A rational political movement requires compromise. For instance, in the Labor movement, the majority which demanded a Jewish state came at the end to the political solution of partition. On the other hand, the left-wing minority, which dreamt about the immigration of five million Jews to Palestine and the surrounding lands, suggested the compromise of a binational state.

So I have to repeat again and again: We live in history and we have to live together, so this is our compromise. We didn't choose it. This is the rational compromise. We are brought together by history. Now we sit together, and we have to look for a compromise – that we can live with in dignity, as human beings.

MOHAMMED DAJANI: Moshe said exactly what I meant, in the sense that in his perception the Hebrew University is teaching history as history. But this is exactly the same feeling Palestinians have on the other side: that we are teaching history and they are not. So each side perceives itself to be the one teaching history and that the history they are teaching is the factual one while the other is teaching myths and lies.

When doing my Ph.D. in the United States I found that the university library contains books which reflected Israeli or Zionist versions or narratives only. I got very selective as to which books I used and which books I didn't in order to build up my case, the Arab case. This became my mission, to really have an Arab interpretation, and to achieve this I would only use those books that reflected the Arab version.

So my Ph.D. thesis reflects my own actual selection of the facts as I saw them. Basically, I think that is what might be happening even at the Hebrew University. Actually I have a lot of respect for the quality of learning at the Hebrew University. I was invited there on a number of occasions to speak and lecture, and I think that this is very important since it gives me as a Palestinian the chance to tell my side of the story to the other. And I keep telling my students that when we, as Palestinians, will allow Israeli professors to come to Palestinian universities to lecture, and we sit there and listen to their side of the story and don't throw stones or tomatoes at them like we did at Bir Zeit University when students threw stones at the French Prime Minister because they disagreed with what he lectured, then that is a culture of democracy and moderation, and basically this is something that we --

SAID ZEEDANI: What about the occupation?

MOHAMMED DAJANI: The occupation is a different story. How can we end the occupation if we don't put our house in order? We keep hanging the ills of society on the occupation. Why can't we be a tolerant democratic society even under the occupation? Should we wait till the occupation is over to start promoting democracy and tolerance within our society?

SAID ZEEDANI: The occupation is a state of mind.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You are saying we are not democratic unless we bring a Jewish professor to teach at our university?

MOHAMMED DAJANI: No, but this is a good example of how we may misinterpret or misread what the other is saying. I am saying we need to be tolerant. It starts that we are not tolerant to hear the Israeli professor then we don't want to hear a Palestinian professor because we disagree with him. We don't have the tolerance to at least hear the other view even if those saying it are neutral..

The second point I want to respond to is Tamar's. Never say never. If we look at narratives and examine them, we might change our views of those narratives. At least, we may take the biased content out. For instance, with regard to the interpretation of the Quranic verse about Jews and monkeys, I am sure that the Israeli professor would reexamine the story to see if my interpretation or his interpretation is the right one. So his version might change should he be convinced I am right or he would remain repeating his version if he thinks he is right.

Also, to give you another example, I met the director of the Jerusalem Museum near Jaffa Gate at a YMCA reception and he asked me if I had ever been to the museum at David's Citadel, and I said no. He asked, why, the hotel your family owns is only 50 meters away and you have never been there? And I responded, it is because they don't include in the Museum the Muslim and Arab history in Jerusalem.

And he strongly protested that this is not true, why don't you go see it for yourself? So I went there and found out that my -- our -- narrative, as Palestinians, about omitting Muslim history in Jerusalem is not true. As a result I changed my narrative about that though Palestinians still think so. So what I am saying is that if you present new facts or information, the narrative may change.

I am not moralizing. Actually this is part of what I do. I am a peace activist, and in everything I look at, I try to see how it affects the peace process, to see if it is an impediment, and if it is an impediment what can we do to resolve it.

So I am looking at the narratives and the histories and at my personal motivation, which is to see how to promote peace and how are they an impediment to peace.

Today many of the narratives that are being taught in Israeli and Palestinian schools and universities may be perceived as impediments to peace making, and my question is whether it is due to ignorance, or is it to nurture nationalism and patriotism. This is where it will be seen whether synthesizing the narrative by shedding light on it will remove it as an impediment, or whether that it will not be removed as an impediment because there is an intentional purpose behind narrating it this way.

In conclusion, we will be moving towards peace when we focus on exchanging our conflicting narratives and try to find a central point where we can tell each other our narratives and have empathy for each other's narratives especially if we publish it and make the public aware of it.