

Session 4

CONCEPTS OF LAND

Chair: Jeff Helsing

Note: This session discussed the paper by Ilan Troen in *Shared Narratives*, entitled "Israeli Views of the Land of Israel/Palestine," and a paper by Professor Sari Hanafi of the American University of Beirut, entitled "Spacio-cide: Colonial Politics, Invisibility and Rezoning in Palestinian Territory," published in *Contemporary Arab Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Jan–Mar 2009, 106–121. Professor Hanafi was unable to be present at the discussion in Istanbul. His paper is available at http://jft-newspaper.aub.edu.lb/reserve/data/urpl665-mh-wk6/Spacio-cide_by_Hanafi.pdf

ILAN TROEN: I was asked to talk about claiming land, rights to land, how people imagine land. I was not restricted by time, whether it was before 1948 or after 1948, and in fact, as I am going to try to suggest, 1948 is an artificial barrier. I would even argue that what it is that I have to say is not specific to Jews or to Muslims or to Christians or to Palestine.

I have been trying to learn about how people claim land in South Africa and Australia, the United States, as well as the Basques and the Canadians, and have concluded there are certain universal aspects to the process. And the way in which Jews claim land is not in any way atypical to the way in which so many other peoples do so. And so the arguments that will be set forth here have aspects which are universal and not merely local.

Middle East conflicts, since time immemorial, have been over land claims. We just came from the Topkapi, the Sultan's old palace in Istanbul. The Sultan owned the land, not just in Turkey, not just in Topkapi, he owned the land in this whole part of the world.

Kings owned land through divine right. The oldest and most ubiquitous way in which people claim land is that they assert that the land belongs to God – "the earth is the Lord's", if you will – and that somehow they are the delegates, the legatees, the agents of the Lord in claiming the land. That is certainly true of Judaism.

What I would have liked to have heard, and I would hope to hear here, is a discussion of what is the Muslim claim to land, and are the claims of Muslims and Christians similar or different to those of Jews? And what I gave to you was the incredible cacophony of diversity with which Jews claim land as religious people. I gave you people who argue that Jews have the land eternally. They may have been placed in exile, but they will certainly be returned to it because it is part of the covenant.

I can explain the most crucial issue in a story that is very relevant and which occurred after 1948: it was a discussion between Hanan Porat and Aviezer Ravitsky at a conference on Religious Zionism and the Land. Hanan Porat gave the speech for Gush Emmunim. Essentially he talked about the Covenant and God's promise. And up came Avi Ravitsky, and he said, "But Hanan, you and I studied at the same place. We sat on the same stool at Mercaz HaRav Kook, and I agree with every word you say, that in the sweet by-and-by, this land has been promised to us, and when the Messiah comes, everything will be set straight. The difference between us is that I don't know when the Messiah comes, and I don't know through whose agency the Messiah will be brought now." And clearly, Gush Emmunim and a whole segment within Orthodoxy believe that they are the agents, and that the time is now.

There are other groups of Jews who believe in the same texts and who come to a contrary notion on how to behave and how to claim the land. Their conclusion is that it is premature to claim the land. The Satmar Hassidim argue that Zionism is a sin, and it is because of the sin of Zionism that the Holocaust took place. Chabad, to take a different Haredi example, makes its own claims. One can go down a whole list of people; the variety and the diversity are absolutely extraordinary.

That is the traditional religious-based land claim, which I would argue is universal. It is a problem to be found in every civilization, and I expect that it would be found in Islam as well, whether land is Waqf or not, or who has a right to a portion and so forth. I would wonder if there is the same diversity.

On the religious side, the most extreme example is Martin Buber, who was willing to have a binational state. His notion of the religious imperative was that the claiming of land must be done ethically; *adamah*, land, and God are intertwined. You can't claim land without creating an ethical society, and if the price of claiming the land was to create distortions and sins and iniquities, then the Jews had no right to take the land. But that, too, was religiously based, though from different sacred texts. That discourse is rich, and it is ongoing.

And one of my questions is, how deep is the second discussion, and that's the additional one about which I would like to talk. How thick or how thin is the veneer of secularity among Jews, among Zionists or among secular Arabs, how rooted in international law, human rights, notions of colonialism or post-colonialism, as opposed to that deep gut feeling that behind the leader there must be a picture of al-Aqsa mosque? And I say that because I study Ben-Gurion, I find it fascinating that at crucial moments in his own life, this most secular leader of Zionism, when he gets hysterical, when he gets nervous, he not only goes to sacred texts as a secular Jew, but he has in his imagination something that can only be called mystical. Perhaps it is a form of religious behavior as well.

So the question of how deep is the secular commitment among Zionists is important. There is a secular argument, and there has to be a secular argument, because religious people within any large group, they can argue amongst themselves, but they can never persuade anybody else in either group. So who is right? Hanan Porat or Rav Kook or Martin Buber? That is internal. But how do you argue to the rest of the world?

And the Arab/Palestinian-Jewish conflict takes place in the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. And what we have to say is brought before the court of world opinion, and

the court of world opinion will say that's nice that you're Jewish, that's nice that you're Muslim, but will argue with you in terms of universal language. And the language is not only human rights, since that comes much later. The language is the secular justifications for any group claiming land, and that has a history which I didn't put in the paper. I'll discuss it very briefly here.

One can date it to the 18th century. It's in John Locke's *Second Treatise on Government*, and he begins to argue that there has to be another discourse for ways in which nations or states claim land. That discourse is continued by Chief Justice John Marshall of the United States Supreme Court in the cases of the Cherokee Indian Nation vs. the State of Georgia in the 1830s. It is the most brilliant synopsis of secular arguments for controlling man in the modern period. He argues the nations may claim land through conquest, through discovery, through purchase, through treaty and also through labour. It is the issue of labour that becomes crucial. My friends, the Labour Zionists, may think they invented it, but in fact the notion of vesting labour comes directly out of John Locke, and before that from Grotius, and it is a product of the Enlightenment. What modern people recognized was that the world is enormously mobile.

Some of us visited the Hagia Sophia today. Looking at the Hagia Sophia is to see a transit of civilizations. To be in Istanbul is to be at an access point of Hittites, Romans, Greeks, Turks, and many more. Who wasn't here, and who will not be here?

How does one lay claim to land? Enlightenment thought tried to provide a solution. It argued that people who are there, the original natives, if you like, the nut-gatherers, have rights. They then argued that the shepherds have rights because they invested in labour. But the final group that has title is those who invested even more later, and they were the farmers

So it could be a traditional capitalistic analysis of how land is controlled, but what that notion does is recognize that there is a hierarchy of rights. There is a resistance to the notion of exclusivity in the contemporary discourse. It is one of the reasons why, in the lexicon of Human Rights, that refugees have rights to land, they have the right of asylum, and that rights of asylum contradict, very often, the right of self-determination. There are very few rights which are absolute, self-contained and resistant to any other claims.

It is that sense that really activated secular Zionism. It is the notion of history and it is fundamentally connected to the notion of reconstitution. The operative particle is "re". Rebuild. Return. Reclaim. "Re" means again, and it is what makes Zionism, in my mind, absolutely distinctive among contemporary movements which claim land for people who were not born in it.

The claim of Zionism is that Jews are indigenous. The claim is that they are natives. They really belong. We heard some of that from Danny Rubinstein unintentionally, and perhaps I'll take his words and twist them. And the ways in which I can give you a world of examples in which Jews came to Palestine without the sense of being foreigners. They came with the sense of invoking history, that they came to reenact, redo, reclaim, return, and the word that became international law was reconstitute. That is found in the Mandate of 1922, and it is found repeatedly throughout the discussion. And the first way was language.

A brief anecdote. When I came to the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, I was

the first dean of the faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and we had a discussion, in what language to do a doctoral dissertation. And some of my colleagues said, of course, it has to be in English, because a doctoral dissertation, by definition, is an original contribution to knowledge, and if nobody can read it, how can it be a contribution to knowledge? At which point, of course, somebody raised their hand and said that's nonsense. We have now returned to our land, so it has to be in Hebrew. Because if Jews could carry on intellectual discussions in Hebrew from Sura and Pumbedita, where the Babylonian Talmud was redacted, and then in Minsk and Pinsk and Chicago, then how much more so when they come back to their own country?

So between these two ideological positions we of course did what we were supposed to do, we concluded that you could write in any language that you want, but we created a fund so that the dissertation could be immediately translated into the other. So we tried to satisfy everybody.

But the real story is the reinvention of the Hebrew language, with more than eight million people who speak Hebrew. Names! What is the name of this land? Not just Eretz Israel. Is it Gilo or Beit Jalla, which are variations of the same name for a Jewish and a Palestinian neighborhood in Jerusalem?

We could even argue we've gone too far in the reclamation. We've stripped ourselves of the history and historical connection with the vast Jewish experience abroad. We've become, if you like - and there's wonderful irony in this - we've become Canaanites, that is, not the ancient people who lived here, according to the Bible, but the intellectual group of the 1950s that argued Israeli Jews should integrate into the Middle East and cut the Diaspora loose. Some people want to be Canaanites, and some people don't. But in Zionist discourse, that cuts in so many different ways.

I say all of this because this very much relates to the great insult which we Zionists feel, and those insults are found in some of the papers. They are found in Sari Hanafi's paper, and I would like to address several of them.

First of all is the historical inaccuracy of Sari Hanafi's paper, which is absolutely astounding, and he is not alone in it, because he is really in the good company of Edward Said and George Antonius and my colleague Uri Ram, and so many other people.

The charge is that Zionists claim: "A land without people for a people without land." And then I see a reference to Adam Garfinkle's article in 1991. Did he not read Garfinkle's article about the history of the phrase? It is astounding. Nobody, no Zionist ever said this. It is an absolute untruth.

What they said was, "A land without a people for a people without a land." And that has to do with *am*, *umma* and *people*, which was our discussion on the first day. "People", the English word, is just an aggregation of human-beings. But when Ben-Gurion said *am*, or Zangwill said *am*, they referred to an aggregation, a collective. Zionists always knew there was somebody else in the land.

We don't have time for it now today, but the interesting discourse is how Zionism over the course of 100 years imagined living with others in the land. The notion that they believed the land was unpopulated was untrue. It's a canard that's repeated again and again, and it reminds me of UN Resolution 242. Does it say "territories" or "the territories"? These little words, "the" or "a" get in the way of discourse.

But Zangwill wrote in English, and the phrase in English was "a people without

land for a land without a people." And the phrase has been taken out of context. And there is a kind of maliciousness to it, because it distorts what Zionist discourse was about in making the claim. Zionist discourse had to do with hierarchies. It had to do with recognizing rights. That's in the Balfour Declaration and that goes on to the present. There were civil rights and there were religious rights, but the right of a group to claim land is something the Jews claimed for one portion, at least ultimately, of Palestine.

The other difficulty here is the phrase "colonial". I know you had a previous discussion [See Ran Aaronsohn's discussion in "*Shared Histories*" – Editor's note], and I want to reengage to the discussion. One of the claims made in contemporary scholarship that absolutely distorts proper historical usage and social science methodology is the notion that Jews are somehow a settler society, that they are colonialists. The basic works rely on the work of D.K. Fieldhouse, who never mentions Jews and never mentions Zionism. And the reason is that his definition of a settler society doesn't apply to Zionism and it doesn't apply to Jews. It has to do with the economic base of a society, it has to do with the notion of a motherland and of a fatherland, and it has to do with colonialists.

Ultimately it has to do with the notion that all other colonial settler societies, in his words, they try to replicate the home society. That is again that notion of reconstitution, and that is not what Zionism did. It didn't replicate. It didn't have an imperial base. It was a group of people who felt that they had come home.

So the notion of a settler society is correct for the Portuguese, the French, the Germans, the Russians in Siberia, the Japanese where they went to, maybe the Indians as they go into the Indian Ocean. But in the case of Zionism, I would again insist, it's going home.

Finally, I would like to take on the arguments that essentially de-Judaize Palestine in the past and in the present. You can find claims made by George Antonius in the 1930s that are repeated on the website of al-Quds University where al-Quds uses scholarship, so-called, of the contemporary period. But it is a desire in effect to remove Jews from Palestine's history.

And what does it say? This is the notion of the Jebusites as forerunners of contemporary Palestinians. You read the al-Quds website, and it has Canaanites, Jebusites, Hittites, all kinds of other people, and it is only the Jews who are not mentioned there, by a very clever trick. The trick is to quote this particular piece of scholarship that debunks the Exodus story. Another piece of scholarship debunks Joshua. What it does is aggregate all of that as if all of them were part of the same piece. It is a rhetorical trick of aggregation rather than serious scholarship. It's polemics, not scholarship.

There is evidently a deep need to remove Jews from the past because that feeds into the secular claim of historicity or the historical claims that Jews have made that they are tied to that land.

Sari Nusseibeh, the President of al-Quds University, is one of my heroes, and so are his colleagues at al-Quds, because I value what they do. But Sari Nusseibeh tells us, "These are my beliefs." And he says exactly the same thing, and he's considered the moderate.

He is somebody who was willing to suspend some fundamental beliefs. He may

really believe that in a time to come, whatever state emerges, that the Jews will meld back into the state that will be created, but until that time comes, one can suspend one's narrative, one's fundamental beliefs, one's hopes, and deal with the problems of the present. In my mind that's equivalent to what Aviezer Ravitsky does. You may still hold on to your beliefs of what the future may hold, but meanwhile, here and now, we've got to live. And maybe we can live together in peace and have brotherhood.

As we create narratives of claiming the land, to what do we choose to compare? Jews choose to compare themselves with those who came a long time ago - it was a land flowing with milk and honey. They identify with them. They do not choose to compare themselves with the Portuguese, the Dutch, the English. Their choice of comparison is what the land looked like when they came to it in the year 1900, let's say, when there were about half a million people there, and the land now has about ten-plus million.

According to the projections, and I was asked to talk about the future, the land in the next generation may have as much as 20 million people, a very different kind of country, where land is no longer agricultural land but only landscape as places for memory and parks. We will have Singapore hopefully with parks.

If it is going to be a country that will survive for us and for you, it's a country where we're not going to be farmers any more. The country is going to have to be a country where everybody has a kind of economic well-being where we can live together in peace. As a Zionist or a Jew, I couldn't imagine Israel succeeding in the long term if it would be a first-world country in a sea of third-world populations. That just won't work, and it has nothing to do with historical arguments.

In short, the whole discourse of claiming land may be offensive. It is accurate in part because it tells one story which is true. It tells one story of aggression, but omits another story of aggression.

And with this I'll end. The most significant feature, the most defining feature of Zionist architecture, which one can find from Mount Tabor to Sharon's fence, is the wall. There is a whole history to *Homa u'Migdal*, to the tower and stockade, which was the name for the Zionist settlements of the 1930s. And thus, when an Israeli builds a house, from any time after 1948 to today, the first thing he builds is a *miklat*, a shelter.

There is a notion of a deep sense of aggressor. There is a deep sense that our story, our narrative, our presence has not been accepted. Israeli architecture is lots of concrete, and it is fundamentally defensive. That defensive must appear to be offensive, and I'm sure it is, but that may be what this whole thing is about, to get the other side to imagine and re-imagine what it is that aggravates the other side. So I thought I would tell you what aggravates me.

WALID SALEM: [Relating to Sari Hanafi's paper] Actually, let me begin by saying Sari Hanafi's paper mainly describes the relationship between the occupied and the occupier in the West Bank and in Gaza Strip, which is the post-1967 period, while your paper tries to describe and analyze the Zionist and the Jewish concept of land, referring to the historical roots of Judaism and Palestine 3,000 years ago and onward, therefore your responses to Sari Hanafi are irrelevant.

And hearing what you said in the meeting now, which is different, in which you added something new to what you wrote in your paper...

ILAN TROEN: That's because we had lunch together.

WALID SALEM: Because I told you to bring it to recent times. But bringing it to recent times brings us to a new point of disagreement, which is as follows: Are we in disagreement with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian relationship after 1967, colonizer and colonized, occupied and occupier?

Your assumption, and this is my main question to you about what you said, because in your paper you were writing about Jewish attachment to the land 3,000 years ago, and that these attachments were not recognized by the Palestinians. And the Palestinians think these were Canaanites, Jebusites, etc. and, according to the al-Quds University website, Jewish rights are not recognized.

So now, are you asking me to consider the Jewish rights in the West Bank and Gaza Strip? And if this is the case, what space are we leaving to the Palestinians?

In this space, if Sari Hanafi's paper focuses on the rights of the Palestinians to get rid of your occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, if this right of Palestinians to get a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is contradictory to what is claimed to be Jewish historical rights in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, now I am trying to see what you said about the West Bank and Gaza Strip. So when we are hearing this kind of discussion, are we leaving its base to the other, or are we just trying to make the same argument that you accused Sari Hanafi of making?

You accused him of being one-sided, not speaking about the Jewish needs and the historical attachment, etc. But now, if we take what you said and extend it to the period after 1967, this will mean that there are Jewish attachments to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and that the Palestinians have to recognize this and they have to recognize what we call colonists, the Israeli settlements in the West Bank, and have to accept them as a new people who are coming back to their homeland.

If this is what you are saying, it is really problematic. I am saying problematic, I am not using the word acceptable or not acceptable, but I am saying the word problematic.

But if this will be the notion, if the Israelis and the Jews have attachments to the old Eretz Israel, what I call Palestine, to all of Eretz Israel, including the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and I, as a Palestinian, have attachments to all history concerning Palestine, including the right of the Palestinian Christian to go freely to the Christian holy sites in Nazareth, and for the Muslims - I am not religious - but the right of the religious to visit the Sidna Ali Islamic religious site inside Israel, close to Herzliya.

So if you want to take the attachments, your attachments, into consideration also, then we should do that, and do that on an equal basis, to think of the attachments of the other.

Therefore we should be thinking of some kind of solution other than the two-state solution. Do you see what I mean? Which is not my opinion, I am not looking for that. But I am trying to tell you what your idea is leading to, because if you want to claim Jewish attachments to everywhere in the historical land of Palestine, the other side's response will be to claim its own historical attachments to all the land, and therefore we should think about other ideas.

This is my comment on what you said. But I am going to re-read your paper from the point of view of Sari Hanafi in the following way. I thought, when I read your paper this morning, that we will disagree about 1948, but we will agree with what comes after, but I was open to be mistaken. I thought that I would partly be with Ilan Troen; for

example, that we disagree about before 1948, but that we have an agreement about the period after 1967 - both sides will say that it is an occupied-occupier relationship.

So before 1948 we are clear, we will not get to a point about the story for 1948. We will get to what Tamar spoke about yesterday, some understanding about each other.

But I don't think we will reach a point that we will get to an agreement about one interpretation on that issue. You will continue to see all the things that you said in your paper about that, and I will continue to see the opposite side when I remind you about before 1948.

I thought we had an agreement from 1967 and after, but we don't have, so this opened the way for thinking about different kinds of solutions.

But now, with regard to your paper, I have methodological problems, and also problems with the facts that you use. With regard to the methodological problems, I find that you are taking into consideration the Zionist positions, and you try to find legal and non-legal interpretations and justifications for it. You are trying to justify it.

So then you are trying to justify the position and also to write about it in a way that also permits the other to understand what this position is, without seeing what is wrong in it, and without taking any kind of critical position. Of course, you are free to do that, but from my point of departure, when I write about the Palestinian positions, I write in the way that I use my intellectual capacity also to criticize what I find wrong in my position. So this is my first methodological problem.

The second one is that you are speaking about the historic rights of the Jews to the land, referring to the 3,000 years. Without any word about any historic rights of the other. I was looking for you, as an academic, to see the historic rights of the Jews, but also to see the historic rights of the others. To see the attachments of the Jews is to see the historic rights of the others.

When you mentioned the others, you mentioned them in a way as if you are speaking about a point of view. Just to mention one example, you write that the Zionist movement created a Jewish majority. "Arabs saw this demographic change as endangering their position in the country." Wow!

This way of writing looks very neutral, looks very scientific, but it is unreal.

Ilan, I will tell you what it is about. You know, when you write that the Zionist movement created a majority in the land of Palestine, okay, Palestine/Eretz Israel, and you remark that Arabs saw this demographic change as "endangering their position in the country", you ignore the reality that the position of the Arabs in the country was really in danger and that it did change – in fact, that the Arabs were really displaced from their country. This is the issue.

So you are speaking of the historical rights of the Jews, but you are not taking into account the historical rights of the others. But even when you mention the name Philistine, you say that the Romans imposed this name on the area, and these were people who came to Palestine only temporarily. On the other hand, you do not mention the Canaanites, for instance, when you go into history. Who were Arabs who continued to reside in this country for a long time-period? You are selective in choosing what you include, and what you exclude.

So to the other. What are the historical rights of the other? If you want to speak about the historical rights of the Jews, you also have to take into account the historical

rights of the others. But when you speak or write about the other, you've done it in a way in which you try to show their point of view is wrong. Or just to discuss it in a very neutral way without really seeing their point of view. You are not doing the kind of work that needs to be done.

So then, when it comes to the period 1917 to 1948, you write that the number of Palestinians was very small, that it was half a million 100 years before 1917, and then you didn't mention the number in 1917, so this is marginal. But referring to the period when there were three million, you are simply saying that in this land there were not a lot of people, and therefore there was a lot of space for others. This is a justification.

But is it a justification that now you have a big space of land in a certain country? Is it a justification for others to come? I know you are not using this only as a justification, and your main point is the historical attachment. But you are using this as an additional point to support your idea, and here is my problem with that: You present the demographic change that took place in Palestine in that period as if it all happened peacefully. As if all of it happened by buying land.

Palestinians will prove to you that six percent of the Palestinian lands before 1948 were bought. But when you read Ilan's paper, he is saying that the Zionist movements were buying the land, and they only took over the state land after 1947, and you know there are a lot of studies which say that this is wrong.

So these are the kinds of problems in the paper. The final problem I have with it is that you are mostly thinking about legal and geographical issues. But I would like to see you adding the human approach, adding the human-beings living there to the analysis, and the issue of human security. That is what I want to add, human security. The equal rights of all people to be free from fear and free from want. Freedom from fear and from want.

If we add this component, does it make some change in the analysis that you are presenting?

To finish with this, your paper is about geography. Sari Hanafi's paper is about geography and society. And what is happening now in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, are a lot of processes that are similar to what happened before 1948. The processes of spacio-cide. If you go now and ask many Palestinians, you will find that this is the feeling, that they are dealing with this idea. In your own words, the "inability to reach an accord after the 1967 war reawakened dormant dreams of a greatly expanded Israel".

Is this is the only reason for "reawakening dormant dreams of a greatly expanded Israel"? In the ideas that you just presented, you are saying something else. You are saying they are attachments, including the West Bank and Gaza Strip, so if it is an attachment, it may not be only the inability to reach an accord, and you are also saying that Palestinians should feel the responsibility for what happened to them, for their *Nakba*. Further, you seem to be saying that if the Palestinians had been good guys before 1948, they would not have suffered a *Nakba*. But what would happen to this analysis if we include the human-beings?

Sari Hanafi's paper is about the period after 1967. He does not discuss the historical concept of land, which you do, but this is not a problem. You can choose whatever angle you like.

Both of you describe what is going on, but both of you lack ideas for what should

be done.

DALIA OFER: I think Ilan should respond to Walid's first question about the period after 1967, because this is a major issue. I am sure that this would cause a lot of discussion and I think our discussion would be more focused.

ILAN TROEN: Well, it always amazes me how people can look at the same text and come out with so many different reasons. Fortunately, Rabbi Rosen is here. For 2,000 years Jews have been looking at the same text and arguing about what it really says.

Look, I see no colonization before 1948. I see little colonization after 1948, and if it does exist I am willing to explain it in a very particular way. After 1967 it becomes a different issue.

But after 1967 there is no question that there is colonization, colonialism, a sense of imposition, because it fits, if you like, the categories that one finds in Fieldhouse of a power sending over colonists, and colonizing the land against the will of the people. In many ways it is different though. I'll come to the last point with this first one.

I would argue that what I have done is give a very human paper, no less so than any other paper given here.

What I have tried to do is try to suggest is a very human reality, which I hope is true with each and every person who sits around this table. And that is that none of us can really capture or express ourselves on only one plane. We are complex individuals who hold many different beliefs, some of which we express and some of which we don't. And I think that is also true for historical situations, so I would agree that this colonization explained why the people who expressed these beliefs got out of the bag after 1967.

The wisdom of the Zionist effort is what Yosef Gorny described yesterday as the wisdom to compromise. And the story that I gave you was the story of Aviezer Ravitsky. I do not side, if you want to ask my personal beliefs, with Hanan Porat. But I think I am entitled to believe exactly what you, Walid, are entitled to believe, not only about the past, but about the future. For example, I sat once at a dinner with a vice-president of al-Quds University who said to me, "In the long run we are just going to beat you, essentially, in the bedroom, with demography." I think we are going to have a compromise of convenience, and this country will not have bloodshed. We can live humanly, and we can live together as human-beings and get to know one another. I, thou, existential, with a safe and secure place for our children, and let history take its own course.

I appreciate and I even love that kind of complexity. I am not so one-sided as to hold up one argument, be it secular or be it legal or be it geographic, and I think that it is incumbent upon us to try to understand the complexity of the others and of ourselves. And my argument is that it is multi-planed. I don't think that I am uni-dimensional in what I gave you.

The whole paper is structured on the dichotomy between secular and religious rights and claims. And that's what I was asked to do. I wasn't asked to do anything else. I was asked to explain how Jews see the issue of rights. I was not asked, in only 6,000 words, to address all the issues that you would like to address, and which I would love to address. So next time, give me 60,000 and I'll try to do it.

MOHAMMED DAJANI: I'm sitting next to Rabbi Rosen. He used some stories

yesterday and I would like to begin with one.

The story is about this rabbi and two Jews who came and they had a conflict, and he listened to the first point of view, and he told him you are right, and then he listened to the second presenting his point of view, and he told him you are right. And then when they left his wife said, But Rabbi, how can they both be right? And he said, "You are also right."

I think if we look at the wisdom of the story then we can agree, and in this I agree with you totally, but you are also right, and I am right in disagreeing, because you presented the Zionist narrative, and you believe in that, and you are right in believing that. I will not contest that.

What I would like to contest is that you are disagreeing with my right to disagree with you. In the way you made the presentation, in denying my right to disagree with you, and saying that I am wrong and you are right, here is where we disagree. For instance, let's look at your use of language.

I was in Brussels a few weeks ago, and an Israeli scholar was there, and in his paper he was talking about Prime Minister Ariel Sharon "entering" the West Bank. One of my comments was regarding his use of language and the word "enter". I said, "Did he walk in there as a visitor, or was he with an army, conquering the land, or how was it? How did he enter it? Explain it to me."

And he said, "No, he went with an army."

So I said, "Okay, if he went with the army, this is the same word they used about Iraq's Saddam Hussein. Then say Saddam entered Kuwait, don't say he conquered Kuwait." He was very upset that I was comparing Sharon with Saddam.

But here, when you say reclaim, how nice, this word "reclaim". But really, how did they reclaim it, did they just walk into court and say, "Here is a deed from God and these people are there and we want to reclaim it," and then the judge sat there and said, "Well, I'll decide for you", and then they transferred it very nicely? But it wasn't that way; it was reconquering the land.

We as Palestinians do not look at the Zionist narrative fondly. Because we are the people who suffered as a result. So when you come and talk about 1948, to us it is our history, our present history. It starts and ends with 1948, because that's the *Nakba*, that's our catastrophe. That's when we lost the land.

My family had a huge amount of property in West Jerusalem, where they lived, buildings and land, and my grandfather had sent his family to Egypt with his brother because of the fighting. One day he went to the *souk* to buy a kilo of meat. That day they closed the area and the Israelis occupied that area, and so he never went back.

He left in the house his money, his jewelry and everything, all his property. And when he went to East Jerusalem he had nothing. He lived in a hotel for a while, and then he rented the hotel and he made it the Imperial Hotel. He was an entrepreneur, and he saw that Jerusalem had no electricity, so he bought a generator and started selling electricity to Jerusalem. And he started from scratch. So he would totally disagree with you that 1948 is artificial, because he lost his land. He lost his property. And there are thousands and thousands and thousands like him who lost property and lost land.

And so when you "reclaimed" that land, you conquered it and you took it. If you agree with that, then we might agree to one thing.

Also I think your attack on Sari Nusseibeh and al-Quds University...

ILAN TROEN: It wasn't an attack.

MOHAMMED DAJANI: It is an attack. Anyway, it is part of an attack on Sari Nusseibeh. For many, Sari has to fit into the stereotype image of being a terrorist. The logic is, if somebody is actually calling for peace, one should be suspicious. Thus it can't be true what he says or what he believes. I am sure you are citing correctly this website of al-Quds University, and I am equally sure Sari did not read it. I am sure he is not behind it. As you know, I am a professor at al-Quds University.

And I think if you tell Sari Nusseibeh, if you are his friend, well, your website says this, I am sure that he will look at it, and if it doesn't mention the history of Jews and Palestine, I am sure he would change it. This is the first time, by the way, that I hear the story of the website.

With regard to the issue that you mentioned regarding so-called inaccuracies: Why should you feel insulted? This is his version versus your version. I am not insulted by your version, I don't understand why you would use the term that you are insulted. This is your narrative and this is our narrative. Let's try to look at these narratives; if there is bad information or ill will, we can correct it. But this is how I see it, and this is how you see it. You have the right to see it that way, and I have the right to see it this way. And I hope that we will remain friends.

SAID ZEEDANI: Ilan, I invite you to come to Jerusalem, and together we can take a tour so that you become aware of that wall that envelops Jerusalem. It is not a shelter. It is not a defense. It is not the fence that makes good neighbors. And I think I want to connect that with what Sari Hanafi says about the term "spacio-cide."

From any neighborhood in West Jerusalem, even those Jewish neighborhoods which were built in East Jerusalem, you do not see it. From Pisgat Ze'ev, from Neve Yaakov, from Ramat Eshkol, you do not see it. The wall, really, is an enclosure around Palestinian neighborhoods. So you have this neighborhood, a Palestinian neighborhood, and the wall surrounds the neighborhood. So these Palestinians are in this kind of enclosure.

Thus we Jews, Zionists, religious and non-religious, secular, we have all the space. The space is us. Those Palestinians are like cattle, like animals. That is the imagery. They are under this kind of closure.

So I think when you think about defensive walls or shelters, this is not what the wall stands for. It has a political dimension, it has a demographic dimension, it has an esthetic dimension, it has a legal dimension. In addition, probably, what you have in mind might be true, but at most it is partially true. And I think that permeates all that you said.

But this is how the art of persuasion, this is how polemics works. There is a grain of truth in it, but then you want to sell the whole package with that. And for me the word that attracted the most attention in your presentation, and of course probably attracted nobody else's attention, was the word "veneer". When it comes to secular Zionism, is it just a veneer, thin or thick? This is what he said. This is what he suspects, right?

ILAN TROEN: That was my question.

SAID ZEEDANI: If I don't understand you, please correct me, because that is good. I am arguing with you, I am not engaging in your art of persuasion for polemics. So take care. I am alerting you.

Because there are two things here that need to be settled. If secular Zionism really does not have this religious component, maybe it has the history and the language, so they can have a country anywhere else in the world. It doesn't have to be Palestine, and there were thoughts about that. They entertained thoughts about that at some point in the early 20th century. You were talking about Uganda...

(Interruptions.)

They were entertained. How seriously I do not know, but I don't want to brush them aside. But I think that is consistent with secular Zionism if it is really secular. The idea was to save the Jews from Europe from the pogroms in Russia and the discrimination that predated the Holocaust. You had it in Germany in the 19th century, this anti-Semitism. It wasn't only the Nazis.

Everybody in Europe in the 19th century, every serious philosopher, had to talk about the Jewish question, Marx included. Everybody.

So there was such a question in Europe, but the question really was related to the secular Jews. Because that was part of the project of the enlightenment in Europe.

But the question really is whether it's something that we have to deal with today. If Yossi Sarid and Shulamit Aloni are religious at the core, it is something that we have to deal with, even if they present themselves with a universalistic language of democracy, human rights, liberalism, individualism, and they claim that, for them, being Jewish has to do with language and history, but not with religion.

So I think we need to come to terms with this issue of secular Judaism and Zionism vs. religion.

Now the half-truth that you mentioned, and it is part of my own thinking, was that Palestinians and Arabs do not really appreciate what I call the singularity of the Jewish experience, or the singularity of the Jewish people, as it were.

For one thing, the issue is whether they are colonisers, yes or no. There are similarities, but on the other hand there are similarities among all the colonialist projects. Since you mentioned the Canadians and the Australians and all of those, I have to remind you of the similarities that there are between the Americans *vis-a-vis* the indigenous populations, how similar the behavior is of the whites in Canada *vis-a-vis* the indigenous Canadians, and the same with the Australians and the same with New Zealand, and the same with almost every country. The similarities are striking.

But of course, there are differences. Different in the sense that Zionism is not a colonialist project par excellence, it is different. Of course it is different, but it is similar in many respects.

My third point has to do with this kind of contradiction. For you, secular Zionism attaches to history and language and so forth, but at the same time, when you talk about Zionism and the Zionist project, you forget completely about history. You forget that it is the 19th century and that it has to do with European nationalism, that it has to do with the experience of Jews in Europe, and that it also has to do with the Holocaust. You forget that nationalism is a new thing, also. Because without that context of the 19th century, who prevented Jews for 1,900 years from returning to Palestine? The way was always open to them most of the time. Nobody stood in the way.

The Zionist project is time-specific. It could only have been managed from Europe. The Jews from the Arab world were not part of this thinking, as you know. They could have come to Palestine at any time and they could have settled.

There used to be Jewish communities in Tiberias and Safed and Jerusalem and elsewhere, and they were part of us. So I think probably history also has this other dimension that you try to suppress. I think these are two sides. There are things that you express and there are things that you suppress, and I remind you of that.

ADEL MANNA': To begin with, I will start with numbers. Whenever we find inaccuracies, as you said, it's offensive, and in your own paper there are things like that. For instance, the population of Palestine at the end of the 19th century was at least 600,000 rather than half a million, which makes a difference. And there are more.

But let's go to the main points. I'll start with an analogy. Try to think from a Palestinian point of view. You are sitting in your home in your homeland. This is your home. You have six rooms in that home. And in the meantime there are only half a million in the late 19th century, so you don't use the whole rooms, but you think that your sons and your grandsons will live in those rooms. And then suddenly somebody comes from the outside and tells you, you are sitting there and I know that you are sitting there, but actually this is my home because 2,000 years ago it was our home.

So this is my home, which means I want to come there to that home and be the landlord. Maybe I will let you be in that home because there is enough room now, and you may take one room and I will take a room, but I am the landlord. This is Eretz Israel, this is not Palestine, though you have been living there generation after generation.

From this analogy I will go back to the history itself. Yusuf al-Khalidi wrote a letter to Theodor Herzl and Herzl responded. And what Herzl wrote in that letter, in his memoirs of his journey to Jerusalem, was that he didn't see Palestinians. But if you read his books, I'm sure you know what the role of the Palestinians will be in the Jewish state. So this is the status of the Palestinians in the Jewish state in the future.

And to remind you, the Zionists weren't the first to reclaim the land, to rediscover the land. The Christians were the first. And because they thought it was their homeland. They thought it was the Holy Land, and the Jews are not singular in that.

Okay, so you can say that God gave it to you, but your God is my God, isn't He? I mean, do we think about the same God?

The main point is that for the Palestinians the Zionist movement is a settler movement although it is something else too. It is a national movement, but it is also a settler movement.

The basic difference between this national movement and other national movements in the 19th century is that all other national movements were sitting on their homeland, and they were trying to liberate themselves from an empire, from a coloniser, and from others. The singular thing in the Jewish Zionist case was that they weren't living on their homeland. So in order to liberate their homeland, they have to occupy, in one way or the other, the land of the other. But as long as they were under Ottoman control, there were no serious conflicts between the Palestinians and the Zionists until the First World War, and those clashes that happened in Metula and Petah Tikva were clashes between neighbors. Not collective clashes, not national clashes.

Only after 1917, when Palestine comes under colonial British control, supporting the Zionist movement, from then on the clash between the Zionists and the Palestinians became more political and more collective.

You said in your talk that until 1948 you don't accept that there is anything like

colonisers of the Palestinians. I differ with you strongly about that, but I don't have time to go into it.

After 1948, you justify the acquisition of the land of the Palestinians, the displaced people, the building of all the settlements in the Galilee and everywhere else, taking the land of the Palestinians with the military governor saying this area is a military area. For five years Palestinians are not able to cultivate their land. And then there is another law that says, for people who didn't cultivate their land for five years, this land becomes state land. This is not force? This is not colonisation? What is colonisation if this is not internal colonisation in Israel after 1948? Not just after 1967.

Today the Palestinians in Israel, with 20 percent of the population, have only 2.5 percent of the land, and their villages become townships, people are condensed, they are living in terrible situations. Any Arab who tries to settle in Katzir or in a neighboring village or kibbutz, can't move there because of the *Keren Kayemet*, Jewish National Fund, and other reasons.

So please, when we speak about a balanced approach and we speak about different issues, and you are offended that sometimes Palestinians don't take your narrative into account, preach to yourself before you preach to others.

AS'AD GHANEM: If all the Jews came back to Palestine, from the point of view of religion, that means that you can give the same claim to all the Muslims to come to this land, and all the Christians to reclaim this land.

DALIA OFER: I have a feeling that we are really going backwards, because the fact is that we do have different narratives. I think Tamar said yesterday that we are not going to change the narratives. I think what we really aimed to do is to say, "Okay, despite these narratives, don't ask too much from us and we won't ask too much from you."

So I don't want to ask too much, but I think that what we really have to ask is: What are the major problems that we are facing today? I find it very difficult to read Sari Hanafi's paper, particularly the new concept that he is trying to use of spacio-cide, which for me is something like a genocidal accusation. It's such a strong terminology.

But I must say that all this theoretical jargon he is using in the paper is really not needed in order to put the case, which is strong in any case. I think that there are a lot of important points in his paper that really deal with 1967 onwards, and I really don't feel that we have to go now into the period before 1948.

If you think that Zionism is colonisation, remember we have a lot of discussion about it in Israel. Baruch Kimmerling was the first one to coin this concept, and he wrote about it extensively. I don't agree with it, but it doesn't really take us any further now. Let's see what we can do from this point on.

I think that an important point that has to be considered in the future goes back to Said's question yesterday; that is: Why didn't we do anything about the rights of the internal, or displaced, refugees? My answer was perhaps not sufficiently ethical. I think that we will get to a point that we will have to deal with this issue, which I believe will be an economic issue.

I live very close to Lifta from which Palestinians were displaced, and as you know there is a lot of talking now about it, and I don't know what to say, to give the houses back or not to give the houses back. In any case, these people have a claim, and whatever the decision will be, they have to get their money back. There is no question

about it in my mind.

We are not yet at the point where we can deal with all these issues now, because I think the major issues are those of the Palestinians in the West Bank, the Palestinians in Gaza, and the issue of the right of return, where the right of return should apply, and all of the major issues that we are far away, now, from planning. But Israel will have to face, in another stage, the other issues. And regardless of how we will define it, colonisation, national movement or something else, we have to solve it ethically, according to our values. And according to our values, we will have to somehow pay for it. And how will it be? Negotiated, certainly. It will not be symmetrical, and not everybody will be happy, but something will have to be done about it.

I think that therefore, Ilan presented a narrative. I don't think it was an apologetic narrative. It was a painful narrative for a Palestinian. I asked myself, how would I have written it?

What I want to explain to my students is why the Palestinians in the 1930s were afraid of Jewish immigration, and why it was a real cause for them. Not that I agree that the solution should have been stopping immigration. On the contrary, I want to show the complexity.

I truly feel that it was a moment in the Jewish national movement that immigration was crucial and they couldn't give it up. And then when *Brit Shalom*, Covenant of Peace, wanted to give up immigration, there was a big clash within its own people. And this is an important point that as a teacher, as an Israeli, as an historian, as an academic, I try to show. So I try to explain why the Arabs were really afraid. And I am sure that this was in Ilan's mind.

But I am thinking, you read it so differently. And how should we write it?

And I must say that you, Mohammed, gave me an important recognition. Perhaps not Sharon himself, but we should use the term about *Tzahal*, that is, the Israeli army, entering the West Bank. All right, he didn't enter the West Bank, Tzahal conquered the West Bank.

On another issue. Said Zeedani, when you said before that there was a Jewish question in Europe, you know for whom there was a Jewish question in Europe, it was for the anti-Semites.

So you see, you can't take words at face value. But I really think that we will never come to a compromise on the narrative.

SAID ZEEDANI: No, but the issue, Dalia, is that Zionism is a 19th century phenomenon.

DALIA OFER: Of course. Ilan thinks so. So what?

ILAN TROEN: Nobody denied that. There is no one who denied that.

DALIA OFER: Perhaps because the tone that Ilan uses is more familiar to me, and I can understand it, I can now understand what annoyed you in the language, and I think this is something important that I understand, and it is important that there are things in our language that you should understand. So I think that from this - not easy - exchange, we did gain something. Not much yet, but something, that each of us would take to himself. Thank you, *today*.

AS'AD GHANEM: Actually, I think that I have heard the other side's story too much. I learned it, I studied at the University of Haifa. I know this story. It takes me back to the contribution of Moshe Ma'oz about the good historian, about the profession

of being a historian without connection to ethnic identity, to the belonging of the person. So it gives us only one example of how writing and using concepts is related to the researcher or historian's identity.

Actually, my main problem is with what was said here by Walid, not by things that I heard from Ilan.

So let me say something related to basic things that I didn't say in my lecture, and I want to say it now. One of the basic problems facing Palestinian nationalism is the fact that we have different groups among Palestinians, and that they develop their own notion of what it means to be a Palestinian. It is a fact that Palestinians in Israel are usually excluded, and no Palestinians living in refugee camps are with us here, except Said, who lives in the refugee camp in Tamara.

Now, I will speak to all my colleagues and especially to my Jewish colleagues.

I will tell you what I wrote in this *100 Concept Book* that I published about the history of the Palestinians and the Jewish Israelis. It was shared history that was written by 24 Arab Palestinian scholars from Israel.

We teach that Zionism is a colonial movement, that it was created in Europe, and the leaders were colonialists, and they fabricated by writing in new things, but also by using things that happened in the history in order to serve their needs in the future. It's true that the Jews were in Palestine, there is no question about that, but what was the legitimacy of Herzl to use this history in his new secular national movement that was created in Europe, and was part of the atmosphere of colonisation?

I am asking: Why it is important to agree about things? I mean, there is no need to write shared history. There is a place to put our histories here on the table and to teach the new generation the different views. This is my view, Ilan.

ILAN TROEN: Okay.

AS'AD GHANEM: And this is a colonial movement that started at the end of the 19th century, and continued until 1948. And one of the main steps in colonisation of Palestine happened in 1948, and afterwards the internal colonisation - do you know what is happening in the Negev now? It is not colonisation?

I heard somebody who didn't believe in the return of refugees. I am a total believer in the return of the refugees and their right, not only the right, but they must come back if they choose to come back. But this is also because I am somebody who wants to return to the history.

To conclude, Zionism is a colonial, settler movement that started in the 19th century, and it gained power in the early 20th century. The *Nakba* and the transfer of Palestinians was planned by the Jewish leaders, and Israel continued its colonial steps against Palestinians who were Israeli citizens, and when they came to another historical moment, they expanded the Jewish colonisation project to the West Bank.

And because of the danger of bi-nationality, and the danger of the demography, Israel is ready to withdraw from the West Bank, and not because it is now a normal state and wants to be one.

So this is our story. It is not our narrative, Ilan, it is our truth. But call it narrative because I know you have a different idea. It is the truth. It is absolutely true. It is much more than that.

DANNY RUBINSTEIN: Thank you.

Well, I have to say that I listened very carefully to Ilan's presentation, and it was a

good representation of the Jewish moderate Zionist approach, and I heard Walid and what Adel and Said added to it, and it was also the Palestinians' view.

There is only one problem. I have heard it thousands of times. I am a veteran in such meetings, and I know this stuff, and whether it was colonialism 100 years ago, or it was not colonialism. You are historians, and you take it from this context and you put it in our context today.

On the other hand, I enjoyed – though perhaps enjoy is not the right word - Hanafi's paper. Because in Hanafi's paper I found something new. He took the history and he tried to implement it for our days here, and he tried to say what you - As'ad - tried to say. That is, "Listen, it is not what happened in the past, only in the context of what happened today, and that is important." If it was colonialism 100 years ago, who cares?

The problem is really whether what happens today in the West Bank affects us with regard to what happened in the past. And that is why Hanafi's paper is very good, because he said, "Listen, what happened in the past, don't think that it stopped somewhere. It didn't stop." What he called this, what was the word?

JEFF HELSING: Spacio-cide.

DANNY RUBINSTEIN: Well, I understand spacio-cide, but I didn't understand biopolitics. That is too complicated for me. But spacio-cide, that is a very good tool or mechanism to try to deal with where you are going in the future.

RONI STAUBER: I would like to say to Said that the Zionist movement was established only in the 19th century as a product of the 19th century, and this is also something that As'ad just mentioned. I think it is important to take into consideration that although Zionism was a product of the 19th century, like many other national movements, it was based on ethnic identity.

The Jews, like the Greeks, are a major example of how religion has been a manifestation of ethnicity.

I say the Greeks, because over hundreds of years they preserved the idea of Byzantium, and the idea of the Greek Orthodox Church as important pillars of national identity. So like the Greeks, the Jews preserved their nationalism as part of their religion.

This is just to tell you that the national identity of the secular people who by the end of the 19th century established the Zionist movement was an outcome of the Jewish tradition, the religious linkage to the Land of Israel and particularly the idea of the Messiah. Judaism has always been a national religion and it preserved the idea of Jewish nationhood.

And I want also to tell something to Walid, that I, as a secular Jew in Israel, can recognize your right on the whole territory but at the same time I expect that you'll recognize my right on the whole territory, and then we can compromise.

WALID SALEM: If you do it about all the territory, I agree.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Let's do it.

RONI STAUBER: Why not? Why not?

WALID SALEM: It is not that the nation was part of the religion. In every national ethnic group religion is part of the nation. So we agree with this.

PAUL SCHAM: I read Ilan's paper as a very thorough and thoughtful expression of the Israel narrative, which is what it was supposed to be, and thus it ignored the

Palestinian narrative. It was not supposed to be, it was not asked to be a statement of the Israeli understanding of the Palestinian narrative, so it left out those parts

But what bothers me was the degree to which the Israeli narrative, as Israeli narrative, is being attacked. Obviously you have the right to do it. That is not the point. Your comments are welcome.

But I think it is important for Palestinians to understand how a secular Jew can subscribe to ideas built originally on a religious base. This is what happened in the late 19th century. Without understanding that, the Zionist project will just seem hypocritical. It's not useful and repeats the old stereotypes.

Now, of course, for many religious Jews as well, the concept of secular Judaism is an oxymoron, an absolute oxymoron. However, you have millions of people who define themselves as secular Jews. So perhaps it's worth trying to make sense of them, if you have to live with them. The point is that it is not useful to say this phenomenon is legitimate or illegitimate, but simply to recognise its existence as a political and historical phenomenon. And to understand further that its claim to the land is related to, but not at all the same, as that of religious Zionism.

As many of us have said, I am not looking for agreement. Agreement is not the point. We are not looking for a shared narrative. But it seems to me that to say this is how Jews and Zionists understand what they're doing is important in itself as an illumination of what happened and is happening.

And the fact that Ilan's narrative didn't deal with the Palestinians at all is, of course, a reflection of that narrative in its classical form. Personally, I would have wanted to hear a recognition of that lack, a critique. I think we should be pointing out what is missing, so we can understand better why the traditional narratives create such anger on the other side. We heard that from both sides today.

And just briefly, to Walid. I think it should be absolutely clear to both sides that both narratives inherently have to include the whole land of Eretz Israel that is now called Palestine. To say otherwise would be a pure falsification. The Jewish narrative is not about the Green Line, and the Palestinian narrative is not about the West Bank and Gaza, except insofar as they are both parts of the same Land. Anyone who knows Jewish history cannot help but recognize that there is much more Jewish connection in ancient history to the hill country around Ramallah and Nablus and Hebron than there is to Tel Aviv.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Who says that? DALIA OFER: Jews say.

PAUL SCHAM: Many people, shall we say.

And without both sides recognizing that, there is no way that each side can recognize the loss and compromise of the other side. Of course, its own loss and compromise are so much more obvious.

But that does not affect the historical narrative. That is based on narratives that existed long before anyone thought of a green line, or armistice lines of 1948.

MOSHE MA'OZ: It's true that the old phrase "a land without a people for a people without a land" has been misquoted, but the fact is that the narrative among most Israeli Jews was that the land was empty. There are people who say that the land was not empty. From my reading, and even today, talking to my students, people believe that the land was empty.

Take the book by Joan Peters, *From Time Immemorial*, which claimed the land

was almost empty, and has been thoroughly debunked by scholars, including many Israelis. The book was a new Bible which was sold by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Many students even believe it. I think it is our task to change this belief. I'm trying my best to do it, number one.

Number two, about the Balfour Declaration. I don't know about you, but I teach this stuff. Many Israelis do not know that the Balfour Declaration speaks of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. It's Palestine as a Jewish homeland, and Palestine on both sides of the Jordan. And I speak to my students, and they believe that the Jews already gave up half of the land to the Arabs east of Jordan and we owe them nothing.

And this leads many of them to say the negotiations should not be from the green line of 1967, but rather from Jordan. And thus they think we have already given something up. There is no notion that something belongs to the Palestinians too, at least 22 percent, which is the 1967 line. This is our task, to change it. And also the task of the Palestinians is to change their concepts about it. So we are not sitting here to blame one another, but we have to educate our people about it.

ILAN TROEN: I'm so glad to have come here. It's so very rare that when I write something or say something I get such a vigorous reaction. I shall cherish this for a long time, and yes, we will all remain friends, I hope.

Walid, I am going to try to put some things together, and I will tell you a story that I hope will help answer these points, rather than going into whether the number of Palestinians at the turn of the century was 500,000 or 600,000, or let it be 700,000. It really makes no difference with regard to the fundamental arguments. It is not the kind of detail that I think I could use in the time that remains for me to respond.

I really want it to be useful. Yes, I did give the traditional Zionist narrative, but that is what I was asked to do. Do you want to know how I voted? I won't tell you. But I didn't vote for a party that would put me in Hanafi's black book. I am that moderate.

I teach both in the United States and in Israel. I have Bedouins in my class. I have Arabs from the Galilee in my class. I have right-wing Russians and I even have now an Ethiopian. And to teach in Israel is to teach the kind of discourse that we have right here. It's to teach this kind of cacophony, it's this kind of dissonance.

So how does one do it? I tell them sometimes what I think, but I confess that what I try to do is to bring before them the literature of several sides. I invite anyone to see my bibliography, then they can read my book, and if you really want to know what I think, you're all welcome to read *Imagining Zion, Dreams, Desires and Realities in a Century of Jewish Settlement*. And I did not say colonisation, I said settlement. Published by Yale, 2004. I am not going to talk about my bibliography, but there is a time and a place for addressing people, and I thought this was a meeting where we were to bring out certain kinds of narratives in an attempt to try to discuss what it is that we could create together. And if I said something that was offensive, I thought maybe that would be helpful in saying hey, maybe we have to soften the edges over here. And I am certainly willing to soften the edges on anything that I might have said.

Which brings me to Sari Nusseibeh. I want you to know that at Brandeis University, which is my other hat, I am one of his strongest advocates. I find Sari Nusseibeh one of the greatest individuals that I have been privileged to meet, one of the important individuals of our time, and a crucial person to the Arab-Israeli conflict. And it is precisely because of the human element that I find in his thought, and I would invite

you, since you haven't read the website, you should read it, but then compare it with his wonderful confession in his book 15 years ago with Mark Heller, *No Trumpets, No Drums*. And his book is constructed in a brilliant way, just like *Shared Histories*.

The book has a general introduction, and maybe this is a way you can edit this. Then it has Mark Heller saying, This is what I believe, then you have Sari Nusseibeh saying, This is what I believe. And from there you have them working out a pre-Ayalon-Nusseibeh plan.

That I find real. We are never going to agree on everything. We may not even agree on anything. But I hope there are some places that we can come together and say, look, this is the reality of our lives.

And that is what I tried to say about Sari, and what I tried to say about Ravitsky, although I see him as kind of an analogue. Which is to say that in all of us, in all of our two different traditions, there are different kinds of arguments. And all I did was present the arguments that came from religion, and then not uni-dimensionally. I also presented arguments that came out of the secular background. Again, not uni-dimensionally.

There are arguments that are lawyers' arguments. There are also national arguments and national rights. There are individual rights, human rights, and they don't necessarily cohere. They conflict with each other.

What do you do in a situation, therefore, when you have many different kinds of rights, many different kinds of narratives, is try to find a shared objective. And the shared objective is a measure of comity, of trying to live together.

So maybe I can explain it by comparing, if you like, or thinking about Sari Nusseibeh, like my real hero, who is Nelson Mandela. It was my great privilege, as a representative of a Zionist university, to give an honorary doctorate to Nelson Mandela at the University of Cape Town a few years ago. He made sure that we went out to Robben Island, where he had been in prison for so many years, and when I left Robben Island I was overwhelmed, because I couldn't imagine anybody coming out of that prison and coming to a notion of truth and reconciliation, because reconciliation is at least as important as truth.

And the metaphor that my wife Carol shared with me, is the metaphor of the warp and the woof. The warp and the woof is that instrument that you use to create a fabric. And each and every one of us has many different strands in our own lives and in our own cultures. They can be religious, they can be secular, they can be all kinds of strands.

What made Nelson Mandela choose from within his African-ness, choose the strands that led to peace and reconciliation? What strands in his Christian past didn't lead to a crusade and revenge, because I must tell you that my reaction from being there, in reading his life, and in reading what I could about apartheid, did lead to anger and the thought that when I get power, damn it, I'm going to put it to them. But he chose a different path.

I would argue, and the point of my paper was to say that Zionism has many different strands, and that we were all confronted with choices. But which of the strands in our rich, deep, ancient cultures do we choose as we weave the fabric of our future?

That's what I thought the Hanafi paper was going to be, and that's why I wrote mine. We never talked about it, I thought he would do the same thing. And I agreed with what he said about 1967 and colonialism and all the rest of that. But that is not

what the issue is.

When I, as an Israeli, look at the PLO covenant, I find it is a secular document. And I have read the Hamas Charter. And I wonder about Arafat, who always had his picture taken with the Dome of the Rock in back of him, and spoke the religious language. I wonder, as I said, that maybe for secular Zionists there was a veneer and I didn't know how thin or how thick it was, and would like to know the same from Palestinian friends. That is, to what extent do they draw on their religious culture when they look at me, do they really see the *dhimmi* who forgot his place, that this is really *dar al Islam*, and we are really interlopers. That is certainly the case with the Hamas Charter.

My message to you would be that ultimately Zionism is a secular movement because it did come out of the 19th century. It came out of a time when the Jews already had nearly 100 years of experience with the Enlightenment, but it was still a religiously rooted society.

Ravitsky is the exception and Hanan Porat is the worry, because secular people can develop and use the kinds of instruments that come out of a definition of human nature that posits that human nature works not only rationally but out of self-interest. And I could then develop for you an argument why rationality, which is related to self-interest, can provide the basis for accommodation. And frankly that is what I tried to do, to try to help get us to that kind of point.

WALID SALEM: My problem was not that the Palestinian concept of land is not included. That is not my problem with the paper, that you should include it and that it would be 12,000 words. My problem was your means of defense of the Zionist position, and the Zionist concept of land. The way of writing, that it excludes the other.

Secondly, there is no problem with the historical attachments of Jews to Palestine. And as was said, all the Palestinians accept the Jewish religious attachments to this land. But the problem is when it comes to speak about historical national rights. This is a big issue. And I don't know how many conferences we will need in order to discuss just this question, if there are historical national issues for the Jewish people in Palestine. It's a very difficult issue, and I don't know if we can solve it even, so this issue will continue to be open, and it will follow us, and I don't even know if we will need to solve it to have an answer.

YITZHAK REITER: One needs to understand that Judaism is not only a religion, but also the core of our national identity.

WALID SALEM: Friends, I was not trying to open the discussion again, but just to tell you where we stand. You know, the main weakness of Ilan's paper is this issue: whether there are historical national rights or not, returning after 3,000 years. This is a big issue, and I don't know if we can solve it.

SAID ZEEDANI: Can I interject? As a specialist in ethics and political philosophy and human rights, I can say that this is the only case in the whole theory of human rights and the theory of justice where the whole question of historic rights arises and when there is a passage of 2,000 years. So it is problematic from the perspective of rights theory, and the theory of justice. But of course, this is part of the singularity of the Jewish question.

ILAN TROEN: I would just say, not as a Jewish question, it is not just 2,000 years.

DALIA OFER: It is not a Jewish question.

WALID SALEM: Then it might be 6,000 and the Canaanites.

(Many voices at once.)

WALID SALEM: Okay, because you know, some people claim, like Moshe told us about Canaanites yesterday, that Arafat is a Canaanite.

DANNY RUBINSTEIN: I will tell you a very short episode.

Some years ago we were dealing with direct absorption for the Soviet Jews who came to Israel. And I was asked by other journalists at my paper to accompany a family that came from Moscow. They came to Ben-Gurion Airport and I was to take them in a cab to their new apartment. And I went with the family from Moscow directly from the airport to Nazareth, to Nazareth Ilit. We crossed Nazareth in the morning, and they saw the Nazareth Arabs. So they asked me, "Who are those people?" When I told them, they said, "There are Arabs here?" I said "Yes", and they said, "What are they doing here?"

So I told them, "Listen, you are here in this country only one hour. These people here, they are here for generations." How did you put it, Adel? My great-great-grandfather of 100 years. And after five minutes they want to send them away, throw them away. Well, maybe that's the Zionist rhetoric. But for many, many Jews, that's what they believe.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's the problem with many Jews: the aggression.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: They don't take even take a rest. They just ask you this after one hour, before they even get to their house.

(Interruptions.)

JEFF HELSING: Now, Walid will finish, please. All right. We are never going to get Walid to finish.

ILAN TROEN: No, I'm going tell my story. About the olive tree in my yard, which I did not take from the Bedouins. I live in the Negev, and we can talk about the Bedouins some other time. But whatever the history between Israel and the Bedouins, nobody except me ever in all of human history, so far as anybody can determine, lived on the piece of ground that I have reclaimed after I have returned, to rebuild and to reconstitute myself in the Negev.

The olive tree was planted by Helen Rizek, who lived around the corner. The store next door to my father's store was owned by the Bethany family. Both families are immigrants from Bethlehem. The neighbor upstairs, their name was Ghibran, and they were still collecting royalties from a book written by Khalil Ghibran, a relative who lived in Lebanon and Boston. All understood why their neighbour's son wanted to return to a land he considered his homeland.

I have always carried that and seen that as a blessing when the Troens, Rizeks, Bethanys and Ghibrans can consider themselves neighbors and friends wherever they live.

WALID SALEM: Now, with regard how to go from here to there. With the issue of attachments, we have agreements about this. We have attachments to this land, all of us, both sides. When it comes to solutions, some of us will go to the two-state solution, and some of us will go to other ideas - okay, the two-state solution is becoming more and more irrelevant.

And as you know, just to mention, as you said, Ilan, that as much as peace

becomes distant and as much as this awakens the ideas that call for Eretz Israel *Ha'shlaimah*, for the West Bank and Gaza Strip to be included in Israel, then other voices will arise, other legitimate voices, which we heard from As'ad indirectly today in this room, saying that, "Okay, if the Israelis want attachments to all the land, then we also want all the attachments to all the land." Therefore, if the Israelis do not want a two-state solution, we also don't want a two-state solution.

So whatever you do, you will have reactions from the other side. So it is up to us either to choose the two-state solution or to choose the solution that will take into consideration the attachment for all the land.

My final point is a technical one. Some of us are in such discussions hundreds of times. As'ad and Said and myself and others who are here. Sometimes you feel fed up with all of these discussions, continuing over and over. So you have a group of people discussing this, and then we are discussing that, and then you have a newcomer, Ilan Troen today, and then you begin discussing it again from scratch as if we never discussed it before. So just think about it and link it to the question of the dissemination.

On the other hand, I am happy that we have Yossi Gorny with us, who is here for the first time, and hearing us for the first time, and this might make a contribution for this meeting.

Thank you.

Postscript to Session 4 (added after the Jewish Sabbath):

RABBI MICHAEL ROSEN: I want to relate to the issue of religion being divisive. I see religion as I see identity: either it can be divisive or it can lead to a greater understanding of the other. It may well be true that the Bible can be used to exclude the other. The Bible is talking about a clash between monotheism and polytheism, and actually there is no compromise. That came to a resolution about the 5th or 6th century BCE. Once you move to Judaism as we understand it today, from then on there is a far greater tolerance of difference and legitimacy of difference.

I remember about 30 or so years ago, reading a paper about whether religion led to a greater intolerance of the other. And basically the author of the paper concluded that there are two types of religion. There is a religion that was based on a social group in which you differentiated yourself from the other, and there was a religion that focused on the eternal relationship between an individual and say, God. In the first there would be more intolerance than if you didn't have religion, and the second would be more tolerant because of religion. That is to say that my quest is to understand my identity, to understand myself, understand my weaknesses and my failings, and hopefully to be more tolerant when I see them in the other person.

So maybe we can define it as an identity which is an external identity, or an identity which is like an internal identity. I don't want to sound arrogant, but I want to say this: If you have an internal sense of identity, you are not that dependent on whether the other acknowledges you or not. My identity is not dependent on whether other people acknowledge my identity or not.

What I would say is that if you don't acknowledge my identity, I wouldn't have that much confidence in the way you looked at me. It is not that I am questioning where I am. It's a matter of how I question the relationship with other people, and everything I

am saying completely works both ways. I am not talking about Judaism or Islam. I am talking about identity.

So if I take Jews, which was a topic this afternoon; from a *halachic* point of view, from a Jewish religious point of view, I am not allowed to go on to the Temple Mount because I am in a state of ritual impurity, as all Jews are since the destruction of the Temple. Therefore, *de facto*, if not *de jure*, why not let members of Islam, which Judaism sees as a more pure form of monotheism than Christianity, why not let them pray to Allah and go on to the Temple Mount? I can't go. But if I hear Yasser Arafat denying that there is a Temple, or there ever was a Temple, or it wasn't a Jewish temple, that doesn't detract from me, from my identity, it just makes me highly suspicious of his perception of me.

The last point I want to make is that I think the question of who came here first is pathetic, because even if suddenly we just came 30, 40, 50 years ago, the pain of being uprooted is the pain of being uprooted. So who the hell cares if the person has been here 40 years or 400 or longer? If Muslim identity has been here for 1,300 years, that's the reality.

However, what I would say is this: The last 25 hours I have behaved, or tried to behave, in a way that I think people living 2,000 years ago would have identified with. That is to say, at the end of a meal I said *Shir ha'ma'alot, b'shuv hashem et shivat tzion ha'yinu k'choli*, "When we returned to Zion we were like dreamers", as the psalmist wrote. Well, then, I felt exactly what he was composing, let's assume that it was composed at the return of the first exiles, 5th century BCE.

I am my lifestyle. It is part of a lifestyle of Hillel and Shamai, from the time of Jesus. My flippant comment yesterday of being able to eat at his table had a strong element of truth in it, as he is a part of my discourse. There is a cultural continuity in my consciousness of things that were lived 2,000 years ago.

Now, if Walid comes along and says, I am a descendant of the Canaanites and the Phoenicians and the Jebusites, I really have no problem with that. They can say that. But I would be interested to know, what is the common discourse, the cultural continuity, between Walid and the Canaanites and the Jebusites and the Hittites and the others? What does he mean? Does he simply mean he is a descendant from them? This is of no major significance because in a sense, who cares? But in terms of integrity, that is the question that I would pose.

In my case, I live in the 21st century and 2,000 years ago. Very much so.