

## Session 6

### ZIONISM AND PALESTINIAN NATIONALISM: POSSIBILITIES OF RECOGNITION AND RECONCILIATION

Chair: Hans-Georg Fleck

**Discussion of papers by Tamar S. Hermann (Open University of Israel and the Israel Democracy Institute) and Said Zeedani (al-Quds University). The papers are in the printed volume of *Shared Narratives*.**

TAMAR HERMANN: In my paper I wasn't justifying anything, I wasn't defending anything, and I wasn't apologizing for anything. I tried to do an analysis of the development as I see it, rightly or wrongly, of the perceptions prevailing on the Zionist side regarding Palestinian nationalism. I should emphasize that I concentrated more on the issue of recognition than on the issue of reconciliation, and maybe I should put the bottom line right here on the table: I am not a great believer in the notion of reconciliation *per se*, and I'll come to the problems of the very notion of reconciliation later on. But I think that recognition is something very important and very timely. I am not so sure about the viability of reconciliation in the foreseeable future.

My point of departure is a semi-Marxist understanding of the notion of ideology. I see ideology as something that is more functional than basic, in the sense that normally ideologies expand into perhaps a frame, political and historical processes, more than create them. There are some massive changes on the ground, and then an ideology which frames these changes emerges, more than the other way around. It was not out of the blue skies that nationalism came to the fore in the 19th century. There was something there in the concrete life and in the economic and other processes which led to the emergence of 19<sup>th</sup> century nationalism. It didn't happen in the 15th century, it didn't happen in the 9th century, it didn't happen in the 1st century.

There was something there that created or encouraged the emergence of this kind of ideology. Therefore, I do believe that ideologies also change in content, along with the practical changes on the ground. If you take some examples of other places, Marxism turned into Leninism and into Stalinism, and it is the same thing but under different circumstances.

The same goes for other ideologies. We mentioned Northern Ireland yesterday. Certainly the IRA ideology of 1921, after the Easter Rising, was not the same as the IRA ideology regarding Irish nationalism in the post-Bloody Sunday era, nor is it the same ideology that Gerry Adams is advocating today. Things do change.

The very critical or dangerous process is when nationalism converges with religion. Because then ideology loses or might lose its flexibility to act in a pragmatic way. Therefore, as my talking point for our discussion, I would say that I don't see Zionism *per se* as an impediment to peacemaking in the Middle East. I don't see that Zionism is the obstacle that is standing in the way of reconciliation between the two

nations, because to start with, Zionism in 1903, when they discussed Uganda, is not the same as Zionism today. Let alone, there has never been one Zionism, as Yossi has mentioned.

We all know the differentiation between political Zionism and practical or Labour Zionism, Revisionist Zionism later on, and also the spiritual Zionism advocated by Ahad Ha'am, who didn't at all see the issue of territoriality and sovereignty as something which is very, very critical.

The three or the four mainstreams of Zionism agreed on one issue - that the Jews, whatever they are, compose a nation, not only a religion, not only an ethnic group, but a nation. And this nation is attached to a specific geographical location. The spiritual Zionism that I just mentioned thought the Jewish homeland should be created in Eretz Israel as the spiritual center. They were not thinking of relocating all Jews to this piece of land. But there were others who thought that it should be a move that must be taken because it was critical in order to physically protect Jews from persecution all over the world.

It must be said that the issue of sovereignty was also debatable. There were certain groups within Zionism that could make do with some international recognition without sovereignty, and the issue of when or where the Zionists should demand such recognition of sovereignty was also debated. What was unique is that normally a national movement emerges in the very same place which it claims, and this wasn't the case with Zionism.

Another unique issue was that it was not directed against some occupying force. They talked about "self-emancipation" in the sense that Jews should get rid of their exilic state of mind and modes of conduct. They were talking about normalization of the Jewish people, and normalization meant various things: It meant having a Jewish thief, a Jewish prostitute and a Jewish army later on.

ILAN TROEN: We have all of them.

TAMAR HERMANN: This is the great success of the Zionist society.

Actually, the idea of having a Jewish majority in the designated land was a result of the friction with the Palestinians residing in Israel, and their national claims.

This relates to what Asad Ghanem said on the first day, that Palestinian nationalism is, to a great extent, a result of its interactions with Zionism. The opposite is also correct because, earlier in the 20th century, the issue of the presence of the Palestinians in the land was not a major issue. And indeed, in 1907, Yitzhak Epstein wrote a piece called *She'elah Ne'elamah* which is the hidden question, or the unseen question, the question that you don't see or you don't want to see. His main argument was that Zionism should recognize that we are having a problem there, and if we do not recognize this problem it is going to explode in our face in the years to come. Someone else who is not so proficient in Hebrew translated it into the "question above all" because he thought that in Hebrew it is *na'ala*, not *na'elamah*. And he had an entire explanation, that in 1907 they thought it was the question above all questions, but it is a mistake because it changes the meaning in a fundamental way and distorts the importance of the article.

However, the political establishment and mainstream Zionism at that time was quite oblivious to the national potential of the Palestinians residing in the geographical area. There were some groups who later on pointed out this potential, but they were

normally at the periphery. And we have already mentioned *Brit Shalom*: in the 1920s they came out with various sorts of solutions, a bi-national state based on parity, and other formulas for solutions. And there was, of course, the small minority on the Right, which claimed all the territory on both sides of the Jordan River and was not ready to recognize the collective rights of the Palestinians.

Even Jabotinsky, the great prophet of the Revisionist party, was not oblivious to the individual rights of Palestinians residing in his dream state. He wasn't talking about not giving them individual rights. He was just refusing to give them collective rights, and later on he was talking about the Iron Wall because he couldn't see a way out of it. With the War of Independence and between 1948 and 1967 this was a question that was raised.

Yesterday, it was stated that the issue of Palestinian nationalism was not highly debated within the Israeli Jewish collective. It was just not thought of as something that was relevant to the current existence of the collective. There is one thing that I missed here and it is important for me to mention. Yossi talked a lot about "compromise". I would like to define this compromise. In the mainstream of the Zionist movement in the 1930s and 1940s, they were talking about or even were ready to have a compromise. This compromise they were aspiring to was to give a part of the land of Israel in return for having a Jewish majority in the part left to them. They were not talking about having a state of all citizens, for example, in the part of the land that they wanted to keep in their hands. So the question here was giving up on part of a land promised by God, and of them having a Jewish state in the land that would be left in their hands.

This theme continues from those days to the present. The mainstream in Israel today is willing to give up territories providing that the state would remain a Jewish state. And if I were to call a referendum and said okay, this is the situation, either have a fully democratic state or a Jewish state, I'd predict – and I risk my professional credentials here – the majority would opt for a Jewish state and not a fully democratic state, the latter meaning a state of all citizens. This is a given. We should operate under this working assumption that this is the mainstream, and I don't see any Israeli Zionist leader coming out with a different basic assumption regarding the nature of this state. We should take it as the sun that rises in the morning and goes down in the evening.

There were some bodies that raised the issue of Palestinian nationalism after the 1967 war, besides the Communist party, which was at the very periphery. The Movement for Peace and Security was at the periphery too, but they started to discuss the problems of annexing the territories, and they took notice of Palestinian aspirations. Actually, the first Intifada erupted at the time when the Israeli collective started to recognize and intellectually legitimize Palestinian national claims as a national movement over the Land of Israel. And as you may remember, *Shalom Achshav* was even ready to recognize them following the 1988 declaration by the PLO. And some prominent members of Peace Now actually left the movement following its recognition of the 1988 declaration by the Palestinians.

So it is a very recent development which we tend to forget. It is very, very symbolic and very critical. Later on in the Oslo process, with all its failures, at the same time it was a cognitive turning point in Israeli thinking about the Palestinian national claims for the land. And from this point of view, I think that we do see a change in

mainstream Israeli Jewish thinking about Palestinian nationalism and, therefore, the idea of a two-state solution, perhaps too late, but it is now held by about seventy to seventy five percent of the Israeli Jewish public. We cannot expect everyone to support it, but this is a massive majority. And the question is: What will the politicians do with that? Will they be able to make it into a visible political issue? Certainly it doesn't depend only on the Israeli side. It depends also on the Palestinian side. And of course, as was mentioned yesterday, suicide bombing is not helpful in this respect.

The two-state solution is based on a very critical issue and I will finish with it. It is based on a desire for separation. It is not based on an ideal of coexistence with open borders. Most Israelis would like to see, if not a narrow world then a transparent world, which is why there is such wide support for the wall. Terror is only one reason why Israeli Jews are so supportive of the wall.

And the question is, is there a way of really translating this into a political language, into an actual language? But ignoring this fact and talking about open borders and about reconciliation may well backfire. At a certain point of time a collective has limited options which it is ready to discuss and to opt for. And right now reconciliation is out of this repertoire. Right now the idea of a merger, social, political, what have you, is not on the national agenda. I am not sure that it would be very wise to press in this direction because it may prove fatal even to the minimal achievement of mutual recognition and the achievement of substantial grassroots support for any political solution along these lines.

SAID ZEIDANI: She complicates things.

Let me say that I have been trying here, in my different comments, to challenge the tacit assumption expressed by some of the participants that coming to terms with the past is a pre-condition or a necessary condition for paving the way to a reasonable solution to the conflict. This assumption is that the past is an obstacle that needs to be removed from the way, so that the train of peace and reconciliation can take us to the desired destination.

In my humble opinion, it is less difficult to reach agreement about the future, about our future relations, than to come to terms with the past. Some of you probably have doubts about my paradoxical comments all along, so let me put the record straight. I am very extremist when it comes to the past, and very moderate when it comes to the present and the future. But let me give you a perspective on the past that is difficult to come to terms with. In my paper, I write about a personal story with a moral and with moral implications, about my grandmother from my mother's side, who died in 1998 at the age of 88.

In 1948, she was driven off the 200 dunams she owned. She became "internally displaced" within Israel. In the early 1950s, my grandmother managed to obtain a permit from the military government to work in a newly established settlement for the new immigrants from Yemen. The settlement was erected on the edge of the demolished village, and the lands of the inhabitants of the demolished village were leased to the new settlers. In this way, she earned her living, but certainly not ignoring that her employer and his associates were farming her own land, and the land of her extended family and fellow villagers.

Our family, like other tens of thousands of displaced families, has not been allowed to return and rebuild the demolished village. It has not redeemed the

confiscated land which became state land for the exclusive use of the Israeli Jews. This is despite the fact that we are talking about Palestinians who are Israeli citizens, citizens of a Jewish and democratic state. More than 20 percent of the Palestinians in Israel proper, as you call it, became displaced as a result of the Arab-Israeli war in 1948. These internally displaced have been labeled "present absentees," as you know, a label they carry up to the present day. They are present for all purposes except for the right to claim their lost or seized or confiscated property, or rebuild their demolished villages.

I do not want to disturb you more with stories about displaced families and demolished villages, but I want to ask you to imagine how it feels to be in that kind of a situation, and how it feels to undergo that kind of experience, and how it feels to live that kind of life. Just a thought experiment. The full story is in my paper.

But so this is the past. It is a very cruel and a very murky past, and we should acknowledge that.

PARTICIPANT: Is it past?

SAID ZEIDANI: We are not going to come to terms easily. We are not going to agree that we revise our narrative. The past is difficult. That should be acknowledged.

So it is not the case really of a Jew coming from Europe and coming "back home". I do not have a problem with that. This process of coming back home has brought a lot of bad things, to say the least. I am not talking about atrocities for now.

So the Jews came back home and in the process they displaced and dispossessed the others. And in some cases they occupied the homes, not only expelled them or demolished the houses or the village. In Haifa, in Jaffa, Palestinians resided in their own homes and owned their own properties. I think this past is going to torment us for a long time indeed.

As a peace-loving person, as somebody who is committed to reconciliation and recognition and all of it, I am inclined to ask a different set of questions.

For me, the more important question is how should we relate to the past? What is the relevance and significance of this past for both of us? What lessons can we or should we learn from this past?

Of course we should revise our narratives and make them less problematic as far as possible, but that will not do it. There are two ways of relating to the past. For the past sixty years, the emphasis has been on one of them, and it has proven to be barren, which is to mobilize and utilize the past in order to perpetuate the conflict in the present. That is, to utilize and mobilize the past, your past and my past, or my interpretation of the past and your interpretation of the past, in order to justify and legitimize your actions and your means, the means used against the other party.

According to this way of relating to the past and to the other, the other is necessarily a violator of rights, an enemy of peace, security and even of humanity. This is what the Israelis say about the Palestinians, and what the Palestinians say about the Israelis.

Both Palestinians and Israeli Jews have derived, and continue to derive, enormous power, each from his own past, in order to perpetuate the conflict. Both mobilize the past in their arguments for ownership of the land. When Ehud Olmert, the moderate, when he was prime minister, gave his opinion that Israeli Jews were giving up part of their homeland, he forgot that we overheard these things and, under the best

conditions, we laughed. Under the worst conditions, you can imagine how people felt and what that feeling might lead to.

The end result of this way of relating to the past and to the other is more evident nowadays than ever before. We see this clash between peoples, between two narratives, between two sets of collectives on national rights, two warring national movements, two religions and probably also two cultures.

From the perspective of an impartial spectator or observer, it appears to be a conflict with two rights. This is the Amos Oz thesis. Two rightful owners fighting for the same property, house, or country. But from the perspective of the participants, whether they are Israelis or Palestinians, the rhetoric is completely different.

The Palestinian says the house is mine by right, mine, not yours, and if it is mine, why divide it or give it up or share it with you?

It is important to recognize that for those politicians who are talking about compromise, the readiness to compromise stems from external pressures, from lack of any other viable option. Not from compassion for the predicament of the other. Not from recognition of his rights or his past or his situation.

Of course, I think Tamar was courageous to draw the conclusion. But I am pointing out this is not the argument for real or genuine reconciliation. It might be recognition, but not reconciliation.

What I am arguing here is the other way, the more promising way to look at the past, using that 19th century Nietzschean or Hegelian terminology, "overcoming the past", transcending the past, superseding the past.

So it involves looking at the past from a distance, from the perspective of a vision of a better future, of a redeeming and a liberating vision. If we have such a vision for the future, then we have a tool that can help us to overcome, to transcend, to supersede the past.

This liberating vision can enable both of us to psychologically distance the past. Look at it from the perspective of a desired and desirable but at the same time feasible state of affairs entailed by a different vision.

So what we should do is to shift gears and attitudes and to concentrate our attention on the future. From the perspective of a feasible desired and desirable future, the significance of the past, what the past means to us can change.

In short, I think that instead of seeking to change or modify the past, we should try to change and modify its relevance, or its significance to us, or our attitude to it. But for this change of attitude to occur, I think certain conditions should obtain, or certain concerns.

Everybody is aware of the asymmetry between the two parties, or nations. But we do not really agree about the implications. We do not know how to appreciate the asymmetry. It is not enough to say that the situation is not symmetrical.

What does that entail here? Israel ended up being a regional superpower, economically as well as militarily. We ended up being refugees or under occupation or subject to discrimination. I think that the far-reaching implications of this asymmetry need to be appreciated.

Of course, it is in some respects like the conflict in South Africa or Northern Ireland or the relationship between the indigenous and the immigrants in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, you name it. But our situation has singular features. And this

singularity has to do with the singularity of the Jewish people. Everybody has talked about that. This marriage between nation and religion, and also the other features of the singularity of the Jews, including the special relationship with the U.S. They came here as colonizers without a mother country. And it was not easy for Palestinians to understand that. It is still not easy for the Arabs or for the Muslims to understand it, and you should really make it easier for us to understand. It is not taken for granted that this is a singular situation.

Of course, when you talk about singularity, everybody is on his guard. Palestinians do not want to hear it, and the Israeli Jews do not want to hear

It either, because if you say it is singular, then there is no solution.

I am granting that all Israeli Jews and all the Jews in the Diaspora have an attachment to this country, all of the country, or to special parts in it.

But at the same time you have to grant that all Palestinians, including the refugees in the Diaspora, are attached to this country. And these attachments are sometimes crazy. You talk about the attachments of the Jews, who have been in exile for two thousand years but you are not ready to grant the attachment of the Palestinians now living in Lebanon and in Jordan and Syria. The question is, what does this attachment mean? It doesn't follow that they should pack the next day and return to Palestine. But we have to come to terms with this, and respect the attachment of Israeli Jews and Jews who are not Israeli, but also of all Palestinians, inside as well as outside.

The idea that I am suggesting is a vision of the future that can meet these conditions that I have been talking about.

So of course Israeli Jews want a state in which Jews are in the numerical majority. But if you are talking about a Jewish state in the sense that it discriminates against non-Jews, I do not accept it. I am ready to fight it until the very end.

If you are talking about a Jewish and democratic state, a state committed to equality and rights between all of its citizens, we can talk. But if in the end you say being Jewish is much more important than democracy then you have a severe problem with the Palestinians inside Israel.

I am in favor of separation, but this separation needs to be only a political separation. In order to respect the attachments of a body. We can talk about two states. But we should learn how to share all of the things that cannot or that should not be divided.

YITZHAK REITER: I really sympathize with Said, and I understand how Palestinians feel in this conflict, and in the daily life of the present. But I have a feeling that something phrased differently than it has been during these last two days should be put on the table, and this is the relationship between the narrative practicalities and the political practice on the ground.

If you ask the average Israeli Jew how is it that you claim to be a democratic state and you practise such policies towards the Arab citizens in Israel, the answer you get is that our understanding of our history is that the Arabs are those who rejected us. They rejected any Jewish presence in historical Palestine, the partition plan and the UN Resolution 181, and they were also the ones who launched the war against the pre-state Jewish Yishuv aiming to prevent Jews from their right to self-determination in their historical homeland. In 1948 the Jews in Palestine were not sure that they were strong enough to defend themselves, and they did not know, if the Palestinians would have

had the upper hand, what would be the outcome of the pre-war clashes and the war itself.

In the eyes of many Israelis, this understanding is a justification for Israel to appropriate the land, to resettle Jewish immigrants in the lands which before 1948 belonged to those who became refugees after the war and so forth. Hence, the Israelis see the events of 1947 and 1948, and the Arab violent resistance prior to this time, as a justification for what happened since 1948 and continues to happen today.

On the other hand, the Palestinians are not willing to admit that they were wrong. They believe that their behaviour at that time was justified, and perhaps even if the events were repeated today they would behave the same and make the same decisions that they took in the past.

So no party here believes that he is unjust.

The problem is that we have to – and I am agreeing with you - that we have to overcome the past and to move from a discourse of justice to a discourse of practice, of what should be done in the future.

I would like to suggest something which is very important in the process of recognition and perhaps reconciliation. I will use an example from the events of 1970 and 1971 in Jordan, what is called Black September, the civil strife between Palestinians and Hashemite Jordan at that time. It was a civil war and about 3,000 Palestinians were killed. It is a traumatic event particularly to the Palestinians, perhaps also to the Hashemite regime. And I think that the Palestinians and Jordanians overcame these traumatic events by using one important tool which is not used enough, or perhaps not used at all in our conflict, and that is rhetoric.

Which is to say - in the Jordanian National Charter of 1990 uploaded on the website of the Hashemite Palace - [KingAbdullah.gov.jo](http://KingAbdullah.gov.jo) - that the Hashemites as well as the Palestinians said, we have had these events and we admit that they were traumatic, but it helped us -- so they phrased it -- to overcome and to consolidate and to unite ourselves towards the future. The Hashemites for years now have said, we are one people, we are one family, *wihda* (unity), and so on. We have something which unites us.

So, whether it is true or untrue doesn't matter. What is important is that the two parties use words of recognition, words of sympathy towards each other, in order to overcome this conflict and these traumatic events. And unfortunately in the Israeli-Palestinian case, we see just the opposite. We see leaders on both sides continuing to use the rhetoric of the past.

**BENJAMIN PÖGRUND:** The example of South Africa keeps coming to mind. I left South Africa in 1986 after my newspaper was closed down by government pressure, and that was a devastating blow in my life. And I left also because I had a sense of hopelessness about South Africa. Apartheid was at its peak. I saw it stretching into the future without a chance of any change. I just gave up. I had a teenage son, and I wanted to protect him from being conscripted into the army. I was given sanctuary in Britain and I left.

Within eight years of my leaving, South Africa was changed. Eight years.

I was an analyst of the South African situation. That was my work every single day, and I knew that this place was gone forevermore.

Of course there were reasons. The Cold War ended, there was internal resistance and many other factors. But the main message to me and that I would convey is that change happens and it cannot be controlled.

No one in the Israeli government can control where the change is going to go. They think they can, but they can't. It might fizzle out. It might take on a momentum of its own. These are things that we cannot predict. So I always hold out that bit of hope.

I am dismayed by what Tamar says, and she is right of course, but it is not fixed forevermore.

So there is the South African example and what we have in Israel, despite what was said about apartheid, it is not apartheid. That is a total misunderstanding. Anyone who says that what you have in Israel within the Green Line is apartheid doesn't know what apartheid was. The same is true in the territories. It doesn't mean it isn't terrible, or that it's good. It's terrible, and there is discrimination. But it is not apartheid. These are swear words that shouldn't be used because they mislead and distort.

I want to thank Said for what he said because I think that is where we have to go: overcoming, transcending, superseding the past. He talked about a redeeming and liberating vision for the future. I think that is what we are doing now in a tiny way, and this is the only way. There are people here who have had years of experience of crossing the lines, like Tamar, like those of you who have done it for five years. Tamar said she has done it for fifteen years, Moshe for thirty years. And I say to Tamar: I hope you do it for another fifteen years, which could well be.

There are other people like Yosef Gorny, like Ilan Troen. This is the first time for them to have encounters like this. This is the way that it has to go. There is no other way.

We have all done wrong, and that's the first acknowledgement. Like being an alcoholic, we must progress until we are able to say, "I am an alcoholic. I know I am wrong." That is where it begins, and I think we have been doing this around the table in many ways. And there are no shortcuts.

It is hard, but we have to keep going.

So I want to thank Said for what he said. I think he put his finger on it all the way. We have to go on seeking to face the past and looking for that liberating vision. I used the image yesterday of drops of water. Perhaps you have added two drops of water in the last couple of days. Thank you.

ADEL MANNA': I want to start by thanking both lecturers, and I see that the discussion is going in the right direction. That is, speaking honestly and discussing the present in order to try to reach the past, or discussing the past and the narratives in order to reach a different future.

I do want to add my voice to what Said said about the issue of separation. I agreed with your analysis, that it seems today that it is very difficult to pursue the Israelis. A real democratic state could be Jewish by majority, but it doesn't have to mean discrimination between Jews and non-Jews, which is the situation and understanding of most Jews.

I want to add to what you said, that about seventy percent of Israelis, when they are asked if they know that Arab citizens in Israel are discriminated against, two-thirds say yes, we know. This is consistent from the mid-1980s until today.

Then if you ask the two-thirds if they want to keep the discrimination or to strengthen it or to change it, then two-thirds of them say, yes, we have to keep or strengthen the discrimination against Arab citizens in Israel.

Which is really a very black picture.

Now I'm going back to the issue of resolution or recognition and a different future.

I've met many times with the leaders of Peace Now and other leftist organizations in Israel and tried to persuade them to deal with the issue of Arab citizens in Israel. They said no, no, no, this is not the question. They don't want to speak about it. But this is the thorniest issue in Israel for the future. You can separate the Palestinians from Israel and build your wall, but what about the Palestinians in Israel?

This is the mindset of most of the Zionists. They believe that they built a state for the Jews, but I think that the conflict and the security issues are only an excuse to discriminate against the Arabs in Israel. This issue of the land, among the other issues that Said touched on, is basic to the mindset of most Zionists. Most of them, not all of them. But most Zionists still live with the idea that they are a minority, that they should take care only of their own community, that they don't recognize that they have sixty years of sovereignty, which means responsibility for others, for the other citizens of the country.

When I speak or Said speaks, we have a lot of pain in our voices. We have a narrative that means that each time that we speak about those issues people come and tell us to try to forget the past, speak about the future. But the past is the present. The past is the future.

I have lived all my life in Israel. Many Israelis tell me, you did well, you are in good shape. You have a Ph.D., your children are educated, all of them are graduates of universities, two of them are living in America.

But I am afraid.

My second child is an engineer. He tells me honestly, I don't want to live in Israel. I don't want to be an Arab in Israel. I want to be a human being. Inside Israel I cannot be a human being. People don't treat me as a human being. It is not just the policemen and the soldiers, it is everywhere. I am an Arab, and I don't want to live that way. Why do you want me to do it?

I said, it is your choice. I hope, but I don't know if we will have reconciliation or recognition, but I hope that in my lifetime I will see my children back with me, living with me, and not see myself alone with my wife while our three children live abroad.

PAUL SCHAM: One of the things that always struck me about the reconciliation process even more than the negotiating or political process is this dialectic, or perhaps it is really an inconsistency in it. I was struck by Said's emphasis on the lack of empathy by Jewish Israelis for the Palestinian narrative. I can certainly understand why you say that, but in some ways I feel that the direction has been opposite. Because I think that there has been much more awareness now, as minimal as it is, and I am not saying that it is remotely enough, but I think that there is now a high degree of awareness of the narrative of the Palestinians, of the existence of the Palestinians. As Tamar rightly said, the one clear accomplishment of Oslo was the recognition on a societal and government level that that other side is here, and it's not going anywhere. And this is generally recognized, except for comparatively fringe groups on either side.

So even at this point of separation and of anger on both sides, unlike the situation before, I think there is a joint recognition that “they” are not going to go away.

The work of Benny Morris has been instrumental in making Israelis aware that the 1948 war was not as pristine and pure as they grew up hearing and would prefer to believe. Of course there have been two Benny Morrises, and I think the rightwing Benny who appeared after about 2002 is even more important than the previous leftwing Morris, because of the fact that he is justifying Israel’s behaviour in 1948, and thus made “revisionist” history acceptable to people who saw it previously as more leftwing apologetics, and anti-Zionist. The fact that he and others are justifying it, means, for these people, that it happened. That is something that has percolated into Israeli society, not only because of him, but I think he is emblematic of it.

Finally, just on the issue of narratives, it is clear that of course we are not going to have a shared narrative, but acknowledgment is the key word, and the fact that the acknowledgment is taking place, even in some negative ways, is potentially positive. I have long since given up predicting that either reconciliation will take place or a political settlement will happen. For me, the paradigm disappeared after the failure of Camp David and the beginning of the Intifada.

But I think that there are certain dynamics which may seem negative, but which can also mean that there is an acceptance from the other that’s developing, and that can, in a paradoxical way, lead to reconciliation when you least expect it. Looking at the situation, I have to agree with Tamar, recognizing that the situation is not rational, we have to continue our efforts in the hope that the results will eventually appear, even in a way that we don’t expect.

YOSEF GORNY: In many ways I agree with what Said said, and understand his feelings. But in that historical situation, we -- and I am referring first of all to the Jews -- are living with some “traps”, positive or negative, but traps. The first trap is the belief that we are a nation, and that we have a Diaspora, and the Jews here are a part of a unique world Jewish nation.

By the same principle, we see you as a part of the Palestinian nation. What I am saying is that I am a part of the Jewish nation, and for me you are a part of the Palestinian nation.

So what is the trap?

The trap is that in some way, we are in a state of war. Who is right in this war? It doesn’t matter now from this point of view. The attitude toward the Palestinian minority or the Palestinian people, as citizens in Israel, is in some way an attitude of suspicion. Historically, I challenge you to give me some other example of such a situation, where two nations are in a state of war and a minority of one nation lives among the majority of the other nation, and there is no suspicion or tension between them. So the paradox is that it is an outcome of a positive recognition of the national identity of the Palestinians as citizens in the state of Israel. .

ADEL MANNA’: But the Bedouin and Druze are fighting on your side in your army against their people, and nonetheless they are discriminated against every day.

YOSEF GORNY: I would like to emphasise again that the double mistrust between the two nations in Israel is not an abstraction. This is a real psychological feeling. The other trap is the psychological feeling of the Jews that they are a minority

in the region, in spite of being a majority in Israel. And because they are a minority, in a state of hostility, they are afraid. This is a psychological truth. Take it or leave it.

ASAD GHANEM: Do you understand it, Said? The superpower is afraid. The majority is afraid.

YOSEF GORNY: This is a feeling. This is a constant feeling. We are a minority in this region.

ADEL MANNA': How can we help you to get rid of this feeling?

YOSEF GORNY: You can help us, and then we can help you to be equal citizens. And in my last sentence I'll return to this.

We have to try together to make some arrangements for peace. And then on the basis of peace we will start to shape our life together. For example, if the Haredim have a completely autonomous educational system, so why not for the Palestinians as well?

DANNY RUBINSTEIN: And they also complain they are discriminated against.

MICHAEL ROSEN: They are. They are.

YOSEF GORNY: I am talking about symbols. I believe that, following Jabotinsky, the process will be from the "Iron Wall" to a binational society in a Jewish state. As I underlined it in my opening paper: Total citizenship equality in the aspects of language, political representation, Palestinian ministers in the government and even a possibility of a Palestinian prime minister. Of course, you may smile hearing my "naïve" political ideas, but you must know that I, as an historian, believe that ideas which were once utopian became true. I could give you many examples – but on another occasion.

YUSUF NATSHEH: Please have a big heart in order to just see that my intention is to be practical.

It is really good to have empathies and sympathies and effects. It is better than not having them. So suppose that we reach that? What is the next step? Which is what really concerns me in daily life.

It is the attitudes. I believe in ethics and morality but that is not enough. What matters are deeds. What really has value in our lives.

We opened a lot of questions concerning the Palestinian insights and the Israeli insights. But what about each other's lives? Thirty years ago, when I was young, it was a nightmare just to renew our ID card, or to get a travel document. Humiliations, bribed, and so forth.

Still, what is the Israeli policy concerning daily life services? I have been living for twenty one years in Beit Hanina, a residential area in Jerusalem supported by the municipality. In twenty years, there has been no project for our roads. Every two or three years when there is a municipal activity or election, they are so nice that they come to our roads to fill the holes.

What shall we do as we are waiting for recognition and conciliation? This appears to be very a complicated process. So I keep asking myself, are there any acts or something we can do to pave the way?

So please, let's see between ourselves if we can do some real deeds. If they are not going to solve all of the problema, at least they'll be steps towards the final recognition of conciliation.

RONI STAUBER: First of all, I want to say that I agree with you, and also with the others, that the relationship between us, the Israelis, and the Arab citizens in Israel, the Palestinian citizens, is the most important issue, and we must start with this.

Now, I want to say that you, Said, spoke about the lack of empathy. This is a key word, and maybe to that we must also add two other key words, which are recognition and respect.

I want to say that I see myself as a messenger of peace, and I try to convince, to speak with people who don't know much about the situation, about the miseries of the Palestinians, to convince them that the Palestinians have the right to their own state in part of the Land of Israel – Palestine.

But then, as Yitzhak said before, many Israelis feel deep mistrust regarding the Arabs' will, even the Arabs who live in Israel, to live in peace and to accept the reality of a Jewish state. One of the main reasons for the mistrust are the extreme statements of Arab Israeli leaders, among them members of the Knesset. Many people repeatedly claim that Arabs in Israel reject and will never accept the idea of a Jewish state in any part of Palestine. So why do you want us to respect their rights?

I think this is the most important thing, to respect the rights of the other side.

ILAN TROEN: The asymmetry is quite remarkable. Israelis can think they are a superpower, but they are one that has had to create a ghetto. The notion of Jews creating a ghetto in order to defend themselves doesn't require any further comment. The notion of asymmetry can be taken another way.

I edit a journal called *Israel Studies*, where As'ad has recently published an article, together with others, that discuss democracy. His perception of democracy really leads to disestablishment of the Jewish state.

The other article that is usually downloaded in tandem with it, for people who want to teach intelligently, is an article by Ruth Gavison, an Israeli professor of law. She uses an American notion that democracies are not perfect, that nobody gets their way fully, that in the real world where real people have to live, nobody can get everything in order for the society to work, otherwise one has a totalitarian state. Between those two versions of democracy, one can have a very fascinating discussion.

So what I would say is that history does matter. History should be transcended for certain practical aspects. History is part of a culture. There is no such thing as a generic human being. We are not soap, we're not toothpaste. It is not just a question of packaging. We all have unique and special ingredients, and those are ingredients that have to be recognized. The challenge for human beings is to recognize the ingredients of someone else's culture. And that defines a way to transcend and to live.

I'm not sure there was anything new that was said to me here today, even as I am sure I didn't offer anything new to anybody else. But it was terribly important to hear these things said by real living human beings.

MOHAMMED DAJANI: I am not sure what is more important than hope. I believe that the big dream for the Israelis is to wake up one morning and not find any Palestinians around. The big dream of the Palestinians is to wake up one morning and not to find any Israelis around. And the small hope for both of them is to wake up one morning and find that they are living in peace next to each other in two states.

Now, taking this, I look at what Jews are deluding themselves with this idea of a pure Jewish state. There will never be such a state since there are other religious

groups who are citizens of the State of Israel. How will Israel get rid of them? If you look at the situation, Israel cannot get rid of all the Muslim Palestinians or the Christian Palestinians living as citizens of the state.

In Jerusalem, the Israeli municipality of Jerusalem collects more than thirty percent of its budget from the Palestinians and it spends only three percent of that budget on Palestinians. That is why you find the Arab neighborhoods in East Jerusalem so underdeveloped.

I think that we have to actually look at things from a different perspective. If Israelis want a Jewish state they have to accept the others living in that Jewish state, and then it will not be a Jewish state. If they want a democratic state, one of the most important elements of a democratic state is how the state treats its minorities. And if Israel treats its minorities well, then we can talk about the state being democratic. But if Israel discriminates against its minorities, then it is difficult to call it a democratic state.

Now that we have a book of *Shared Histories*, and this book will be about conflicting narratives, I hope that there will be a third project where we can look to the vision of conciliation. If we can do that, then maybe here we are translating what we are talking about into something on the ground. It is so important for us to come out of this meeting with something that can be translated into the future.

MICHAEL ROSEN: There is a phrase in English called "solitude for company". And I think that crystallizes the perception that conciliation is not in the cards until there is a reengagement. As well as that may sound, reconciliation is based on trust, possibly on self-confidence and equality. It is not there yet.

The basic line is that there is absolutely no trust between the two parties. I was very impressed by both presentations, but I don't know exactly when I will meet with Said again. I would like to relate to Said. I think he is a brave man. I have enjoyed talking over the last few days, even when it has been painful for me. But I think in spite of the correct things that he said, if you analyze what he has been saying over the last days in terms of objectivity, it is essentially a demand for a *mea culpa*. A declaration of I am guilty.

Even for the last twenty minutes of his presentation, fifteen were trying to tell me "acknowledge my pain". It was only in the last few minutes he then talked so beautifully about redeeming the past. He said: I am the one who thinks of the future, the music is in that. Please understand where I came from, understand my past. My question is, how do you understand? Listen to the two voices of a marriage counselor. What has to happen is to explain how we got here, but he will not take us to the future.

I may offend my Israeli comrades. Secular Zionism is essentially rootless. It has within it ambivalence about cultures of the past, yet is unable not to acknowledge the past. So it is therefore so vulnerable. It wants to be loved. It's pathetic. It's like a lover when his love has been rejected. In such a situation, unless there is understanding, the emphasis must be on building trust or making the acknowledgment.

And I say, how pathetic. I am the one who is occupied. I am the one who is so troubled. I am the one being asked to acknowledge the other. And that is exactly what the marriage counselor would say to the Israelis. What they need to hear from you is that you acknowledge their rights. If you make that commitment, they will melt.

YASSER ABU KHATER: Said and others talked about the experience of Israeli Arabs. Yusuf and Mohammed talked about East Jerusalem, but there is more to say about it.

Let me tell you about how Israel refused to allow the refugees to come back to Israel or Jerusalem. Right now, the Israelis have laws that anybody from East Jerusalem, if he lives outside of Israel for seven years, is not allowed to come back to where he was born.

That is exactly what happened with me. I lived more than seven years in Europe, and when I tried to come back to Jerusalem where I was born, where I lived more than twenty-five years, they didn't allow me to come back.

But for the immigrant who is Jewish, it is easy to come and get a house and good treatment, even though a third of the immigrants are not Jews.

I see from this that Israel is a democratic state, but just for the Jews, not for the others.

WALID SALEM: Well, I am confused between the issues we are discussing. We should not lose sight of what we were speaking about, which is transcending, superseding, and overcoming the situations that we are living in, and also doing that to the way that we argue with each other.

Without reconciliation, no solution, whatever it is, would endure. Therefore we need to supersede, we need to transcend. No other way will work. All of us have pain. We should take note of all of the pain, the personal stories which we have heard.

I have hundreds of stories to tell. I myself spent five years in an Israeli prison and I have a story about that. My last story was affected by my visit to Auschwitz. It was at my own request that I visited there. And I have worked for eleven Palestinian newspapers and every one was closed by the Israeli authorities. And I live in a house without a permit, and I have a 127,000 shekel fine, and the demolition order is not cancelled. And my wife is living illegally in Jerusalem.

I am not the kind of person who will come to tell you these stories because I believe in what Said said. Transcending. It would not be helpful if we get together in order to continue arguing. The issue is that we bring up all of these things in order to understand ourselves, but we should not stop there.

If we stop there we will perpetuate the words of Said. We speak to each other about these things in order to look upon each other again. I am using your words, you see. So in order to stop, in order to recognize each others' tragedies, it is important at the same time not to stop there. If we stop there we would be losing, all of us, because the issue is how we can transcend these tragedies.

I want to call attention to a problem with these discussions, that we are sometimes taking the position of analyzing, telling the other side the arguments of all the popular opinion, but not talking to the other side about our social responsibilities.

I talk about us, now, both sides. The academics and the public opinion on both sides. We are happy with our role, analyzing the situation, and analyzing what is going on, telling each other about how this is the way our public opinion is thinking, but we are not shouldering our social responsibilities in order to transcend. This is missing. I am not happy that I am hearing "this is what will happen, and you have to accept it". You are giving me analysis. I say, "No!" My question is, what will we be doing with public opinion to transform the situation in order to do that transcendence that we have already

experienced, that we can bring to others from our own experience, when we become bigger people who are transcending and leading to a new future?

In order to do this, I agree with Said and Mickey Rosen about the issues, that we must find a formula for a joint future for both of us, so that the “other” will find their needs encapsulated in it as well. We must recognize that answering clearly the peace question is not any kind of answer in itself. We must accept that solving issues of acknowledgment in its individual and collective parts is absolutely essential. If we solve these issues we can celebrate.

MOSHE MA'OZ: I don't want to complicate things. We have our plate full, but maybe for next time, if there will be a next time, we might discuss, or elaborate more on these issues: Palestinians in Israel and the internal refugees. Second, not enough has been done about WWW, What Went Wrong, with Oslo, Taba and the peace process of the 1990s. And what followed, which in my opinion is very crucial.

On the one hand we have Hamas, and what does it mean? Can there be changes? Pragmatism vis-à-vis ideology. I think we should discuss these issues too.

TAMAR HERMANN: When I opened my presentation, I said that I am not presenting my personal views. I was just trying to analyze. At the end of his, Said again told me, I wonder how you can live with this? So he turned it personal. I never do that, but I will do it this time.

I was deeply offended, as a second generation Holocaust survivor, when Adel said the other day that the Holocaust is over with, but the Nakba is going on.

For me the Holocaust is not over with. I open my refrigerator every day, and I want to have double the food that I need in order to feel secure. And in any personal and political choice that I have made in life and will make in life, security comes first. And the psychological legacy I got from my father is that the skin is closer than the shirt.

In other words, I'll do everything possible to guarantee the safety of myself and my loved ones. And if it means that I have to acknowledge that I have done wrong to others, I must say okay. And this is what I did here. I tell you okay. We did some very, very nasty things. Sometimes we haven't acknowledged them. But then, if you ask me if my security is threatened by trying to compensate for it, I'll tell you a big no.

This is why the Holocaust is here with me and with many other Israelis, for good. And this, Said, is my answer to you on how can I live with it. I can live with it because my father said my skin is closer than one's shirt.

SAID ZEIDANI: Tamar, I think what you are omitting, unfairly I think, unfairly to you, the three other revolutions here. You have the women's revolution, the human rights revolution, and the democratic revolution. And unlike you, I think that nationalism is all rot inside. At least from my perspective, I do not want to invest so much in nationalism. I want to invest much more in human rights and democracy and in all of this. I think this is much better for both of us.

And I want to say something to Rabbi Rosen.

I am forward-looking in this sense that I want to invest in the future, really. I want us to recognize each other and to be reconciled with each other, and to agree on a vision about the future, about living together in the future. Separately, but together at the same time.

You want a state in which the Jews are the numerical majority, and I accept this. Any other sense of a Jewish state is going to be racist or discriminatory and we are not

going to accept that. But if you talk about a numerical majority of Jews, I don't have a problem with that. And the Palestinians inside Israel don't have a problem with that.

But if you talk about the Jewish state in the other senses, that it gives priority to Jews over non-Jews and practises discrimination, we are not going to accept that.

But in looking forward, Rabbi, I don't have any problem, and I don't think any of the Palestinians here have any problem in recognizing the rights of Israeli Jews to be in this land and to have a state. It is you who have the problem. I say here and in writing, that I respect the rights and the attachments of the Israeli Jews and non-Israeli Jews to the whole country, or to special parts of it, provided you grant that Palestinians have rights and attachment to the whole country. And if we grant that let's decide what to do, whether to divide it, whether to separate, under what conditions, what to share and so forth. There are things that we can separate and it is clear that we want to separate.

But there are things that we should know how to share.