

REVIEW
OF
MIDDLE EAST
STUDIES
5

Israel/Palestine: Fields for Identity

Scorpion Publishing Ltd
London

Contents

Review of Middle East Studies will normally be published twice a year.

The Editorial Working Group consists of: Glenn Bowman, Anne Enayat, Deniz Kandiyoti, Roger Owen, Peter Sluglett, Sami Zubaida.

Contributions are invited, and should be sent for consideration to the Secretary: Glenn Bowman, 51 St Peter's Place, Canterbury CT1 2DA, UK

A set of back issues of *Review of Middle East Studies*, issues 1-4, is available from the Secretary at £25.00 including postage and packing.

Subscriptions to *Review of Middle East Studies* at £17.00 per annum, including postage and packing, should be sent to Scorpion Publishing Ltd, Victoria House, Victoria Road, Buckhurst Hill, Essex IG9 5ES, England.

© Review of Middle East Studies 5 1992

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

First published in 1992 by
Scorpion Publishing Ltd
Victoria House
Victoria Road
Buckhurst Hill
Essex
England

ISBN 0 905906 97 7

Typeset by MasterType, Newport, Essex
Printed and bound in England

| | |
|--|-----|
| Editorial Statement | 1 |
| Biographical Notes on Contributors | 3 |
| 'We Opened Up The Arabs' Minds': Labour Zionist Discourse and the Railway Workers of Palestine (1919-1929) – Zachary Lockman | 5 |
| West Bank and Gaza Strip Social Formation Under Jordanian and Egyptian Rule (1948-1967) – Jamil Hilal | 33 |
| Soul of the Nation: The Fallah in the Eyes of the Urban Intelligentsia – Salim Tamari | 74 |
| Zionism, Anti-zionism and the Construction of Contemporary 'Jewishness' – Nira Yuval-Davis | 84 |
| Between State Ideology and Minority National Identity: Palestinians in Israel and in Israeli Social Science Research – Ahmad H Sa'di | 110 |
| Publications Received | 131 |

Between State Ideology and Minority National Identity: Palestinians in Israel and in Israeli Social Science Research

Ahmad H Sa'di

Analyzing socio-political and cultural realities in multinational/ethnic societies such as Israel is inconceivable without attention to the issue of identity. The aim of this article is to deal with the attitude of the Israeli Zionist state toward the national identity of the Arab minority living in Israel and the ways that attitude is reflected in Israeli academic research on 'Israeli Arabs'. Israeli research on the national identity of the Palestinians living in Israel has been conducted to serve political ends. Israeli researchers, instead of inquiring into reasons for the centrality of Palestinian national identity among 'Israeli Arabs', have questioned the existence of a Palestinian national identity and designed their research to deny it. In this paper I will examine the close correlation between the categories informing Israeli social scientists' researches into Palestinian identity within Israel and those underlying the Israeli state's attitudes and practices relating to this national minority. This examination of that relationship should help us to determine whether the Israeli state has succeeded in creating a hegemonic conception of the minority's national identity.

ZIONIST PERCEPTIONS OF THE PALESTINIANS' NATIONAL IDENTITY

In May 1948, the independence of Israel was declared. Only

160,000 of a pre-1948 population of 900,000 Palestinians remained in the part of Palestine which became Israel (Peres, 1977:62). In the Israeli declaration of independence, the national identity of the remnant Palestinians was defined as 'Arab'. Since 1948, however, political and administrative factors have brought about a reconsideration of the national identity of the Palestinians in Israel. The result is a multiplicity of 'images' serving to designate this population: 'Arabs', 'Israeli-Arabs', 'Arabs of the land of Israel', 'minorities' and 'non-Jewish population' ('image' is used in this paper - in lieu of 'representation' - as the term is consistently used in the research literature. The terms 'Palestinians in Israel' and 'Israeli Arabs' are used interchangeably). This proliferation raises questions concerning the differences between these images and the way mainstream Zionism relates to them.

Concepts, images and definitions are not neutral descriptions of certain collectivities or social phenomena when mobilised in a situation dominated by conflict. Incorporated into ideologies and linked to connotations and interpretations, they serve to justify and legitimate certain activities and to discredit others. A salient feature of the state-produced images listed above is their non-Palestinian content. This refusal to acknowledge the category 'Palestinian' is of great significance in light of the fact that acceptance of the image 'Palestinian' would in various ways refute Zionist historiography and challenge the legitimacy and morality of the Zionist project.

Zionist leaders have refused to recognise the Palestinians as a nation and those living in Israel as a national minority precisely in order to avoid such an undermining of Israeli ideology. The refusal (frequently and variously articulated both before and after the 1948 war) is most familiar in the form given it by Golda Meir:

It was not as though there was a Palestinian people in Palestine considering itself as a Palestinian people and we came and threw them out and took their country away from them. They did not exist (quoted in Chomsky, 1975: 26).

M Begin, former Likud prime minister, was aware of the fact that with the acceptance of Palestinian national identity, the moral claims of Zionism are undermined. When asked about the rights of 'Palestinians' by a member of Kibbutz Ein Hahoresh, Begin replied:

My friend, take care. When you recognise the concept of

'Palestine', you demolish your right to live in Ein Hahoresh. If this is Palestine and not the Land of Israel, then you are conquerors and not tillers of the land. You are invaders. If this is Palestine, then it belongs to a people who lived here before you came. Only if it is the Land of Israel do you have a right to live in Ein Hahoresh . . . (quoted by Chomsky, 1975: 27).

Another rhetorical device by Zionist politicians, scholars and propagandists to deny the existence of a Palestinian national identity is the idea of 'non-historic nations'. This concept was formulated by Engels in the second half of the nineteenth century and proved untenable in the light of subsequent historical developments. Nonetheless, it has frequently been mobilized by Zionists; Syrkin, the biographer of Golda Meir, argued that Palestinian nationalism is an artificial concept since 'unlike its role in Jewish history and tradition, in the Arab eyes Palestine was neither the cradle of a nation nor a holy land' (Syrkin, 1971: 99). Aliyav, a veteran member of Israel's so-called 'peace camp', described Palestinian nationalism as an artificial movement and not a genuinely nationalist one (Terry, 1976/7:73). The argument is polemical; it says that as far as nationality is concerned 'we are genuine' while 'you are superficial'. There have been instances of Zionist historiographers falsifying historical evidence regarding the Arab migration to Palestine before 1948 to prove there never was a Palestinian people. An attempt to revive the worn out claim of 'Land without people for people without land' was recently made by Peters (1984) who produced false historical evidence concerning the number of Palestinians who lived in Palestine during the Mandate Period (for reviews of Peters see Said, 1988 and Finkelstein, 1988).

'Arabs', which was the most popular Zionist term for describing Palestinians before 1948, continues to be the term used most widely and most frequently in describing Palestinians. Palestinians are registered on Israeli identity cards as 'Arabs', and the Israeli Declaration of Independence uses the same terminology. This characterization suggests that Palestinians are Arabs with no particularities of their own. Generally speaking, Palestinians are, of course, part of the Arab nation; they share language and various other cultural characteristics with other Arab communities. This consanguinity does not, however, undermine the validity of their historical, cultural and territorial – in other words, national – particularity. National particularism has, throughout the Middle

East, supremacy over broad Arab nationalism. There are Syrian Arabs, Egyptian Arabs, and so forth, but their particularism is not challenged as it is with Palestinian Arabs.

In Zionist ideology the denial of the Palestinians' particularism has, since before 1948 and up until the present day, led to calls for the 'transfer' of Palestinians to surrounding Arab states where they, as 'Arabs', belong. The idea that there are many Arab countries and that it is desirable to transfer the Palestinians to them has been widespread in Israeli-Jewish public and parliamentary opinion since the foundation of the state (see Peres, 1977 and Smootha, 1987). The slogan 'They Must Go', promoted in the 1980s by Meir Kahane, the late leader of the extremist group 'Kach', echoes the ideas of the early leadership (Ben-Gurion, Weizmann, etc.) which planned and carried out acts of transfer in the 50s and 60s (see Jiryis, 1976, Shahak, 1978, Melman and Raviv, 1988).

Other images include 'minorities', 'non-Jewish population', 'Israeli Arabs', and 'Moslems, Christians, Druze'. From the state's point of view, the 'non-Jewish' population is a mere collection of different minorities, which can be unified within the category of 'non-Jewish' because of their sectarian alterity (i.e. 'we – the Jews' – versus 'the others'), their residence in Israel before the massive Jewish immigration, and the fact that they speak Arabic and are influenced, in various degrees, by Arabic culture (Peres, 1977: 56-7).

The attitude of the Israeli state towards Palestinians living in Israel has remained within the limits of thisideo-political 'mode of thought'. The non-recognition of the Palestinians living in Israel as a national minority is an ideological presupposition determining political and practical policies towards Israeli Arabs as a collectivity. In 1976 Yitzhak Rabin, then prime minister, claimed that the Arabs in Israel constituted a cultural religious minority rather than a political or national one (Haddad et al., 1979: 93). Yigal Allon described the interplay between these two aspects in the following way:

It is necessary to declare it openly: Israel is a single nationality Jewish state. The fact that an Arab minority lives within the country does not make it a multinational state. It only requires that the state grant equal citizenship to every citizen of the state, with no differences based on religion, race or nationality. The Arabs have many states, the Jews have one state only. The Arabs of this country must understand that they also must make a

substantial contribution toward the alleviation of Jewish suspicion regarding most of the Arab population (quoted in Lustik, 1980: 65).

Both Rabin and Allon follow the principle of denying the existence of any national group other than the Jews in Israel. To them, Israel is a mono-national state and the Arabs in Israel do not have (and are not allowed to have) a collective national identity.

The 'mono-nationalism' explicit in these formulations draws a distinction between the land belonging to the nation of Israel and those 'foreigners' who dwell on it. One of the terms formulated in the years following the establishment of the state for the Palestinians resident in Israel was 'the Arabs of Israel'. This image connotes a distinction between the people and the land; the Arabs are living (lived) in the land of Israel without having a moral or a historical claim to own it, for it is by definition 'The Land of the Jewish People'. This separation between the Palestinians and the land has been expressed on countless occasions by Zionist politicians, ideologists and scholars. Ariel Sharon, attempting to give ideological back-up to his hard-line policy on the controversial issue of the Arab village borders, stated as Minister of Agriculture in 1977 that

National land is actually robbed by foreigners.... Although there is talk of the Judaisation of Galilee, the region is regressing into a Gentile district... I initiated a strong action to prevent aliens from taking the state lands (quoted in Smooha, 1987: 26).

Sharon emphasised the need to continue the unfinished Zionist assignment, begun by the socialist Zionists, of 'the occupation of the land' (*Kibush ha-adama*) in terms of which Palestinians are seen as foreigners.

Israeli social scientists, in line with this principle, questioned Palestinians resident in Israel as to their attachment to their land. Peres put to his interviewees the following question 'do you feel more at home in Israel or in the Arab states?' (Peres, 1977: 186). Molho asked Palestinians she interviewed about their readiness to leave their villages and the destinations to which they would chose to go (Molho, 1980: 481).

THE STATE'S POLICY: FROM PALESTINIANS TO 'ISRAELI ARABS'

Policies, by virtue of standing between the realms of abstract ideas and action, are of great importance for research, for they embody the ideas which are put into practice. Generally speaking, the policies of multinational/ethnic states towards their minorities can be aligned along a spectrum ranging from that of intentional assimilation to that of granting the minority territorial autonomy with participation in the process of national decision making (i.e. consociational regime). Israeli policy rejects both assimilation and autonomy. Instead it aims at changing the very essence of the Palestinians' identity through the *divide et impera* method of control. It has worked to divide the Palestinian community on the national level according to religious and social alliances, and on the local level according to family lines. Hence, the Druze have been separated from the Muslims through being granted a privileged status, Bedouins from other Palestinians through privileged treatment on individual bases, and attempts (for the most part unsuccessful) have been made to single out the Christians by presenting them as a separate community (Lustick, 1980, Nakleh, 1975a and Segev, 1984). State policy has aimed to divide the Palestinian minority along communal lines, while introducing a loose overarching identity of 'Israeli Arabs' distinguishing Palestinians both from the Arabs in the Arab states and from those in the 'Terrorist Organisation' of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (Nakleh, 1975b: 31-2). Enforcement of this 'Israeli Arab' identity was pursued parallel to an uncompromising policy of de-Palestinisation through the deliberate demolition of every Palestinian cultural characteristic. Expressing the state's perception and policy toward the culture of the Palestinian minority, Michman stated

To understand the cultural mosaic of the minority, however, it is necessary to distinguish between the various communities (Moslems, Christians and Druze). . . . The religious differentiation influences to a considerable extent the cultural life of the minorities. It has resulted in a divergent historical development, and in varied sociological economic and intellectual structures. It should be also remembered that the cultural centres of these communities have always been in the capitals of the neighbouring countries. . . . For all these reasons,

the autonomous development of the cultural life within these communities has always been extremely difficult (Michman, 1973: 64-65).

As a result of this perceived fragmentation, policy is to draw segments of the Palestinian population into identification with Israeli culture. Since many Arabs can read Hebrew 'those belonging to the educated stratum have no trouble whatsoever in enjoying cultural activities in Hebrew or in reading Hebrew publications [and thus], on the recommendation of the national council for culture and arts, four books from Hebrew literature have been published in Arabic translation' (*Ibid*).

The state's policy of de-Palestinisation was made explicit in the introduction of an amendment to the 'Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance 1948' according to which any public action of identification or expression of sympathy (raising a flag, displaying symbols, voicing slogans, singing the Palestinian anthem, etc.) with 'terrorist organisations' (specifically the PLO) was made a criminal offence. The mid-seventies surge in Palestinian national identification among large sectors of the Palestinian community in Israel had made existing policies of negative dismissal of nationalist identity appear insufficient, and seemed to demand the need for a more active policy of suppression. The amendment passed through the Knesset in 1980 with the support of both Labour (M'arach) and Likud (Smoocha, 1980a: 26). This law marks a new phase of the state's policy of fighting Palestinian national identity in linking the Palestinian flag, symbols and essential parts of Palestinian culture with terrorism. This policy is unprecedented in multinational/ethnic states for it does not merely outlaw a national movement with political demands, but criminalises the very existence of a minority's national identity and culture. With the introduction of this law, Israel's antagonistic policy towards Palestinian national identity reached its limits, if the policy of expulsion is excluded.

PALESTINIAN IDENTITY IN ISRAELI SOCIAL SCIENCE LITERATURE

In the previous sections I have dealt with the state's ideological-political attitudes toward the Palestinians and with state policies developed in accordance with those attitudes. In this section, I shall

focus on the ways Israeli social scientists have dealt with the issue of Palestinian national identity and the relations between their perceptions and those of the state.

The national identity of 'Israeli Arabs' is the theme which most concerns Israeli scholars who write about Arabs in Israel. Sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists and orientalist have researched this subject intensively. Despite the heterogeneity of their intellectual background, their work shares many conceptual and methodological elements.

All the Israeli researchers who dealt systematically with the national identity of the Palestinians based their research on hypotheses related to modernisation theory. Modernisation theory posits that mass education and the development of extended networks of communication accelerate social change, social and spatial mobility, and moves towards standardisation. Such advances weaken primordial social ties (those of the individual to his family, kinship group, village, etc.) and substitute for the identities those ties promoted new collective forms of identification such as nationalism (see Deutsch, 1953 and Parning and Cheung, 1980).

Israeli social scientists, following this general modernisation theory approach to individual and group identities, introduced five inter-related assumptions to set the parameters of their approaches to Palestinian identity. One, the national identity of the 'Israeli Arabs' is a phenomenon without historical depth. It is considered to have come into being with the establishment of the state in 1948, and any previous traces of a Palestinian national identity are either denied or ignored. Two, the intensive modernisation process which the Arabs have experienced has led to the weakening of their primordial loyalties on the one hand, while, on the other, imposed on them the task of searching for new frames of identification. Stendel, for example writes:

The undermining of the traditional values of Arab society has created a severe crisis, in the course of which old loyalties based on blood relationships have weakened. The sense of 'belonging' to a clan is fading. A worker's mobility frees him from dependence upon landowners. His life is no longer focused on one point and indeed the whole pattern of his relationships and commitments has been disrupted (Stendel, 1973: 199).

Three, the process of searching for new frameworks of

identification creates a feeling of alienation and rootlessness. This leads Arabs in general, and particularly the younger generation which was raised within the Israeli state, to experience individual 'identity crises'. Shokeid, in a review of relevant research, concludes

Some of the studies carried out among Israeli Arabs has concentrated on problems of national identity, particularly among Arab youths. These young Arabs were described as being trapped in a situation in which they did not fully belong, or as unable to identify with either of the surrounding worlds, whether Jewish or Arab (Shokeyid, 1980: 199).

Four, given the inability of older more localized identities to offer frames within which to evaluate contemporary experience, Israeli Arabs seek to identify with more global reference groups such as 'Arab', 'Israeli', 'Israeli-Arab', 'Palestinian-Arab', 'Palestinian-Israeli', 'Moslem', 'Christian' and 'Druze'. Five, such 'images' can be seen to reflect either the radicalism and alienation felt by Israeli-Arabs or their senses of moderation and their desire to be integrated into Israeli society. 'Palestinian' and 'Palestinian-Arab' identities signify radicalism while 'Israeli-Arab' and sectarian religious images of identification signify moderation and a desire to assimilate. The newly invented image of 'Palestinian-Israeli' stands somewhere in the middle.

Such a trajectory of assumptions leads some Israeli social scientists to come to 'social-scientific' conclusions conforming closely with presuppositions mobilized by Zionist ideologues and politicians in establishing policy. Rekhess, a notable Israeli researcher of Palestinian national self-awareness, developed what came to be known as the 'radicalisation thesis' (Rekhess, 1976). According to this thesis, Israeli Arabs have, since the 1967 war, been moving along a path of radicalisation which leads to growing Palestinianisation, to preservation and renewal of Palestinian culture, as well as to increasing support for the PLO. This movement is away from primordial identification, tendencies of moderation and desire to integrate into Israeli society. Rekhess' underlying political assumption justifies the state's heavy handed treatment of its Arab minority as not only necessary but also inevitable. Hofman, who until recently refused to acknowledge 'Palestinian' identification, has, faced with overwhelming evidence, recently changed his position. He now considers 'Palestinian' identification to signify

'PLO oriented Palestinian nationalism' (Hofman, 1987: 24) which, in the Israeli context, means a terrorist orientation. Y. Peres, who is considered an authoritative sociologist of ethnic and racial relations, makes this implicit equation explicit, thus constructing an object for repressive state action: 'Palestinian national identification meant acceptance of violent terror raids against their Jewish neighbours. For many young Arabs, it was not only an ideological dilemma, but a practical one as well' (Peres, 1971: 43).

The vast majority of Israeli scholars adopted the presuppositions of modernisation theory in order to conduct statistical empirical research using either the socio-psychological theories of Miller (1963) or the structural theories of Kerlinger (1967). Miller defines self-identity as a person's private version of his pattern of traits, distinguishing between a person's identity as he perceives it, the identity he aspires to, potential identity, and public identity. Kerlinger argues that attitudes are 'orthogonal', i.e. independent from each other; Israeli social scientists have thus measured Palestinians' attitudes towards Israeli and Palestinian identities as independent phenomena. Their investigations are usually conducted to explore the self awareness among Palestinians by providing subjects with a list of images and asking them to choose the image which they deem most appropriate to their status. Although there are many similarities among these statistics-based studies, there are methodological and conceptual nuances distinguishing between them which call for them to be considered in three distinct groupings.

The first type of research (also the first to appear) was conducted by Peres and his collaborators just before and just after the June 1967 war. The timing of the research gave Peres and Davis (1969) the opportunity of observing changes in Israeli-Arabs' attitudes towards the state in light of the changing aspect of the Israeli-Arab conflict. This study not only opened a new field of research, but also set up the rules and the basic concepts that future researchers would accept in their investigations of the issue of Israeli-Arabs' national identity. Subsequent Israeli researchers conducting statistical empirical studies have followed Peres in relying on the presuppositions of modernisation theory, viewing Israeli-Arab's national identity in psychological terms, and considering Israeli-Arabs as a collectivity produced by political and historical regional developments on which they had had no influence.

The research included questions concerning self-definition and the political future desired by Israeli Arabs. As far as questions on

self-definition are concerned, the people surveyed were asked to rank the different images provided on a list according to the degrees to which they respectively defined their national identity. Prior to the 1967 war, the order of results was 'Israeli', 'Israeli-Arab', 'Arab', 'Palestinian'. After the war, however, the order became 'Arab', 'Moslem/Christian', 'Israeli-Arab', 'Palestinian', 'Israeli'. Peres argued from these findings that two strong and conflicting frames of identification exist within which Israeli-Arabs identify themselves: the Israeli and the pan-Arab. To cope with this conflict, Israeli-Arabs have developed self-defence mechanisms: compartmentalisation, which divides cognition from behaviour, and role distancing, which involves taking a role without identifying oneself with it (Peres, 1977: 181-4). The problem with this approach, which assumes a form of schizophrenia to explain inconsistencies in choices of images of identity, is that the analysts did not take account of interviewees' awareness of the fact that the social scientists doing the surveys were representatives of an Israeli Zionist state which held firm opinions as to which images were positive and which negative. Israeli Arabs could not really afford to choose anything but the 'safe' image, especially after eighteen years of repressive military rule.

Before the war the vast majority (81 percent) of Israeli Arabs responded to questions about the political future they desired with the choice 'a separate but equal people within the state of Israel'. After the war only 53 percent choose this option, while 17 percent wanted a separate state and 19 percent claimed to desire an Arab state covering the entire territory of Palestine. Peres analysed this change as indicating a rise in the national consciousness of Israeli-Arabs (*ibid.*, 186). In my opinion, however, the results of the pre-war and post-war surveys alike indicate the Palestinian's self-conception of themselves as a distinct minority with its own historical and cultural characteristics justifying a demand for pluralism. Even before the war their self-conception as a people led them to reject the option of assimilation and to insist on their collective identity and their collective political rights. The shift is indicative not so much of a rise in national consciousness as the beginnings of a movement to elaborate that national consciousness within a nationalist frame of reference.

The second body of research is that carried out over the last eighteen years by Hofman and his collaborators. In his research, Hofman has adopted Miller's semantic differential method of measurement. His first study with Debbyny hypothesized that the

'Arab identity could be similarly discriminated along lines of religious affiliation' (Hofman and Debbyny, 1970: 1014). Their interviewees, eleventh grade students, were asked to rank five images - 'Me', 'Arab', 'Israeli-Arab', 'Lebanese-Moslem', 'Lebanese-Christian' - in terms of the increasing distance of every image from 'Me'. They concluded from their results 'that to be an Arab means first of all to be a Moslem. Arab nationalism may well leave Christians at the periphery' (*ibid.*). This conclusion was restated in Hofman's (1974) second study. The third study, conducted with Rouhana (1976), used open ended questionnaires unlike the earlier two and presented the analysis with serious difficulties as some of the findings did not match the conclusions previously reached. They found that

There was overwhelming satisfaction with the national sub-identity . . . With respect to the religious sub-identity, importance and attractiveness went their separate ways. Almost all expressed satisfaction in their religion, but few attached importance to it, least of all the Druze. The ties to religion were sentimental, but apparently not much more than that (Hofman and Rouhana 1976: 78).

This did not prevent them from concluding that for Christians 'Arab nationalism does not follow quite as readily from their own past and tradition as it does for Moslems (*ibid.*). The same depiction of Israeli-Arabs as deeply divided along religious lines and the same argument that they are best understood in terms of ethno-religious criteria surfaces again in Hofman's 1978 study. Here he concludes that 'the direct effects of the religious factor, or its indirect effects as a pattern in which ethno-economic division is hidden, have not weakened' (Hofman, 1978: 281).

Peres criticised Hofman's studies for refusing to include the image 'Palestinian' in his list of images even though the largest groups of interviewees in other studies identified themselves as such (Peres 1980). Hofman's exclusion of the image 'Palestinian' was deliberate insofar as it followed from his opinion that the Palestinian frame of identification lacks continuity and is hence not real. Peres also asserted that Hofman's findings could not be generalised to the Arab population in Israel as his interviewees, secondary school pupils and university students, were not representative of the population as a whole (*ibid.*: 244-5). Hofman has recently retreated from his indefensible position of denying

Palestinian identity and has included the Palestinian image in his research. Nonetheless, despite the change in terminology the impetus of the work remains unchanged. Instead of postulating that Christians and Moslems are distinct types of Arabs, Hofman's new position states that: 'there is in fact some evidence to show that Muslims and Christians are distinct types of Palestinians' (Hofman, 1987: 22).

Evaluating Hofman's research in relation to Zionist ideological perceptions of Palestinian identity and their reflections in state policy, one finds striking similarities. Hofman's main hypothesis, which his research is designed to prove, restates the official state position that the Palestinian minority in Israel is a collective of religious minorities loosely associated through an overarching Israeli-Arab frame of identification. In his work governmental policies are represented as objective realities; the state policy aimed at changing the identity of the Palestinians in Israel from 'Palestinian' to 'Israeli-Arab' is represented by Hofman not as a strategy in the process of being carried out but as an indisputable empirical fact. Thus, he writes in the introduction to one of his studies that 'since the establishment of the state the consolidation of two new national categories has begun, the Israeli Jew versus the Israeli Arab, a consolidation which continues until this day' (Hofman, 1974: 316).

The third type of research includes the studies of Zak (1976) and Smoocha (1980b, 1982). Zak (1976), following Keringer's structural theory, argued that in many cases the structure of attitudes is orthogonal rather than bipolar. The identity of the Israeli-Arabs can be formulated in terms of two theoretically independent scales: one measuring Israeli identity and the other Arab identity. Israeli identity expresses a sense of common destiny with the state of Israel, of belonging with Israelis, of sensitivity to Israeli issues and of feelings of interdependence with the Israeli people. Arab identity expresses the need to take an active interest in the fate of the Arabs elsewhere and the tendency to regard Arabs all over the world as members of one family. Zak reports that the only association found between these two scales is a negative correlation of -0.22, which is due to the Israeli-Arab conflict. By controlling the indices of this conflict, Zak was able, however, to establish the total independence of the two identities.

Zak researched the identity of the Israeli Arabs in a way similar to his researching of American Jews, without acknowledging the conflicting ideologies of Americans and Israelis regarding the

nature of their societies. The USA, at least officially, aims at creating an American people, regardless of race, ethnicity or religion; the American nation is meant to stand above and encompass different groups' cultural and social particularities. Israel in contrast, declares itself as the state of the Jewish people; its claimed *raison d'être* is to serve the needs of the Jews, and the needs and identities of others can only be peripheral. Officially, there is no such notion as the 'Israeli nation'; there are 'Arabs' and 'Jews' in Israel.

Smoocha used Zak's model in his research (1980b and 1982), with one change. He substituted the concept 'Palestinian identity' for that of 'Arab identity'. Smoocha posited the existence of a dialectical relationship between Palestinian and Israeli identities according to which a growing tendency towards Palestinian self identification is accompanied by a desire for involvement with and integration into Israeli society. According to Smoocha's thesis of 'Arab politicalisation' this dialectical relationship results in the birth of a new identity which Smoocha calls that of 'the new Arab':

The new Arab was born and has been educated since the establishment of the state, has at least post primary education, has command of both Arabic and Hebrew, and is versed in both Arab and Israeli culture. He is strongly committed to democracy, considering it the best defensive weapon at his disposal as an individual and as a member of a minority. His level of aspiration is high and he compares his achievements to those of the Jews. He accepts Israel and sees his future tied to it. He feels deprived and is willing to fight hard for equality. The new Arab in Israel is sensitive, proud, and self-assertive (Smoocha 1989: 223).

Again, like Zak, Smoocha ignores the fact that both legally and practically there is in Israel no Israeli nation to serve as a frame of identification for all Israelis. As Shipper (1988) notes:

Today, one out of every six Israelis is an Arab, but the Arab is not Israeli in the full sense. His citizenship is shallow. It taints his self identity with complication. He exists at the edge of a society that can never, by its nature, accept him as a complete member in disregard of the religious and ethnic identities that set him apart (Shipper, 1988: 428).

Researchers who have analysed the relationship between

Palestinian and Israeli frames of identification have tried to investigate the hierarchical order between them. Tessler, for example, found strong negative relations (-0.407) between the distribution of responses on the Israeli scale and those on the Palestinian scale; 41 percent of his subjects accepted the term Palestinian and rejected the term Israeli, 29 percent accepted Israeli and rejected Palestinian, while a third expressed similar attitudes towards each focus of identity (Tessler, 1977: 316-7). Clearer results in this respect were reported by Hofman and Rouhana as a result of a direct question put to the interviewees: 'If confronted with a choice, are you ready to renounce your 'Arab' or your 'Israeli' identity?' (Hofman and Rouhana, 1976). The results they obtained suggest that Israeli identity is unimportant for the vast majority of the Palestinians; while none of the interviewees were ready to renounce 'Arab' identity, 82.5 percent were ready to renounce Israeli identity if called upon to choose between the two.

Even if we disregard the issue of the existence or non-existence of an idea of Israeli nationhood, it appears that Smoocha has established his model by ignoring some major issues and misrepresenting others. He ignores, for example, the conflict between state ideology and Palestinian national identity. Instead of dealing with this conflict as a major factor of antagonism, he has reduced it to an issue of attitudes, as if the ideology of the state does not favour either side, and as if the state's hegemonic ideology does not exist. In fact, Smoocha's argument concerning the emergence of a peculiar Israeli-Palestinian identity reflects his deep misunderstanding of the notions of nationalism and of national identity; his image of the 'new Arab' is no more than a revised version of the image 'Israeli-Arab' produced and fostered by Israeli politicians and Arabists. Israeli politicians like Golda Meir and Pinhas Sapir spoke in the sixties and early seventies of the new generation of Arabs which had grown up, been educated and modernised in Israel. In my opinion, Smoocha's model is an ideological obfuscation of the simple aspiration of the Palestinians as a national minority to keep their national identity at the same time as they oppose oppression and discrimination.

In evaluating Israeli research on Palestinian national identity, it is essential to consider not only its design but also its premises, its content and the ideological-social framework within which it unfolds. Superficially, it seems that the Israeli research discussed above complies with the 'rules of objectivity'. It is based on general theories of identity from which researchers drew hypotheses and in

terms of which they compiled lists of images of identity from which the Arabs surveyed were asked to choose the image most appropriate to their conceptions of their identities. In this process, as in the subsequent processing, presentation and explanation of the resultant data, the role of the researcher appears secondary and instrumental while 'scientific process' takes the prime and determinant role. Behind this facade of objectivity lies, however, a systematic ideological-political bias. This can be seen when the following theoretical presuppositions are unpacked.

One, Israeli researchers have adopted an a-historical theory of modernisation which views national identity as an outcome of the modernisation process and a substitute for the primordial identities of the pre-modern era. In light of this approach, Palestinians are seen not to have existed as a national entity with a particular national identity during the British Mandate Period and are assumed to have only appeared as a self-conscious national collectivity with the establishment of the State of Israel.

Two, despite modernisation theory's emphasis on national identity as a distinct form of identity, Israeli social scientists have analysed Palestinian national identity as analogous to other identities such as the familial, the occupational, etc. This directly contradicts the approach of Deutsch, the major theoretician of modernisation and national identity, who firmly distinguishes national identity from more specific identities:

Ethnic complementarity, the complementarity that makes a people, can be readily distinguished by its relatively wide range from the narrow vocational complementarity which exists among members of the same profession . . . efficient communication among engineers, etc., is limited to a relatively narrow segment of their total range of activities. In most other things they do, in their childhood memories, courtship, marriage . . . they are far closer to mutual communication and understanding with their countryman than with their fellow specialist in other countries (Deutsch, 1953: 72).

It seems here that Israeli researchers used the tenets of modernisation theory when they suited their intentions, exchanging them for those of more psychological theories when ideology demanded.

Three, in order to deny the historical evidence for the long-standing existence and development of Palestinian national

identity, Israeli researchers dealt with national identity as a matter of personal attitude only, ignoring its historical, social, cultural and political dimensions.

Four, Israeli researchers failed to recognise that images of identity chosen by their interviewees represent situational identities rather than exclusive alternatives. Researchers put to Palestinians surveyed lists of images which included 'Israeli', 'Israeli-Arab', 'Palestinian', 'Palestinian-Arab', 'Israeli-Palestinian', 'Arab', 'Christian', 'Moslem', and 'Druze'. The majority of these images describe Palestinians: legally, Palestinians living in Israel are Israeli; officially, they are registered as Israeli-Arabs; socially, every person is born into a family belonging to a certain religious group. One would expect Palestinians, like members of any other national group, to provide varying answers, dependent on situation, to the question 'What are you?'. Israeli researchers did not seem, however, to account for this variability in reaching their conclusions. They were particularly indifferent to two significant criteria in evaluating responses. Firstly, that a statement of one's attitude regarding one's identity reflects one's particular situation at a particular moment; for instance, Palestinians in Israel, when faced with legal issues, will stress their Israeli identity. Secondly, and following from this, Palestinians, recognising that the state's ideology and practices are anti-Palestinian, will be reluctant to adopt the image 'Palestinian' publicly, and particularly when being questioned by people who represent official Israeli institutions. Zureik realised that Palestinians are more ready to admit their Palestinian affiliation to Palestinian researchers than they are to Israeli researchers who they perceive as associated with the politically dominant group (Zureik, 1987: 227).

Finally, the research discussed here should not be considered only in an intellectual context but must as well be seen in terms of the role it plays in relations between the Israeli-Zionist state and the Palestinian minority. The state, naturally, tries to foster its version of the state of affairs and to institutionalise and popularise that reading through intellectual persuasion. Researchers can either support the state's version or produce other interpretations of the situation which may be critical of or indifferent to the state's rendition. This review of Israeli social scientific literature on Palestinian identity suggests that Israeli researchers have failed to introduce alternative approaches to that of the state. It seems that they have instead assimilated the state's ideology into their research under the guise of social science concepts, methods and design. In

this way, state ideology is reproduced and presented as objective, scientific discourse.

NATIONAL IDENTITY AND PUBLIC OPINION

A system of ideas gains political potency by virtue of becoming hegemonic – by establishing itself as the ideology of the masses. In this respect, it is to be noted that the Israeli state's ideas concerning the Palestinians has been adopted by the vast majority of Israeli Jews. A cross-section survey of Israeli Jews, conducted at the beginning of 1970, disclosed that two thirds of those polled either believed that a Palestinian people did not really exist or were not sure whether they existed or not (cited in Nakhleh, 1975b: 38). A more recent survey, conducted in 1980, reveals that only 11 percent of those polled agreed that Israel must unconditionally recognise the Palestinian nation (Smootha and Peretz, 1982: 458-9). It is not clear from these surveys whether or not the concept 'Palestinians' extends to those living in Israel. It is possible that, in certain political circumstances, Israel and Jewish Israelis might be ready to recognise the existence of a Palestinian nation, but this would refer only to that part of the Palestinian population living outside the 1967 borders. Israeli politicians, as well as the Israeli press and public, has always firmly distinguished between Palestinians living in Israel and their countrymen living in the West Bank and Gaza. This distinction has been highlighted by the events of the uprising and the possibilities they invoke of a political settlement.

Nonetheless, in spite of state ideology and Israeli public opinion, Palestinians living in Israel are experiencing an evolving national-self consciousness as considerable evidence brought by various researchers shows (see Zureik, 1987; Mi'ari, 1987; Nakhleh, 1975b; Qanaz'a, 1985; Shipier, 1988).

CONCLUSIONS

Israeli politicians, social scientists and ordinary people, when legislating on, researching or discussing the status of Palestinians in Israel, dwell at length with questions such as: 'Have the Arabs (in Israel) reconciled themselves with their status as a minority in the state of Israel?', 'Do they recognise the state?'. Implicit in these questions, as in reference to 'the loyalty of the minority' and the

'Israeli-Arab conflict', is an antagonism to the national identity of Palestinians *per se*. The will to efface Palestinian identity is again evident in a recently launched state programme in the Arab secondary schools aimed at teaching pupils to accept their status as members of an Arab minority. The sources of this antagonism can be traced to the early Zionist ideological denial of the existence in Palestine of any group in possession of a sense of national identity other than the Jews. The state of Israel is the fulfilment of that ideological denial, and consequently pursues its self-definition as a mono-national state by classifying members of the Palestinian nation under a number of exclusive and non-national categories and putting into practice policies aiming at destroying their national identity.

The state has been successful until now in establishing its hegemonic conception of Palestinian identity through the mobilisation of Israeli Jewish public opinion and the findings of social scientists who, as 'experts', reproduce state ideology as 'scholarship'. Now, however, with the Palestinian uprising in the Occupied Territories and the mounting international pressure on Israel to solve the Israeli-Arab conflict peacefully, the state ideological structure faces new challenges. If the Israeli leadership is forced into recognising that the Palestinians outside the 1967 borders constitute a nation with political and historic rights, then it will be difficult for it to maintain the position that the Palestinians inside Israel do not have a particular national identity too. Their claim that Israel is a mono-national state will become untenable.

The author wishes to thank the following people for their comments on previous drafts: Dr Paul Kelemen, Dr David Pool, Prof. Teodor Shanin and Glenn Bowman. The author is, however, solely responsible for the arguments presented in this paper.

Bibliography

A = Arabic, H = Hebrew.

- Chomsky, N. 1975. *Peace in the Middle East*. Glasgow: Collins.
- Deusch, K. 1953. *Nationalism and Social Communication*. Cambridge: M.I.T.
- Finkelstein, N. 1988. 'Disinformation and the Palestine Question' in E. Said and C. Hitchens (eds), *Blaming the Victims: Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question*. London: Verso.
- Haddad, S. et al. 1979. 'Minorities in Containment: The Arabs of Israel' in R. Melaurin (ed.), *The Role of Minority Groups in the Middle East*. New York: Praeger.

Between State Ideology and Minority National Identity

- Hofman, J. 1974. 'National Images of Arab Youth in Israel and the West Bank' in *Megaron*, XX(3), 316-324 (H).
- 1978. 'Changes in the National-Religious Identities of Young Arabs in Israel' in *Megaron*, XXIV(2), 277-282 (H).
- 1987. 'Jewish-Arab Relations in Israel: Human Relations and Social Identity' in *Patterns of Prejudice*, XXI(3), 15-26.
- and S. Debbiny. 1970. 'Religious Affiliation and Ethnic Identity' in *Psychological Reports*, XXVI, 1014.
- and N. Rouhana. 1976. 'Young Arabs in Israel: Some Aspects of Contradicted Social Identity' in *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 10, 75-86.
- Jirjis, S. 1976. *The Arabs in Israel*. New York: Monthly Review.
- Kerlinger, F. 1967. 'Social Attitudes and their Critical Referents: A Structural Theory' in *Psychological Review*, LXXIV(2), 110-22.
- Lustick, I. 1980. *Arabs in the Jewish State: Israel's Control of a National Minority*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Melman, Y. and D. Raviy. 21 February 1988. 'A Final Solution of the Palestinian Problem?' in *The Guardian Weekly*, 19.
- Mi'ari, M. 1987. 'Traditional and Political Identity of Arabs in Israel' in *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, XXIII(1-2), 3-43.
- Miehan, J. 1973. *Cultural Policy in Israel*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Miller, D. 1963. 'The Study of Social Relationships, Situation, Identity and Social Interaction' in S. Koch (ed.), *Psychology a Study of Science* (Vol. V). New York: McGraw-Hill, 639-726.
- Molho, S. 1980. 'Behaviour and Value Change Among Arab Villagers in Israel' in *Megaron*, XXV(4), 478-487 (H).
- Nakdimon, S. 7 April 1988. 'Ya'ari Did Not Object to Transfer' in *Yedioth Acharonot* (H).
- Nakhleh, K. 1975. 'The Direction of Local-level Conflict in Two Arab Villages in Israel' in *American Ethnologist*, II(3), 497-516.
- 1975. 'Of Palestinian Collective Identity: The Case of the Arabs in Israel' in *New Outlook*, XVIII, 31-40.
- Parning, T. and M. Cheung. 1980. 'Modernisation and Ethnicity' in J. Doirny and A. Akiwowo (eds), *National and Ethnic Movements*. London: Sage, 131-141.
- Peres, Y. 1977. *Ethnic Relations in Israel*. Tel-Aviv: Sefnat Hapaleem (H).
- 1971. 'Ethnic Relations in Israel' in M. Curtis (ed.), *People and Politics in the Middle East*. New Jersey: Transaction, 31-68.
- 1980. Review of J. Hofman, *Images and Identity of Arab Youth in Israel in Hamizrah Hehadash*, XXIX, 244-245 (H).
- and N. Yuval-Davis. 1969. 'Some Observations on the National Identity of the Israeli Arabs' in *Human Relations*, XXII, 219-233.
- Qanaze, G. 1985. 'National Identity in our Local Literature' in *Al-Mawakib*, II(3-4), 6-21 (A).

Review of Middle East Studies

- Rekless, E. 1976. *The Israeli Arabs Since 1967: The Issue of Identity*. Tel-Aviv: Shiloah centre, Tel-Aviv University (H).
- Said, E. 1988. 'Conspiracy of Praise' in E. Said and C. Hitchens (eds), *Blaming the Victims: Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question*. London: Verso. 23-32.
- Segev, T. 1984. *1949 - The First Israelis*. Jerusalem: Domino (H).
- Shahak, I. 1975. *Zionism According to Its Leaders*. Jerusalem: Galleou (H).
- Shiplet, D. 1988. *Arab and Jew: Wounded Spirits in a Promised Land*. New York: Times Books.
- Shokeid, M. 1980. 'Ethnic Identity and the Position of Women Among Arabs in an Israeli Town' in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, III(2), 188-206.
- Smoocha, S. 1980a. 'Existing and Alternative Policy Towards the Arabs in Israel' in *Meganot*, XXXVII(1), 7-36 (H).
- 1980b. *The Orientation and Politicization of the Arab Minority in Israel*. Haifa: The Jewish-Arab Centre, Haifa University.
- 1987. 'Jewish and Arab Ethnocentrism in Israel' in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, X(1), 1-26.
- 1989. *Arabs and Jews in Israel*. Vol. 1. Boulder: Westview Press.
- and D. Peretz. 1982. 'The Arabs in Israel' in *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, XXVI(3), 451-484.
- Stendel, O. 1973. *The Minorities in Israel*. Jerusalem: The Israeli Economist.
- Syrkin, M. 1971. 'Who Are the Palestinians?' in Michael Curtis (ed.), *People and Politics in the Middle East*. New Jersey: Transaction. 93-110.
- Terry, J. 1976/1977. 'Zionist Attitudes Toward Arabs' in *Journal of Palestine Studies*, VI(1), 67-78.
- Tessler, H. 1977. 'Israel's Arabs and the Palestinian Problem' in *Middle East Journal*, XXXI, 313-329.
- Zak, I. 1976. 'Structure of Ethnic Identity of Arab Israeli Students' in *Psychological Reports*, XXXIX, 239-246.
- Zureik, E. 1987. Review of Smoocha: *The Orientation and Politicization of the Arab Minority in Israel* in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, XIX(2), 225-227.

Publications Received as of 26 April 1992

(Although reviews of a number of these texts will appear in future review articles, the following information is provided to inform readers as to what has been recently published)

- Abed, George T. *The Economic Viability of a Palestinian State*. Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies. 1990. \$3.95 pb.
- Abed, George T. *The Palestinian Economy: Studies in Development Under Prolonged Occupation*. London: Routledge. 1988. £30.00 hb.
- Aburish, Said. *Children of Bethany: The Story of a Palestinian Family*. London: I. B. Tauris. 1988. £14.95 hb.
- Aharoni, Yair. *The Israeli Economy: Dreams and Realities*. London: Routledge. 1991. £40.00 hb.
- Ahmed, Akbar S. *Resistance and Control in Pakistan* (foreword Francis Robinson). London: Routledge. 1991. £12.99 pb.
- Amini, Mohammad Javad. *Agriculture, Poverty and Reform in Iran*. London: Routledge. 1990. £30.00 hb.
- Aronoff, Myron. *Israeli Visions and Divisions*. London: Transaction Publishers. £14.95 pb.
- Aronson, Geoffrey. *Israel, Palestinians and the Intifada: Creating Facts on the West Bank*. London: Kegan Paul International. 1990. £30.00 hb.
- Alam, Asaddollah. *The Shah and I: The Confidential Diary of Iran's Royal Court, 1969-1977* (intro. and ed. Alinaghi Alikhanik). London: I. B. Tauris. 1991. £24.95 hb.
- Ayubi, Nazih. *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*. London: Routledge. 1991. £40.00 hb.
- Azar, George Baramki. *Palestine: A Photographic Journey* (introduction Ann Moseley Lesch). Berkeley: University of California Press. 1991. \$49.95 hb, \$24.95 pb.
- Bailey, Clinton. *Bedouin Poetry from Sinai and the Negev* (foreword Wilfred Thesiger). Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1991. \$60.00 hb.
- Beck, Lois. *Nomad: A Year in the Life of a Qashgari Tribesman in Iran*. London: I. B. Tauris. 1991. £14.95 pb.