



THE CHAIM HERZOG CENTER FOR MIDDLE EAST STUDIES & DIPLOMACY

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Israel and its Demand for Recognition as a Jewish State

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Twenty-one years after the signing of the 'Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Agreements' ("Oslo Accords"), the relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority are in a state of perpetual crisis. The causes of the crisis and the reasons for its continuation are manifold and diverse. However, each side has one contention regarding the main reason for not achieving a final status agreement ending the bloody historical conflict. President Mahmoud Abbas



PM Netanyahu at the UN, November 2014

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claims that "the settlement activity represents the core of the policy of military colonial occupation of the Palestinian people's territory and all the brutality of the aggression and racial discrimination against our people that this policy entails." Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly declared that "the core of the conflict has always been and unfortunately continues to be

the Palestinians' refusal to recognize a Jewish state in any borders." The end of occupation and mutual recognition were the two pillars of the Oslo Accords, meant to lead to a permanent agreement and a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The dominant perception among most Israelis is that the widespread opposition within the PLO to recognize Israel as a Jewish state is an expression

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of a denial of the legitimacy of Israel's very existence and reflects opposition in principle to the recognition of its sovereignty. This common perception is rooted in the failure to distinguish between the recognition of Israel and its recognition as a Jewish state.

Various groups in Arab societies are indeed opposed to recognizing Israel. Yet, it is not true that all Arabs refuse to recognize it. The peace agreements signed between Israel and Egypt, and with Jordan include explicit provisions regarding the recognition of Israel; and on the eve of the signing of the Oslo Accords, Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat exchanged letters on the issue. However, there is no reference in these agreements to recognizing Israel 'as a Jewish state.' Diplomatic and legal recognition of the State of Israel is a necessary condition for a peace agreement with any Arab side. The (national and cultural) collective identity of Israeli society is an internal matter. It is of course legitimate for the Israeli consensus to give expression to its Jewish identity. The demand for the Palestinian side to recognize the Jewish identity of the State of Israel is not relevant to the signing of a peace agreement with them.

The demand for the recognition of Israel as a Jewish state in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and in particular when raised in the context of the final status negotiations, has three main implications. The first entails a denial of the very legitimacy of the Palestinian demand for recognition of their historical rights to their homeland, or at least the lion share thereof. Accepting Netanyahu's pre-requisite is tantamount to Abu Mazen agreeing to erase the memory of the Nakba and eliminating the

Palestinian narrative with regard to the 1948 War.

The second implication stems from the fact that the Israeli demand has been raised during the permanent status negotiations. First and foremost this stipulation basically undermines the Palestinian position regarding their sovereignty over a part of Jerusalem and their demand to control the *Haram al-Sharif* complex – that is the Temple Mount. Is it conceivable that after gaining Arab recognition as a Jewish state, Israel would still be ready to compromise on the control over an area that represents the site where the inner sanctum of Judaism was located? And in the context of the Palestinian refugee issue, the recognition of Israel as a Jewish state undermines any possibility of reaching an agreement on this charged issue.

The third implication of the recognition of Israel as a Jewish state pertains to its direct and harsh repercussions for the Palestinian minority among Israel's citizens, particularly in relation to their link to their historical homeland. The last decade saw an ever growing number of expressions of alienation among the Jewish majority in Israel from the minority's positions regarding their historical and national identity as an integral part of the Palestinian people. The events of October 2000 constitute a landmark in the way Israel's Palestinian citizens perceive the state and the majority's attitude toward them. The growing political support for the Right, and especially its hawkish wing, finds clear expression in the Israeli public discourse and in nationalist legislation.

The processes between Israel and the Palestinians are,

of course, affected by regional developments, primarily the power struggles that began with the civil uprisings known as the "Arab Spring." The upheavals in Egypt and Syria and the challenges that the governments in Jordan and Lebanon are facing had a significant impact on the positions held by Israel and the Palestinians. The Israeli government has adopted a policy that actually reflects a preference for the status quo and the rejection of negotiations the conclusion of which will require a significant withdrawal and end its control over the West Bank. In this situation the PA leadership places its hopes in the international community. President Abbas' policy seeks to convert the international support in principle for the establishment of a Palestinian state into political action hoping that it will create a new dynamic in the political process with Israel. At the same time, NGOs in Europe and the US promote initiatives of boycott and sanctions against Israel. These initiatives are controversial, and it is questionable whether they contribute to the accomplishment of the goals, some of them declare to pursue. The status quo in the Israeli-Palestinian arena is fragile and it is doubtful whether it will last much longer.

This complex situation poses a challenge for scholars of the Middle East. The issue 18-19 of the Chaim Herzog Center Newsletter testifies to the importance we have given during the last two years to major issues, including those mentioned above. Many of the reviews presented in this volume have in common that they examine the issues in a broad Middle Eastern context. This research position will continue to guide us in our extensive activities during the coming year. ♦

International Workshop: Jewish Thought in Arab Societies 1880-1960

The international workshop on *Jewish Thought in Arab Societies from 1880 to 1960* was the highlight of the Chaim Herzog Center's activities in 2014. The participants were scholars from Israel, the USA, and Europe. Within a wider trend of growing scholarly interest in various aspects of Jewish history in the modern Middle East, the workshop focused on the intellectual activities of Jews writing in Arabic, French, Hebrew, and English, examining their work in the social, cultural and political context in which it was created. Taking inspiration from the anthology *Modern Middle Eastern Jewish Thought: Writings on Identity, Politics, and Culture 1893–1958* (2013), edited by Moshe Behar (University of Manchester) and Zvi Ben-Dor Benite (New York University), the workshop was largely conceived as a continuation of that project. The two important scholars, who edited the anthology, were among the organizers of the workshop.

The premise of the workshop participants was that Jews were an integral part of the local societies and were affected in similar ways by the processes and changes occurring in Arab societies as well as by the challenges of modern philosophy stemming from the European Enlightenment. Studying their views, ideas and cultural world enables a critical reexamination of the broad political, social and economic changes experienced by the Middle East region, and even extending the range of observation

to wider, global contexts and circles. The workshop organizers thought that such studies may be important, helping to fill a research lacuna, given that the field of Jewish Intellectual History is usually associated with Jewish thought that flourished in Europe and was affected by the changes occurring there. In contrast, the intellectual history of the Middle East is not sufficiently developed, and research on the contribution of Jews to a variety of ideas developed in the region is still in its initial stages. Promoting the study of Jewish intellectual history of the region may contribute to both of these major fields of knowledge. In light of the state of historiography, the workshop organizers sought to identify and reveal the texts that make up the "missing corpus" of the rich works of Middle Eastern Jewish intellectuals.

The workshop was attended by leading scholars along with a host of young researchers.

The speakers and discussants included, among others, Yaron Tsur, Gadi Algazi, Yigal Nizri, Moshe Behar, Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, Yuval Ivri, Almog Behar, Menashe Anzi, Yaacov Yadgar, Liat Kozma, Yoram Meital, Zvi Zohar, Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, Deborah Starr, Haya Bambaji-Sasportas, Michelle Campos, Abigail Jacobson, Orit Ouaknine-Yekutieli, Esther Meir-Glitzstein, Haggai Ram, André Levy, and Henriette Dahan-Kalev. The participants' papers were made available in advance which allowed for in-depth discussions on a variety of issues, including the intellectual world of Hayyim Ben Kiki, Shehata Haroun, Rabbi David Buzaglo, Rabbi Yosef Hayyim, Rabbi Mas'oud Hai Ben Shim'on, Rabbi Raphael Aharon Ben Shim'on, the filmmaker Togo Mizrahi, and the historian Elie Kedourie. Stimulating discussions dealt, among other issues, with *al-Andalus* and how Saul Abdallah Yosef and Abraham



Participants of the workshop "Jewish Thought in Arab Societies 1880-1960"

Shalom Yahuda represented it in their thinking and writing; Eastern feminist thinking in the story of 'Flora Saporto' by Nehama Pohatchevsky; Eastern Jews as mediators in Mandatory Palestine; the paper *Mizrach u-Ma'arav (East and West)*, published by Abraham Elmaleh; the historiography of Moroccan scholars researching Moroccan Jews; a survey of Jewish newspapers in the Mediterranean region; the Theosophical Society in Basra and the transfer of knowledge between Yemen, the Persian Gulf, and Iraq; and the *Farhud* as history and memory in the writings of Iraqi-Jewish intellectuals.

Drawing on methodological tools of global intellectual history, Zvi Ben-Dor Benite discussed Hayyim Ben Kiki who represents well the cultural and intellectual world of Eastern Jewish writers through whom we aimed to highlight the missing intellectual corpus and to place it on the academic agenda. A significant part of the writings of these Eastern Jewish intellectuals is not well known because they lived on the periphery of the major intellectual centers of the Middle East, placing them from the beginning on the periphery of Jewish intellectual history or global and European intellectual history. Ben Kiki's writings that were published in the local Jewish press in Hebrew at the beginning of the twentieth century show that the world he imagined extended far beyond the known geographical boundaries of the Middle East and certainly beyond the narrow historical consciousness that modern nationalism began to impose.

Ben Kiki, born in Tiberias, was the son of Rabbi Shlomo Ben Kiki, who emigrated from Morocco to Ottoman Palestine in the 1860s and spent most of his life in

Tiberias, Haifa and Jerusalem. At a time when the geopolitical and national boundaries had not yet been established on the ground, people like Ben Kiki could rather freely move physically, intellectually, culturally and epistemologically from Tiberias to Damascus, Beirut or Cairo, and even further east to India or west to Italy. Ben Kiki illustrates that the Jews were an integral part of the societies of the East as a whole and that they perceived their history in cultural terms and as distinct from the West. They opposed Europe's expansion into the East in light of the cultural changes that it imposed on local societies. The war in Syria and the establishment of Lebanon demonstrated to Ben Kiki the effects of European expansion, which he analyzed drawing on a perspective and such concepts as "minorities" and "ethnicity," common in the academic discourse on Syria and Lebanon. Dramatic events like the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the Arab Revolt, the Balfour Declaration, and the establishment of the Mandate regimes were perceived as most severe setbacks of the East which Ben Kiki analyzed in civilizational terms.

Ben Kiki gave expression to a historical consciousness that was wide in terms of time and space. Ben-Dor Benite compared Ben Kiki's discussion referring to the old classical categories of human civilization that was not necessarily religious, to the type of analysis of world history proposed by such historians as Hegel, Ranke or Spengler. In Ben Kiki's categorization, the 'Orient' included also Asia. It was not perceived in geographical terms, but as a huge cultural space, as the cradle of the old civilization, created by the prophets and sages, the creators of the Eastern spirit, who included not only the Hebrew prophets and Muhammad, but also Buddha, Confucius and Zoroaster. In Ben Kiki's historical consciousness the world was divided into Asia and Europe, and from there, from his Oriental-Asian vantage point Ben Kiki looked at the global realities of his time. Ben-Dor Benite discerns in Ben Kiki a critical perspective resembling the postcolonial discourse. Thus for example, Ben Kiki presented the relationship between the West and the East as power relations saturated with dialectic contradictions and discussed them as political



Opening session of the workshop

relations between different types of style and forms of knowledge. In Ben Kiki's view, the modern humanities and social sciences were a means of control exerted by the West over the East, designed to weaken its spirit. The East's difficult political situation was the result of this control and of the West's ability to weaken the national culture and the Eastern self-esteem to such an extent that Eastern peoples forgot their identity and internalized the idea of their inferiority. In an article, titled "European Culture in the East," where he discusses these issues, Ben Kiki showed how the members of the three major religions in the East rejected European presence and influence. Moreover, his Jewishness shaped his awareness of the political use made by Europe of religious minorities in the East to undermine its cohesion, and in particular its use of Jews and Christians as heralds of its ideas. As a sworn admirer of Arabic and as translator of the Qur'an, Ben Kiki was convinced that the West's worst attack was directed against Arabic which was the unifying basis of Arab racial unity. Eastern Christians assisted also in this. Europe changed the nature of Arabic by cutting it off from its Islamic poetic anchor and poured it into a European form and style, thus destroying it from within. For the Jewish Ben Kiki, Islam was not only a system of faith and religion, but had also cultural, civilizational meaning, the expression and representation of the old East.

Ben Kiki was concerned about the fate of Jewish culture in the process of Europeanization of the Christian-Arab East, that Jews will lose their collective identity and their Easternness, and thus remain lost and isolated. Though it is not possible here to elaborate his views, it is evident that they corresponded not only to global



The Andalusian Mediterranean Orchestra of Ashkelon

perspectives and worldviews, but also to the views expressed by Christian and Muslim Arab intellectuals of his time and to the work of such Jewish intellectuals as Abraham Shalom Yahuda and Abraham Elmaleh, while reflecting also a growing awareness of Ashkenazi presence in Palestine, of nationalism and Zionism. The discussion on the life of Ben Kiki is one example of the wealth of issues raised in the debates the debates on such a wide range of intellectuals.

The richness and variety of the lectures on these subjects indicated that the category 'intellectual' may be much wider than commonly assumed. The studies presented at the workshop have revealed the existence of a rich Jewish intellectual life in a wide range of fields, from journalism, literature, film and liturgical poems, through political philosophy and rabbinical thought, to theosophy and leftist political theories. Their writings show that Jewish intellectuals had a broad worldview and that their cultural and intellectual world went beyond the defined boundaries in the Middle East. The discussions at the workshop demonstrated that it is possible to find common characteristics

among these intellectuals but also to make distinctions between them, to identify formal and informal networks of intellectuals, or to distinguish between peripheral intellectual history and an intellectual history that is academic in nature, dealing with meta-historical ideas. This raised a number of questions, regarding the contexts in which Middle Eastern Jewish intellectuals need to be studied; issues of memory, identity, and collective community identity; and how Middle Eastern Jews challenged the liberal ideas of nationalism, secularism and the nation state and may offer Jewish versions thereof.

In the framework of the workshop the Chaim Herzog Center invited the participants, faculty members, students and residents of Beer Sheva to a concert: *Umm Kulthum Forever*, performed by the Andalusian Mediterranean Orchestra of Ashkelon, conducted by Tom Cohen. The concert was also an opportunity to become acquainted with the soloists, Nasreen Qadri from Nazareth, who has a very powerful and electrifying stage presence, and Ziv Ezekiel, a Haredi, who was first exposed to Arabic music through liturgical poems in the synagogue, was



Umm Kulthum Forever, May 2014

taken in by it and later decided to study Arabic language and the rules and styles of classical Arabic music. The concert focused on the musical creations of the giants among Egyptian singers, in particular Umm Kulthum, Mohammed Abdel Wahab, and Farid al-Atrash. The impressive performance won enthusiastic applause. The orchestra's composition, and especially the soloists' biographies, fit well into the framework of the workshop; the concert was a perfect closing event. ♦

Forty Years since the Yom Kippur War

During the past year the Chaim Herzog Center organized two events marking the fortieth anniversary of the Yom Kippur War. One addressed fundamental systemic questions revealed by the war, which in part were raised by Yigal Kipnis' book, *1973: The Road to War* (2013); and the other dealt with the way the war has been inscribed in Israeli collective memory, the myths created around it, and its deep, long-term implications for Israeli society.

At the conference following the publication of Kipnis' book the participants, scholars and former members of the intelligence services, discussed the relations between the military and the political leadership during the war, the role of the intelligence services in the political processes leading to the war, and the way that history should be written. The former head of IDF Military Intelligence, Uri Sagi, presented a critical approach to the role of the intelligence services. In his view, their task is to raise and refine questions, but not to provide answers, except for issues of the past. Sagi addressed the methodological questions raised by

Kipnis' book, namely the necessary distinction between knowing and understanding, from which a possible course of action derives. This is a fundamental issue that is not only relevant to the 1973 War. He elaborated on the tendency to impose preconceived views on the analysis of reality. This is a typical course of action for politicians, but it is highly problematic if it trickles down to the intelligence level. The intelligence services must not have preconceived opinions. They have to form their own opinion and recommendations based on the information available to them and on their own assessments. Drawing on the decision makers' views in that process is a recipe for disaster. Even if a body dealing with the evaluation of national intelligence has an opinion, it has to be able to neutralize such underlying views and detach them from the picture that emerges from the actually accumulated knowledge and data. That was the reason for the failure in 1973. Another crucial issue is the premise that intelligence services essentially deal with the past, since all they see and hear occurred in the past, they have no

real-time intelligence. Here lies another methodological difficulty that stems from the expectation that the intelligence services will predict the future, while they are not abler to do so than anyone else. The intelligence services need to be humble in their approach and warn decision makers about what they know and don't know. It is their duty to present to decision makers what they see at the moment, to talk modestly, not to predict the future, and to emphasize that they do not know what will happen. Yet they must present potential future scenarios and weigh them according to their probability, a designation in the gray area. Conversely erudition can be a hindrance, especially in extreme cases, it cannot be a substitute for common sense, and therefore intelligence claiming to know what will happen is invalid. During the Yom Kippur War there was plenty of intelligence due to the superb collection capability that was not based only on one source (like Ashraf Marwan). But the better the intelligence sources are, the greater the danger of complacency and reliance on "exotic" sources. In this respect it is still unclear what

“kind” of source Marwan was. The intelligence services wanted to be right, which is an intellectual failure. Intelligence is not meant to be “right,” but relevant for the decision makers. On the other hand, skepticism and questioning are not just a technical means, but a very important feature that should be encouraged. Unanswered questions sharpen and refine the work and thinking of intelligence services. Since the decision makers are politicians dealing with events, while the members of the intelligence services deal with their long-term implications, there is bound to be a constant dissonance between these two systems. During the Yom Kippur War, however, the decision makers and the intelligence services were in harmony, there was no disagreement between the military and the political leadership. In contrast, Sagi suggested that disharmony will benefit national security, and the more disagreements and arguments there are, the better.

Ronen Bergman, a senior journalist and author of numerous books on intelligence and security issues, dealt with the intelligence services during the Yom Kippur War. He said that Israel had good, high-quality intelligence before the war. Ashraf Marwan, Nasser’s son-in-law, provided accurate information on a number of issues and therefore was seen as someone who “could read Sadat’s mind,” giving the impression that Israel had managed to create a channel to discern the other side’s intentions at the highest levels – a source more valuable than the contributions of advanced intelligence technology. The combination of technological devices and the use of Marwan and other means created the impression in Israel that the level of intelligence available is so high that nothing can happen in the Arab world without its knowledge. The successful fight against terrorism, in particular

Operation “Spring of Youth,” in which the Black September leaders were eliminated, the total shock created by this operation in Arab countries, and its political implications that led to the fall of the Lebanese government, strengthened the feeling. All that had also an impact inside Israel. The operation raised the army’s prestige and reinforced the sense of security that afflicted the self-view of the military and the political leadership. Operation “Spring of Youth” and other achievements raised Israel’s intelligence capabilities to a mythical status, making the intelligence failure in the Yom Kippur War even more severe. The main reason for this failure was the absolute dependency of the military and the political leadership, their almost “addiction” to “exotic” and “know-it-all” intelligence sources. The testimony of then Chief-of-Staff David Elazar to the Agranat Commission illustrated this well, when he said, for example, that the intelligence successes created absolute trust and reliance on intelligence. Elazar admitted that Israel knew in real time that the Syrian and Egyptian armed forces had switched to combat protocol

and that they were able to launch a surprise attack, but it estimated that its forces deployed along the front will be able to halt such an attack if it occurs. The army did not think in terms of stopping but rather of “containment,” assessing that in case of an attack their intelligence sources, especially Marwan, will provide them with sufficient notice in advance. This fact and the relaxation among the military following Zvi Zamir’s meeting with Marwan in London also demonstrate the dependency. In Bergman’s view this lies at the basis of the war’s intelligence failure. In Israel there was confusion between “intentions” and “capabilities.” Israel knew that the other side had the ability to attack, but since it relied on good intelligence sources, it settled for understanding the intentions and did not focus on capabilities. In addition there was intolerance in the system toward opposing views, and thus members of the intelligence services were not able to express their views beyond certain levels. Apart from the intelligence failure in assessing the readiness for military challenges, there is a lesson relevant to a range of fields. Also Ehud Barak insisted that the



political and military lesson learned from Operation “Spring of Youth” was wrong, creating a baseless sense of security. In his view, no conclusions should be drawn from one specific successful action with regard to the entire sector, or with regard to the army’s overall ability, as if it were all powerful. Israel’s intelligence community is indeed the best in the world. It achieved a startling series of tactical successes and was an inspiration to other intelligence services. But the winning combination of good and accurate intelligence for specific targeted operations with tactical success also led to a resounding strategic failure. Not only in 1973 have the intelligence services created a sense of power among the Israeli leadership that led to a consistent rejection of any peace proposal. These capabilities have given rise to a feeling among the political leadership that we can “outsmart history” and that time works in our favor. Although Israel was able to defeat something invincible such as the suicide terror attacks, and to make Hamas ask for a ceasefire, the calm and the cessation of terror attacks were not used for a political initiative that has to follow such a military victory. This sense of calm is misleading, and the political leadership is wrong now to think that it is possible to outsmart history and that time is working in Israel’s favor.

Yoram Meital, the chairman of the Chaim Herzog Center, focused on further basic methodological questions stemming from Kipnis’ book. Beyond its contribution to the revival of the public and academic debate about the war, the book does indeed raise central questions about Israel’s political conduct; and in this sense, the renewed discussion points to old questions, more than it provides conclusive answers. The book focuses on the view that in the course of 1973 Golda Meir, Moshe Dayan and Yisrael

Galili worked to foil an Egyptian diplomatic initiative to resolve the conflict in Israeli–Egyptian relations. Against that background Meital raised the methodological question whether it is possible to discuss the missed chance of a political process, not only in 1973, but also between Israel and the Palestinians and other Arab states, without examining thoroughly the Egyptian or Arab side. Can a book deal with a very important channel of communication, such as the talks that were held in 1973 between Hafez Ismail, chairman of the Egyptian National Security Council, and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, adviser to President Richard Nixon, by drawing only on American documents, Kissinger’s letters, and Israeli press headlines? Meital believes that this is not possible and that this is one of the missed opportunities in the writing and discussion dealing with the political process that preceded the war. Publications in Israel have ignored the writings and testimony of key figures such as Hafez Ismail and Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, who were close to the ruling circles and decision makers in Egypt, and shed light on the story of Marwan and the secret political negotiations that preceded the war. Israeli researchers do not follow publications in Egypt and are unaware of the existence of a lively internal Egyptian debate that deals not only with such questions as to whether or not there was a victory in the 1973 War, and Egyptian staple-food issues pertaining to the political process and the peace treaty with Israel, but also with many important issues such as the Marwan case and the political negotiations preceding the war. Meital elaborated on a publication from August 2012 that documents a controversy between Marwan and Heikal when they met in London in 2006. Israel completely ignored this documentation within which Heikal

accused Marwan of being a spy close to the Egyptian government who passed information to Israel, and Marwan responded to the accusation. The 1973 War is not merely an Israeli affair, but that does not find expression in the Israeli writings on it. The tendency to present a limited Israeli perspective is also reflected in the analysis of the political process that ignores the basic questions of the conflict, as for example the circumstances of the passing of UN Resolution 242, where Egypt was one of only two Arab states supporting it. Similarly, Israeli publications did not relate to Sadat’s public political initiative in February 1971. The Israeli leadership that was identical to the leadership in 1973 and consisted of Golda Meir, Yisrael Galili and Yigal Allon, ignored this initiative, although it resulted in the opening of an important channel of communication between the US and Egypt that led to the crystallization of the idea of the “year of decision.” Although Kipnis’s book is important and provides a lot of insights, it also illustrates the argument that it is impossible to study the war only from an Israeli perspective which can never reflect the full picture. Especially one should not ignore the Arab side nor give in to stereotypes about Arabs or hide behind them. In order to say something meaningful that does not just reproduce statements made by politicians and members of the intelligence services, one needs to take the Arab perspective fully into consideration.

In his response, Yigal Kipnis addressed the takeover of the memory by individual narratives and their entrenchment as the exclusive historical story. Thus the widespread Israeli focus on the military-intelligence channel defined the boundaries of academic and journalistic writing on the war and led to the entrenchment of the military-intelligence narrative, while

the political aspects of the war were marginalized. In his book *Kipnis* intended to change that state of historiography, by showing, among other things, how the political conduct impacted the military and intelligence aspects of the war, as for example the Egyptian initiative to establish a secret diplomatic channel vis-à-vis Kissinger, while working through military means to propel and promote that channel.

The vantage point of the second conference dealing with the war was the end of the fighting, or as we titled it: "When the cannons fall silent." Speakers addressed broad regional and international strategic aspects of the war, while others, scholars of cultural studies and sociologists, dealt with the way the memory of the war was inscribed in Israeli society and its implications for civil society. Gideon Avital-Epstein (Kibbutzim College of Education, Technologies & Arts) talked about the language of the war memory and the epithets associated with it attributing meaning, such as "failure," "earthquake" and "trauma," that show how the war has been inscribed in Israeli public memory. In addition there are memory practices that essentially aim at forgetting the war: hardly any street

is named after it, there is no official memorial day marking it, no heroes and no victory albums. Through an entire world of associations and images the memory of the war is tightly connected to the remembrance of the Holocaust and draws on the multi-layered trauma that recurred in Jewish history from the time of Abraham Avinu and the Binding of Isaac until the first Lebanon War. Tirza Hechter dealt with the process of mythologization of the war, engaging in a theoretical discussion of the ways political myths are built. She talked about the political narratives that stood at the center of the mythologization process of the war, as for example, the victory narrative which military men, politicians and journalists explicated and used to create solidarity. This narrative was shattered by Menachem Begin's protest in the Knesset session, in which Golda Meir defined the war as a historical landmark; and it gave way to the myth of failure targeting the leadership's negligence and flawed functioning. In Hechter's view, Begin's protest constituted a turning point. From there on, the war became a political text. She further talked about a number of other myths and metaphors, such as the

"earthquake," and the myths of the "miracle," "the binding of Isaac," and the "disillusionment."

While the previous speakers addressed the place of the war in Israeli memory culture, Yoram Meital dealt with the memory of the war in Egypt. Theoretical research on the politics of memory focuses on practices imparting memory, on the acceptance among different groups and social sectors, and on the ways in which such memory serves current political interests. Meital set out to demonstrate these aspects using as a case study the memory culture created in Egypt, in which the representation and memory of the war is completely different from the way it was inscribed in the Israeli consciousness. This is reflected in the names given to the war in Egypt: "Ramadan War" and "October War." Another expression was the change of the national holiday, which until 1973 marked the day of the Free Officers Revolution on July 23, to October 6, the day the war began. "The crossing" (*al-'ubur*) is the main symbolically significant term associated with the war and the way it was inscribed in the minds. It refers to the crossing of the Canal and Egypt's ability to break through the line of Israeli strongholds, as an expression of a historic victory, not merely in military or strategic terms, but mainly in psychological ones. Sadat's assassination in 1981 during the annual parade marking the anniversary of the war added another symbolic meaning of this date. Moreover Sadat was buried within the monument of the Unknown Soldier, the official memorial site of the war, that is designed in the form of a pyramid. The monument is located on a busy main highway connecting the luxurious Heliopolis neighborhood with downtown Cairo, where the annual parade in memory of the war is held. Perpetuating of the war memory in Egypt is a project with various expressions: The



"When the Canons Fall Silent," November 2013



"When the Canons Fall Silent," opening session

October anniversary stamp that always contains Egyptian national symbols, the October Panorama, the war museum commemorating "the crossing," as well as speeches and ceremonies constantly referring to Egypt's achievements in the spirit of "the crossing" seen as a historical milestone. Over the years all of them have been used for the political purposes of the present leadership, be it at the time of President Mubarak, who, among other things, switch the myth of heroism from Sadat to the Egyptian army, in which Mubarak served, or at the time of President Morsi, who in a picture commemorating the war, added not only his own image but also those of members of the Muslim Brothers (who were persecuted by Sadat and Mubarak) and of *al-Jama'a al-Islamiya*, to which Sadat's assassins belonged.

Michael Feige (Ben-Gurion Institute) talked about the war as a turning point in Israel's history and elaborated on its impact on different sectors of Israeli society. He claimed that the war was not necessarily a basis for social solidarity, but exposed and highlighted differences between

the groups. The kibbutz movement, whose members were prominent representatives of the Zionist ethos and Israeli culture of bereavement, perceived the war as a deep crisis that led to disillusionment and disappointment with the political leadership. On the other hand, trauma and personal or national crisis did not characterize the response of the right wing of religious Zionism, who saw the war as just another step in the nation's struggle to return to its country. The founders of Gush Emunim, led by Hanan Porat, who used his war injury to shape the organization's ideological and political character, saw themselves as heralding a message of healing, redemption and hope through settlement in the West Bank, that was presented as a continuation of the Zionist project. In their view the trauma was the ceding of part of the land within the framework of the interim agreements. Some of them perceived this as the state's betrayal of its historic goal and a disruption of the Jewish people's historical trajectory. Peace Now saw these views as dangerous. The movement was shaped by the war trauma, the threat it created for the

social order and for the individual, and the basic assumption that the war resulted from avoidable failure. Its founders aimed to achieve social and political change.

Zaki Shalom (Ben-Gurion Institute) and Galia Golan (Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya) dealt with broad strategic aspects of the war. Shalom presented the Israeli concept of power that was based on self-deception and served as the framework of policy decisions since 1967, as for example the consistent and uncompromising refusal to withdraw from the occupied territories, except in return for a comprehensive peace. The political opportunities after 1967 and especially after 1973 exposed that the Israeli leadership was prisoner of its ideology and its inability to see the situation and deal with it in a realistic and practical manner. Maintaining the status quo as a central interest of American policy in the period between 1967 and 1973 was perfectly in line with Israeli policy, despite its declarations of its willingness to withdraw from the occupied territories. Golan concluded the discussion addressing the international repercussions of the war, its impact on the relations between the Soviet Union and the United States during the Cold War, and the damage it did to the détente policy. She elaborated on the political process that led to tension between the superpowers due to their conflicting interests. That tension was unprecedented and similar to the Cuban missile crisis in the early 1960s. Golan emphasized the centrality of the détente policy in Soviet interests which led the Soviet Union to initiate and promote peace proposals in order to maintain the status quo in international relations with the US, while the latter prevented any progress toward an agreement due to its own narrow interests. ♦

Bedouins in Israel

The conference *Bedouin Citizens of the Jewish State: Toward Confrontation or Reconciliation* was held in the midst of the public debate over the Begin-Praver Report and the legislation bill regulating Bedouin settlement in the Negev. The conference was held against the background of the increasing lack of trust between Bedouin society and government institutions. Alongside the academic debate on basic historical, anthropological, legal and discourse issues related to the reality of the lives of Bedouins in the Negev, the conference included a special public session in which Atiya al-Assam, the chairman of the Council for the Unrecognized Villages in the Negev, and Ami Tesler, responsible for the Community Department of the Implementation Headquarters (the executive unit established in the wake of the Begin-Praver Report), participated.

The opening session dealt with theoretical and historical issues raised by a recently published book, *Indigenous (In)Justice: Human Rights Law and Bedouin Arabs in the Naqab/Negev* (2013), edited by Ahmad Amara (New York University), Ismael Abu-Saad (BGU), and Oren Yiftachel (BGU). The book places the Bedouin citizens in the Negev within the theoretical discourse on “indigenous peoples,” including comparisons to other indigenous populations in other societies. Ismael Abu-Saad (Department of Education, BGU) argued that the discourse on indigenous peoples fits the situation of the Bedouin population in Israel, given the common definition according to which a people becomes

“indigenous” when the territory it inhabits comes under the rule of another people, and when the regime, norms, laws and culture of the latter are imposed on it, while its existence as such (i.e., as an indigenous people) is not recognized by the ruling majority. Indigenous peoples are disenfranchised despite their legal status as “citizens.” In particular many aspects of the definition of indigenous peoples formulated by Jose R. Martinez Cobo are discernible in the Bedouin population in the Negev: temporal priority (pre-invasion or pre-colonization), the preservation of cultural distinctiveness, the self-view as indigenous, and the experience of oppression, marginalization, dispossession, exclusion, and discrimination by the dominant part of society. The status of the Bedouin population as an indigenous people actually stems from the fact that Israel defines itself as a Jewish state. Abu-Saad emphasized that he does not reject the Jewish aspects of the state, but he objects to the violation of the Bedouins’ collective and cultural rights by means of ideological mechanisms. The public good is determined by and for the Jewish majority interests, while the treatment of the Bedouins, who are citizens of the state, is inequitable in civic terms. Equality cannot be attained by specialized bodies exclusively dealing with “Bedouin” issues, but rather the Bedouins have to be *a priori* recognized as equal and given their collective rights on an egalitarian basis. Such special bodies established for the purposes of inspecting or promoting the Bedouin population as the Israel Land Administration,

the Green Patrol, and the Implementation Headquarters of the Prime Minister’s Office that collaborates with the National Security Council, perceive the Bedouins primarily as a security threat. This conveys a troubling message to Bedouins who perceive themselves as citizens and come thus to realize that a solution can only be attained by force. The Bedouin are not passive. They are speaking out and offer alternatives appropriate to their culture such as individual farms or agricultural cooperatives, but the state is not willing to enter into any dialogue with them.

Manny Mautner (Law Faculty, Tel Aviv University) discussed a number of theoretical models of various countries, each of which represents a specific type of relationship between “the state” and its indigenous peoples. The structural difficulty in the relationship between nation states and indigenous peoples lies in the priority that is given to one human interest: the preservation of the culture and national sovereignty of the majority group, without giving sufficient room to those with other interests, such as indigenous peoples, within the state territory. The nation-state model pursues a cultural standardization of all its citizens, even if they do not belong to the ethnic majority. Thus cultures of minority groups are erased and disappear; and when culture is erased, also human beings are erased, creating a lack of correlation between mental categories giving meaning to life, and reality itself. This has serious implications, also in material terms. Contrary to the nation state, a multi-cultural state recognizes the need to give room



to several cultures, but even this model tends to prioritize one human interest, namely cultural interests, while ignoring other human interests. The third model is the social-democratic state that embodies a combination of liberal theory inspired by John Stuart Mill, and socialist-Marxist theory. This model combines the liberal assumption that people will prosper if they realize their inner potential and abilities, with the view that the state is the means enabling this self-realization, since it is the state's purpose to facilitate individual prosperity and thus the prosperity of all individuals in the country. The social-democratic model perceives the needs of human beings most accurately; it is the most desirable and appropriate model, to ensure the existence and prosperity of an indigenous people. In that light Mautner argued that the state has the duty to relate to the indigenous people in civic republican terms, and not as a majority state to a minority. Yet, the state must not accept oppression in the name of conservation and preservation of indigenous culture. It must act within the indigenous population to advance modernization; it has to

intervene to introduce change and progress, to improve the level of welfare in education and housing, and to promote human rights, for example, for women.

Guy Ben-Porat (Public Policy and Administration, BGU) presented a sociological perspective on the structural and theoretical problems in the relationship between the state and the Bedouins. He stressed the structural tension between Israeli citizenship and Jewish nationality, especially with regard to the state's commitment to equality. The tension that is unique to the State of Israel can be explained by a neo-institutional approach that sees in institutions the rules of the game that direct and create values, norms of behavior and practices shaping reality and order as well as the ways society functions. The institution relevant to the discussion here is Israeli citizenship that is subjected to the institution of the Jewish state, while both institutions are facing the institution of the democratic state. In Israel the rationale of citizenship and democracy are subordinate to the rationale of the nation and the Jewish state. As an indigenous population, the Bedouins are

trapped in these structural tensions and their rationale, and their situation is affected by them. For example, the narrative about the Bedouins shapes the way they are conceptualized in Israeli society. This narrative differs from the narrative regarding Israeli Arabs and presents the Bedouin as nomads who have no land rights. Institutions like the Jewish Agency, the JNF or the concept of Judaization of space, an informal institution, share the narrative's rationale. Recent years have revealed a contradiction within that rationale itself when the state tried to establish order with regard to the Bedouin space and population, as in the Goldberg Report, but this attempt failed because Bedouin society has adopted a national identity and has undergone a process of Palestinization. Even the modernization processes in Bedouin society are distorted given that they include forced settlement and the breaking of the Bedouin leadership, creating a reality of poverty and crime with which the state can hardly cope. The state cannot offer equality as long as it is a Jewish state; and the recognition of indigenous rights is not on the agenda at the moment. However, there are possibilities of action on the public management level to advance the rights of marginalized groups, as for example the adjustment of state policies to the group's needs and aspirations and/or its participation in decision-making as an equal partner and not only as a recipient, for a fair policy.

Ahmad Amara (Ph.D. candidate at New York University) addressed several methodological issues arising from the book he edited together with Yiftachel and Abu-Saad, in particular the need to pay attention to the terminology used in the discourse on the Bedouins. Amara focused on various fields of discourse

through which the uniqueness of the Bedouins' situation may be seen. As the Palestinian Arabs in Israel, the Bedouin in the Negev have remained outside the homogeneity created by the nation state. The fact that Bedouin society is characterized by a series of images, such as tribalism and nomadism, that are located in the periphery, the desert, and associated with women and exotics, makes it object of a discourse on development, modernization and social engineering regarding urbanization, modernization, education etc., as state projects. One possible approach is that of historical distributive justice, justice that rights the wrongs of the past, some of which are the expulsion and dispossession of land. Postcolonial theories may present the condition of the Bedouins in the Negev as a form of internal colonialism, cultural superiority and systematic discrimination, through a series of political, historical and legal justifications regarding land rights, while the practice may be seen in the form of displacement, alteration of space, house demolitions, etc.

In her talk Noa Kram (Sapir College) moved from the theoretical plain to a historical-legal discussion on a practical level, focusing on the clash of indigenous Bedouin law with the Israeli legal system over all claims to land rights. Kram pointed to historical changes in the patterns of Bedouin settlement and the transition from nomadism based on animal husbandry to a semi-nomadic lifestyle that combines animal husbandry with agriculture. The gradual increase in the volume of agriculture and land cultivation led to the development and expansion of rural settlements and to a consolidation of concrete concepts of territory and land. The gradual institutionalization of the involvement in agriculture

led to the distribution of land and tribal water areas, and over time also to a regulation of land ownership. For that purpose, a legal system developed, consisting of norms and practices regarding the demarcation of boundaries, the regulation of ownership, inheritance, sale, rent and mortgage, as well as rules for conflict resolution. The system also included practices pertaining to such diverse matters as the use of different types of bills of sale and various arrangements conceived as legal norms that are used until today for resolving conflicts. These norms were influenced by Ottoman law, by traditional Bedouin law, and by rules that were accepted and recognized among immigrants who arrived from Egypt, for example. This system exists and is still valid today among the Bedouins. The question is to what degree this system is recognized by the State of Israel, how the state relates to customary law, and what happens when the two systems meet in an Israeli court in the framework of a land ownership claim.

Safa Abu Rabia (Mandel Center for Leadership in the Negev) introduced an anthropological perspective, as she spoke about the relation of the Bedouins in the Negev to the land that is deeply engraved in the minds of women of the Nakba generation. Abu Rabia mainly aimed to represent the Bedouins themselves, make their voices heard, present their point of view, and add the indigenous discourse itself to the discussion. The hegemonic academic debate tends to discuss institutional mechanisms working against the Bedouins and thus perpetuates the hegemony, its mechanisms and its discourse in a range of fields such as the legal sphere and that of planning, that are wrapped in quite a few moral assessments. Abu Rabia, on the other hand,

set out to discuss the Bedouins, drawing on the changes in the academic discourse since the 1980s, and to use a more critical perspective to present an informal local indigenous discourse and the way it shapes local awareness.

With regard to its significance, the struggle of the Bedouins is not only about the land in a physical sense, but also about local identity, memory and belonging, raising the question not only to whom the land belongs, but also to whom the local past belongs. Abu Rabia emphasized the cultural and identity value of land among the Bedouins and the sense of belonging to the place, especially in light of the existing establishment approaches that are based on a nomadism narrative which assumes that Bedouins lack a sense of belonging to the land or any memory culture related to land. Abu Rabia presented many examples of how Bedouins speak about the place and its history, of the memories and stories that spring to mind when walking in the area, the culture of visiting ancestral land, sites and tombs. They kiss the ground and walk it barefoot to feel it and to remember it, and in doing so mark it and talk about its exact boundaries. They tell their children the history of expulsion and displacement. Another means is the preservation of documentation such as maps, aerial photos, and personal photos from the time they lived on the land and adhered to a particular way of life. Research on the past and the memory of the past is of great importance to the present and the current political and land-right struggle, but also as a struggle against being silenced and against narratives presenting the Bedouins without identity, belonging and history, and disconnected from the land. The documentation of these complex aspects may offer a national alternative that

includes the Bedouins' story in the Nakba discourse that is usually associated with the northern and central regions.

In his lecture, Sandy Kedar (Law Faculty, Haifa University) brought the discussion back to issues of legal doctrine and in particular the state's use of the Ottoman legal concept, known as *mawat* land, to justify acts of dispossession of Bedouin land. Kedar placed this particular practice into the framework of legal geography and its innovative critical methodology. As mentioned, the State of Israel relies on the *mawat* doctrine that is based on Ottoman law defining land in uninhabited areas as dead land. Ottoman legislation was vague and flexible about the definition of dead land not belonging to anybody, and thus allowed for varying decisions regarding the fate of the land and adjacent villages. The Israeli legal system, on the other hand, tends to use the *mawat* doctrine in a narrow and rigid sense in order to justify expropriation of land through a legal interpretation that often diverts from the interpretation of experts of Ottoman law. According to the doctrine of the 'dead' Negev, Bedouins have no historical land ownership rights, and therefore all Bedouins living in permanent villages are trespassers. Moreover it was determined that since the land is dead land, it belonged to the Mandatory state, and now it belongs to its legal successor, namely the State of Israel. This assertion was the basis for a situation where the Bedouin have lost in every legal proceeding against the state that, inter alia, drew on the legal claim that it continues to implement Islamic-Ottoman and Mandatory law and preserves state land. In Kedar's view the argument is incorrect in legal terms. Kedar then addressed the Praver Report directly. In his opinion, the initial report written

by Justice Eliezer Goldberg placated the Bedouins; later a dramatic change in approach was introduced. Ehud Praver's proposals set the tone; they were the basis for the various rounds of recommendations that essentially aim at reducing the Bedouins' space. The disengagement in 2005 was Praver's source of inspiration and tangibly demonstrated that the removal of thousands of people is feasible. In Kedar's view, a compromise solution with the Bedouins is definitely possible. The problem is the absence of a language recognizing their civil rights and the details of the formulas for compensation payments, features that create a lack of trust between the parties.

Kedar's lecture brought the discussion directly to the Begin-Praver Report that was the topic of a session held in an interview format. Dror Zeevi (Middle East Studies, BGU) interviewed Atiya al-Assam, the chairman of the Council for the Unrecognized Villages in the Negev, and Ami Tesler, responsible for the Community Department of the Implementation Headquarters. After describing the harsh reality of the Bedouins in the Negev, especially in the unrecognized villages, al-Assam referred to the hard feelings accompanying the intention to implement the report that the Bedouins perceive as a plan to remove them from the land, destroying 30 villages, and to concentrate them in existing communities where the situation is already difficult, while establishing Jewish settlements instead of the demolished villages. From the perspective of the Bedouins, the program is not intended to improve their socio-economic situation, but to evict them, concentrate them, and abandon them to their fate. Only a small part of the huge budget earmarked for the implementation

of the plan will eventually reach the Bedouins themselves, while most of it is meant to finance the compensation, the establishment of the police units for the task of destroying the villages, the officials of the Ministry of the Interior and the Green Patrol, and the establishment of the Implementation Headquarters. The first part of the program that focuses mainly on house demolitions is already being implemented, destroying, in the name of the law, thousands of homes and leaving these families without any solution.

Tesler argued that al-Assam's description presents the perspective taken by factors claiming to represent the Bedouins while centering the entire discussion on the 12 percent of the Bedouin population that have land claims against the state. Tesler emphasized that with the understanding that there is a serious problem that cannot be ignored, the state decided that it must address the painful issue of the Bedouins and their condition, and is willing to invest billions of Shekels for economic development, including also the development of infrastructure, an infrastructure for education, an infrastructure supporting employment, and others, something that has not been mentioned at the conference at all. The Implementation Headquarters analyzes the situation on the ground and the physical data, for the intended purpose of fairness, generosity and justice. There is no intention to dismantle concentrations of villages that include hundreds of families, but rather to give such existing concentrations the character of proper settlements by building roads and developing the infrastructure and by establishing of new communities. The problem is that the discussion focuses

on those 12 percent, thereby deflects the debate from the main points, and is unconnected to reality. Moreover, those pursuing lawsuits are under the influence of non-Bedouins who drag the discussion to political issues, against the wishes of the majority, and thus cause them harm. These protesters have sometimes no knowledge of the subject, since many of them are not even familiar with the bill. Furthermore a significant portion of the claimants Tesler met explicitly say that there is room for dialogue. Tesler is aware of the problem created by the lack of trust between the Bedouins and the state, but points to the importance he sees in the implementation of the program in order to ensure the future of the children and young people among the Bedouins.

When asked about the importance the Bedouins attribute to land resources, al-Assam said that the Bedouins are interested in a solution, but not in the one offered by the bill. They are used to disappointments and it is unclear how the state wants to move populations from one place to another, based on erroneous judgment, and thus worsen the situation of both, the villages to which they are brought, and the existing ones. He addressed a basic issue arising from the argument that the state sees itself as having exclusivity in finding a solution. Due to this assumption the state does not engage in any dialogue with the Bedouins about alternative solutions they themselves propose and that do not at all contravene Israeli planning. Al-Assam pointed to the sense of distrust stemming from the state's discrimination against Bedouin villages. For example, Bir Hadaj was recognized by the state 15 years ago, and it has still no



Unrecognized Bedouin village in the Negev

electricity and infrastructure, while an individual farm nearby that was illegally established not long ago, is connected to electricity and water. The state's policy is discriminatory as it "whitewashes" individual farms on the one hand, and destroys Bedouin homes on the other hand – Why does the state not "whitewash" in the same manner Bedouin villages inhabited by ten thousands of people? The Praver Plan does not propose the establishment of any new Bedouin village, while it aims at concentrating the Bedouins in the existing communities.

In response Tesler said that he is aware of the feelings of mistrust, that at times may be founded, but in the village of Bir Hadaj, all of which sits on state land, without any pending ownership claims, there are 300 plots ready for immediate occupancy, but the Committee threatens everybody who wants to move in and indoctrinates them with lies. The reality on the ground is much more complex than the description presented here. An additional aspect is the bureaucracy that operates and fosters slow and cumbersome procedures which hinder the program's progress. Tesler revealed that he

understands the hard feelings created by the phenomenon of house demolitions, but added that this is a matter of law enforcement. The Implementation Headquarters want to reach a situation where anyone whose house was destroyed will be provided with an alternative, even temporarily, until a new village is established, and Tesler expressed his hope to find a legal solution for that purpose. Tesler stressed that contrary to al-Assam's presentation, the demolitions of illegal buildings are not in the magnitude of thousands per year.

Al-Assam reiterated the centrality of the house demolition policy that is driven by insensitivity, for the growing distrust and despair. The state should treat the Bedouins as citizens who have a problem, and not as a problem that has to be dealt with. The Bedouins have a plan, they want the state to recognize the unrecognized villages and provide them with proper infrastructure. They want the state to make a plan in full cooperation with the population, to rebuild trust based on equality, real participation and dialogue, rather than the use of force. With this Tesler agreed. ♦

Revolution and Protests in the Middle East: Israel and the Arab Spring (December 2012)

Undoubtedly the political changes and upheavals in the Middle East that began in January 2010 mark crossroads in the history of the region. We are still in the midst of the developments that unfold day by day, and it is clear to everybody that it will take a long time until some stability will reemerge. In December 2012, the second anniversary of the outbreak of the dramatic events that at times are now called simplistically the 'Arab Spring,' we held a major conference with the intent critically to discuss these events from an Israeli perspective and even connect them to the social protest in Israel in the summer of 2011. Our methodological premise was that Israel is part of the Middle East, and therefore it is impossible to disconnect what happens in the country from the events unfolding in the region. The first sessions of the conference therefore dealt with the events in the regions, paying attention to the way these events were seen in Israel, while the discussion in the other sessions focused on the sociological analysis of the protests in Israel, with the participation of researchers and social activists, past and present. This report was written in the summer of 2014, after Operation Protective Edge, which places the discussions at the conference into a fascinating perspective.

The conference attracted much attention among students and faculty members at BGU. It was especially fascinating to reexamine the speakers' insights, given that a year and a half have passed since the conference until the writing of this report, a time when the pace of thoughts, digestion and documentation of events has

failed to keep up with the pace of the developments. Since the conference we have seen the ousting of Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi, a representative of the Muslim Brothers, by a military coup, the continuing persecution of the Muslim Brothers by the Egyptian army led by Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, who also won the elections; an escalation in the war in Syria after myriads of civilian casualties, partly due to the use of chemical weapons; and the gradual conquest of Iraq by Jihadist movements, such as *Jabhat al-Nusra* and ISIS that fight also in Syria.

Samir Ben Layashi, from Tel Aviv University, dealt with the events in Tunisia that lit the spark that ignited the region, discussing them in comparison to the events in Egypt, especially with regard to the constitutional developments in both countries. Ben Layashi opened with a critical methodological note pointing out that in light of the

continuously evolving events, we have to avoid clinging to paradigms that often predetermine the shape of our observations. While in the last two years since the overthrow of Ben Ali the conflict in Tunisia had appeared to be a struggle between Islamists and secularists, it gradually became clear that the developing conflict created profound dilemmas regarding fundamental issues, such as the entry of civil society into the existing political frameworks in order to change the socio-economic reality.

Another issue stemming from prevalent methodological assumptions is the impression of overwhelming public support for Islamist parties, such as Ennahda in Tunisia. As the Muslim Brothers in Egypt, Ennahda won the elections and heads the state, but the election victory does not accurately reflect its support among the population, which is actually much more limited. This raises a



Tahrir Square, May 2011

fundamental question, namely to what extent Islamists represent the population in comparison to the 'silent majority' belonging to civil society that is not organized in political parties but in independent civic organizations. Over the years civil society in Tunisia had difficulties bringing people out into the streets given the lack of trust in politics and in the election process. President Morsi and the Muslim Brothers in Egypt have a similar problem of legitimacy leading to a second round of upheaval initiated by those who do not see the Shari'a as the exclusive basis for legislation.

The revolution in Tunisia did not only demand a reform of the political system, but also a rebuilding from scratch of the defective institutions that operate since the colonial period. In Tunisia, as in Egypt, part of this trend is the attempt to draft a new constitution; but unlike in Egypt, in Tunisia there is a true dialogue between those in power and representatives of civil society over the contents of the constitution and the centrality of the Shari'a as sole source of legislation. Ennahda that finds it difficult to cope with the persistence of civil society in the debate, once again incites the debate over issues of identity and culture, while the public demands to deal with economic and social hardships. There is nevertheless evidence that the distinction between Islamists and secularists is not accurate, and that it is more accurate to present the struggle as one between the supporters of civil society and those who want to strengthen the power of the state.

Kais Firro, from Haifa University, dealt with Syria, another country where dramatic events keep rapidly unfolding. Also Firro opened with a methodological note regarding the way we perceive the events, by referring to the images that the media engrave in our minds. A narrow picture of

the events expressed in simplistic headlines like "The Last Battle over Damascus," statements about Assad's imminent downfall, or such terms as the "Syrian Revolution" come to us via the media. This discourse does not reflect the complex and far more ambiguous reality. According to him, most of the media reports we are fed are obtained from an opposition-controlled media channel based in London, and that is how the narrative is presented. As is usually the case with narratives, it is difficult to break free of them.

The networks of Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya have adopted that narrative and continue to show it, and maybe they are even creating it; but about six or seven months ago, different information began to appear. Most of the Arab media support the Syrian revolution; these include at least ten Islamist television networks, most of which are funded by Saudi Arabia. These networks are ideologically close to al-Qaeda, and drawing on that discourse they create an influential narrative according to which Assad and his family are killing the Syrian people. This exemplifies Antonio Gramsci's theory regarding the creation of cultural hegemony and Michel Foucault's concept of a regime of truth where the media create reality and perceptions, of which it is difficult to break free. Only one independent station, named *Dunya*, run by young people who are not the product of the Syrian education system and propaganda, has taken on the task to introduce another narrative and even managed to convince viewers in Syria that the picture is different.

The differences in the reporting on the fighting were at the basis of the Arab League initiative to send a delegation of observers to Syria, and as a result of its failure the matter was moved to the UN Security Council and has become an international issue.

All this indicates that the media themselves have become a player in the game of various factors. A series of massacres led to the disappearance of the Syrian opposition, while violence and chaos reign on the ground.

According to Firro, the struggle in Syria is over the character of the state, and not over who controls it; that means the discourse in no longer a liberal, but an Islamist one. The vast majority of dissidents belong to Jihadist groups, headed by *Jabhat al-Nusra*; thus unlike other countries in the region, radical groups affiliated with al-Qaeda, and not the Muslim Brothers, will take over if the regime falls. The Syrian revolutionaries wanted change, but it is already now possible to see that the developments are not what they wanted. The struggle in Syria is therefore much more complex than could have been foreseen.

Mike Herzog addressed the challenge posed to Israel by the events of the Arab Spring, not from an academic but a policy perspective. He related to some aspects of the events and their implications for Israel. The earthquake in the Arab world unleashed forces that had been suppressed for decades. Political Islam has become a significant force, switching from a suppressed opposition to the status of those in power, especially in Egypt. This turn raises questions about the degree of moderation and pragmatism that political Islam may adopt, about the nature of the balance to be struck between ideology and governmental responsibility, and about the implications of this change for a movement like the Muslim Brothers. Another type of 'force' unleashed is the Jihadists that are continuously growing in number, despite the impression created by the killing of Bin Laden. These tensions are prominent in Egypt, where Morsi assumed power, put himself above

governmental control, and tried to pass a constitution with the help of a committee that is Islamic in nature, while on the other hand there is the authentic protest and opposition of the public that wants to speak out.

These situations create acute dilemmas for the West and Israel, in particular regarding the kind of policy and dialogue to be pursued toward political Islam. On the one hand it is understood that the Muslim Brothers are a factor, with whom one has to talk, for example on issues important to the West such as human rights, but on the other hand there are reservations regarding their ideology. From the Israeli perspective, a dilemma has arisen regarding the proper way to weigh the positive role played by Egypt in achieving a ceasefire with Hamas, against the measures taken by Morsi that violate basic rules of democracy. The low-key response of the US also raises questions regarding the preference they give to the interest in maintaining relations with Israel, over the state of democracy in Egypt.

The weakening and disintegration of political frameworks throughout the Middle East is another feature of the region's reality. Syria is sliding into an intra-sectarian war that will most likely lead to a weak and fragile government and a fragmentation of the state. In Egypt, there are severe economic problems and a loss of government control over the Sinai Peninsula; and in Libya and Yemen, there is a significant loss of state control over the country. This situation may reduce the risk of a classical military confrontation, but it is liable to pose a challenge to Israel, for example, in the form of irregular forces such as the Jihadists operating on the Sinai Peninsula; a similar danger might develop on the Golan Heights.

In the regional context, a bloc of Sunni countries is emerging that

cooperate with the United States in its fight against the Iranian nuclear program or against al-Qaeda, but these countries also support Islamist elements that pose a challenge to Israel and the West. This was also illustrated by the case of Gaza, when a coalition was formed around its concerns, comprising Egypt, led by Morsi, Turkey and Qatar that support Hamas and Islamist factors in Syria. Hamas has lost its Iranian backing because it did not support Assad, but it continues to receive weapons from Iran, that for the first time has admitted doing so – an admission Iran avoided making in the past in light of its conflict with the Sunni bloc. The situation in Gaza has become more complicated, given that the Egypt of the Muslim Brothers provides Hamas with a protective shield, while under Mubarak it supported Israel against Hamas. The regime of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt is nevertheless interested in political achievements in the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, and has therefore worked for a ceasefire between the two sides.

For Israel, the outcome of the events will be determined in four main arenas, Egypt, Syria, the Palestinians and Iran. With regard to the Iranian issue, Israel is approaching the moment of decision whether to pursue a military option or a diplomatic one, while being committed to taking into account the changing regional framework. In the Arab–Israeli arena, two options begin to emerge. For one, Israel could wait quietly as long as the stormy winds are around, or else—an option Herzog favors—it could see in the current situation an opportunity for Israeli initiative and activism, especially with regard to the Palestinians.

The second session of the conference, titled “From the Arab Spring to the Islamic Winter,” reviewed critically the way the

events were perceived in Israel. Yoram Meital, Chairman of the Chaim Herzog Center, discussed the events in Egypt, while also aiming to determine their significance in the conceptual context guiding policy and public discourse in Israel, which he termed “iron wall,” drawing on the famous article by Ze'ev Jabotinsky. The overthrow of Mubarak has created a new political game, the rules of which may not be known for sure, but its players are defined, and the political struggle is focused. Egypt is in a transitional phase after the revolution, where the situation is fluid and constantly changing, yet we can ascertain several major stages in the process, including among others, the agreement on a new constitution as well as elections in institutions and of the leadership that enjoy broad legitimacy. The struggle for legitimacy is currently the main struggle in Egypt, and it is centered on the Shari'a as source of legislation.

Among other things, Meital addressed the difference and distinction between the Muslim Brothers' rhetoric and their practice, and the tendency to distance and disconnect their normative founding texts from the events of the last two years. The Muslim Brothers' stand with regard to Israel and the peace treaty, for example, is clear and well known, and yet since they entered parliament and since the election of President Morsi there seems to be a consensus that the peace treaty is in Egypt's national interest. Nevertheless there appears to be no change at all with regard to Israel's image and Egyptian–Israeli relations. In the past, Mubarak supported attacks on Hamas, while Egypt under Morsi's leadership may impose restrictions on Israeli actions in the political and military field, particularly with regard to the Gaza Strip. A new chapter has now been opened also with regard to the PLO.

As for the internal Egypt context there are several issues on the agenda. One is the construction of a new hegemony which seemed to be the task of the Muslim Brothers and the Salafis, as the only organized political force; but they are unable to do so because of new political forces, led by the “power of Tahrir,” that now voice the slogan “the people want the overthrow of the regime” against Morsi. Another issue is the debate over the constitution as a document organizing the social and political order. The argument is not necessarily centered on the status of the Shari’a, given that the Muslim Brothers announced that they would retain the clause from the 1971 Constitution. With US assistance, it was the military council that steered the constitutional crisis and determined that the elections will be held before the debate on the constitution. To Meital’s mind, the acceptance of this scheme by the Muslim Brothers and the Salafis was a mistake. By establishing a connection between the council and the Muslim Brothers, the United States enabled the creation of a historical situation in which the military that for years had seen the Muslim Brothers as enemies, became their partner in building a new order under their leadership.

This relates also to Israel. At the beginning of the events, the Israeli public was shocked and expressed fear of the unknown. Gradually the fear gave way to a more realistic analysis. Nevertheless a policy began to emerge that Meital defines as “iron wall” policy, characteristically found among decisions makers, the government, and even the left wing of Israeli politics. This is essentially a policy of introversion and of building an ‘iron wall’ between Israel and the Middle East, while foregoing in advance all opportunities that could otherwise be used. Jabotinsky’s “iron wall” became ‘higher’ and



Social protest in Tel-Aviv, August 2011

‘thicker,’ as Israel is building high walls without noticing that the events also entail an opportunity for a new interpretation and vision of political Islam that could lead to further opportunities of choice. If it does not embark on a reevaluation, Israel will remain stuck with the same worn statements about the deepening of the “Islamic Winter” that are clearly meant as a threat, while the picture is actually far more complex. Moreover, the difference in policy positions between Israel and the Muslim Brothers is much smaller than assumed in Israel. These differences stem from the way in which the movement built itself over the years, while today, as part of the regime, it has to be pragmatic, especially in the current situation, where its very legitimacy is called into question.

Wadeaa Awawdy, a journalist working for *al-Jazeera* and *al-Quds al-Arabi*, dealt with the inspiration infused by the events into the political relations among Israeli Arabs. He also sought to balance the image of the Muslim Brothers in Israel and expressed his trust in political Islam’s ability to act with pragmatism, precisely in situations where it is in a position of power and has to pursue internal and foreign policies. Awawdy

compared this situation to the Islamic Movement in Israel that learned that the reality seen from the perspective of the head of the council is totally different from the one seen from the opposition benches. The attitude of the Arab society in Israel toward the events of the Arab Spring is divided between opponents and supporters; and sharp arguments are exchanged about it in the public discourse and in Friday sermons in mosques. The majority supports the revolution, but there is a large minority of 40 percent who see it as *mu’amara*, that is a Western conspiracy, imperialism in a new dress, and an alternative way to conquer the Arab world.

Moreover, there are the internal political divisions between the three main groups: communists, nationalist, and Islamists. These groups struggle for hegemony while the Islamic Movement gets a boost from the strengthening of political Islam, especially in Egypt. On the movement level one can actually discern an increase in Salafists, although there are also reformists that serve in the Tunisian case as a model for an open and pluralistic Islam. Inspired by the Arab Spring, more and more young people are taking the initiative into their own

hands and assuming roles and key positions also in the social sphere with the understanding that involvement and initiative are likely to bring about change. To Awawdy's mind, this trend will have an impact on the Arab parties leading to greater democratization. However, there are also indications for a tendency among young people, who constitute about 70 percent of the Arab population in Israel, to abstain from voting in national elections in order to punish the Arab parties for their failure to understand the aspirations and prevailing trends among the young.

In his lecture on Iran, Haggai Ram from the Department of Middle East Studies at BGU dealt with the inspiration that the Green Revolution in Iran in 2009 provided to the events of the Arab Spring and addressed the inability in Israel to examine rationally the Muslim world, and especially Iran. In a geopolitical situation where Iran emerges as Israel's security nemesis, there is no room for expressing the overall cultural, social and political complexities that constitute Iran's past and present. Iran's name is missing in the description of contemporary processes in the Middle East, and so is any reference to the struggle of Iranians against the tyranny entrenched in their country. This situation stems from the fact that the study of Iran in Israel is in a subordinate position vis-à-vis Middle East Studies; in a Euro-American world, the history of Iran, like other non-Western histories, is approached with much ignorance. With regard to Iran the situation is even more acute, given the tragic asymmetry between Iran's centrality in the Israeli public discourse and the enormous ignorance of those talking and writing about it. That ignorance is widespread in all parts of the Israeli establishment, ranging from the security and intelligence apparatuses, via the academia



"The People demand social justice," Tel-Aviv, August 2011

and the media, to the Israeli public. That ignorance leads us to push the debate on Iran to the areas of radical otherness, where Iran is perceived as more exceptional than other Middle East countries.

This situation even prevents us from seeing that the events of the Arab Spring and the Green protest movement in Iran after the rigged elections in 2009 are closely related and are part of the same social and political phenomenon arising from the same conditions and circumstances. This is actually a crisis of the nation states established after the First World War that maintained class, gender and other hierarchies of the colonial period and enriched the juntas that came to power in these countries, at the expense of the welfare and freedom of the subjugated population. The Green Revolution in Iran and the events of the Arab Spring are distinctly postcolonial struggles, and therefore need to be examined within a single political framework.

In the events of the Arab Spring, as in the modern history of the Middle East, Iran has played an exemplary role in the post-colonial and anti-colonial struggles. The Constitutional Revolution of 1901 was the first anti-colonial

revolution; the nationalization of the oil industry under Mohammad Mosaddegh inspired Egypt's struggle against the British and the nationalization of the Suez Canal by Gamal Abdel Nasser in the 1950s; and the Islamic Revolution of 1979 inspired current events. The connection between the Green Revolution and the events of the Arab Spring was obvious for Iranians, as many demonstrated in solidarity with Tunisia and Egypt and for fundamental reform in Iran. The solidarity is not surprising given that many Iranians are facing neo-liberal austerity regulations, censorship, government corruption, high unemployment, rising inflation and brutality of the security forces – conditions and circumstances that led to the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt.

In light of this situation it is clear that the real threat that Iran poses to Israel pales in comparison to the threat that the Iranian leaders pose to their own people. The fact that in Israel the debate focuses on the Iranian threat that is more imagined than real, and not on the just struggle of Iranians against the regime, demonstrates that there cannot be any truly critical discussion of the "Iranian threat." It is still difficult to assess what the

Green Revolution's prospects for success are, but we can assess that the events in Iran in 2009 were a definite turning point, indicating an unmendable rupture, though the when and how are still unclear.

The second part of the conference dealt with the Israeli social protest in the summer of 2011. The main speakers were Avia Spivak, who was a member of the expert committee of the protest leadership and participated in the writing of the alternative report to the Trachtenberg Report, as well as Uri Ram, from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, and Efraim Davidi, from the Department of Social Work at BGU. Spivak discusses the concept of a balanced budget in light of the fact that one of the protest's demands was a budget increase, a demand that raises the question whether this calls for a deficit or a balanced budget. Spivak set out to challenge some of the basic assumptions, on which Israel's economic policy has been based since 2003 that was formulated by Netanyahu in a most eloquent and aggressive manner, centering on the need to reduce taxes. The policy was premised on the vague "fiscal principle," which—as was clear from the outset—was bound to lead to budgetary problems. Spivak argued that the tax-reduction policy broke the balance between revenues and expenditures and caused the deficit afflicting Israel's economic situation. The social protest was mainly due to a decline in the level of services that resulted from the policy based on the fiscal principle.

An alternative approach was formulated by researchers at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, who resolutely rejected the government's basic assumptions and argued that it is possible to raise taxes and thus allow for an increase in expenditure. They also stated that the basic economic assumptions of the government's

policy are unfounded and nothing less than a 'PR sham.' Ministry of Finance officials created confusion among the public by talking about breaching the expenditure framework, which caused everyone to think that increasing the deficit and spending will inevitably lead to a crisis. The *Dror Israel* Movement that was behind the social protest tried to refute the fiscal principle guiding the government and to formulate a new, anti-establishment fiscal principle supporting a deficit increase. The protest's achievement was that it stopped tax cuts, based on the understanding that this trend is destroying the welfare state. Netanyahu's eventual consent to raising taxes and his declaration pledging to restore welfare policy were another achievement of the protest. Spivak expressed his belief that real change will come when the gap between what the public wants and the actual situation is translated into political action.

Uri Ram's lecture, prepared in collaboration with Danny Filk from Department of Politics and Government at BGU, centered on a fascinating comparison between the French Revolution and the social protest in Israel that symbolically also began on July 14 – the day of the storming of the Bastille in 1789, followed by the declaration of the sovereignty of the Third Estate. This symbolic vantage point enabled the two scholars to attain a sharper view of the social protest's features and implications. With regard to the French Revolution it is possible to identify a correlation between economic and political changes. The combination of a financial crisis, debts and deficit, following a military adventure which led to a change in the tax system, scarcity and a steep rise in prices triggered the Revolution. A rise in housing and food prices, the gap between wages and rising costs,

and the implementation of a fiscal and tax policy that undermined the purchasing power of the middle class led to the outbreak of the protest in Israel. In accordance with the characteristics of a post-industrial society, the protest in Israel was a consumer protest, and not one of workers, given that organized labor did not participate nor was it represented in it.

In the French case, as in the Israel, the question is how economic change is translated into the political level. The convention of the estates in France due to the king's intention to change the tax system led to the demand of reform that developed into a revolutionary process. On the other hand, the protest in Israel developed "upside down" precisely because of a lack of opportunity and a crisis of representation in the political system, the political parties and parliament. The understanding that the political system is no longer a channel for the representation of interests and ideas was at the roots of the non-political nature of the protest, in addition to the shortcomings of the socio-economic left and its political collapse. All this meant that the protest was the only possible channel, the deficiency of which was actually proven when the Labor Party adopted the message. The Enlightenment as an ideational framework of concepts of rights and representation was at the center of the French Revolution, while the protest in Israel was led by a non-ideological, apolitical generation. In a consumer society with a crisis of political representation, as in Israel, the generation's language does not distinguish between commerce, culture and politics. Yet the protests created a new language given that the cultural situation muted and lacked political speech fitting the circumstances.

This was not a protest based on identities, but a protest using



"The People demand social justice," Cairo, August 2011

a rhetoric opposing ethnicity and hiding behind that a more important social class issue. In contrast to the French case, the core group of the protest in Israel belonged to the middle class, educated young people, who are not wealthy, in relative terms. Pierre Bourdieu would define this group as having much cultural capital, and relatively little material capital. This group spoke in the name of the people and attracted the middle class and the periphery; but it remained a middle-class protest, leaving many groups outside, such as the ultra-Orthodox, the national-religious, and the working class. It was the first protest against the liberal revolution that centers on Netanyahu's privatization policy, and against the breach of the Republican social contract which obliges the state to ensure welfare, education, health care and housing for the middle class. This is a class that has retreated from political and public involvement to the private domains of high-tech and making money, and that is connected with the global elite and Israeli capital in their support of the neo-liberal revolution. Although

this was the strongest protest in Israel, it was also weak, since it created no ideological alternative to neo-liberalism, but merely a "list of amendments" and a political bridge between groups that need protection from capitalism and colonialism.

In his lecture, Efraim Davidi made a connection between the protest in Israel and the events of the Arab Spring for a comparative discussion of these protests from a global class perspective. He argued that the protests in the Middle East have to be seen in the international context of the crisis of capitalism that affects also the world system's periphery, such as Egypt, Tunisia, and Israel. The current regional crisis is mainly driven by the unemployed and by workers (and not the middle class), and it spread to sectors in Israel who headed the protest that was essentially political. In Egypt and Tunisia the protest was offensive and resulted in the overthrow of the government, while in Israel it was defensive with the intent to preserve the existing political order. In historical perspective, the protests in the Arab countries

are reincarnations of workers protests that had erupted in remote provinces against the privatization policy years before the current uprisings. In the case of Egypt and Tunisia, the protest was translated into political action in the form of the ousting of Ben Ali and Mubarak. In contrast, the protest in Israel did not originate in the periphery, but the center.

Davidi rejected the characterization of the protest as Tel Aviv middle-class protest, arguing that it was a much more complex group. It did not go against the power centers of capitalism or the capitalist system in Israel and was careful to avoid such issues as the occupation and an outright turn against the regime. The ramifications are to be found in the workers' sector in the form of new organizations of workers and employees, that gave relevancy to concepts from the world of labor, such as "collective agreement," "works council," "trade union," or "Histadrut" (trade union federation). To Davidi's mind, these trends will not stop with a change of government in Israel. According to him, the protest in Tunisia and Egypt is continuing despite the change of government, not only because the demands for democracy and freedom have not yet been met, but also because the new rulers are unable to abandon the neo-liberal economic paradigm. Though radical, the Islamic message is also economically conservative. Trade unions in Tunisia that used to be in the opposition are now taking over peripheral cities. Trade unions in Egypt support the Muslim Brothers, but unrest among workers led to the formation of new radical trade unions. In Israel, the erosion of the conservative bastion of organized labor is reflected, among other things, in the establishment of the alternative organization *Ko'ach laOvdim* (power to the workers).

All this provides a picture of the protest extending beyond the borders and being structurally related to the situation of workers throughout the capitalist world, while the final outcome cannot yet be foreseen.

The conference was concluded by a roundtable session with the following participants: Reuven Abargil, member of the “Black Panthers”; Yuval Elbasha, chairman of *Yedid* (a network of citizens’ rights centers in underprivileged neighborhoods) and social activist; and Yossi Yonah from the Department of Education at BGU, who participated in the writing of the alternative Experts’ Report. The discussants related to such issues as the impact of the events of the Arab Spring on the protest in Israel; the ethnic-

sociological context of the protest and its identification with the Ashkenazi middle class in Tel Aviv; and in particular, the question whether the protest was directed against the socio-economic “system” in Israel or operated within it, and to what extent it is appropriate and desirable to join its ranks in order to change the system “from within.” Among other things, it was argued that the protest was used by the establishment in order to portray Israel as enlightened and democratic, in antithesis to the protests in the Arab world, and thus link it to the national Zionist context. Yonah also addressed the report of recommendations that he wrote together with Avia Spivak, explaining that the report was meant to reshuffle the cards and to offer a policy alternative, without

taking over the government. From among the recommendations, two are particularly noteworthy, namely a differential allocation of resources to the periphery and weaker strata; and an explicit and specific approach to the Arab and Bedouin population that was systematically discriminated.

This was undoubtedly a special conference due to the close connection made between the events in Israel and the turmoil and dramatic upheavals in the Middle East, which are still unfolding while these lines are written. It is yet another expression of the fact that Israel is an integral part of the region in which it is located. Reading the contents of the conference lectures is all the more fascinating in late summer 2014. ♦

Political Islam and Transformation in Turkey

Professor Jenny B. White of Boston University was a guest of the Chaim Herzog Center and gave a lecture on political Islam in Turkey, in the framework of a conference on political Islam in the Middle East. White, a social anthropologist, focuses in her research on modern Turkey; she also writes historical novels drawing on her historical and anthropological knowledge and her command of Ottoman Turkish. Her academic books deal with women and the rise of political Islam in Turkey. Her lecture at the conference was based on her latest book *Muslim Nationalism and the New Turks* (2012) that was listed as one of *ForeignAffairs.com*’s Best International Relations Books in the Best Books on the Middle East category for 2012.

The book examines the changes in Turkey over the last decade and



Jenny White, May 2013

through them also the conception of Islam, secularism and nationalism. White aims at challenging the tendency to oversimplify the phenomenon of political Islam in the Middle East and in particular in Turkey and thus problematizes the interpretation that sees Turkey as a model of political Islam. In White's view, political Islam in Turkey is not a 'model' but rather a process that has to be described and explained; its unique features need to be discerned, in order to assess the potential implications for political Islam in the Middle East. Turkey's economic situation is currently very good—its economy is growing, with the third highest growth rate worldwide; the country is more prosperous than it was a decade ago, or even five years ago; and it is a democracy. This process is very fast, comparable to similar developments in India, Brazil, China, and South Africa. The economic growth also contributed to social and legal change, as clearly illustrated in the elections of 2002, where the ruling party won by overwhelming majority. No similar process has occurred in the Arab world. Turkey was established in 1923, but no elections were held until 1950;

and since then it is necessary to distinguish between the state and the elected government. This feature is of great significance for our understanding of Turkey, and its return to Atatürk. Contrary to conventional wisdom, he saw Turkey as a Western country that is not necessarily a secular state, but rather one in which the state controls religion. Another mistaken conventional view is that there is no separation of religion and state in Turkey. Due to the idea of a unitary Western nation, there was cultural oppression, as for example of the Kurds, as well as social engineering pursued especially by the army. The army took upon itself to shape the country in accordance with its interpretation of Atatürk's views. It did this by means of coups with the intention to control the religious orientation, while Islam as a faith and religion was marginalized. These concepts affected mostly non-Muslims who were perceived as disloyal since the First World War, as the enemy "within" demonstrating the constant threat of dissolution to Turkish national unity.

Many changes were introduced after the coup in 1980; there was a lack of political stability, and several

military coups occurred in the wake of elections in which the winning candidate was not backed by the army. Conceptually these were not military coups in the strict sense, and it would be more accurate to define them as processes of social and cultural change. The economic openness introduced by the secular government led by Turgut Özal that opened Turkey to the market economy was a powerful key process. This crucial change released tensions in the districts, facilitated business initiatives and removed restrictions on foreign trade and on state involvement in the economy. Businessmen, who were also relatively conservative in religious terms, opened many businesses, grew rich and gained in strength and influence, but they differed from big industrialists, who were secular and Western, and among other things backed the Islamic parties. Most of these nouveaux riches were from Anatolia, and they were also more Anatolian in terms of culture. In many respects the commercial-economic boom had an Islamic orientation—an unprecedented phenomenon. Intending to show that they belong to the upper class, the emerging Islamic bourgeoisie created their own fashion style as well as new identities. Commercialization enabled people to choose how to be Muslims, as reflected in music, literature, and leisure culture. People were experimenting with how to live a Muslim life, a sort of modern, non-traditional Islam. For the first time women became active in politics, Muslim women fulfilled themselves as women and showed it in national terms. According to some observers, Erdoğan's party won the elections thanks to these women.

Another new trend was the theology of secularism that emerged in Ankara and influenced the Islamic party. In this framework



Emanuel Sivan discusses "Muslim Brotherhood and the Challenges of Democracy," January 2014

questions arose challenging the common assumption widely held among Christians that a religious person is necessarily an Islamist. Being religious became part of a new definition of "personhood": being religious Muslims does not make us Islamists, and it does not determine our decisions. According to this approach, political and other decisions can be made on a factual rational basis without ideology. In this spirit Turks now define Turkey as a secular republic run by religious people. Also the regime does not define itself as Islamist, but has mainly redefined secularism. This is a major change.

Yet another new trend is the intense proliferation of Islamic networks that appear as civil networks and are engaged in

Islamic community work and personal public work, providing tools for integration in the new economy. Pluralism is also a new feature. The new elites created new, non-orthodox definitions of identity, such as the freedom to choose what kind of Muslim one wants to be, or what kind of Turk. This was accompanied by a return to Islam and to the Ottoman heritage, that had been suppressed by Kemalism. For example, this finds expression in a television series featuring Sultan Süleyman Kanuni and in public art in the Metro station on Taksim Square (the location of the official 'Monument of the Republic') depicting the conquest of Constantinople. Post-imperial Turkey does not want to go back and become an empire

again, but it wants to go back and become a world power, like Russia. In contrast to its past image as a police state, its current image has commercial-economic features. All this led to the emergence of a new understanding of Turkish nationalism that is no longer perceived in purely ethnic terms, but expresses a departure from the Kemalist way. This is reflected in the readiness to do business with Greece, Armenia and Cyprus, in the removal of the army from its traditional position that placed it above the government and the severance of its ties with the government. Similarly, pluralism makes it possible to deal publicly with such sensitive issues as the Armenian genocide and the reconciliation with the Kurds. ♦

The State Archive

The conference on *The State Archive: Knowledge, Power, and History* aimed to discuss critically the institution on which the work of every historian is based. Traditionally the archive is perceived as an institution that contains knowledge embodied in the form of official documents which historians merely need to collect and pick, like a ripe fruit, in order to use them for reconstructing the past. These assumptions were dismantled by criticism of the modernist approaches in the humanities and social sciences, including the discipline of history. It is clear today that the archive, and in particular the state archive, containing the official papers, and documenting the work of the state's apparatus and its political system, cannot be seen as an institution embodying a simple objective truth, but rather as one participating itself in the molding of knowledge and

agendas. As an institution that dominates and controls all official information on behalf of the state, the state archive gives only partial access to documentation, not merely by such simple measures as secrecy laws, but also by discursive means including rules and regulations, the conception of categories, catalogues and hierarchies that reflect an internal discourse and constitute filtering mechanisms stemming from the state's priorities, its agendas, and its political and/or security considerations. Technological progress and the means of computerization and digitization in archives should help historians navigate the endless ocean of papers and files, yet they have turned out to be powerful filtering mechanisms in the service of the state officials' priorities and the ideology of those at the helm.

The speakers at the conference, who were mostly historians,

presented various aspects of their work in the archive and its role in the interrelation of knowledge and power, drawing on innovative critical theories and on (mainly their own) research experience in state, imperial and private archives. Ehud Toledano (Ottoman and Turkish Studies, Tel Aviv University) proposed a potential methodology for using the official archives of the Ottoman Empire to enable the writing of a history of marginalized groups like male and female slaves, reconstructing their experiences and their voices precisely from documents produced by, and representing, the ruling political and bureaucratic elite. This is important because these groups lacked the ability to document by and for themselves and usually also lacked a real and textual representation in the state apparatus. The study of Ottoman society, as the study of societies in the distant past, is undertaken

under conditions of cultural distance, and distance in time and space; in addition, Ottoman Turkish is a 'dead' language which the researcher has to master. Since Ottoman documents are strenuous for the eyes and difficult to decipher, the researcher has not only to put things into the right context, but also to examine circles of sources and layers of mediation other than the archives in order to fill the gaps in the documentation and to include material that is not distinctly archival. The researcher aims to recover voices from actions such as the escape of slaves, to understand what they indicate as well as the slaves' motivations and the possibilities available to them, and offer scenarios for all of them. Such reconstruction is possible through a practice dialectically linking the evidence to the historical context, in combination with the researcher's imagination, based on his/her knowledge and informed assessment, empathy and the humanization of the studied subject. These methodologies are of particular relevancy and significance for the writing of social history.

Omri Paz (Middle East Studies, BGU) dealt with the characteristics and practices of Ottoman criminal records in the nineteenth century, and ensuing problems. One manifestation of the overall systemic change initiated by the Empire in the nineteenth century was the restructuring and expansion of the bureaucracy, which entailed changes in the documentation systems, that is the archives. The structural changes of the archive reflected the logic underlying the reforms, particularly the process of centralization that placed all Ottoman government institutions under the control of the center. One of the main problems in the study of crime and criminality in the Empire derives from the fact



Avi Rubin, Omri Paz, Ehud Toledano, "The State Archive," December 2013

that only the reported crimes were recorded. This limitation creates the impression of a low crime rate, and hence a high level of security in Ottoman society. One of the *tanzimat* achievements in this field were bureaucratic changes that significantly increased the number of reported crimes. That in combination with changes in the legal system created a large body of knowledge of criminal records, perfected a clerical writing tradition on various levels and shaped a specific culture of court hearings. All these reveal power relations, norms, rivalries, disputes and conflicts among the various branches of law enforcement, but also problems in the documentation itself. Among other things, the minimizing of protocols for practical reasons seems sometimes to amount to filtering and censorship. Despite all limitations, the organizational culture of the nineteenth century provides an unprecedented opportunity to zoom in on the delinquent, the victim, and the policeman, and thus assists in the reconstruction of social life in the nineteenth century.

Dror Zeevi (Middle East Studies, BGU) addressed current trends of efficiency, improved access and

digitizing in Turkish state archives, that assist historians, while at the same time serving as very effective filter, especially with regard to the study of Armenians and the Armenian holocaust. The interface between the researcher and the archive has improved immensely, specifically during the rule of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's party, in terms of entry procedures and the locating of archive material, as well as the level of technological means available to the researcher. Yet this efficiency drive was gradual, and it turned out to be a double-edged sword. To the same extent to which the state simply makes the past accessible to the researcher, it also filters, monitors and conceals systematically and effectively information on sensitive topics, such as the relations to the Kurds, and the deportation and massacre of Armenians, not only from the time of the First World War, but also from earlier periods. The digitization process is accompanied by the state's efforts to publish its own version of such issues, to the extent that there may not even be any trace of them in the archive. The archives in Turkey underwent thorough cleaning after which their managers are not afraid to allow

researchers access. An historian who works in an archive, knows it, and has learned to identify its weak spots, is able to circumvent these difficulties by cross-checking records from different sources, such as documents of missionaries, consuls, memoirs of people involved in the events or testimonies of survivors, and thus can obtain indications and information about the massacres and deportations. If the archives are the institutional sites of mediation between history and its narration and writing, the silencing of the Ottoman archives means that they are no longer actual sites of mediation between the historical process and the writer; they are mere make-believe. This is an ongoing deception of researchers who believe that they receive access to the original material, while filtered and censored information containing a mere fraction of the historical evidence is presented to them instead. Above all this is a shameful long-term deception of the Turkish public that wishes to know their country's history.

Motti Golani (Jewish Studies, Tel Aviv University) opened the discussion on Israeli archives that assist in the writing of the history of the State of Israel, and expressed his concern that adopting an extremely critical approach may lead to a negation of archives' contents. In his talk, Golani made a comparison between the Israeli State Archive and the British archive known as PRO. The latter was essentially an imperial institution that underwent a process of 'nationalization' as part of the gradual internalization in British historical consciousness that the British Empire no longer exists. The basis for the comparison made by Golani, is historical, since Zionism was an imperial project that used the English-Zionist alliance

as systematic institutionalized policy. Yet, this association had also an institutional expression. Zionist experience can be found in the units of the British archive, documenting the various imperial offices, such as the Colonial, the Foreign, or the War Offices. The link to Britain was also reflected in learning the political culture and the culture of documentation. But it turns out that the learning of the culture of documentation was mutual. The British themselves learned the culture of Zionist archiving through the Haganah archives seized in an operation known as 'Black Sabbath.' The aim was to get to the archive that proves that the Jewish Agency was behind the Jewish Resistance Movement. Contrary to the Haganah archives in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv that were seized in this operation, the important archive in Yagur was destroyed before the British could reach it, and thus a major source for the study of the period was lost. According to Golani, the British learned from the organizational method of the Haganah archive and applied that knowledge to the National Archive in London. Unlike the British archives, the Israeli archives are still on the defensive, a trend that undermines their democratic nature. One expression of this is the use of elusive rules and definitions for the categorization of documentation as confidential for 'security' reasons. This is often justified, but in the name of security, also disorder is hidden, things are done that should not be done, and from the beginning, the historian is treated as a suspect. In the British archives, on the other hand, the rules are clear, unambiguous and equal to all. Apart from these limitations and apart from digitization, a visit to the archive as a social aesthetic experience is irreplaceable, and therefore creative solutions need

to be found in light of the limitations imposed by digitization.

Esther Meir-Glitzstein (Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism, BGU) focused the Joint's archive, which she considers of paramount importance for the study of Jewish immigration from Muslim countries. Despite its suspicious attitude toward Jewish nationalism, the philanthropic aid organization worked initially also in Palestine and, after the Holocaust, cooperated fully with the Zionist movement, though it consistently upheld its non-Zionist approach. After World War II, a focus of its activities was assistance to Jewish communities in Muslim countries and Eastern Europe. Yet, the degree of the Joint's visibility and presence in the study of the immigration from Muslim countries is inversely proportional to the centrality of its operations. This is important in light of the common narrative in existing research that did not make proper use of the Joint's archive. In this narrative such immigration is perceived as a rescue operation, as for example the immigration waves from Yemen and Iraq, and as the result of negotiations between the State of Israel and the Jews, as if there were no other factors involved. Local Arab governments, the world powers, the local Jewish leadership, various Jewish groups and others thus disappeared from research. A visit to the Joint's archive reveals that the immigration from Muslim countries was a much broader and more complex story than commonly thought. The awkwardness of the formal procedure required for entering the archive, its lack of organization, and the fact that it is not computerized may be part of the explanation for the common narrative and the state of the research. In the Joint's archive, especially in its

New York branch, one can find extensive documentation on the organization's activities in Arab countries that has not yet been explored. This documentation reveals explanations for the failures of the immigration from Yemen, the hardships the immigrants suffered and their difficult medical situation, which the Joint's archive in Jerusalem made sure to hide. The material shows the way of conduct of the philanthropic organization that operated in the shadow of British colonialism and adopted some of its work methods and perceptions. It was run by Europeans with colonial-Orientalist views, employing documented measures of abuse, beating and starving. So the story of the immigration from Yemen exposes the dark sides of the organization's activities that have not yet been studied. The Joint's archive is an invaluable treasure trove awaiting scholarly exploration because of the quality of the documentation regarding the immigration, and also as a source for the study of the organization itself precisely because it is non-Zionist.

Benny Nurieli (Politics & Government, BGU) continued the critical approach toward the

Joint and its presentation in the scholarly literature in the context of the Jewish immigration from North Africa. The Joint and its medical branch helped in the construction of the racial discourse regarding Jews from Muslim countries and European Jews, especially Holocaust survivors. Based on his research experience, Nurieli argued that while Jewish archives in the United States reflect a global worldview and consciousness, archives in Israel, such as the State and the Zionist Archives, reflect a local national consciousness and represent a brief local history of Zionism in Eretz Israel. Nevertheless institutions that the Israeli and American Jewish archives served, interacted through networks of experts in population management, doctors, and officials, who intermingled in spaces of immigration and health care in the camps in North Africa and Europe. These networks reveal a discourse dealing with the creation of racial hierarchies between Jews and non-Jews, with the biology of Jews and the improvement of the Jewish body. Drawing on critical approaches, Nurieli argued that the archive creates a discourse

and forms of scientific, political and moral authority, as well as forms of exclusion and denial, while reflecting and hiding power relations. These connections are exposed when Israeli doctors and officials adopted categories of knowledge measuring and creating racial distinctions for Jewish immigrants who survived the Holocaust and those from North Africa – categories that were created by American and European professionals of the Joint's medical branch. However, the archival discourse denies in a discursive manner the connection between the political action and the philanthropist one, by concealing the ties that existed between the Israeli Zionist Jewish representatives and the representatives of non-Zionist Jewish organizations. American archives reveal how racial scientific knowledge and the cataloging of physiological characteristics of Holocaust survivors in comparison to North African Jews, helped in justifying the Joint's financial aid, in directing the immigration goals of European and of North African Jews, and thus in pursuing an official selection policy as part of their immigration to Israel. ♦

The Middle East in Trans-Regional, Trans-Imperial, and Trans-National Historical Perspective

At the beginning of June 2013 a nationwide workshop of young scholars was held by the Department of Middle East Studies at BGU, with the support of the Chaim Herzog Center. The workshop focused on research on the Middle East from a trans-regional, trans-imperial, and trans-national historical perspective. The two-day workshop was organized

by Iris Agmon with the assistance of Liat Megid-Alon and Aviv Deri from the Department of Middle East Studies at BGU. Research students and faculty members from all Israeli universities participated.

In recent years a growing number of Middle East scholars choose to focus on historical processes crossing ethnic, cultural and national borders.

These processes occur within the constant movement of people and the transfer of knowledge, ideas, commodities and cultural products between regions, empires and countries. This important research trend seeks to look beyond the formal political frameworks that have been like scratches on the glasses of historians since the nineteenth century.

The methodological approach underlying the workshop focused on social networks and patterns of migration and of cultural and economic exchange across official geographical boundaries. The social role of mediation and the role of mediators as cultural agents are particularly important in this context. These mediators simultaneously belonged to different communities and act in the social, cultural and economic spheres between them. The use of mediation as category of historical analysis allows examining the territory of an empire or state simultaneously in two dimensions: “*from below*” – focusing on individuals and communities who have lived, worked and define themselves in ways that crossed political, ethnic and religious boundaries; and “*from beyond*” – that is without an a priori assumption of boundaries between human societies, such as communities, groups and political entities. The historicization of boundaries and their conception as fluctuating, permeable and variable make it possible to examine the role of cultural mediators in the ongoing processes that create and shape political boundaries and form individual and collective identities. Hence, a complex concept of identity is also required, seeing it, like borders, as entwined, fragmented and constantly changing. The workshop sought to promote such a research perspective among today’s research students, future scholars.

The workshop aimed to encourage Israeli graduate

students to discuss and revisit the historical categories of space, time and identity in the specific context of the Middle East, the Ottoman territories and the Mediterranean basin, as part of the productive engagement with these issues pursued by scholars worldwide. The workshop was meant to facilitate a dialogue between experienced senior scholars and young research students. The workshop was indeed a fertile and fascinating ground for discussion, joint deliberation and the establishment of ties outlasting the workshop itself.

In the session on *Intellectuals, Mediation and Migration of Knowledge*, the papers among other things dealt with Arabic translations of European history, the history of the Jewish people in Palestinian thought during the British Mandate, and intellectuals as cultural agents in Azerbaijan (Nicole Khayat, Rafi Beihanov, Eli Osheroff; discussant: Orit Ouaknine-Yekutieli). In the session on *Memory and Culture in the Tension between National and Local Identities*, the papers addressed the ethnic dimension of the representation of Jewish orphanages in the Ben-Yehuda Press, and the meaning of expressions of alienation from Arab states, drawing on the case of Moroccan Jews in Venezuela (Tamir Karkason, Aviad Moreno; discussant: Yoram Meital). In the session on *Relations between the Periphery and the Empire*, the papers focused, among other things, on the Kurdish tribal revolts in the Ottoman Empire at the end of the nineteenth century, and

on the tension between imperial environmentalism and colonial civil society, drawing on the case study of members of the arborists association in Mandatory Palestine (Roi Bell, Idan Barir; discussant: Avner Wishnitzer).

The session on *Bourgeois Culture in the Middle East* featured papers dealing with the sexuality of female servants in Egypt, bourgeois Jewish families in Egypt in the interwar period, and female images of the Egyptian state in cartoons (Sharon Maftsir, Liat Megid-Alon, Keren Tsdaifi; discussant: Liat Kozma). The last session on *Identity, Expertise and Knowledge in the Encounter between Colonialism and Nationalism* included a lecture on climate, environment and Jewish architects in Jaffa, and a paper on expertise, local Orientalist knowledge and the formation of modern culture in the area between Jerusalem, Cairo and Jaffa (Aviv Deri, Netta Cohen; discussant: Smadar Sharon).

The papers, lectures and the constructive discussions that followed were not only fascinating, but also provided a representative survey of the research trends among young researchers, indicating the encouraging current trends in Middle Eastern Studies in Israel, and an opening of the boundaries of political history. We hope that the workshop for research students will become a tradition, and thus strengthen the intellectual ties between them and senior scholars, contributing to the formation of an active community of discourse in this field of knowledge. ♦

Film Screening and Discussion

Half a Century of Algerian Independence: The Battle of Algiers (1966/67)

The Battle of Algiers looks at a world, in which guerrilla and terror warfare have become legitimate means of national liberation movements, and asks where the limit is, what is allowed, and what isn't. These questions, of course, relate to both sides in the war, [...] what is more immoral: to blow up cafés, or to destroy houses from the air, using planes; to kill policemen in the street, or to torture prisoners in order to obtain information about the organization?

(Pablo Utin, *The Battle of Algiers*)¹

A symposium marking half a century of Algerian independence (1962) was held on December 16, 2012, by the Chaim Herzog Center in cooperation with the Department of Middle Eastern Studies at BGU. The symposium that was open to the public was attended by students from the Department of Middle East Studies, especially those enrolled in courses dealing with the history, society, and culture of North Africa, guests, and other interested students from the University.

The screening of the film *The Battle of Algiers* (1966/67), directed by Gillo Pontecorvo, stood at the center of the symposium. The film served as axis for the discussion on colonialism and decolonization in Algeria and, more generally, in North Africa, as well as on the implications for Israeli–Palestinian relations.

Before the screening Ruth Ginio from the History Department at BGU, who specializes in the study of French colonialism in Africa, introduced the film and its historical context. She outlined the history of the French occupation of Algeria and spoke about the making of the film, those who made it, and about the political issues raised by its making and screening. Denis Sharvit from the Department of Sociology, Political Science and Communication at the Open University, and Yair Sheleg from the Israel Democracy Institute and the newspaper *Makor Rishon* participated in the discussion held after the screening of the film. Sharvit dealt with the relationship between France

and Algeria before, during, and after the Algerian War of Independence. Sheleg used the analogy between the French occupation of Algeria and the Israeli occupation in the territories as a premise to suggest that the Algerian case—where one million French settlers left Algeria after 130 years of occupation—is a possible evacuation model, in case the Israeli

מרכז חיים הרצוג לחקר המזרח התיכון והדיפלומטיה
THE CHAIM HERZOG CENTER FOR MIDDLE EAST STUDIES & DIPLOMACY
مركز حاييم هرزنووع لدراسات الشرق الأوسط والديبلوماسية

אוניברסיטת בן-גוריון בנגב
המחלקה ללימודי המזרח התיכון

חמישים לעצמאות אלג'יריה

הנכם מוזמנים להקרנת הסרט הקרב על אלג'יר (1966)
במסגרת הקורס מרוקו המודרנית - סוגיות בהיסטוריה, חברה ותרבות

בתכנית:
14:15 התכנסות ודברי פתיחה:
יורם מיטל, י"ר מרכז חיים הרצוג לחקר המזרח התיכון והדיפלומטיה
אורית ויאקני-יקותאלי, המחלקה ללימודי המזרח התיכון

14:30 רות ג'ניו, המחלקה להיסטוריה

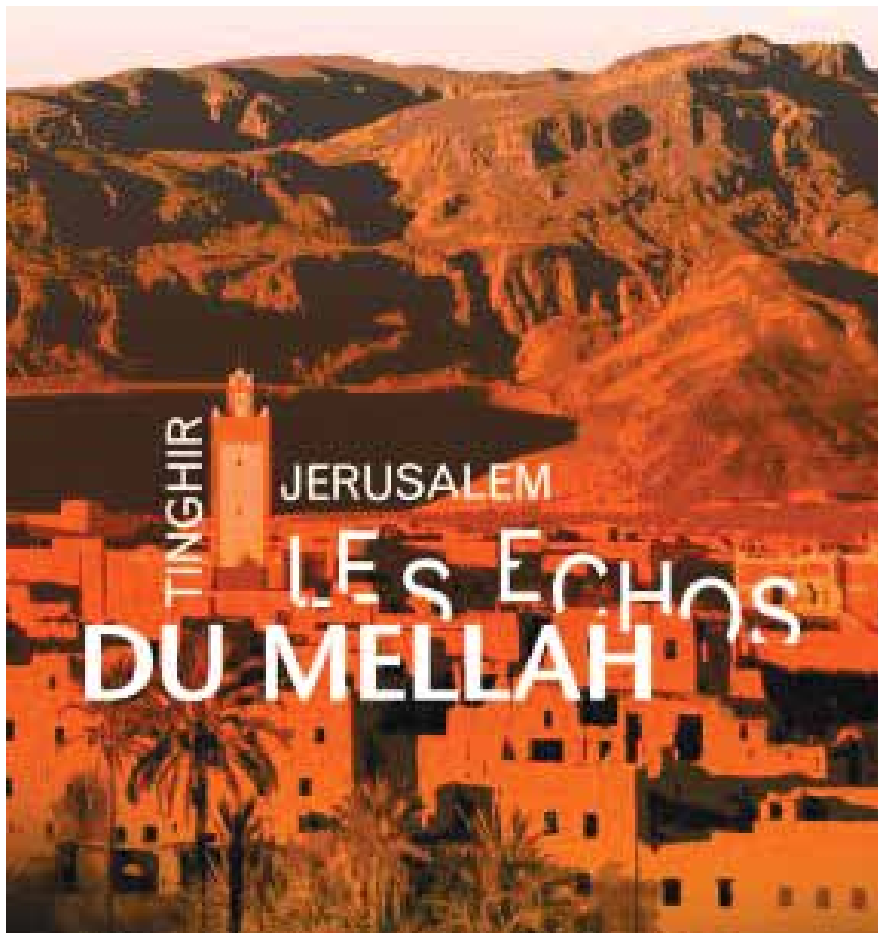
16:45-14:45 הקרנת הסרט הקרב על אלג'יר (1966)

17:00-16:45 הפסקה

18:00-17:00 דיון בהשתתפות:
יאיר שלג, המכון הישראלי לדמוקרטיה, עיתון הארץ
דניס שרביט, האוניברסיטה הפתוחה

יום ראשון, ג' טבת תשע"ג, 16.12.2012 בשעה 14:00
אולם אורן, בניין קרייטמן (26)
קריית האוניברסיטה ע"ש משפחת מרקוס

1 http://inside.jsfs.co.il/cinema_grade2sem1/the-battle-of-algiers [Hebrew]



the conflict created by guerrilla warfare of Third World countries in pursuit of their liberation from Western occupiers. Almost half a century before terrorism and the fight against it moved again to the top of the agenda in politics and the media, the film already looked at these issues in a complex, profound and uncompromising manner.

The Battle of Algiers is not made in accordance with recognized cinematic formulas, and unlike similar films, it does not present the rebels and locals as caricatures, nor does it romanticize them; but rather it employs a form of realism, creating by cinematic means the effect of a documentary, which helped to turn it into an exemplary model. The camera angle gives the viewers the impression that they are inside the events themselves, watching them as they occur; the black-and-white film shot from a camera carried on the shoulder creates the effect of real-time news reporting; and the fact that there is no evolving plot centered on a single character, and that the actors are non-professional, local Algerians – all this helps to create the impression of a documentary film rather than fiction, and to enhance that realism. The film also raises ethical questions concerning the violent nature of the struggle in Algeria, such as violent terror operations against civilians, the occupying army's use of torture, and generally the institutionalized methods employed by the occupying power, but also the counter methods adopted by oppressed civilians, as shown in the quotation above. ♦

public decides to withdraw from the West Bank territories as part of a peace agreement.

The ensuing discussion, chaired by Orit Ouaknine-Yekutieli, dealt with the implications of the Algerian–French case for Israeli–Palestinian relations, and with the significance of the colonial and postcolonial discourse. In the spirit of the film, the discussion sought to confront such issues as settlements, evacuation, terror, and occupation, while emphasizing their complexity, without demonizing any of the parties involved. Thus the film depicting Algeria's liberation struggle fifty years ago turned out to be also of particular relevancy for our contemporary reality.

When it was first released, *The Battle of Algiers* became important

as a model for political and radical films, and as inspiration for artists from Third World countries who wanted to tell the story of their peoples' oppression in a realistic way, from their perspective, and with effective cinematic tools. The film's effect was enhanced by the context of the time, the processes of decolonization in the Third World in the 1960s, in the framework in which the images of Frantz Fanon and Che Guevara became inscribed in historical memory and inspired a violent form of struggle, the use of terror and guerrilla warfare that characterized the war in Algeria documented in the film. Over forty years later, *The Battle of Algiers* is again of major importance for scholars and government officials, due to the way in which it describes

Tinghir-Jerusalem : Echoes from the Mellah (2012): Director Kamal Hachkar's visit to the Chaim Herzog Center on the occasion of the screening of this film

Kamal Hachkar was born in Morocco, in Tinghir – a city with a predominantly Berber population; he is a Muslim Berber living in France. When he was a child his parents emigrated to France, but they kept their house in the city, and over the years they often came there to visit. Hachkar set out to trace his family's roots and history in the city and soon discovered that until the 1960s there had been a large well-integrated Jewish community in the city. Until he began making the film, Hachkar had not been aware of that fact, and even more importantly he did not know that there had been a vibrant Jewish community of some 250,000 people in the country that constituted an integral part of the social, cultural and economic fabric of Morocco and its history. The research he wanted to do on his family soon shifted its focus to the question of how it happened that the Jews of Morocco, and in particular the Jews of Tinghir, left suddenly and rather quickly. While making the film Hachkar realized that he was raising profound questions and

issues, far beyond the simple factual question of why the Jews left the city. His film deals with migration, exile, displacement and loss, with memory and identity, and with identity politics in Morocco. The film also addresses political questions regarding Jewish–Arab coexistence. Hachkar's film was the first one raising the question of the departure of the country's Jews to be shown on Moroccan national television; and for the first time, the film addressed publicly, under the auspices of the state, the joint Jewish–Muslim history of Morocco that had always been present in people's minds and memories, though it was not taught at school. The broadcasting of the film by an official channel is important not only because of the relevancy of the topics shown to a wide audience in Morocco, but also because it reveals that today's public discourse in the country is more pluralistic and open than ever before, allowing for multiple identities and combinations thereof.

Hachkar's project that set out to trace the family's history in Tinghir became a journey of self-discovery

of his Moroccan and Berber identity that included the surprising and puissant rediscovery of the place of Jews in Moroccan history. Through the Jewish identity of Tinghir's Jews, Hachkar finds his Berber identity—a discovery that helps him to feel comfortable and confident about his identity and origin.

It should be noted that Tinghir, located in the Southeast of Morocco, is a city mainly inhabited by Berbers who speak Tashelhit Berber. The city's Jews were part of the Berber culture and spoke Tashelhit (that gave also rise to the Israeli mocking derogatory expression "*chleuh*"); they lived next door to Muslim Berbers, but strictly preserved their Jewish religion, laws, and way of life based upon them. The Jewish presence in Tinghir helped Hachkar understand that pluralism of identities may overcome the political barriers separating Arabs, Berbers, French men/women, Muslims and Jews, that were created by the national and nation-state discourse. It should be pointed out that the story of the Moroccan Jews was less than ideal, and that there were tensions in Muslim–Jewish relations, ups and downs; but the film demonstrates that it is important for people to remember the good things, and the most beautiful memories of Muslims and Jews of Tinghir are the memories of neighborliness, mutual respect and coexistence, as expressed in the film by the city's residents who continue to live there, by the former Jewish residents now living in Israel, and by their children. Many of them remembered that with nostalgia mixed with sadness and



Kamal Hachkar (director), Yoram Meital, Andre Levy



"Tinghir-Jerusalem" screening, May 2013

pain about the displacement and the loss of a distant world, while some even expressed their feeling of alienation in Israel, especially at the beginning, in light of the difficulties of integration. It turns out that many children of Jews who left Tinghir to live in Israel are interested in their parents' past and document their history in Morocco.

The memories of Tinghir's Muslims and Jews shown in the film indicate the central role played by Jews in the life and history of Morocco. This leads to the eye-opening insight that understanding Moroccan history is impossible without understanding Jewish-Muslim coexistence. The departure of the Jews from Morocco was not

only a loss for the Jews, as evinced by those who came to Israel, but also a loss for the Muslims and a rupture in the history of Morocco. In the minds of Moroccans, Jews are linked to Morocco's distant past that helps them to build their identity. There is a unique phenomenon in Morocco: many Muslims are of Jewish origin. That origin is welcomed since it indicates their veteran status as Muslims. One of the discussants after the screening of the film, Orit Ouaknine-Yekutieli, a scholar of Moroccan history, observed that the presence of Jews is part of the Moroccan *mentalité*, soul, in the sense that people perceive their world as being in the presence of

the king, as well as in the presence of Jews, though they are no longer physically there. Actually their absence makes them ever more present. Ouaknine-Yekutieli noted that the film reveals something beyond the Jewish-Muslim context in Morocco, referring to the crisis of modernity, where migration is part of the processes dictated by modernity, namely nationalism, that entailed the loss of a world and a past that will never return. In the story of Muslims, Arabs, Berbers, and Jews in Morocco, it is necessary to consider also colonialism that determined identities and demanded singular identities. It was colonialism that, for example, marked the Jews as different and as agents of modernity, thus creating a consciousness that entered the actual interrelations between Jews and Muslims.

Hachkar helps to create an alternative Jewish-Muslim narrative in the Moroccan public discourse that has been totally overshadowed by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in recent years. In this context Hachkar expresses young people's search for multiple identities. The film is full of nostalgic descriptions through which Hachkar seeks to convey a message of optimism and hope for his generation in Morocco and Israel. ♦



Linda Abdul Aziz Menuhin, "Shadow in Baghdad," screening and meeting, January 2014

Ahmed Qurei (Abu Alaa) at the University Campus – A Visit Organized in Cooperation with the Chaim Herzog Center

Ahmed Qurei (Abu Alaa), a senior PLO member, who served as Palestinian Prime Minister in 2003-2005 and in 2005/06, visited the Chaim Herzog Center in spring 2014, just before the end of the semester. Mr. Qurei was one of the drafters of the Oslo Agreements, and few know as much as he does about the secrets of the talks between Israel and the Palestinians over the last two decades. He was accompanied during his visit by Mr. Elias Zananiri, the deputy head of the PLO's Department for Dialogue with Israeli Society.

During his visit on campus, Abu Alaa met with faculty members and students, and the talks turned into fascinating discussions. The visit culminated in his lecture at the Senate Hall and the following discussion. The meeting took place before Operation Protective Edge, at

a time when the Israeli government criticized the establishment of a Palestinian unity government in partnership with Hamas. During his lecture and his talks with faculty members and students, Abu Alaa repeated the official position of the PLO and the Palestinian National Authority, calling for the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel. His comments made clear that any other option trying to avoid that solution would be a waste of time. He reiterated that the Palestinians want to end the conflict and expect (and hope for) a just peace agreement.

Mr. Qurei noted that from his meetings with Israelis, he has the definite impression that most of them want peace. The problem is not with Israeli society, but with the leadership that insists on continuing to build settlements in the occupied territories. It is impossible to hold

negotiations and at the same time to expropriate land and to continue the settlement projects. Since 1988, the PLO has decided to pursue a political program in the spirit of a two-state solution, "to which we are committed." According to this program that has won recognition from the Palestinian people, there will be a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and the right of return based on UN Resolution 194. The Palestinians have no intention to "flood" Israel with refugees, as President Abbas (Abu Mazen) has pointed out, time and again. If there is agreement on East Jerusalem being occupied territory and on its future placement under Palestinian sovereignty, then a compromise over Jerusalem may be possible.

Mr. Qurei described the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002 as the best framework to achieve a permanent agreement. Israeli willingness to accept the peace initiative would give Israel many advantages because it opens the door for Muslim and Arab recognition of Israel and for normalization. This is a plan acceptable to Arab countries because an Arab Summit Conference initiated it, and it was even approved by the Islamic Conference.

The PLO recognized the State of Israel already in the Oslo Agreements that are the irreplaceable basis. This is of significance since Rabin kept his promise to implement the agreement, while Netanyahu embarked on renegotiations. Moreover, in each round of



Zvi HaCohen, Abu Alaa, Yoram Meital, Dan Goldenblatt

negotiations with the Israeli government since Oslo, Israel demanded to reopen the negotiations over what had already been agreed upon. That is no way to conduct negotiations. In the Oslo Accords it was agreed that both sides will refrain from taking unilateral steps and proceed only through negotiations, which means that unilateral steps are defined as harmful to the permanent status agreement. The establishment of the Palestinian National Authority is an achievement. The Palestinians do not want to forego this achievement, and therefore both parties have no interest in dismantling the Palestinian National Authority. Since the Oslo Accords refer to two peoples, they also refer to two states, which embodies also the PLO's recognition of the State of Israel. The demand to recognize Israel as a Jewish state is an obstacle meant to prevent progress toward a peace agreement. Israel

already signed agreements with Egypt and Jordan as well as an agreement with Lebanon regarding its troop withdrawal, without ever demanding its recognition as a Jewish state. This demand is unacceptable to the Arab side. Also the insistence on not releasing prisoners that Netanyahu agreed to release is incomprehensible. Abu Alaa expressed understanding for the feelings of Israelis regarding the release of prisoners, but pointed out that there is also much sorrow among the thousands of families of prisoners, to whom the PNA is committed.

Mr. Qurei criticized Israel's opposition to the Palestinian unity government. The Israeli government includes the party *HaBayit HaYehudi*, that does not at all recognize the Palestinians, and yet the Palestinians are not demanding that the party be removed from the government. Israel's strong opposition to the

Palestinian unity government in partnership with Hamas is unacceptable. Hamas is a part of the Palestinian people, and its leadership has agreed to pursue reconciliation and actually to comply with the treaty obligations in relation to Israel. Reconciliation with Hamas, that will hopefully succeed, will be based on the positions held by the PLO.

Abu Alaa expressed his regret that the current Israeli position does not leave any room for optimism. On the other hand, he stressed that the situation in the region is changing and might lead to new constellations, and therefore it is in the common interest of Israel and the Palestinians to make a serious effort to reach an agreement. According to him, the Palestinian leadership is most serious in its intent to pursue peace, but there is growing frustration in Palestinian society that may even lead to a reaction detrimental to peace. ♦

The Ambassadors Forum

The Indian Ambassador to Israel, H.E. Jaideep Sarkar visited the campus in April in the framework of the Ambassador's Forum, organized by the Chaim Herzog Center in cooperation with Center for the Study of European Politics and Society. On that occasion, the Ambassador gave a public lecture in which he presented the relationship between Israel and India in historical perspective. He elaborated on the resemblance between the two nations, especially in their struggle for national liberation. He emphasized India's commitment to the Palestinian cause and to a full partnership with Israel in matters of science, agriculture and advanced technology and industry, in times of globalization. Ambassador



HM Ambassador Sarkar addressing the forum

Sarkar emphasized Israel's need to develop its ties with eastern countries and recommended increasing academic cooperation between the two countries. ♦

Jama'a Vols. 20 & 21



The International Journal for Middle East Studies – *Jama'a*, serves as a stage for graduate students, young scholars as well as established researchers. The journal is sponsored by the Chaim Herzog Center. Published since 1998, *Jamaa* positioned itself as a leading Hebrew journal in Middle East Studies, enabling Hebrew readers (students and the general public alike) to come across cutting-edge research in the history, sociology, anthropology, language and literature of the Middle East. For faculty members, the journal serves as a good indicator of what the younger generation of scholars is engaged in these days, and contributes to the creation of a vivid academic community studying the Middle East. In December 2013 volume 20 came out, and in May 2014 we published volume 21.

Volume 20 contains three original articles. Batir Xasanov's article, "In Search of Chingis-Khan's Good Light: The Rise of Chingis-Khan's importance and the 'Neo-Dastan' Discourse in Kazakhstan," deals with the rehabilitation of Chingis-Khan's image, reestablishing him as the forefather of the

new Central Asian states. In his article, "The Egyptian Historiography in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries on the Egyptian Rule of Sudan during the Nineteenth Century," Mustafa Badran discusses the evolution of Egyptian identity through modern historiography. The historiographical debate about that episode in Egyptian history enables us to discern the process of Egyptian identity formation during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The third article, by Yossi Goldstein, titled "Turkey above all else: Ben Gurion's Faith in the Ottoman Empire," places Zionist history in its Ottoman context and shows that after the 'Young Turk' Revolution Ben Gurion, like many others at the time, believed in the new regime's democratic goals.

From the onset of *Jama'a*, we have dedicated a section to a Hebrew translation of an article we believe to be a milestone in the study of the Middle East. This year we decided to translate Andre Raymond's seminal article "Islamic City, Arab City: Orientalist Myths and Recent Views," which criticized the way Middle Eastern urban history was studied by Western scholars. The translation

is introduced by Daniel Monterescu, who places Reymond's contribution in a broader context.

Volume 20 also contains a new column – an interview with a leading scholar in Middle East Studies. The first interview is with Prof. Roger Owen, who is introduced by Avi Rubin of Ben-Gurion University, outlining Owen's legacy.

Volume 21 also contains three original articles. Sharon Shitrit-Sason's article, "Who is Afraid of Autobiographies? On Women's Autobiographies in the Arab World – Fadwa Touqan and Haifa Bitar," defines the main features of Arab women's autobiographies through two very different writers. In "Eviction and Compensation, the Village of al-Samara, 1948-1951: The Relations between Israel and the Baha'i Community," Shai Rosen focuses on the unique kind of relations of the young Jewish state with its Baha'i community. The last article, by Itamar Dubinsky, titled "Wife, Husband, and Two Children: Family Planning Policies in Tunisia and Iran," analyzes family planning in two Muslim societies, Tunisia adhering to a secular ethos, and the Islamic Republic of Iran, and shows how each regime marketed family planning accordingly.

The volume's translated article is Constantine K. Zurayk's "*Ma'na al-Nakba*" [The meaning of the Disaster]. This seminal work coined the term "*Nakba*" with reference to the 1948 War. Hillel Cohen, from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, provides an introduction to both Zurayk and the short book that was published during the war itself.

The volume includes an interview with Prof. Leslie Peirce, a leading Ottomanist. An introduction to Peirce's work is provided by Amy Singer of Tel Aviv University. In the Food for Thought column, Haggai Ram's contribution, titled: "On Thrillers, Boundary Crossing, and Crime in Mandatory Palestine," suggests using fictional writings for reconstructing the social history of Mandate Palestine.

Both volumes contain a review section. Please visit our new website at <http://in.bgu.ac.il/humsos/jamaa/Pages/default.aspx> and our facebook page: Jamaa Journal. ♦



The Chaim Herzog Center Annual Scholarships Awards 2013

MA thesis

Noga Mosco, Department of Sociology & Anthropology, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

In Search of "The Bedouin Adaptive Adult": Developmental Goals of Mothers and Fathers from the Bedouin Society of the Negev

Eli Osheroff, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies

Where Did You Come From? The History of the Jewish People in Early Palestinian Historiography (1920-1948)



Maxim Yosefi, Michael (Mike) Herzog, Yoram Meital, Zvi HaCohen

Ph.D. Dissertations

Maxim Yosefi, Department of Middle East Studies, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Anthropology of the Traditional Bedouin Poetry: Social and Ritual Functioning

An Encouragement Scholarship

Zmira Ron-David, Department of Hebrew Literature, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Love Stories in Conflict Zones: Personal Oral Stories; Letters and Postcards; Narratives of Love Stories in the Public Sphere



"Art and Protest in the Middle East," roundtable

The Chaim Herzog Center Annual Scholarships Awards 2014

MA thesis

Mor Tzaban-Bar Sheshet, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

The Study of the Qur'an and the Torah in the Medieval Middle East

Ph.D Dissertations

Nassim Khalaf, Department of Sociology & Anthropology, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Al-Tarab: Poetics, Music and Communication in Constituting Cultural Identity In Egypt, 1904-1970

Irena Fliter, Department of Middle Eastern and African studies, Tel Aviv University

Ottoman Diplomats and the Culture of Diplomacy: Ambassadors, Chargés d'Affaires and Dragomans between the Ottoman Empire and Prussia (1761-1821)

An Encouragement Scholarship

Moshe Firrouz, Department of Jewish Thought, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Studies in the Karaite Sage Judah Hadassi's 'Sefer Eshkol ha-Kofer' (The Book of Cluster of Henna Blossoms)



Yoram Meital, Mor Tzaban-Bar Sheshet, Isaac (Bougie) Herzog, Yossi Sucari



Annual Scholarships Awards 2014

Calendar 2012-2013 (Selected)

November 7, 2012

Symposium: The Muslim Brothers: A Religious Vision in a Changing Reality

November 12, 2012

Symposium: The October War – Intellectual Errors and War Failures

November 28, 2012

Book Event: The Dream of the White Sabra by Meron Benvenisti

December 11, 2012

Conference: Protest and Revolution in the Middle East – Israel and the Arab Spring

December 16, 2012

Screening and a Discussion of a Documentary Film: The Battle of Algiers (1966)

December 24, 2012

Symposium: Translating the political – Senegal and Iranian literature in Israel

January 7, 2013

Book Event: To Mark the Hebrew Version of She, Me and the Fall, by Salman Natour

March 12, 2013

Book Event: Jewish Life on the Nile – Sheikh Hamza Street No. 17 in Cairo, by Abraham Bar-Ab (Ben Tata)

April 24, 2013

Book Event: A Tiger Made of Paper, to Mark the Hebrew Collection of Zacaria Tamer Short Stories by Alon Fragman

May 27, 2013

Screening and a Discussion of a Documentary Film: Tinghir–Jerusalem: Echoes from the Mellah by Kamal Hachkar

May 29, 2013

Symposium: Political Islam and Transformation in the Middle East

June 4, 2013

Symposium and Annual Scholarships Ceremony: A Spring of Anger – The Art of the Painter Khader Washah

November 13, 2013

Symposium: 1973 War: When the Canons Fall Silent

November 18, 2013

Symposium at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem: Judaism and Islam – Jurisprudence, Thought and Practice in Comparative Perspective

November 19, 2013

Conference: Bedouin Citizens in a Jewish State: Towards Appeasement or Conflict

December 25, 2013

Symposium: State Archive – Knowledge Power and History

2013 

NEWSLETTER 2014

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Calendar 2014 (Selected)

January 5, 2014

Screening and a Discussion of a Documentary Film: *A Shadow in Baghdad* (2013) by Linda Abed el-Aziz Menuhin

January 8, 2014

Symposium: The Muslim Brothers and the Challenges of Revolution and Democracy

January 15, 2014

A Visitor Lecture: "State of Liberation: Hamas between Government and Resistance," Somdeep Sen, University of Copenhagen

March 19, 2014

The Ambassador Forum: "Relations of the EU, Israel and the Middle East," Lars Faarborg-Andersen, Head of the UE Delegation to Israel

April 2, 2014

The Ambassador Forum: "India-Israel Relations and Recent Developments in India's Politics," H.E. Jaideep Sarka, India Ambassador to Israel

May 19, 2014

A Visitor Lecture: "Israel's Asian Challenge," P.R. Kumarswamy, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi India

May 26-28, 2014

An international Workshop: Jewish Thought in Arab Societies, 1880-1960

May 24, 2014

Concert: Um Kulthoum Forever, The Andalusian Mediterranean Orchestra of Ashkelon

June 10, 2014

Symposium: Ahmed Qurei (Abu Alaa), Israeli-Palestinian Relations in Light of the Breakdown in Negotiations: What Lies Ahead?

June 19, 2014

Annual Scholarship Ceremony and a Visiting Lecture: Yossi Sucari: "The Silenced Holocaust – Holocaust of Libyan Jews"

2014

Who's Who at the Center

Scientific Committee



- ◆ Chairperson: **Prof. Yoram Meital** (ymeital@bgu.ac.il)
- ◆ Academic and Administrative Coordinator:
Dr. Haya Bambaji-Sasportas (hercen@bgu.ac.il)
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- ◆ **Dr. Iris Agmon**, Dept. of Middle East Studies, BGU
- ◆ **Dr. Avi Rubin**, Dept. of Middle East Studies, BGU