



THE CHAIM HERZOG CENTER FOR MIDDLE EAST STUDIES & DIPLOMACY

מרכז חיים הרצוג לחקר המזרח התיכון והדיפלומטיה • מרכז חיים הרצוג לدراسات الشرق الأوسط والدبلوماسية

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Egypt's Journey towards the Second Republic

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The popular uprising in Egypt gained unprecedented achievements: President Husni Mubarak was forced to step down, and the political power structure established over decades fell in turmoil likely to bring fundamental change. Without minimizing the challenges that Egyptian society faces, the "Revolution of January 25" can be credited with exceptional achievements, providing a source of inspiration for social and political struggles in the Middle East and elsewhere.



Tahrir Square, Cairo January 2011

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The Revolution of January 25 was first and foremost an Egyptian civil uprising. A combination of economic, social and political factors formed the background for the outbreak of rage. Millions of salaried employees that constitute the middle class have suffered ever growing economic hardship over recent years. Social gaps reflect a deep abyss between those who benefit from the "open economy" policy and the vast majority unable to cope with the rising costs of

living. Some 40 percent of the 85 million citizens of Egypt live under the poverty line. University graduates suffer most from the high unemployment rate (about 20 percent). Moreover, corruption has come to plague the country, affecting both the private and the public sectors. This provided the background for the slogan voiced by many demonstrators: "Freedom, Change and Social Justice".

The demonstrations that led to the political transformation in

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the country of the Nile were not organized by just one group, nor were they headed by a common leader or leadership. This may be seen as a weakness. Yet, the lack of a singular “address” during the critical stages of the stern confrontations in the cities’ streets actually worked in favor of the demonstrators and allowed different sectors to identify with their aims and to join the protests. Undoubtedly, the men and women of the younger generation brought about the miracle of the uprising. They employed the new media to harness their struggle in various ways. Social internet networks, email, blogs, SMS and mobile phone cameras were used not only to connect and recruit activists and sympathizers, but also as a framework for solidarity in the internet age. Their protest received extensive media coverage; particularly noteworthy is the unprecedented support provided by *al-Jazeera*.

Nevertheless, the protest of the younger generation could not have evolved into a popular uprising without the participation of sectors of the lower strata, most of whom are not at all connected to Facebook, do not use email and cannot afford mobile phones. At the height of the uprising the cities’ streets were packed with millions of Egyptians who expressed their protest by “traditional” means: they marched, shouted hoarsely: “the people want to overthrow the regime”, and suffered the blows dealt out by the internal security forces and by thugs employed by them. In these non-virtual confrontations more than 350 citizens were killed, and thousands were injured. Thus the “power of the crowd” was created that ultimately was the decisive factor.

Decades under an oppressive regime had turned society into a “silent majority”. A wide range of silencing mechanisms was



Domino effect in the Middle East?

employed, from the imposition of a hegemonic narrative and the censorship of critical positions in various fields, to the persecution, imprisonment and torture of dissidents. Expressions of resistance were well known, especially in the works of writers, poets, playwrights, filmmakers and artists. Egyptians’ renowned sense of humor provided a daily outlet for criticizing the “situation”. The number of demonstrations organized by various organizations and parties increased continuously; during the last six years more than 400 demonstrations were held every year. Intellectuals from the entire political spectrum joined protest movements such as “*Kifaya*” [enough!]. The Muslim Brotherhood won wide support, and 88 of its representatives entered parliament in the elections of 2005. The regime allowed the opposition some, not insignificant space, but it laid down the rules of the game that undermined any possibility to change the political power relations legally. The widespread fraud in the parliamentary elections in 2010 was a blatant expression of that trend. The Muslim Brotherhood, whose 88 representatives had

constituted the main opposition faction, was left without any representation in newly elected parliament. The other opposition parties constituted a tiny minority.

Two factors dominated the public space during the first days of the uprising: the “baton” of the internal security forces and the police; and the determination of the first wave of the protest, mostly by men and women of the younger generation (that were proud to be called “*Shabab*”). As the means of oppression employed by the regime became more brutal, a growing number of citizens sympathized with the demonstrators and gradually joined their ranks. Once the “barrier of fear” was broken among millions of citizens, the balance of power between the establishment and the crowd was reversed. It was of great importance that the solidarity within the demonstrators’ camp was forged in the course of the confrontation, which provided the unending source of energy to continue their struggle. That solidarity among individuals and among small groups was formed within that unique “moment” – without mediating agents. The

rage was the external expression of the realization that this time the just struggle had a chance to succeed. Millions of citizens were willing to fight fiercely to attain universal rights, especially political freedom, human rights and reasonable living conditions. These clearly demonstrate the vanity of the Orientalist argument about the “submissiveness” of the Egyptian/Arab citizen. Midan al-Tahrir became the focus of the struggle and the model of the uprising throughout the Republic. As the uprising spread, the tables were turned, and an atmosphere of fear filled the corridors of power and the chambers of the regime’s leaders.

* * *

Egypt entered a transition period with Mubarak’s resignation. The overall responsibility for state affairs during this period rests with Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), comprising the senior military command of the Egyptian army, who played a crucial role during the uprising and Mubarak’s resignation. That this was not a military coup was made clear by the public commitment of the SCAF’s statements and by their initial steps, especially the constitutional amendments which allow free and fair elections to both the presidency and the parliament. Thus, the transition period should end in the transfer of power to the elected civil leadership. One of the challenges that the “Revolution of January 25” now faces is the wide-spread fear of a conflict of interest between the forces and objectives of civil society and those of the security, military and administrative establishment that currently manages the affairs of state. Therefore it is clear that even when the army returns to its barracks, it will remain an influential factor in the developments in Egypt and in its politics.

The “Revolution of January 25” reshuffled the cards in the public

space in general and in the political arena in particular. A new wind blows in the public space, and Egyptian citizens are again interested in the political arena. The vacuum created by the disappearance of the ruling party is being filled by political organizations, old and especially new ones. The Muslim Brotherhood (MB) remains a significant social and political movement and the rallying point for supporters of a religious and conservative agenda. It lost its position as the only alternative to the regime, however. In the next parliamentary elections, the MB will participate for the first time as a party; however, it will not be competing with the members of the unpopular ruling party, but rather with representatives of parties that lead the uprising. Particularly noteworthy are the new political organizations that identify with the “younger generation”, constituting more than half of the population, and advocate the establishment of a civil and democratic welfare state. These organizations have gained wide public sympathy that is likely to find expression at the ballot box.

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The question of how the changes in Egypt might affect key policy issues, including the peace with Israel, should be examined with reference to two stages. The first stage, the transition period is characterized by fast changes in the political and public arena, on the one hand, and by continuity in foreign, security and economic policies, on the other. Cairo’s strategic partnership with Washington and the commitment to the peace treaty with Israel will be upheld in both stages. In this context, the very generous American aid to Israel and Egypt will also continue. Since the signing of the peace treaty with Israel, Egypt has received some 70 billion dollars in American aid (including

about 40 billion dollars in military aid).

The military leaders have repeatedly announced that Egypt will honor its international commitments, and thus sent an important and unambiguous message regarding the peace treaty with Israel, the strategic partnership with the US, and the numerous treaties between Egypt and many other states. Moreover, spokespersons of groups and parties involved in the “Revolution of January 25” published similar announcements. It might be worthwhile to recall that the fate of the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty also became a matter for concern during dramatic events in the past, including the assassination of President Anwar Sadat, the first and the second Lebanon War, the collapse of the Oslo process, and countless confrontations between Israel and the Palestinians.

However, considerable changes in Egyptian policy towards Israel and the Palestinian arena may occur in the second stage, when power has been transferred to the elected civil leadership. While upholding its commitment to the peace treaty, and especially to the treaty’s military annex and to the openness of the Suez Canal for Israeli vessels, an elected leadership might express the widespread criticism in Egypt of Israel and its policy towards the Palestinians. Therefore, the relations between the two countries may be affected. Egypt under Mubarak foiled possibilities for cooperation with Israel, apart from the sale of crude oil and, recently, gas. Egypt led an international campaign to expose Israel’s nuclear capability and to force it to sign the Treaty of Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. An elected government in Cairo will continue that trend and might even demand a change in the conditions of the gas deal or its

cancellation. Egypt will invest significant diplomatic efforts in the international arena, especially the US and Europe, to condemn the Israeli settlement project and will hold Israel responsible for the non-renewal of the peace process.

The developments in the Gaza Strip and the Egyptian policy towards Hamas may potentially cause an acute crisis in Israeli-Egyptian relations. Like Israel, Mubarak's regime opposed the establishment of Hamas' rule in the Gaza Strip. Egypt took measures to prevent arms smuggling from Sinai, opposed the opening of the Rafah crossing under prevailing conditions, and provided political support to the leadership of the Palestinian Authority in its fight against Hamas. This policy was consistent with the heavy siege imposed by Israel on the Gaza

Strip. A few days after Mubarak's resignation, there was a first sign of change in the Egyptian position. Egypt announced a partial opening of the Rafah crossing, and an elected Egyptian government can be expected to tend towards opening it on a regular basis and thus to disrupt the closure imposed by Israel on the million and a half inhabitants of the Gaza Strip. Any wider armed confrontation between Israel and Hamas, like for example the "Cast-Lead" operation, may cause Israeli-Egyptian relations to deteriorate into an unprecedented crisis.

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The "Revolution of January 25" has gained significant achievements, but these are the beginning of a long journey fraught with obstacles to the realization of the main aims: the establishment of a civil

government based on democratic principles. The groups bringing about the miracle of the uprising carried two main slogans: "The People Want to Overthrow the President"; "The People Want to Overthrow the Regime". In eighteen days of hard struggle their first aim was achieved. The overthrow of the regime, namely the transition from an autocratic regime to a democratic one, is a far more complex challenge that has to be seen as a long journey fraught with obstacles, in which free elections constitute an important step, but not the only one. The "Revolution of January 25" put Egyptian society in a good starting position for the establishment of the "Second Republic" and opened a new chapter in the history of modern Egypt.

Leaving Iraq

Dr. Nadir Tsur

During the night of 18-19 August, at the time when the heat of 44 centigrade gradually fades in the capital Baghdad, the last soldiers of the 4th Battalion of the 2nd Infantry Division of the American Army left Iraq. To keep the promise that the Battalion would leave by the end of August 2010, US President Barack Obama ordered to complete the withdrawal a few days before the end of the month. The withdrawal date was brought forward for tactical reasons, to prevent terror organizations from attacking the withdrawing soldiers – similarly to Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000.

The withdrawal of the last combat division from Iraq symbolizes, at least explicitly, the end of the American active operational involvement in the war-stricken country, after more than seven

years of occupation, of fight against terrorism and attempts to establish a new political order.

The war began with fanfares and a sin – the presence of a nuclear smoking gun in Iraq without any proper evidence for it and the strange link between the terror

attack of 11 September 2001 and Saddam Hussein; and it ended with a whimper and another sin – the destruction of all institutions and the abandonment of millions of people to governmental chaos and external threats. Over the years, the US lost more than



Obama's exit policy

four thousand and four hundred soldiers; almost a trillion dollars were spent on the war effort and the American entanglement in the ensuing chaos; and some one hundred thousand Iraqis lost their lives due to terror attacks and odd circumstances. Now Iraq has been abandoned to its fate, steeped in bloody conflict, without being ready for it, after the world's greatest superpower failed to establish a "new order," a democracy, in a country whose dictatorial tradition was the only means to prevent chaos, though the cost was terror and despicable tyranny.

Almost like years ago in Vietnam, when the US, under the leadership of five presidents, behaved in South-East Asia like an elephant in a china shop, their military campaign and continuous involvement in Iraq fell victim to a long series of erroneous decisions, false justifications and a disastrous combination of deceit and stupidity. While in Vietnam US involvement began under the pretext of supporting the independence of the states on the Indochina Peninsular and promoting the establishment of democracy to replace the defeated French colonial rule – and thus also erasing the Korean trauma; in Iraq the US wanted to get rid of a dictator, who dared to challenge them, imposed his bestiality on his neighbors and provided support and shelter to terrorism – and they intended thus to erase the disappointment over the results of the first Gulf War and the trauma of the Vietnam War and to react forcefully to the destruction of the Twin Towers on September 11.

The US did not heed the warnings of the Gulf States against a war in Iraq. Moreover, the Bush administration excluded them from the decision making process preceding the toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime. Apart from Kuwait that had an unsettled



Demanding American Withdrawal from Iraq

score with the dictator and was eager to assist the Americans, the Sunni regimes in the Gulf argued that Saddam's downfall will not guarantee stability for Iraq and that Iraq will become an arena of inter-ethnic conflict that is bound to threaten them. Again, similar to the events in Vietnam, the United States were sucked into an internal civil war. This time they faced a conflict between Sunnis, Shi'ites and Kurds, and US involvement chopped off the iron fist that despite its inherent flaws steered Iraq's internal affairs in accordance with the norms recognized in the culture of the region, that characterize quite a number of states in the non-Western, non-democratic world. The United State again realized that the use of democratic means actually increases existing tensions, rather than overcoming them.

Currently Iran and Turkey are sharpen their claws in order to clamp them into a country prone to internal conflict that now lacks the rule and control of the American combatants, whose presence after all suppressed worse bloodbaths than those we witnessed so far. During the years of the American occupation, Iran has established

ties with many interest groups in Iraq and can also be expected to reach the relatively moderate Shi'ite cleric, the elderly Ayatollah Sistani, alongside its already existing ties to groups loyal to the more radical religious leader Muqtada al-Sadr. The recruitment of groups worried that Iraq may become a secular, democratic, stable state, and their transformation into a united political force is bound to erode the power of those supporting Iraqi nationalism – both Shi'ites and Sunnis. The Iraqi nationalists are in discord with the Kurds, among other things over the issue of royalty rights pertaining to the oil fields near Kirkuk, on the border to the Kurdish region. The future of the Kurdish national movement torn between traditional tribal structures and the reorganization into Islamist groupings also worries Turkey given its continuous struggle against its Kurdish minority. Turkey fears that such confrontations will be exacerbated, if it does not attend to what is happening in Iraq.

Iraq now depends on local policemen and soldiers for its defenses, and on American military advisors and bureaucrats, if not to say on a privatized mercenary

army aided by contractor companies. It is doubtful whether those forces have the power to prevent what in February 2006 was termed "sectarian hell." Shi'ite militias, Kurds, Sunnis and terror networks that found favorable conditions in Iraq, are getting ready – quite reminiscent of the situation in Lebanon after the Israeli withdrawal to the security zone in 1985. At the end of 2011, when the US withdrawal from Iraq will be completed, the country will have no air force to defend its air space against external threats, nor a navy to defend its coast line and its oil export.

For more than seven years, Israel has enjoyed a sense of

security on its Eastern border, but now it may have to add to the threats that cause the security system sleepless nights, also an Iraqi threat, be it from terror cells sending trained terrorists to Israel, or be it from an additional arm of the Iranian octopus or the Turkish one.

Wars led without a clear and wide national consensus and without defined and accepted aims apparently end up harming the states that initiated them and their allies, even if it is the power of the US. Who knows that better than Israel? Who was harmed more from that than Israel? Such declarations as "we won" or "we won by points" are to no avail. The

truth is that, almost like the story of Vietnam, the story of the US in Iraq is bound to be summed up in the history chronicles with the words "we came, destroyed and left."

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••• CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS •••

The Arab Peace Initiative: Political and Environmental Dimensions

An international conference on "The Arab Peace Initiative – Political and Environmental Aspects" was held on 20-22 June 2010. Prof. Eilon Adar, director of the Zuckerberg Institute for Water Research at BGU's Sede Boker Campus, made a unique contribution to its success. The conference is part of a wide long-term project, funded by Yad Hanadiv, that deals with such diverse issues as public opinion, democratization processes, new media, communication and globalization in the Middle East.

The conference aimed at exploring the potential inherent in the Arab peace initiative in the context of the current situation in the Middle East. In addition, it was meant to provide a unique opportunity to discuss both the political and the environmental implications of the conflict with

the Palestinians and its future settlement.

Leading scholars from Egypt, Jordan, the US and Britain attended the conference, alongside their Israeli and Palestinian colleagues. Another outstanding feature was the participation of personalities that took part in the political process, including Dr. Oded Eran, director of the Institute for National Security Studies at Tel Aviv University, who formerly served as Israel's ambassador to Jordan and the European Union, as deputy chief of the Israeli embassy in Washington and as head of Israel's negotiations team with the Palestinians (1999-2000).

Among the participants were Prof. Eyal Benvenisti, scholar of international law at Tel Aviv University, who discussed the interpretations of UN Resolution 194 regarding the right of return

of Palestinian refugees; Dr. Amichai Magen, Director of the Institute for Democracy, Law and Diplomacy and Associate Fellow at the Department of Government, Law and Diplomacy at the Shalem Center, as well as Visiting Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, who analyzed US policy in the Middle East during the Bush and the Obama administrations; and other such experts as Prof. Elie Podeh, Prof. On Winckler, Dr. Menachem Klein, Dr. Moshe Behar, Mr. Israel Harel, Dr. Adnan Musallam (Bethlehem University), Dr. Muhammad Eiedat (University of Jordan), Samir Ghattass (Egypt – a former leading member of the PLO), and Prof. Alon Ben-Meir (Center of Global Affairs, NYU).

Israeli and Palestinian scholars of environment studies including Prof. Eilon Adar (director of the Zuckerberg Institute for Water

Research), Prof. Richard Laster (Faculty of Law, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Prof. Alon Tal (BGU), Dr. Alfred Abed-Rabbo (Bethlehem University) discussed in their conference contributions joint projects and practical solutions regarding the use of water resources, while other scholars, including Prof. Arie Issar, Prof. David Eaton and Dr. Andrew Wade dealt with such issues as desertification.

The conference was a great success and received positive feedback from the participants and from Israeli media. In light of Israel's political situation today and the further relevancy of the Arab peace initiative, we hope to organize a follow-up conference. We are currently in contact with Palestinian, Egyptian and American academic institutions that are interested in cooperating with the Chaim Herzog Center to organize a second conference, to be held in 2011. Moreover, we hope to publish the papers presented at the two conferences.

Abstract of the lecture presented by Dr. Moshe Behar (University of Manchester):

The 2002 Arab Peace Initiative (API) is effectively the sole route to realizing a modestly viable "two states" settlement to the conflict over the territory of Mandated Palestine (controlled in its entirety by Israel since 1967). While the API cannot resolve the conflict completely, it still contains the single most promising potential to diffuse the conflict somewhat. This quality results first and foremost from the API's inherently regional dimension; other schemes being discussed – be they for one state, two states or a bi-national state – fancifully relate to the territory comprising Mandated Palestine as if it is a territorial island. Given its clear comparative advantage, why has the API been totally scorned,

not just by Israel, but also by Europe and the United States too? While I would have wished my answer to be less mundane than it is – there is little conundrum here: Israeli decision makers are – plainly and simply – uninterested in any viable scheme for a two state solution. An examination of the platforms of all Israeli political parties reveals that out of the 120 members elected to the Knesset in 2009 – only 14 support a *substantive* two state framework (including the one the API outlines). Israel's remaining 106 MKs are all opposed to any *viable* two state solution – hence, to the API as well.

In brief: The 14 MKs who support a *viable* two state arrangement belong to the United Arab list-Ta'al (4), Balad (3), Hadash (4) and Meretz (3). Out of these there are only 4 *Jewish MKs* who support a two state scheme and – as such – are the sole Jewish MKs capable of substantive engagement with the API. In terms of the API, Israel's remaining 106 MKs can basically be divided as follows socio-politically: Labor (13 MKs), Kadima (28), United Torah Judaism (5), one-third of the Likud (9/27), one-fourth of Yisrael Beytenu (4/15) and perhaps one-fourth of Shas (3/11) – i.e. 62 MKs *under the best case scenario* – support rhetorically (i.e.

deceitfully) a two state framework; in *actual* terms, however, these MKs support the establishment of a Palestinian mini-Bantustan next to a greater Israel controlling over 85% of Mandated Palestine. These MKs cannot be seriously regarded as productive partners to the API. Israel's remaining 44 MKs are more candid (and, as such, probably better mirror the Israeli electorate at large). They openly oppose any two state scheme (a Palestinian mini-Bantustan included) and advance what I term *Israel's* one state solution (i.e. further consolidation Israeli-Jewish domination over the whole territory of Mandated Palestine). With such composition of Israel's (democratically-elected) leadership, little prospect exists for serious Israeli engagement with the API.

Furthermore, as is the case since Dwight D. Eisenhower's 1956 intervention – it remains unlikely that the international community will mobilize *as vigorously as required* to change this state of (Israeli) affairs. Another war – possibly a regional one involving Iran – seems more likely to erupt *before* serious Israeli consideration of the API takes place. Lastly, it would be a grave scholarly error to dismiss too hastily the possibility that a



The Arab Peace Initiative conference, June 2010

regional confrontation between Israel, Iran and their respective allies *might* involve *some* form of a second Nakba. This, in turn, has the potential to affect the conflict's present demography, geography, and other dimensions in a way which would ultimately advance the Israeli version of a one state solution.

Abstract of the lecture presented by Prof. (emeritus) Arie Issar (BGU):

The Forecasted Negative Climate Change in the Middle East:

Another good reason to have peace and collaboration in this region

The history of Middle East was decided by past global climatic changes. Warm periods caused droughts resulting in desertification, migrations and wars, while cold periods were humid and brought

abundance and the settling of the deserts' fringes. On the basis of the principal of "The past is a key to forecast the future," it is forecasted that the present global warming will cause the drying up of this region. This negative impact should be mitigated by progressive stages of development. The first stage will involve the development of the storage capacity of the groundwater resources including resources stored from past wetter times. This will involve deep drilling, pumping and modern irrigation methods. This and the proceeding stages will be in the framework of a new policy of "Progressive Development," which will entail the utilization of currently undeveloped and untreated effluents, desalination of brackish groundwater and of seawater. As these resources, especially surface

water and groundwater spread beyond political boundaries, they thus have to be developed and controlled on the basis of a regional plan. This can only be achieved, once a state of peace among the countries of the Middle East is achieved.

The new website of the Chaim Herzog Center presents a section dedicated to the Arab peace initiative, including information on the initiative itself, documents, relevant links as well as the full version of a selected number of papers presented at the conference.

[<http://humweb2.bgu.ac.il/herzog/he>]

The Golan Heights – Myth and Reality

A symposium on Yigal Kipnis's book, *The Mountain That Was As a Monster: The Golan Between Israel and Syria* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2009) was held on 3

March 2010, within the framework of the Chaim Herzog Center's activities related to Israel's conflict with its neighbors and peace negotiations. Among other topics, the book deals with the history of Arab settlement on the Syrian Heights on the eve of the Six-Day War and notes the differences between memory and images, on the one hand, and reality on the other. By discussing concepts, representations, symbols and language as a part of the history of the Golan Heights, the author, who also lives on the Heights, draws a connection between the state of affairs before the Six-Day War and the current political situation where Israel needs to reach a peace agreement with Syria, while facing the possibility of a withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Four lecturers participated in the symposium: Amir Oren, senior correspondent for military and security issues of the daily *Ha'aretz*; Prof. Yossi Ben-Artzi, Rector of Haifa University and professor of Historical Geography; and Prof. Yechiam Weitz, a scholar of Israeli politics at Haifa University. The last speaker was the author of the book, Dr. Yigal Kipnis. In his talk, he dealt with the Golan Heights issue in general and addressed specific points raised by the other speakers with regard to his book.

Amir Oren spoke about the press as a formative factor. In his view, the fact that the Golan Heights are widely seen today as an integral part of Israel is, in part, due to the press. The Israeli press was "committed" to the state since its establishment until 1973, and



since then it has been “reserved.” Until the 1973 war, the press was committed to, and a part of, the establishment. It did not see itself as defending the principle of “the public’s right to know,” but rather subscribed to “the government’s right to prevent the public from knowing.” Apart from marginal publications, like the weekly *HaOlam HaZeh* [“This World”], the press did not think that its role is to be skeptical, to demand answers from the government and to challenge the government’s complacency that characterized the period. Therefore the press did not deal with such issues as the decision making process during the “war of attrition” and the way in which Israel as strategically and operationally pushed to give preference to Bren’s and Bar-Lev’s views over those of “Talik” [Israel Tal] and Sharon – who supported a mobile defense, rather than a stationary, “sitting duck” strategy.

From its beginnings, the press saw its role as necessarily intertwined with power. Some journalists were also political actors, moving in between and within the political establishment. At times the press chiefs allowed the establishment to lie; what we think of those years is therefore in the “grip” of censorship, ignorance and propaganda. Thus, for example, the press cheered “when such blatant lies were told as the announcement of the IDF spokesman at the outbreak of the 1967 War, according to which Israel was on the defensive, while the forces of the Arab countries were ‘already here.’” None of the newspapers said that the politicians and the army are lying, and thus the public opinion was not formed on the basis of facts. The state had the monopoly over the truth in all security-related issues, until the shock of the 1973 War and especially after the war and during the 1980s,

before Aharon Barak restricted censorship. Journalists were not allowed to write articles expressing their views, but rather had to serve as the state’s mouthpiece. As the legal advisor to the government (2004-2010), “Meni” [Menahem] Mazuz supported a change in the situation, but the High Court was not yet asked to rule on the issue.

Just when those conditions for journalism improved and the state’s ability to control information changed, the press deteriorated. That occurred in 1993 with the rise of [TV] Channel 2 and the



transition from rational print journalism to electronic media that give preference to form over contents. A situation arose in which controversies are not debated rationally, but tend to take the form of slogans and stickers, and there is hardly any chance of conducting a serious debate on basic issues, such as the question whether or not Israel needs to keep the Golan Heights as a deterrent. Although the press is today much freer than in the past, it cannot address the issue properly for commercial and other considerations and thus preserves old images of the Golan Heights and of the need to keep them.

Prof. Yossi Ben-Artzi emphasized the book’s research achievements, but the main part of his talk focused on the discrepancy between the image of the Golan Heights and their history, a major theme in the book. One of the central images of the Golan Heights is that, contrary to the West Bank, they do not pose a moral dilemma. According to that image, that turns out to have no basis in reality, there was no population in the Golan Heights when they were conquered in 1967. The book tries to refute that image by discussing the settlement history of the Golan Heights before 1967.

Prior to the war, the term “Syrian Heights” was used; “the heights that threaten” to open fire on the settlements, to disturb fishing in the Kinneret (Sea of Galilee), to divert the water of the Jordan River, etc. But the term vanished very fast, without any censorship, from the public discourse, and the term “Golan” became widespread. The book deals with that change by presenting the settlement of the Syrian Heights from the perspective of historical geography, and exposes the moral dilemma underlying the terminological change. That terminological oblivion actually erases and forgets the Syrian landscape on the eve of the war that included 254 permanent Syrian villages, in addition to seasonal ones and the town of Quneitra, with ten thousands of inhabitants, 110 agricultural farms and more. The population was diverse, also in ethnic terms: There were, among other, Alawi communities, Kurdish, Armenian and Circassian ones.

In the consciousness of the Israeli public, the Heights were a space uninhabited by Syrian civilians, with a Syrian military presence only. Drawing on the book, Ben-Artzi raised the question of how dozens of Syrian villages and some 20 thousand people living on the Heights “vanished”

in historiographic terms. The Syrian history of the Golan Heights is not only forgotten by the physical erasure of the settlement landscape, but also by the creation of a historical image of the Golan Heights as an “empty space” that is perpetuated in the academic and research literature. That image can, for example, already be found in a talk that [Yitzhak] Tabenkin gave in Kibbutz Dafna on 23 June 1967, where he said, “There is no population on the Heights, we have to see to it that they will be filled with working Jews.” That image is engraved in the consciousness until this very day, just like the image of the military threat posed to the settlements at the foot of the Golan Heights. The historical literature, for example, reinforced this image by creating a historical continuity of the Jewish settlement since ancient times. Thus someone interested in the history of the Golan Heights can see that books documenting the landscape allot a prominent place to synagogues and monuments. That kind of literature creates a historical continuity from ancient times to the Israeli settlement, as if it were an uninterrupted continuum, by excluding the Syrian-Arab settlement of the Golan Heights from memory. Nobody has addressed the main question yet, whether this was an intentional process.

Contrary to what usually happens in historiography, no revision has yet occurred with regard to the history of the Golan Heights; maybe, Kipnis’s book is the first sign of such a trend. That may be the reason why the book has met with such a lot of criticism, especially from those for whom the oblivion is an ideological matter due to their political stand on the issue of the Golan Heights. Someone who is supposed to make a political decision regarding the Golan Heights needs to know

the historical facts irrespective of any political views. Since the political debate over the Golan issue can be expected to be sharp and dramatic, the public needs, at least, to know the full picture, before voting in a referendum on the future of the Golan Heights.

Prof. Yechiam Weitz devoted his talk to Menahem Begin, who is not a central figure in Kipnis’s book. Weitz briefly outlined the history of the cooperation between Begin’s party and the *Ma’arakh* [Alignment] governments before the 1967 War and during the war, when Begin served as minister in Levi Eshkol’s government. Thus Begin and [Yigal] Allon supported the decision on 7 June 1967 to conquer East Jerusalem and to establish Kiryat Arba on Passover 1968. On the issue of the Jewish settlement on the Golan Heights, however, Begin took a different stand than the activist positions of Allon, Tabenkin, and *Ahdut HaAvoda* [Labor Unity]. His general attitude to the settlement of the Golan Heights was indifferent and detached. That detachment and his sense of permanent displacement, in Weitz’s view, explain Begin’s stand on the settlement of the Golan Heights.

Begin’s relation to the occupied territories on the Sinai Peninsular and on the Golan Heights was totally different from his relation to the West Bank, which he persistently called “Judea and Samaria.” Though Begin declared during a tour of Na’ot Sinai that he intends to live there after his retirement, as Prime Minister, he nevertheless gave the order to withdraw from Sinai and to remove Na’ot Sinai. Begin saw Judea and Samaria as a part of Greater Israel, whereas the Golan Heights were not seen as such. He also saw no analogy between the Sinai and the Golan Heights. Many in his party disagreed with his position and distinctions. Yet, it was that

stand that allowed him to support the dramatic secret decision of Eshkol’s government on 19 June 1967, that basically offered a peace agreement to Syria and Egypt based on the international borders. Begin’s stand needs also be seen in relation to his position at the beginning of the war. On 5 June, the first day of the war, Eshkol sent a message to King Hussein saying that Israel will honor the ceasefire line under the condition that Jordan will not enter the war. Eshkol consulted Begin on the issue, who accepted the idea. Some even claim that Begin thought that such a decision would be acceptable to all future governments. This move reflects Begin’s very pragmatic side that is quite contrary to his general image.

After his election as Prime Minister and in light of his position regarding the West Bank, the new government gave preference to settlements in the West Bank, whereas the previous *Ma’arakh* government had promoted settlements on the Golan Heights and in the Jordan Valley. It should be noted that the population living on the Golan Heights was closely linked to the old *Ma’arakh* establishment, especially with Israel Galili and Yehiel Admoni, but not to the new establishment, represented by the Begin government.

The peace treaty with Egypt and the evacuation of the settlements in the Rafah Plain posed a challenge to the settlements on Golan Heights. In February 1980, the government convened for an emergency session during which Begin proposed the Golan Law. The legislative process was extremely fast, breaking all rules of parliamentary procedure. Under heavy pressure from Begin, the Knesset passed the law within a few weeks.

Weitz explains the change in Begin’s stand on the Golan issue psychologically. After the 1981

elections, Begin's decline set in; due to his depression, he made decisions against all rules and reason. Weitz sees a connection between Begin's decision to pursue the Golan Law and his decision in March 1982 to set up a committee to investigate the murder of Haim Arlozoroff. He made the latter decision after he had read Shabtai Tevet's book. According to Weitz, both decisions stemmed from Begin's personal problems and were part of the destructive tendencies that took hold of him leading to his withdrawal from political life a year and a half later.


The author of the book, Yigal Kipnis concluded with his remarks the fascinating debate. In his talk, he emphasized that the book deals with the history of

the Golan Heights until 1992. He also focused on the discrepancy between history and memory regarding the Golan Heights and Israeli-Syrian relations, between what is known in the public and reality. Kipnis's talk underlined the connection between the history of the Golan Heights and their image, on the one hand, and the current political reality concerning Israeli-Syrian relations and the future of the Golan Heights, on the other.

In his view, Israel will be able to come to an arrangement with Syria, if the emotional attachment to the Golan Heights can be neutralized during the negotiations. Israel has so far refrained from reaching an agreement, more on emotional than substantive grounds. Therefore, Kipnis believes that presenting the history of the

Golan Heights is the best way to show that a withdrawal from the Heights is actually possible. The gap between memory and history has prevented a political process until now. A lack of knowledge concerning the history of the Golan Heights is common among the Israeli public but also among the decision makers, even on the highest level, the mediators, the media and the academia. The gap makes it difficult to distinguish between the rational and the emotional aspects related to the Golan Heights. Kipnis considers it important that the discussion on the Golan Heights will deal with the substantive issue, based on facts and informed by their knowledge, under exclusion of the emotional aspect.

Judaism, Islam and the Arab-Israeli Conflict

 Can religion serve as a bridge to peace? This was the main question posed at a conference on the religious aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict, held at the BGU Campus in Eilat on May 5-6, 2010. The conference was conducted by the Middle East Studies Program in Eilat, and jointly funded and organized by the Eilat Campus, the Chaim Herzog Center, and the Program on Conflict Resolution at BGU. It brought together academics, public figures and clerics of both faiths, Judaism and Islam, who do not normally tend to appear together on the same stage: Shaykh Hammad Abu Da'abis, Head of the Islamic Movement (Southern Branch), and Dr. Ahmad Natur, President of the Supreme Shari'a Court of

Appeal, on the one hand; and Rabbi Eliezer Melamed of the Yeshiva Har Bracha and Rabbi Mordechai Greenblatt, both Gush Katif evacuees, and Rebbetzin Adina Bar-Shalom, Director of the Haredi College of Jerusalem, on the other hand. It is important to emphasize, however, that these categorizations are quite problematic. The positions and opinions held by these participants are much more complex and heterogeneous than the common categorizations might suggest.

The discussions included a wide array of topics related to religion, nationalism, religious national movements and political conflict. Prof. Yoram Meital delivered the keynote address dealing with the intriguing relationship between religion and

nationalism in the contemporary Middle East. This was followed by two days of intensive discussions on the religious-legal and the theological aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict, covering such topics as the sanctity of the land in both religions, religious national movements, and political conflict. In the concluding session Prof. Shifra Sagy and Dr. Muhammad al-Atawneh chaired a round-table discussion on the question: To what extent can religious dialogue serve as a bridge to peace? Though some disagreements emerged, all the participants, both Jewish and Muslim, emphasized the importance of interfaith dialogue, arguing that such meetings and exchanges are crucial for the promotion of tolerance and peace.

For browsing at the conference website: <http://humweb2.bgu.ac.il/herzog/he/media>

'Az'i Ayima'

by Sami Shalom Chetrit

A symposium on Sami Shalom Chetrit's movie *Az'i Ayima* ("Come Mother," 2009) was held at the Chaim Herzog Center in early November. Sami Shalom Chetrit is a prominent figure in the debate on *Mizrahi* culture, trying to establish a new *Mizrahi* discourse. He was born in the town of Qsar al-Suq in Morocco in 1960, immigrated to Israel as a child and grew up in Ashdod. Today he lives in New York and teaches Hebrew language and literature at Queens College.

Chetrit is also a renowned writer and poet. His books include *Shirim BeAshdodit* ("Poems in Ashdodian"), poetry collection 1982-2002 (Hebrew, 2003); *Freha Shem Yafe* ("Freha is a Beautiful Name"), poems (Hebrew, 1995); and *Yehudim* ("Jews"), poetry book (Hebrew, 2008). Some of his poetry books have been translated into Arabic, English, French and German. Moreover, Chetrit is one of the editors of the anthology, *Me'a Shanim, Me'a Yotzrim. Asufat Yetzirot Ivriyot BaMizrah BaMe'a HaEsrim* ("A Century of Hebrew Writing: An Anthology of Modern Hebrew Writing in the Middle East"), 3 vols. (Hebrew, 1998/9). In his academic and journalist writing, Chetrit focuses on the culture and politics of *Mizrahim* in Israel. His book, *Hama'avak HaMizrahi BeYisrael: Bein Dikui leShihzur, bein Hizdahut leAlternativa, 1948-2003* ("The *Mizrahi* Struggle in Israel: Between Oppression and Liberation, Identification and Alternative, 1948-2003," Hebrew, 2004) is based on his Ph.D. dissertation (Hebrew University of Jerusalem). Chetrit was a founder and director of an alternative school, "Kedma" in *HaTikva*



Sami Shalom Chetrit



The graduation picture

Quarter of Tel Aviv-Yafo, and he was a member of *HaKeshet HaDemokratit HaMizrakhit* (The *Mizrahi* Democratic Rainbow Coalition). Together with Eli Hamo, Chetrit made the documentary movie, *The Black Panthers Speak* (2003)

The movie *Az'i Ayima* (2009) takes its lead from a photo of his mother's class at elementary school to trace her childhood memories in Morocco and her transition to Ashdod in Israel. Chetrit shows his mother's (Yaqut) visits and meetings with her former classmates in various places in Israel, documenting the women's memories of Morocco and their lives in Israel. The movie culminates in a meeting of all the women with one of their former teachers at the Alliance school in

Morocco. The meeting was held in the classroom at their former school in Morocco where they used to study.

Four speakers participated in the panel that followed the screening of the film. Orit Vaknin-Yekutieli, a Ph.D. student at the Department of Middle East Studies, BGU, who specializes in the historiography and the cultural and social history of Morocco during the colonial period, focused in her talk on the way Moroccan Jews are remembered in Fez and Sefrou, as well as among the Shluh Berbers of the Atlas Mountains. Orit emphasized the role that their memory plays in the way in which today's Muslim Moroccans conceive what they see as typical for Morocco, for Fez, for local culture.

Samir Ben-Layashi, a Ph.D. student at the School of History at Tel Aviv University and researcher at the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, was born in Meknes and grew up in the city's *Mellah* (Jewish quarter); he came to Israel at the end of the 1990s. Ben-Layashi's talk was autobiographical. He spoke about his memories of his childhood, as a Muslim living in the *Mellah*, and about his perspective today, as a Moroccan living in Israel.

Dr. Sigal Nagar-Ron, sociologist at BGU, investigated how *Mizrahi* women of the first generation were marginalized in Israeli society and established their identity in accordance with the ethnic labeling. In her talk, she discussed the way in which these women place themselves within and relation to the Zionist narrative.

The last speaker was Shira Ohayon, a poet and writer, who also

serves the Ministry of Education as instructor for the preparation of study programs, and is engaged in social issues. She was one of the founders of the “Kedma” school and in charge of the PR affairs of the Israeli Andalusian Orchestra. In her talk, she used the women’s

perspective shown in the film to speak about the education of Jewish women in Morocco and to call for a reevaluation of their contribution and place in Moroccan culture, as for example in the field of music.

In addition to the fascinating academic debate that characterized

the entire symposium, Chetrit’s film made a deep emotional impression on all participants. *Az’i Ayima* is undoubtedly a considerable contribution to the corpus of works dedicated to *Mizrahi* historical memory – individual and collective.



The 34 Annual Conference of The Middle East and Islamic Studies Association of Israel (MEISAI)

The Middle East and Islamic Studies Association of Israel (MEISAI) holds an annual conference, which is convened each year at a different university. The association is open to all researchers and graduate students in Middle East and Arabic Language Studies at Israeli universities and colleges. Apart from providing a meeting place for scholars at different stages of their academic training and career, the annual conference reflects the state of the art in the field in Israel. This year’s annual conference was held at BGU, under the auspices of MEISAI, the Department of Middle East Studies and the Chaim Herzog Center.

Alongside veteran researchers from all universities, graduate students presented their works in progress, i.e. either M.A. theses or Ph.D. dissertations. The lectures dealt with a wide range of topics forming a fascinating mosaic of the research on the Middle East in Israel. The topics ranged from Arabic language and literature to social and cultural studies, anthropology, economics and historiography. During a long and busy day that began in the morning and continued until the late

evening, students and researchers presented diverse topics and various disciplines. Apart from MEISAI’s plenary session and a round table discussion on contemporary developments in the Middle East, there were three clusters of sessions, each comprising three panels held concurrently. This year’s range of topics was particularly wide, including among others issues of spatial design; material culture; photography and architecture; the migration and the diasporas of Muslim communities in Europe and Latin America; social groups and strata like women, elites and the bourgeoisie; literature and communication; Sufis, the Shi’a, and the movement of the Muslim Brothers; the biographies of such personalities as Mithqal al-Fayez (Jordan), Muhammad ‘Ali al-Ja’bari (Hebron), May Ziadeh (Egypt), and Shakib Arslan (Syria); consumption and products like narcotics and alcohol. The panel on social history was this year dedicated to the memory of the late Professor Yossi Ginat from Haifa University, in recognition of his contribution to the study of the Arab and Bedouin society in Israel. The special panel of the graduate

students’ lectures was dedicated to the memory of the late Gil Berger, a Ph.D. student in Middle East Studies at BGU. Gil’s friends said a few words in his memory at the beginning of the exciting panel that was attended also by members of his family.

In the main session, that was the culmination of the conference, this year’s prize for distinguished members of MEISAI was awarded, in the presence of the Rector of BGU, Prof. Zvi Hacoheh, and the MEISAI president, Dr. Mahmud Yazbak, to Aharon Layish from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Shimon Shamir of Tel Aviv University, and Gabriel Warburg of Haifa University, three leading researchers in Israel in the fields of law and political and social history in the Middle East.

The conference concluded with a round table discussion, in which Eldad Prado, Ronen Zeidel, Dror Ze’evi and Rami Ginat participated, who presented their interpretations and evaluations of current developments in such countries as Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Egypt. The speakers focused on the impact of pressure stemming from civil society on structural and political changes in these countries.

Food, Power and Meaning in the Middle East and Mediterranean

The international workshop on “Food, Power and Meaning in the Middle East and the Mediterranean” was held at BGU, on 14-16 June 2010. The workshop was jointly organized by the Chaim Herzog Center, the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, and the Center for the Study of European Politics and Society. The scholars in cultural studies who participated in the workshop presented fascinating papers on different aspects of the connection between food and power in various Mediterranean societies. Thus, for example, several speakers elaborated on the interrelation between the history, sociology and politics of food. In this context, the participants discussed the cultural representations of food in the media and in art, the implications of the transition to consumerism, as well as everyday eating practices

in public and private spaces. Also some renowned chefs participated in the workshop, including Ruth Sirkis, Shmuel (“Shmil”) Holland, Dughul Sefadi and Mika Sharon.

The workshop took its lead from the centrality of food in all societies. Food is therefore among the most prominent means of power: while regulating the food intake of others or preventing them from eating altogether is the outmost form of coercion; access to, and control over large amounts of nutritious and expensive fare are manifestations of prestige, supremacy and potency. Food is not only a means of coercion, but also a means of cooperation, mutual assistance and partnership. When food is distributed or handed over, power ensues through social exchange. Food sharing is therefore highly regulated across cultures and is routinely embedded in complex sets of rules and rituals.

Yet the culinary sphere is also an arena where power is negotiated and challenged, where existing power structures are undermined and alternative arrangements are probed. Indeed, as a mundane, body-oriented, non-verbal praxis centered on short-lived artifacts, eating is probably one of the most taken-for-granted social activities, and the culinary sphere is therefore among the least reflexive cultural arenas. As such, it is a privileged space for social negotiation, subversion and resistance.

In the ecologically and culturally diverse region encompassing the Middle East and the Mediterranean (North Africa and Southern Europe), modern national boundaries, many of which were imposed during colonial times, systematically transgress ethnic and religious divisions, often leading to conflict, violence and war. This region also features some of the world’s grandest cuisines, as well as many others, which are possibly less renowned but certainly no less elaborate, complex and intriguing.

Economic and political debates are only part of the complex fabric into which food and power are woven in the region: changing meal structures, gendered ways of eating, religious culinary innovation or conspicuous consumption of food as a means of class distinction are all features of daily life in the Middle East and the Mediterranean that involve differing measures of power and meaning.

The workshop explored the ways in which food and ways of eating partake in the production, reproduction, negotiation and subversion of power and



Eating Humus - Beer Sheva style


meaning in the Middle East and the Mediterranean. Some of the presentations approached the culinary sphere as an arena of cultural production, perceiving culinary artifacts as cultural icons that define different aspects of

identity and highlight power and power relations as tangible social forces.

The workshop included also a tour to unique culinary venues in the vicinity, where power is an important aspect of the culinary experience:

practicum of vegan cooking with the Black Hebrews in Dimona, a visit to the market in Beer Sheva and a visit to an unrecognized Bedouin village (Drijat), including a cooking workshop.

Literature and History: Middle Eastern Perspectives

 On 31 May to 2 June 2010, the Middle East Studies department held its annual research workshop, entitled, "Literature and History: Middle Eastern Perspectives," organized jointly by Dr. Ariel Shetrit and Dr. Yair Huri. The Chaim Herzog Center sponsored the very successful event. The topics deliberated at the workshop addressed the intricate relationship between *belles-lettres* and history that has long haunted literary criticism, historiography, cultural studies and literary practice. Scholars treated this set of issues within the broad domain of Middle Eastern studies.

Participants hailed from far and wide, from such cities as London, Exeter, Toronto, Istanbul, Oslo, and Lagos, and from various parts of the United States, including Massachusetts, Virginia, New York, California and Pennsylvania. Participants also made their way from Jerusalem and Haifa. Of course, we were pleased to host many of "our own" professors and researchers from BGU, some of whom lectured and served as moderators. This geographically heterogeneous confluence of participants included both well-known and established professors of Middle East studies, such as Sami Shalom Chetrit, Gabriel Piterberg, and Amidu Sanni, as well as doctoral candidates and researchers, who recently completed their doctoral theses.

In addition, Iraqi-German novelist, short-story writer and journalist Najem Wali delivered a lecture, entitled "The Invention of Basra," which focused on his recent autobiographical work, from which he read, thereby offering an enchanting and enlightening case in point of the meeting of history and literature. The memories that Wali recounted revisited experiences of his childhood in Iraq, while simultaneously exhibiting an emotional interaction between the writing self and the self recalled. Throughout his talk, Wali intriguingly probed his literary spaces that are sometimes submerged in a surreal atmosphere, but more than that, metaphorically entwined in a bewildering amalgam of idyllic echoes from childhood and historical allusions.

Each session comprised three lectures, the moderator's response, and a discussion. All sessions were decidedly "too short": the discussions following each session proved so lively and intense that they continued during the breaks between the sessions and during evening conversations. Participants and guests listened with great attention and responded avidly, creating scholarly interaction which was both profuse and fecund.

Presentation topics covered many periods, from medieval through the present time, were geographically and linguistically diverse and referred to texts written

in Arabic, Kurdish, Persian, Turkish, and Hebrew. Nevertheless, each session was organized so as to comprise lectures of more or less related topics, so as to generate productive discussions. Speakers interpreted the space between literature and history in many divergent ways, stressing the immediacy and problematic nature of the issue. Specific topics included issues of fictionality, social impact and cultural meaning of medieval biographical texts; history, landscape and nation in Israeli literature; the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in literature, translation and childhood narratives; portrayal of the "Other" in Egyptian, Sudanese, and Turkish literary works; the politics and poetics of Mizrahi literature; reading history through "fictional" texts; as well as the nexus of history and literature in specific works.

In a panel on medieval biographical writings, each talk addressed this genre from a different viewpoint. Yet, all tackled a common set of questions: What are the different levels of meaning in this type of writing? How can one distinguish between the historical, social, and cultural significations of a text? How can those significations be distinguished from literary conventions? In a panel on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Yael Dekel treated the political significance of translation into the "language of the enemy."

She discussed the reception of the Hebrew translation of Ilyas Khuri's novel *Bab al-Shams*. As the first *magnum opus* of the Palestinian experience of the *Nakba*, it not only offers "versions" of history in the body of the work, but this literary work effects history by its very translation into Hebrew (Who reads it? How is it received?). On the same panel, Dana Herbergs discussed Palestinian and Israeli oral narratives about Jerusalem. She focused particularly on the motif of the "border" within memory and its tendency to both divide and unify. Hakan Karateke treated the topic of Middle Eastern Orientalism with regard to a Turkish writer's orientalizing view of Arab locals.


He focused on Refik Halit's representation of the "Other" in his exile stories from the 1930s and in so doing, pinpointed a hybrid genre infusing fiction and memoir. Ramon Stern discussed Judeo-Arab history within Israeli literature, particularly that of Samir Naqqash. He described such literature as "aesthetics of rupture," arguing that such narratives disrupt, rather than tell a story. The stylistics reflects, expresses and emphasizes the impossibility of narrating the history, as it refuses to posit itself in opposition to the dominant narrative, disrupting it, instead. Yoram Meital's presentation focused on the production of hegemony and resistance in

Egyptian literature, focusing on two opposing narratives, one by Naguib Mahfouz and the other by Sonallah Ibrahim. He discussed the intricate ways in which history and literature are inherently linked, although they employ evidence in different ways. Ariel Sheerit attempted to disentangle the intricately layered levels of voice and representation in Lebanese writer Hanan al-Shaykh's "autobiography" of her mother. These are just some of the topics addressed at the conference.

The workshop provided a unique opportunity to examine the boundaries between two scholarly disciplines which are often taken as unconnected, that of history and of literature.

Symposium

Chaim Herzog – The Sixth President of Israel Selected Documents from His Life, 1918-1997

 On 15 April 2010, a symposium was held at Tel Aviv University marking the publication of the book, *Chaim Herzog – The Sixth President of Israel. Selected Documents from His Life, 1918-1997*. The book is one in a series published under the auspices of the State Archives, that documents the biographies of Israel's former presidents and prime ministers who have passed away, by presenting an overview of their public and personal lives in conjunction with a selection of their speeches, lectures and writings. The symposium was a joint project of the State Archives, the Chaim Herzog Center at BGU, the Chaim Herzog Institute for Media, Politics and Society at Tel Aviv University, and Yad Chaim Herzog.

Family members, including Mrs. Aura Herzog, Member of Knesset and Minister of Welfare and Social Services Isaac (Buj'i) Herzog,

and Michael Herzog, attended the event. Michael Herzog spoke on behalf of the family, relating to the book and in particular to the aspects of Chaim Herzog's personality that are reflected in the documents assembled: A proud Jew, but also a man of the world; a public personality who was raised in a tradition of public service, but also a family man and a private person; a soldier and a diplomat; a politician and a statesman who knew to distinguish between the wheat and the chaff ("a man who saw the trees and the forest," as his son put it), whose perception demonstrates the ability to see the whole picture without losing sight of the details. Friends of the Herzog family and public figures who knew Chaim Herzog were in the audience.

The symposium opened with the greetings of Professor Rivka Carmi, BGU President. In her

address Prof. Carmi noted that Chaim Herzog himself initiated the establishment of the Chaim Herzog Center, and elaborated on the Center's academic achievements. Then followed the greetings of Prof. Noah Lewin-Epstein, Dean of the Faculty of Social Science, Tel Aviv University, who focused in his address on Chaim Herzog as representative of the second generation of Israeli leaders. In addition, Dr. Nurit Guttman, head of the Chaim Herzog Institute for Media Politics and Society and of the department of Communication at Tel Aviv University, addressed the symposium, as well as Dr. Yehoshua Freundlich, the State Archivist, who presented the Archives' memorial project regarding the first generation of Israel's leadership.

After the opening, a short documentary was screened that showed Chaim Herzog's biography

from his days in the British army to the time of his presidency and afterwards. In an academic panel, chaired by Prof. Yoram Meital, head of the Chaim Herzog Center, senior researchers gave lectures on different aspects of Chaim Herzog's activities: Brig. Gen. (res.) Dr. Dani Asher discussed his contribution to establishment of the IDF's military

intelligence; Dr. Ami Gluska, who was President Herzog's secretary, spokesman and aid, focused on the characteristics of President Herzog's term in office, 1983-1988; Dr. Avi Biker spoke about Chaim Herzog's engagement at the diplomatic front, when he was Israel's ambassador to the United Nations; and Prof. Naomi Chazan

discussed Chaim Herzog as a parliamentarian and a president. The contribution of Dr. Arnon Lammfromm from the State Archives, who edited the book, concluded the symposium. This special event focused on Chaim Herzog and his work as a public figure that were closely intertwined in critical events and developments in the history of Israel.

Further information on the book:

<http://www.archives.gov.il/NR/exeres/8B4669A6-D83C-4FE4-859B-F7877E4450CF.htm>.

••• PUBLICATION & BOOK PANELS •••

Talal Asad

The new series Mizraha ("Towards the East"), a joint project of the Chaim Herzog Center and the Israeli academic publishing house Resling, aims at making outstanding research on Middle Eastern culture and society available in translation to Hebrew. The first book published in the series is the translation of *Formations of the Secular* by Talal Asad. Professor Asad is an anthropologist who published highly acclaimed books on various social and cultural processes in the Middle East. Born in Saudi Arabia, he received his academic education at Oxford University, as a student of Edward Evans-Pritchard. Professor Asad published path-breaking studies on religion and secularism as an integral part of modernization processes, in particular in the Middle Eastern context. His books have been translated into many languages. He also published,



among others, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); and *On Suicide Bombing* (Columbia University Press, 2007). Professor Asad lives and teaches in New York.

Formations of the Secular traces the conceptual development of secularism and the related practices in the context of both Western and Middle Eastern societies and religions. He critically reviews commonly held assumptions about the secular and the terrains it allegedly covers. He argues that although many anthropologists have geared their research toward the study of the "strangeness of the non-European world," toward what is seen as the non-rational dimensions of social life – such as myth, taboo, and religion – they did not deal sufficiently with the modern and the secular. His main conclusion is that the secular cannot be seen as succeeding religion, or as accompanying the rational. The secular is an independent category with a multi-layered history, related to the basic assumptions of modernity, democracy and human rights.

Jama'a Vol.18

Since its first volume *Jama'a* has gained the reputation as a leading Hebrew journal on Middle East affairs. The Chaim Herzog Center's support of this journal reflects its commitment to introducing Hebrew readers to rigorous academic writing by students and scholars in this field.

In June 2009, the tidal waves of protests following the presidential elections in Iran reminded many of the events leading to the Islamic revolution in 1979. Marking thirty years to the revolution, *Jama'a's* eighteenth volume is dedicated to the Iranian issue.

Volume 18 deals primarily with different facets of Iranian society, culture and economy throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. The volume includes a wide range of articles: "Journalism amidst Revolution: The Emergence of Women's Journalism in Iran and the Constitutional Revolution," by Liora Hendelman-Baavur dealing with gender issues as reflected in Iranian journalism; "Politics from Below: Protest, Violence and Social Justice in the City of Shiraz,

1835-1848," by Moshe Aharonov mapping the intriguing issue of social protest in the city of Shiraz; and "Traveling Ideas: Mossadegh and the Anti-Imperialist Struggle in Egypt," by Lior Sternfeld discussing the influence of Iran's anti-imperialist struggle during the 1950's on the Egyptian political discourse.

The volume also features a Hebrew translation of Sohrab Behdad's important article, "A Disputed Utopia: Islamic Economics in Revolutionary Iran" (1994). This article examines the evolution of the discourse on Islamic economics in Iranian intellectual circles immediately before the 1979 revolution. It contends that despite their religious rhetoric and their general commitment to an Islamic social order, the ideas put forward by Iranian Islamists remained wedded to and embedded in secular economic discourses. Islamic jurisprudence nevertheless imposed some definite restrictions on the legality of radical definitions of a social order. Behdad shows



how Khomeini and other populist leaders of the Islamic Republic were eventually overcome by conservative advocates of Islamic tradition and laissez faire economics, who preferred to shift the focus of the Islamist mobilization of society from economic justice to cultural purity.

In addition, the volume offers a culture section and book reviews. We are also excited to announce the launch of the new *Jama'a* website. The site will make the important research papers published in *Jama'a* accessible for a wider audience. The website will allow to locate quickly any article published in *Jama'a*, to review it and even to comment on it. We thus hope to facilitate a lively academic discussion.

EVENTS

Visitor in the Center

A lecture by Raymond Stock, translator of Naguib Mahfouz's writings

On 8 December 2009, the Chaim Herzog Center hosted Dr. Raymond Stock, the official translator of Naguib Mahfouz's writings to English. Dr. Stock visited the

Chaim Herzog Center in the framework of his stay in Israel as a guest of the Foreign Ministry. In that framework he held a series of meetings and lectures on topics of Egyptian culture and literature.

Dr. Stock has lived in Egypt for more than 20 years. His Ph.D. dissertation, "A Mummy Awakens: The Pharaonic Fiction of Naguib Mahfouz" (University of Pennsylvania, 2008), deals with

the Pharaonic themes in Mahfouz's writings. The study focuses mainly on issues in the field of Arabic literature and Egyptology, but also extends to aspects of biography, ancient and modern Middle Eastern history, literature and religion, as well as historical and literary theory. In addition to his expertise in Arabic language and literature, Dr. Stock has also studied Hebrew literature, history and politics of the Middle East, journalism, and geography with special focus on water resources. For his translations of Mahfouz's writings, Dr. Stock was awarded several prizes in the US and Europe. His work is also highly valued in Egypt, as is reflected in the award he received from the Egyptian Poets and Writers Association, in recognition of his achievements. His English translations of Mahfouz's books include: *Before the Throne: Dialog with Egypt's Great from Menes to Anwar Sadat* (2009); *The Dreams* (2009); *Dreams of Departure* (2009); *Khufu's Wisdom* (2007); and *The Seventh Heaven: Stories of the Supernatural* (2006). Dr. Stock is currently working on a biography of Mahfouz, that is soon to be published. In addition, he is engaged in a number of projects dealing with Egyptian cultural issues, in modern and ancient times.

In his lecture at the Chaim Herzog Center, Dr. Stock presented the main findings of his dissertation. In this context, he argues that great importance should be ascribed to the interrelation between Mahfouz's personal biography, especially the centrality of the Pharaonic motif in his Egyptianness, and the wide expression that Mahfouz as an intellectual and writer gives to that consciousness. Stock's intimate familiarity with Mahfouz's biography and personality enable his deep understanding of Mahfouz's views as a human being and as an intellectual, and especially of



Naguib Mahfouz

his writings and of the views that Mahfouz sought to express in them. Stock ascribes Mahfouz's deep connection to the Pharaonic civilization to a number of factors, including his childhood nanny. Although illiterate, his nanny was well acquainted with the ancient traditions of the Greco-Roman, the Coptic, and the Pharaonic cultures of Egypt. Thus he learned already in his youth, even if not fully consciously, that Egypt and Egyptianness are the product of a combination of a wide range of cultural influences.

Naguib Mahfouz was born in 1911 and grew up in the Abbasiyya Quarter. The formative years of his life witnesses profound political, social and intellectual changes in Egypt – from the national liberation struggle against the British government to the peace treaty with Israel. In his youth he was exposed to the ideas of the outstanding intellectuals and national leaders in modern Egyptian history, in particular Sa'd Zaghlul, Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid, Taha Husayn, Salama Musa und Muhammad Abduh.

Stock argued further that Mahfouz felt a deep physical, intellectual and emotional bond to Egypt (that allowed him to

identify with Egyptian territorial nationalism). According to Stock, that bond extended beyond the meanings and expressions of the intellectual and literary context and manifested itself also in the biography of the greatest Egyptian writer. Thus, for example, he could not study in France in his youth, due to a bureaucratic "obstacle." His application for a scholarship was turned down because the official in charge assumed that Mahfouz was a Copt. In Stock's view, this event has an additional meaning – Mahfouz saw it as a sign of heaven making it clear to him that he has to stay in Egypt and should not leave, not even for a moment. Over the years, those feelings turned into a real fear of deserting Egypt. That is the reason why he could not attend the Nobel Prize award ceremony; he was horrified of the possibility of dying outside Egypt.

Mahfouz was well acquainted with all parts of Egyptian society; and the social and human realities in Egypt were not only a main source of inspiration for his writings but stood at their center. In the course of his life he met a very wide range of people in Egypt, that were presented in his books as characters, also in metaphorical ways. His book, *Children of Gabalawi / Children of Our Alley* (1959), for example, appears to present characters from a typical Egyptian neighborhood, but is actually meant to symbolize the cradle of humanity and the believe in social justice. In this remarkable story all characters are described by allegorical references to the lives of the prophets in the monotheist religions. The book was one of the reasons why a religious fanatic stabbed Mahfouz. The assailant objected to the way the character of the Prophet Muhammad was presented in the story.

Mahfouz's work as a civil servant was also very important



Raymond Stock's lecture

for his writing. Thus he became not only well acquainted with Egyptian bureaucracy and its ways of functioning. Beyond the banal

social context, however, Mahfouz ascribed to the bureaucracy additional meanings that he described in traditional Egyptian

terms. In Mahfouz's eyes, modern Egyptian bureaucracy, in all its aspects, was deeply rooted in Egyptian culture, stemming from the Pharaonic tradition.

Mahfouz was a devout Muslim. Nevertheless, it were Christian Egyptian intellectuals, like Salama Musa and Mustafa Abdel-Raziq, who greatly influenced his conception of Egyptian nationalism and Egypt's special regional and global status. That conception was also the basis for his relation to Israel and to the peace treaty. His support for the Camp David accords found expression in his book, *Before the Throne* (1983), presenting a positive image of Sadat and the peace process with Israel that he led.

The Ambassadors Forum

Talk by H.E. James B. Cunningham, U.S. Ambassador to Israel

 On Tuesday, 10 November 2009, US Ambassador James Cunningham visited Ben Gurion University and the Chaim Herzog Center, in the framework of the "Ambassadors Forum" – a joint project of the Chaim Herzog Center and the Center for the Study of European Politics and Society at BGU. The Ambassadors Forum hosts leading foreign diplomats to present their countries' Middle East policies and their involvement in regional developments.

The US Ambassador gave his talk at the Senate Hall filled to capacity by students, university staff and faculty. Dr. Salim al-Mughrabi, the deputy governor of the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) also attended the event.

BGU President, Prof. Rivka Carmi warmly greeted the ambassador and introduced him to the audience. In her introductory remarks, Prof. Carmi mentioned among other things that Ambassador Cunningham was born in Pennsylvania and that he holds degrees in Political Science and Psychology. She also pointed out that he speaks French, Italian and Spanish and that for many years he has played an important role in US foreign policy.

After Prof. Carmi's introduction, Ambassador Cunningham stepped up to the podium. In his talk he explained that President Barack Obama succeeded in introducing a new spirit and momentum to the politics of the Middle East. He mentioned President Obama's historical speech in Cairo (June

from the two respondents, Prof. Yoram Meital and Dr. Sharon Pardo, and from the audience. Prof. Meital's question related to US policy towards Hamas as a political Islamic movement. In his response, Ambassador Cunningham said that as long as it does not recognize the State of Israel, Hamas is not relevant for the peace process. In his answer to Dr. Pardo, Ambassador Cunningham welcomed the intensive European involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, explaining that there is no competition between the USA and the EU regarding the resolution of conflicts in the Middle East. He stressed that Europe and the US pursue a central common goal, namely the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

2009) and George Mitchell's appointment as Special Envoy for Middle East Peace to demonstrate the seriousness of the President's intention to calm the region and to reach substantial political achievements in Israeli-Palestinian relations. With regard to the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, Ambassador Cunningham called on both sides to return to the negotiating table. He pointed out that the US administration is well aware of the fact that such core issues as the question of Jerusalem are very sensitive issues for both sides, but he explained the necessity to enter negotiations without preconditions. In the same context, Ambassador Cunningham stressed that, promoting regional stability in the Middle East, the US administration has high expectations of Israel. The USA, he stated, see Israel as a very close friend that is fully entitled to defend itself against its enemies.

The US Ambassador's speech was received well, but it also gave rise to comments and questions



Ambassador Cunningham and Dean Newman

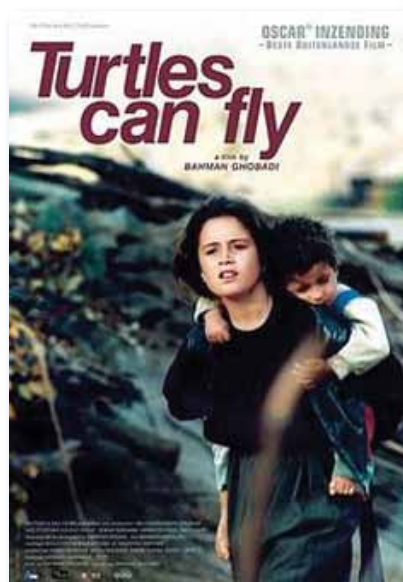
In his response to questions raised by members of the audience, Ambassador Cunningham expressed his support for the plan drawn up by Salam Fayyad, Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority, to establish the infrastructure for a future Palestinian state; he also referred to the problem of the tunnels and explained its complexities. In his response to a question concerning the Goldstone

report, Ambassador Cunningham declared that the USA are doing their utmost to nullify the report and to convince the Security Council to reject its recommendations. Afterwards, the Chaim Herzog Center hosted the Ambassador, the BGU President and about a dozen faculty members for lunch, providing an opportunity to further clarify some of the issues raised in the Ambassador's lecture.

Cinema

The Chaim Herzog Center initiated the establishment of a Cinema Club in order to open the world of Middle East cinema to the community of students and scholars at BGU. The movies shown in that framework address burning issues relevant to various societies in the Middle East. The screening of a movie is usually accompanied by an introductory lecture and, afterwards, a discussion on the issues raised in the movie. On many occasions the filmmakers were invited to the forum, to speak about as their movies and the production. During the last four years, the Cinema Club hosted

many filmmakers; and the movies shown included *Bikur HaTizmoret*



("The Band's Visit" – 2007) by Eran Kolirin, *Mi'az SheHalahta* ("Since You Left" – 2004) by Mohammad Bakri, *Faradis – Gan Eden Avud* ("Paradise Lost" – 2003) by Ibtisam Mara'ana; and *HaKhalutzim* ("The Pioneers" – 2007) by Sigalit Banai.

In 2010 five movies were shown in the framework of the Cinema Club. In the first session the movie *America Shika Bika* ("America Abracadabra") by Khairy Beshara (1993) was shown. Mr. Idan Lahav, a graduate student, gave a short introductory lecture on Egyptian migrants that are the movie's theme, and conducted a discussion after the screening about the social conditions



Saddam Hussein’s regime. The film is set in a Kurdish refugee camp on the Iraqi-Turkish border on the eve of the US invasion of Iraq in spring 2003. Led by Satellite – a charismatic boy who got his nickname for his passion for technological matter, a group of orphans living in horrifying conditions in a hostile, crumbling environment tries to survive under impossible circumstances and to find moments of joy and warms in midst the terror in which they live. The movie’s strength, in part, derives from strong images and the use of a rich cinematic language. The filmmaker won the “Glass Bear” – Best Feature Film and Peace Film award at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2005 and the Best Film award at the San Sebastián International Film Festival in 2004.

in Haneke’s minimalist suspense drama that won several awards at the Cannes Film Festival. Georges, the host of a cultural TV program, receives packages with videocassettes of him and his family filmed secretly from the street, and disturbing drawing. He has no idea who might be sending the material to him. Gradually the video clips become more personal, including hints at the person who shot them, a former acquaintance of Georges. The sense of



impending danger hovers over the entire family, especially due to the growing number of secrets revealed. After the screening, Ms. Orit Vaknin-Yekutieli conducted a discussion linking the plot to French colonial memory of Algeria and its commitment to the Algerian people.

causing millions of Egyptians to emigrate from their homeland and the ensuing cultural aspects. The second session was dedicated to an analysis of a selection of movies produced by Yamin Mesika, an independent filmmaker of feature films dealing with social issues relevant to Israeli society, and especially contemporary Mizrahi culture. Mr. Shahar Ajami, a Ph.D. student at the Department of Middle East Studies, and Ms. Natali Baruh, a social activist, conducted a discussion on “the new masculinity,” the Mizrahi discourse and the Middle Eastern character of Mesika’s movies. In another session, the movie *Turtles Can Fly* by Bahman Ghobadi (2004) was screened, the first movie shot in Iraq after the end of

The Iranian movie *The Song of Sparrows* by Majid Majidi (2008) was screened in the fourth session. Ms. Orlly Rahimian, a Ph.D. student at the Department of Middle East Studies, linked the movie’s plot to current social issues in Iran, such as the tension between urban centers and the countryside, between tradition and modernity. The Cinema Club concluded its program for the last academic year with the screening of the French movie *Caché* (“Hidden”) by Michael Haneke (2005). The actors Daniel Auteuil and Juliette Binoche star



Mira Awad's performance at the beginning of the academic year, Dec. 2010

The Chaim Herzog Center Scholarships 2010

Every year the Chaim Herzog Center awards scholarships to outstanding graduate students based on the potential excellence of their research projects. The award ceremony was held at the beginning of June, in the presence of Prof. Rifka Carni, the BGU President, Ms. Leah Goldberg, the representative of the Chaim Herzog Memorial Fund, and Prof. Yoram Meital, the Head of the Chaim Herzog Center. Four students were awarded a scholarship this year, including two students working on M.A. theses in Middle East Studies.

The M.A. thesis of Ro'i Amsalem from BGU illustrates the potential theoretical connections between history and literature. His thesis analyzes the historical novel, *Ard as-sawad* (1999), by the Iraqi writer Abdul-Rahman Munif, that deals with the Mesopotamian provinces of the Ottoman-Mamluk Empire in the late 18th and the early 19th centuries, and examines the possibility of reading that novel as a source that gives voice to marginalized social strata, and of reconstructing the history of the region that later became modern Iraq.

Another scholarship for a M.A. thesis was awarded to Natali Elion, Tel Aviv University. Her thesis studies the city of Erdine, examining the interrelation



The awards ceremony, June 2010

between demographic changes, social transformations and the construction of a Turkish national identity. Her research combines the study of nationalism with that of demography in order to understand the transition from the Ottoman era to the establishment of modern Turkey.

A scholarship for a Ph.D. project was awarded to Nicole Kiyat, Haifa University. Her dissertation is a historiographic study investigating the place of the West ("the Occident") and its history in the literature of the Nahda ("renaissance") in Syria and Lebanon during the last decades of the 19th century. By analyzing the translations of European history books to Arabic, she aims

at examining the construction of Arab collective identity.

This year we decided to award also an "encouragement" scholarship to Ariel Mariot from BGU, who is also an architect and a graduate of Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design. His dissertation deals with the ancient Nabatean city of Avdat and with the Bedouin village located at its outskirts as part of the ancient settlement system in the Negev. The dissertation seeks to examine the cultural continuity from ancient Avdat as a settlement project to the contemporary Bedouin village and to discern also the perspective of the Bedouin inhabitants by discussing the way in which they make use of the city's space and its resources.

NEWSLETTER 2011

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Calendar 2009-2010 (Selected)

November, 20, 2009

The Ambassadors Forum: “President Obama’s Middle East Policy”, H.E. James B. Cunningham, U.S. Ambassador to Israel

December 8, 2009

A Visitor Lecture: Raymond Stock, Translator of Naguib Mahfouz’s Writings

January 5, 2010

Screening and a Discussion of the Movie **Az’i Ayima** by Sami Shalom Chetrit

March 8, 2010

The Mountain That Was As a Monster: The Golan Between Israel and Syria, Symposium on The Golan Heights – Myth and Reality

March 23, 2010

Cinema: *Amrica Shika Bika*

April 6, 2010

A Book Panel: *Reinventing the Nation: Palestinian Intellectuals in Israel* by Hunaydah Ghanim

April 15, 2010

Symposium at Tel-Aviv University:
Chaim Herzog – The Sixth President of Israel: Selected Documents from His Life, 1918-1997

April 25, 2010

Cinema: the center’s cinema club discussing “The New Masculinity” in Yamin Mesika’s movies

May 5-6, 2010

Conference at BGU Campus in Eilat: **Judaism, Islam and the Arab-Israeli Conflict**

May 27, 2010

The 34 Annual Conference of The Middle East and Islamic Studies Association of Israel (MEISAI)

May 31-June 2, 2010

An International Workshop: **Literature and History – Middle Eastern Perspectives**

June 14-16, 2010

An International Workshop: **Food, Power and Meaning in the Middle East and the Mediterranean**

June 20-22, 2010

An International Conference: **The Arab Peace Initiative: Political and Environmental Dimensions**

November 30, 2010

A Visitor Lecture and A Panel Discussion: Herbert Kelman – “One Country-Two State Solution: The Israeli-Palestinian conflict”

December 8, 2010

Book Panel: The Translated Hebrew Version, *Formation of Secularity: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*, by Talal Asad

December 14, 2010

The Ambassadors Forum: “European Union, Israel and the Middle East”, H.E. Andrew Standley, EU Ambassador to Israel

2010

2009 ■

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