CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE

Faculty of Humanities

Adam Coman BA

Rewriting Israeli History: New Historians and Critical Sociologists – Formation, Terminology, and Criticism

Master's Thesis

Prague 2016

CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE

Faculty of Humanities

Department of Historical Sociology

Adam Coman BA

Rewriting Israeli History: New Historians and Critical Sociologists – Formation,
Terminology, and Criticism.

Master's Thesis

Supervisor: Mgr. Alena Marková, Ph.D.

Prague 2016

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank the following who have assisted me in writing this thesis: my supervisor Dr. Alena Marková of Charles University who helped separate the wheat from the chaff, and guided me in formulating the thesis and in my writing; my family, who has tried to make me find meaning in the meaningless, gave me its own insight into the changing perception of Israeli history and reality, and challenged my preconceptions; Lea, for her patience and for taking care of me during long days of writing; and finally Duza, who, as always, inspired me when I was losing it.

Statement

I hereby declare that I have written this diploma thesis solely by myself and I agree with its eventual publication in print or electronic form. All sources and literature have been properly cited. This work has not been used to obtain a different or the same degree.

Prague, June 24th, 2016   Adam Coman

Rewriting Israeli History: New Historians and Critical Sociologists – Formation, Terminology, and Criticism

The New Historians and Critical Sociologists were two groups of thinkers who emerged in Israel during the 1980s, strongly criticizing Israeli history and society, focusing mainly on the 1948 War and Israel's treatment of the Arabs. Coming from various backgrounds and using different methodologies, nonetheless they all shared a highly critical approach towards mainstream historians and sociologists, and, more importantly, towards key moments and issues in Israel's history. These thinkers blamed the Zionist establishment for having ignored the distress of the European Jews during the Holocaust, committing war crimes against the Arab population during the 1948 War, and having abused immigrants in the years after the State's independence. These claims raised passionate debates between mainstream and critical scholars, which strongly affected Israeli society. This paper examines the processes that led to the emergence of these thinkers, and analyzes the specific terminology they employed, as well as their opponents' criticisms. It explores how processes in Israeli society, military and politics, as well as non-academic developments led to the emergence of these thinkers, who sought not only to rewrite Israeli history, but also to reshape Israeli collective consciousness.

Přepis izraelské historie: Noví historikové a kritičtí sociologové – vznik, terminologie a kritika

V osmdesátých letech dvacátého století se v Izraeli objevily dva nové myšlenkové proudy: noví historikové a kritičtí sociologové. Tyto skupiny silně kritizovaly izraelské dějiny a izraelskou společnost a ve své kritice se zaměřovaly především na první arabsko-izraelskou válku v roce 1948 a na způsob, jakým v tomto období Izrael zacházel s arabským obyvatelstvem. Přestože pocházeli z odlišných prostředí a používali rozdílnou metodologii, sdíleli příslušníci obou myšlenkových směrů výrazně kritický postoj k historikům a sociologům hlavního proudu a především pak ke klíčovým momentům a

tématům izraelských dějin. Noví historikové a kritičtí sociologové obviňovali sionistické vedení státu z ignorování utrpení evropských Židů během holocaustu, z páchání válečných zločinů proti arabskému obyvatelstvu během války v roce 1948 a ze špatného zacházení s přistěhovalci v letech následujících po získání nezávislosti. Cílem nových historiků a kritických sociologů bylo přepsat izraelskou historii a zároveň přeformovat izraelské kolektivní vědomí. Tvrzení těchto skupin a vášnivé debaty, ke kterým následně došlo mezi novými kritiky a zastánci hlavního myšlenkového proudu, poté významně ovlivnily izraelskou společnost. Tato práce zkoumá procesy vzniku těchto dvou skupin kritiků, analyzuje specifickou terminologii, kterou příslušníci těchto myšlenkových proudů používali, a věnuje se reakci hlavního proudu myslitelů na jejich kritiku. Práce též pojednává o tom, jakým způsobem byl vznik těchto dvou nových kritických myšlenkových skupin ovlivněn izraelskou společností, armádou a politikou a dalšími neakademickými sférami.

Contents

1.1 Introduction

Up until the 1980's, Israeli historiography and sociology reflected, by and large, Israel's mainstream historical and sociological narratives concerning the making of Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The essence of this narrative runs more or less as follows: after two thousand years of exile, the 19th century saw the awakening of Jewish national feeling. A Jewish national revival in Europe led to the formation of the Zionist organization, which sought to create a Jewish State in the Land of Israel. However, the Land of Israel was occupied first by the Ottoman Empire, and since 1917 by the British Mandate, who opposed to the Jews' resettlement in their motherland. Nonetheless, following threats to the European Jews by growing antisemitism and the development of the Jewish settlement in Palestine, the Zionist movement received several guarantees to a future Jewish "national home" from the British government, such as the Balfour Declaration (1917), and the Peel Commission (1936). The Zionists sought to create a progressive, egalitarian society in Israel, and believed their efforts would bring wealth and prosperity both to the Jews and the local Arab population. However, in spite of their good intentions, the Arabs were growing increasingly hostile towards the Zionists, attacking and massacring them on several occasions. At the same time, the Zionists were doing their best to aid the European Jews, who were facing antisemitism and the Holocaust. Before and during the Holocaust, the Zionist organization did all it could to help save the European Jews, exercising both diplomatic and military efforts, such as the Kasztner train in which 1,684 Hungarian Jews were saved, and the parachuting of Zionist fighters behind enemy lines. In 1947, following the Second World War, the United Nations acknowledged the Jews' right for their own country. With Israel's declaration of independence, the newly founded state was immediately attacked on all frontiers by hostile Arab armies. During the war, Palestinians fled Israel to neighboring territories under their leaders' commands, and in spite of Israel's attempts to convince them to stay. Despite its inferior military standing, the small Israeli army

managed to vanquish the stronger, plentiful Arab armies. Following Israel's independence and victory, Jews from Muslim countries were violently expelled and chose to immigrate to Israel, while Holocaust survivors also chose to help build the newly founded state, and all Jews reunited with their fellow brethren.

The main reason for this highly positive portrayal of Israeli history was that Israel being a young and small country, its history was written by people who had participated and who were deeply involved in its wars and foundation[1]. Not only did these writers take an active or supporting part in landmark events in Israeli history, but they also felt an obligation to describe these events in a positive light, downplaying controversial events.

The 1980's saw the emergence of several historians and sociologists who challenged this narrative. Proclaiming themselves "new historians" and "critical sociologists", these thinkers sought to bring to light and public attention topics which were either unknown to or undiscussed by the general Israeli public. Because I will treat mostly the historical dimension in the sociologists' writings, and as these writers consist of academy members as well as journalists (nonetheless, with academic education), I will refer to them in this paper as the Critical Historians, while the "old" historians and "institutional" sociologists will be referred to as simply "old" historians[2].

The Critical Historians challenged three main issues in Israeli history:

1. The Zionist movement's reaction and activities during the Holocaust.
2. War crimes and the expulsion of Palestinians during the first Arab-Israeli War, as well as political and strategic decisions and actions made by the Israeli government.

---

[1] Shlaim, 2007, p. 125.

[2] Many Israeli academics have debated the appropriate term to describe the various historians and sociologists, an attempt made all the more difficult with the changing agendas and the clashes among the New Historians themselves at later stages. The term Critical Historians was suggested previously by Pappé to differentiate post-Zionist and postmodern scholars from Morris following their fall out. In this paper the term Critical Historians will refer also to non-postmodern scholars of the revisionist camp.

3. The treatment and assimilation of immigrants by the veteran Jewish settlers in Palestine/Israel, and the hegemonic rule of *Mapai* ("Workers Party of the Land of Israel" later part of *hama'arakh*)" elite.

Nonetheless, these thinkers are a heterogeneous group, coming from different backgrounds and pursuing diverse methodologies – while some used mainly "orthodox", positivistic research methods and argumentation, others openly used and professed postmodern and relativistic methodologies, and while some called for scientific objectivity, others called for unabashed subjectivity[3]. The Critical Historians also offered different accounts for their own emergence. While more objectivist scholars such as Benny Morris considered the opening of Israeli archives and previously concealed sources as the main reason for the reexamination of Israel's past[4] others, such as sociologist Uri Ram focused on the rise of critical studies in European and American academies[5]. However, in spite of these differences, the common criticism these scholars expressed towards the official Israeli narrative and history, quickly joined them together both in their eyes, and in the eyes of the public and the media.

By uncovering previously classified documents, adopting a neutral, and sometimes outright negative, terminology concerning what was until then considered the "heroic" Zionist history, the Critical Historians stirred a prolonged emotional discussion, which deeply affected Israeli society and the way it perceived its history.

Soon after the Critical Historians caught public attention, "old historians", as they were now reluctantly labeled, found themselves in the need to defend previous historiographies and Israel's reputation. Like their "new" adversaries, the "old" historians were also diverse in their methodologies and argumentation. While some historians questioned the methods and academic capabilities of the

---

[3] Pappé, 1996, pp. 130-136.
[4] Morris, 2007, p. 14.
[5] Ram, 1997, p. 278.

controversial scholars[6], others accused them of downright manipulation of data to validate their a-priori held beliefs[7]. While some claimed the Critical Historians were "judging history in retrospect"[8], others dismissed them as belated fame seekers, whose provocative arguments were nothing but restatements of previously well-known facts[9]. However, the more loaded and intense the debate was becoming, the clearer it became that not only were the Critical Historians not in the least uniform in methodology and political views, but that their claims and ideas were to leave a lasting mark on Israeli scholarship, mythology, and society.

The aim of this paper is to study several aspects of the New Historians and the Critical Sociologists, and their impact on Israeli scholarship. For this purpose, the paper is divided into three chapters.

The first chapter examines the emergence of the New Historians and Critical Sociologists. The term "new historians" was originally coined in a 1988 paper by Benny Morris to describe himself, Shlaim, Pappé, and Flapan. According to Morris there were two main reasons for the sudden interest in reexamining Israeli history. The first, "material" reason consisted of the opening of state archives and the availability of previously classified papers. The second reason was related to the historians themselves: they were all born around 1948, and were therefore, unlike previous historians, more critical towards Israeli history, especially in light of the 1982 Lebanon War[10]. However, the more attention the Critical Historians attracted the clearer it became that other factors also influenced their emergence. For one, the international academic climate during the 1970's-80's was especially ripe for self-critical and minority studies. Throughout the Western world (to which, academically at least, Israel adheres) this was the high tide of postmodern theories and multi-narrative histories. Israeli academics, highly influenced by western-European and American schools of thought, were eager to implement

---

[6] Aronson, 2003, p. 381.
[7] Friling, 1992, p. 319.
[8] Gelber, 2003, p. 158.
[9] Gutwein, 2003, pp. 248-249.
[10] Morris, 2007, pp. 14-15.

international methodologies in their own immediate environment[11]. Another important factor was the social and political events which, as of 1967, pushed Israelis to "soul-search" their past, present, and future. A series of landmark events which followed the 1967 occupation of the Palestinian territories include:

- the 1973 Arab-Israeli war;

- the reawakening of the Palestinian national movement in the 1970s;

- the 1977 fall of the traditional Socialist-Left-Ashkenazi *Ma'arakh* and the rise to power of the Right-wing *Likud* for the first time in Israeli history;

- the 1982 Lebanon War;

- and finally the outbreak of the First Intifada in 1987.

All these events both affected and reflected Israel's self-perception and self-awareness[12]. As we shall see, the social and political climate in Israel, alongside rising academic trends during the late 1970's and the 1980's served as a hothouse for the emergence of these scholars. Thus, these critical scholars represented what many have termed a "maturing" process of Israeli society, which entailed a confrontation with Israel's less-heroic moments on the one hand[13], and a rebellion against the established academia on the other. In many ways they reflected processes and transitions Israeli society itself was going through: disillusionment with past myths and conceptions; a reappraisal of Israel's part in the Arab-Israeli conflict; the gradual realization that Israel's founders were not without faults; and a cautious readjustment of Israel's political and social vision. Politically, this process was symbolized by the growing comprehension that Israel would have to reach some sort of understanding with its neighbors – a realization culminating in the 1993 Oslo Accords led by the far from dovish Yitzhak Rabin. The Oslo Accords, in spite of the objections they raised with many parts of society, represented

---

[11] Ram, 2006, p. 247; Taub, 1997, p. 232.
[12] Kimmerling, 2001, p. 23; Ram, 1997, pp. 276-277.
[13] Friling, 2003.

Israel's maturation, acceptance of responsibility, and willingness to participate in creating a new regional reality. Socially, the process was felt through the increasing public discussion on ethnic and sectorial equality and discrimination in Israel.

The second chapter explores the terminology employed by the critical scholars. A key characteristic of the Critical Historians was the use of either a neutral or negative terminology in describing Israeli history. Heroic, momentous, and subjective terminology, commonly used by mainstream scholars was solemnly rejected by the Critical Historians. The popular term *alyia* (ascent), which signified the Jews' return to their homeland, was replaced with *hagira* (immigration) or colonization; *milhemet ha'atzmaut* (the War of Independence) was now the First Arab-Israeli War, or the 1948 War; *eretz Israel* (the Land of Israel) was to become Palestine when referring to the same territory prior to Israel's declaration of independence[14]; simple Arabs were now Palestinians, and the Hebrew spelling of the word "Palestinian" proved to be a difficult, perplexing task, laden with positive or negative meaning. Other terms such as *shlilat hagalut* (the rejection of the Jews' existence outside Israel) and *haiehudy ha'hadash* (the new Jew) were shown to possess fascist influences, and to have heavily affected the Zionists' neglect of the European Jewry during the Holocaust[15]. The use of the new terminology was not merely a superficial change, but represented a greater aspiration, namely, to expose the *myth* of the Zionist project. With this new terminology the Critical Historians expressed their discontent with previous scholarship, and their desire to research Israeli history with critical, non-sentimental tools, shedding national biases as much as they could and regardless (or, at times, in order to accelerate) of political and social consequences.

The third chapter explores critical reactions to the emerging scholars. As the "old guard" of the Israeli historiography was blamed for embellishing and

---

[14] Bar-On, 2005, p. 64.
[15] Segev, 2001, p. 25

censoring Israeli history, renowned scholars such as Tuvia Friling, Anita Shapira, Yoav Gleber, and Shabtai Teveth found themselves compelled to defend their own research, on the one hand, and to counter attack the Critical Historians' works, on the other. Their criticism revolved around four main lines of argumentation: the Critical Historians interpreted events in retrospect and with knowledge that was not available to the Zionist (and later Israeli) leadership at the time; they intentionally falsified and used information out of context in order to vilify the leadership's motives; they misread sources and documents, and misunderstood the significance of events and the hierarchy of historical players[16]. The fourth line of argument was directed against postmodernism in general and its imported Israeli derivative in particular[17].

The "clash of historians" which ensued also stirred a debate about Zionism and post-Zionism[18]. More than other points of contention, this debate quickly seeped to the media and popular discourse in Israel, diverting attention from historical facts and processes, and focusing instead on which narrative Israelis should espouse. Thus, the most significant widespread impact of the Critical Historians lay not in uncovering and discussing ambivalent moments in Israeli history, but in polarizing Israeli society, generating a process in which gradually any criticism of Israeli history or politics came to be associated with post- or anti-Zionism. Shortly, questions of political affinity and vision occupied the center stage, instead of historical and academic argumentation.

Previous studies about the New Historians and Critical Sociologists largely focused on their claims and ideas with the intent to either support or refute them. In addition, they have commonly grouped together and focused on scholars with similar methodologies and political motives (or lack of) in order to reach an absolute "verdict" regarding these scholars. Thus, for example, some papers focus on Benny Morris, Ilan Pappé, Avi Shlaim, and Simha Flapan, who were originally

---

[16] Friling, 2003a, pp. 426-427.
[17] Taub, 1997, pp. 233-234.
[18] Bar-On, 2005, p. 53.

dubbed the "New Historians" by Morris, in order to identify biographical and methodological similarities. Others have focused on postmodern writers such as Pappé, Uri Ram, and Adi Ophir in order to discuss the postmodern elements of these scholars[19]. In this paper I tried to assemble a comprehensive yet varied representation of Critical Historians. Thus the study is predominately based on the writings of Morris, Tom Segev, and Baruch Kimmerling, each of which represents a different "current" within the Critical Historians.

In his seminal *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem* Morris studied the 1948 War, and exposed expulsions and massacres committed by the Israelis. While most Israelis were under the impression the Israeli army was not responsible for the Palestinians' expulsion, Morris claimed both Israeli political and military leaderships played a central role in organizing and enabling the expulsions. The book was one of the first Critical Historiographies to be translated into Hebrew (most early works were written in English), and therefore the claims Morris raised concerning Israel's part in the refugee problem played a central part in the early part of the historians' debate.

Segev focused on the impact of the Holocaust on the Jewish settlement in Mandatory Palestine, and Zionist reaction to the Holocaust. In his book *The Seventh Million* Segev criticized the Jewish settlements' actions and response to the Holocaust, claiming the Zionist leadership did not do enough when it could save lives, and later exploited the memory of the holocaust for political purposes. The book garnered both widespread success and criticism. One of the most critical papers on the book, *The Zionist Movement's March of Folly* by Tuvia Friling, criticized the book factually, but more importantly, considered the book a case study of the New Historiography, thereby "exposing" techniques and methods used by other critical writers[20].

---

[19] Taub, 1997.
[20] Friling, 1992.

Baruch Kimmerling (1939-2007) was one of the most prominent sociologists in Israeli academy. Nearly ten years older than other Israeli Critical Historians and a former student of Eisenstadt, Kimmerling was publishing critical papers on Israeli history and society several years before the term New History was coined. In his books, Kimmerling focused on Zionist hegemony and its treatment of non-hegemonic groups: Arabs, ultra-orthodox Jews, Holocaust survivors, and Jewish immigrants from Muslim countries (e.g. Morocco, Yemen, Iran, etc.). Kimmerling also wrote on colonialist aspects of Israel, a topic which was to dominate the Critical Historians' narrative.

Alongside these writers, I will use papers by historians Pappé and Shlaim, and sociologists Ram and Gershon Shafir, as well as other scholars, in order to explore other aspects of critical writing, such as postmodernism, relativism, and multi-culturalism.

For this paper, I will use a comparative methodology. A comparative methodology will enable a wider examination of the critical thinkers, the differences and similarities in the uses of different terminology, criticism, and ideas. It will also facilitate the preparation of a more comprehensive, axial research, evaluating how different terms are used by different writers in one period of time, and how they evolve throughout time by specific writers. While initial response to the critical writers was vehemently antagonistic, over time some of their ideas gained widespread recognition and were, reluctantly, even accepted by "old" and "institutional" thinkers[21]. Thus the story of the emergence and development of the Critical Historians is not limited to a particular, closed group of scholars, but relates to the way Israel comes to understand and debate its history and identity.

---

[21] Bar-On, 2005, pp. 80-81.

2.1 Chapter 1: The Origins and Opinions of the Critical Historians

The emergence of the Critical Historians in the 1980's, stirred Israeli public opinion into a heated discussion on the 1948 War, and the birth, as well as the future of Israel. This fiery discussion was long time in the making, and had its roots in historical, sociological, philosophical, and political happenings, some even preceding 1948. The Critical Historians were influenced differently by various occurrences and developments, some driven more by social changes, such as ethnic tensions between *Ashkenazi* and *Sephardic* Jews, others by "material" historical occurrences like the uncovering of classified documents in the 1980s, some by political conviction, rooted in the objection to Israeli policies in the Occupied Territories following 1967, and others by a combination of these factors.

Before we set out to study and recount the processes which led to their formation, it is important to clarify at least one potential terminological issue. One of the confusing difficulties in discussing the Critical Historians is the common designation of the New Historians and the Critical Sociologists as post-Zionists. While the New Historiography and Critical Sociology describe mostly an academic approach, post-Zionism denotes a rather wide array of political convictions. Unfortunately, the terms New Historians, Critical Sociologists, and post-Zionists, are frequently used alternately, while in fact, different writers hold different opinions concerning Israel's present condition, and its desired future course[22]. The spectrum of opinions held by the Critical Historians includes self-proclaimed post-Zionists (Segev, Kimmerling, and Ram), anti-Zionists (Pappé), non-Zionists (Shlomo Sand), and Zionists (Morris). With time, and responding to further developments in Israeli history (such as the failed Oslo peace talks, and the Second Intifada), some have radicalized their views (Pappé) bringing to question Israel's right to exist, some have retained their views (Segev, Kimmerling, Ram), supporting various forms of a multicultural society, and Benny Morris represents a unique case of disillusionment with post-Zionism, and consequently the support of

---

[22] Livneh, 2001.

a strong Israeli state, and the creation of a "joint West Bank–Gaza–Jordan state, ruled jointly by the Hashemites and the PNA" [Palestinian National Authority][23]. In order to simplify and clarify this confusion, as well as separate academic works from political views, it will sometimes be necessary to emphasize and explore the differences in evolution and development between the Critical Historians concerning academic writing and methodology on the one hand and political persuasion on the other.

In the paper's first chapter, I will explore the background and origin of the Critical Historians, through two main facets:

1. The main events in Israeli history, politics and wars (1948-1988), and their influence on Israeli critical thinking; and,

2. Social developments and transitions in Israeli society which, alongside philosophical and methodological developments that took place in Western European and North American academies (1967-1990s), generated the new academic generation of the Critical Historians.

As we shall see, the Critical Historians were deeply influenced by a combination of internal Israeli affairs, such as the eroding of *Mapai*, the impact of the Six Day, Yom Kippur, and Lebanon wars, and the accessibility to previously censored documents, and external, mainly academic developments in philosophies and ideologies such as postcolonial studies and identity politics.

2.2 Israeli history: Archives, Heroism, and Disappointment

The historical events which spawned the emergence of the Critical Historians could be roughly divided into two main categories: the opening of the Israeli archives, and political and military clashes of Israel with the Arab states and Palestinian population.

---

[23] Morris, 2009, pp. 200-201.

In 1955 Israel passed the Archives Law (amended in 1964 and 1981) which entailed, alongside restrictions concerning sensitive documents, the declassification of state papers after thirty years (the "thirty-year rule"). Throughout the 1980s the Israeli government was in the process of declassifying "hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions" of papers[24], from the years 1947-1956, including personal journals and correspondences, Foreign Ministry papers, official and non-official documents from the Defense Ministry, the IDF, the prime minister's office, and political party papers. These documents contained reports, testimonies, and proof of various cases of expulsion, massacres, rapes, and lootings, committed by the Israeli military, as well as the Israeli leadership's semi-planned transfer of the Palestinian population.

According to Morris, the "old" historians had predominantly based their writings on interviews and personal memoires of Israeli officers and politicians who had participated in the 1948 War, and therefore their research was extremely unbalanced. On the other hand, sources which could be used to balance, support, or refute personal recollections, were unavailable. The Critical Historians reached academic "maturity" just as these sensitive documents came to light. Having come across such a multitude of newly available documents, the Critical Historians preferred basing their research on "hard data", striving to establish themselves as professional scholars, and refrained from using oral history and other "soft" research methods. Their early research was highly factual, and tended to refrain from critical theorization which would become central in their later writings. Coming across previously unavailable resources of such importance, the Critical Historians saw themselves as no less than revolutionaries of Israeli historiography. Segev went so far as to term himself the "first" historian of early Israeli history[25]. According to Segev, before the New Historians, Israelis did not have a have a history, but a *mythology*, at best, as previous historians did not have the materials

---

[24] Morris, 2007, pp. 14-15.
[25] Segev, 1998, p. vii.

necessary for writing a proper history. More commonly, Segev argues, Israel had an ideology, plenty of indoctrination, but no proper history[26]. The term *mythology* was used profusely to symbolize the calling the Critical Historians felt they now had, i.e. the demythologization of Israeli history, and presentation of "what [actually] happened" in Israeli history[27].

In his seminal article *The New Historiography* Morris took the case study of the Lydda and Ramle massacre and expulsion in order to demonstrate how lack of resources enabled misleading depictions of historical events. Examining contemporary documents, Morris shows how a misunderstanding (under nerve wrecking conditions, admittedly) and not a rebellion, as previously believed, caused the Lydda massacre on July 11, 1948. Lydda, an Arab town, was occupied by Israeli forces on July 11th. While no official ceasefire had been signed between the Israelis and the residing Palestinians, the town was peaceful for the remainder of the night. The following day, led to believe they were being reinforced by the Transjordan army, armed locals began sniping at the Israeli forces. Soon the Transjordan forces retreated, however, without the knowledge of the local population which continued its resistance. In retaliation to the local population's fire, the four hundred Israeli soldiers situated in the village began firing haphazardly, massacring more than 250 Arabs[28]. Both Israeli and Arab historians claimed the Israelis' actions were a response to a rebellion of a much larger scale than had actually taken place: the Israelis in order to lessen their own blame, and the Arabs in order to emphasize their own bravery and tenacity. Following the shooting, official orders were given to expel the inhabitants of Lydda and neighboring Ramle. Israeli historians during the 1950s-1970s, Morris claimed, were "less than honest in their treatment of the Lydda-Ramle episode"[29]. Both official histories (such as IDF publications) and independent depictions (by ex-

---

[26] Segev, 1991, p. 9.
[27] Morris, 2004, p. 3.
[28] Morris, 2007, pp. 11-12.
[29] Ibid., p. 12.

combatants directly or indirectly involved in the events), misrepresented the events, bluntly claiming or insinuating, that the Palestinian residents asked the IDF for permission to evacuate the towns (fearing Israeli retribution) which they were then given. According to Morris this was just one episode characteristic of many in which the events of the 1948 War were misrepresented to absolve the Jewish soldiers of atrocities and expulsions. On a large scale, this misrepresentation by historians and veterans led Israelis to believe they were not responsible for the birth of the Palestinian refugee problem. Until the Critical Historians published their research, most Israelis were under the impression that while Jewish soldiers fought heroically during the 1948 War, the Palestinians were encouraged by their leaders to evacuate their villages and towns for cynical political reasons. As the Critical Historians now demonstrated, Israeli history was far less pure and undisputed[30].

Some Critical Historians acknowledged the fact that even before the declassification of sources there were steps taken by some Israelis to present a more scientific and a less "mythologized" version of Israeli history. Morris, for example, noted Kimmerling's 1983 *Zionism and Territory*, and Ephraim Kleiman's *Khirbet Khiz'ah and Other Unpleasant Memories*, however, these and other attempts "all had suffered from the relative paucity of archival materials"[31]. Indeed, the Critical Sociologists, who emerged during the 1970s, nearly a decade before the New Historians, were not as influenced by the discovery of new archival material[32]. The Critical Sociologists were more influenced by social and ideological changes which will be discussed in the second section of this chapter.

While Morris and Segev repeatedly emphasized document declassification as the key factor in the emergence of the New Historians, other historians and sociologists, not belittling the archives' importance (save for Ram's peculiar claim

---

[30] Morris, 2004, p. 5.
[31] Ibid., p. 2.
[32] Ram, 1993, p. 7.

that "the facts discovered in the historians' debate were known to everyone"[33]),
gave greater importance to other processes and happenings in the Israeli State and
society.

In 1988, when the New Historians first caught public attention as revisionists of
Israel's "pure" narrative [34], the State of Israel was 40 years old. In its forty years of
existence, it had experienced six full scale wars, an Intifada, and one major
political turnover. Each of these events, whether a passive reaction to "outside"
factors, or a planned, calculated action, left its mark on Israeli public mentality,
and self-perception.

When the New Historians came to explain the historical-political events which
influenced them, they most commonly referred to the Lebanon War and the First
Intifada. However, some scholars have marked the 1967 Six Day War as the
watershed of Israeli historiography.

In spite of the general euphoric wave which took over Israel following the war's
successful victory, the occupation of the Golan Heights, the West Bank, Gaza, and
the Sinai Desert, also raised protest and objection by some Israelis. Alongside
prominent figures such as philosopher Isaiah Leibowitz and Finance Minister
Pinchas Sapir who objected to the settlement of the conquered territories and
called for negotiations with the Arab countries, the first public movements were
also born, protesting against the destruction of Palestinian villages[35]. Another
result of the war was the renewed interest in earlier Zionist history. Israel no
longer under existential threat, Israeli researchers now felt more comfortable
researching sensitive topics, such as the Zionists reaction to the Holocaust and the
Jews' relations with the Arab world.

Before the Six Day War there existed one prevalent mainstream narrative, and
several marginal critical narratives. The mainstream Israeli narrative maintained
the Zionists had done all in their power in order to help the European Jews during

---

[33] Ram, 1997, p. 278.
[34] Morris, 2007, p. 15.
[35] Calderon, 2003, p. 174.

the Holocaust, on the one hand, and secure peaceful relations with the Arabs on the other. The marginal narratives were held by several opposition groups to the hegemonic *Mapai*, such as the ultra-orthodox Jews, the communists, the anti-Zionist Bund, and in a different manner by the nationalist *Likud*. These groups accused the *Mapai* establishment of having failed, or rather not having tried to solve these burning problems. The accusations against the *Mapai* establishment were plentiful: it neglected the European Jews during the Holocaust, and attempted to save only those who seemed able to benefit the Zionist settlement in Palestine, abandoning physically unfit Jews, on the one hand, and opponents of Zionism on the other; it did not attempt to create true coexistence with the Arabs, and had betrayed Zionism's universal-socialist origin in favor of nationalism; it had mistreated the new immigrants, especially those from Muslim countries and Holocaust survivors; it mistreated the ultra-orthodox and the Palestinian minority out of arrogance, etc. Following the war, these accusations slowly began to reemerge, however, now they also began to preoccupy academic researchers[36]. Another effect of the Six Day War was the consolidation of the religious right wing and its expansionist vision. As the religious right wing was gaining widespread support, it began using mainstream Zionist symbols and agendas, which previously belonged to the center-left. In essence, following the Six Day War the Israeli left saw its values and symbols now representing right-wing expansionism, but while the traditional left sought to redefine its purpose and ideals within a national agenda, a radical sub current gradually began to emerge, alienating itself from Zionism altogether[37].

While the Six Day War epitomized the climax of Israeli euphoria and optimism, the 1973 Yom Kippur War marked a major turning point in Israeli morale and self-awareness. Ill prepared for the war, the Israeli army suffered major losses which gravely shook Israeli society for the first time. Nationwide protests and

---

[36] Gelber, 2003, p. 116.
[37] Friling, 2003, pp. 40-41.

public outcry produced the Agranat Commission and the dispersal of the wartime government, led by the socialist *Mapai* party which had been in power since the formation of Israel. The war's traumatic effect led the Israeli public to mistrust *Mapai*'s competences, and its ability to secure Israel's existence in the Middle East. This disenchantment was corroborated in the political turnover of 1977, in which the nationalist *Likud*, headed by Menachem Begin, won the elections for the first time. The defeat of *Mapai* in many ways symbolized the crumbling of the Ashkenazi social elite, which Kimmerling termed *AHUSALIM*, (an acronym standing for Ashkenazi, secular, veteran, socialist, and nationalist[38]), the collapse of hegemonic forces, and the rise of rivaling groups, critical of mainstream Zionism[39]. The weakening of the fifty-year-old established labor party led, in turn, to the emergence of the Critical Sociologists, as they termed themselves in opposition to Establishment Sociologists. According to Ram, the source of the differences between the Critical and the Establishment sociologists is their attitude towards the present: while Establishment Sociology is interested in preserving the present and existing social reality, Critical Sociology is interested in changing the present, its methodology is an "analysis of the whole and its inner oppositions, and its theory is the effort to expose the emerging or the possible"[40]. While Establishment Sociology presents itself as objective and independent of external factors, Critical Sociology declares its commitment to values of equality and freedom.

The third turning point in Israeli history came in the form of the 1982 Lebanon War, along with the "triple-digit inflation […] two sources of instability" in Israeli society[41]. While previous Israeli wars were described as "no-choice" wars, threatening the entire existence of the Israeli State, the Lebanon War was the first designated as a calculated war meant to serve strategic purposes. This difference

---

[38] *Leumi*, i.e. nationalist, bears both a positive and a negative meaning in Hebrew, depending on context.
[39] Kimmerling, 2001.
[40] Ram, 1993, p. 8.
[41] Segev, 1998, p. vi.

in terminology, as well as the war's unexpected extension and feeling it had reached an impasse, led to a general demoralization in Israeli society. In spite of the pessimistic atmosphere caused by the war and the inflation, the 1980's also brought along a feeling of potential change. Slowly being freed from past political and social restraints, a nationwide poll revealed people were feeling "personally happy", in spite of showing a growing concern over the State of Israel[42]. Thus the Critical Historians began publishing their studies at a time when Israeli society was disillusioned with some of its early mythologies on the one hand, but was harboring cautious optimism on the other.

The final historical event to have influenced the emerging Critical Historians was the First Intifada which broke out in 1987. Unlike past Palestinian terror attacks which were organized by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the intifada was a spontaneous popular uprising. The Palestinians revolted as a unanimous body, regardless of age, sex, or social background. As opposed to organized terrorism, the symbolic weapons of the intifada were "the stone and, occasionally, the Molotov cocktail and knife" – not guns and bombs[43]. For the first time it seemed that no amount of military violence could stop the Palestinians' demand for their own state, and the Israeli public turned against the rigid *Likud* government headed by Yitzhak Shamir. The First Intifada, thus made Israel question its policies and seek a way out of what seemed an endless bloody cycle. Morris himself served time in the military prison, after refusing reserve duty in the occupied territories, and described the prevalent reaction among the New Historians towards the First Intifada: "I saw the first intifada […] as an effort of a people to throw off a 20-year military occupation. This effort, in the main, was not lethal, and the protesters did not use live-fire weapons. They'd simply had enough; they wanted to be rid of the yoke of occupation − that is how I saw it. I did not feel it right to take part in the suppression of this nonlethal uprising, and I refused to do

---

[42] Ibid.
[43] Morris, 1999, p. 561.

reserve duty in the Nablus Casbah. I felt that the Palestinian struggle for independence was legitimate and that the oppression was fundamentally illegitimate."[44] In light of these events, a steadily growing part of the Israeli population was feeling a "discomfort" with Israel's official national memory[45]. By 1988 the first major critical historiographies had been published, gaining both critical acclaim and harsh criticism. Soon, the heated debate about post-Zionism reached the media, bringing questions concerning Israel's past and future course to the forefront of public interest.

2.3 Sociology and the "post" philosophies

The second primary source for the emergence of the Critical Historians was a combination of social transitions taking place in Israel, and the way these transitions affected, and were affected in return, by European and North American philosophical trends. These changes and evolutions took place not only within Israeli society, but also among Israeli scholars and academics, and in essence they constitute the advent of post-Zionism as an evolutionary stage in Israeli society on the one hand, and as a philosophical and political vision on the other.

While not all Israeli historians and sociologists agree on the importance of the various social and philosophical variables to the emergence of the Critical Historians, it is widely accepted that these scholars consisted of a new generation in the Israeli academy, which corresponded to a new state of mind prevalent within Israeli society. In order to examine these transitions it is important to study the role of the universities in the earlier years of the Israeli State and their development against the background of social transitions in Israel on the one hand, and Western academic trends on the other. In other words, as Ram suggests, both the "old" and "new" histories are deeply rooted in Israel's national memory, and

---

[44] Ben-Simhon, 2012.
[45] Ram, 1997, p. 276.

reflect – either as a cause or an effect – pervasive transitions in Israeli society[46]. In this section I will explore Kimmerling's and Ram's sociological accounts as representing the critical approach, Gelber's and Shapira's as representing the "old" school understanding of the Critical Sociologists, Daniel Gutwein's unique account of Israeli economic and academic privatization, and finally I will assess and criticize different aspects of these accounts.

Hegemony, as understood by Gramsci, is one of the most debated terms in the Israeli historians' and sociologists' debate, and will be studied comprehensively in the second and third chapters of the paper. However, there is general agreement among both the "old" historians and sociologists and the Critical Historians that Israeli society and politics underwent a major change from a more or less united, or monolithic, society, to a diverse and pluralistic one. This transition took place not only in Israeli society, but was evident also in Israeli politics, economy and academy. The main Israeli universities (in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa, and the Negev) were formed during the earlier stages of building the Israeli State, and their formation was part of the "construction of the nation, society, culture, economy, armed forces, and public bureaucracy"[47]. Therefore, and as is common among young, emerging states, Israeli historians and sociologists closely cooperated with the state, and took it upon themselves to support the new state by presenting a positive, heroic, and "pure" history of the nation. In their analysis of the history of the Israeli academia, the Critical Historians frequently attack the willful cooperation of the "old" academics with the hegemonic ruling *Mapai* party. As we have seen earlier, both Segev and Morris considered themselves and the New Historians the first Israeli historians, discarding the former as ideologues and apologists. One of the main reasons for the emergence of the Critical Historians, they asserted, was the universities in which the scholars completed their studies. As Segev noted in his English preface to *The First Israelis*, most of the Critical

---

[46] Ibid., p. 278.
[47] Kimmerling, 1997, p. 261.

Historians completed at least some part of their studies abroad – mostly in American and British universities – during the late 1970s and early 1980s, where "one of the most crucial lessons they brought home was the importance of challenging and criticizing accepted truths"[48]. Morris also briefly considered this idea when attacking, many years later, Pappé's books and harsh criticism towards Israel, discussing Pappé's studies at Oxford, and the influence his supervisor, Albert Hourani, might have had on his materializing views[49]. Thus, they conferred a significant part in their own development to their studying in foreign universities, associating geography with ideology and methodology, and granting more importance to external influences on their development.

Kimmerling and Ram offer a more detailed analysis of the "old" Israeli academics and the processes which led to the emergence of the new generation. Focusing more on internal transitions and changes, they seek to explain why Israeli academics internalized these theories so enthusiastically.

According to Kimmerling, the Israeli academies were created inseparably of the Zionist establishment. The dominant founders of Israeli sociology, especially in the Jerusalem Hebrew University, Israel Eisenstadt, Jacob Talmon, and Joseph Ben-David as well as other key figures in the early Israeli academy, came from East-Europe, and were deeply committed not only to the Zionist project, but also to *Mapai*[50]. Encountering problematic subjects or sensitive issues, the "old" historians and sociologists would consider the grand Zionist project at hand, and discard those issues in favor of a positive, embellishing account of the state. While ignoring or "retouching" problematic issues is a common phenomenon in many national historiographies, in Israel the anxiety concerning Israel's future existence and ability to sustain itself intensified the need to "mythologize" its history[51]. The founding sociologists laid down rigid framework decisions concerning

---

[48] Segev, 1998, p. vi.
[49] Morris, 2011.
[50] Kimmerling, 1992, p. 448; Kimmerling 2008, p. x.
[51] Kimmerling, 1997, p. 263.

28

sociological research, such as terminology, periodization, and sociopolitical boundaries, which having been harnessed to the nation's state building, and by deploying Zionist conceptions, disabled significant self-criticism[52]. Thus, the Israeli academy was saturated with value-laden terms such as *alyia* (literally "ascent", but also meaning immigration to Israel) as opposed to *yerida* (literally "descent", and denoting emigration from Israel), and *eretz israel* when referring to Ottoman-ruled- or British Mandate Palestine. Through periodization, historians and sociologists focused on the Zionists' activities leading to the formation of the Israeli State, thus creating a directional, deterministic history, on the one hand, and relegating the Palestinians to the level of "supporting characters" in the Israeli story on the other. According to Kimmerling, "[a]ny sociologist who attempted to deploy new approaches confronted established framework decisions"[53].

The diversification of Israeli sociology first took place through the proliferation of universities in Israel during the 1970s, and the emergence of a new generation of sociologists with Marxist orientation in Haifa University, who positioned themselves in opposition to the dominant "Jerusalem Sociology". The erosion of Israeli hegemony started after the Six Day War, as Israeli society was becoming polarized in relation to the question of the occupied territories. The first dissenting group was the "religious Zionists" who called for an official annexation and immediate inhabiting of the territories. In opposition, radical leftist groups also started emerging, urging the government to relinquish the territories and seek peace with the surrounding Arab countries. Both groups were represented in the academy. The first radical leftist sociologists, were comprised of both Jews and Palestinians, associated themselves with the New Left, and analyzed Zionism through the colonial perspective. However, these sociologists, who soon became anti-Zionists and left Israel, tended to blend political views and social analysis, thus attracting limited attention in Israel. Nonetheless, they pioneered critical

---

[52] Kimmerling 1992, p. 449.
[53] Ibid., p. 455.

sociology in Israel, and were soon followed by other sociologists in methodology and terminology[54]. The disintegration of Israeli hegemony gained pace, giving rise to more and more nonconformist groups within Israeli society, reflected in turn in the proliferation of sociological currents who opposed the previously established sociologists.

According to Ram, early Israeli academic writing was in many cases auxiliary to "ideological writing, not to say propaganda – always undeclared, sometimes without awareness, usually while giving the product a scientific appearance"[55]. Ram disagrees with Morris' assertion that the main reasons for the development of the New Historians were archive accessibility and academic generation changes. Contrarily, Ram sees the emergence of critical academics as a result of a widespread "discomfort" with the official Israeli national memory. This "discomfort" was initially a popular, that is non-academic, feeling, which was reflected in academic works only at a much later stage. Ram associates the emergence of the Critical Historians with post-Zionism, which he understands as a byproduct of postmodernism, and the advent of multiculturalism in Israel. Ram maintains that Israeli society began its process of pluralization in the 1970s, with two main alternative movements to the official hegemonic Zionist identity: neo-Zionism, and post-Zionism. While neo-Zionism manifested a religious revival and a messianic, expansionist attitude, post-Zionism emphasized the "individual's right against collective loyalty, normality against exceptionalism, and the present against the past"[56]. Both neo- and post-Zionism began as popular reactions to the ongoing occupation, and were epitomized respectively in the *Gush emunim* (the settlers') and *Yesh gvul* (conscientious objectors') movements. Post-Zionism, unlike orthodox and neo-Zionism is a pluralistic movement, which does not favor one narrative, but rather supports the multiplicity of narratives as a cultural principle for securing democracy. Therefore, the historians' debate is not a result

---

[54] Ibid., 1992, p. 456.
[55] Ram, 1997, p. 283.
[56] Ibid., 1997, p. 284.

of generational change, but is rather the consequence of the creation of new narratives, and the preference of alternative narratives and identities to the Zionist one. The transition from growing collective consciousness to articulated academic discourse took place during the 1970s and 1980s, when Western European and North American postmodernism was implemented in the Israeli academia. According to Ram, what Morris and Segev consider a mere archival "coincidence" was in fact the expected attraction of Israeli scholars to contemporary academic trends.

The main weakness of Ram's narrative is that the Critical Historians used, at least in their beginnings, predominately positivistic, modern methodologies. Among the historians, Flapan was the only one to have used an explicitly Marxist and ideological paradigm in his *Birth of Israel*, until Pappé proclaimed himself a postmodern historian in 1996, and called for a "new agenda for the 'new history'"[57]. Nonetheless, Pappé's own subsequent research did not comply with the new postmodern agenda he advanced, as his research remained positivistic in essence. Among the critical sociologists postmodernism is more prevalent, especially in identity politics and postcolonial theories, as can be found in Kimmerling's writing, to cite one example, and more significantly in the anthology *Israeli Society*, edited by Ram, which explores women's, ethnic, class, and militaristic narratives. Methodologically however, postmodernism had a weaker effect on Israeli sociology, as relativism is relatively sparse, and most researchers establish their findings on outwardly objective, positivistic research.

"Old" historians and "establishment" sociologists have naturally disowned these historical accounts. Notwithstanding the lack of available sources, they claim earlier Israeli historians and sociologists, such as Eisenstadt, Israel Kolatt, and Talmon were balanced and objective, and did not hesitate to confront David Ben-Gurion and the establishment[58].

---

[57] Pappé, 1996.
[58] Gelber, 2003, p. 118.

In opposition to the dichotomous "old" and "new" histories, Gelber has offered a periodization of four generations of historians: the first generation consisted of Zionists turned historians. Writing in Mandatory Palestine, these early historians were not professional historians, and their writing was apologetic, aimed to justify Zionism and the formation of the Israeli State before anti-Zionist Jews[59]. The second generation, active during the first decade of the Israeli State, focused on the Jewish settlement in pre-Israeli Palestine (the *yishuv*), and considered recent events, such as the 1948 War, too contemporaneous to deserve a historical account[60]. The third generation, which began writing during the 1960s, was the first to use critical, academic tools in researching Zionism and Israel. Not only was their research, unlike what the New Historians claim, professional and objective, but it was still being written in Israel, by non-politically-committed scholars[61]. According to Gelber, the New Historians are in fact the fourth generation of Israeli historians, and are more similar to the first generation of historians, being ideologically committed in their research, unlike the second and third generations. Their criticism towards the third generation is the product of their political and ideological commitment, not the third generation's "betrayal" of the truth[62]. In spite of Gelber's insightful division to four periods of historians, he explains the New Historians' emergence only by their studies in foreign universities and their overenthusiasm towards Political Correctness[63]. In Gelber's account, the Critical Historians are "fashion victims" at best and political opportunists at worst.

Anita Shapira, a prominent "old" historian, has offered a less disparaging analysis of the origins of the Critical Historians, but also a less systematic one. Shapira recognizes the political differences and nuances between the historians, but finds they all share a distrustful attitude towards the State of Israel, and that

---

[59] Gelber, 1997, p. 68.
[60] Ibid., p. 75.
[61] Ibid., p. 77.
[62] Ibid., p. 84.
[63] Ibid., p. 85.

most of them use historical criticism as a point of departure for offering a political program for the future[64].

Sociologically, Shapira observes most of them were born after 1948, and thus have matured academically during the 1980s and the 1990s. According to Shapira, this sociological aspect played a major role in their emergence. The Critical Historians examined Israeli history without the awe and admiration which was characteristic of previous historians, who had participated to some extent – either as passive witnesses, or actively in combat and decision making – in the 1948 War[65]. They did not experience the fear and excitement of the 1948 War, did not see their friends and comrades die in the war, and therefore were not impressed by Israel's victory. The Critical Historians, who learned about the war from documents and statistics, saw the victory simply as a matter of Israel's superior military strength. Accordingly, they were more impressed by the 750,000 Palestinian refugees, than they were by the 6,000 fallen Israelis, who accounted for 1% of the Jews in Israel at the time[66]. They saw Israel as a country like any other, with just as many strengths and weaknesses, and did not feel compelled to suppress or ignore these weaknesses in their research. However, Shapira claims, beyond reexamining Israeli history, the Critical Historians sought to modify Israeli collective memory. In point of fact, many of the Critical Historians' "discoveries", such as Israeli military superiority in the second part of the 1948 War, were common knowledge within the Israeli academia[67]. The mythologized memory of the 1948 War, best exemplified in the perception of the Jewish "David" fighting against the Arab "Goliath", was a result of school textbooks, media coverages, and commemoration projects. The Critical Historians emphasized such unheroic facts alongside the Palestinians' misfortunes, which were less known before the opening of the archives. The fight over collective memory, however, did not take place

---

[64] Shapira, 1997, p. 370.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid., pp. 371-372.
[67] Ibid., p. 371.

within the academy, but exploded in full force in the media. What differentiated most the Critical from "older" historians was not so much archive availability, as political and social agendas, and the attempt to influence Israeli society. Centering her argumentation on generational "rebellion", Shapira optimistically deliberated on how the generation following the Critical Historians will rebel against them, and possibly, might return to a more balanced view of Israeli history[68].

Daniel Gutwein offers an unusual explanation for the emergence of the Critical Historians. Gutwein starts his analysis by claiming the Critical Historians did not offer a new criticism towards Israeli collective memory, but on the contrary, they were merely recycling critical claims raised against the Israeli establishment by Zionist as well as non-Zionist oppositions, prevalent during the 1950s-1960s[69]. The difference between the early and the new critics was predominantly material, and lay in the Critical Historians' access to more data to support their claims. Accusations of colonialism were previously raised by *Maki* (the Israeli Communist Party) and its leader, Moshe Sneh. Mythological representations of the 1948 War were already challenged by Israel Bar, a former journalist deeply involved in the Israeli military establishment, discovered later to have been a Soviet spy[70]. Accusations of *Mapai*'s treatment of the European Jews during and after the Holocaust were regularly raised by Begin, the dominant opposition leader. The main difference between the old and the new critics was that while the old critics were proclaimed politicians and ideologists, the Critical Historians presented themselves, at least initially, as objective, non-ideological researchers. What interests Gutwein are not so much the psychological backgrounds and political motives of the Critical Historians, as the reason their researches and ideas were so widely accepted and discussed, unlike their predecessors[71]. Therefore, his research focuses on transitions in Israeli society slightly before and during the eruption of

---

[68] Livneh, 2001.
[69] Gutwein, 2003, p. 249.
[70] Gutwein, 1997, p. 317.
[71] Ibid., p. 338.

the historians' debate, and not on the particular reasons which led the Critical Historians to conduct their researches. In a way, Gutwein considers the Critical Historians mere "tools", conscious and at times unconscious, of change, used by elements of the establishment to promote the "privatization of memory"[72]. Gutwein recognizes four "agents" who promoted the Critical Historians and enabled them to have such an impact on Israeli society, in spite of the usual marginality of academic historians, and what he considers the abundance of defects in their research: the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, *Hakibbutz Hameukhad* publishing house, *Haaretz* newspaper, and the universities[73]. According to Gutwein, these institutions are part of the main Israeli establishment, or old hegemony. The reason they endorsed the Critical Historians was not because they sought to exchange one official narrative with another, but because they were promoting a general privatization within the State of Israel. While privatization was already under way in the economic sector as of 1977, these agents were pushing for privatization in other sectors as well: social, political, cultural, juridical, etc. Israeli national memory was one of the most hegemonic, consolidated areas in Israeli society, while forces within the Israeli establishment were promoting general privatization as the new Israeli hegemony[74]. Gutwein analyzes two statements by Segev and Ram shortly before and during the Second Intifada, in which they associate post-Zionism with globalization processes. Gutwein claims that Segev and Ram understand post-Zionism as a reaction to external globalization processes – "similar to the way the acceptance of the post-Zionist ethos was a result of globalization, with the peace and economic growth it entails, so did the security threat and the economic downturn caused by the

---

[72] Ibid.

[73] Gutwein, 2003, p. 249. It is important to note at this point that in Israel political and economic left are not necessarily identical as they might be in other countries. As is especially evident in the case of Haaretz, while it has been a strong supporter of left-wing political solutions, it has also advocated liberal economic agendas and privatization throughout the years.

[74] Gutwein, 1997, p. 343.

[Second] Intifada brought a retreat from it"[75]. However, Gutwein claims, post-Zionism was first and foremost a result of internal conflicts and trends, largely unaffected by external factors. As mainstream Israeli politics was abandoning its socialist roots and adopting a free market capitalist approach, it was pushing for the privatization of all public sectors: memory and identity alike.

These social and philosophical accounts of the emergence of the Critical Historians, along with the historical factors studied in the previous section, are those generally accepted by Israeli academics: archive availability and the First Lebanon War by all, Ram's and Kimmerling's by critical sociologists, and Gelber's by "old" historians. While Gelber's explanation might explain the lack of critical writing before the fourth generation, it fails to explain *why* this generation emerged, shortly mentioning their studies in foreign universities and their exposure to political correctness as the key factor. Shapira's analysis is also somewhat limited in this area. Typical of "establishment" scholars, both Gelber and Shapira ignore broader transitions which took place in Israeli society, and limit their analysis to inter-academic feuds. However, there is something lacking in discussing the development of the Critical Historians without considering processes and transitions which took place in Israeli society. Gelber's and Shapira's explanations identify external processes, such as the influence of foreign academies and academic trends, but fail to explore their deeper meanings and drives, why they were so eagerly adopted and implemented in Israel, and more significantly, why Israeli "lay" opinion was so receptive to these ideas. The polarization of Israeli society following the Six Day War, and the erosion of the prestige of the socialist *Mapai* were demonstrated in almost all areas of Israelis society, most significantly in the crucial 1977 *mahapakh* (the "turnover") in which the right wing *Likud* won the elections for the first time in Israeli history. It is lacking in scope to ignore these social events and transitions which were reflected in the emergence of popular political movements as well as new political parties,

---

[75] Gutwein, 2003, p. 245.

radically critical cultural works, such as Hanoch Levin's controversial satires, and other events which expressed the destabilization of Israeli society. Evidently Israeli academics felt the need to respond to these happenings, and felt encouraged to criticize Israeli history and society through the prism of new and fashionable theories, themselves indicative of similar universally widespread feelings.

However, adoption of postmodern and postcolonial theories was not as extensive as postmodern thinkers, such as Ram and Ophir have claimed. Unlike Ram's analysis, substantial use of postmodern methods and theories did not gain currency in Israel until the mid-1990s (with the exception of postcolonial theories). Early Critical Histories were not as radical as later works from the late 1990s and early 2000s would come to be, and from today's perspective seem rather harmless. The tremor caused by their discoveries and ideas at the time, testifies to the lack of previous critical historical and sociological accounts. Another reason for their apparent moderation today might stem from the fact that many of their discoveries and ideas were subsequently, after the initial havoc they had raised, accepted in Israeli mainstream society, mainly by being incorporated into Israeli school textbooks.

Gutwein's unusual account might indeed be instrumental in explaining the extensive exposure the Critical Historians received, and the question of the Critical Historians' influence on non-academic readers is rarely researched. It is also evident that *Haaretz*, one of the leading newspapers in Israel, dedicated profuse attention to the historians' debate and the Critical Historians' claims. However, the conspiratorial quality of the claim that the scholars were mere instruments of change remains unconvincing. As was suggested before, critical approaches and methodologies were a prevalent in Western academies at the time, therefore their international emergence must imply a universal privatization plan. Moreover, most of the Critical Historian' associated themselves with leftist, sometimes socialist political and economic agendas, if not downright Marxist or neo-Marxist. Segev and Kimmerling's criticism towards the establishment's assimilation of the

Palestinians, the ultra-orthodox, and the immigrants arises mainly from the establishment's condescension and homogenization attempts, not from an overly generous welfare policy. In fact, the Critical Historians' or rather the post-Zionists' story, has a rather ironical end. Until the Second Intifada, which erupted in 2001, many post-Zionists, such as Kimmerling, Ram, and Segev were highly optimistic concerning the disintegration of mainstream Zionism. They believed the acknowledgement of multiple narratives would generate a new, tolerant, harmonious, and mutually-supportive society. The bitter irony is that following the Second Intifada, Israeli society became more polarized than ever before, with each identity group supporting its own ends, and opposing, if not downright attacking, other sectors and groups. The current privatized, hostile Israeli society, was not the post-Zionists' aim. In a way it could be suggested that the weakness of their vision was envisioning individualism, group pride, and coexistence, while ignoring the emerging reality of alienation, group chauvinism, and mutual suspicion.

3.1 Chapter 2: Terminology: Demythologizing Israeli myths

The Critical Historians criticized not only what they considered the "old" historians' lack of objectivity and professionality, but even more their part in "mythologizing" Israeli history[76]. This mythologization, they argued, was accomplished not only by constructing a unique narrative and depicting specific events, such as the heroism and exceptional morality of the Israeli soldiers, or the peaceful endeavors of the Zionist leaders before and during the 1948 War, but moreover, by using a specific terminology, the choice of which justified a-priori the Zionist cause[77]. Thus, by using the terms *eretz Israel* (land of Israel) when describing Palestine under Ottoman, and later British rule, the geographical entity was depicted as belonging to the Jewish people throughout history. The term *alyia* ("ascent") conveys Jewish immigration to Palestine/Israel in a positive way, unlike

---

[76] Segev, 1998, p. v; Kimmerling, 2008, p. 116.
[77] Lissak, 2007, p. 180.

yerida ("descent") which carries a negative undertone to emigration from it. On the other hand, the Arabs' and Palestinians' rebellions against the British mandate and the Jewish settlement were called *meora'ot* (literally "events"), ignoring the causes which led to these rebellions[78]. These were just a few examples of how Israeli history acquired a mythological quality, connecting contemporary Zionists all the way to the biblical Hebrews, thereby establishing the Jews' moral and rightful claim to the State of Israel – both in territory, and in statehood.

In order to oppose this subjective historical description, revising historical and sociological terminology was one of the main tasks the Critical Historians took upon themselves. Consequently, the Critical Historians replaced positive terminology with neutral or outright negative terminology: what was previously called the War of Independence, was substituted for the 1948 War, or the First Arab-Israeli War; instead of *alyia*, Jews merely immigrated to Israel, or otherwise they *colonized* it; the *meora'ot* were now Arab rebellions; *eretz Israel* became Palestine; the generic term Arabs was replaced with Palestinians, etc.[79].

However, revising terminology meant more than just a semantic change. Other terms were criticized for their destructive implication on Jewish and Zionist history. "The negation of the diaspora", for example, which designated Israel as the only home for the Jews, caused the Zionist settlement to largely ignore the distress of the European Jews before and during the Holocaust[80]. One of the Zionists' aims, the creation of "the new Jew" on the other hand, which signified the revival of Jewish identity and nationhood, possessed fascist roots, and brought along feelings of indifference and contempt towards the European Jews by the Jewish settlement in Palestine[81].

---

[78] Gelber, 2007, p. 463.
[79] Lissak, 2007, p. 180.
[80] Segev, 1991, p. 404.
[81] Segev, 2001, pp. 23-24.

Finally, some terms, especially colonization and hegemony, pushed for new and extended research on Zionism as colonialism[82], and the privileged hegemonic *Mapai* party and its exclusion of non-hegemonic and minority identities[83].

In this chapter, I will explore key terms that were revised by the Critical Historians, and the significance of their new representation in depicting Israeli history. These key terms are: immigration/colonization; hegemony and elite, negation of the diaspora and the new Jew; and finally the term Palestinians. As we shall see, the adoption of new terminology did not only create a seemingly "objective" historiography, but the use of the new terminology created new research possibilities in Israeli historiography, which in many cases became fundamentally hostile not only to some episodes in Zionist history, but to the Zionist project in its entirety.

3.2 Zionism as Colonialism

As mentioned in the first chapter, critical Israeli scholars were significantly influenced by the emergence of postcolonial studies in Western European and Northern American universities. The first attempts to research Zionism through the colonialist perspective took place already in the 1970s. However, these early postcolonial studies focused on Israel's colonizing attempts following the Six Day War, and not on earlier Zionist efforts[84], notwithstanding the fact that their influence on Israeli public discourse as well as on Israeli academic research was limited[85]. Nonetheless, the late 1980s saw a renewed interest in the relations between Zionism and colonialism, which not only identified colonial aspects in early Zionism, but has also endured to this day. In this section I will analyze general aspects of the "Zionism as colonialism" paradigm, as well as specific interpretations of this paradigm by Critical Historians.

---

[82] Pappé, 1997, p. 346.
[83] Ram, 1993, p. 7.
[84] Ram, 1999, p. 55.
[85] Kimmerling, 1992, p. 456.

At first glance, the similarity between the Zionist movement and other European ideological-colonial movements is self-evident: the Zionist movement was formed by white European men during the 19th century, and like previous religious, national, and expansionist movements, such as the Basel Mission, sought religious revival in Palestine[86]. Initial attempts by the Zionists to rely on their own labor and resources proved futile, and they began seeking help through overseas donations[87]. In addition, their early infatuation with and admiration of the indigenous' way of life quickly gave way to embittered hostility. Consequently the Zionists began to condescend and exploit the indigenous population, while robbing it of its land and resources[88]. Finally, the survival of the Zionist settlement, and the formation of the State of Israel would not have been possible without the support of the British Empire, which allied with the World Zionist Organization, and "which both opened up and secured the country to Jewish immigration and land purchase[89]. As is evident, while not all proponents of "colonialist Zionism" are outspokenly political, this methodology is more prone to political criticism of Zionism than other historiographical narrative, even among the Critical Historians, especially because it traces the "sins" of the Zionist movement back to 1882, and not to the 1948 War. Postcolonial theories inherently share some common factors such as the division of society into exploiting, excluding colonizers against exploited and repressed indigenous victims, as well as the colonizers' condescending view of the natives, which in the Middle Eastern context is associate with Said's "orientalism". Proponents of "colonialist Zionism" frequently claim that Zionist colonization was the main trigger to Arab and Palestinian hostility towards the Zionists, and that consequently the postcolonial

---

[86] Pappé, 1997, pp. 357-358.
[87] Shafir, 1993, p. 110.
[88] Ibid., pp. 110-111.
[89] KImmerling, 2001a, p. 90.

prism is the most suitable in understanding the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict[90].

Nonetheless, the uniqueness of the Zionist movement against other colonialist movements is undeniable. To name just a few: the Zionists were a national movement, and actually sought to secularize biblical symbols, unlike the Basel Mission or the puritan colonization of North America; the Zionists were not an extension of a country or a church, therefore they did not exploit the land's resources for an overseas base, nor did they receive organized and stable support from an administrative body; and finally, unlike other colonial movements who were predominantly "pulled" to distant colonies, the Zionists were equally "pushed" from Europe by the pogroms in East Europe and rising Antisemitism[91].

In face of these disparities, supporters of colonialist interpretations of Zionism have had to justify the "colonialist Zionism" narrative, and consequently there are several postcolonial theories concerning the Zionist movement. One of the main methods of constructing a colonialist narrative of Zionism, is finding a historical "parallel" of the Zionist movement, such as the Basel Mission or the American Puritans, and pointing out similarities in various colonial aspects, such as motives for colonizing, methods of expansion, external supporters of colonization, the relations between the colonizers and the indigenous, etc. Thus, Pappé recognized similarities between the Zionists and the idealist-agrarian Basel Mission which attempted to create a colony in Palestine[92]. Pappé finds similarities between the movements mainly in terms of discourse (the "return" to the promised land); symbolism (the "ideal village"); historical context (both phenomena took place against the background of rural industrialization); education (hostility towards Islam); gradual corrosion of ideals, etc.[93]. Pappé does mention some differences between the movements, mainly the Zionists' dependence on British goodwill in

---

[90] Shafir, 1993, p. 104.
[91] Bareli, 2003, p. 305.
[92] Pappé, 1997.
[93] Ibid., pp. 358-362.

42

establishing a state, and the ultimate goal of the settlements (the mission did not aspire for the immigration of all Christians, nor did it consider industrialization), but these are mentioned briefly, and as insignificant. Similar approaches were taken by Shlomo Sand, who found links between Zionism and the Spanish Conquistadors in Latin America, and Kimmerling and Ram, who found links to the Puritan colonization in North America[94].

Gershon Shafir, one of the earliest sociologists to have used the postcolonial prism, linked Zionism to European colonialism by identifying different types of European colonialism, and evaluating the similarities and differences between Zionism and the various colonial types. Following categorizations by researchers D. K. Fieldhouse and George Fredrickson, Shafir recognizes four main types of colonies: occupation; mixed; plantation; and pure settlement[95]. Shafir claims Zionism is a mixture of plantation and pure settlement colony, notwithstanding specific characteristics it developed over the course of time. Both these types represent colonies in which Europeans colonized territories for the purpose of inhabitance and exploitation of resources and land. The plantation colony is characteristic of the cotton areas in the south of the United States, where black slaves were imported from Africa for labor, while the pure settlement colony is characteristic of the north of the United States, Australia, and New Zealand, where the colonizers either deported or annihilated the local population, and both employers and employees belonged to the same ethnicity. The Zionists, Shafir argues, had to decide whether they wanted to create a plantation colony, in which the Arabs would be delegated to a lower "caste" of workers and citizens, or whether they should create a pure settlement colony, from which the Arabs would be expelled[96].

At an early stage of his analysis, Shafir recognizes six main differences between European colonial movements and Zionism:

---

[94] Gelber, 2007, pp. 412-413.
[95] Shafir, 1993, p. 106.
[96] Ibid., p. 108.

1. the Zionists chose their territory according to religious and idealistic motives unlike other movements which colonized areas according to their wealth of resources;

2. in most areas, colonizers confronted migrant natives, while the Zionists confronted a predominantly rural, and peasant population (excluding the Bedouins);

3. other colonizers were usually supported by military forces of the colonizing states, whereas the Zionists did not enjoy such a support;

4. in most colonies land was abundant, whereas in Palestine it was scarce, compelling the Zionists to pay for land, thereby limiting their ability to expand;

5. colonizers were commonly able to use imported slaves as work force, while the Zionists had to rely on paid labor;

6. finally, most Jews chose to immigrate to North America and Western Europe – not to Palestine – and therefore the Zionist settlement was slow in expanding[97].

In face of these differences, Shafir attempts to explain why Zionism was, and managed to survive as a colonial movement after all. Shafir argues that in spite of not owning the capitalist and military advantages of other colonial movements, the Zionists did enjoy support to some extent, mainly in the form of donations from Jewish philanthropists, and later some protection from the British Mandate. Nonetheless, they did have to possess more "resourcefulness and flexibility" than other colonial movements[98].

Shafir identifies six stages of development the Zionist movement went through between 1882 and 1948. During these unplanned stages, the Zionist movement had to adapt itself both to "land market and labor conditions […] as well as to the

---

[97] Ibid., pp. 108-9.
[98] Ibid., p. 109.

ratio between the populations and the characteristics of the Jewish settlers"[99]. The first stage began in 1882, when a group of Jewish peasants settled in small plots with the purpose of creating a pure settlement colony. These settlers tried to imitate the natives' agricultural methods, but realized it could only provide them with a standard of living lower than they had previously been accustomed to in Europe. As a result, they turned for help to Baron de Rothschild, and under his administrative and economic support began the second stage. The Baron provided the settlers both with financial support and plantation experts from North Africa who reorganized the settlers' agriculture, focusing on plantations (mainly vineyards) instead of fields. As a result, the settlement began hiring unskilled Arab labor, along with a few Jewish workers. The third stage took place in 1900 with the Baron's demand that the plantations become profitable, bringing salary reduction and the eradication of unprofitable plantations. In addition, the Baron stopped land purchase, pushing many settlers to leave the country[100]. The fourth stage began in 1904, with the arrival of the second wave of immigrants (the second *alyia*, in Zionist jargon). These settlers attempted to imitate not only the Arabs' agricultural methods, as the first wave of immigrants did, but also the Arabs' living standards. Like the first wave, their attempts failed. However, unlike of the first wave, the second wave founded national-collectives and socialist communes, in the attempt to create pure settlement colonies which would attract more immigrants. The fifth stage began with settlers' strategy termed "conquest of labor". The Jewish workers decided not to lower their wages, but instead to expel the Arabs from the labor market[101]. As a national goal, their aim was to create a pure settlement colony. While this strategy failed, as plantation owners were reluctant to hire costlier and less effective workers, it was instrumental in the creation of the workers' national consciousness. Ironically, the same socialist workers who fought for the Arabs' conditions and equality in the labor market now

---

[99] Ibid., p. 110.
[100] Ibid., p. 111.
[101] Ibid., pp. 111-112.

tried to push out the Arabs from the labor market. The final stage began in 1909, as the World Zionist Organization began supporting the settlers' efforts, by openly emulating the German version of pure settlement colony. This strategy emphasized the communal aspect of the settlements, which was later to develop into the *kibbutz*. Land was owned by the Jewish National Fund, and its inhabitance and toil were meant for national purposes[102].

Shafir acknowledges three distinctive characteristics of the Zionist movement: the second immigration wave's adoption of a pure settlement colony instead of a plantation colony; this adoption segmented the land's economy into three: the Arab, the plantation, and the pure settlement economy, which was to become the backbone of the Israeli State's economy; finally, segmenting the land's market was later to serve as the basis for the partition of the land into the Jewish and Palestinian states[103].

Shafir's analysis is important in demonstrating the postcolonial outlook of the Zionist movement. As a pioneer in using the postcolonial prism in Israel, Shafir opened the door to other postcolonial works which focused on the cultural clash between the Zionists and the Arabs, and which explored various dimensions of exploitation and abuse on the Zionists' part. What is evident in Shafir's portrayal of the settlement process of the Zionist movement is the very specific terminology and rigid description, which hardly mention the Zionists' ideological motives or their reasons for having emigrated from their homelands. Shafir's description is extremely technical, and gives primacy to economic considerations and actions, largely ignoring the roles played by political and social factors in the Zionist movement, and treating idealist discourse, such as "conquest of labor" as merely rhetorical, designed to promote purely functional purposes. This tendency of the postcolonial theorists was highly criticized by the "old" historians as we shall see in the third chapter.

---

[102] Ibid., pp. 112-113.
[103] Ibid., p. 114.

3.3.1 Hegemony and Elite

Two of the key interrelated terms among the Critical Historians are "hegemony" and "elite". The critical Israeli use of the term *hegemony* is rooted in Gramsci's cultural-political theory, and was theoretically developed primarily by Kimmerling and later Ram, while the term *elite* was developed less theoretically, though more narratively, by Segev[104]. Briefly, the theory of hegemony suggests that hegemonic society is ruled by "groups of social elites" who share common political, economic, and intellectual interests[105]. Within Israeli society this hegemonic elite was (and some claim still is) what Kimmerling termed *AHUSALISM*: an acronym standing for Ashkenazi, secular, veteran, socialist, and nationalist. According to Kimmerling, "The *AHUSALIM* built [Israeli] society and state, won the 1948 War, during which they expelled a considerable part of the Arabs from the State's territories, absorbed a massive amount of immigrants and crushed them in a cultural and political crusher in order to make them a new nation through melting pot mechanisms. The *AHUSALIM* were the undisputed lords of the land, at least during the first two decades."[106]

From the Critical Historians' perspective, this elite is mainly criticized for being intolerant towards new Jewish immigrants, forcing them to comply with and adopt the previously established customs and norms; for neglecting the European Jews during the Holocaust; and for excluding non-elite groups such as the Arabs, the ultra-Orthodox, and the Sephardic Jews from the political, economic, and cultural spheres. In this section I will explore the *hegemonic* theory and *elite* narrative mainly as developed by Kimmerling and Segev respectively.

---

[104] Kimmerling, 2001; Kimmerling, 2001a; Ram, 1997; Segev, 1991; Segev, 1998; Segev, 2001.
[105] Kimmerling, 2001a, p. 99.
[106] Kimmerling, 2001, pp. 11-12.

3.3.2 Kimmerling's Hegemony: the Emergence and Disintegration of the *AHUSALIM*

Kimmerling recognized four stages in the rise and fall of the Israeli *AHUSAL* elite: "(1)The creation of a local Jewish ethno-communal identity in colonial Palestine, (2)the attempt to create a hegemonic national identity, dominated by a bureaucratized monocultural system, (3)the challenging of this hegemony by one of its own inner components, the national religious subculture, and (4)the final disruption and decomposition of the hegemonic culture and the fragmentation of the collectivity into a plurality of competing cultures, engaged in a wide variety of changing relations."[107]

The first Zionist immigrants arrived to Palestine in the end of the 19th century. These immigrants, like those who were to follow in subsequent waves, created their own "social and mental 'bubble'", secluding themselves from the local Arab population, while depending on it for land acquisition and labor nonetheless[108]. Following the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the organized Jewish settlement realized that British Colonial rule in Palestine was to be short lived, and that the British would pass state authorities to the Arabs following their departure. Therefore, as of the early 1920, the settlement sought to create its own institutions and organizations, in order to create a sort of "state-within-state", for the purpose of administrating the Jewish settlement[109]. However, several decades after the first immigration wave, the Zionist settlement had itself become a stratified society. The elite of this materializing society had distinct sociological features, and constituted of immigrants from Russia and Poland who came during the second and third immigration waves (1904-1924). *Chalutizm*, (i.e. pioneers) and agricultural workers were considered the highest in hierarchy, though this was a predominantly symbolical status. Political power was held in the hands of "city-dwelling party bureaucrats and leaders", whereas the secular and religious urban

---

[107] Kimmerling, 2001a, p. 89.
[108] Ibid., p. 90.
[109] Kimmerling, 1993, p. 333.

middle class who resided in the new cities (e.g. Tel Aviv and Ramat Gan) played a key role in economic and commercial developments, while being denied symbolical and political power[110]. In spite of the differences between these groups, they cooperated closely in creating the future state, with the aim of creating an autonomous society, and under the umbrella of the *Histadrut* ("The General Organization of Workers in the Land of Israel") headed by *Mapai* ("Workers' Party of the Land of Israel"), established various institutions and services, such as banks, schools, sports associations, etc.

Kimmerling identifies five basic premises of the Jewish settlement, inherent to its identity: the future "Jewish commonwealth" was to be established in all or part of British Mandate Palestine, and until the community was consolidated, it would give preference to absorbing mostly young, able Zionists; the Jewish settlement was a direct continuation of the ancient biblical Jewish society; the bible and other religious sources were used selectively in order to give the settlement inner and external legitimacy; Hebrew was adopted as the formal language instead of Yiddish, in order to represent the discontinuation of life in the diaspora, and the creation of the "new Jew"; a hybrid calendar was created, made out of secularized religious holidays and national holidays, such as May Day, and the Trumpeldor remembrance day[111].

The pre-Israeli elite (later to become the "Israeli oligarchy" in Kimmerling's words[112]), established and fortified its status mainly by having succeeded in building a society out of thin air, forming a strong and efficient military force, and replacing the stereotypical weak, uprooted "diaspora Jew", with the strong, working "new Jew" – the *sabra* (literally: prickly pear). Excluded from the borders of the Jewish organized settlement and the future state were the Arabs, the ultra-orthodox Jews, the "old *yishuv*" Sephardic Jews, and the communists[113].

---

[110] Kimmerling, 2001a, pp. 90-91.
[111] Ibid., pp. 92-93.
[112] Kimmerling, 1993, p. 334.
[113] Ibid., pp. 333-334.

Participation in the construction and modelling of the new state was possible only to those who adopted the values, ideas, and customs of the ruling elite[114].

The formation of the State of Israel saw the doubling of the Jewish population from 650,000 to 1,300,000 with the arrival of immigrants from Muslim countries and Holocaust survivors on the one hand, and the decrease of the Arab population from 900,000 to fewer than 150,000 on the other[115]. At the same time, a symbiosis took place between the *Mapai* elite and the State of Israel itself.

The Israeli elite was both suspicious and disdainful of the new immigrants, viewing the survivors as *avak adam* ("human dust", i.e. wrecked people), who might attempt to take over state mechanisms. The non-European Jews, on the other hand, were viewed as "low quality" human material, which might "Levantinize" the state and society. Stereotypically, they were seen as aggressive, alcoholic, uncultured, lazy, and unhygienic, having come from barbaric countries which had not experienced the Enlightenment, modernity, and progress[116]. The Arab and Levantine culture which they brought with them was seen as a primitive threat to the Israeli culture, which was rooted in European culture and thinking. Finally, as most of the Jews from Muslim countries were religious, they expected immigration to Israel to be a religious experience, whereas the old settlement was predominantly secular, and hostile to religion. Immigrants who did not integrate into the old establishment through marriage and/or by adopting the elite's values were made to become manual workers, and were excluded from the centers of society by being located in peripheral villages and development towns[117]. They were expected to participate in the state's institutions and construction, until the melting-pot would rid them of their old identities. Their participation in the building of the new state was limited to physical labor, as they were excluded from cultural, political, and social influence. Their assimilation difficulties were

---

[114] Ibid., p. 335.
[115] Kimmerling, 2001a, p. 94.
[116] Ibid., pp. 95-96.
[117] Kimmerling, 1993, p. 336.

taken for granted by the establishment, which expected only the younger immigrants and the following generations to become "true" Israelis.

Beyond the social and cultural aspects, the Israeli elite feared the political implications of the immigrants' arrival, as the survivors, among whom there were many socialists and communists, might seek to "communize" the state, and the non-Europeans might align themselves with the nationalist right-wing revisionist party. Threatened by and suspicious of the new immigrants, the Israeli elite sought to secure its status by creating a new Israeli hegemonic identity. This identity was created through a highly centralized "all-encompassing institution" and by generating a "new state civil religion, with its own cults, ceremonies, calendar, holidays and commemorations […], first around the military, and later around the Holocaust."[118] In many ways this civil religion was a reformation of the pre-Israeli settlement hegemony, revolved around the pioneers' civil religion[119].

In classical hegemonies, ideologies are produced by the intellectual elite who "create the meanings, the world order, and the boundaries of the imagined community"[120]. In Israel, however, the academy was marginalized from an earlier stage by the political elite, as it contained some supporters of the idea of a binational state, an extremely vexing concept in the eyes of the *Mapai* Zionists. Therefore, primary intellectuals were excluded from creating and modelling the new Israeli identity, and in their stead secondary intellectuals were made responsible for this effort: veteran schoolteachers, journalists and peripheral writers, self-educated politicians, and poets. Educational curriculums revolved around bible studies, hiking trips, and a selection of translated and Hebrew literature. Whereas the settlement's main ethos was collectivism, the state's was *mamlachtiut*, i.e. *raison d'état*, the state itself. At the center of this ethos was the military, as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was seen more and more unresolvable, gaining a "mythological", Manichaean character, of a perpetual, never-ending

---

[118] Kimmerling, 2001a, pp. 96-97.
[119] Ram, 1996, p. 21.
[120] Kimmerling, 2001a, p. 99.

war[121]. As military service is obligatory, the military, alongside the educational system, was also crucial for modelling the Israeli *sabra*. The militaristic ethos left its mark on Israeli society even after it was replaced with the Holocaust (following the Eichmann trial in 1961), and consequently Kimmerling termed Israeli society a "civilian militaristic" society, in which the entire "social nexus", both institutionally and mentally, is oriented towards a militaristic protection of society and the collective[122]. As a result of this mentality, groups who do not serve in the army, especially Arabs and the ultra-orthodox, are a-priori excluded from mainstream Israeli experience and daily life.

The hegemony oppressed non-hegemonic subcultures in various ways. As mentioned earlier the Arabs were excluded from the state's mechanisms from the start, and were viewed suspiciously as a fifth column. This was especially evident in the martial law which was in effect during 1949-1966, limiting the Arab population's movement, but also in the Jewish National Fund's regulations which limit non-Jewish acquisition of land, as a result of which no more than 0.25% of the land is owned by Arabs[123]. Nonetheless other groups also suffered from hegemonic control. Jews from Muslim countries (the *mizrachim*) generally had much larger families than European Jews, and encountered many difficulties in adjusting to Israel, especially as the *maaborot* (transitional camps for immigrants) were designed for European families, who have 2-3 children on average[124]. In addition, the Israeli mandatory educational system recognized three major streams: the General Stream (the secular, urban, and largest stream), the "Workers' Stream", and the "National Religious stream"[125]. The *mizrachim* who were a distinct religious stream had to adjust themselves either to the secular or to the national religious system, which practiced Ashkenazi, and not Sephardic Judaism.

---

[121] Kimmerling, 2008, p. 143.
[122] Ibid., p. 141.
[123] Kimmerlin, 2001, p. 26.
[124] Ibid., pp. 54-55.
[125] Kimmerling, 2001a, p. 104

Kimmerling claimed that following the Six Day War, Israeli hegemony had undergone a process of disintegration. Following the occupation of the territories a new religious-expansionist revival was born, advocating the idea of a "greater Israel"[126]. As religious Zionism "rebelled" against *AHUSAL* hegemony, other groups such as the *mizrachim* and the ultra-orthodox began to organize and establish their status in Israeli society. Kimmerling's 2001 *The End of Ashkenazi Hegemony* contained not only an analytical sociology of Israeli society, but also an optimistic vision of a possible future Israeli society. Kimmerling believed Israel's future lay in a multicultural society, in which each of the seven groups which constituted Israeli society (*AHUSALIM*, traditional Sephardic Jews, ultra-orthodox Jews, Arabs, religious-Zionists, ex-USSR immigrants, and Ethiopians) would enjoy equality in all public spheres and realize its identity, thereby empowering Israeli society as a whole[127]. Fifteen years later, with inter-cultural tensions growing stronger than ever, a Hobbesian civil war seems more likely.

3.3.3 Segev's Elite: Zionists and the Holocaust

Segev's criticism of the old Israeli elite was most explicitly formulated in his 1991 *The Seventh Million*. *The Seventh Million* narratively described the history of the Zionist settlement (and later Israel) and its relation to the Holocaust. Segev criticized three main aspects of these relations: before, during, and after the Holocaust. During the first years of the Nazi regime, Segev claims, the Zionist elite did not realize the extent of the danger facing the German Jews. Segev illustrates this problem through the story of Arthu Ruppin. Following the Nazis rise to power, Ruppin, a Zionist activist, went to Germany in order to discuss the terms of the German Jews' immigration to Palestine. "The whole of Germany was under terror, but Ruppin found it difficult to recognize the Nazis' revolution. 'Had I not known from newspapers and personal conversation to what extent the Jew's

---

[126] Kimmerling, 2001, pp. 30-44.
[127] Ibid., pp. 89-90.

economic and political conditions had deteriorated […] – I would not have felt it by the street's appearance, not in Berlin, in any case,' he wrote in his diary."[128] Meeting with Professor F. K. Günther, one of the leading ideologists of Nazi racial theory, they discussed the origins of the "Jewish race" and Ruppin noted the professor's amiability in his diary. Segev uses Rupin's and other Zionist activists' comments in order to display the Zionists' indifference towards the German Jews, and non-Zionist Jews in general. Their main fear was that Jews leaving Germany would immigrate to other places instead of Israel, and it was this concern which pushed them to sign the *haavara* (transfer) agreement with the Nazis, which enabled the Jews to transfer some of their property to Israel. Following the *Kristallnacht* Ben-Gurion expressed concern that "human conscious" might compel other countries to open their gates to the Jews, warning that "Zionism is in danger!"[129]. In addition, those chosen to immigrate were closely selected by Jewish Agency representatives. The representatives selected candidates who were closer to the Zionist cause on the one hand, and who were young and physically able enough to assist the settlement on the other. A struggle began between *Mapai* and the Revisionists in the attempt to choose candidates who were closer to their political agenda. After the war, Herut, the revisionist party headed by Menachem Begin, would accuse Ben-Gurion and *Mapai* for having saved only young socialists and abandoning Jews with different political convictions to the Nazis[130].

The immigrants' hardships, however, did not end upon leaving Germany. In British Palestine they suffered not only from the weather and plagues, but also from the old settlement's condescending treatment. The old settlement which was made out of predominantly ardent ideological immigrants felt disdain towards the *Yekke* (a derogatory term for the German Jews, possibly derived from the German word "clown"), who preferred staying in Europe, and made *alyia* only out of necessity. Their assimilation difficulties and bourgeois habits were mocked by the

---

[128] Segev, 1991, p. 16.
[129] Ibid., p. 22.
[130] Ibid., p. 35.

54

old *chalutzim* who were building a land and a new socialist ideal, and were already accustomed to the land's hardships. Most of the 1930s immigrants indeed would have preferred to immigrate to the USA or to other places. The Zionists' main trouble was convincing the Jews that could choose where to immigrate, that the Zionist project was truly realistic and feasible[131].

During the Holocaust, Segev claims, the settlement largely ignored the European Jews' tragedy, and instead of facing and attempting to help the European Jewry, preferred to focus on building the future state. Two of the main components of Zionist ideology, "the negation of the diaspora" and "the new Jew" had long distanced the settlers from the European Jews. The ideal of the "new Jew" was borrowed from similar Soviet, Fascist, and Nazi ideals. The "new Jew" or the "new Hebrew" as he was sometimes called was "erect, brave, handsome, physically developed, enjoyed work, sports, and games, and was free in movements, and dedicated to his people and possessions"[132]. This ideal man was often described as a peasant, seeing that working the land symbolized not only the healthy ideal of physical work, but also the spiritual connection he must develop with the land. "Negating the diaspora" meant juxtaposing the "new Jew" against the "old", urban, exilic Jew. The latter was seen as a weak, uprooted, decadent remnant of a dying world, a submissive citizen of states not his, at the mercy of hostile governments and people, helpless against the occasional pogrom, while the *chalutzim* were reclaiming the honor of the Jewish people. The negative stereotype of the urban exilic Jew had sometimes reached classical anti-Semitic descriptions, with Jewish moneylenders described in *Haaretz* as "blood sucking leeches."[133]

For the Zionists, returning to Israel was the Jewish people's return to "normality". Deterministically, Jewish history in the diaspora was seen as meaningless in itself, connecting to the land was important precisely because it

---

[131] Segev, 2001, p. 23.
[132] Ibid., p. 25.
[133] Ibid., p. 26.

"anchored" the nation, thus bringing it "back to history"[134]. Exilic Jews were resented precisely because by remaining in exile, they were postponing the rebirth of the Jewish people. According to Raz-Krakotzkin, after the formation of the State of Israel the "negation of the diaspora" took on a different form. While Jewish life in the diaspora was no longer dismissed as meaningless, the Holocaust itself was understood only in connection with the formation of Israel[135]. The clearest example for this is the famous maxim *mishoa litkuma* ("from Holocaust to revival"). According to this axiom, the Holocaust cannot be seen or understood without the birth of Israel. Israel is the only "justification" for the Holocaust, without which, the Holocaust is meaningless. Accordingly, the Holocaust became the clearest secular justification for the State of Israel, as the only moral lesson of the Holocaust is that the Jews must live in Israel. All other possible moral lessons are discarded in Israeli society. This perception is evident in the curricular narrativization of the Holocaust. While Nazism is taught in connection with European nationalism and the 20th century, the Holocaust is taught within the context of Zionism and Israeli history[136]. The negation of diaspora is also understood by Raz-Krakotzkin as the driving force behind the hegemonic oppression of minority groups such as the *mizrachim*, the Palestinians, and the ultra-orthodox. As the "new Jew" with its European ideological roots became the prototype of the ideal Israeli, the minorities' cultures were seen not only as primitive, but also as obstructive to the fundamentally messianic Israeli vision[137]. In short, not only did the "negation of diaspora" and the "new Jew" alienate the Zionists from the European Jews, abandoning them to the Holocaust, but also propelled Israeli hegemony to oppress its minorities.

Returning to the Holocaust, the Zionists felt the destruction of the European Jews might be greater in numbers, but that destruction of the *yishuv* would

---

[134] Raz-Krakotzkin, 1993, p. 23.
[135] Raz-Krakotzkin, 1994, p. 119.
[136] Ibid., p. 119.
[137] Ibid., pp. 125-126.

annihilate the best of the nation's people[138]. Some went so far as to blame the Jews themselves for having stayed in Europe. *Davar*, the *Histadrut*'s newspaper claimed the "destruction of the Jews was a 'divine punishment' for having stayed in the diaspora and not immigrating to Israel"[139].

The *yishuv*'s reaction to the Holocaust fluctuated between indifference, frustrating feelings of powerlessness, and inept rescue attempts. As the War broke out, the *yishuv* felt an ambivalent excitement: the dangers of the war were apparent, especially after the Italians bombarded Tel Aviv, but Palestine was now a center for British military rearmament, and consequently soldiers arrived from all over the world, vitalizing the local economy, eliminating unemployment, and developing and expanding local industries[140]. Then, in 1942 as the German Army reached Stalingrad a general panic took hold of the *yishuv*, who feared they would soon be in the Nazis' hands, and would expect extermination. This alternation of hope and despair was to last until the end of the war.

While sharing the *yishuv*'s confusion in face of the Holocaust, the Zionist leadership, exhibited a cynical, realpolitik attitude towards the Holocaust. Insult was added to injury, as the leadership's indifference towards the European Jews was accompanied with attempts to promote the Zionists' aims. Aside from several symbolic identification gestures (national fast days, organized prayers, cancelation of cultural events), the Zionist leadership was mostly concerned with the *yishuv*'s wellbeing and the future state. The leadership also saw the war's upside: whereas the First World War secured the Balfour Declaration, the Second World War would secure the state itself[141]. This, Ben-Gurion claimed, would be the Zionists' "political conscience" during the war. The Jewish Agency's responsibility was to build a state, not to save "one child from Zagreb" which "sometimes" might be more important. Segev also brings Ben-Gurion's most notorious saying: "If I knew

---

[138] Segev, 1991, pp. 63-64.
[139] Ibid., p. 85.
[140] Ibid., p. 60.
[141] Ibid., p. 72.

it was possible to save all the children in Germany by taking them to England, and only half of the children by taking them to Eretz Israel, I would choose the second solution. For we must take into account not only the lives of these children but also the history of the people of Israel."[142] In spite of all these statements and actions by the Zionist leadership, Segev claims, throughout the years Ben-Gurion was presented as a brave, powerful leader, who did all there could be done in order to help the European Jews. Famously, Ben-Gurion declared it was the *yishuv*'s obligation to assist the British in their fight against the Germans. Nonetheless, when serious proposals were made to form Jewish units in the British Army, like in the First World War, Ben-Gurion strongly objected, claiming Jewish soldiers would be needed for the future Israeli State[143].

While the Zionist leadership objected to *haapala* (illegal immigration to Palestine), the rivaling Revisionists continued throughout the war to assist immigrants and refugees fleeing Europe to Palestine. This caused Moshe Sharett, a prominent Zionist activist, to complain at the "bad human material" they were assisting: blind, cripples, and old people[144]. Towards the end of the war, nonetheless, the Jewish Agency also began assisting with *haapala*, but the main reason for this by then was to prove the Agency was active in saving Jews. The leadership's most famous attempt at military assistance, however, was nothing more than a mythologized disaster. In 1944 the Agency collaborated with the Royal Air Force in parachuting paratroopers behind enemy lines. Seeing that the war was at an end, their main assignment was to get in touch with partisans. The paratroopers were *kibbutz* members in their twenties: symbols of the "new Jew". They were also inexperienced and ill prepared for the mission. Expecting precise instructions from the Agency upon leaving, they received nothing more than empty slogans. "Ben-Gurion told them to act so 'the Jews would know Israel is their land and refuge,' so they would flow to it in their masses after the victory

---

[142] Ibid., p. 22.
[143] Ibid., p. 73.
[144] Ibid., p. 74.

[…] Eliyahu Golomb, of the *Hagana* [the main paramilitary organization] leaders, told them their goal was to "exhibit themselves proudly" to the Jews."[145] The paratroopers did little more than risk their lives, however. Half of them were taken prisoners, and seven were executed. Local partisans blamed them not only for not realizing the danger they were in, believing the war was just a game, but also of risking the local partisans themselves. One of these paratroopers, Hanna Szenes, was caught immediately upon her arrival, tortured, sentenced, and executed. Szenes was to become the main symbol of the paratroopers' myth[146].

When the war ended, Zionist activists went to Europe in order to convince the survivors to immigrate to Israel. The activists were disappointed with the survivors' "empty materialism", which they understood to be the result not only of the Holocaust, but also of their prolonged stay in exile. They must have been morally corrupt in order to survive the Holocaust. The activists were worried they would be useless to the Zionist cause, and were not afraid to tell them they were not the ideal "human material"[147]. On the other hand, they were afraid the survivors might choose to rebuild their lives in Europe or America. Once in Israel the survivors were expected not to talk about the Holocaust. The *yishuv* did not want to hear about their experiences, and when survivors did tell their stories – they were not believed[148]. Made to keep their stories to themselves, they were alienated from the rest of society.

After years of silence, the third abuse of the elite was its instrumentalization of the Holocaust for social and political purposes. The Gruenwald-Kasztner trial in 1954-5 deeply embarrassed the *Mapai* establishment. One of its rising members and a longtime member of the *Histadrut*, Rudolf Kasztner, had reluctantly sued for libel the pamphleteer Malchiel Gruenwald who had accused him of collaborating with the Nazis. The trial quickly became a deep and disturbing examination of

---

[145] Ibid., p. 76.
[146] Ibid., pp. 76-77.
[147] Ibid., pp. 105-107.
[148] Ibid., p. 140.

Kasztner's, and through him of *Mapai*'s, engagement with the Nazis and rescue attempts. The elite was understood to have wasted a precious opportunity in the flop "blood for goods" agreement, in which the Hungary Jews would be saved in exchange for trucks and other goods supplied to the Nazis[149]. The Gruenwald-Kasztner trial, along with other scandals and governmental mishaps, had time and again destabilized Ben-Gurion's and *Mapai*'s secured status during the 1950s. For the establishment, the 1961 Eichmann trial was an opportunity not only to reaffirm its power and morality against the Kasztner affair, but also to create a new ethos for Israeli society. Observing that committed idealism was eroding among Israel's youth, who were gradually leaving the *kibbutz* and agricultural life for urban pleasures, Ben-Gurion also saw the trial as an opportunity to induce Israeli society with new idealistic purpose and vigor[150].

The Eichmann trial was famously recounted by Hann Arendt in *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, and Segev's criticism focuses, similarly, on its public and political impetus. However, in spite of his criticism, Segev's description of the trial is generally more empathetic and less critical. According to Segev, Arendt herself confessed to him that she had written the book in anger, and would probably have written it differently were she to write it again[151]. Segev acknowledges the trial's political purpose, its role in raising global awareness to the Holocaust, and creating a new homogenizing ethos in Israeli society, but he also notes the liberating effect the trial had on the survivors and Israeli society. Whereas most Israelis were completely disinterested in the trial in its beginning, scorning the weak, pathetic witnesses and their tragic stories, by the end of the trial, Israeli society was united in mourning and a sense of a common destiny[152]. Indeed, Segev's criticisms of Zionist and Israeli history are much less vehement than other Critical Historians, and his narratives do not vilify key characters (in spite of

---

[149] Ibid., p. 78.
[150] Ibid., pp. 311-312.
[151] Ibid., p. 401.
[152] Ibid., pp. 331-339.

critics' claims), but present them as humans with strengths and weaknesses. As he wrote in the introduction to *The First Israelis*, "For me, the story of those first Israelis is basically one of success; I tend to think of them with compassion and not a little envy for their part in the historic task of creating a new state."[153]

Nonetheless, *The Seventh Million* greatly affected Israeli discourse on the Holocaust for several reasons. When *The Seventh Million* was published in 1991, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* still was not translated to Hebrew, and it was considered a landmark in mainstream criticism of the Holocaust, Zionists, and Israel. Furthermore, in recent years many works, much more radical and critical towards the Holocaust and Israel were published. Books such as Idith Zertal's *The Gold of the Jews*, and Moshe Zuckermann's *Shoah in the Sealed Room* systematically emphasized the cynicism of the Zionist and the Israeli elite. These books, unlike Segev's, were written from a distinctively political and postmodern perspective, were much more academic in writing and tone, and consequently did not affect mainstream discourse as much as Segev's. *The Seventh Million* was also not the first work to have criticized the Zionist leadership's reaction to the Holocaust: it was preceded by Shabtai Bet Zvi's 1977 *Post-Ugandan Zionism* Dina Porat's groundbraking *An Entangled Leadership: The Yishuv and the Holocaust, 1942–1945* from 1988. However, Segev's book differed from these works in several aspects: it was the first comprehensive account of Zionism and the Holocaust; Segev was a famous journalist in leading Israeli newspapers; the book received international acclaim; and finally, it was written in a captivating, fluent language[154]. Therefore Segev's criticism of the Zionist and *Mapai* elite, though much milder than Arendt's, Zertal's, and Zuckermann's, and relatively sympathetic towards Israeli society, raised a storm in Israel, provoking heated attacks on Segev's narrative, style, and presentation of facts. The attack on *The Seventh Million* was formulated most clearly by Tuvia Friling, whose analysis of the book

---

[153] Segev, 1998, p. v.
[154] Weitz, 2007, p. 282.

61

became a landmark in criticizing the Critical History, and will be examined in the third chapter.

3.4.1 The Palestinians

Critical Historians have also criticized previous scholars for ignoring the Palestinians' part in the history of the Zionist movement and Israel. In previous histories, they argued, the Palestinians were either ignored, or vilified as vicious Arabs. Reconstructing the image of the Palestinians has been one of the major aims of the Critical Historians, seeing that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the most central problems in Israeli history and society. In fact, discussing the Palestinians was a challenge in itself, as Israeli public opinion had been reluctant to see them as a distinct Arab people[155]. Indeed, in one of the many ironies of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, both sides have been reluctant to accept the other's nationhood. While many Israelis claim the Palestinians were simply Arabs who had immigrated to the territory following the economic blessing brought by the Zionists, the Palestinians have continually asserted that Judaism is merely a religion, not a nation, and therefore the Jews did not deserve a state (admittedly both questions have also perplexed each nation concerning itself and external researchers)[156]. Not only did the Critical Historians have to "introduce" the Palestinians into the Israeli narrative, but they also had to clearly illustrate who the Palestinian people were, how and when did they emerge as a people, and what differentiated them from other Arabs nationalities. Because the Critical Historians were predominantly oriented to the political left, they also had to exhibit the Palestinians' part in their clash with the Israelis from a generally empathetic point of view.

---

[155] Kimmerling & Migdal, 2003, p.xii.
[156] Israelis not recognizing Palestinian nationhood, see, Porath, 1996; on Palestinians not recognizing Jews as a nation: Avineri, 2015; Shlomo Sand is the most notable Israeli scholar to question Jewish nationhood, Sand, 2008.

In this section I will explore the image of the Palestinians in Critical Historiography as it is reflected in their origins and their relations with the Zionist movement. I will also examine the peculiar problem of writing word Palestinians in Hebrew, and the implicit meaning each spelling sometimes carries.

3.4.2 The Image of the Palestinian in Critical Historiography

In spite of being sympathetic towards the Palestinians, most works by the Critical Historians focused on the Palestinians from an exclusively Israeli point of view. Consequently, the Palestinians are seen primarily as victims: assassinated, deported, raped, massacred, and abused. Nonetheless they also figure as robbers, murderers, and outlaws, but in these instances the writers usually focus on Jewish victimhood rather than the aggressors. Throughout the works of the Critical Historians there is little mention of the Palestinians as a people in itself. One reason for this may be that even the Critical Historians agree that Palestinian national consciousness developed largely through interaction with the Zionists.

The only substantial work to treat the Palestinians from a seemingly "independent" perspective as well as to meticulously trace their origins, was Kimmerling's and Migdal's *The Palestinian People* from 1994. In their book, Kimmerling and Migdal claimed the Palestinians' forefathers were Bedouins who came from the Arabian Peninsula in the first half of the 7th century. The forefathers were farmers, who nonetheless preserved their warrior identity. Their strongest loyalty was to their immediate and larger family, but they were fast to sign treaties for material gain. Their enemies, on the other hand were any state or authority which attempted to disarm them or restrict their movement with borders[157]. Palestinian national consciousness began to consolidate in the 19th century with the 1834 rebellion. At that time the territory of Palestine, in which there were 300,000 inhabitants including 60,000 Christian Arabs, and 10,000

---

[157] Kimmerling & Migdal, 2003, p. 5.

Jews, was ruled by the Egyptian *Wāli* (Ottoman governor), Ibrahim Pasha[158]. In spite of enforcing security in the land, allowing the Christians to trade in grain and livestock, and improving local agriculture, Ibrahim was extremely unpopular with the local population as a result of demanding conscript. The revolt began following the inability of several important families to supply conscripts to match the demanded quota. The families claimed the peasants had fled the villages, but Ibrahim, in light of similar precedents, decided to "postpone conscription in these other areas, but to maintain strict enforcement of the policy in Palestine."[159] As a result, riots erupted in the Hebron region. Ibrahim's attempt to suppress the riots with Egyptian soldiers further enraged the locals, and united "dispersed Bedouins, rural sheikhs, urban notables, mountain fellaheen, and Jerusalem religious figures against a common enemy. It was these groups who would later constitute the Palestinian people."[160]

In their book, Kimmerliing and Migdal followed the development of the Palestinians through their clashes and interactions with the Ottoman Empire, British rule, the Zionist movement, and finally Israeli rule. The writers generally refrained from romanticizing the history of the Palestinians as well as from sentimentality, and present a fairly objective image of the people. This was partly due to the fact that the writers relied predominantly on secondary sources, and sought to create a concise research accessible also to the general public. Nonetheless, the book managed to enrage right wing Israelis who saw it as a radical anti-Zionist document[161], and failed to satisfy Palestinian scholars, who saw it as a fundamentally orientalist work, replete with Western stereotypes[162].

Kimmerling presented a more interesting analysis of the relations between the Palestinians and the Zionist settlers in his *A Model for Analyzing Reciprocal Relations Between the Jewish and Arab Communities in Mandatory Palestine*. In

---

[158] Ibid., p. 6.
[159] Ibid., p. 8.
[160] Ibid., p. 7.
[161] Gelber, 2007, pp. 416-417
[162] Kabha, 2007, p. 313

the paper, Kimmerling analyzed the cultural, economic, and social effects of the communication between the Zionists and the Palestinians, and showed how the interaction between the groups, changed them internally. The two groups interacted with one another (and also with the third ruling group: the Ottoman, and later British empires), on two planes: model and concrete[163]. While concrete communication represents physical, material interactions (i.e. trade, economy, employment), model interactions are concerned with the perceptions and the attitudes each group had of the other. Kimmerling examines the Palestinians' ambivalence in face of Jewish immigration. Concretely, by introducing new capital to the land, the Zionists accelerated processes of urbanization and the consolidation of three urban strata ("the *a'yan*, urban notables who were sometimes great landowners; professionals, mainly lawyers, a few doctors, and the educated class […]; and the *shabab*, or urban lumpenproletariat"), as well as the transition from autocratic villages, to monetary economies[164]. As a result of these processes, Arab society was struggling within itself whether to maintain economic relations with the Zionists, and who should profit from the exchange: Christians, Muslims, *fellaheen*, or sheikhs. Consequently, the Zionists were not only responsible for the gradual expulsion of the Palestinians from their land, but also divided them from within. The Arab population was confronted with an individual and group dilemma: while Zionist capital was bettering the conditions of individuals and enabling the development of national Arab enterprises (education, newspapers, etc.), selling land and labor also meant the loss of land, and the intensification of the Zionist settlement.

According to Kimmerling, cultural interactions were no less puzzling for the local population. Kimmerling analyzes these interactions on three levels: religious (Jewish-Muslim), cultural (Western-traditional), and political (the Zionists'

---

[163] Kimmerling, 2008, p. 3.
[164] Ibid., p. 5.

attempt to spread socialism and communism)[165]. Most of these cultural and political ideas were completely foreign to the local Arabs. They associated many of these ideas as well as the Zionists' behavior and influence with "vulgarity". Moreover they confused the different cultural aspects they had encountered, associating Western modernity with Judaism and socialism, and came to reject all of these cultural aspects together, associating them with the Zionists. In response, the local Arab population adopted and reintroduced traditional customs, growing intensely hostile of anything Western, modern, European, socialist, and Jewish.

The political sphere of interaction was the most important, and also proved to be the most fatal for the Palestinian nation. While Jewish national consciousness was already formulated, organized, and possessed a political vision, Arab-Palestinian consciousness was slow to crystalize, lacked a political vision, and was helplessly trying to preserve the status-quo[166]. Moreover, the local Arab population was seeking for a long while to develop a Southern Syrian identity, relying on Syria's expected independence. Attempts to establish a common identity through Muslim values also failed, as they alienated the Christian Arabs. The failure to create a homogenous national identity was most strongly demonstrated in the 1936-39 Arab revolt. The revolt suffered from lack of a common political and social objective, and was a mixture of peasant, familial, colonial, religious, class, and racial struggles, lacking cohesion[167]. The failure of the Revolt, Kimmerling asserts, foretold the Palestinians' failure during the 1948 War.

Kimmerling's analyses and descriptions of the Palestinians and their relations with the Zionists, despite their overall objectivity, are mostly compassionate and empathetic. Their interaction with the Zionists on the one hand, and the governing empires on the other, are seen as doomed to begin with. Their national consciousness and social organization were continually hampered by their

---

[165] Ibid., p. 8.
[166] Ibid., pp. 10-11.
[167] Ibid., p. 12.

misunderstanding of the rules of the game. Unlike "old" historians, who emphasize the Zionists' role in the emergence of Palestinian national consciousness, Kimmerling, while acknowledging the Zionists played a major role in this development, attempts to downplay it, by emphasizing the Palestinians' struggles against the Ottoman and British empires. Kimmerling also goes as far as to suggest that the Zionists' presence in Palestine hampered Palestinian nationalism, claiming that in other countries Arab national consciousness developed more successfully (with the exception of Lebanon)[168]. In spite of generally refraining from explicitly criticizing the Zionists (at least in works that focus on the Palestinians), it is clear that Kimmerling sees their arrival as damaging to the indigenous population, who innocently lacked the political, cultural, social, and economic tools to deal with their sophisticated rivals.

Unlike Kimmerling, most other Critical Historians treat the Palestinians predominantly from the perspective of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Commonly, these accounts avoid glorification, although they regularly depict the Palestinians as the ultimate victims of the conflict. The historians focus typically on the 1948 War, concentrating both on actions taken by the IDF and the Jewish paramilitary organizations (*Etzel* and *Lehi*), as well as the leadership's orders during the war, and its reactions to reports of atrocities from the front. In these cases the Palestinians appear only mutilated, massacred, abused, raped, and deported. There is hardly any mention of their lives before the war, except for the rare occasions when their peaceful or hostile relations with their Jewish neighbors are briefly mentioned. The historians describe somewhat coldly massacres, expulsions, and abuses, while highlighting unusual events, the military influence they may have had, and the Israeli leadership's reaction to these events. The Deir Yassin massacre, one of the most notorious symbols of Jewish violence committed by *Etzel* and *Lehi*, is a representative example[169]. Segev mentions the massacre in one

---

[168] Ibid., p. 13.
[169] Morris, 1999, pp. 207-209.

sentence, only in order to explain why so many Arabs had left their villages (they were afraid of a similar fate), although he does add a footnote which briefly describes the general course of events: "Over two hundred villagers, many of them women and children, were killed. The rest were paraded through the streets of Jerusalem and then forced to cross over to the Arab part of the city. The Jewish Agency strongly denounced this action."[170] Morris describes the course of events more meticulously, recording the stages and actual acts of the massacre: "Whole families were riddled with bullets and grenade fragments and buried when houses were blown up on top of them; men, women, and children were mowed down as they emerged from houses; individuals were taken aside and shot."[171]

In the Critical Historians writings' there is hardly any mention of the Palestinians' existence outside the context of the conflict and the wars. In this sense, the historians did more to question Israeli heroism and "purity of arms", than to absolve the Palestinians or present them as three dimensional characters in the Israeli-Palestinian story. In many occasions the historians use the Israeli leadership's response to Palestinian sufferings, in order to emphasize the leadership's cynicism, and heartlessness. For example, upon hearing that tens of thousands of Palestinians had abandoned their homes, Segev quotes Ben-Gurion as saying, "Now history has shown who is really attached to this country, and for whom this country is a luxury which is easily given up.[…] Indeed, it has now been made amply clear which people is deeply attached to this country."[172] Many Arabs, Segev claims, did leave their homes, but not their country. The leadership is also blamed for silencing reports of atrocities committed by Israeli soldiers. Ben-Gurion, Segev concludes, "tended to ignore the human tragedy of the Palestinian Arabs."[173]

---

[170] Segev, 1998, p. 25.
[171] Morris, 1999, p. 208.
[172] Segev, 1998, p. 25.
[173] Ibid., p. 28.

These descriptions by Segev and Morris are typical of the Critical Historians' depictions of the 1948 War. The differences between them also reflect the difference between Segev and Morris: while Segev writes fluent, captivating narratives, full of unusual anecdotes, Morris writes detailed descriptions, refraining from personal analyses. Interestingly, concerning the Palestinians' victimhood, Morris is one of the few Critical Historians who has emphasized not only the Palestinians' victimhood in face of the Israelis, but also of the Palestinian people in face of their own leadership and elite. According to Morris, not only did the Palestinian leadership refuse to discuss or accept any agreement with the Jews, and not only did it incite the masses to war against them, the leadership failed to prepare to the expected war, and was fast to flee the battlefield, and secure itself abroad[174]. It is interesting to observe that Morris is one of the only Critical Historians to emphasize this dimension of the Palestinians' victimhood, whereas other Critical Historians, in spite of neo-Marxist leanings, do not differentiate between the upper and lower Palestinian classes. Nonetheless, it should be noted that Morris' descriptions of the same events have undergone some change over the years, most probably due to his political change of heart, and have gradually become more concise, lacking the shocking effect of his earlier works[175]. However, his findings are still accurate, thereby causing difficulties for devoted left wing historians who continue relying on his work[176].

Despite the Critical Historians achievements in challenging and revising key Israeli myths, such as *alyia*, and the role of the Zionist elite in Jewish affairs, their treatment of the Palestinians has remained relatively limited. Admittedly, it is easier to write from the inside about ones' own people, than to write about a different people. The Palestinians' physical proximity and shared bloody history have further aggravated this difficulty as it seems almost impossible treat them

---

[174] Morris, 2004, p. 197; Morris, 2007a, p. 37-38.
[175] Segev, 2010. Historians have repeatedly criticized the disparity between Morris' violent findings and descriptions, and his mild, matter-of-fact conclusions.
[176] Wilson, 2007.

with indifference. Kimmerling's systematic attempts to draw out a profile of the Palestinians' relations with the Zionists are so far, among the Critical Historians, the most extensive and convincing. Nonetheless, they too seem lacking in scope, and too often ignore their own internal conflicts and the more problematic aspects of their relations with the Zionists.

In other works by the Critical Historians the Palestinians are exhibited as the main victims of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but interest in them hardly exceeds beyond their victimhood. Only in recent years did Pappé start writing on the conflict from a distinctively Palestinian point of view, markedly glorifying the Palestinians and vilifying the Zionists and Israelis[177]. These attempts, however, have naturally damaged his reputation as a credible historian, at least among Israeli and outside readers. It seems clear that for the majority of the Critical Historians, writing as Israelis meant first and foremost confronting their own history, and actions. Remembering that revising national memory and collective consciousness was one of the primary goals of the Critical Historians, it is understandable why the Israelis are at the center of their stories.

3.4.3 The Palestinians: Spelling the Nation's History

The name Noah can be correctly written in Hebrew in two different ways – one consists of two letters, the other of three. The expression "writing Noah with seven mistakes" refers to a text that is affluent with mistakes – not necessarily spelling mistakes. In the case of the word "Palestinian", in Hebrew it can be written in approximately six different ways:

"פלסטיני," "פלשתיני", "פלשטינאי", "פלסטיני", "פלסתינאי", "פלסטינאי".

In January 1995, as the Oslo Agreements were being implemented and in the center of public attention, the Academy of Hebrew Language, following a heated debate, decided that two spelling forms will be accepted as correct: פלסטיני, and

---

[177] Morris, 2004a.

פלסטינאי (*palestini*, and *palestinai* respectively)[178]. However, by May the same year, after another passionate debate concerning the exact pronunciation of these words, (politicians and radio broadcasters were using p and f interchangeably), not only did the committee fail to reach a decision, but it agreed to abolish the previous decisions reached concerning spelling, and let any person pronounce and write it as they please[179].

The Academy's debates reflected by and large not only the etymological problems of the word Palestine, but also the political meaning each spelling might contain. The most obvious obstacle refers to writing פלשתיני (*paleshtini*), which associates the Palestinians with the Hebrews' ancient enemies, the Philistines. While some committee members were strongly against this form ("it might insult someone"), others found it resonated the old Hebrew spelling of Mandatory Palestine (פלשתינה)[180]. However, both rationales for this spelling carry a negative connotation concerning the Palestinians: the first insinuating they are contemporary Israel's mythical enemies, the second suggesting they are not an actual nation, but merely Arabs who happened to reside in Mandatory Palestine. The spellings פלסטיני and פלסטינאי, (pronounced with a p or an f), on the other hand, seem the most politically correct.

Israeli media, and especially newspapers (both print and online), are a good example of how political preferences influence the spelling chosen. Most daily newspapers, such as *Haaretz*, *Yediot aharonot*, and *Ma'ariv*, use the form פלסטיני. While *Haaretz* is considered a left wing newspaper (some claim radical left), *Yediot aharonot* and *ma'ariv* are center-right. *Israel hayom*, the most circulated newspaper in Israel, and the most right wing in mainstream media, uses the form פלשתיני, whereas the religious Zionist *Srugim*, and channel 7, and the ultra-orthodox *Kikar hashabbat* use the term Arab[181].

---

[178] Akadem, 1995, p. 1.
[179] Plenary Meeting, pp. 314-319.
[180] Ibid., p. 316.
[181] Gilad, 2015.

As we can see, these mundane choices both represent and influence the way entire social and political sectors view the Palestinians. While the left and center-right acknowledge Palestinian nationhood in itself, the right is only willing to admit the Palestinians' "uniqueness" as a consequence of British rule whereas the religious Zionists refuse to admit the Palestinians are a distinct people whatsoever. The term פלשתיני (*palestini* or *paleshtini*) is derived from פלשתינה, the Hebrew translation of the ancient, universal term Palestine. In Mandatory Palestine, this term was translated by the Zionists to פלשתינה, and the term פלשתינאי referred both to the Arab and Jewish residents of the Mandate. Thus, Jewish volunteers in the British Army during the Second World War were called Palestinian[182]. Therefore, Golda Meir's statement that there is no Palestinian people, as she herself was a Palestinian, is essentially correct. Nonetheless, Meir was a פלשתינאית, but was not, and as a Zionist Jew, could not be, a פלסטינית[183]. The term פלסטיני (*falestini*), unlike, פלשתיני, is an essentially Arab term. Nonetheless, the Palestinians were initially reluctant to define themselves as such, seeing that they considered themselves Southern Syrians, and envisioned their future capital in Damascus. Only after the dream of Greater Syria began to fade, did they proclaim themselves Palestinians.

The term Palestinian (פלסטיני/פלסטינאי, with a p or an f) was slow in entering Israeli discourse. During the 1950s the term Palestinian indicated only the refugees. With the formation of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964, the term פלשתינאי began to appear in a wider context, while the term פלסטיני was figuring in articles by Middle East experts[184]. After the Six Day War and the occupation of the territories the terms פלשתינאי and פלסטיני were increasingly gaining currency. Left wing activist and editor of the radical *Haolam haze* (This World), Uri Avnery, was promoting the term פלסטין, in order to differentiate between "the period in which an Arab majority lived throughout western *eretz-*

---

[182] Shamir, 2005.
[183] Ibid.
[184] Gilad, 2015.

Israel (contemporaneous 'פלשתינה') and the problem of the people now residing in the West Bank and Gaza Strip ('פלסטין') along with its exiled brothers."[185] During the 1970s and 1980s the term פלסטיני was becoming still more widespread, though the media lacked uniformity. In at least one letter to the editor published in *Davar* in 1979, the terms פלשתינאי and פלסטיני appear interchangeably[186].

From their beginnings in the 1980s most of the Critical Historians commonly used the term פלסטיני. Even among left wing writers, this decision was not obvious: *Haaretz* had used the terms alternately up until 2009, following the Gaza War (Operation Cast Lead)[187]. The one exception to the Critical Historians is Segev, who in his books continually uses the term פלשתינאי, which strangely enough is usually associated with a more right wing view of the people. Stranger still, in his published articles for *Haaretz,* including those that predate the 2009 decision, Segev uses the term פלסטיני.

As we have seen, Israeli academy and society are still far from agreeing on a definite spelling and pronunciation for the term Palestinian. While this disagreement seems superficial at first sight, it represents in many ways the deep fissure in Israeli society's relation to the Palestinians.

4.1 Chapter 3: Criticizing the Critical Historians: the "Old" Historians Fight Back

As mentioned before, the Critical Historians' books, papers, and especially their newspaper articles, stirred up many heated debates. The "old" historians were not only obliged to protect their professional integrity and objectivity, which was being viciously attacked, but also had to reclaim Israel's lost pride. The historians' debate took place in two spheres: the academy, and mainstream media. For both

---

[185] Quoted in Gilad, 2015.
[186] Davar, 12.23.1979, letter to the editor by Itzhak Lugasi.
[187] Gilad, 2015.

debating sides it was important not only to scientifically support their view of Israeli history, but more importantly, to shape national Israeli memory.

According to the "old" historians, the Critical Historians sought to "dehumanize and delegitimize Zionism"[188] by way of vilifying key Zionist and Israeli figures and their actions. This was done by presenting problematic events and statements out of contexts and by giving them too much importance. Another accusation directed at them was that they were importing American postmodernism and political correctness. By doing so, they were creating a relativistic reality in which the victims were automatically just and the victors inevitably the villains of the story, regardless of historical "truth" or course of events.

In this section I will explore these criticisms as they are developed by key "old" historians and philosophers such as Friling, Shapira, Gelber, Taub, and others. As we shall see, while these arguments were not without grounds, in the end the "old" historians tended to diminish and thereby easily excuse Israel's mistakes and wrongdoings.

4.2 Bending the Facts

The Critical Historians' books contain enormous amounts of footnotes, and long bibliographical lists with predominantly primary archival sources. Indeed, even their sharpest critics have not accused them of lack of research. However, precisely because the Critical Historians were not seen as amateurs, the "old" historians accused them of twisting reality for their ideological purposes. It was not the Critical Historians' knowledge or familiarity with the facts which was being attacked, but the interpretation and positioning of these facts within the wider historical context.

According to the "old" historians, the Critical Historians were, essentially, creating a new, fictitious narrative, using real, but distorted facts. This was done

---

[188] Friling, 1992, p. 367.

by selectively choosing data and stories, quoting heart rending stories when hard data was inefficient in "incriminating" the wrong doers, using testimonies without verifying their reliability, and quoting unimportant Zionist activists and presenting them as dominant decision makers[189].

Several "old" historians have taken up the challenge of refuting some of the Critical Historians' claims through detailed analyses of the Critical narrative and the events as they really happened. The most noteworthy examples of this kind of analysis are Tuvia Friling's *The Zionist Movement's March of Folly and The Seventh Million* and *David Ben-Gurion and the Holocaust*. In these articles Friling attempted to reveal the techniques and manipulations Segev used in *The Seventh Million* in order to vilify Ben-Gurion and the Zionist establishment. These articles are considered milestones not only in their critique of Segev's book, but also in "exposing" the general approach and methodology of the Critical Historians. Friling mainly criticized the accusations Segev directed at the Zionist leadership, and Ben-Gurion in particular, and what Segev saw as their indifference towards the Holocaust. In Segev's book, Friling claims, "the successes of the Zionist enterprise are merely coincidental and its heavy failures are the result of folly and malice."[190]

According to Friling, Segev ignored the difficulty and complexity of the rescue operations, and preferred to simply accuse and deride the Zionist establishment. Friling laboriously describes in detail all the processes and communications which surrounded these plans, in order to demonstrate that the Jewish Agency did all that could be done in order to save Jews. Reviewing the Transnistria rescue plan, Friling illustrates how Segev creates the impression that the Jewish Agency was to blame for the plan's failure, while the Allies and the Germans were those responsible for the plan's failure. In the Transnistria rescue plan, the Romanian government offered to free some 70,000 Jews who survived the massacre in

---

[189] Friling, 2003a, p. 422.
[190] Friling, 1992, p. 318.

Transnistria in exchange for 14-28 million dollars (200-400 dollars per head)[191].
However, both the Germans and the British objected to this deal. The Germans did
not want to strengthen the Jewish settlement against their allies, the Arabs, while
the British principally prohibited the entrance of citizens of enemy states to their
territory. Thus the plan failed not because, but in spite of the Jewish Agency's
efforts. However, after reviewing the failed effort, Segev deliberates whether the
Jewish Agency could not sill proceed with the plan: "and thus only doubt is left if
the Agency could reach an agreement with the Romanians, behind the Allies and
Germans backs, in order to save several thousands; maybe it could not"[192]. Segev's
remark, Friling claims, not only puts the blame on the Jewish Agency in spite of
having tried to save Jews, but is also absurd, given that it would be impossible to
secretly transfer 70,000 people[193]. Friling methodically follows the failure of other
rescue plans, all the while referring to Segev's narration of the same events, which
belittles and disparages Ben-Gurion and the Agency's "little people"[194]. Instead of
realizing the complexity, entanglement, and difficulty of the leadership's position,
Friling claims, Segev prefers accusing the leadership of "Palestino-centrism",
pettiness, and ineffectualness.

Moreover, Segev blames Ben-Gurion for forsaking the European Jews, ignoring
the fact that during the 1930s-1940s, Ben-Gurion was not yet at the height of his
power, and was far from being the only, or even the most prominent decision
maker. At that time, the Zionist Jewish Agency was a complex body, with at least
two rivaling centers, one in London, headed by Chaim Weizmann, the other in Tel
Aviv, headed by Ben-Gurion. The Jewish Agency and the Zionists were also far
from being as hegemonic as Kimmerling and others have claimed. At that time,
the *yishuv*'s most powerful political organization was *keneseth Israel*, representing
ninety five percent of the *yishuv*, including strong opponents of Ben-Gurion's

---

[191] Segev, 1991, p. 78,
[192] Ibid., p. 79.
[193] Friling, 1992, pp. 321-322.
[194] Ibid., p. 321.

Mapai – the Revisionists. In spite of leading *Mapai* Ben-Gurion did not enjoy the party's support, and had to threaten resignation time and again in order to accomplish large scale operations. To further complicate matters, the Jewish Agency was not the only organization involved in rescue operations and the *yishuv*. The World Jewish Congress and the Joint were also active in these attempts, and the three organizations were interdependent in reaching decisions and executing operations. As a result, not only were Ben-Gurion's problematic remarks (concerning saving children) not the Jewish Agency's only guidelines, but his own status and standing in the organization were under constant attack[195].

In the second half of *The Seventh Million*, Segev accuses the Israeli political establishment of cynically exploiting the memory of the Holocaust for material purposes. As we have seen, Segev presented the Eichmann trial quite similarly to Arendt's depiction: the trial was meant to improve Israel's status among the nations and to exonerate the *Mapai* establishment following the Gruenwald-Kasztner trial. However, according to Segev this cynical use did not end with the Eichmann trial, but actually aggravated over time, reaching macabre heights in Begin's term, as Begin "associated control over the Holocaust heritage, with governing itself."[196] Friling agrees with Segev's accusation, especially with regards to the Begin administration, but claims Segev has himself used the Holocaust for political purposes – "to dehumanize and delegitimize Zionism."[197]

The Critical Historians' various theories of colonization are also strongly attacked by the "old" historians. While Zionism does exhibit some colonial characteristics, such as immigration and settlement, as well as its temporary dependence on an imperial force such as Britain, colonialism is too limited a perspective for analyzing Zionism, they claim.

The first and clearest difference is inherent in what Avi Bareli termed "forgetting Europe". By "forgetting" Europe, the Critical Historians manage to

---

[195] Friling, 2003a, pp. 423-425.
[196] Segev, 1991, p. 374.
[197] Friling, 1992, p. 367.

ignore the fact that in spite of emigrating from Europe, the Jews were not Europeans in the common sense of the word. After centuries of living in Europe the Jews never managed to assimilate. In this sense, Zionism was an expression of the Jews' need to flee European antisemitism and pogroms[198]. For the Zionists, unlike other colonialists, the "push" factor for immigration (antisemitism) was as strong, if not stronger, than the "pull" factor (national revival). The fact the Zionists were not "proper" Europeans is also visible economically: the Zionists invested capital in the land, contrary to other colonial groups who coveted the colonized land's resources, sending them to the motherland[199]. The final difference Bareli recognizes concerns labor and exploitation. According to Bareli, the Zionists and the Palestinians competed over labor, whereas colonialists usually exploited the indigenous population. While it is true that in the early stages of Zionism, during the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the beginning of the British Mandate, there was a threat the *yishuv* would become exploitative of the Arabs, this threat was quickly dissolved by the spread of the *avoda ivrit* (Hebrew labor) ideal, which sought to rely only on Jewish labor, in the creation of the New Jew and the future state[200]. While material analyses of Zionism as colonialism are unsatisfactory, comparisons of discourse and consciousness are also inadequate, for precisely the same reason. Comparing the Zionists and the Basel Mission's use of symbols and religious discourse, Pappé ignores both the societies each group came from, their cultural and social background, and the material differences between them. Pappé superficially analyzes a narrow and selective set of symbols and discourse elements, and consequently deduces Zionism is a form of colonialism. His analysis overlooks both the material and cultural differences between the groups, and especially the role the Jews' experience of Eastern Europe played in turning to Zionism[201].

---

[198] Bareli, 2003, p. 304.
[199] Bareli, 2003, p. 305.
[200] Ibid., pp. 306-307.
[201] Ibid., pp. 311-313.

According to Bareli, the Critical Historians' reaction to these claims is to systematically broaden the categories and definitions of colonialism. By creating more and more categories and sub-categories of colonialism, the Critical Historians attempt to keep Zionism within their own definitions of colonialism. Bareli attempts to explain post-Zionism and the use of postcolonial theories as another dimension of "forgetting Europe". Immigrant societies, Bareli asserts, have a tendency to suffer from cultural rift, and lack of "identity-communal" continuity: Israelis experience a life immensely different from that of their parents and grandparents. As a result, they tend to deny their roots and heritage, and present themselves as fundamentally Israelis, and by doing so ignore the events and ideas which drove their families to Israel[202].

Bareli's criticism of postcolonial theories in Israel is undeniably convincing. While Zionism does contain colonial characteristics, European antisemitism and the rise of nationalism played a central, unquestionable part in the formation of Zionism. Ignoring the European factor in Zionism hampers any serious attempt at understanding Zionism as well as the structure and consciousness of Israel. However, Bareli's claim that the post-Zionists adopted post-colonialism because they themselves suffer from this failure is extremely weak. It is somewhat unlikely that the same post-colonial scholars who emphasize the immigrational dimension from the outset, and who base the majority of their criticism on Zionism as an immigrant society, can deny their own roots and origins. It is, however, more likely, that post-colonial scholars prefer ignoring or diminishing the European dimension of Zionism, in order to establish their theories. This explanation would also account for their limited and awkward attempts to target this dimension, such as Shafir's absurd claim, which Bareli himself quotes, that Jewish national consciousness developed only in Palestine, like in the instance of the Puritan settlement[203].

---

[202] Ibid., p. 315.
[203] Ibid., p. 311.

Gelber has also pointed out serious flaws in the Zionist-colonial prism. In his typical blunt style, Gelber claims "[t]he accusation of 'colonialism' that they (the "new" historians] hurl against Zionism rests on dubious historical evidence (that usually points to the opposite conclusions). It derives mainly from tendentious interpretations that mix up past and present and serve to advance Palestinian viewpoints on the persisting Israeli-Arab conflict."[204]

Gelber bases his anti-colonialist paradigm on several points:

- the Zionists did not attempt to conquer the land by force, but saw the return to manual labor as a means to "normalizing" the Jew;

- unlike other colonialists, they attempted to create a democratic society, and sought to rely on natural growth and immigration in order to promise their demographic majority;

- Palestine, unlike other colonial destinations, was a poor country, its resources so scarce, both Arabs and Jews were compelled to emigrate from it during the waning of the Ottoman Empire;

- while colonialists took over land and resources by force, the Zionists purchased land, causing land prices to rise, and consequently enriching the Palestinian elite, who led the Palestinian national movement. Moreover, as the Zionists felt guilty for dispossessing the *fellaheen*, they would compensate them in addition to paying for the land;

- the Zionists did not attempt to integrate into the existing Arab economy, nor did they wish to take over it, rather, they competed with the Arabs over the labor market, a competition inconceivable in colonial societies;

- culturally, the Zionists severed ties with the "old" world, seeking to create a new society;

---

[204] Gelber, 2007, p. 412.

- finally, in Palestine the Zionists sought to revive an ancient heritage, as can be seen in the use of the Hebrew language – in other words, theirs was a typical 19th century national revival, and not a colonialist effort[205].

Gelber's arguments are largely convincing, though they are based on common knowledge, and sometimes lack scientific accuracy and detail. His attempt to revoke all postcolonial arguments in a few pages is bound to remain incomplete and defective. His claim, for example, that unlike other colonialists the Zionists did not use force in conquering the land (unlike the conquistadores they "did not come armed to their teeth"[206]), is true, but this was not necessarily out of "pacifism" as of from lack of military ability. In 1904 Menachem Ussishkin, a leader of the Zionist group *hovevei Zion* wrote: "[w]ithout ownership of the land, Erez Yisrael will never become Jewish. [Land is acquired in the modern world by three methods]: by force – that is, by conquest in war, or in other words, by robbing land from its owner; […] by expropriation via governmental authority; or by purchase […] we are too weak, therefore, we have but the second and third [options]."[207] Ussishkin, and like him other Zionist activists, acknowledged their military weakness, on the one hand, and their economic strength on the other, and hardly used any moral arguments in preferring purchasing to violence.

The differences between the first *alyia* and the second *alyia* and their relation to the Arabs were also more significant and lasting than Gelber suggests. While the second *alyia* had a strong, formulated vision of a socialist, equal society, in which Jews and Arabs would co-exist, the first *alyia* was essentially a materialistic society which quickly took advantage of the Arabs' cheap labor, developing standard colonial relations with the Arabs "based on stereotyped images and behavior patterns; exploitation; and mutual dependence, contempt, racism, hatred, and fear."[208] While it is true the Arabs benefitted materialistically from being

---

[205] Ibid., pp. 416-421.
[206] Ibid., p. 418.
[207] Quoted in: Morris, 1999, p. 38.
[208] Ibid., p. 39.

employed by the Zionists, they also felt at the same time the threat of being slowly excluded from their own land. Their relations with their employers were not necessarily pleasant, and were frequently hostile.

Similarity between the Zionists and other colonizers are obvious in some areas such as relations between colonizers and the indigenous population, the colonialists' discourse, means of conquering the land, economic exploitation, etc., but the differences are also too great to ignore. The colonialist paradigm of Zionism is, as we can see, far from perfect, and cannot be taken for granted as the only prism through which Zionism should be seen. The political implications of "convicting" the Zionists of colonialism are clear, and therefore it is difficult to find scholars who approach this question with even the least objectivity. Deciding either way involves the recurrent task of "indicting" or "exonerating" Zionism, and consequently the State of Israel. In Israeli left-wing discourse, one of the frequent topics is the point in which the State of Israel "lost its way". Common landmark events mentioned include the Six Day War, following which Israeli society was overtaken by hubris and expansionism, the Yom Kippur War, which represents Israeli stubbornness and unwillingness to seek peace, leading to a fateful war, and the First Lebanon War, which, being the first "choice" war, symbolizes Israel's turn to active aggression and violence. The 1948 War, in spite of the atrocities and expulsions committed by the Israelis, is still perceived by most, even in the deep left which acknowledges the Palestinian *Nakba* ("disaster"), as a justified war whose atrocities are relatively mild compared to other wars. Dating Israel's "sin" to the first days of Zionism, however, is more painful to most leftists, who wish to believe Israel can return to a rightful way which had once existed.

Criticizing the Critical Historians focuses thus mostly on their representation of facts and events. This representation is criticized for emphasizing secondary events and actors who might defame the Zionists and Israel, diminishing and concealing substantial and important events and actions, and presenting events and statements out of context. Philosophy professor Elhana Yakira has controversially

compared this technique to the one used by Holocaust deniers[209]. While Yakira's comparison is generally accepted to be an exaggeration, the Critical Histories are not free from misrepresentations, as Moshe Zimmermann, a vocal critique of Israel, has had to admit, at least in relation to *The Seventh Million*[210]. These misrepresentations are seen as the main tool the Critical Historians use in order to present their own narrative of history. However, it is impossible to claim the Critical Historians' works are entirely fictitious and unreliable. Not devoid of mistakes and political motivation, not only did they bring new unknown facts to the center of attention, they have managed to stir a serious debate on Israeli history, shattering the previous view of Israel as pure and completely just. Many of the Critical Historians have also revised their works, acknowledged their mistakes, and have published new works which substantiate their claims. Seeing that the historical and sociological discourse in Israel is predominantly modernist, the Critical Historians have had to base their research on "dry" facts, more than anything else. The interpretation and arrangement of facts are indeed in the hands of the writer, but it cannot be said they have taken more liberty in them than the "old" historians. The main difference between the "old" and Critical historians is essentially in the side with which the writers identify themselves with. While the "old" historians see themselves as Zionists, and identify with the history of Zionism, in spite of its faults and sins, the Critical Historians are not necessarily Zionists, and are consequently less empathetic towards the Zionists and their actions. As Shapira has noted, they were less immersed in the exhilaration of building Israel than the "old" historians were, but this was less a result of generational gaps, as she has claimed, and probably more a result of a collective discomfort with the path Israel was taking in the 1980s and the intensification of the crisis it was in.

---

[209] Yakira, 2006.
[210] Friling, 2003a, fn. 66.

4.3 Post-Zionism, postmodernism, multiculturalism

Many "old" historians have criticized the Critical Historians postmodernism and relativism in spite of the fact that most Critical Historians have predominantly used modernist methodologies, and have repeatedly claimed to present the "real", and not just "another" narrative of Israeli history. Benny Morris has famously claimed his initial interest in the Palestinian refugee problem began because he "simply wanted to know what happened"[211]. In spite of being mocked for his positivistic "antics" by many Critical Historians, most notably Pappé who has proclaimed himself a postmodern historian, most Critical Historians, including Pappé himself, have continuously claimed their research to be an objective, and more "definite" version of the events which took place. Therefore it is interesting to see whether the Critical Historians did possess some postmodern characteristics after all.

Gadi Taub has routinely accused post-Zionism and the Critical Historians of postmodernism. According to Taub, postmodernism in Israel is not a French, but rather an American import, based on American terminology such as multiculturalism, post colonialism, and multiple narratives. Israel, Taub claims, is similar to America in several ways: both are immigrant societies which have disinherited the indigenous population; both have repressed other ethnic groups over a long period of time; and both have suffered traumatic social-political events: the Vietnam War and the occupation of the territories, events which drove the left in both societies to turn its back with disgust on national values and identity[212]. As a result, the post-Zionists adopted an American version of postmodernism with its political correctness, and veneration of the Other: the Palestinians, *mizrachim*, women, etc.. Focusing on these excluded groups, post-Zionists have downplayed and blemished the grand Zionist narrative, in the attempt to create a multicultural state which would replace the Israeli, or better

---

[211] Morris, 2004, p. 3.
[212] Taub, 2003, pp. 224-225.

still the Jewish state. In this sense, the ideal of the post-Zionists is an American multicultural society, in spite of the fact that they see themselves as influenced by French postmodernism, most notably by Foucault. Critics of this approach point out two major flaws in this vision. First, it exposes the post-Zionists' double standard, in the sense that while they reject Jewish national identity and the Jews' right for self-determination, they recognize and support the Palestinian people and their right for a nation. Extreme post-Zionists who reject even the Palestinian right for self-determination, calling for a nation-less multicultural state, overlook the strong and dominant role national feeling plays in contemporary identity[213]. In this sense, the post-Zionists have not learned the lessons of the 20th century, and continue to ignore the triumph of national feeling as a uniting factor over other identities, such as class. Post-Zionists underestimate nationalism, seeing it as a manipulation from above, constructed through "false consciousness" and "imagined communities", instead of realizing it is a feeling which spreads from the bottom, from the masses[214]. The Second flaw is the post-Zionists' disregard to the fundamental difference between American and Israeli immigrant societies. Immigrants to America go to it as individuals – they leave their families and communities, and realize their individualism in their new country. Most frequently, they attempt to discard their previous identity, language, and culture, and adopt an American identity, which above all is based on ideology and the "American way of life"[215]. Israeli national feeling, however, is deeply rooted in the trauma of the Holocaust and the compulsion to flee the Muslim countries following the formation of Israel[216]. Jews immigrated to Israel in groups, and sought to create a familial society, in which the community plays a strong role in one's identity. While immigrants to America chose to sever ties with their families and communities, Jewish immigrants to Israel sought to realize and fulfill their

---

[213] Calderon, 2003, p. 214.
[214] Taub, 2003, p. 231.
[215] Calderon, 2003, pp. 186-187; Taub, 2003, p. 240.
[216] Calderon, 2003, pp. 186-187.

long repressed identity. By adopting a postmodern outlook, the post-Zionists ignore the national desires of both peoples, and instead offer the dubious solution of adopting fragmented identities, constructed from histories and feelings of victimhood.

Taub has also criticized another postmodern aspect in the writings of the Critical Historians. Critical Historiography aims at two kinds of revision: "classical" revision which seeks to present history as it really happened, and postmodern, or politically correct revision, which rejects the concept of a historical truth, and strives to create a "gallery of 'competing versions', none of which is preferable to the other."[217] Surprisingly, it was Morris the objectivist who grouped together the two ostensibly opposing approaches in his landmark article *The New Historiography*. Moreover, while Morris presented in his *Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem* detailed evidence concerning the war and expulsions, Pappé has based his postcolonial paradigm on formalistic similarities which ignore matters of content through a relativistic point of view. Facing these discrepancies, Taub seeks to understand what joins such different writers in one historiographical group. Taub explains this anomaly not through the scholars' research and methodology, but through their initial approach to the subject matter. Asked why the Palestinians' rejection of the UN Partition Plan for Palestine (which led to the 1948 War) was played down in his book, Morris answered the book was not about the war itself, but rather about the refugees problem[218]. Taub interprets this statement as Morris' confession that he was not after the "entire truth" but rather part of the truth. Moreover, in later articles Morris has acknowledged that his motivation for choosing subjects is ideological, but insisted that once his research is under way, he treats the data with objectivity. According to Taub what Morris, Pappé and other Critical Historians share, is ultimately their negative

---

[217] Taub, 1997, p. 233.
[218] Ibid., p. 236.

approach towards Israel, and their attempt to "undermine Zionism's traditional perception of itself as a morally pure movement."[219]

Criticizing the postmodern aspects of post-Zionism and Critical Historiography is, academically at least, less convincing and effective than criticizing their methodological, factual, and historiographical errors. This form of criticism puts more emphasis on the writers' political agenda and vision than on the actual works and their content. The Zionist / post-Zionist debate is more of a political-philosophical debate than a historical one, and is therefore less preoccupied with the actual events and the way they are described, than with the potential meaning and motives behind their writing. While this debate is interesting in itself, seeing that it reflects to a large extent the transitions and clashes within Israeli society, it fails to address questions of accuracy, representation and misrepresentation, and justice and wrongdoings in Israeli history. In some cases, like those of Pappé and more recent postmodern sociologists and philosophers this debate might be of more interest than with most Critical Historians who have usually employed modern approaches and methodologies in constructing their arguments. The issue of the motive behind choosing the area of research is also of less importance than Taub has suggested. One should not be hasty in thinking scholars are able to approach facts and findings without any ideological bias, as Morris has repeatedly claimed, but it is doubtful whether the "old" historians have interpreted data without their own pro-Zionist bias. Interviewed about her Ben-Gurion biography, Shapira repeatedly emphasized his greatness and far-sightedness, but when pushed on the issue of the expulsions, Shapira was reluctant to discuss the topic, saying "the book does not engage in moralizing […] I was not evasive. The facts are there. Everyone can decide what he thinks about the subject."[220] Shapira's discomfort in discussing the topic is clear, and illustrates quite simply how "old"

---

[219] Ibid.
[220] Shani, 2015.

historians have had to accept, in spite of their criticisms of the Critical Historians, some of the new, disturbing facts about Israel.

5.1 Conclusion

By the 1980s Israeli society had already went through several military, social, and political crises, which have polarized Israeli society. Alongside the religious Zionists, who supported Israeli expansionism following the Six Day War, the Israeli left was becoming increasingly critical of the course Israel was taking, and what it saw as the state's militarization and brutalization. The continuing occupation of the Palestinians, the traumatic Yom Kippur War which exposed Israel's obduracy, and the seemingly pointless and costly Lebanon War along with the Palestinians' popular uprising against the occupation, caused more and more leftists to doubt Israel's eternal morality and innocence. Historians and sociologists seeking to learn about roots of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were lucky enough to come across official documents concerning the 1948 War which were previously confidential. These documents revealed that the 1948 War was not as heroic as Israelis had been led to believe, and that the Israeli establishment and army were responsible for expulsions of Palestinians, and for several atrocities which previous scholars had downplayed or utterly ignored. Moreover, some of the new historians and sociologists, were significantly influenced by new Western European and American academic fads such as post-colonialism, postmodernism, and multiculturalism, and sought to implement them in Israeli studies. The proliferation of critical historiographies and sociological works in the 1980s drove Benny Morris to write an article analyzing the phenomenon. Morris claimed the new historians were the first to write the "real" history of Israel, which was far from being as heroic and pure as previous historians have portrayed it to be. One of Morris' most astonishing discoveries was that, contrary to what for years Israelis were led to believe, not all Palestinians fled during the 1948 War – some

were deported by the Israeli army and under direct orders from the Israeli government. Moreover, the notorious Deir Yassin massacre, while by far the most brutal massacre which took place during the war, was not the only occasion in which Israeli soldiers massacred and abused the Palestinian population. Other harrowing issues addressed by the Critical Historians included the Zionist leadership's neglect of the European Jewry during the Holocaust, and its maltreatment of immigrants and minorities.

Much more than academic literature, Morris' article thrusted the Critical Historians into the center of Israeli discourse and debate. Debating their ideas in mass media, some Critical Historians, such as Pappé, Ram, and Ophir radicalized their scientific discoveries for the purpose of supporting their argument that Zionism was a violent, colonialist movement, that Israel won its independence at the expense of an indigenous people, and that atonement was only possible through the abolition of the Jewish State, and the formation of a binational one in its stead. Other Critical Historians such as Morris and Segev were not as politically radical, but still believed it crucial for the Israeli people to learn of the darker actions and moments of Israeli history. They did not call for Israel's elimination, but for national introspection and self-criticism for the purpose of expiating Zionism's wrongdoings as much as possible within the Israeli framework. All Critical Historians, however, were waging a war on Israel's national memory.

Mainstream historians, who until the emergence of the Critical Historians were publishing their own research on Zionism and Israel, attacked the Critical Historians, claiming they were falsifying facts and misrepresenting the real course of events, for the purpose of sullying Zionism and undermining its achievements. Their attacks, however, were directed less at the scientific findings than the public pronouncements of the Critical Historians. While it is true that works by the Critical Historians were never free from errors, their actual content and conclusions were not as indicting and aggressive as the opinions voiced by them in

the media. Consequently, the public debate was much more dramatic and stormy than the academic one. While public debate centered on issues such as Israel's future, and the complete conviction or acquittal of Ben-Gurion and his relation to the Holocaust, academic debate addressed issues such as the right perspective from which researchers should view their subject matter, and whether the Lydda massacre took place because of the Israeli soldiers' lack of experience, or mercilessness.

Nonetheless, with time, mainstream historians had to acknowledge at least some of the unpleasant moments of Zionism. Their own research was compelled to address and acknowledge the Zionist leaderships' actions and mistakes. While some events, such as the Lydda massacre could be explained by the soldiers' fear and lack of experience, others, such as the expulsion of Lydda's and Ramle's inhabitants had to be acknowledged as pitiless.

The Israeli public was strongly influenced by the historians' debate. For the first time in its history, Israeli mainstream was obliged to confront Israel's part in the refugee problem. Before, most Israelis were led to believe the Palestinians had fled the land during the 1948 War, *in spite* of the Israelis' calls for them to stay. This was partly the case in Haifa, but in the rest of the country Palestinians were either forcefully compelled to or encouraged to flee through harassments[221]. Israelis were also led to believe that throughout its history Israeli governments had done all they could in order to secure peace with its neighbors – while in truth they were rejecting not a few of their neighbors' peaceful endeavors. However, some Israelis, especially those who had felt excluded from participation in Israeli public life for many years such as the *mizrachim* and the ultra-orthodox, believed the Critical Historiography had exposed the *AHUSAL*'s hypocrisy and cynicism. Confronting its past, therefore, meant more to Israelis than merely acknowledging their predecessors' wrongdoings – it compelled them to examine their country's present and future. Israelis also had to adapt themselves to the new terminology used by

---

[221] Morris, 1999, p. 211.

the Critical Historians – was Israeli society still being ruled by a hegemonic class? Was Israel's melting pot a success or a failure? Did the old Zionist values of the "new Jew" and the "negation of the diaspora" lead to a national revival, or the neglect of the European Jewry? Was Israel a colonialist society, or was it egalitarian? Did Zionism disinherit the rightful inhabitants of the land, or did it give rebirth to the Jewish people? Not only were these questions difficult and complex, not only did they seem to have more than one correct answer, answering them one way or other might well decide Israel's future.

Since the emergence of the Critical Historians Israel has undergone several significant events, such as the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, the stagnation of the Oslo peace accords, the Second Intifada during the 2000s, the disengagement from Gaza in 2005, the Second Lebanon War in 2006, and several small to medium scale wars with Gaza. Today, many of the Critical Historians' findings are taken for granted: expulsions and atrocities took place; immigrants were maltreated by the Israeli elite; the Zionist elite could have done more for the European Jewry during the Holocaust; Israel has possibly missed rare opportunities for peace. Nonetheless, during those years the Israeli political center has moved further to the right, while Israeli society has undeniably gone through a process of polarization and radicalization. In today's political climate, many Israelis are no longer shocked or distressed by the findings of the Critical Historians. With the disintegration of Israeli society, many Israelis are either indifferent to or actually supportive of the wrongdoings of the old Zionist establishment. In recent years Benny Morris has himself expressed support of the 1948 expulsions, much to the amazement of the political left from which he emerged, and which he helped model through his discoveries on the war[222]. The Israeli left, on the other hand, has also grown more extreme and detached from Israel and mainstream Israeli politics, as other Critical Historians demonstrate. Pappé, for example, a former professor at the University of Haifa, has immigrated to Britain where he currently teaches, and supports the

---

[222] Shavit, 2004; Ben-Simhon, 2012.

BDS movement, and the boycott of Israel[223]. Admittedly, the Critical Historians were never a homogenous group, but their embittered clashes and fights represent, to a large extent, the polarization of Israeli society itself and the violent dispute it is engrossed in.

Reading list

1. Aronson, Shlomo, 2003. "Zionism and Post-Zionism in Israel: the Historical Ideological Connection." Pp. 379-417 in *An Answer to a Post-Zionist Colleague*, edited by Tuvia Friling. Tel Aviv: Yedioth Ahronoth (Hebrew).

2. Bareli, Avi, 2003. "Forgetting Europe: Perspectives on the Debate about Zionism and Colonialism." Pp. 294-317417 in *An Answer to a Post-Zionist Colleague*, edited by Tuvia Friling. Tel Aviv: Yedioth Ahronoth (Hebrew).

3. Bar-On, Mordechai, 2005. "What Happened to the 'New History' in the Turn of the Century." In: *Iyunim Bitkumat Israel*, 15, pp. 53-81 (Hebrew).

4. Ben-Simhon, Coby, 2012. "Benny Morris on Why He's Written His Last Word on the Israel-Arab Conflict", Haaretz, accessed 17.4.2016: http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/benny-morris-on-why-he-s-written-his-last-word-on-the-israel-arab-conflict-1.465869.

5. Caldron, Nissim, 2003. "Post-Zionism against Multiculturalism in Israel." Pp. 173-223 in *An Answer to a Post-Zionist Colleague*, edited by Tuvia Friling. Tel Aviv: Yedioth Ahronoth (Hebrew).

6. Friling, Tuvia, 1992. "The Zionist Movement's March of Folly and The Seventh Million." In: *Iyunim Bitkumat Israel*, 2, pp. 317-367 (Hebrew).

7. –, 2003. "Maturation Processes in a Fissured Identity." Pp. 13-62 in *An Answer to a Post-Zionist Colleague*, edited by Tuvia Friling. Tel Aviv: Yedioth Ahronoth (Hebrew).

---

[223] Morris, 2011.

8. –, 2003a. "David Ben-Gurion and the Holocaust." Pp. 418-456 in *An Answer to a Post-Zionist Colleague*, edited by Tuvia Friling. Tel Aviv: Yedioth Ahronoth (Hebrew).

9. Gelber, Yoav, 2003. "On Historiography in Israel." Pp. 109-172 in *An Answer to a Post-Zionist Colleague*, edited by Tuvia Friling. Tel Aviv: Yedioth Ahronoth (Hebrew).

10. –. 2007. *History, Memory and Propaganda*. Tel Aviv: Am-Oved (Hebrew).

11. Gilad, Elon, 2015. "Palestinaim, Palestinim, Falestinim Refugees – How Should We Call Our Arab Neighbours?", Haaretz, accessed, 25.5.2016: http://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/the-edge/.premium-1.2773483

12. Gutwein, Daniel, 1997. "'The New Historiography' or the Privatization of Memory." Pp. 311-344 in *Zionist Historiography Between Vision and Revision*, edited by Yechiam Weitz. Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History (Hebrew).

13. –, 2003. "Postzionism, the Privatization Revolution and the Social Left." Pp. 243-273 in *An Answer to a Post-Zionist Colleague*, edited by Tuvia Friling. Tel Aviv: Yedioth Ahronoth (Hebrew).

14. Kabha, Mustafa, 2007. "A Palestinian Look at the New Historians and Post-Zionism in Israel." Pp. 299-316 in *Making Israel*, edited by B. Morris. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

15. Kimmerling, Baruch, 1992. "Sociology, Ideology, and Nation Building: the Palestinians and Their Meaning in Israeli Sociology." In: *American Sociological Review*, 57, pp. 446-460.

16. –, 1997. "History Here and Now." Pp. 257-274 in *Zionist Historiography Between Vision and Revision*, edited by Yechiam Weitz. Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History (Hebrew).

17. –. 2001. *The End of Ashkenazi Hegemony*. Jerusalem: Keter (Hebrew).

18. –. 2001a. *The Invention and Decline of Israeliness*. University of California Press.

19. –. 2008. *Clash of identities: explorations in Israeli and Palestinian societies*. Columbia University Press.

20. Kimmerling, B., & Migdal, J. S. 2003. *The Palestinian People*. Harvard University Press.

21. Livneh, Neri, 2001. "Post-Zionism Only Rings Once", Haaretz, accessed 28.3.2016: http://www.haaretz.co.il/misc/1.734630 (Hebrew).

22. Lissak, Moshe, 2007. "'Critical' and 'Establishment' Sociology in Israel's Academic Community." Pp. 178-201 in *Making Israel*, edited by B. Morris. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

23. Morris, Benny, 1999. *Righteous Victims*. New York: Knopf.

24. –. 2002. "Peace? No Chance", The Guardian, accessed 28.3.2016: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/feb/21/israel2.

25. –. 2004. *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*. Cambridge University Press.

26. –, 2004a. "Politics by Other Means", New Republic, accessed 20.5.2016: https://newrepublic.com/article/61715/politics-other-means-0

27. –, 2007. "The New Historiography: Israel Confronts Its Past." Pp. 11-28 in *Making Israel*, edited by B. Morris. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

28. –, 277a. "Revisiting the Palestinian exodus of 1948." Pp. 37-59 in *The War for Palestine*, edited by E. Rogan & A. Shlaim. Cambridge University Press.

29. –. 2009. *One State, Two States Resolving the Israel/Palestine conflict*. Yale University Press.

30. –, 2011. "The Liar as Hero", Scholars for Peace in the Middle East, accessed 7.4.2016: http://www.ee.bgu.ac.il/~censor/katz-directory/11-03-17the-liar-as-a-hero-about-pappe-by-benny-morris.pdf

31. Pappé, Ilan, 1996. "A New Agenda for the New History." In: *Theory and Criticism*, 8, pp. 123-137 (Hebrew).

32. –, 1997. "Zionism as Colonialism". Pp. 345-366 in *Zionist Historiography Between Vision and Revision*, edited by Yechiam Weitz. Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History (Hebrew).

33. Ram, Uri, 1993. "Society and the Science of Society: Mainstream and Critical Sociology in Israel." Pp. 7-39 in Uri Ram ed. *Israeli Society: Critical Perspectives*. Tel Aviv: Breirot (Hebrew).

34. –, 1996. "Memory and Identity: Sociology of the Historians' Debate in Israel." In: *Theory and Criticism*, 8, 9-32 (Hebrew).

35. –, 1997. "Zionist and Post-Zionist Historical Consciousness in Israel: A Sociological Analysis of the Historians' Debate". Pp. 275-289 in *Zionist Historiography Between Vision and Revision*, edited by Yechiam Weitz. Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History (Hebrew).

36. –, 1999. "The Colonization Perspective in Israeli Sociology". Pp. 55-80 in *The Israel/Palestine Question*, edited by Ilan Pappé. London and New York: Routledge.

37. –, 2006. "The Time of the 'Post'." In: *Theory and Criticism*, 26, pp. 241-254 (Hebrew).

38. Raz-Krakotzkin, Amnon, 1993. "Exile within Sovereignty: Toward a Critique of the 'Negation of Exile' in Israeli Culture, part 1." In: *Theory and Criticism*, 4, pp. 23-55; *Theory and Criticism*, 5, pp. 113-132.

39. –, 1994. "Exile within Sovereignty: Toward a Critique of the 'Negation of Exile' in Israeli Culture, part 2." In: *Theory and Criticism*, 5, pp. 113-132.

40. Segev, Tom. 1991. *The Seventh Million: Israelis and the Holocaust*. Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House (Hebrew).

41. –. 1998. *1949: The First Israelis*. New York: The Free Press [Hebrew: 1987].

42. –. 2001. *The New Zionists*. Jerusalem: Keter (Hebrew).

43. –, 2010. "'1948: A History of the First Arab-Israeli War' by Benny Morris", Haaretz, accessed 24.5.2016: http://www.haaretz.co.il/1.1211132

44. Shafir, Gershon, 1993. "Land, Labor, and Population in Zionist Colonization: General and Unique Aspects." Pp. 104-119 in Uri Ram ed. *Israeli Society: Critical Perspectives*, Tel Aviv: Breirot (Hebrew)

45. Shapira, Anita, 1997. "Politics and Collective Memory: the New Historians' Debate." Pp. 367-392 in *Zionist Historiography Between Vision and Revision*, edited by Yechiam Weitz. Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History (Hebrew).

46. –, 1999. "The Past Is Not a Foreign Country", The New Republic, 29.11.1999.

47. Shamir, Shimon, 2005. "Noah in Seven Mistakes", The Seventh Eye, accessed 25.5.2016: http://www.the7eye.org.il/27274

48. Shani, Ayelett, 2015. "'Modern Leaders Are 'Killed' Before They Can Emerge'", Haaretz, accessed 1.6.2016: http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.659558

49. Shavit, Ari, 2004. "Survival of the Fittest", Haaretz, accessed 22.3.2016: http://www.haaretz.com/survival-of-the-fittest-1.61345

50. Shlaim, Avi, 2002. "A Betrayal of History", The Guardian, accessed 24.5.2016: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/feb/22/israel

51. –, 2007. "The Debate about 1948." Pp. 124-146 in *Making Israel*, edited by B. Morris. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

52. Taub, Gadi. 1997. *A Dispirited Rebellion: Essays on Contemporary Israeli Culture*. Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad (Hebrew).

53. Weitz, Yechiam, 2007. "Dialectical versus Unequivocal." Pp. 278-298 in *Making Israel*, edited by B. Morris. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.