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January 9, 2000

NEWS ANALYSIS

The Shepherdstown 'Slows': Can Clinton Prevail?



By DAVID E. SANGER

SHEPHERDSTOWN, W.Va., Jan. 8 -- From hilltops in this pre-Civil War town where Israel and Syria have negotiated all week, you can just make out the farm across the Potomac River where Abraham Lincoln met Gen. George B. McClellan in a tent and complained that he suffered from "the slows" after the battle of Antietam.

This week, traveling here almost daily to deal with a very different conflict, Bill Clinton found himself struggling to cure the same affliction.

Day after day, his helicopter would land on a college baseball field, and he would spend hours trying to get Israel's prime minister, Ehud Barak, and Syria's foreign minister, Farouk al-Shara, to begin hashing out the details of a deal whose rough outlines have been obvious for years. And day after day he was confronted by political posturing over what would be discussed first, and who would be seen to make the first concessions, all intended

ISRAEL-SYRIA PEACE TALKS

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first concessions, all intended to make a convincing show half a world away that neither side was willing to give in to a longtime enemy.

Mr. Clinton and his secretary of state, Madeleine K. Albright, are betting that this is just a phase in the multi-act performance of peacemaking, and one that may now have run its course.

On Friday, they handed Mr. Barak and Mr. Shara a seven-page working paper that the United States hopes will become the basis for what in diplo-speak is called a "core agreement" between the two countries.

It would lay out the rough boundaries of the land Israel will surrender, 33 years after it seized the Golan Heights in the Arab-Israeli war, and how the two sides would share scarce water resources. And it would roughly define the kind of security guarantees and steps toward normalized relations an ailing President Hafez el-Assad of Syria would be willing to grant in return, a delicate balancing act for a leader who realizes he can no longer afford economic and diplomatic isolation, but fears that openness could threaten the iron control over the country he wants to pass to his son.

No one expected that the talks that began here in this town of 1,300 would be resolved in a week. As the weekend began, diplomats said Mr. Barak and Mr. Shara would most likely leave on Sunday or Monday to ponder the working paper for a few weeks before resuming talks. And even then, it is still not clear if either side is prepared to make the

Israel-Syria Talks (Jan. 5)

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- A Rare Lull in Lebanon Fighting Is Linked to Israel-Syria Talks (Dec. 25)
- The Overview: Israelis and Syrians Agreeing to New Talks (Dec. 17)
- Syria and Israel Begin Peace Talks After 4-Year Halt (Dec. 16)

At a Glance

- Timeline: Israel and Syria
- Main Issues in Israel-Syria Talks

Video Collection

- Israel-Syria Peace Talks

Text

- Clinton's Comments on Mideast Peace Talks (Dec. 16)
- Speeches Opening Mideast Peace Talks (Dec. 15)
- Clinton's Words to Press (Dec. 8)

From the Archives

Upon termination of the 27-year British administration in Palestine, the state of Israel was proclaimed on May 14, 1948.

- The New York Times front page story from Saturday, May 15, 1948.
- Declaration of Independence of the Jewish state.
- The Two Worlds of Palestine, May 18, 1948
- Cease-Fire in Syria Accepted, Ending 'Six-Day War', June 11, 1967
- Israel vs. Arabs, 1948-1973, October 7, 1973.
- Egypt and Israel Sign Formal Treaty, March 27, 1979

Interactive Maps

- In 1947, the United Nations passed a partition plan that would have established both a Jewish and Palestinian state in what is now Israel. Here is a look at Israel's people and territory 50 years later.
- The Shifting Borders of Israel: A History of Conflict in Israel and the Middle East from 1923 -1967

prepared to make the psychological and political leap required for a deal that would give Israel at least a cold peace with its immediate neighbors.

Issue in Depth

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"This is difficult stuff," Mr. Clinton said as he headed out to Shepherdstown one more time this week, canceling other business in Washington to stick with the talks. "They are trying to imagine the end of the road."

Then he disappeared into the heavily guarded hotel, and a news blackout that is intended to force the two reluctant negotiating teams to get at it until they actually get something done.

But the slowness of this week's progress, and the carefully orchestrated, quite public delaying tactics, raise the question of whether the now well-rehearsed technique of locking Israel and its adversaries in a negotiating arena, cut off from other distractions, still works as well as it once did.

After all, in an age of cell phones and e-mail, there is no such thing as real isolation. Each day, the Syrian delegation would call the Syrian reporters camped out in a school gymnasium a mile away, the Israeli delegation would call Israeli reporters, and Americans would hold news conferences describing the day's efforts to keep the two sides talking. Few details of actual negotiating positions seeped out, but it is, as one negotiator said, "a bit early for strategic leaks."

The technique worked, of course, at Camp David in 1978, during the Israel-Egypt negotiations, and again at the Wye Plantation in 1998, where a framework for peace with the Palestinians was hammered out.

That model -- holding talks outside of Washington, but close enough for President Clinton to fly in within 45 minutes to break logjams -- is the logic of Shepherdstown. But it also seems as if the negotiators have adapted to their environment and have learned to resist some of the pressures that arise from talking endlessly in close quarters.

"This whole idea of putting people into castles with moats, or even small villages, has at best a marginal impact," concluded Richard N. Haass, a scholar at the Brookings Institution who served on the National Security Council under President Bush. "Cell phones and other technology leapfrog the barriers, of course," he said. "And the issues don't get any easier."

In this case, he noted, the issues and the negotiating positions are so well aired that "you could hold the whole thing in Dupont Circle," just up the road from the White House.

But the American mediators are still enamored of the Appalachian approach, convinced that fresh air and no microphones is the only real treatment for the slows. By design, it makes the State Department spokesman, James P. Rubin, the only real television presence -- preventing the most public forms of grandstanding on the evening news in the Mideast.

And it showcases Mr. Clinton as the mediator, the only man both sides will really trust, not a bad image for a leader spending his last year in office seeking a firm niche in history.

Mr. Rubin insists that technology notwithstanding, moats still work. "We do believe that developing a format that is isolated, and that limits disclosure of each side's positions, focuses energy on the hard job of real decisions," he said on Friday. "To do it without this kind of isolation it is hard to imagine how any decision could be made before it is preempted by somebody who doesn't agree with it."

"The Wye precedent," he said, "showed that the American-designed cocoon can and does work -- even though it won't always work."

The Americans are also betting that the Syrians, far more isolated than most of the large Mideast players and a lot less media savvy than Yasir Arafat, have yet to learn the art of spin. And Mr. Barak's government, one diplomat involved in the talks said, "is less public relations oriented" than the government of Benjamin Netanyahu, his predecessor. That may come to haunt Mr. Barak, however, when he tries to sell any eventual deal to the Israeli public, which would have to approve it in a national referendum.

But in the end, the atmospherics of the talks may prove less critical than the strategic calculations behind them.

Mr. Clinton is betting that the moment for peace has arrived because the political calculus has changed. Mr. Barak, unlike his predecessor, clearly views the value of the Golan's buffer zone as a diminishing defensive asset.

Continuing to hold it promises continued troubles in Syrian-controlled Lebanon, where he has vowed to withdraw Israeli troops.

And with the right mix of early-warning systems, a reduced Syrian troop presence on the border, new American weaponry and an agreement to begin normalization of relations, Mr. Barak, a former general, apparently believes he can give up the land without damaging Israeli security. Selling that position to a public that has come to view the Golan as the key to national survival, however, is another matter. That is why he has insisted on talking security first, and the return of the Golan second.

Mr. Assad knows that he has little hope of retaking the Golan by force. His military power is eroding, along with his economy. Getting the Golan back in his lifetime would cement his place in history, assuming he can do it on terms that do not undercut his rule,

or his son's succession. That is why he has insisted on talking about land and water first, security and "normal diplomatic relations" second.

It is still unclear whether that logjam -- and with it the slows -- is now broken. President Lincoln had to fire General McClellan to get the Army of the Potomac moving. That is not one of the choices open to Mr. Clinton, who must take the generals and diplomats he is dealt.



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January 18, 2000

NEWS ANALYSIS

Damascus Demands the Israelis Accept Its Golan Claim as a First Step**Related Articles**

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- [Bomb Explodes in Northern Israeli Town](#)

By SUSAN SACHS

DAMASCUS, Syria, Jan. 17 -- The Syrian-Israeli peace talks were never expected to be easy. And now decades of Syrian mistrust, born of isolation and a dogged view of what is a just solution for Syria's main grievance, have caused a breakdown in discussions.

In Damascus tonight, there was no official comment on the announcement from Washington that peace talks between the two nations have been suspended. The discussions, brokered by Washington, restarted late last year after a four-year hiatus and were to continue this week.

But commentary in the government-run press and radio repeated a consistent line: that the talks have stumbled because as a first step, Israel must agree that Syria owns the Golan Heights, the strategic plateau it lost in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Only then, in the Syrian view, can bargaining take place over other issues, like water rights, normalization of diplomatic ties and security arrangements.

The official Damascus radio kept up the antagonistic tone that has emerged in the last few days. It accused Israel of sidestepping the key component of peace. And it said today that at the negotiating session that ended last week in Shepherdstown, W.Va., "the Israeli side kept evading the demarcation of June 4, 1967, lines." In fact, Israel has not agreed to new borders, though it has suggested a willingness to give up the Golan.

Syria complains that the Israeli prime minister, Ehud Barak, is trying to make the talks a "labyrinth" and is entering into

"negotiations for the sake of negotiations."

The government newspaper Tishrin made the same points. Talking of normalization before a full Israeli withdrawal is "placing the cart before the horse."

The paper accused Israel of not treating seriously the negotiating committee that is meant to deal with the border, a denunciation that may mean only that those talks were not given priority.

In general, those statements echo the position that Syria has held with a prickly pride as first the Egyptians, then the Palestinians and then the Jordanians, signed peace accords with Israel in the last 21 years. Under Hafez al-Assad, the enigmatic Syrian president, who commanded his country's air force in the disastrous 1967 war, unconditional repatriation of the Golan has been a Syrian mantra. It has been taught in the schools for 33 years as the essential component of Syrian self-esteem.

So last week when an Israeli newspaper published a working paper prepared by United States officials on the status of the talks -- and that paper outlined an Israeli position in favor of allowing some 17,000 Israeli settlers to remain in the Golan after a peace deal -- the reaction in Syria was anger.

The document was already in the hands of the Syrians and the Israelis. But its publication suggested that it was a draft treaty and, as the Syrian official press noted with indignation, that implied that Syria was negotiating over whether it would regain full sovereignty over the land.

Both sides still say they are committed to a resolution of the Golan issue, but every word and phrase and even the tone can be sensitive enough to throw the talks off track.

President Assad is of the generation of political figures who came of age during a period of nascent Arab nationalism. That idea of a unique Arab identity grew out of resistance to European colonialism and was nurtured by the cold war, which made the Arab world a strategic player, or at least a stage, in international politics.

In Syria, this sense of a special Arab destiny became even more fierce and immutable after the bruising military conflicts with Israel. Run by a man from a small religious minority group, the Alawites, and threatened in the past by internal uprisings, Mr. Assad's Syria has remained more isolated than its neighbors and, with the exception of Iraq, more tightly controlled by the central government.

Against this backdrop, many diplomats in the region said, Syria came to the peace talks not only to regain land. Had it held out indefinitely, rather than negotiate, its central national conceit of being the one Arab state to remain true to Arab ideals would remain intact. But Syria had other, parallel goals.

With the collapse of its erstwhile patron, the Soviet Union, and the

new American-sponsored military alliance between Turkey and Israel, the Syrian government sought a beneficial and well-defined relationship with the United States consistent with its self-image as a strategic player.

Farouk al-Shara, the Syrian foreign minister who led his negotiating team in Shepherdstown, is said by his diplomatic contemporaries to be an avid student of Asian and Middle East history and of the modern Israeli political scene. And according to diplomats who are in close contact with the Syrians, he was sent to the latest round of talks on the strength of a belief by Damascus that the United States had obtained a private Israeli commitment to full withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

The euphoria in the United States and in parts of Israel after the first round of ice-breaking talks in Washington in December did nothing to dissuade the Syrians from this view.

But the second set of talks were followed by an agreement to divert Mr. Barak briefly from the Syrians to meet in Washington with Yasir Arafat, the Palestinian leader. Further, there were reports from Israel of political and religious resistance there to giving up the Golan Heights, resistance that Mr. Barak's government is obliged to overcome no matter what promises the United States may have made.

While none of these machinations are new, they seem to have thrown the Syrian negotiators, who have fallen back for now to their well-honed position.

"Syria," said Tishrin, the government newspaper, "is concerned with a just and honorable peace that returns land to its indigenous owners."



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FROM THE ARCHIVES / March 27, 1979

Egypt and Israel Sign Formal Treaty, Ending a State of War After 30 Years; Sadat and Begin Praise Carter's Role

By BERNARD GWERTZMAN Special to The New York Times

Washington -- After confronting each other for nearly 31 years as hostile neighbors, Egypt and Israel signed a formal treaty at the White House today to establish peace and "normal and friendly relations."

On this chilly early spring day, about 1,500 invited guests and millions more watching television saw President Anwar el-Sadat of Egypt and Prime Minister Menachem Begin for Israel put their signatures on the Arabic, Hebrew and English versions of the first peace treaty between Israel and an Arab country.

Israel at 50



President Carter, who was credited by both leaders for having made the agreement possible, signed, as a witness, for the United States. In a somber speech he said, "Peace has come."

The First Step of Peace

"We have won, at last, the first step of peace--a first step on a long and difficult road," he added.

Later, at a state dinner, Mr. Begin suggested that Mr. Carter be given the Nobel Peace Prize, and Mr. Sadat agreed.

At the signing ceremony, all three leaders offered prayers that the treaty would bring true peace to the Middle East and end the enmity that has erupted into war four times since Israel declared its independence on May 14, 1948.

By coincidence, they all referred to the words of the Prophet Isaiah.

"Let us work together until the day comes when they beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks," Mr. Sadat said in his paraphrase of the biblical text.

'No More War,' Begin Says

Mr. Begin, who gave the longest and most emotional of the addresses, exclaimed: "no more war, no more bloodshed, no more bereavement, peace unto you, shalom, saalam, forever."

"Shalom" and "salaam" are the Hebrew and Arabic words for "peace."

The Israeli leader, noted for oratorical skill, provided a dash of humor when in the course of his speech he seconded Mr. Sadat's remark that Mr. Carter was "the unknown soldier of the peacemaking effort." Mr. Begin said, pausing, "I agree, but as usual with an amendment"--that Mr. Carter was not completely unknown and that his peace effort would "be remembered and recorded by generations to come."

Since Mr. Begin was known through the negotiations as a stickler for details, much to the American side's annoyance, Mr. Carter seemed to explode with laughter at Mr. Begin's reference to "an amendment."

Minutes later, Mr. Begin was deeply somber as he put on the Jewish skull cap and quoted in Hebrew from Psalm 126.

The signing was followed by an outdoor dinner on the South Lawn at the White House for 1,300 guests.

The treaty was the result of months of grueling, often frustrating negotiations that finally were concluded early this morning when a final compromise was reached on the last remaining issue--a timetable for Israel to give up Sinai oil-fields.

Under the treaty, Israel will withdraw its military forces and civilians from the Sinai Peninsula in stages over three years. Two-thirds of the area will be returned within nine months, after formal ratification documents are exchanged. The ratification process is expected to begin in about two weeks.

In return for Israel's withdrawal, Egypt has agreed to end the state of war and to establish peace. After the initial nine-month withdrawal is completed, Egypt and Israel will establish "normal and friendly relations" in many fields, including diplomatic, cultural and economic relations.

Breakthrough at Camp David

The outline for the peace treaty was achieved in September when Mr. Carter, Mr. Sadat and Mr. Begin met at Camp David, Md., for 13 days. In addition to the treaty, they also agreed on the framework for an accord to provide self-rule to the more than one million Palestinians living in the Israeli-occupied areas of the West bank of the Jordan and the Gaza Strip.

The Camp David accords were opposed by most countries in the Arab

~~world for two reasons. The Arabs regarded the decision by Mr. Sadat to sign a peace treaty with Israel as a betrayal of the Arab cause, since it suggested that Egypt would no longer be willing to go to war against Israel to help Syria, Jordan, and the Palestinians to regain territory.~~

~~Arabs also viewed the self-rule agreement for Palestinians as insufficient because it did not guarantee the creation of a Palestinian state.~~

As a result of that opposition, ~~today's signing was greeted by criticism throughout the Arab world.~~ Echoes of that were heard in Washington, where about a thousand Arabs demonstrated in Lafayette Park, several hundred yards from the signing ceremony. Their anti-Sadat chants could be heard at the White House.

"We must not minimize the obstacles that still lie ahead," Mr. Carter said. "Differences still separate the signatories to this treaty from each other and also from some of their neighbors who fear what they have just done.

"To overcome these differences, to dispel those fears, we must rededicate ourselves to the goal of a broader peace with justice for all who have lived in a state of conflict in the Middle East.

"We have no illusions--we have hopes, dreams, prayer, yes--but no illusions."

Mr. Carter read out a long passage that turned on a metaphor of peace being waged like war. It was later disclosed by the White House that the section was quoted from an essay written by the Rev. Walker L. Knight in the House Mission Magazine of the Southern Baptist Convention.

At the end of the ceremony Mr. Carter, Mr. Sadat and Mr. Begin grasped each other in a three-way handclasp. Despite the show of cordiality, there were signs that differences between Egypt and Israel were far from over.

In his speech, Mr. Sadat never referred to Mr. Begin, whom he reportedly does not like personally. By contrast, Mr. Sadat praised Mr. Carter as "the man who performed the miracle."

"Without any exaggeration, what he did constitutes one of the greatest achievements of our time," President Sadat said.

In the printed text of his speech, Mr. Sadat made a strong appeal to Mr. Carter to lend "support and backing" to the Palestinians and reassure them that they would be able "to take the first step on the road to self-determination and statehood."

Sadat Cites 'a Grave Injustice'

The following was in the text of Mr. Sadat's address, but he did not read it publicly:

"No one is more entitled to your support and backing than the Palestinian people. A grave injustice was inflicted upon them in the past. They need a reassurance that they will be able to take the first step on the road to self-determination and statehood.

"A dialogue between the United States and the representatives of the Palestinian people will be a very helpful development. On the other hand, we must be certain that the provisions of the Camp David framework on the establishments of a self-governing authority with full autonomy are carried out. There must be a genuine transfer of authority to the Palestinians in their land. Without that, the problem will remain unsolved."

The remarks about the Palestinians would have been provocative to Mr. Begin, who has declared he will never permit a Palestinian state to be established. He has called the Palestine Liberation Organization the most "barbaric" group since the Nazis.

Later, Mohammed Hakki, the Egyptian Embassy's spokesman, said that the section on the Palestinians, which was on page seven of the printed text, had been "inadvertantly" omitted because Mr. Sadat had turned two pages, instead of one, and accidentally skipped that portion.

Mr. Begin's speech seemed highly charged with personal emotions, especially in two separate allusions to Jerusalem. These amounted to a reassertion of the Israeli stand on Jerusalem, in a context that was likely to prove embarrassing to Mr. Sadat.

The Israeli Prime Minister said that it was "the third greatest day in my life." The first, he said, was the day of Israel's independence, May 14, 1948, and the second "was when Jerusalem became one city and our brave, perhaps most hardened soldiers, the parachutists, embraced with tears and kissed the ancient stones of the remnants of the wall destined to protect the chosen place of God's glory."

This was a reference to Israel's capture of East Jerusalem from Jordan in the 1967 war and Israel's subsequent annexation of that part of the city to become part of Israeli Jerusalem.

A major point of difference between Israel and the Arabs is the future of Jerusalem, with the Arabs, including Egypt, insisting that Israel must relinquish control over the eastern sector, and Israel's declarations that it will never yield it.

Last night, Mr. Sadat underscored the continuing problem when, in the course of a 90-minute meeting with Mr. Begin, he invited the Israeli Prime Minister to make a one-day trip to Cairo next Monday but declined an invitation to visit Jerusalem.

Mr. Sadat visited Jerusalem in November 1977, and it was that dramatic trip that started the process leading to today's treaty signing.

Egyptian officials said that Mr. Sadat wanted to put off another trip to

Israel until progress was achieved on the Palestinian negotiations, which are to start in about six weeks.

The peace treaty negotiations went through a series of ups and downs and surprises.

They began in October in Washington with expectations of an early conclusion. Although the basic treaty text was approved by both Egypt and Israel by early December, three months more were needed to obtain agreement on differing interpretations of the treaty--the subject of a separate document of "agreed minutes"--and over issues such as when ambassadors would be exchanged and target dates for beginning and concluding the Palestinian self-rule negotiations.

Mr. Carter finally resolved most of the questions during a weeklong trip to the Middle East earlier this month.

Even though both Governments approved the treaty, it was not completed until late last night when Mr. Begin and Mr. Sadat agreed that the Sinai oilfield would be returned to Egypt seven months after the treaty was ratified, instead of the nine months Israel had preferred and the six months Egypt had earlier asked.

In addition, Mr. Begin agreed to turn over the El Arish area within two months instead of the three months originally proposed by Israel.

An arrangement was also made to insure Israel a right to buy oil from the fields without interruption.

Even this morning, in the final draftings, differences arose over whether to call a body of water the Gulf of Aqaba or the Gulf of Eilat. The Arabic and English texts refer to it as "Aqaba," the name of the Jordanian port by that name. The Hebrew version calls it Eilat, after the Israeli port adjacent to Aqaba.

The White House made public the texts of all the documents included in the peace treaty package. These include the actual preamble, nine articles, three annexes and one appendix that comprise the actual treaty text. In addition, there is a document of "agreed minutes" covering differing interpretations of the treaty.

A letter signed by Mr. Begin and Mr. Sadat--and covering the controversial "linkage" question of when negotiations on the Palestinian self-rule questions would begin--one month after ratification of the treaty--and when the negotiations would conclude--about a year afterwards--was also released, as were certain clarification letters from Mr. Carter and maps.

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2. The New York Times, October 1, 1993, Friday, Late Edition - Final, Section A; Page 2; Column 4; Foreign Desk, 1188 words, Theory vs. Practice; Clinton's Stated Foreign Policy Turns Into More Modest 'Self-Containment', By THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN, Special to The New York Times, WASHINGTON, Sept. 30
3. The New York Times, September 15, 1993, Wednesday, Late Edition - Final, Section A; Page 1; Column 4; Foreign Desk, 1417 words, MIDEAST ACCORD: News Analysis: Dividing a Homeland, By THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN, Special to The New York Times, WASHINGTON, Sept. 14
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There is guarded optimism that a deal may be imminent.

By the BBC's Ed Butler

The Middle East peace talks underway in the United States are being seen as the last big piece in a diplomatic jigsaw designed to solve half a century of conflict.



Israel and Syria have long been at opposing ends of the Middle Eastern divide, and have now come together in

Shepherdstown, West Virginia.

According to Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak the price of peace may be painful, but it is necessary.

He states Israel's security will be strengthened by ending the conflict

“

We will do our utmost to strengthen Israel's

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Israeli PM Ehud Barak

borders, securing their water sources, and ending "the tragedy in Lebanon".

The move would also "make a qualitative leap" in the strategic co-operation with the United States, and bring North African states and the Arabian peninsula into the process he says.

Despite such benefits, Mr Barak insists that he will not be sacrificing too much to win them.

Syrian concessions

He is going to require some major concessions from Syria if Israel is to finally relinquish what it regards as the main prize, the Golan Heights.

This mountainous stretch of land was seized by Israel during the six-day war of 1967.

It has become home to some 17,000 Israeli settlers and offers Israel a natural strategic buffer to Syria.

The BBC's State Department correspondent Richard Lister believes it remains to be seen whether Israel is really ready to give it up:

"I think it's no secret that the Israelis are talking because they are prepared to withdraw from the Golan, but the devil is in the details and that is the stage we are at".

Those details are to what border the troops withdraw from: the 1967 border, or the original Palestine border with Syria of 1923?

Precious water

Another question is whether part of the border will be made available to the Israelis for the collection of water.

Water is a prized asset in this region, especially to Syria, according to the Syrian writer and commentator Rana Kabbani.

“**Syria is extremely worried about water. It won't reach an agreement without a guarantee of a decent supply**”

"Syria is extremely worried about water because it has had a major drought in the last few years" he said.

Rana Kabbani

"Syria's economy, unlike Israel's, is still agrarian-based, and with its loaded history of conflict with Turkey over water. I think it won't reach an agreement without a guarantee of a decent supply".

That will mean Syria demanding the handover of the source of the Baniyas River, which lies within the Golan territory.

In return Israel wants concrete security safeguards - possibly in the form of semi-militarised advance warning posts inside the Golan and elsewhere.

For Israel, normalised relations with Syria would grant it one clear benefit - the freedom to withdraw with impunity

from the 'buffer' territory in southern Lebanon.

This border area, patrolled by Israeli troops, has cost it billions of dollars and many lives in the approximately 18 years Israel has been there.

Israel would probably be relieved to pull out now that the Syrian-backed Lebanese Hezbollah guerrilla group is no longer a threat.

“

The people of Israel will have to be convinced that paying the price of withdrawal is worthwhile

”

Moshe Fogel

But Syria must first prove its serious desire for peace, according to Israeli Government spokesman Moshe Fogel:

"The Syrian Government must convince the Israeli electorate that it is in our interest to end the conflict - we can only be convinced if the Syrians completely and totally change their attitudes."

Historic time

President Clinton and his Secretary of State Madeleine Albright worked hard to push both camps towards a deal at last month's preliminary talks.

In the past their influence has been central in keeping the peace process alive.

“

We are all prepared to roll up our sleeves and really work hard

”

Madeleine Albright

Mrs Albright does not expect these talks to conclude quickly however. "I'm sure there will be more than one round in this," she

said.

"We are all aware how problematic the issues are, but obviously we are all very much seized with the idea that this is an historic time."

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Guest Editorial

DOWN FROM THE HEIGHTS: LAMENTATIONS OF A ZIONIST DOVE

By Ralph Seliger

Once again, the peace process has proved to be long on process and short on third or fourth time, Syria's President Assad has found a way to reject Israel's of from the Golan Heights. The latest round of bloodshed in Lebanon is not neces doing (he does not fully control Hezbollah), but the anti-Semitic tirade about the Syria's government-controlled press clearly is.

Assad has yet to prove that he understands what negotiations really are. Insistin signed commitment to withdraw to the pre-June 1967 line before discussing all the issue is at best a pressure tactic, at worst a propaganda ploy. And Israel is f pointing out that the 1967 line includes small but critical areas along the Sea of Syria took by force of arms in 1948. There is hard bargaining to be done about border should be marked, as well as the kind of security measures and econom relations which Syria should agree to in return for the Golan.

Likewise, it is legitimate to negotiate on the fate of the communities which Israe the Golan at the explicit behest of their government and, unlike in the West Ban widespread support of most of the political spectrum. As has been widely noted approximately 14,000 Israelis who have made the Golan their home are not the uncompromising hardliners who constitute a prominent element of the West Ban population. For example, the Golan is the only area beyond the 1967 Green Lin members of the left- wing and very dovish Kibbutz Artzi or National Kibbutz Fed merging with the United Kibbutz Movement) established new kibbutzim.

Although these kibbutzniks have from the outset declared a willingness to leave return for a real peace with Syria, peace would only be strengthened if Israelis a businesses were allowed to remain while acknowledging Syrian sovereignty. It i many would choose to remain under Syrian rule, but this concrete fact of Israeli existence would greatly improve the new post-war climate and provide a signific stagnant Syrian economy.

There is no inherent reason why the highly successful Golan Heights Winery, fo the ski resort at Mt. Hermon, and the other enterprises of 24 factories and 28 kib moshavim could not benefit both Israelis and Syrians. Syria could derive benefit taxation, rent payments, and through a spate of employment and investment op its people. The notion of such cooperation may be a pipedream; Syria has alrea opposition, but any peace which would require total evacuation by Israel would would be immeasurably more difficult to sell to the electorate in the promised re. Barring a radical change in the nature of the Syrian state, the most compelling r to return the Golan Heights to Syria is to secure the Lebanese border. If Syria d cannot prevent violence along that border, there is no enormous incentive for ls beautiful and productive region. Hopefully, Prime Minister Barak will comply with


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beautiful and productive region. Hopefully, Prime Minister Barak will comply with withdraw from southern Lebanon by July of this year, if not sooner. Then, it cou clear to Syria that if violence continues from the Lebanese side, Israel remains o indefinitely. Instead of Israel in effect being held hostage in Lebanon, the pressu squarely on Syria.

An early withdrawal from Lebanon and a flexible but realistically hard line towar actually help progress toward a real peace with the Palestinians. Unlike on the G the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip that the remaining sectors of Israeli militar (misnamed as the "Civil Authority"), settlements and by-pass roads truly oppres of people. For example, since 1967, Israel has demolished 6,000 Palestinian ho 30,000 people homeless. Most of these demolitions are for homes built on Pale land without an official Israeli permit, a document which is rarely granted to Wes Jerusalem Palestinians, and never secured simply or easily.

Home demolitions, along with the bulldozing of olive groves and other Palestinia graphic reminders of the harshness of military rule over a conquered people. De are enforced arbitrarily and without warning. Families may be visited at all hours armed soldiers and police, and given the peremptory command to evacuate the 15 minutes. Even a moment's hesitation out of the shock of the occasion may b "resistance," prompting the forceful dragging and beating of the soon to be hom occupants. Such events have been witnessed by activists of the Israeli Committ House Demolitions, including Prof. Jeff Halper, a Hebrew University anthropolog M.K. Naomi Chazan.

Except for the shocking incident of 300 cave-dwelling bedouins forcibly removed homes near Jerusalem, most of this activity has been suspended by the govern Barak. It is vital for the sake of building a peaceful future with the Palestinian pe actions be finally and totally ended. It is on the West Bank and in Gaza, not on t an end to occupation would lift Israel of a heavy moral and practical burden. Wh boundaries and dimensions of the new Palestinian state in the process of becom important that the Palestinians have a significant contiguous swath of West Ban NOT— as threatened today— as many as 70 island-cantons surrounded by Jew and by-pass roads.

Prime Minister Barak's announced goal of incorporating blocs of settlements wit proper is not unreasonable, but settlements should not make a mockery of the c Palestinian statehood. It is on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip that it is nec Israel's future peace to be secured by the evacuation of at least some Jewish to withdrawal of Israeli rule. Israel's limited political capital to sacrifice for the sake more prudently expended vis-a-vis the Palestinians than the Syrians.

RALPH SELIGER is board secretary and publications chair of Meretz USA. The opinions expres own. A slightly different version has recently been published in the *Philadelphia Jewish Exponen*

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Visits to Gaza

Ezrahi

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Tikkun

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HEADLINE: Remapping the landscape.Special Section: The Rabin Assassination

BYLINE: Ezrahi, Sidra DeKoven

BODY:

The shiva is over. And the shloshim. After the countdown comes the trial, so now is the time for each of us to begin to write our own sentence

The signs of mourning have not been entirely erased by the rains and the routines of life in the aftermath: Hundreds of thousands of spent candles have left congealed wax on pavements, on rocks, on hedges. Dead flowers hang by limp stalks on lampposts and traffic lights. Fragments of poems and prayers cling to walls, kvittlach with petitions and pledges to the slain leader flutter in the wind, held down by wax or pinioned on the needles of pine trees or the spikes of iron fences.

The landscape did change: The rhetoric of hate disappeared for awhile. The bumper stickers with the inflammatory slogans vanished the night after the assassination, their only trace the rivulets of water drying in the morning sun under hundreds of newly scrubbed cars More peace doves flew in the month of mourning on rear windshields than had ever migrated through Israeli skies. The posters announcing activities against "memshelet zadon" ("reign of iniquity") and sporting pictures of Rabin in a kaffiyeh or S.S. uniform were scratched from the bulletin boards and walls. Replaced by huge posters of the same man with the words, "oseh shalom bimromav" (he who makes peace in the heavens....) and "hashalom yikom et damo" (peace will avenge his blood). Draped over the luminescent billboards at intersections advertising new products or coming attractions is a black-and-white announcement: "bemoto tziva lanu et hashalom" (in his death he bequeathed us peace). Every so often one still encounters a poster from "before" with "Rabin rotzeah" (Rabin is a murderer) incompletely covered by a poster announcing "Rabin nirtzah" (Rabin is murdered), forming an eloquent dialogue, a sort of ongoing op-ed in the public square.

These events take on melodramatic dimensions of a scale that only Steven Spielberg could have conceived (pace, Sophocles, Hollywood has overshadowed Athens, even in Jerusalem). Rabin's murder, as we are learning every day, had been inscribed into an unfolding pageant of imprecation, mystification, and holy war. And his death took place in a rare moment of ecstasy and gratification, against a choral backdrop of husky voices singing out of tune.... The most unlikely of martyrs, Yitzhak Rabin emerged, rather belatedly, as father to a country of self-proclaimed orphans. O Captain, my Captain, they kept intoning, as if Whitman had just won the Bialik Prize.

Oddly enough, one thought it was the "People of the Book" who had learned, the hard way, not to take their reading too seriously. Or maybe seriously but not too literally. Like the journey itself - a journey to an ever-deferred end. When the end would come, then it would be time to literalize the verses and the curses. It was the journey, then, that safeguarded the innocuousness, the inefficacy, of words for hundreds and thousands of years. "L'halakha velo lema'aseh" (A matter of theory, not practice), as the rabbis would have it. We are only engaged in an intellectual, hypothetical exercise, calling someone a "moser" (informer, turncoat) as long as we don't have the mechanism or the mandate to enforce the verdict. No one - including many of the rabbis who were preaching that Rabin and his ilk, in their willingness to give up any of the territory of Eretz Yisrael, were "mosrim" and "rodfim" and "rozhim," (traitors, attackers, murderers) - seemed to notice that the young people they were addressing had been raised on the literalization

of the text.

Coming back to the land has meant, for the post-'67 generation, reclaiming the concrete dimension of the Jewish imagination. Baruch Goldstein read a quite literal Megillat Esther and went out on Purim to reenact, in the Tomb of the Patriarchs, the Jewish tale of vengeance in "real time," against today's goyim - who just happened to be twenty-nine Moslems at prayer This past Yom Kippur, Kabbalistic curses written in Aramaic that constituted a contract on Rabin's head were distributed in mainstream synagogues in Jerusalem. (As columnist Lili Gallili wrote in Ha'aretz six weeks after the murder: foreign correspondents keep asking her how you say "puls de mura" in French.) During the weeks and months preceding his decision to kill the Prime Minister, Yigal Amir was hearing from authorities he trusted that Rabin was a "moser" and a "rodef" and he knew that such people must be stopped at all costs, even and up to taking their life. Since, as he was also taught at Bar Ilan and its "Kolel," Rabin's government was not even kosher, relying as it did on an Arab minority for its narrow majority in the Knesset, it was incumbent on all those who had the courage, to carry out the verdict.

These are people for whom the Book of Joshua is, quite simply, a guidebook to twentieth-century "Judea and Samaria." For whom Maimonides, quoted out of context (and where are the genius and flexibility of the rabbinic voices over the generations if not in quoting each other "out of context"?) and deciphered at the convenience of the interpreter (who is not engaging in "politics," God forbid, but in interpretation or translation of divine will), is the highest judge of the moral status and fate of a man who lives some eight hundred years later.

Through a pilgrimage to Jerusalem the likes of which the Holy City had never seen in its "3,000-year" history, the people of this country from every walk of life, Ashkenazim and Sephardim, rich and poor, Hasid and Druze, and many many Arabs who came to pay homage to the dead Prime Minister began to cast out the hideous monster that has evolved from fundamentalist Judaism and xenophobic Zionism. If this country wanted a "referendum" on the peace process, this was it.

And it was not limited to Jerusalem. Folk too young to use the ballot voted with their feet and folk too old to use their feet were wheeled through the local shrines erected around the casket at the Knesset and then at the gravesite on Mt. Herzl, outside the Rabin home, and at the demonstration site in Tel Aviv, and on nearly every corner and crossroad in the country. In their very fragility, these little pedestrian shrines provide an alternate topography to the Tomb of Rachel and the Cave of Machpelah and all the other idolatrous sites of ancestor-worship that have replaced the unique mobility of our collective imagination.

At first, I must admit, it appeared to me that we were embracing a new form of empowered secularism. Back to the early days of the Zionist movement when territory was largely real estate to be purchased - or stolen - but not "reclaimed." But in letting go of the territorial mania it may be, it may just be, that we are finally beginning to reclaim something else that was hijacked from us. Even if the Aramaic words of the Kaddish were badly mispronounced by Rabin's son Yuval (which was, notwithstanding, a rather appropriate tribute to his father, who would surely have stumbled over the same words), the eulogies were in fact saturated with biblical images: "Akedat Yitzhak," Moses at the edge of the Promised Land, "malakhei hasharet," (the heavenly hosts), Yehuda Amichai's allusive verses. The Bible, on which generations of Israelis had been raised and then disenfranchised, has begun to reemerge as a new charter between the generations, along with the blood-stained "shir le-shalom" (Song of Peace) that was folded neatly in Rabin's pocket but proved a less adequate shield than a bullet-proof vest would have been. It is, nevertheless, something very local, very Israeli, something for the Zionists as well as the post-Zionists, the Jews and the Arabs, sons and daughters of Abraham, to share. There was a conspicuous absence, in the local T.V. coverage and in the official proceedings around the funeral, of American Jewish leaders. Some of them were here, we know, as we know that many of them were still smarting from the tongue-lashing to which they were subjected on Rabin's last visit to the United States.

Since the religion which is the only source of collective identity for the Jews in the Diaspora has been implicated in the most hideous crime that this people has ever known, the breach will not be repaired without major and daring acts of redefinition. We cannot, here or there, return Judaism to its pristine state as a religion of the Book, like a genie sent back into the bottle. Maybe there are some places in the world where a "nonpolitical" Judaism can be reconstructed, untainted by the structures of power and the horrors of a sawed-off pistol held by a man wearing a kippah (he did

remove it during the murder ...). Some neo-Hasidic bubbles in protected places that look like Bratslav and have names like Westchester County or Brookline. Or as an intellectual and spiritual exercise that is safeguarded and contained within the confines of "The Text." But I rather doubt it. As one of the commentators said, on television a few days after the assassination, "sinat hehayyim hamithapeset leruhniut" (hatred for life that masquerades as spirituality) is no longer tolerable among those for whom Judaism is still the wellspring of their consciousness and who must contend with its present contaminated condition.

There are endless discussions these days over the airwaves and in the print media about the rhetoric of hate which no one thought would spawn violent deeds. I am only surprised at the surprise. At the masses of people beating their breasts and saying that as of Saturday night, November 4, 1995, Israel became a different place. Of course it is different. Yitzhak Rabin is dead. But evidently most of the people in this country needed a major symbolic event to teach them what had been staring us in the face for a long time: that the poison was just waiting for the first public (=Jewish!!) victim. Emile Grunzweig, the graduate student in political science at the Hebrew University who, just days before his assassination at a Peace Now rally thirteen years ago, had submitted a seminar paper pleading for a public discourse with "words, not swords," knew it. We who had our lives threatened by the "Sicarians," who spent hours and hours at street-corner demonstrations over the past two decades being spat upon and cursed, told that it was a shame that the Nazis didn't get us and our families, that our mothers and our daughters were whores, knew it. All of us who watched in horror as the crowds in the demonstration of the "nationalist" camp chanted "Rabin boged" (Rabin is a traitor) and held up posters of our Prime Minister in Nazi uniform, knew it.

And of course the Palestinians knew it. They have been dying for years, but not being part of the "tribe," their deaths did not desecrate the communitarianism that drew strict boundaries between Us and Them and never allowed a true civil society to evolve in the Jewish State. Overnight, it is true, an intimacy seemed to reemerge within a community that had not lost its nostalgia for a Gemeinschaft in which everyone spoke Yiddish or Judeo-Arabic or Ladino But if it is to succeed, this new solidarity cannot revert to some romantic and anti-democratic, ghettoized idea of "consensus," but to something that weaves this society together in a fabric that respects the different colors and textures and ages of our lives. And it is the young people who are demanding it: What has been released into the atmosphere besides the breathlessness of Rabin's generation, of adults weary of war, is the energy of youth who are claiming three-score-and-ten rather than self-sacrifice as their legacy.

After his death, Rabin became much larger than he ever was in life. Those who never forgave him for giving the order to "break bones" during the early months of the Intifada, and those who applauded him for it, cried along with those who registered his change of course from waging war to waging peace as an act of courage greater than any heroism in the battlefield. He became an icon not only of the peace process, but of the yearning for life that young people in this country never allowed themselves to express, even in the early pioneering days. A kind of repository of all the blessings that every individual wishes for himself or herself. What we see is not just hedonism, the desire for a "better life," however legitimate that might be. It is a challenge to one of the last remaining sacred cows of Zionism: "tov lamut be-ad artzenu" (It is good to die for our country"). Whether we believe what we will never know, that those were in fact Yosef Trumpeldor's last words, or whether, like Rabin, his last words (and testament) were: "koev l, aval ze lo nora" ("it hurts, but never mind...") may be the measure of the distance we have come as a country and as an aggregate of hurting and hurtful individuals

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Mehol Haharadot (The Fatal Embrace), by Meron Benvenisti. Maxwell-Macmillan-Keter; 168 pp.

Why is it invariably so much more fun to read Benvenisti's books on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict than those of his academic counterparts? I think that at least part of the answer is that Benvenisti's merciless determinism belongs less to the intellectual disciplines of modern historiography or the social sciences and more to the literary genre of Greek tragedy. Benvenisti's idea of reality is too clear, one-dimensional and rhetorically decisive to be useful in careful intellectual analysis of complex social and political phenomena. Because social scientists and historians employ much more subtle and underdetermined concepts of the real, they must forgo the dramatic effects that Benvenisti achieves. In this narrative of the conflict whose flawless prose is uninterrupted by footnotes or references the protagonists appear innocent of any knowledge of the facts that doom them to a tragic end. Whether they are Arabs or Jews, right-wingers or left-wingers, they are prisoners of myths and illusions that deny them the recognition that their actions are futile, and the process of self- and mutual destruction irreversible. By contrast, Benvenisti and the readers of his books are privy to such privileged knowledge, which allows them to sit in the theater of this Middle Eastern drama like the audience of a Sophoclean tragedy and witness the actors on the stage as they move inexorably toward their end. Benvenisti's basic argument, updated in his new book to include recent events, is well-known: The Arab-Israeli conflict is basically a war between communities, not states, and is a profound "existential" struggle over the foundational principles of the respective groups.

The logic of such a chronic, irreconcilable conflict is bound to defy any attempts to resolve it by institutional arrangements or agreements among states. Even direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians are unlikely to result in a process leading to a resolution. The late Prof. Dan Horowitz, of the Hebrew University, also published widely on the subject of inter-communal struggles, seeking to illuminate the continuities and discontinuities between the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and other instances of communal wars. Both Horowitz and Benvenisti point to the threat that communal conflicts pose to state authority, and the potentially destructive effects of "communal armed organizations" vigilante groups of the very kind the Israeli government is now licensing for the first time in the settlements. In contrast to Horowitz's qualified language, however, Benvenisti's notion of a historically irreversible process of confrontation entails implicit claims of foreknowledge that are no less fantastic and intellectually indefensible than the ideas of the utopian optimists whom Benvenisti castigates. The complexities of this conflict resist easy formulas or reductionist theories. It seems more reasonable to view the situation as consisting of constantly shifting convergences between several sub-conflicts among communities, states, cultures, religions, international forces and economic interests. Benvenisti is certainly right to emphasize the increasing saliency of the inter-communal war, but - contrary to his view - the Gulf War and the peace talks between Israel and the other parties to the conflict indicate, at the very least, the powerful presence in this drama of other actors who obey a significantly different logic. Yet any reader of these lines who would infer that while Benvenisti's book is engaging and is not particularly instructive, will miss my point. The fact that he carries his thesis beyond the boundaries of judgments informed by the humble acknowledgment of the unpredictable does not mean that his perspective is without valuable insights. Benvenisti, formerly a deputy mayor of Jerusalem, was director of the now-disbanded West Bank Data Project. Author of "Conflicts and Contradictions" and other works, he is one of the most astute commentators on the Palestinian-Israeli problem, whose familiarity with the occupied territories and penetrating intuition can be matched by very few experts.

The impact of his books in Israel and abroad suggests that his mode of writing has value in focusing public debate on some of the most enduring elements of the Arab-Israeli problem. In "The Fatal Embrace," he forcefully presents a position that, despite its flaws, should be entertained by any sophisticated observer of Middle Eastern politics. The gravity of his conclusions, while excessive, nevertheless illuminates the harsh and tragic elements of this bloody conflict. In addition, Benvenisti makes some particularly instructive observations on the socio-political and ideological aspects of the Israeli position, such as when he explores the deeper links between the isolationism of the leaders of the Israeli right wing and their moral immunity to the analogies between the dual system developed in the territories and apartheid. While I find Benvenisti's polemical style refreshing, it seems to lead him to simplify the positions of those he sees as his adversaries - and even of those who are his political allies. A characteristic illustration is his constant attacks on what he regards as the wishful thinking and naive optimism of the left. Benvenisti clearly fails to distinguish between optimism as a quality that may or may not be warranted by political analysis and optimism as a necessary element in the operational code of all reformers and seekers of change. Fortunately, Benvenisti is not himself a hopelessly consistent pessimist. In his concluding remarks, he expresses some faith in the possibility that actors who understand reality may actually be able to change it by rational means. But this sudden illumination comes too late in the book to spoil the reader's absorption in the drama of an Israeli-Palestinian tragedy.

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BYLINE: Efron, Noah J.

BODY:

"We shall know how to keep the rabbis in their synagogues, and our generals in their barracks," Theodor Herzl wrote of his Judenstaat. Add to that keeping the socialists on their kibbutzim, and you've got the desideratum of Rubber Bullets, Yaron **Ezrahi's** memoir-cum-political criticism about growing up Israeli and, ultimately, about Israelis growing up. **Ezrahi** believes that Herzl's brash confidence that ideologues of different stripes could easily be kept in check was misplaced, or at least well ahead of its time. Most of the hundred years since Herzl first proposed a Jewish state have seen various collectivist ideologies claiming, with great success, the hearts and minds of *eretz yisraelim*, Jews born in "the land of Israel."

These ideologies were until recently so pervasive and so adept at creating collective allegiance, **Ezrahi** argues, that they prevented individual Israelis from developing sturdy private identities. Israel's history, refracted by these ideologies, was epic - in different versions messianic, eschatological, or utopian - and it transcended and overshadowed the petty private histories of mere individuals. To be Israeli was to participate in something larger than life and more important than any particular life, including one's own. To be an Israeli was to sway, **Ezrahi** writes, to "the epic chorus that silenced the lyrical voice of the self. Only after the Six-Day War did the hold of totalizing ideologies (and the epic history they engendered) slacken somewhat, and only with the start of the intifada a decade ago, was their psychological hegemony seriously challenged. As the image of Israel as an embattled David became harder and harder to sustain (given Israel's patently Goliathine might), many Israelis' confidence in the heroism of their unfolding history was shaken.

Ezrahi nicely observes that nothing marks the end of Israel's epic history better than the introduction of rubber bullets to fight Palestinian protesters in the intifada. Rubber bullets, though they can be lethal, are meant to control and subdue, not to kill. Rubber bullets are used against civilians, not enemy soldiers. They limit force, implying that in the battle between Jewish soldiers and Palestinians, the danger is not of Jews having too little power, but rather of indiscriminately using too much, discrediting the heroic view of beleaguered Jews struggling against implacable enemies. Once this axiom of Israel's epic history is given the lie, other revisions follow in tow. For the first time, many Israelis have now begun to see their foundational ideologies and their foundational mythologies as a sham. They have turned away from collectivist vision, and increasingly sought to cultivate the self, enlisting in what **Ezrahi** calls "the counterrevolution of the Israeli individual." It is only now that we Israelis are, as Marlo Thomas sang, "free to be you and me." After one hundred years of Zionism and fifty years of statehood, Israelis are finally able to effect the frame of mind necessary for liberal democratic values to thrive.

Though the influence of the old era can still be felt, particularly in the rhetoric and rejectionism of the religious right, **Ezrahi** is persuaded that better, less ideologically fraught times are upon us.

Ezrahi, who teaches political science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, is a fatuously affable mensch and a widely-respected public intellectual and peace activist. *Rubber Bullets* combines these different aspects of his persona, intertwining personal memoirs, social criticism and political analysis. This combination is appropriate, because one of **Ezrahi's** most potent points, and one of his most vigorous complaints, is that for Israelis the personal is always fused with the social and political, producing - like Brundel-fly in the sci-fi classic - monstrously amalgamated identities. In Israel, it is hard to tell where you end and the country begins. In its form and content, **Ezrahi's** book captures this fact well. Indeed, the stories of **Ezrahi's** own childhood in Palestine and Israel - he was eight when Ben-Gurion declared the establishment of the state - are the most arresting part of the book. Growing up epic, it turns out, can be cruel.

Ezrahi's most wistful anecdotes concern his family. His grandfather, an early Hebrew scholar named Mordechai Krichevsky, paid close attention to the four-year-old **Ezrahi**, but had little interest in what the boy thought or who he was. **Ezrahi's** relationship with his father, Yariv, was close, but here too, communal ideologies got in the way. Yariv was a musician and music teacher, a vocation of which **Ezrahi** was proud but ambivalent. He imagined his father as a sort of warrior, yet the eight-year-old **Ezrahi** could not help but notice that his father fell short of the Israeli soldierly ideal.

Many years later, this ideal would come between **Ezrahi** and his own son, Ariel. As Ariel neared induction, **Ezrahi** found himself hoping that his son would fail his physical, that they find "some defect, not serious but sufficient to disqualify" Ariel from serving in crack combat units. In the weeks before Ariel was to go to basic training, **Ezrahi** toured the United States with his son, choosing the Grand Canyon as a backdrop to warn Ariel about the ideological indoctrination he was about to receive in the Army. When Ariel rejected his arguments against the occupation, **Ezrahi** realized with a start, perhaps a touch condescendingly, that Ariel and his friends would be sent off to the army "before they had been able to distinguish themselves as individuals from the larger society and even from their own high school group."

The collectivist ideology would have its day, distancing father from son, just as it had distanced **Ezrahi** from his own father.

Ezrahi also shows how collective commitments infiltrate not just one's family but also one's very self. When he was ten, visiting family friends on kibbutz Gvat, he set out with a group of kibbutz children to a nearby reservoir. When they arrived, the other boys and girls stripped naked, **Ezrahi** alone wearing a bathing suit: "I was left with a sense of irrecoverable loss, painfully accepting my stigma as an outsider. I was clearly and irremediably a city boy, a native of that inferior place where money is paramount and fallen people live." This is a poignant realization, and it took its toll on young **Ezrahi**. Two years later, he woke up from a nap frightened and disoriented: "I did not recognize anything around me or remember who I was and why I was there. I'll never forget the terror as I felt I was moving in the void." What is striking about this is that it was "a liberating moment, a fleeting escape from my dense collectivized and historicized consciousness, a seductive invitation to a trip outside the Jewish-Zionist epic." When a total, terrifying loss of self is a relief, something is clearly wrong. As **Ezrahi** puts it:

"To be born in Tel Aviv in 1940 and turn eight about four weeks before the Declaration of Israel's Independence was...to be dwarfed by a narrative stretching between catastrophe and redemption. It could dry up an early appreciation for anything personal, for private language, private space, private time, even private life."

Ezrahi observes with understandable relief that this stultifying communalism is quickly fading now. Many Israelis are increasingly repelled from ideology-driven politics toward more pragmatic approaches.

One must agree with **Ezrahi** that Israelis are at the same time gravitating toward bourgeoisie pleasures with greater gusto than ever before - annual junkets abroad, for instance, are now almost de rigeur - and the pursuit of these pleasures is less at odds with the prevailing ethos than it used to be. The new cultural heroes are not generals, farmers, or scholars; they are investment bankers and stock and securities traders. The arts can no longer be relied upon for hortatory representations of Zionist ideology. Acclaimed movies like *Life According to Agfa* or *The Revenge of Itzik Finkelstein* portray seamy institutions that leave Israelis emotionally and morally vacant. Aviv Geffen, a teen rock idol, threatens to kill himself if drafted, and advises his groupies to leave the country after the assassination of Rabin and election of Netanyahu. Each year for over a decade, it has become more difficult for the army to persuade soldiers to

agree to become officers; even as standards have been lowered, too few have come forward. Over the same period, the number of young men and women studying law has exploded, and the number of law schools has more than doubled. The army of young lawyers in the major cities of Israel is not, as a group, seeking to advance the public interest. The kibbutz movement has settled into a state of perpetual crisis, with several kibbutzim closing their doors or privatizing, and others doing away with rules limiting private property and ensuring equality of means and opportunity. And Israeli academia, where **Ezrahi** spends most of his time, is experiencing a frenzy of "demythologizing" of Israeli and Jewish history.

Like the story of growing up when communalism was at its most vigorous, the story of the decline of communalism is one that **Ezrahi** tells with elan. But just what were these ideologies, what accounts for their hold on *eretz yisraelim* for most of the past hundred years, and what accounts for the weakening of that hold? Here **Ezrahi's** account is less convincing. Liberal individualism did not develop in Jewish Palestine and Israel, **Ezrahi** finds, because it was suffocated from the start by zealots and zealotry. He writes that "an Israeli society shaped and led by Eastern European nationalists, socialists, and religious Zionists (all representing highly collectivist variants of the cultures of Judaism) was thoroughly inhospitable to the values of self-cultivation and unfamiliar with the resources of advanced Western individualism. Jewish immigrants from the Arab countries, while marginalized in other respects, only reinforced these trends in Israeli society."

This statement is the core of **Ezrahi's** j'accuse. It is telling and worth parsing. One of **Ezrahi's** points is that the communalist ideologies from which Israel derived its political culture were nationalism (by which he seems to mean the revisionist nationalism, or corporatism, of Jabotinsky and his followers), socialism, and orthodox Judaism. Though quite different from each other, these ideologies had much in common. They were planted in the Holy Land by Ostjuden, and, except perhaps for socialism, later fortified by Sefaradim - together an unholy alliance of *declassé* Jews who never had a chance to absorb Western civility. The three great Israeli ideologies all funded "epic histories," and though the themes of these histories differed for each ideology, all three "converged in diminishing the individual".

But if these ideologies are the cause of diminished individualism, they are at the same time also its effect. Because, and this is another of **Ezrahi's** important points, each of these ideologies traces its roots back to "the cultures of Judaism," in which the individual is all but invisible. **Ezrahi** observes that Israelis lack the sense of self to produce true autobiographies (finding that the autobiographies of Moshe Dayan, Abba Eban, Shimon Peres, Golda Meir, and Yitzhak Shamir do not address the inner life of their authors nor do they provide honest, reflective narrative of the writing, or speaking, self). This, he explains, reflects the fact that "Hebrew culture from its classical period to the present...has a distinct poverty of autobiography as a viable literary genre". **Ezrahi** attributes this fact to the "secondary status of the individual in Judaism.... The meaning of [the Jew's] life is absorbed in collective structures and collective myths." The durability of these collective myths owes to another feature of the "cultures of Judaism": their "collectivist counter-liberal orientation" toward what **Ezrahi** revealingly calls "the burden of the past."

It was traditional Judaism, then, that prevented Jews from becoming individuals, forcing them instead into the juggernaut of the Jewish epic. None of this is surprising in light of what **Ezrahi** calls, "the long Judaic tradition of viewing the individual as a member of a community of faith designated by God to carry out a divine mission. In this narrative, the lives of the multitude are cemented by a single superhuman author who inscribes both nature and history: one God, one King, one Kingdom. As a direct challenge to paganism, with its idea of a multiplicity of gods, and kingdoms, Judaism has been a paradigmatic expression of the attempt to privilege a single all-encompassing master narrative."

This Jewish habit-of-mind, to lose oneself in a single "master narrative," persisted even for those early Zionists who rejected God and Halacha. Micah Josef Berdichevski, a radical Marxist Zionist, adopted Nietzsche's notion of "transvaluation" to describe how traditional habits-of-mind might be revived, with new content, in the Jewish homeland. As **Ezrahi** sees it, the "transvaluation" was all too successful; even for Jews who rejected traditional Judaism, the traditional Jewish affinity for "master narratives" survived, be they Marxist or revisionist or whatever else.

What thrived in this ideologically-charged atmosphere was militarism. Though each ideology pointed toward its own utopia, they all agreed that a powerful army was needed to achieve their visions. This elemental agreement did not prevent different armies from arising out of different ideological milieus. In the decades before the state, socialists and

revisionists each built their own militaries, which differed in philosophy and organization. It was only after the revisionists were successfully stronghanded - Ben Gurion's decision to bomb the Altalana being the most shocking example of the long struggle between Jewish armies - that everyone reluctantly fell in behind a single banner. Still, the belief that a powerful military was at once a necessity and a virtue was deeply felt by almost all, regardless of their ideological affiliations. The military was the hub of a rare, profound consensus, and, perhaps owing to this fact, its significance - both practical and spiritual - became an article of faith. It did not take long for the army to become the focus of its own "master narrative" and its own epic history, with mass sacrifice increasing the investment that all Israelis had in the image of their heroic army forging an epic history.

The military "master narrative" soon became the most potent, and universally accepted, of Israel's grand narratives, outstripping the others in influence and allure. This comes as no surprise. What has sometimes been called the "cult of the military" transcended ethnicity, class, and ideology, making possible a heady sort of concordia discordantium among Israel's diverse Jewish population. It also played well to international audiences, cheered to have the image of ruddy Jews in Jeeps replacing the image of emaciated Jews at the fences of Dachau. Its appeal grew further because, for a time, it seemed to have succeeded brilliantly. By the time Israel was established, it was hard to believe that a socialist utopia, or a revisionist one, or a halachic one would win the day. It was far easier to believe that the heroic vision of Jews transformed from victims to victors would be fulfilled. It had been fulfilled. Add to that the fact that the army's achievements had exacted commitment by exacting a price; it had produced thousands of martyrs, so many that almost every Israeli family has paid homage to Israel's military with the blood of loved ones. This mass sacrifice increased the investment that all Israelis had in the image of a heroic army forging an epic history.

The epic history it forged was an epic history for the masses. Its appeal was equally great for the petite bourgeoisie in Tel Aviv like **Ezrahi's** own family, for hard-core ideologues, for Jews from North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, for the DPs and refugees from western Europe, and for the scattered Jews from the Americas, and other far-flung places from where Jews might choose to emigrate to Israel. For these reasons militarism became a most stable and unquestioned feature of Israeli culture and identity - that is, until recently.

Ezrahi traces the weakening of communalism in all its varieties to the unraveling of the military narrative: "Since 1967, if not earlier, the romantic idea of the Israeli army - of armed Jews fighting to secure historic, religious, or metaphysical justice for the Jewish people - has become demystified by individual Jews' experiences of killing and being killed in wars, as well as by the moral ambiguities and ideological contradictions inherent in the encounter between a vision of liberation and the realities of conquest."

Once Israel became, as the pundits like to call it, a "regional superpower", the story-line of vulnerable Jews winning wars against insuperable odds quickly wore thin. As **Ezrahi** sees it, the net effect of the past thirty years of Israeli military predominance and serial political and military misadventures has been to expose Israel's collectivist "master narratives" for the myths they are. With these given the lie, liberal individualism finally had an opportunity to grow.

Ezrahi's accounts are right in many ways, but he oversimplifies. **Ezrahi** exaggerates the moral dimension of the ennui felt by most Israelis suppressing the Palestinian uprising, or watching its suppression on television. Israelis were morally outraged, say, when a foreign cameraman captured a soldier beating bound Palestinian children. But for most Israelis, the intifada did not so much change their moral analysis of the occupation, as it did their cost-benefit analysis. The intifada enervated all but led only a very few to alter their philosophical or ideological commitments.

Reading Rubber Bullets, one gets the feeling that the Israeli communalist ethos collapsed because Israelis, sick and tired of policing and occupying, finally found the gumption to do as the bumper sticker advises: question authority. But other factors deserve more of his attention. The Camp David Accords, which **Ezrahi** barely mentions, shattered many Israelis' belief that Arab rejectionism was inevitable. The vigorous opposition of most of the West to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and to Israel's settlement policy throughout the '80s, and to Israel's reaction to the intifada all dampened enthusiasm within the country towards these policies. So did Israel's growing affluence. The collapse of communism also dramatically changed the balance of powers in the Middle East. Many more factors could be mentioned that, looked at together, would weaken the morality play at the heart of Rubber Bullets.

Ezrahi also exaggerates the role the nationalist, religious, and socialist "master narratives" played in Israeli culture.

All the ideologues of all colors, taken together, long ago became a minority. In the cafes of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Haifa, the commitments to revisionism, Judaism, and socialism - though they may have produced strongly felt affinities - were hardly demanding and hardly prevented the development of robust selves. The majority of workaday *eretzyisraelim* were people who did not entirely buy into one or another of the utopian narratives that dominated much of *eretzyisraeli* literature and political rhetoric.

Ezrahi vastly overstates the extent to which Israelis were zombified by "master narratives" of any and all ideologies. Although self-sacrifice was a highly-valued ethos, and although Israelis to this day can exhibit unparalleled empathy (witness the national mourning that followed last month's helicopter crashes), Israelis can also be an eccentric bunch. If a me-first sort of individualism has been frowned upon, a certain devil-may-care individuality has long been admired. **Ezrahi** may find Israelis flat and superficial, their conversation "innocent of probing reflection," but others would argue that Israelis are just as often ebullient, profound, and insightful.

Ironically, **Ezrahi** overstates his case in order to craft a single, coherent, and rather heroic story. *Rubber Bullets* is a saga of Israelis finally rising from their "self-imposed nonage" - as Kant famously put it in *Was ist Aufklärung?* This is a saga of daring free thinkers ignoring the crushing pressure to conform. It is Exodus meets the Fountainhead, and it's so epic that it ought have been filmed by Cecil B. De Mille.

Ezrahi's story has everything that one could ask for of epic history. It has heroes: "There is no more daring or difficult act," he writes, "for an individual to undertake than to step outside the bounds of the prevailing universe of meaning, the institutionalized modes of ordering and interpreting experience." It has moral growth: "When more enlightened Israelis started slowly to draw a line separating liberation from conquest, our country from theirs...self-delusion began to give way to collective self-(re)formation." It has the battle between good and evil: It is the battle "between individualism and collectivism, liberalism and nationalism, democratic and messianic politics, between minimalistic and maximalistic conceptions of military force." And it is a battle of historic importance, "a profound struggle over the soul of Israel, over the very conceptions of politics and power in contemporary Israel."

Like most epic stories, **Ezrahi's** has a moral: strong commitment to shared ideals is stifling and infantilizing. This moral encapsulates a theory about human nature, that humans thrive when unencumbered by communal obligations, when freed to be "ironists," the term, **Ezrahi** borrows from Richard Rorty (from his essay, "Private Irony and Liberal Hope," in *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*) to describe people who have become "skeptical of the very attempt to regard any idea, narrative, or claim as unambiguously or decidedly superior to all others." **Ezrahi's** moral also embodies the theory that what constitutes a "good society" is one that ensures for its members what Isaiah Berlin called "negative liberty," liberty, "the right of individuals to pursue their own appetites, whatever they may be, so long as they do not infringe upon anyone else's rights. These theories are the foundational dogmas of **Ezrahi's** book.

Such dogmas account in part for **Ezrahi's** antipathy for the "ideologies" and ideologues that held such sway for the first generations of Zionism and for the epic histories they produced; for their achievements, failings, strengths and frailties. Though Zionists proved themselves capable of great cruelties -to other Jews and especially to Palestinians - they also produced astonishing achievements. Zionists like **Ezrahi's** grandfather did revive Hebrew as a throbbing language, and as the foundation of a new literature, and a new culture. They did absorb hordes of Jews from everywhere and nowhere, many Emma-Lazarus forlorn, and provided them relative safety and prosperity in a Jewish state. This Jewish state is a democracy. And they did create an astonishing army that forever changed the way Jews view their own strength.

One doesn't have to buy the picture-postcard account of any of these achievements. Israeli revisionist historians - we call them the "new historians" - are feverishly rewriting the hagiographic accounts of all these achievements that were for generations the standard accounts of Zionist history. Hebrew literature and language were laden with ideology and propaganda. The ingathering of Jews was a highly selective affair, and immigration and absorption policies and priorities reflected Eurocentrism, at best, and often downright racism. Israel is prosperous because of the systemic exploitations of occupied Palestinians, and it is a democracy only if one ignores the millions of disenfranchised Palestinians whose fate it controls. The army has been an instrument of murder, vicious repression, and massive confiscation of lands - much of it calmly premeditated - since before the state was declared.

All of this is sobering, and depressing but not enough to dismiss, to ignore, or to forget that there was something splendid - yes, even heroic - about the old ideologues and their old ideologies. Yet **Ezrahi** has nothing but scorn, for example, for kibbutzim: they foster conformity, discourage creativity, engender flatness of emotion, the ability to mourn not individuals or instances but only cohorts killed in this or that given war. Although there is much to criticize and find disenchanting about kibbutzim, it takes a steely resolve not to see something sumptuous about the effort to create a better society, more equal, more free, more productive than any that had come before. One can easily criticize the naivete or the failed execution, or even the vision itself, but only a willful contrarian can fail to appreciate - to be moved by - the passion and earnest self-sacrifice of the early kibbutzniks.

Ezrahi's antipathy for the "ideologies" of Zionism goes well with his affection for America and American individualism. **Ezrahi** admires American political culture because its politics are dehistoricized and deideologized, and because its unit of analysis is always and only the individual. Surely the state of American civic and political society is tenuous enough that **Ezrahi** should be more circumspect in his enthusiasm. **Ezrahi** approvingly quotes Tocqueville time and again, seemingly unaware of Tocqueville's own ambivalence about the American culture he observed so well. (One need not be Robert Bellah or Robert Putnam to suspect that American individualism has its downside.) **Ezrahi's** exuberance, deaf to the constant oy-oy-oying about the decline of American values and collapse of civil society, seems positively Panglossian.

An admirable society, John Stuart Mill suggested in *On Liberty*, would be convivial to "a person whose desires and impulses are...the expression of his own nature, as it has been developed and modified by his own culture." **Ezrahi's** complaint is that Israel had denied its citizens of their own nature, shattering them with so much communalist ideology from cradle to grave. Though **Ezrahi** describes vividly the hardships of growing up in a demanding society, his complaint still rankles because he assumes that ideological and religious commitments are always at odds with one's own "true" nature. **Ezrahi** is, as a result, deeply suspicious of the strongly held beliefs of most Israelis, beliefs founded in Zionism, Judaism, socialism, or whatever. He wrongly assumes that those who have rejected such beliefs are more evolved, less oppressive and more mature than the rest. He is condescending, seeing those who cling to ideological commitments and to strong civic identities as brainwashed, or as primitives, or as having tragically gone "local" by accepting Middle Eastern mores instead of superior western European ones.

The history of Israel need not be written as a history of dupes and somnabulist ideologues. It can just as easily be written as the history of a society that engendered among people of countless backgrounds and countless points of view a remarkable commitment to common goals and pride in common achievements. Circumstances have changed greatly in the past generation, and this commitment and pride are fading. The fact that communalism in Israel is deteriorating may have good effects, as **Ezrahi** has argued. Still, **Ezrahi's** alchemy - distilling this ambivalent fact into unalloyed virtue - reflects a stunning lack of sympathy for the dreams of Israel's founders and the hopes of most Jewish Israelis today.

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By Yaron **Ezrahi** Farrar Straus Giroux. 308 pp. \$25.00.

Soon after Mordechai Krichевsky arrived in Palestine at the end of the 19th century, he adopted the surname **Ezrahi**--from the Hebrew for "citizen." Today, Yaron **Ezrahi** wonders whether his grandfather was conscious of the deep symbolic meaning of this choice. "He probably could not have anticipated the ambivalence of at least one of his grandsons, who would share his enthusiasm for and commitment to the privileges of citizenship for Jews but would feel an equally insistent impulse to keep the family domain separate from the public space and public duties."

A senior fellow at the Israel Democracy Institute, **Ezrahi** has written an eloquent, often personal account of a not often talked about transformation in the way Israelis see themselves: Where once citizens were taught their individual lives mattered only insofar as they were actors in the collective Zionist drama of return and redemption, the special meaning of private existence is now ever more assertively permeating life.

Ezrahi explores how this emerging individualism has allowed many Israelis--among them the late Yitzchak Rabin--to view the "land for peace" equation as something other than a betrayal of the Zionist dream. Rubber Bullets would be worth reading for this nuanced analysis alone, but the author renders an additional service by painting a picture of a country that is defined by more than its military and political struggles (thus avoiding a shortcoming of many other important works). This book is less about policy than it is about people.

Israel's impoverished culture of the self resulted from a confluence of factors: religious and cultural traditions that elevate communal values; collectivist social engineering; and living in a land literally strewn with reminders of the biblical Jewish commonwealths. During modern Israel's formative period, observes **Ezrahi**, even the national language tended to militate against self-expression. Hebrew, an ancient tongue revived, "was not a suitable medium for communicating personal thoughts or feelings." It was "thick with layers of majestic, biblical, midrashic, or literary style." And of course, living under constant external pressure, Israelis were understandably driven to identify strongly with the state.

Probably the most powerful influence on the way Israelis have seen their role in society was the socialism at the core of mainstream Zionism. Nowhere was this more evident than in the country's distinctive collective settlements. Although the kibbutz communities have never accounted for more than a tiny minority of the population, says **Ezrahi**, they have played a "pivotal role in projecting ideals of altruism, camaraderie, self-sacrifice, voluntarism, patriotism, and a high work ethic." Not surprisingly, many of Israel's more celebrated military and political leaders came from kibbutzim.

While children in the cities were never reared communally, as they once were on the kibbutz, many were drawn into the socialist youth movements. And as the author recalls from his own childhood, students were often required to wear uniforms and parents "were told not to send their children to school with expensive fruit or foodstuffs which other families might not be able to afford." **Ezrahi** does not deny the appeal of these ideals and practices; yet the inevitable consequence, he observes, was a devaluation of individualism.

The collectivist ethos has been extended across society by mandatory Army service. For once recruits don their uniforms the "suppression of individuality" becomes explicit policy. This, of course, is true for any nation's fighting force, and is typically justified by the need for order, discipline and solidarity. But in Israel the military takes on additional roles that make civilian life much "more permeable to the Army's values and mores." Among them are teaching Hebrew to immigrants, educating the underprivileged and rehabilitating ex-convicts.

Some of the author's most thought-provoking insights into the Israeli condition are found in his discussion of nature. In the West, nature has long been conceived as a refuge from society. Jean-Jacques Rousseau went so far as to recommend that children be temporarily removed to the wilderness in order to strengthen their individuality and independence. **Ezrahi** points to America's national parks and nature preserves as manifestations of this romantic ideal; they were established partly in recognition of the need for protected space to allow the "experience of solitude and privacy, for the intimate edifying dialogue between self and nature."

His own country, however, offers no such relief from the multitude: "In Israel, where nature, like a thin layer of dust covering ancient scrolls, is but the back side of human scriptures; where any hill can be a shrine covered by dirt and any valley hide a sunken city; where the earth is but a buffer between past and present; where nature is younger than history, no landscape is a retreat from society and any scenery is but politics in disguise."

A chapter entitled "The Precariousness of Autobiographical Time" examines how the Zionist narrative has tended to crowd out personal ones. An illuminating example is the way in which holidays are observed. The purposeful sequencing of Holocaust Remembrance Day, Memorial Day and Independence Day--on a calendar already filled with Jewish holidays carrying similar subtexts--dramatically reinforces the Zionist narrative passage "from mourning to rebirth, from fall to redemption." Dates of mainly personal significance, by contrast, have generally been downplayed in Israel. Birthdays are customarily marked only for the young, and even then are "celebrated in school for several children at once, rather than as a separate one for each" (a practice that was cruelly apparent to me as a visiting American boy in an Israeli kindergarten).

The remainder of the book charts the course Israelis have taken to bring out what the author calls their "lyrical personal voice." This endeavor has been a difficult, sometimes traumatic one, requiring them to challenge many comfortable "truths." Among these is the notion that there is glory in sacrificing one's life for the national mission. So strong was the impulse to "estheticize ... heroic sacrifice," writes **Ezrahi**, that "as the children raised on the Zionist narrative began to die in the thousands, their own agony and ambivalence were largely repressed." In the wake of the 1973 Yom Kippur War, however, Israelis began to assert their right to "co-author, even rewrite, the story rather than merely to enact it."

According to the "unqualified redemptive versions of Zionism," Israel's battles have all been epic battles, the nation's war-dead have all died epic deaths. And epic death cannot be adequately mourned by the immediate families of the deceased. Thus, efforts to personalize grief and mourning are of great importance to **Ezrahi**. In recent years, he notes, the demystification of death in war even seems to have received the blessings of the government--which once saw itself as the true parent of the soldiers who were lost. On Memorial Day, 1996, instead of broadcasting documentaries that hallowed Israel's war heroes and the bravery of their families, state television "focused on the more strictly private emotional or psychological responses to the absence of the dead men."

The author draws a striking conclusion from this trend: "Because the loss of life is an absolute loss, the gradual spread of the values of individualism has forced Israelis to juxtapose 'there is no other place' with the no less compelling imperative 'there is no other life.'" From there it was scarcely a great leap to question the justice of making others mourn and suffer for the sake of ideals that were no longer sacred. Indeed, it was during the Intifada that Israelis began

to come to terms with the tension between the prerogatives of power and the demands of conscience.

As the Palestinian rioting that erupted on December 8, 1987 in Gaza spread to the West Bank, a debate ensued in Israel about how to classify the violence. To call it a war would have allowed the military to bring its full might to bear against the demonstrators. From the outset, however, Army spokesmen advocated treating it as extreme civil disorder. "They knew better than many of the political leaders," the author writes, "that a policy of shooting civilians, including women and children, would be not only illegal but morally unthinkable for many soldiers." So the soldiers used rubber bullets.

Ezrahi has chosen this mitigating munition as a metaphor for the struggle to uphold the moral basis of Israeli society. While acknowledging that it is "easy to be skeptical of any attempt to 'moderate' the force applied by soldiers to civilians," he believes the use of rubber bullets also represents Israel's "readiness to actually reframe the conflict, to see it not as a war of survival but as a struggle between a civilian population and an occupying force." This transformation of the Israeli body politic helped set the stage for the present peace process. When Yitzchak Rabin was sworn in as Prime Minister in July 1992, he spoke of the Labor Party's determination to "place the citizen at the top of our concerns." It was in this context, says **Ezrahi**, that "the readiness to make territorial concessions made sense."

Critics on the Zionist Right may argue that by focusing so determinedly on how changes in Israel have opened the door to peace, **Ezrahi** implies that the Jewish State is the only significant actor in the Middle Eastern conflict--and in its resolution. Yet the author never denies that real peace can come only with parallel transformation among the Palestinians and the other Arab peoples. His gaze is intentionally, and courageously, turned inward, on Israel and Israelis.

At any rate, peace will merely be an early step toward self-discovery. Israelis have still to resolve the difficult tensions of living in a state whose Declaration of Independence upholds both the particularistic values of Judaism and the universalistic values of liberal democracy.

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RUBBER BULLETS

Power and Conscience
in Modern Israel.

By Yaron **Ezrahi**.

308 pp. New York:

Farrar, Straus & Giroux. \$25.

SINCE the day the radical bourgeois took their seats to the left of the conservative aristocrats in the French revolutionary assembly more than 200 years ago, we have been stuck with a political image that obscures more than it illuminates. The terminology of "liberal" and "conservative" is almost as confusing and fruitless. That applies not least in Israel, with its stereotypes of "right-wing" nationalists and religious zealots opposed by a secular liberal left.

On the face of it, Yaron **Ezrahi** fits conventional categories: academic liberal, leftist, peacenik. On the face of it also, "Rubber Bullets" covers the well-trodden ground of Israeli-Palestinian relations and Israel's inner conflicts. In fact, this is one of the most original and stimulating books about Israel and Zionism for a long time. The title refers to the bullets, metal coated with rubber, adopted during the Palestinian uprising of the late 1980's by Israeli forces willing to wound but afraid to strike dead. Mr. **Ezrahi** takes this as a metaphor.

He sees that "the rubber bullet was, of course, a fantasy that could be neither effective enough militarily nor morally acceptable against stone-throwing Palestinians." He wonders whether the rubber bullets were meant to spare those at whom they were fired, "or, rather, to protect the tender souls of Israeli soldiers." And yet he still believes that the way Israel dealt with the uprising marked a genuine turning point in attitudes.

Even this is almost peripheral to the true theme of his book, which is as much a challenge to the left as to the nationalist right. What he says is of particular interest to American readers, since it sheds further light on the great, albeit often unrecognized, gulf between the Jewish state and Jewish America, which for so long gave its heart to a country about which it actually knew very little. His argument could be said to turn on the word "liberalism."

There is a sense in which almost all Americans are liberals, not excluding the neocons who use that word as a curse, but this is not the usual journalistic sense of the word. That's to say, Americans believe instinctively in a pluralist, individualistic, open society. Jewish Americans may have been (and remain) to the left of the American average. But even when many of them were more openly critical of materialistic capitalism than they are now, they found themselves thriving in a country whose underlying value was liberal individualism. American culture has always stressed individual fulfillment over duty owed to the state; the nation's very founding creed was "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Which was just what Zionism rejected. In that same sense of the word, Israel was deeply illiberal in its origins. Although it was a free country, it was also for long much the most collectivized society outside the Communist bloc. Only a small (and now reduced) minority of Israelis ever lived on a kibbutz, but the kibbutz epitomized the Zionist attempt "to create and shape the Israeli-born Jew as a new kind of Jew."

Looking back, you don't have to be a crazed militiaman or an Ayn Rand to be dubious about that attempt. The kibbutz meant not merely socialist production and collectivized agriculture but socialist family life and collectivized child rearing. Parents saw almost nothing of their own children, children were encouraged to think of the kibbutz itself as their mother and father, and the most despised value of all was privacy.

Mr. **Ezrahi** describes brilliantly how Zionism came to devalue the Western ideals of individual happiness and self-realization. Some of this stemmed from circumstances. Life under siege, "coupled with a delayed reaction to the Holocaust, reinforced the tendency to idealize state power and weakened the force of liberal-democratic principles." But more stemmed from Zionist ideology, with its heroic collective national narrative that denied "cultivating the solitary self, the lyrical personal voice of the individual."

Indeed, there are three versions of this narrative. Orthodox religion sees the lives of the multitude "cemented by a single superhuman author who inscribes both nature and history." National Zionism sees the Jew as a member of a persecuted minority, and the fate of the individual as determined by membership in the group "rather than by personal resources, talents or chance." And socialist Zionism adds its own version. The combination is

formidable.

Sometimes Mr. **Ezrahi** seems hard on his country. Even the title, with its scope for irony and skepticism, is a reminder that Israel does have the conscience as well as the power of his subtitle. Some of us who once covered South Africa will recall the Afrikaner police chief rounding on a reporter: "Listen, man, we will fire rubber bullets when they throw rubber rocks." Better rubber bullets than the plain kind against riotous crowds; if they seem hypocritical, isn't hypocrisy what La Rochefoucauld called "the homage vice pays to virtue"?

Again, to illustrate the suppression of the individual in Israel, Mr. **Ezrahi** observes that "autobiography -- as the voice of the first person singular, of the self-reflecting, self-narrating individual, not as a soldier or missionary of a particular collective -- has not flourished in Jewish or Zionist culture." The memoirs of Moshe Dayan, Abba Eban, Shimon Peres, Golda Meir and Yitzhak Shamir "do not address the inner life of their author, nor do they provide honest, reflective narrative of the writing, or speaking, self."

He is right about those books. He is wrong in thinking this peculiar to Israel or its politicians. Mr. **Ezrahi** should try some of the equivalent books from my own country. The dire category of modern political autobiography has recently produced a subgenre -- the memoirs of British cabinet ministers of the 1980's -- outstanding even in this field for self-importance, self-justification and lack of self-honesty, not to mention sheer tedium (one of these Tory autobiographers was congratulated by a critic for managing to stay awake while he wrote his book).

Nevertheless, Mr. **Ezrahi's** underlying message is vitally important, and one that only an Israeli could have given. Not only can an Israeli criticize his own society with a candor almost impossible for outsiders, Jewish or gentile, but only an Israeli -- and by his own lights a patriotic one -- could cut through the Zionist rhetoric that perplexes not only anti-Zionists but those who claim to revere Israel. Mr. **Ezrahi** is a professor of political science at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and occasionally writes like one. Mostly he writes not as a scholar, or even as an activist, but as a human being.

A while ago, Michael Kinsley wrote that Jewish Americans envied Israelis for living out history in a way that made the comfort and security of life in New York or Los Angeles seem jejune. This may be so. But "Rubber Bullets" explains why many Israelis -- by no means easily categorized on obvious political lines -- increasingly envy Americans not just their material prosperity but their freedom to pursue happiness and individual destiny.

GRAPHIC: Drawing

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: March 2, 1997

Yaron Ezrahi



Yaron Ezrahi is a professor of Political Science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Professor Ezrahi earned his doctorate in Political Science at Harvard University in 1972. He has written and published extensively on the impact of modern science and technology on democratic governments and the conduct of public affairs. Noteworthy among his publications is his book *The Descent of Icarus, Science and the Transformation of Contemporary Democracy*, published by the Harvard University Press in 1990. He was the co-editor, with Everett Mendelsohn and Howard Siegal, of *Technology, Pessimism and Postmodernism*, published by Kluwer Academic Publishers in 1994. Professor Ezrahi's most recent book is "Rubber Bullets, Power and Conscience in Modern Israel" (Farrar, Straus Giroux, New York 1997 (in Paperback Berkley 1998)). He received the National Jewish book Award for 1997, in the category of Israel and Zionism. Prof. Ezrahi served as the head of the advanced program for the History and Sociology of the Sciences at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and as chairman of the Academic Committee of the Sidney M. Edelstein Center for the History, Philosophy and Sociology of the Sciences at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He was a fellow at the Center of Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University and served as a visiting professor at the universities of Pennsylvania, Harvard and Duke. He also served as consultant to a variety of institutions including The White House (The National Goals Research Stafo, the OECD, The Israel National Academy of Science, and, more recently, the Carnegie Commission on Science and Government. In the context of the Israeli policy, Prof Ezrahi has been active on a number of public issues like, the peace process, the politization of Israel's public and private television, and the state of Israel's system of higher education. Since 1993, Prof. Ezrahi has been a senior fellow at the Israel Democracy Institute in Jerusalem where he directs the project "Mass Communications and the Democratic Process."

X reviews

● Projects and Programs

- Communications and Democracy
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● Titles and Affiliations

- Senior Fellow, The Israel Democracy Institute
- Professor of Political Science, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

● Fields of Research

- Rule of Law
- Constitution Making
- Human Rights
- Political Theory
- Civic Education
- Presidential and Parliamentary Structures
- Public Administration and Policy

● Publications

- *Rubber Bullets: Power and Conscience in Modern Israel*, University of California Press, 1998
- *Gewalt und Wissen- Israels Langer Weg in Die Moderne*, Alexander Fest Verlag. (German)
- "Myths of Information and Democracy" in *Dvarim Ahadim al Tikshoret, Jerusalem* Van Leer, Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House and The Smart Institute of the Hebrew University, 1997, pp. 19-25.
- "Haldane Between Daedalus and Icarus", in *Daedalus on Science and the Future* Dronamraju (ed), Oxford: Oxford University Press, January 1995, pp .64-78.
- "Dewey's critique of Democratic Visual Culture and its Political Implications", in *Philosophical Studies in the History Vision*, Levin, David N.(ed), MIT Press,1997,pp. 315-336.

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Power and Conscience in Modern Israel

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LEVEL 1 - 8 OF 17 STORIES

Copyright 1993 The Jerusalem Post
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September 10, 1993, Friday

SECTION: Features

LENGTH: 870 words

HEADLINE: Israel and the PLO sail along while the US waves from shore

BYLINE: DAVID MAKOVSKY, WASHINGTON

HIGHLIGHT:

US officials are haunted by a sense of deja vu. Not only was the US not involved in directly producing the Middle East breakthrough, but it was actively promoting another diplomatic approach altogether.

BODY:

US officials are haunted by a sense of deja vu. Not only was the US not involved in directly producing the Middle East breakthrough, but it was actively promoting another diplomatic approach altogether.

In 1977, six weeks after the dramatic US-Soviet call for all Arabs and Israelis to attend an international peace conference, Egypt's Anwar Sadat shook the world by making a solo trip to Jerusalem.

Sixteen years later, the US was not at it again. Secretary of State Warren Christopher visited the region to set up a back-channel dialogue between Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Syria's Hafez Assad. Within three weeks, a breakthrough was indeed reached - with the Palestinians.

In a postmortem of where the US went wrong, US officials admitted they had ignored Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.

They saw his Oslo activities as the irrelevant flurry of a person kept at bay by the only man who counts in Jerusalem: Rabin.

The Clinton administration has always viewed Rabin as its "partner." Christopher said barely a word when he met with Peres at the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem early last month.

The administration shifted toward the Syrian track, as both Rabin and the US shared a frustrating few months at the peace table with the Palestinians.

"We were kept informed about Oslo, but our eyes were elsewhere," a senior US official said. Sources say the US was kept informed about Oslo by the Norwegians and through furtive messages from Ambassador to Washington Itamar Rabinovich to US special coordinator for Middle East peace talks Dennis Ross.

Some would say that by going the opposite direction both in 1977 and in 1993, the US unwittingly contributed to progress each time. Sadat went to Jerusalem



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for a variety of reasons, but the timing of his trip may have been linked to a fear of the US bringing the Soviets into the Middle East. The PLO may have been nudged into final concessions by fear, that Christopher was warming up a Rabin-Assad back channel.

But the US did not plan it this way. US officials dismiss as "too clever by half" reports that Christopher's second trip to Damascus in three days last month was a decoy to persuade the Palestinians they had to act since the diplomatic train was leaving the station.

Even after the Oslo deal was arrived at, Christopher showed a distaste for intrigue. He dismissed a plea by Peres during their meeting in California a couple of weeks ago to present the Israel-PLO deal publicly as a US proposal, so as to soften the news to the Israeli and Palestinian publics.

US CREDIBILITY made Oslo possible. Richard Haass, a Bush administration official on the Middle East and a fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said: "The US contributed its share. It won the Cold War, Gulf war, and convened (the) Madrid (peace conference).

"The breakthrough for peace was done by Israel and the PLO. It is a proper division of labor. Peace will not last if it is imposed, but only if the parties are committed."

The US contributed more than just the groundwork, according to Prof. Hisham Sharabi, a Middle East expert at Georgetown University. He said the Palestinians concluded - contrary to the accepted wisdom - that since the Clinton administration was the most pro-Israel in US history, it could not be counted on to pressure Israel to accede to better terms than Jerusalem was willing to offer in negotiations.

Fouad Ajami, a Middle East expert at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, sounded delighted that the old approach appears to be in bad repute. "Pity the pundits. Israel, not the US, motored this locomotive ... A generation of 'peace processors' have theorized that this could not happen without the US leaning heavily on Israel. It shows that history can happen without angst."

Clinton administration officials suggest a high-handed approach may have been suitable in dealing with a Likud government, but not in dealing with a Labor government that sees territorial withdrawal as consistent with Israel's national interest.

It did not hurt that Clinton views foreign policy through a domestic prism and did not want to offend his American Jewish constituency, they say. Distrust and suspicion in the Bush-Likud period has been replaced by Clinton-Rabin trust.

NOBODY SHOULD assume the US will stand and watch diplomacy glide past. The US adhered to a request by Jerusalem to urge Syria not to obstruct the accord. So far, Syria has told the US it will remain neutral, but it has not acceded to a US request to restrain Damascus-based Palestinian rejectionists.

Senior US officials fear that unless Syria is brought in, it will seek to thwart a separate Israeli-PLO accord. Christopher is almost certain to make a



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trip to the Middle East in October and seek to revive the Rabin-Assad back-channel.

And US help is still likely to be needed on the Palestinian track. Sixteen years ago, Sadat embarked on a historic course, but he needed assistance from the US at Camp David to close any deal.

All sides are likely to come to the US for financial aid in one way or another. "The US is tagging behind with her checkbook," Ajami said.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: September 13, 1993



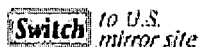
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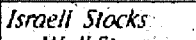
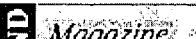
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Tuesday, April 25, 2000

HA'ARETZ Op-Ed

Barak goes nowhere fast

By Yoel Marcus

The mayor of Haifa, Amram Mitzna, says that Prime Minister Ehud Barak lacks "the wisdom of simplicity." Communications Minister Binyamin "Fuad" Ben-Eliezer says that Barak suffers from "too much brain" - ueber-hakham, in the colloquial Mapainik of the forefathers of the Labor Party. There was little news in Barak's holiday interviews, but there were many complaints about the impatience and short fuses of the public. "There are things that cannot be done overnight, things that need to ripen," said the prime minister. Not that his complaints are wrong, but before he gets mad at the public, a bit of self-criticism is in order. The tightly packed dates that Barak has set for himself to achieve goals and agreements are what have put the public into a frenzy of expectations. And when the deadlines go by or are about to go by with nothing happening, the public's disappointment and impatience are perfectly understandable.

July 7, the date for the withdrawal from Lebanon, is the only deadline that Barak cannot evade without a real blow to his image. However, if he is forced to pull out without an agreement with Syria, this will, according to military intelligence assessments, be a withdrawal under fire and the firing will continue after the withdrawal is completed. It is clear now why Barak was compelled to fly for 25 hours for a single meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton, who is concerned lest fire draw more fire if an agreement with the Palestinian Authority is not reached quickly. Were the two not considered allies, it would have been possible to describe the summons to Washington as Clinton's ultimatum to Barak to put an end to the procrastination.

Does this mean that we are on the threshold of an agreement with the Palestinians? The answer is negative. To understand the basis for this pessimism, it is worth examining the extraordinary way the prime minister has functioned in the realm of foreign policy ever since his inauguration. Barak, as a former senior government official has defined him, has been blessed with "iron balls" with respect to his ability to make the bold decisions from which the prime ministers who preceded him refrained: 1.) He has decided on a unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon. 2.) He has declared publicly, in contrast to his predecessors who did so in secret, his willingness to relinquish all of the Golan Heights. 3.) He is confident of his ability to market any agreement he signs and convince the public to accept it.

But above all, what has been revealed is his ability - whether through cleverness or cunning - to bring the other side to the

Nation's soul is with the times/
Benziman

Tire tracks sea dunes/By Zafri

Women may n harassed, but t sold/By Hannah

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through cleverness or cunning - to bring the other side to the "moment of truth" where action must be taken. His willingness to make generous territorial concessions in exchange for peace with Syria has forced Syrian President Hafez Assad, who has been driving the world crazy with his "peace strategy," to deal with the need to decide once and for all. And indeed Assad dithered, squirmed and over the last hundred meters fled (at least to date), with all the blame falling on him. If Barak was looking for an alibi, and heaven forbid that we should think this was his intention, he found it.

The same bulldozer energy that was supposed to have pierced the barriers of suspicion and hesitancy in Damascus is now threatening Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat. With his goal of a "framework agreement" and his commitment that this time we are serious, Barak is leading Arafat to show his cards (to mix a metaphor) at the level of the bottom line. In short, he is leading Arafat to the same place he brought Assad: the moment of truth that demands a decision one way or the other.

The question is whether Arafat will behave differently from Assad. Does he have a mandate from a billion Muslims all over the world to relinquish Jerusalem? Can he sign an agreement that would allow most of the Jewish settlements beyond the 1967 borders to remain in the territories? And can he give up the right of return and deny the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who live in refugee camps in the Arab states the hope of a return to an independent Palestinian state? "And if it is not possible to arrive at a final-status agreement that means burying all the dreams, then it is certain that there is no chance of coming to a framework agreement," says Education Minister Yossi Sarid. "You can't leap over an abyss in two steps."

If Barak is looking for an alibi on the Palestinian issue as well, and heaven forbid that we should suspect this is his intention, perhaps he will find it in Arafat's court. If so, then we will have a prime minister with two alibis but a country that will remain with the same problems and the same results. While media opinion is divided as to whether Barak is gaining altitude or not, and as to whether he is landing too quickly or not landing at all, the truth at the moment is that, at least for the moment, he is flying nowhere



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LEVEL 1 - 6 OF 17 STORIES

Copyright 1997 The Jerusalem Post
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March 14, 1997, Friday

SECTION: OPINION; Pg. 6

LENGTH: 926 words

HEADLINE: The Naharayim tragedy

HIGHLIGHT:
Editorial

BODY:

Once again, the hearts of all Israelis are sickened by the news of a terrible tragedy. Seven young girls, on a school trip to see a concrete example of the warm peace with Jordan, were massacred by a rogue Jordanian soldier. The response to the loss of so many young lives must go beyond a temporary hiatus from rhetoric that incites violence. Even if the action was of an isolated madman, it should force responsible Arab leaders to address the culture of hatred against Israel that permeates the Arab world.

The youngsters were standing on Naharayim, the "island of peace," a spit of land that was transferred to Jordan by Israel under the peace treaty, but was leased back by Israel so the nearby kibbutzim could continue to cultivate their fields there. Just as the girls were listening to a description of this close Israeli-Jordanian cooperation, they were fired upon.

For Jordan, this incident constitutes a tremendous security failure and is a deep embarrassment. King Hussein quickly called President Weizman to say he felt as if the tragedy had happened to "his children." Later, however, he defended the blistering letter he had sent Sunday to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, in which he blamed Israel's policies for fostering "inevitable violent resistance" from the Palestinians.

Israeli leaders, such as Netanyahu, Foreign Minister David Levy, and Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai were right to conclude from this incident that the drumbeat of similar predictions of "spontaneous" violence from the Palestinians, Jordan, and Egypt must stop.

As Netanyahu put it, "I believe that this incident demonstrates what I have long contended - that the mentality of certain elements who sanctify violence and are prepared to use violence poses the greatest threat to the peace process. Neither do I expect anyone to grant legitimacy to violence, in any form. We may have political differences, but there must be a total, absolute and vigorous rejection of all manifestations of violence, of this or any other kind."

King Hussein, and all those who have recently been predicting violence, would no doubt deny that they support violence, or that such predictions lead to violence. The fact is that predictions of violence are a subtle form of justification, particularly if they are not accompanied by explicit rejections



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of violence and calls for restraint.

Whether or not this specific slaughter was caused by all the talk of potential violence is a moot point; chances are that we will never know. What we do know is that those who seek to advance their interests in the peace process by fostering a climate of violence are playing with fire. They certainly should not be allowed to get away with doing so in the name of the peace.

But the problem is deeper than those who claim to be promoting peace by threatening violence. There is a longer-term problem that likely had as much or more influence on the Jordanian soldier than the current tense atmosphere: The widespread opposition in the Arab world to any accommodation with Israel.

As the noted Arab-American political analyst **Fouad Ajami** wrote in a much-quoted article in U.S. News and World Report "There has been no discernible change in the Arab attitudes toward Israel and little preparation in the Arab world for the accommodation the peace promised. The great refusal persists. A foul wind attends this peace in Arab lands. It blows in that 'Arab street' of ordinary men and women, among the intellectuals and the writers, and in the professional syndicates. The force of this refusal can be seen in the press of the governments and of the oppositionists, among the secularists and the Islamists alike, in countries that have concluded diplomatic agreements with Israel and those that haven't. This is the one great Arab fidelity that endures in a political culture that has been subjected to historic ruptures of every kind."

It is ironic that in Israel the strongest support for the peace process is among intellectuals, while in Egypt and Jordan the exact opposite situation persists. In the Arab world, the peace with Israel is, as Ajami puts it, a "peace of kings and pharaohs," not of the people at large.

Normally far-sighted leaders such as King Hussein understand this, and are courageous in their attempts to lead by example. Over time, the sight of Arab leaders meeting their Israeli counterparts, Israeli flags flying in their capitals, Israeli tourists visiting their countries, can slowly break taboos and barriers. But this sort of evolutionary process does not move quickly enough. It must be supplemented by effort, not just from the top down, but from the ground up.

X The maps throughout the Arab world on which Israel does not appear - including those on official Palestinian documents - must be changed. Arab schoolchildren should learn not only about the wars with Israel, but also about the hope for peace. Arab intellectuals and professionals who know better must challenge their colleagues and professional associations to talk to Israelis, not boycott them. The "people-to-people" sections of Egyptian and Jordanian peace treaties and the Oslo II accord should not be ignored.

The Israeli Embassy in Jordan was flooded yesterday with expressions of deep sorrow and embarrassment, from Jordanians in all walks of life, at the massacre perpetrated by one of their own. The most constructive outcome from this terrible tragedy would be if it sparked efforts to build a culture of peace in the Arab world.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH



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February 2, 2000, Wednesday

SECTION: OPINION; Pg. 8

LENGTH: 835 words

HEADLINE: Peace with modernity

HIGHLIGHT:

Editorial

BODY:

A few months ago, the compliments bestowed upon Prime Minister Ehud Barak by Syrian President Hafez Assad made headlines in Israel, and presaged the opening of Israeli-Syrian negotiations. Now, an editorial in Tishrin, a newspaper known to be a government mouthpiece, compares Israel to the Nazis and claims that Zionism "created the Holocaust myth to blackmail and terrorize the world's intellectuals and politicians." Such statements would be serious enough if they were on the fringes of Arab society - but the fact that unbridled hatred of Israel remains common even among our "peace partners" raises serious questions regarding the viability of the peace process as a whole.

It is tempting, as many Israelis do, to dismiss examples of rabid Arab antisemitism and anti-Israeli expressions as crude hyperbole, and a throwback that will naturally lessen as the circle of peace widens. This theory, unfortunately, has not been substantiated in the over 20 years since the signing of the Camp David Accords.

Over this period, it is difficult to claim that opposition to Israel has moderated, even among the Arab parties that have signed peace treaties or agreements with it. A recent poll taken by political scientist Hilal Khashan of the American University of Beirut among 1,600 Jordanians, Lebanese, Palestinians, and Syrians, found that peace with Israel was opposed by a ratio of 69 to 28 percent. By a ratio of 87 to 13 percent, the Arab respondents supported attacks by Islamic groups against Israel. And by a ratio of 79 to 18 percent, those polled rejected the idea of doing business with Israelis even after a total peace.

The response of some Israelis to the resilience of Arab rejectionism is simply to forge ahead faster, as if more peace agreements alone will solve the problem. Further, many Israelis have become used to the "cold peace" with Egypt and do not expect more from the Palestinians, Syria, and even the country that represents Israel's warmest peace, Jordan.

The slow process of learning to live with Arab enmity, even as the peace process proceeds, seems to have penetrated Israel's negotiating positions.

When Yitzhak Rabin began the previous round of negotiations with Syria, he expressed Israel's formula as "the depth of the withdrawal (from the Golan) will



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equal the depth of peace." This formula was subtly altered by Barak to link the depth of a withdrawal to the depth of "security arrangements." The message sent by Barak is that pushing Syrian armored divisions back is more important than the number of Israeli tourists and trade delegations welcomed in Damascus.

Though Barak's shift in emphasis might be considered a bow toward realism that was necessary to bring the Syrian's back to the table, a peace process that deemphasizes peace is problematic, and not just in the long term. Barak himself and Israelis in general may be more impressed by the "hard" prospect of security arrangements compared to the "soft" advantages of normalization. Ultimately, however, the idea of a peace standing only on security arrangements is as flawed as a peace that rests only on normalization. It is one thing for a peace to be "cold," quite another for it to be hostile.

There is a difference between lack of enthusiasm, or even disillusionment, and utter rejection by the leading elements of society. For example, Dr. 'Ali 'Aqleh Ursan, the head of the Arab Writers Association in Syria, wrote just days ago that Israel will remain "an enemy" so long as it occupies any part of "Arab Palestine," that is, so long as it exists. If Syria recognizes Israel's right to statehood, Ursan laments, "what legitimacy would remain to what Syria had said at the Camp David, (Jordanian), and Oslo accords? Would it help Syria if it claimed that it was the last one to sign? What path would it take in the pan-Arab cause? Would there be a path left at all?" (Translation by the Middle East Media and Research Institute.)

* Ursan, in fact, asks the right question for both the Arab world and for Israel. If peace with Israel destroys the core tenet of Arab identity, then the Arab world must find a substitute cause for peace to survive.

Given that, according to a 1995 World Bank report, 260 million citizens of the Moslem Middle East and North Africa exported fewer manufactured goods than Finland (population five million), the Arab world's post-peace agenda would seem to be clear: catch up with the political freedom and economic advances of the modern world.

Fouad Ajami, in his book Dream Palace of the Arabs, notes that a handful of Egyptian intellectuals - including the renowned novelist Naguib Mahfuz - helped convince Anwar Sadat to make peace with Israel. "For these men," Ajami writes, "peace with Israel was a precondition of modernity and an open society." The reverse is also true; a peace that is not intertwined with an Arab transition to modernity will remove neither Israel nor the Arab world from their respective predicaments.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: February 2, 2000



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FOCUS - 11 OF 24 STORIES

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June 5, 1997, Thursday

SECTION: BOOKS; Pg. 2

LENGTH: 1210 words

HEADLINE: Aiming for **Peace**

BYLINE: Michael Widlanski

BODY:

RUBBER BULLETS: Power and Conscience in Modern Israel by Yaron Ezrahi. New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 307 pp., \$ 25.

ISRAEL ON THE ROAD TO **PEACE**: Accepting the Unacceptable by Ziva Flamhaft. Boulder, Westview. 252 pp. \$ 59 (cloth); \$ 17 (paper).

GENEALOGIES OF CONFLICT: Class, Identity and State in Palestine/Israel and South Africa by Ran Greenstein. Hanover, Wesleyan University Press. 306 pp. Price not stated.

JERUSALEM TODAY: What Future for the **Peace** Process? Edited by Ghada Karmi, with a contribution by Edward Said. Berkshire, UK, Ithaca Press (Garnet). 191 pp. pounds 25.

When academics tackle controversial political topics, there is always a danger that unacademic - political - ends will justify and thereby predetermine the means.

All four books surveyed here are affected by this problem, but only Yoram Ezrahi's work manages to prevail, not because it avoids the danger, but because it actually embraces the danger.

Professor Ezrahi makes no bones about his feelings concerning Israeli military rule of the West Bank and Gaza. He opposes the "occupation," all it represents, and, to his mind, all it has brought. His writing is powerful and eloquent, affecting even those who will not subscribe to his viewpoint. Ezrahi uses "rubber bullets" as a metaphor for the Israeli condition: wanting to control without being brutal, but being forced to be brutal nevertheless.

The author is honest and up-front about his views, and his learned background allows him to make his personal statement with the added force of keen insight into what he sees as the Israeli condition. It is, in short, an Israel that is moving from a collective ideological agenda to a "me generation" more interested in individual rights, individual interests and creature comforts. Ezrahi's epiphany occurs while watching the evening television news reports on the IDF's use of rubber bullets.

What emerges, at last, is a powerful sense of the ennui felt by many modern



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secular Israelis. This book's subtitle, therefore, is probably mischosen, because this is less a dispassionate outsider's analysis of Israeli policies and feelings and more an autobiographical account.

ZIVA FLAMHAFT'S book lacks Ezrahi's honesty. It pretends to be a dispassionate analysis of the various Arab-Israeli diplomatic contretemps from Camp David to Oslo. Flamhaft, who teaches at Queens College, has set forth a good framework, which, if filled properly, would have probably taken three times the space and been a tough read. To make her own life easier, she keeps only the framework of academic analysis, while the heart and guts are clearly biased or carelessly researched. What results is a book that is a miracle of modern embalming: the surface epidermis looks intact, while all the internal organs have been taken out and buried elsewhere.

Flamhaft misreports key elements of the Camp David, Madrid and Oslo processes. In fact, Flamhaft misses the essence of Camp David - the meeting of Israeli and Egyptian strategic interests - and vastly overrates the part played by the United States in that process and subsequent ones. As someone who traveled with secretary of state George Shultz during his 1988 shuttles and as someone who advised the Israeli delegations in 1991-92, this reviewer can testify to many of Flamhaft's accounts being erroneous. There is a strong sub-text to Flamhaft's analysis: only the Labor Party will really push **peace** initiatives, while the Likud and other rightist parties will not.

Indeed, says Flamhaft, Camp David happened because "for Israel it had become too difficult to keep holding on to the West Bank and Sinai." This is nonsense. In 1977, the West Bank was relatively quiet, but Menachem Begin had an Egypt-first approach that matched Anwar Sadat's Egypt-first policy: "Misr awalan, Misr daiman" (Egypt first, Egypt always). This was quite different from Gamal Abdel-Nasser's pan-Arab approach or the Israeli Labor Party's Jordanian option. Flamhaft suggests that **peace** talks with the Palestinians were motivated by the "common-sense perception of reality" heavily influenced by Scud missile attacks. Quite the contrary, common sense seemed to work in a different direction, and one recalls that Yossi Sarid, influenced by the sight of Palestinians cheering the Scuds, told Yasser Arafat to go chase himself ("sheh yihapsu oti"). A full list of Flamhaft's analytical and factual errors need not be supplied here, and would certainly be far longer than the 36-page section of documents (which can easily be obtained elsewhere).

RAN GREENSTEIN is an Israeli-born researcher who now teaches in South Africa and whose book began as his doctoral thesis for the University of Wisconsin. His book still reads like a bad dissertation.

To Greenstein's fleeting credit, he acknowledges that comparing Israel to South Africa is a dangerous business - but he does so anyway, without offering any cogent argument for the comparison. After all, Greenstein argues that Israel and South Africa represent colonialist societies fighting with native populations. This is not completely true of South Africa, and it is certainly not true of "Palestine/Israel," where the 19th century and early 20th century saw an influx of both Jewish and Arab settlers.

A full critique of Greenstein's false assumptions would require far more space than readers need bestow on such a work.



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GHADA KARMI'S book is unremittingly terrible even as an exercise in propaganda. It contains 14 articles by authors including Palestinian activist Edward Said, former Jordanian minister Adnan Abu Odeh ("The Ownership of Jerusalem: A Jordanian View"), Ohio State University Professor John Quigley ("Jerusalem in International Law"), Paris-based lawyer Rodman Bundy ("Legal Approaches to the Question of Jerusalem"), and Mahdi Abdul-Hadi ("The Ownership of Jerusalem: A Palestinian View"). Said's article is called the "Keynote Essay."

In an article that should be read by the administration of Ohio State University, Quigley asserts that Palestinian Arabs are the descendants of the Canaanites who lived in Jerusalem, which was part of an area known as Palestine since ancient times. This may make good bedtime reading for PNA minister Hanan Ashrawi, who claims that Jesus was a Palestinian, but for those of us who have already read our share of bad propaganda, it won't do.

The "Israeli view" is "represented" by Uri Avineri in an article entitled "The Ownership of Jerusalem: An Israeli View." Suffice it to say that Avineri supports the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. Avineri closes his article with a quote from Churchill: "This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is perhaps the end of the beginning." Avineri says he is talking about the struggle of Israeli and Palestinian **peace** activists to change public opinion, but maybe he is being unusually prescient about the nature of Palestinian demands. When PNA Justice Minister Freih Abu-Medein reminds audiences that 92 percent of Israel is built on stolen private Palestinian land, then, indeed, it becomes clear that, in negotiations, we have only reached "the end of the beginning."

GRAPHIC: Photo: These metal balls covered with plastic were taken from the head and neck of a man in the Kalandia refugee camp. (Credit: Brian Hendler)

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: June 18, 1997



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LEVEL 1 - 31 OF 45 STORIES

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June 24, 1999, Thursday

SECTION: OPINION; Pg. 8

LENGTH: 651 words

HEADLINE: Dare we hope for progress?

BYLINE: Daoud Kuttab

HIGHLIGHT:

Palestinian freedom of movement was in the news this past week. Let's see if there will be concrete results. The View from the East

BODY:

During the **past** year I have devoted many of my columns on this page to issues dealing with the Palestinians' freedom of movement. I have done this because I feel that any genuine progress in the **peace process** needs the proper public atmosphere to support it.

The Palestinian public has the power to allow any peace seedling to grow or wither and die. And in the daily life of the average Palestinian there is nothing more pressing - and often depressing - than issues relating to freedom of movement.

These and many other day-to-day issues have been raised by Palestinian negotiators as well as international mediators, yet somehow, the politicians rarely paid attention to these calls.

But on this front, three things took place last week.

First was the surprise suggestion by Israeli prime minister-elect Ehud Barak that he favors building a bridge to connect Gaza and the West Bank. According to press reports, he favors a four-lane elevated highway for cars, buses and trucks, a rail track and communication and electricity links.

Jordan's King Abdullah II made a surprise visit to the Jordanian terminal of the King Hussein Bridge to check out the facilities at the bridge, as the summer vacation begins and travel increases. And there was a report on Israel Radio that an antiterrorism unit had paid a visit to Allenby Bridge (note that Jordanians and Israelis use different names for the same bridge), to assess whether the present security precautions are still necessary.

The idea of a bridge between Gaza and Hebron has elicited many responses.

The Palestinian National Authority's official response was that this idea should not replace the commitment to immediately open a safe passage route. Such a ground route was already agreed upon by the military people under the Netanyahu government and all that was needed was for the Israeli political



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establishment to give the OK to open it up.

The idea of the bridge produced new ideas by Palestinians living in the center of the country. Some suggested a bridge connecting Bethlehem with Ramallah, to replace the existing dangerous road that bypasses Jerusalem to the east. Others proposed a rail connection between Gaza and Ramallah as well, so as to avoid having to go to Hebron to access Barak's super bridge.

Yet to others, Barak's bridge idea somehow indicated that the new Israeli leader seems serious about separating the Palestinian territories from Israel.

Many Palestinians are worried that if Barak's idea of separation is implemented without true independence and sovereignty, this would leave the Palestinians stuck in a huge prison - not being able to enter Israel while still having many restrictions on traveling to and from the rest of the Arab world. Without a reciprocal opening of the Arab world to the Palestinian territories, such a separation from Israel could be suicidal, they fear.

The international crossing points between the Palestinian territories and nearby countries will probably be among the most crucial issues **future** negotiations will have to deal with. But in the meantime, the suffering on the bridges and at the crossing points in and out of Jerusalem and Gaza will continue to dominate the day-to-day agenda of most Palestinians. And while the events of last week seem promising, they need to take a much more serious turn before the Palestinian public will believe that there is genuine interest in their well-being.

An apology: In my March 4 column entitled "Travel Agonies," I wrote about the closure of the territories for the Purim holiday and said, "Purim is not a national Israeli holiday nor a religious holiday. It is similar to Halloween in the United States."

A number of readers have written to me as well as to the paper informing me that Purim is, in fact, a religious holiday. I stand corrected and apologize to anyone offended by my remarks.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: June 24, 1999



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LEVEL 1 - 10 OF 45 STORIES

Copyright 1999 The Jerusalem Post
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December 17, 1999, Friday

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 2A

LENGTH: 658 words

HEADLINE: Long is the road to peace

BYLINE: Eyal Zisser

HIGHLIGHT:

ANALYSIS. Eyal Zisser is a senior research fellow at Tel Aviv University's Moshe Dayan Center.

BODY:

The media focus on the "key question" of why Syrian Minister Farouk Shara avoided a handshake with Prime Minister Ehud Barak in Wednesday's ceremonial opening of the renewed peace talks must not distract from the important issues at hand. The negotiations with Syria on borders, security arrangements, and the nature of the new peace have greater historic significance for Israel's **future** than a handshake that didn't happen.

Nonetheless, those Israelis who watched Shara avoiding a public handshake with Barak, or who listened to his cool, even hostile, address, had good cause to feel disappointed: If this was to be the first step on the road to peace, that road seemed long indeed.

For close to nine years Syrian President Hafez Assad has been in a peace process with Israel. There were low points and even break-offs in the negotiations between the nations, but there were also high points where it seemed a breakthrough that would allow for an peace accord was close.

But this breakthrough never came, to all appearances because Assad got on the road to peace, even displaying a desire to move forward, without having the determination or political motivation to bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion.

Assad's surprise decision last week to renew talks with Israel raised hopes both here and in the West. Assad displayed unprecedented and startling pliancy - albeit with strategic interests at heart - and even a zest to advance the peace process, sending his right-hand man, Shara, to Washington for the historic meeting with Israel's prime minister. This led many Israelis to believe that the Syrian president has finally made a strategic decision to achieve peace with Israel in the near **future**.

On the face of it, this is indeed how it seems. Nonetheless, Shara's body language at the ceremony showed that the road to peace will be long. Possibly Shara's conduct in the White House rose garden is a product of Syria's difficulty in grasping the mysteries of playing politics with a democratic



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country like Israel, or its obliviousness to the role of public relations and public statesmanship in advancing a **peace process**. Perhaps his behavior was a result of Syria - haunted as it is by the **past** - finding it difficult to adjust to the new reality of peace with Israel.

The Syrians, for their part, claim that Israel should not expect them to do Barak's work of persuading the Israeli public to support the **peace process**. Nonetheless, the Syrians are likely to discover that, for Israelis, these matters of decorum are critical, and that they will find it hard to support a peace deal entailing painful and palpable sacrifices without Syria's contribution being equally felt - first and foremost by a change in the tone, rhetoric, and even body language of Damascus.

All this, and we haven't even touched on the serious issues at hand. On these, it seems, there is a general understanding between the nations, and breaking it down into details would be a long and arduous task. Syria and Israel are still divided on the question of the **future** border between them - between the international line, favored by Israel, and the June 4, 1967 border that would bring Syria to Lake Kinneret and which is Syria's firm and uncompromising demand.

The issues of the security arrangements - the depth of demilitarized zones on either side of the border, the installation of an Israeli advance-warning station on the Golan, and others - still await clarification and finalization. Finally, the depth and scope of normalization between the nations must be determined.

Understandings on these issues have been reached in the past but, again, translating such deals into the detailed clauses of a peace accord is a complicated business. Shara's coming to Washington attests to Syria's willingness to move forward on the road to peace, but his conduct on the White House lawn shows that road will be long.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: December 20, 1999



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October 26, 1996, Saturday

Oz
Ezrahi
Hami

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SECTION: Features

LENGTH: 1032 words

HEADLINE: So who did kill Yitzhak Rabin?

BYLINE: Amos Oz

BODY:

A year after the assassination of Israel's Prime Minister, Amos Oz considers who should bear the real responsibility.

Certainly, not the Israeli right wing. Not the Likud party, nor the West Bank settlers, nor the Orthodox Jewish community, nor the Hawks. But it was indeed from parts of those quarters that we heard the hateful voices towards Rabin, while some of their leaders - who could have tamed the anti-Rabin incitement - preferred to fuel it. And now, their much-needed soul-searching has apparently been postponed: they seem to have more urgent business.

Actually, many of these leaders have one and only one piece of business, namely the idea of a "Greater Israel". For the sake of this idea, some of them have been painting peace in the colours of disaster and turning the public debate surrounding peace into a hunt for traitors. But no, these are not the people who murdered Rabin. These are a very devout group of people.

The vast majority of the population in Israel is willing, with certain provisions, to make a historical compromise with the Palestinians and to partition the country into two national homelands. With this in mind, some of the intransigents of the "Greater Israel" ideology are donning a different cap nowadays. They are pretending to be the guardians of Israel's security and the vigilantes of Palestinian violations of the Oslo accords. Yet it is common knowledge that even had the Oslo accords bestowed heavenly peace on Israel, with not so much as a single Palestinian violation, nor a single Israeli casualty, those same people would still be preaching that there is no reason for us to make any concessions at all to the Palestinians.)) *

For several months this year, between April and September, there were indeed very few violations of the agreements on the part of the Palestinians, and these resulted in only a small number of Israeli casualties. Full of hubris, that same group of devout people interpreted this relative calm as a green light for opening the controversial tunnel in Jerusalem, for putting off redeployment in Hebron and for increasing Jewish settlements on the West Bank. The hawkish logic behind this is: when all's calm on the Palestinian front, why give them anything at all? Why not take from them, acre by acre, land which is still theirs?

For 30 years, fundamentalist elements within the hawkish side of the Israeli spectrum have been reducing all of Judaism into a rite of Holy Places. A choir of fiery rabbis, who have never bothered to utter a single note of Jewish morality about society's starving and homeless, its battered women, its justice or injustice, its compassion - these rabbis have condensed all of Jewishness into the holy tombs of the Patriarchs. They may well be responsible for alienating an entire generation of Israelis from their own Jewishness, but they are not guilty of killing Rabin: they are very devout people.

Of course, only the murderer himself and his accomplices are guilty of slaying Rabin. No one else. Still, the inspiration for the murder may well have sprung from the shrine in Kiryat Arba, erected in memory of another Jewish murderer, Baruch Goldstein, who died in the course of murdering 30 Arab worshippers, and who has become the hero of an ultra-nationalistic religious sect. This sect worships Goldstein's memory and makes pilgrimages to his grave, where a monument has been erected. It would have been easy for Rabin's murderer to deduce that he, like Goldstein,

would be elevated to martyrdom. That, by killing Rabin, he, too, would be promoted by some to sainthood "in the name of a Greater Israel".

No, the adherents of a "Greater Israel" were not involved in Rabin's death: they are, after all, a very devout group of people. Nevertheless, some of them are responsible for spreading the monstrous notion that all the means are sanctified if the end is a "Greater Israel". An end which justifies all means is not an end but a vicious obsession. And this particular obsession still hovers above the monument of the murderer from Hebron, as well as some other places where people are being taught that for the Holy sake of a "Greater Israel", anything goes. There it stands, this outrageous shrine, every day, every hour, attracting worshippers and pilgrims alike - a ratification of Rabin's assassination and an incitement for more spilling of innocent blood. The Goldstein cult must be outlawed, with no further delay.

Had all the Torah sages, all the Jewish clergy, all the rabbis, stood as one immediately after Goldstein's massacre of innocent Arabs in Hebron to excommunicate and exorcise the Goldstein cult, to erase his name and his memory - Yitzhak Rabin might still have been with us today.

Alas, several rabbis seem to have made Rabin, not Goldstein, the target of religious damnation and furious excommunication. This happened, perhaps, because some of the very devout group of people are more devoted to a "Greater Israel" than they are to the Sixth Commandment.

* | A year has passed since Rabin died. We all mourned him, then we all returned to our day-to-day lives, convinced that Rabin had given his life for peace. We were wrong: Rabin died in the battle over the question of who we are and what this nation really is all about.

In previous generations, it is true, holy tombs in the Land of Israel were conceived of as symbolic segments of the Jewish sense of identity. Maybe there will come a day when they will be considered so once more. But for now, Jewish fundamentalists have managed to turn those sepulchres from a symbol of identity into a dark threat to our collective identity. Eagerly waving flags over ancient tombs, these people do not hesitate to cause the need for fresh graves to be dug.

Yitzhak Rabin died because he turned his back - and ours - on tombs. He opted for life in line with the Torah, which commands us always to choose life. Let us not sanctify Rabin's memory, or his grave. Rather, let us sanctify life and justice and freedom and reason and realism: For it is for these values that Rabin lived and died.

Amos Oz's latest novel, *Don't Call It Night*, is published by Vintage.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: October 27, 1996

March 5, 1996

SECTION: THE GUARDIAN FEATURES PAGE; Pg. 15

LENGTH: 1200 words

HEADLINE: HAND IN HAND TO HELL?

Amos Oz pleads for peace in an open letter to a Palestinian friend

BYLINE: Amos Oz

BODY:

ISRAEL is our homeland; Palestine is yours. Anyone who refuses to live with these two simple facts is either blind or evil.

Two and a half years after signing the Oslo Accords you and we have still to agree about the terms of peace. We still have to work hard, negotiate, persist with some issues, make concessions on some others. But, after three generations of fighting each other, we have at last agreed to start healing the wounds. This is what Yasser Arafat meant when he spoke about the Peace of the Brave.

Yitzhak Rabin was a brave man: he paid with his life for his effort. Shimon Peres is a brave man: both his life and his political future are at stake. Now is the time for Yasser Arafat to demonstrate that he too is a brave man - or to give his place to someone braver than him.

There are hundreds of clauses to the Oslo Accords, but the essence is clear and simple: we stop ruling over you and suppressing you, and you recognise Israel and stop killing us. But up until now we have delivered and you haven't. Israel is no longer controlling the lives of 85 per cent of the Palestinians in the territories. The Palestinians, for their part, have not stopped killing us. In fact, more Israelis are being killed by Palestinians after the agreement than before. The symbol of your recognition of Israel - the cancellation of the Palestinian Covenant calling for our destruction - is still delayed.

I know: the injustice, the humiliation, the misery and the loss which your people have experienced and for which both your people and mine are responsible, are not yet gone. But then the injustice and the losses inflicted on us Israelis by your fanatic and uncompromising leaders for many decades cannot be undone either. The purpose of peace is not to erase all past sufferings but to prevent further suffering. We must both choose now.

My friend, I have not forgotten the fact that hundreds of thousands of you are still rotting in miserable refugee camps. Nor am I ignorant of the fact that the Palestinian autonomy is less than an independent nation, or that problems such as Jerusalem and the Jewish settlements are still unresolved. Is there anyone amongst you who seriously maintained that everything could have been resolved in two years? Do any of you really think that you could possibly take without giving, or that Israel can give without taking?

You say that Israel had given you too little. Perhaps so. And yet, it is a fact that Rabin's and Peres's Israel has given the Palestinians more in two years than the entire Arab world has ever done for them. Whatever the Palestinians have got now has been achieved for them not by Arab weapons, not by the superpowers, not even by bloody Holy War, but by a narrow majority of Israelis who have, at last, reached the conclusion that military occupation and suppression are both immoral and useless.

This is a moment of decision: a shaky majority of Israelis still support the Oslo Agreements, but even within this majority there are some who are beginning to consider other options. Even our doves cannot bear a situation where

Land for Peace means that Israel gives away land and gets less and less peace. Some of us are now looking into ideas such as drawing our border with you unilaterally, according to our best interests, disengaging the Israeli population completely from the Palestinian population and defending ourselves from behind these new borders. It is unthinkable that Israel will go on living by its Oslo commitments while you Palestinians pay us with post-dated cheques, claiming that it is too hard for you to cancel the covenant, too hard to fight with Hamas, too hard to change the contents of antisemitic school textbooks, too hard to isolate your fanatics.

Of course it is hard for you; but, alas, it is quite hard for us Israelis to get killed every day. "We aren't strong enough", you say, but it is not just your strength which must be put to the test now. It is, first and foremost, your courage and integrity.

If you and your friends remain quiet now, if you make do with mumbling, half-hearted condemnations and offering private condolences over the phone to your Israeli friends, Oslo might soon become a missed window of opportunity. If this happens, it will fulfil the dark visions of your engineer and our doctor: Goldstein and Ayash still threaten to return hand in hand from hell and bring hell upon us all.

Now it is your turn to rise and fight for peace. Don't delay.

1996 Amos Oz

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: March 5, 1996

June 17, 1995, Saturday

SECTION: INTERNATIONAL; Pg. 17

LENGTH: 651 words

HEADLINE: Dreams must die to pay for peace Israel and a Palestinian state can flourish together only if both sides are prepared to compromise, says Israeli writer Amos Oz

BYLINE: BY AMOS OZ

BODY:

THERE is hope that the Palestinians will soon be holding the first democratic elections in their history. If the elected Palestinian leadership so desires, it is possible for their Autonomy to develop, eventually, into a Palestinian or a Jordanian/Palestinian State, which will maintain a peaceful relationship with Israel. However, much depends on whether the elected Palestinian leadership be stiff-necked, full of bitter, self-righteous indignation, or will it engender in its people a creative enthusiasm for building their homeland and for healing old wounds? Will Palestinian public opinion be wise enough to isolate those instigators of revenge and of hatred? Will the words and actions of the Palestinian leadership be aimed, among other things, at soothing the apprehensions and suspicions which still cloud the Israeli psyche? If the answers to these questions are positive, then the day when Palestine will exist as an independent nation is not far off. A change in the Palestinian Charter, which the PLO committed itself to at the signing of the Oslo Accords, is an urgent and crucial step in this direction. Israel for her part, will have to give up the malignant notion that whatever is bad for the Palestinians must be good for us and vice-versa. The tragedy of the Palestinians, their suffering, humiliation, poverty and desperation - all these are our problem, even if we are not to blame for them, or at least not the principle culprits. So long as the Palestinian people live in the pits, Israel will have no peace and no security.

The help of the international community, together with that of the Arab world and of Israel in assuaging the suffering of the Palestinian people is as urgent and necessary a matter for Israel herself. The Israeli settlers in the occupied territories will have to choose between fulfilling their religious vocation and realising fully their national identity. If, from religious motives, they want to make their home in close proximity to the Jewish holy places, in a Palestinian State, as residents of that State, not as masters in it - they should be allowed to do so. On the other hand, if they choose to move back within Israel's peace boundaries, we must do our best to help them to be re-integrated into Israeli society, materially, socially and morally. Most of the Israeli settlers in the occupied territories are not enemies of peace, nor are they Arab-eaters. They are people who crossed the green line in order to fulfil a dream, an impossible dream based on blindness. For more than 20 years, successive Israeli governments have piled large quantities of support, encouragement, sponsorship and applause on this dream. And now it appears that the conflict can be solved, if the Arabs are willing to relinquish the realisation of their dream to return to Jaffa and Haifa, and the Jews to relinquish theirs to go back to Jericho and to Shiloh. Relinquishing these dreams will involve a tragic shock for many people on both sides, who see this as no less than treason, sacrilege, or the first step to losing everything. Extremists are asking themselves these days: If we don't have the right to Hebron, how do we have the right to Haifa? or, If we forgo our demand to return to Haifa, what rights have we to Nablus? The only feasible answer to this is that Israel could not exist without Jaffa and Haifa, while Palestine, without Nablus and Hebron, is just as impossible. On the other hand, Israel can exist and even thrive without Hebron and Ramallah, just as Palestine can flourish without Lydda and Jaffa. The traumatic emotional upheaval involved in relinquishing certain of the rights is very real and the pain is real. We must take care not to rub salt into open wounds. It may be possible to turn victims of peace - at least some of them - into partners, who can invest their future in making peace work, rather than in blocking it.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (65%);

September 20, 1993, U.S. Edition

SECTION: MIDDLE EAST; Pg. 42

LENGTH: 1903 words

HEADLINE: TO PREVAIL OVER THE PAST;

The real rift is no longer between Jew and Arab but between backward-looking and forward-looking people on both sides

BYLINE: By AMOS OZ ARAD;

Amos Oz is an Israeli novelist, essayist and peace activist. (c) 1993 Amos Oz;
With the editorial assistance of Maggie Bar-Tura

BODY:

A few nights ago, when Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization recognized each other, I had a vivid recollection of the night of May 14 and May 15, 1948, when Israel declared its independence. I was nine years old. I remember my father coming to my bed and lying beside me in the dark. "When I was a boy, I was beaten in school in Russia and then in Poland for being a little Jew," he said. "You may still get beaten in school, but not for being a Jew. This is what the State of Israel is all about." In the darkness I could suddenly feel his tears. It was the only time in my life that my father cried in my presence. *

The next morning, within hours of Israel's declaration of independence, five Arab armies invaded the country from all directions. The Jewish section of Jerusalem was besieged for several months, bombarded by Jordanian artillery from the east and by Egyptian forces from the south. What had been, since the beginning of the century, a neighborly feud between Arabs and Jews turned that night into a major international war.

Twice in my life, in 1967 and again in 1973, I saw the face of war as a reservist soldier, first in Sinai and then in the Golan Heights. That experience turned me into a peace activist, but not into a pacifist ready to turn the other cheek to an enemy. If anyone tries to take my life or the life of my people, I will fight. I will fight if anyone tries to enslave us, but nothing short of the defense of life and freedom could make me take up arms. "National interest," "ancestral rights" and an extra bedroom for the nation are not reasons to go out to the battlefield.

As a teenager addicted to politics, I would do my shift as night watchman along the perimeter fence of Kibbutz Hulda, secretly listening to the news on a portable radio. Through the night, I would wander between the transmissions of Jordan, Syria and Egypt. Whenever they referred to Israel, they used the term the Zionist entity. The announcer would say "the so-called government of the so-called state" but would stop short of pronouncing the word Israel, as if it were a four-letter word. The Arab world, primarily the Palestinians, dealt with us as if we were nothing more than a passing infection.

I remember how those nights in Kibbutz Hulda, about three miles from the pre-1967 armistice lines, were punctuated by fires and explosions on the eastern horizon as we guarded against the fedayeen, which is what the Palestinian infiltrators were called. On the Israeli radio station, you could hear the rhetoric of a society of armed settlers: "Our generation, and perhaps generations to come, are destined to plow the fields while carrying a gun." At that time I didn't think I would see an Israel-Arab peace in my lifetime. The term Palestinians was hardly used in those days. It was almost as unpronounceable for Israelis as "Israel" was for the Arabs. We used to talk about "refugees," "terrorists" or simply "the enemy." Since the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, most of us simply refer to them as locals. One winter night I shared my guard duty in Kibbutz Hulda with an elderly ideologue (without the illicit radio).

With a strangely ironic expression on his face, he suddenly whispered to me, "What do you expect from those Palestinians? From their point of view, aliens have landed in their country and gradually taken some of it away, claiming that in return they will shower the natives with loving-kindness, and Palestinians simply said no thanks, and took to arms in order to repel the Zionist invaders?" Being the teenage product of a conventional Zionist upbringing, I was shocked by his use of the word Palestinians, as well as by the treacherous revelation that the enemy not only had a point of view, but a fairly convincing one at that.

His words eventually turned me into a relativist about the ethical dimension of the Israeli-Palestinian tragedy. There is nothing tragic about the conflict between Israel and Syria or Israel and Iran. They have been the aggressors, and we have defended ourselves as best we could. The case between Israelis and Palestinians is a tragedy precisely because it is a clash between one very powerful claim and another. Israelis are in the land of Israel because there is not and cannot be a national homeland for the Jews anywhere else. The Palestinians are in Palestine because their ancestors have been here for more than a thousand years. Where one powerful claim clashes with another, there can be either an endless cycle of bloodshed or a somewhat inconsistent compromise. Since 1967, the Israeli peace movement has advocated a compromise based on mutual recognition of the simple fact that one small country, about the size of the state of New Jersey, is the only homeland for two peoples. Wherever there is a clash between right and right, a value higher than right ought to prevail, and this value is life itself. I believe a similar premise underlies the changing attitudes toward peace among Palestinians.

For many years, fanatics on all sides have tried to turn this conflict into a holy war or a racial clash. Do-gooders outside the region tended to present it as a civil rights issue or simply as a sad misunderstanding. Fortunately, this conflict is essentially nothing but a dispute over real estate: Whose house? Who is going to get how much of it? Such conflicts can be resolved through a compromise. I believe in a two-state solution that can be achieved only step by step: Israeli recognition of the Palestinian right of self-determination in part of the land, in return for Arab readiness to meet Israel's legitimate security provisions. The two parties are not about to fall in love with each other once the agreement is signed. Yet the parties do not need to see eye to eye regarding who was David and who was Goliath in this conflict. (Obviously if one focuses on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, then the Israelis are a clumsy Goliath, whereas the stone-throwing Palestinians are brave little David. Yet by changing the zoom and putting the frame around the conflict between almost 5 million Israelis and more than 100 million Arabs, and perhaps several hundreds of millions of Muslims, the question of David and Goliath looks very different.) Luckily, Israelis and Palestinians and other Arabs can conclude their conflict even without agreeing about the narrative.

Many Israelis and certain past Israeli governments are guilty of blindness to the gradual emergence, perhaps as a by-product of modern Zionism, of a Palestinian national persona. The Palestinian national movement, for its part, has brought disaster upon the two peoples by taking an uncompromising stance toward the Israeli national persona. It may have blinded itself by perceiving Zionism as a colonial phenomenon. Actually, the early Zionists had absolutely nothing to colonize in this country when they began to return to it nearly 100 years ago: it has no resources. In terms of colonial exploitation, the Zionists have involved themselves in the worst bargain of all times, as they have brought into the country thousands of times more wealth than they could ever hope to get out of it.

Both parties, in two-different ways, are victims of Christian Europe: the Arabs through colonialism, imperialism, oppression and exploitation, while the Jews have been the victims of discrimination, pogroms, expulsions and, ultimately, mass murder. According to the mythology of Bertolt Brecht, victims always develop a sense of mutual solidarity, marching together to the barricades as they chant Brecht's verses. In real life some of the worst conflicts develop precisely between victims of the same oppressors: two children of the same cruel parent do not necessarily love each other. They often see in each other the image of their past oppressor. So it is, to some extent, between Israelis and Arabs: the Arabs fail to see us as a bunch of survivors. They see in us a nightmarish extension of the oppressing colonizing Europeans. We Israelis often look at Arabs not as fellow victims but as an incarnation of our past oppressors: cossacks, pogrom makers, Nazis who have grown mustaches and wrapped themselves in kaffiyehs, but who are still in the usual business of cutting Jewish throats.

Naturally, all sides are uneasy, even worried, about the present breakthrough. Many Palestinians fear that "Gaza and Jericho first" is nothing but a disguise for an Israeli plot to get away with "Gaza and Jericho only." Many Israelis, for their part, fear that Israel is about to give away land and forfeit strategic assets in return for nothing more than a piece of

paper, a sweet document that may easily be torn to shreds the following day. Some of those apprehensions can be alleviated when people on both sides realize that the present contract contains an element of time as well as one of space: the fulfillment of Palestinian national rights in the occupied territories is going to be implemented over a period of several years, delivered not mile by mile, but one attribute of sovereignty after another so that Israel will have the time to find out if the Arab and Palestinian peace check does not bounce.

The present agreement is not accompanied by a burst of brotherly emotion on both sides. If anything, Israelis and Palestinians may be feeling like patients awakening from an anesthetized slumber after amputation surgery, discovering with pain and frustration that things are never going to be the same again. This is the time for well-meaning governments and individuals outside the region to stop wagging their fingers in disapproval and instead to consider the prompt incorporation of a peaceful Middle East into larger security and economic systems, thus helping both sides to overcome some of their fears. This is the time to develop a Marshall Plan for the Middle East in order to help resettle almost a million Palestinian refugees as well as a similar number of Jewish refugees from the former Soviet Union and elsewhere. I believe within 15 years a peaceful, prosperous Middle East will be able not only to repay the sponsors of such a Marshall Plan but even to extend material aid to other, less privileged parts of the world.

The labors of peacemaking are not concluded once the treaty is signed. Courageous sappers on both sides must start clearing the emotional minefields, the aftermath of war, removing mutual stereotypes created by many years of fear and hatred. Describing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a tragic clash between right and right, I maintain that we do not want a Shakespearean conclusion, with poetic justice hovering over a stage littered with dead bodies. We may now be nearing a typical Chekhovian conclusion for the tragedy: the players disillusioned and worried, but alive.

 Let us not forget that even now there are still different sets of clocks at work in the Middle East. The real rift is no longer between Jew and Arab but rather between past-oriented and future-oriented people on both sides. I believe there is a good chance that the future will prevail over the past. Together the Israelis and the Palestinians are today sending a resounding message to every agonized corner of the earth: If we can compromise with each other and turn our backs to violence despite 100 years of sound and fury, is peace not possible between all deadly enemies in the world?

GRAPHIC: Picture 1, PALESTINIANS New Beginnings: A group of young girls in the West Bank start the fall term descColor: Palestinian girls walking to school., AP; Picture 2, ISRAELIS Hope Springs Eternal: Settlers in the Gaza Strip head home after class descColor: Israeli children walking home from school., RICKI ROSEN -- SABA FOR TIME

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

January, 2000 / February, 2000

SECTION: REVIEWS; Review Essay; Pg. 158

LENGTH: 2496 words

HEADLINE: New History for a New Israel;
Two Landmark Looks at a Sentimentalized Past

BYLINE: Yaron Ezrahi; YARON EZRAHI is Professor of Political Science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His latest book is Rubber Bullets: Power and Conscience in Modern Israel.

BODY:

Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-1999. BY BENNY MORRIS. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999, 751 pp. \$40.00.

The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World Since 1948. BY AVI SHLAIM. New York: W. W. Norton, 1999, 448 pp. \$32.50.

The education minister in the dovish new Israeli government led by Ehud Barak caused a stir recently. Yossi Sarid decided that Israeli high schools should teach their students about something most Israelis would just as soon not dwell on: the massacre by Israeli soldiers of dozens of Israeli Arab civilians who broke a curfew in and near the village of Kafr Kasim some 43 years ago. The shootings were followed by a trial and an Israeli court's landmark decision to pin individual responsibility on Israeli soldiers who follow illegal orders. With Sarid's directive, dirty laundry from Israel's founding era was to be aired for its next generation.

This was something quite new under the sun. For decades, Israelis were raised on a celebratory, heroic version of their history -- a story of the return to Zion, of the resettlement of the desolate Jewish homeland, of a war of liberation in which the few stood up to the many; and of a constant struggle by the newly established state to survive in a sea of Arab hostility and brutal violence. This epic was founded on ideas and beliefs that most Israelis held as self-evident: the Jewish nation is ancient, and the Palestinian claim to nationhood is questionable at best; Israelis are innocent, and Arabs have an innate propensity to terrorism; Israel's humanistic soldiers were driven to fight by necessity, not fear or hatred; the Arabs are determined to push the Jews into the sea; the Israeli army's victories were made possible by the spirit of the Israeli fighters, not their superior numbers or weapons; the Arabs have failed to modernize and to ameliorate their economic condition; Israel is a tiny sliver of land in a region of vast Arab territories; the Palestinian refugee problem was created by Arab leaders; and many costly wars could have been prevented if not for Arab intransigence, starting with the 1947 U.N. partition plan and continuing through the many rebuffed Israeli peace initiatives.

Toward the end of the 1980s, however, these certainties began to be shaken. A small group of revisionist historians, including Avi Shlaim, an Oxford professor, and Benny Morris, who teaches at Ben-Gurion University in Beersheva, published more skeptical versions of the early phases of the Arab-Israeli conflict. These studies elicited some legitimate criticism from professional academics. But the Israeli public -- including much of the intelligentsia -- was unwilling to sympathetically consider a more complex version of Israel's history that implied greater Jewish responsibility for the Palestinian refugee problem, criticized Israeli diplomatic blunders that prolonged the conflict, and exposed Israeli soldiers' involvement in some atrocities. The works of the "new historians" triggered an angry public debate that quickly deteriorated into a clash between apologists for both the received Israeli master narrative and its "post-Zionist" debunkers.

Shortly after Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization formally recognized each other in September 1993, a

Palestinian friend living in exile in Paris asked me, "Now that we have recognized you, will you start remembering what you did to us?" Israelis have. For nations in conflict, the selective processes of remembering and forgetting are always shaped by the fluctuations between war and peace. The Oslo breakthrough and its aftermath demonstrated that - despite such grave setbacks as the 1995 assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the 1996 wave of Islamist bus bombings -- once they thought of the Arabs not as the enemy but as neighbors and future partners in peace, battle-hardened and skeptical Israelis could reassess the extent of their responsibility for the conflict and even recognize some of their adversaries' claims. This ability to share blame for the costly struggle has let former fighters, some of them notoriously ruthless, meet again as diplomats around the negotiating table and convert their military reputations at home into the political authority that can sanction painful compromises with erstwhile foes.

Although the peace negotiations with the Palestinians have made Israelis more ready to replace unexamined, self-glorifying notions of the past with more complex and even painful historical accounts, the new Israeli openness must also be traced to deep social and cultural transformations. Recent decades have brought a slow, steady erosion of the almost automatic national solidarity and docile public conformism on which Israeli governments once counted, especially during emergencies; a growing fragmentation of Israeli society into competing groups (Sephardim, the ultra-Orthodox, Israeli Arabs, Russian immigrants, and so on) with distinct senses of identity and profoundly divergent takes on the meaning of the Jewish state; and perhaps most significant, the rise of Israeli individualism, which brings with it a spreading distrust of authority in almost all spheres of life.

Taken together, these developments mark a dramatic shift from an epic culture and politics to a post-epic Israel. In the new, more jaundiced Israeli mood, the once-hegemonic version of Israel's past can survive only as another partisan history. What used to be the official heroic Israeli narrative of the Arab-Israeli conflict is today mostly the version of the Israeli right.

In this climate, the two major new books by Morris and Shlaim are more likely to trigger debates among academics than among ideologues -- an improvement on the debate over their earlier books some ten years ago, which demonstrated that very little light is shed when the bias of apologists meets the bias of debunkers. But now there is a very different Israel to read the new historians.

WOUNDED SPIRITS

The periods covered by the two books converge only partly. Benny Morris' *Righteous Victims* begins with the start of major Zionist settlement in Ottoman Palestine in 1881 and ends in 1999, whereas Avi Shlaim's *The Iron Wall* extends from Israel's creation in 1948 to the present. The bulks of these two volumes may make readers decide that one is plenty, but they are more complementary than redundant. While Morris concentrates on the details of military history, which he combines with an account of the politics of the conflict, Shlaim focuses on the diplomatic history of Arab-Israeli relations.

As in his earlier work -- most notably, on why some 700,000 Palestinians fled their homes during Israel's War of Independence -- Morris provides a very rich account of the military and political aspects of the conflict and a very thin interpretive framework. The greatest merit of this bulky "synthesis of existing research" is that the massive body of facts it builds defies sweeping generalizations about the conflict and facile attributions of moral responsibility to any one side. As such, Morris' book provides a timely account for readers who have been learning to regard parts of Israel's past with ambivalence rather than apologetics. His work can help Israelis face the contradictions and ironies of a narrative of liberation that entailed a narrative of conquest and displacement. Where Zionists repeatedly recalled the Arab threat "to throw the Jews into the sea," Morris quotes the fuller statement made during World War I by the Jaffa Muslim-Christian Association: "We will push the Zionists into the sea -- or they will send us back into the desert." Morris describes the role of rightist Jewish militias in introducing the indiscriminate bombing of civilians into the conflict by attacking the markets of Haifa and Jaffa in 1938, but he does not exonerate the Arabs for their share of the terrorism. He details the Israeli army's edge in both numbers and equipment but does not underestimate the superior motivation of Israeli soldiers or the demoralizing effects of internal Arab rivalries.

Righteous Victims illuminates the historical evolution of Jewish perceptions of Arab violence -- particularly the shifts from viewing it as merely the result of incitement by a few belligerent leaders like Hajj Amin al-Husayni, the mufti of

Jerusalem in the 1920s and 1930s, to regarding it as a consequence of innate Arab and Muslim aggressiveness, to the post-intifada view of Palestinian violence as an expression of national aspirations. But when Morris examines the way Israelis look at their own armed forces, his book suffers from his unwise assumption that one can separate a nation's military from its social and cultural history. Hence, he does not consider the nexus between the evolution of Jewish perspectives on force and the Zionist aspiration to make the Jew into a soldier -- to create a new Jewish identity to replace the Jewish merchant or the feeble religious scholar. Against this background, the debate between activists such as the country's founding prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, and moderates such as his foreign minister, Moshe Sharett, reflects not only competing strategies for handling the Arabs but competing notions of modern Jewish identity and the meaning of freedom and statehood for post-Holocaust Jews.

Since writing history, however empirically based, is inevitably also an exercise in interpretation, Morris should have been more explicit about how he chose his sources and weighed his evidence. The impression of a neutral, factual description may be misleading even when the historian tries to be fair.

BETWEEN GUN AND OLIVE BRANCH

Avi Shlaim takes a bolder and richer approach than Morris'. His mastery of the sources and his explicit preferences win him the reader's trust for his decisions about what to highlight, when to summarize, and which shortcuts to take in retelling the complicated history of the Arab-Israeli conflict. By advancing a reasonably coherent interpretation and constructing a flowing narrative, Shlaim risks the criticism that the "real world" is too messy, contradictory, and ambiguous to fit into neat patterns. But this is usually a worthwhile price to pay for parsimony and provocation.

The principal theme of *The Iron Wall* is the constant disagreement between Israeli moderates and military activists on how to handle the conflict with the Arabs. According to Shlaim, moderates like Sharett, Levi Eshkol, and Abba Eban usually read the Middle East situation correctly and relied on diplomatic rather than military means, whereas activists like Ben-Gurion, Moshe Dayan, Ariel Sharon, Golda Meir, and Menachem Begin tended to miss important opportunities for negotiations that might well have prevented costly wars.

Shlaim's account of the competition between these two schools makes fascinating, revealing reading, although the dichotomy he draws between them is sometimes too sharp. Despite the sympathy the reader might feel toward the moderates, one doubts that the bridges they proposed building would have served Israel better during its formative years than the "iron wall" that the activists, and especially the militants, actually built around the Jewish state -- on the theory that after they had bashed their heads against it often enough, the Arabs would eventually reconcile themselves to Israel's existence. The echoes of these opposing approaches can still be heard in the two parallel conceptions of the ultimate goals of the peace talks with the Palestinians -- the Rabin school, which seeks to separate Israel from the Palestinians, and the school of his rival and successor, Shimon Peres, which seeks to link the Palestinian and Jewish states.

The biggest problem with Shlaim's study is its occasional lapses into 20-20 hindsight. A case in point is Shlaim's assessment of Peres' decision in 1996 to let the Israeli General Security Service kill Yahya Ayyash, the mastermind behind many gory suicide bombings by the Islamist militants of Hamas. Shlaim calls this decision "the greatest mistake of Peres's political career." Hamas, writes Shlaim, "declared Ayyash a martyr" and, in a series of retaliatory suicide attacks, seriously undermined Peres' leadership, making him politically vulnerable to the assaults of his foe in the 1996 elections, Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu. Peres, to be sure, could have anticipated that Hamas might seek revenge, but he had no way of knowing how savage the terrorists' spree would be -- or that it would tip the electoral scales for Netanyahu. Shlaim is guilty here of retroactive foreshadowing, or what the literary critic Michael Andre Bernstein calls "backshadowing" -- judging participants in historical events as if, unconstrained by uncertainties, they should have known the future that we know as the past. Nevertheless, Shlaim's usual appreciation for complexities and contradictions and his keen sketches of the principal Israeli actors make this very readable book one of the best and most illuminating accounts of Arab-Israeli relations in years.

Read together, these two books give a historical perspective from which it is easier to understand why the peace process has proven stronger than any Middle Eastern government or leader. Looking at their past, the adversaries can see that military solutions to the conflict are becoming obsolete. There is no Soviet Union to arm and support the

Arabs, and the remaining superpower is the main sponsor of the peace process. Moreover, in today's world of globalization, the media puts military operations under such a glare that, increasingly, they are simply not worth the risk.

Both Shlaim and Morris have tried to carve out a space for history between the domain of myths, which have for many years governed Israelis' perceptions of the more distant past, and the domain of journalism, which mediates their perceptions of the very recent past and the present. Writing history inherently revises the mythological past. But the special authority of the historian -- who can combine a historical perspective with painstaking research based on original documents and testimonies -- diminishes the closer his or her account comes to the present. The two volumes are, therefore, more revealing about the early phases of the Arab-Israeli conflict than about more recent ones. Toward the end, Morris' and Shlaim's accounts tend to merge with the familiar journalistic reports and become shallow. Still, in a democracy, self-reflection, skepticism, and ambivalence toward authority accelerate the movement from myth to history and encourage history to lend depth to journalism. Without ignoring the limits of these two volumes, Shlaim and Morris can only be commended for their contributions to this process. Israelis' reactions to these two landmark works will be deeply telling.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: January 18, 2000

April 12, 1999
Correction Appended

SECTION: WORLD REPORT; Pg. 20

LENGTH: 724 words

HEADLINE: The ancient roots of grievance

BYLINE: By Fouad Ajami

HIGHLIGHT: For 600 years, violent nationalisms have bloodied the Balkans

BODY:

Speaking of war, there'll be troubles in the Balkans in the Spring.

RUDYARD KIPLING, THE LIGHT THAT FAILED, 1940

In Kosovo, the great, brutal truth has not varied: a deadly impasse between demography and history. Demography has been Albanian, and overwhelmingly so. But a nationalist Serbian narrative asserts a mystical claim to the land. There is nothing new about Slobodan Milosevic's campaign to "cleanse" the place of its Albanian people. Consider what the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace said about the Balkan wars of 1912-1913: "Houses and whole villages reduced to ashes, unarmed and innocent populations massacred en masse, incredible acts of violence, pillage and brutality of every kind . . . with a view to the entire transformation of the ethnic character of regions inhabited exclusively by Albanians."

It was odd that a Communist Party hack like Milosevic, and a Montenegrin at that, would unleash this new fury in Kosovo. He had not shown a penchant for nationalist romanticism, but once he found the pathos of Kosovo--the solitude of the Serbs, their view of themselves standing at the ramparts of Christendom and fighting noble wars only to be undone by more cunning peoples in more worldly lands--he had found his themes. The Serbs had spun a history at once grand and tragic, and their inspirational memory was Kosovo, where the Ottoman Turks defeated them on the Field of Blackbirds in 1389.

Polyglot empire. But the truth of history was less poetic and less exalted. It was the tale of how all the peoples of the Balkan Peninsula made their accommodation with the Pax Turcica and found their way into the armies and the court of the empire. But the Serbs in the province of Belgrade had been left to their own devices. The Turkish presence was scant there, confined to the principal fortress towns, while the countryside had remained Serbian, a world of peasants tilling their own fields. Kosovo, ruled by an Ottoman pasha in Pristina, was of a piece with the larger world of the northern Albanians. Religious identity was fluid here, and folk religious ways were more important than formal, high religion. The world was checkered, as was practically the whole polyglot Ottoman empire.

The old ways of the Ottoman world came to an end in the late years of the 19th century. Out of the ruins came Balkan states seized with nationalist delirium--dreams of Greater Serbia, Greater Bulgaria, Greater Albania. The Balkan wars of 1912-1913 then sealed the fate of the Ottoman dominions in Europe. The Albanians declared their own statehood, but a good deal of their territory was contested by Serbs and Bulgars and Greeks. Serbia, consumed with a spirit of historical triumphalism, swept into Kosovo in 1912, only to find an Albanian majority on the sacred land of its imagination. A relentless campaign of Serbianization was let loose on the place, driven by desire to reclaim Kosovo and make it whole--and Serbian. Some 5,000 Albanians were liquidated. A brief respite came for the Albanians when a

combined German-Austrian-Bulgarian campaign overwhelmed the Serbs in 1915.

The Serbs returned at the end of the war, in the nimbus of a mighty legend: In their retreat to the Adriatic, through Montenegro and Albania, 100,000 of them had perished. In the eyes of the Serbs, the newly created Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (renamed Yugoslavia in 1929) was their gift and their redemption. But when Serbs tried to colonize and settle Kosovo, displacing the majority Albanians, they were foiled by the destruction of the Yugoslav state by Germany in 1941.

The Communist leader Josip Broz Tito, son of a Croat father and Slovene mother, denied and balanced all the competing nationalisms of the Yugoslav state. But Tito died in 1980, and the lid started to come loose. In less than a decade, an awkward and coldblooded bureaucrat annulled Kosovo's autonomy and made the bulk of Yugoslavia's peoples yearn for the vainglorious Tito. "Brotherhood and Unity" of the southern Slavs had been Tito's slogan, an escape from the bloodletting of the Balkan nationalisms. Men and women soon longed for the time when such pretensions held the "ethnic cleansers" in check. Marvel at Milosevic, sorcerer of Belgrade: Can he still control the furies he has called up with his spell?

CORRECTION-DATE: July 5, 1999

CORRECTION: "The Ancient Roots of Grievance" [April 12] should have cited 1891 as the publication date for Rudyard Kipling's *The Light That Failed*.

GRAPHIC: Picture, Nationalist romanticism. The memorial at the Field of Blackbirds (Gary Knight--SABA)

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 7, 1999

February 17, 1997

SECTION: WORLD REPORT; COMMENTARY; Pg. 44

LENGTH: 870 words

HEADLINE: The peace of kings and pharaohs

BYLINE: By Fouad Ajami

HIGHLIGHT: On the 'Arab street,' rejection of Israel remains the only constant

BODY:

Beyond the long-awaited and long-delayed Israeli-Palestinian deal on Hebron and its impossible details lies a larger truth that diplomacy has yet to take up: There has been no discernible change in the Arab attitudes toward Israel and little preparation in the Arab world for the accommodation the peace promised. The great refusal persists. A foul wind attends this peace in Arab lands. It blows in that "Arab street" of ordinary men and women, among the intellectuals and the writers, and in the professional syndicates. The force of this refusal can be seen in the press of the governments and of the oppositionists, among the secularists and the Islamists alike, in countries that have concluded diplomatic agreements with Israel and those that haven't. This is the one great Arab fidelity that endures in a political culture that has been subjected to historic ruptures of every kind.

It is no accident that the two leaders who have gone furthest with the peace, King Hussein of Jordan and Yasser Arafat of the Palestine Liberation Organization, were the same weak men who blew with the wind from Saddam Hussein's Baghdad in 1990-1991. Having bet on Saddam Hussein and lost, they sought a way out of the disgrace of the choice they had made and a way back into the diplomatic game of nations. For King Hussein, this was a return to the politics of his family, which had always been based on reconciliation with the Israelis across the Jordan River. But it was different for Arafat, who left behind him the exiles and the refugees who had been his foot soldiers, left behind an imaginary Palestine, and settled for what he could get in the West Bank and Gaza.

Passive peace. But neither the Jordanian ruler nor the Palestinian leader could or would take this peace to the coffeehouses and the universities and defend it. When pressed, the men on top fell back on democratic principles: They would not force the pace; they would wait for the great enmity to subside. Indeed, in a twist of fate, Arafat, who had run the affairs of the Palestinians from his back pocket for a quarter century and had taken his people on endless detours, lived to see the emergence of a genuine opposition to him. The man who had been followed by the Palestinians over the roughest and loneliest roads would come to know recriminations once he embarked on this new path of realism.

In the way of Arab politics, the opposition to the peace remains fiercest in Egypt, the state that led the way to accommodation with Israel in the 1970s. Opposition has become part of the ethos and the ideology of the state, in many ways a substitute for repairing the land and opening up the country's political life. Uneasy with their country's relationship with its American benefactors, Egypt's ruling circles and intellectuals have been swept up of late with a nostalgia for the 1960s, for the time of nonalignment and Arab nationalism.

This has given the regime and its oppositionists a joint endeavor, for the gatekeepers of Egyptian culture remain unalterably opposed to normal traffic with Israel. They have kept Israelis out of an annual international film festival and out of book fairs year after year. And they have discouraged the men and the women of culture and letters from traveling to Israel, branding that simple deed as a journey across forbidden lines. When a distinguished man of letters, the playwright Ali Salem, a man who marches to his own drummer, broke with the unwritten ban and traveled to Israel,

he had to endure a relentless campaign of vilification.

Prevailing wisdom has it that the hard-line stance of Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu frightened off those in the Arab world who had bet on the **peace**. But that wisdom errs. It was not Netanyahu's frugidity but Shimon Peres's embrace that made the Arab world recoil; the "New Middle East" of Shimon Peres, his talk of a region at **peace** with open borders, became a rallying point for those who maligned **peace** as nothing other than a form of Israeli hegemony, a Pax Hebraica. Millennial, grand, and technocratic, Peres's project was a threat to all the sacred totems of Arab nationalism. Peres had come forth at a time of great political and economic disarray in Arab lands, an exuberant seducer at an Arab wake. The most celebrated poet in the Arab world, the Syrian Nizar Qabbani, caught this dread of Peres's utopian world when he said that its vision was one of a "Middle Eastern supermarket with an Israeli chairman of the board."

Six years and two secretaries of state ago, Dennis Ross, the State Department negotiator, made the case for a deeper American role in Middle Eastern **peace** in a telling way: "We have seen an earthquake. We have to move before the earth resettles, because it will and it never takes long." The Earth had split open in the Arab world in the aftermath of the gulf war, but the landscape has closed again. The king's **peace**, they call it in Jordan; the pharaoh's **peace**, in Egypt. Arafat's "surrender," Arafat's Versailles, is how his Palestinian opponents describe the deal he made. Now this is better than yesterday's wars, but the **peace** of the autocrats is yet to put down roots in Arab lands.

GRAPHIC: Picture, Yasser Arafat and King Hussein in Gaza last month (Jim Hollander--Reuter)

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: February 13, 1997

October 14, 1996

SECTION: OUTLOOK; ONE WEEK; Pg. 15

LENGTH: 552 words

HEADLINE: The tugging of a dreaded past

BYLINE: By Fouad Ajami

BODY:

Last time around, it was a brilliant sunny day on the south lawn of the White House, Sept. 13, 1993. The gruff soldier, Yitzhak Rabin, had made that occasion. The hesitant handshake he had offered Yasser Arafat was true to the great, heartbreaking impasse between Arab and Jew. It would be different for this summit of Arabs and Israelis. The dreary Washington weather the day the gathering came to an end gave the thing away. We no longer have the Israeli soldier whose unique authority had anchored the **peace**. The Washington summit was a culmination of all that had come to pass in the year behind us.

Grant Yigal Amir, the assassin of Rabin, his due. He had struck down the one historic figure who could have given that "new Middle East" we celebrated a fighting chance. But Amir had accomplices in that effort that brought down the **peace**. There were the Hamas boys and their grim campaign of terror in Ashkelon and Jerusalem and in the heart of Tel Aviv, last winter, which broke the back of Labor Zionism and shattered Israel's faith in the **peace** it had made with the Palestinians. There was Yasser Arafat being his old, familiar self: a "partner" of the Jewish state and then a leader winking at the diehards of Hamas that he shared their determination to recover all of Palestine by other means. And there was the large Arab political world that in the main (Jordan and Oman and Qatar aside) continued to see Israel as an illegitimate presence in the landscape and a great usurpation. A whole political class in the Arab world had denied the **peace** its support. Made by autocrats, the **peace** was dismissed as the rulers' **peace**, a defiling deed of Arab surrender. No wonder an Egyptian state that had made an early **peace** with Israel was now waging a steady campaign against "normalization" of cultural and political traffic with Israel.

Cravings. There is a great irony in the Arab and Palestinian nostalgia for the "new Middle East" and for its standard-bearer, Shimon Peres. Israel had yearned for a new life beyond its familiar siege. It had wearied of the alleyways of the West Bank and Gaza. A great risk had been taken for the **peace**. A veritable Palestinian army, the police force of the Palestine National Authority, had been introduced between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean. But terror had stalked the **peace**. The political triumph of Binyamin Netanyahu's Likud Party was owed to the recognition that the world around Israel remained a hazardous place.

It would not have been in the nature of things for a summit in a far-away capital to resolve the deep disillusionment with the **peace** that has gripped Israelis and Palestinians alike. The Pax Americana whose shadow lies across the Mideast is part reality and part the illusion of power, a make-believe born of our sense of imperial duty and their need for a distant arbiter. In the end, we were indispensable and helpless: We could summon the protagonists to Washington, but we could not dictate terms of reconciliation. We could not get Israel's leader to shred the very cause--reciprocal **peace**--that had brought him to power. It is their world there, and they must make it in their own image. It is their dawn that will witness either the birth of a new accommodation or the return to the dreaded familiar past.

GRAPHIC: Picture, No deal. PLO's Arafat, Israel's Netanyahu and Jordan's King Hussein at the White House (Chick Harrity--USN&WR)

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: October 10, 1996

February 11, 1997, Tuesday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section A; Page 21; Column 2; Editorial Desk

LENGTH: 1140 words

HEADLINE: No Longer the Unthinkable

BYLINE: By A. S. Khalidi; A. S. Khalidi, editor of the Arabic edition of The Journal of Palestine Studies, advised the Palestinian delegation during Middle East peace talks from 1991 to 1993.

DATELINE: LONDON

BODY:

In the weeks since the signing of the Hebron agreement, the final destination of a Palestinian-Israeli peace settlement has begun to emerge from the political haze. Such a settlement must not only end the Israeli occupation and colonization of Palestinian soil, it must give the Palestinian people a sovereign, uncontested, independent state of their own. This is a matter of justice and practicality. If a truly lasting and stable peace is the goal, there is no other option.

The notion of a Palestinian state has gradually broken the bounds of the unthinkable and has seeped into the very center of the debate over the future of the peace process. In the United States, even such ardent supporters of Israel as Henry Kissinger and William Safire have grudgingly acknowledged that a Palestinian state is inevitable.

Even on the Israeli right, political discourse has begun to shift significantly. David Bar-Illan, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's senior adviser, has spoken of a state of "limited sovereignty" for the Palestinians. Avraham Stern, a right-wing member of the Knesset, has declared that opposition to a state "is not something holy." For its part, Israel's Labor Party has dropped its longstanding opposition to a Palestinian state.

Although these changes have yet to be acknowledged by Mr. Netanyahu, the truth is that Palestinians already have most of the prerequisites of sovereignty: control over land, a legitimate political process and quasi-governmental institutions. Yet these precursors of statehood remain fragile, incomplete and still subject to Israeli dictates. Israel, for example, continues to seal off Palestinian areas, keeping thousands from jobs, schools and even hospitals. And Mr. Netanyahu continues to insist on maintaining and expanding Israeli settlements, recently restoring financial incentives to settlers.

In the coming weeks, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators are scheduled to begin taking up the toughest issues, those left for the final stage of the peace agreement: refugees, borders, settlements, security and the future of Jerusalem. Though the Israeli Government is not likely to publicly acknowledge it, these talks will really be about the future shape of a Palestinian state.

For a settlement to be truly final, it must minimize the chances of future rejection or violent disaffection. The vast majority of Palestinians would support a settlement that resulted in a Palestinian state in Gaza and the West Bank, with its capital in East Jerusalem. Such a settlement would have the legitimacy necessary for a stable peace, which would be in the interests of Palestinians and Israelis.

But the mere trappings of statehood will not suffice. The state has to be real and workable. The following are its essential conditions:

Territorial integrity and contiguity. The Palestinians' ability to accept further territorial compromise is severely constrained by historical, political and geographic realities, including the lack of a direct link between Gaza and the West Bank. Any further dissection of Palestinian territory would make it politically and economically impossible to maintain a state.

Because Israeli settlements would be a constant challenge to the new state's security and integrity, there can be no civilian pockets under Israeli rule on Palestinian land. But there is no reason why individual Israelis could not live in Palestine and individual Palestinians could not live in Israel.

A sovereign capital in Jerusalem. East Jerusalem is Palestine's historical, spiritual and commercial heart. To exclude it from a Palestinian state is unthinkable. Moreover, the boundaries of what Israelis call their "eternal united capital" are neither sacred nor irrevocable. Israel imposed arbitrary new borders on the city in 1967 by annexing to it areas of the West Bank.

With the exception of the Jewish holy places in the Old City, few Israelis can claim much attachment to Jerusalem's existing boundaries. A recently published survey by researchers from the University of Maryland and Israel's Guttman Institute of Applied Social Research found that 70 percent of Israelis who have been to Jerusalem have never ventured into the Arab areas beyond the Old City, and about 60 percent would accept a redefinition of the city limits to "exclude Arab neighborhoods" and insure an overwhelming Jewish majority in their part of Jerusalem. A poll published late last year by Maariv, an Israeli newspaper, even found a slight majority of Israelis in favor of moving the capital to Tel Aviv.

The view perpetuated by politicians that Israelis would accept nothing less than exclusive control over the whole city need not be blithely accepted. There is no good reason why Jerusalem cannot have two separate coexisting sovereignties within nominal, open borders that demarcate the Arab and Jewish areas. Freedom of movement and access to holy places could be guaranteed without redivision of the city.

Security. While appreciating Israeli security concerns, Palestinians have deeply rooted concerns of their own. Given the loss of their homeland in 1948 and occupation since 1967, Palestinians cannot be expected to cede their right to self-defense unilaterally. Instead of being totally demilitarized, a Palestinian state should be capable of limited self-defense but not have the ability to threaten its neighbors.

In practical terms, this would mean no defense pacts with countries hostile to Israel, limits on the size and nature of Palestinian defense forces and no offensive weaponry. International guarantees for both sides and a bilateral nonaggression pact should reinforce mutual security. An international presence of some kind, Israel's requirements for early-warning and ground-to-air defenses and joint security arrangements covering the Jordan Valley could be negotiated.

Justice and fairness for refugees. No final resolution can be complete without addressing the needs and aspirations of Palestinian refugees. As a matter of principle, the Palestinians' right to return or to be compensated for their lost homes and land is nonnegotiable. How this right is exercised is a matter for negotiation. Israel must acknowledge the suffering and hardship Palestinian refugees have faced as a result of their eviction from their homeland, and must assist in their rehabilitation and reabsorption.

For their part, the Palestinians have to acknowledge that a return to the status quo before the creation of Israel in 1948 is impossible and that a resolution of the refugee issue will effectively close the file on this fundamental issue.

This is not a full blueprint for Palestine. The hard details must be left to the negotiators. But these conditions for Palestinian statehood must be met if hopes for a lasting peace settlement are not to be an illusion.

GRAPHIC: Drawing (Graham Elliott)

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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