

# **Conflicting narratives**

**Territory and border debates in contemporary Israeli discourse and their influence on two Jewish lobbying groups in the Netherlands**

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## **Table of contents**

Introduction	2
Chapter 1 - Zionism and Territory	5
1.1    Zionism as a nationalist ideology striving for a Jewish homeland in Palestine	5
1.2    Zionism and its vision on territory and borders	8
1.3    Contemporary discourse on identity, security and territory from a Zionist perspective	12
Chapter 2 - Diaspora	18
2.1    Diaspora and diaspora politics	18
2.2    Relations between Israel and the diaspora	19
2.3    The diaspora, Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict	20
2.4    The Dutch Jewish community	22
2.5    The Dutch Jewish community and Israel	23
Chapter 3 - Israel, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and territorial developments	27
3.1    A history until 1967	27
3.2    1967 and thereafter	32
Chapter 4 - Current debates in Israel on borders and a geographical solution	42
4.1    A critical view on the two-state solution	44
4.2    Alternative solutions	50
Chapter 5 - Jewish lobbying groups in the Netherlands and the Israeli territorial and border debate	58
5.1    Centrum Informatie en Documentatie Israël (CIDI)	58
5.2    Een Ander Joods Geluid	64
Conclusion	72
Literature	75

## Introduction

The nature of the state of Israel has been part of an ongoing debate both inside and outside of Israel. A state founded and formed by a nationalist movement called Zionism, its nature and foundations have been at the forefront of ongoing debates on (Jewish) identity, on being a 'Jewish homeland' or not, its relation to its Palestinian-Arab minority and its position in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, its position towards the Palestinians overall and the Arab world, and its connection to space and borders. The latter debate, on space and borders, has been ongoing since Zionism emerged as a nationalistic movement searching for a Jewish homeland (Kimmerling, 1982; Romann, 1990; Sternhell, 1998; Gans, 2008). Although most of its borders 'materialized' after the War of Independence in 1948, a new debate has been raging focusing on its borders since the Six Day War in 1967 and Israel's occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights. The concept of borders, identity and Zionism are highly intertwined and cannot be seen as totally separate from each other, and has fueled a fair amount of discussion both inside and outside Israel, in the Jewish diaspora and beyond (Shain and Bristman, 2002; Ben-Moshe, 2005; Gans, 2008). This reckons for a deeper understanding of the current debate on Israel's borders, in the light of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in an ever shifting paradigm on Zionism, land and borders, but also on the level of Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Arab relations.

As said, it would be false to assume that this debate is limited to Israel in space and time. In fact, the Jewish diaspora plays a significant role in both fueling and being influenced by this debate and broader debates on Zionism, Israel and Jewish identity. Relations are deeply intertwined and highly diverse. A fair amount of Jews in the diaspora, either collectively in organizations and groups or individually, have since the onsets of Zionism not only participated in its framing on the ideas of space and borders, but have also been influenced by them. And while suspicion arises that especially after the 1967 War the eyes on the Jewish diaspora as both a subject and an object of influence when it comes to this debate have been focused at the Jewish community in the United States<sup>1</sup>, in other countries Jewish communities and Jewish individuals have been strong participants on this field as well.

As a Dutch researcher, a focus on the Netherlands and its Jewish community has been a new field of exploration. Dutch Jews and Dutch Jewish organizations have always been vocal

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<sup>1</sup> See for instance Mearsheimer, John J. and Stephen M. Walt, 2007. *The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy*. London: Penguin Books.

on sharing their views and opinions on Zionism, Israel and related historical developments. On the other end, they have also been influenced by ongoing debates within Israel on these issues.

In this thesis I will focus primarily on the latter development within the Israeli space and borders debate. I will try to give an answer to the following central research question: how have two Dutch-Jewish lobbying groups been influenced by current territory and border debates in Israel within the framework of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? To answer this question three other questions have to be answered: how has Israeli discourse on territory and borders been formed? How does the current Israeli discourse on territory and borders look like? And what is the discourse on Israel's borders and territory within the framework of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict look like within CIDI and Een Ander Joods Geluid? Within my analysis I will put a focus on how the debate on space and borders has been framed after the Six Day War in 1967. The two Dutch-Jewish lobbying groups which I will be analyzing, as said, are the CIDI and Een Ander Joods Geluid (A Different Jewish Voice).

In its first chapter, this paper wishes to present an overview on Zionism as a nationalist ideology, its vision on territory, as well as discussing perspectives on Zionism, territory, identity and security in contemporary Israeli discourse. I will also focus on security and identity issues as a fair amount of the Israeli debate on space and borders have been intertwined with issues of security and identity.

The second chapter will delve into the concept of diaspora, on diaspora politics and diaspora - Israeli relations. It will furthermore focus on the Dutch-Jewish community and its relations with Israel.

The third chapter will present a historical overview on the changing Israeli borders and territory. It will discuss a wide range of views on this subject until after 1967 and Israel's conquest that year of territories outside of its borders.

Chapter four will try to describe contemporary debates on borders and territory in Israeli discourse, with a special focus on territorial final status solutions such as the two-state solution.

In chapter five, an overview will be given on the debate within the two Dutch-Jewish lobbying groups, the CIDI and Een Ander Joods Geluid, on borders, territory and territorial final status solutions.

Finally, this paper will try to give an answer to the question to what extent the debate on territories and borders in Israel within the framework of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been incorporated by CIDI and Een Ander Joods Geluid.

This thesis also contains a societal relevance. By examining the incorporation of Israeli debates by Jewish lobbying groups here, we can get an insight in to what extent diaspora groups are bringing discourse in their 'homelands' to the international arena. It gives us subsequently a deeper insight in how globalization can add to the framing of political discourse on the world stage through diaspora groups, specifically in this case within the framework of conflict discourse.

### *Methodology*

In this article I wish to address the concept of the Israeli territory and border debates and the incorporation of these debates among Jewish lobbying groups in the Netherlands through several methodological means. First of all, I wish to give an assessment on the literature which has been written down so far on the concept of Zionism, territorial space and borders. Secondly I will give an overview on the historical development - with a focus on the post-1967 era up till today - and current status of the border debate in Israel, through both literature and analyses of Israeli newspapers and Israeli opinion makers (think tanks et al.). The analyses of the latter focus primarily, but not exclusively, on 2009. Third, I will give an overview on the debate among CIDI and Een Ander Joods Geluid on Israel's borders and territory, through interviews and an analysis of articles and opinions voiced by both organizations.

## 1. Zionism and territory

### 1.1. Zionism as a nationalist ideology striving for a Jewish homeland in Palestine

Several diverging views exist on how to describe the concept of nationalism. Ernest Geller, as quoted by Eriksen (2002: 98), uses nationalism explicitly to refer to a certain link between ethnicity and a state, seeing it as a 'political principle', as a 'sentiment or [...] a movement', an ethnic ideology which holds that its own ethnic group should 'dominate a state', as Eriksen (2002: 98) puts it. Whereas Geller 'politicizes' the concept of nationalism, Benedict Anderson, as quoted by Eriksen (2002: 98), focuses more on 'the force and persistence of national identity and sentiments' as a crucial part of nationalism. Linked to nationalism Eriksen (2002) elaborates on the concept of the nation-state, a concept which has been the subject of increasing debate as its definition, in relation to the concepts of space and power, has been moving away from the idea of being 'a genuine compound [which is] integrating feelings of belonging and [exercising] compulsory authority in a given territorial space that is deemed sovereign' (Reis, 2004: 252).

Zionism can be described as a nationalist ideology (Ram, 1998; Sternhell 1998), with Israel being its nation-state. It was founded by members of the Jewish diaspora in Europe as an ideology which stressed the need for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in the Land of Israel and first gained momentum with Theodor Herzl's 'Der Judenstaat' (The Jewish State) in 1896. Before Herzl, small groups of Jews had already found their way to the region, either on religious grounds, as an outcome of expulsion or as the first Zionist forerunners of the larger Zionist movement that would soon come to existence. Most notable among them were the Hovevei Zion ('Lovers of Zion') movement and the Bilium in 1882, who moved to 'Eretz Yisrael'<sup>2</sup> from the Russian Empire, fleeing from persecution and searching for the establishment of a Jewish homeland (Vital, 1975).

The rise of Zionism should be seen in the light of several developments: growing nationalism among Europe's Jews with its perceived goal to 'rescue the [Jewish] nation as a historical entity', which also gave rise to other Jewish nationalisms such as the Bund<sup>3</sup> (Gans, 2008: 3); as well as a reaction to European anti-Semitism and overall physical and economic insecurity felt by Jews in Eastern Europe (Sternhell, 1998: 51). For Herzl, a pivotal moment

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<sup>2</sup> Literally the 'land of Israel, or the land of the people of Israel (Sternhell, 1998: 392).

<sup>3</sup> The Bund, the 'General Jewish Workers' Union, was a Jewish-socialist political party active in Lithuania, Poland and Russia and was founded in 1897 (Vital, 1975: 312-313). The Bund 'advocated cultural autonomy for the Jews in the countries where they were living' (Gans, 2008: 3). Like Zionism, it was in favor of Jewish self-determination, but one which could and should take place within the Jewish diaspora, and was as such a movement advocating for a Jewish 'non-territorial' self-determination (Gans, 2008: 28).

in the founding of Zionism was the Alfred Dreyfus Affair (Cohen, 1996: 510-511), which would turn ‘an assimilated, bourgeois, Viennese journalist [into] the key advocate of Zionism’ (Cohen, 1996: 511). Sternhell (1998) explains that this affair<sup>4</sup>, which should be viewed as exemplary of a broader rise of nationalist and anti-liberalist tendencies in Europe at that time, shocked Herzl, who until that time believed deeply in the emancipation of Jews through assimilation and even the abandonment of a Jewish identity in the end (Sternhell, 1998: 10-13). As one of the first and most influential Zionists, Herzl first and foremost called for Jewish self-determination in a given territory, not necessarily mentioning Palestine as an only geographical option at that time; rather, Herzl was part of a branch within the Zionist movement described as ‘territorialists’, who argued that Jewish self-determination could also take place in a territory such as East Africa, giving rise to the Uganda Plan<sup>5</sup> presented by Herzl on the Sixth Zionist Congress in 1903 (Gans, 2008: 10-12). This plan was rejected on the Seventh Zionist Congress in 1905, apparently because of ‘its fundamental unacceptability to Zionist ideology’ (Gans, 2008: 15). Instead, the Zionist movement focused its efforts on creating a Jewish homeland in the land of Palestine.

Overall, from the onset of Zionism, a vision of land and territory and achieving control over it has been a central concept in its development. As a nationalist movement, Zionism was formed in an era of increasing ‘organic nationalism’ in Europe, a nationalism of ‘blood and soil’ (Sternhell, 1998: 10-13). This also had its influence on Zionism. As Sternhell (1998) explains, ‘Zionism developed the classic features of organic nationalism. The experience of contact with the soil, the desire to strike roots in it, and the need to lay a foundation for the legitimation of a return to the country led to a blossoming of the romantic, historical and irrational aspects of nationalism’ (Sternhell, 1998: 15-16).

Gans (2008) draws the reason for the Zionist movement to decide to build a Jewish homeland in Palestine from what the Zionists described as their ‘historical rights’, drawn from ‘the primacy of the Land of Israel in the history of the Jews’ (Gans, 2008: 26). Thus, the basic

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<sup>4</sup> The Alfred Dreyfus Affair revolved around Alfred Dreyfus, a French-Jewish officer who was convicted for treason in 1894. His conviction later proved to be false, but instead of releasing Dreyfus, several high-ranking French officers accused Dreyfus for a second time, giving rise to a debate which would split France and led to accusations of anti-Semitism. The Affair shocked Theodor Herzl, who at that time was a reporter for the Viennese *Neue Freie Presse* in Paris, for its anti-Semitic features (Vital, 1975: 240-244), in a country where its inhabitants, according to Herzl, were ‘strangers to [...] anti-Semitism’ (Vital, 1975: 241).

<sup>5</sup> The Uganda Plan was a plan coming from Herzl and proposed a Jewish homeland in Uganda or East Africa. According to Sternhell (1998), those in support of the plan ‘based its Zionism on the need to provide a quick and effective solution to the distress of a population sunk in poverty and in perpetual fear of the next pogrom’ (Sternhell, 2008: 80), by that meaning the distressed Jews in Eastern Europe. Furthermore, most of them believed or understood that ‘Eastern European Jews were not in a position to wait for a kind of solution that Zionism, either of the “practical” or the “spiritual” variety, was able to provide at that period’ (Sternhell, 1998: 28), as ongoing persecution in Eastern Europe made the position of many of the Jews living there almost unbearable.

idea the first Zionists had in mind was to create a Jewish homeland in an area which they felt the Jewish people could lay a historical claim on, to have Jewish self-determination and to preserve a Jewish identity. As Gans (2008) also shows, the first Zionists talked about the territory as a place where a homeland could be created, but did not imply that the specific territory they laid their claims on was the entire area of what was then called Palestine or the Land of Israel and that it all should be part of the Jewish homeland (Gans, 2008: 28-29). However, for many Zionists, the historical claim resonated to the entire land, which has led to an ongoing debate within the movement ‘whether Jewish self-determination should be realized in the all of the Land of Israel or only in part of this territory’ (Gans, 2008: 31).

The Zionist claim on the Land of Israel didn’t merely focus on the perceived historical rights of the Jews to the land. Several prominent Zionist thinkers, such as Aaron David Gordon, believed that, although Jewish historical rights were the primary factor of focusing on Palestine as the future Jewish homeland, the Zionist will and ability to cultivate and settle the land was an additional basis to rightfully claim the land for the Jews (Sternhell, 1998: 68-73). Gordon ‘accused’ the Arab population in the Land of Israel of having given away their rights to the land by what he perceived was the absence of Arab will to ‘use’ the land. And because Gordon claimed that ‘whoever works the most, creates the most, and shows the most dedication will gain the most moral right to the land and the most power over it’ (Sternhell, 1998: 70), he believed that as long as Jews worked the land and created settlements, they had the best claim on the land. This point of view fitted in his broader philosophy that Jewish redemption in the Land of Israel could be reached through physical labour, as it ‘reformed’ humans, ‘renewed’ national existence and could serve as a ‘solution to the problem of exploitation and the realization of social justice’ (Sternhell, 1998: 64).

Gordon’s works would have a great impact on the Israeli Labour movement, on the members of the Zionist Hapo’el Hatza’ir party<sup>6</sup> and prominent Zionists such as David Ben-Gurion, Berl Katznelson<sup>7</sup> and Yitzhak Tabenkin<sup>8</sup>. Gordon was known for being a proponent of practical Zionism, according to which ‘the goals of Zionism would be achieved by establishing Jewish settlements in Palestine and creating facts on the ground’, as opposed to political Zionism, which ‘strove to secure support for a Jewish national home from a great

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<sup>6</sup> Hapo’el Hatza’ir was established in 1905 and was to ‘serve as the structure for Socialist-Zionist cadre-building’ in the first years of Zionist settlement in Palestine (Perlmutter, 1977: 76).

<sup>7</sup> Berl Katznelson (1887-1944) was one of the main ideologues of Labor Zionism and has been dubbed ‘the ideologist and the “conscience” of the labor movement in Palestine’ (Sternhell, 2008: 19).

<sup>8</sup> Yitzhak Tabenkin (1888-1971) was an important member of the early Zionist labor movement and was in favor of a ‘Greater Israel’, beyond the borders of the state of Israel (Gorenberg, 2006: 15-16).

power or an international organization' and which held that 'a Jewish national home must be guaranteed by international law' (Gans, 2008: 46).

## **1.2. Zionism and its vision on territory and borders**

The issue of territory and borders is intertwined with ideas on ethnic identity and ethnic control over a given territory. As Barzilai and Peleg (1994) note, 'Borders are not merely physical locations. They are, to a large extent, reflections and symbols of national identities, elites, ethos and collective myths' (Barzilai and Peleg, 1994: 59). And because borders are not mere physical locations but human constructs as well - or rather, in a postmodern world, merely human constructs -, they are not laid down and fixed either. Rather, 'boundaries are human creations, and although many boundary lines follow landmarks or physical features, none could be described as "natural"' (Grundy-Warr and Schofield, 1990: 13). So depending on the way in which a border is constructed by man, one can also assume that borders can be deconstructed, given a different meaning in a variety of situations with a variety of actors.

It should be noted that the territorial and border concept of the Land of Israel in the first stages of Zionism was rather vague; in fact, as Romann (1990) states, 'in the absence of definite boundaries of the historic land of Israel and contemporary Ottoman Palestine, the Zionist target area remained essentially vague' (Romann, 1990: 372). This has also been observed by Kimmerling (1982), who claims that in the period before the Zionists received sovereignty through the establishment of the State of Israel, control over the land was vague, its borders not drawn beforehand but rather 'defined by social and political realities' (Kimmerling, 1982: 197). The territorial relationship the Zionists felt with the Land of Israel was thus 'nurtured through processes of territorial socialization' (Newman, 2002: 633). After Israeli independence, Zertal (2005) notes that this vagueness would become instrumentalized, as 'the modern, secular Zionist project refrained unequivocally from defining its territorial borders' and 'the Zionist movement as representative of Jewish national aspirations, and subsequently all of Israel's governments, evaded debate and decisions on the issue of the state's borders' (Zertal, 2005: 184).

The decision to build a Jewish homeland in Palestine meant that control over its territory had to be ensured. Conquering the land became an important facet of Zionist ideology, and a crucial step in coming to Jewish self-determination. As David Ben-Gurion said during the 1920s, as quoted by Sternhell, 'The one great concern that should govern our thought and work is the conquest of the land' (Sternhell, 1998: 22). The 'nationalist ideology' of the Labour movement, which was the dominant factor within Zionism up until the late 1970s, had

the goal 'to conquer as much land as possible' (Sternhell, 1998: 6). However, the Zionist settlers were faced with a land which was already inhabited by an Arab population, something which the settlers were aware of it. 'Zionism was not blind to the presence of Arabs in Palestine' (Sternhell, 1998: 43) and its supporters knew that the land was not 'empty' of people. In fact, Ben-Gurion knew that the Zionist ideal of conquering and settling the land would result in a clash with the Arab population (Sternhell, 1998: 19). As Romann (1990) explains, up to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 the Zionist settlers felt that, because of the Arab population in Palestine, the goal of conquering the land could only be reached by numbers, so a large presence of Jews was needed in the Land of Israel 'in order to secure the territorial gains and to justify the claim to national sovereignty' (Romann, 1990: 371). This awareness, along with the need to lay a claim on national sovereignty in (parts of) the land, led to Zionist settlement in concentrated regions in Palestine, 'in order to attain a territorial continuum and a Jewish majority permitting political autonomy in the foreseeable future' (Romann, 1990: 372). This vision only changed at the end of the 1930s, when partition plans, drawn up for the Mandate area of Palestine to create a Jewish state alongside an Arab state there, led to the belief by the Zionist leadership that in order to change the borders of the future partition plan, more dispersed Jewish settlements were needed in the land. In that way, a Jewish claim could be laid on the land through 'creating facts on the grounds', even though the Jewish presence was one of a minority. This type of conduct has since then also been applied both within Israel after 1948 as well as in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the Golan Heights since 1967 (Romann, 1990: 380-381).

As already elaborated on earlier, the need to create a Jewish homeland by the Zionist movement was strong, and they felt that their claim to the Land of Israel was justified. The perception of territory among many Zionists has been described by Yiftachel (2000) as hegemonic, a perception which saw the land as belonging 'to the Jews and only to the Jews' (Yiftachel, 2000: 737). This perception would have a fundamental impact on the social structure of Israeli society later on.

Yiftachel (2000) coins the term 'ethnocracy' or 'settling ethnocracy' to describe the character of the Israeli state. He describes it as a type of state 'which combines expansion, settlement, segregation, and ethno-class stratification'. In his definition, the Israeli ethnocracy favors a certain 'ethnic class', in this case the Askenazi (European) Jewish population, over other ethnic classes, in this case both the Palestinian-Arab Israeli population and the Mizrahi (Northern African and Arab) Jewish population (Yiftachel, 2000: 728). When talking on territory and ethnocracy, Yiftachel claims that an '[e]thnocracy is a specific expression of

nationalism that exists in contested territories where a dominant ethos gains political control and uses the state apparatus to ethnicize the territory and society in question' (Yiftachel, 2000: 730). Thus, he argues, the way in which the Israeli state was founded, as an outcome of Jews trying to build a homeland in a contested territory as it already had an Arab presence, would shape the state as an ethnocracy.

Ram (1998: 513-514) argues that Zionism, originating as a national movement without a territory, adopted a 'settler-colonial nationalism' when the first Jewish settlers from the diaspora arrived in Palestine. It is also close to what Sternhell (1998) has said on Zionism, namely that 'the significance of Zionism was the conquest of land and the creation of an independent state through work and settlement, if possible, or by force, if necessary' (Sternhell, 1998: 15). As Yiftachel (2000) concurs, Ram positions Zionism as the ongoing dominant ethos within Israel which has not relinquished an ethnic principle of membership for a more liberal-territorial one (Ram, 1998: 514).

But what does this have to do with Zionist perspectives on territory and borders? Yiftachel (2000), Ram (1998) and Sternhell (1998) focus on - Jewish - ethnic territorial control to describe Zionist means for a Jewish homeland to become and stay in existence. This meant conflict with the Arab population. As during most of Zionist history there has been conflict with the Palestinians and the Arab world over territorial control, Newman and Falah (1997) suggest that because of this, the issue of borders has been under constant change in Israel, as they claim that 'territorial relationships have not remained static and unchanging throughout the period of conflict' (Newman and Falah, 1997: 112). This has also been suggested by Kimmerling (1982), who identified at that time four developments on territorial control and changing border perceptions by the Zionists. The first, in the period before Israeli independence, was one of control either by land ownership - the buying of land - or by 'presence' - establishing a settlement and 'being there'. The second was in the period between 1948 and 1967, what Kimmerling calls the settling of the land inside of Israel - trying to enlarge a Jewish presence in predominantly Palestinian-Arab lands within the state, such as the Galilee, in order to attain more control in these areas and diminish chances of territorial self-control by the Palestinian-Arab population. At that time there was a consensus within Israel that its borders and frontiers were 'closed', and the Jewish homeland would not expand beyond these borders. The third period was the period after 1967 when, due to Israel's occupation of the West Bank, the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip and the Sinai, the earlier perceived closed borders were opened again, and a debate ensued about optimal or partial lasting territorial control over the newly conquered lands by establishing new 'facts on the

grounds', e.g. Israeli settlements. The fourth period Kimmerling identified was the area after 1977, when the political party Likud, which had its roots in Revisionist Zionism, came to power and came out in favour of extended territorial control in the Occupied Territories.

So when focusing on Zionist perspectives on borders and territory, we cannot leave out the consequences the Israeli-Palestinian conflict had on these perspectives, and vice versa. In fact, the entire concept of territory and borders has been changing drastically from when the first Zionists set foot in the Land of Israel and a territorial conflict ensued. This is not a surprising but rather expected process. Newman (2002) describes how during conflict and the process of conflict negotiations and resolution, 'territory is a dynamic factor influencing policy decisions in its own right, not just a passive outcome of the political process' (Newman, 2002: 631). Certain geographical realities as perceived by actors in the conflict can change over time, because of certain developments which alter the perspective of public opinion, the political leadership or both. And these changing realities are crucial to incorporate when negotiating a (geographical) solution, as they directly affect the perception of the public of how a solution should look like. So Newman (2002) identifies several processes when looking at conflicts over territories and borders, such as the symbolic and tangible dimensions given to territorial conflict, and the 'dynamics of territorial change from a time-space perspective' (Newman, 2002: 633).

The claim on a certain territory, often accompanied by the reject of these same claims by other groups, facilitates a certain separation, as shown earlier by Ram (1998) and Yiftachel (2000) when talking about Zionism. As Newman quotes Paasi (1996), 'symbolically, territorial separation and partition reflect the desire of [...] national groups to create homogeneous territories in which their own national historiographies, narratives and myths are expressed' (Newman, 2002: 633). This also resonates with what Eriksen (2002) has said earlier on concerning nationalism. As Ram puts it, 'The newly established nation of Israel, which was born out of diaspora Judaism, had to reimagine itself [...] reinvent a tradition [...] and renarrate a historical identity' (Ram, 1998: 514), and partly did so by putting it apart from its Arab neighbours and positioning itself against Arab opposition and hostility.

It is important to note that many of these perspectives on Zionist perceptions of territory, borders and conflict have been gradually evolving since the 1980s. Ram (1998), for instance, can be positioned within a broader line of so-called New Historians who 'have challenged the conventional view of the foreign and security policy of Israel, especially [...] regarding the 1940s and 1950s' (Ram, 1998: 515). Since their first appearance in the 1980s, they have become part 'of the Israeli cultural discourse' (Sternhell, 1998: x). Well-known

New Historians are Benny Morris<sup>9</sup>, Ilan Pappé<sup>10</sup> and Avi Shlaim<sup>11</sup>. Some argue that they are part of a movement which has been dubbed as post-Zionism, a movement which looks critically at the character of the state of Israel and its origins. As Pappé (1997) describes it, post-Zionism is ‘a hybrid of anti-Zionist notions and a postmodernist perception of reality’ (Pappé, 1997: 30), of which the postmodernist perception gives way to the view that the present-day situation in Israel is ‘a phase in which most of the Zionist truths have collapsed but there is no sign of what would replace them’ (Pappé, 1997: 30). Furthermore, reflecting on Israel’s character, some of the post-Zionist scholars ‘become more confident about the future when they envisage the creation of an Israeli rather than a Jewish state: a state for all its citizens’ (Pappé, 1997: 30). According to Ram (1998), New Historians have been responsible in the 1980s and 1990s for challenging settled Israeli views on the birth of the Palestinian refugee problem, the Israeli War of Independence in 1948, the prevention of the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and the role the Labor Party played in the establishment and first years of the state of Israel (Ram, 1998: 515-519).

### **1.3. Contemporary discourse on identity, security and territory from a Zionist perspective**

As was discussed earlier, Zionism arose as a perceived need among some Jews to have their own territory, a homeland for the Jewish people, so to preserve Jewish identity and escape (European) anti-Semitism. As Yiftachel (2000: 736) puts it, the ideology of the first Zionists arriving in Palestine can be described as ‘colonialism of ethnic survival’.

Since then, issues of territory linked to debates on security, the survival and preservation of both Jewish identity and a Jewish homeland seem to be at the core of Israeli discourse. To give an example of this, during the time of the Oslo Accords in the beginning of the 1990s, ‘[a]greement that land and borders were about issues of identity was one of the rare things left and right [in Israel] agreed on’ (Ben-Moshe, 2005: 14). This debate was linked to the earlier discussed rise of post-Zionism in the 1980s and 1990s, which gave way for Israel to reflect on its internal character (Ben-Moshe, 2005: 14-15). According to Ben-Moshe, many ideological opponents of the Oslo Accords - many of them originating from the religious-

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<sup>9</sup> Benny Morris has been the writer of several historical works, most on the Israeli War of Independence in 1947-1948; see one his most important works, Morris, Benny, 1988. *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>10</sup> Ilan Pappé has become widely known for his writings on both the British role in the establishment of Israel and Israeli or Zionist policies during 1947-1949, and its role in the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem, see for instance Pappé, Ilan, 2006. *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications.

<sup>11</sup> Avi Shlaim has written extensively on the partition of the Palestinian Mandate area and Jordan.

Zionist right - felt that Rabin, who was prime minister during the signing of the Accords, was prepared to give up Greater Israel and with that a certain ideology 'for the benefit of a materialistic culture' (Ben-Moshe, 2005: 15), which made Rabin and his allies in the eyes of his opponents a product of post-Zionism. According to these critics, a true Jewish and Zionist identity should be placed above the yearning for normalisation, and the decision to withdraw from the Palestinian Territories, as was foreseen in the Oslo Process, was not seen by them as based on a Zionist vision, but was 'instead the result of external pressure, weariness from the intifada, diplomatic pressure from the US and Europeans, lack of faith in the Jewish and Zionist cause, and a desire for the post-Zionist materialistic normalisation' (Ben-Moshe, 2005: 16). For Rabin's opponents, the Israeli presence in the Territories and the settlements established there were justified, part of what they saw was land not less part of the Land of Israel than for instance Tel Aviv (Ben-Moshe, 2005: 16) Of course Rabin felt that his decision was, in fact, based on a Zionist vision, declaring that the Accords were a victory for Zionism because it would bring peace and would lead to international recognition of the Jewish state by the international community, something political Zionism had long yearned for (Ben-Moshe, 2005: 17). The debate on what land Zionism should claim and where it should have control caused a split during the Oslo Accords, mainly between the (religious) right and the (secular) left. As Ben-Moshe (2005) puts it, 'For the religious right, if Zionism was the means by which the Jewish people's future could be guaranteed, withdrawal from Greater Israel would undermine Zionism and in turn, undermine the Jewish future. For the left, withdrawal was the means for Zionism, in its secular, universal and humanistic form, to liberate itself from the corrupting influence of the military occupation of millions of Palestinians' (Ben-Moshe, 2005: 21). Furthermore, Israel's existence and whether or not to give up the Occupied Territories were described as 'the body' of the Land of Israel that was 'severed', which would either 'jeopardize the rest of the body' according to the Right, or 'save' the body with 'the removal of the infected part' (Ben-Moshe, 2005: 21). This territorial outlook thus boiled down to perspectives on survivalism, on the preservation of Zionism and the preservation of a Jewish homeland.

Also others have commented on Israeli discourses of territory and identity, security and conflict in recent years. According to Rouhana and Sultany (2003: 6), echoing Yiftachel (2000), the state of Israel has always revolved around a certain Jewish ethnocentrism, hence its definition as the 'state of the Jewish people', and Israel's domestic and foreign policies

have for a large extent been guided by this ideology. The Second Intifada<sup>12</sup> has, according to the authors, led to a greater awareness of what can be described as a ‘demographic threat’ among the Jewish-Israeli population, the notion that there is a certain ‘enemy within’, the Palestinian-Arab Israeli population, that could ‘threaten the Jewish character’ of the State of Israel (Rouhana and Sultany, 2003: 6-7). Rouhana and Sultany take this perception of a ‘demographic threat’ not only to include the Palestinian population within Israel, but also as having its effect on foreign policy and a final status solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They suggest that one of the proposed solutions to the ‘threat’ is to incorporate the big Jewish-Israeli settlement blocs on the West Bank in the state of Israel, giving the Jewish population in Israel a bigger demographic share in the population than they currently have (Rouhana and Sultany, 2003: 7), a perspective which also has its influence on Israel’s future borders. They see this as being part of what they call the ‘New Zionist Hegemony’. So, according to the authors, the entire debate on both the place of Palestinian Arabs in Israeli society and the future borders of Israel still boils down to a Zionist discourse on Jewish ethnocentrism in the state of Israel, its vision to territorial control, so to keep the Jewish population in the state of Israel a demographic majority and ensure a Jewish homeland.

Shamir and Sagiv-Schifter (2006) describe how intolerance and fear in Israeli society have increased due to ongoing conflict and threats in recent years, and how this is feeding Israeli discourse on territory and security. In a poll conducted in 2001, some 30% of the Israeli Jewish population believed that the reason for an outbreak that year of heavy rioting among Israeli Palestinians was because of ‘opposition on a national and religious basis to Jews and the state of Israel’ (Shamir and Sagiv-Schifter, 2006: 571). At the start and further into the Second Intifada, 40 to 50% of the Jewish-Israeli population thought that the Palestinian population in the state of Israel threatened the state’s existence, both on the level of Israel’s physical security as of Israel’s Jewish character (Shamir and Sagiv-Schifter, 2006: 577-579). Similar sentiments were heard in a poll conducted among Jewish Israeli’s in 2002<sup>13</sup>. The existence of a large Palestinian-Arab population within Israel’s borders thus seems to resonate with existential fears and a threat to the Jewish character of the state.

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<sup>12</sup> The Second Intifada, also referred to as the Al-Aqsa Intifada, broke out in September 2000. ‘Intifada’ is Arabic for ‘uprising’, literally ‘shaking off’. ‘Palestinians consider it to be a war of national liberation against occupation. Israelis it to be a terrorist campaign’ (Shamir and Sagiv-Schifter, 2006: 570). The First Intifada started in 1987 and ended in 1993.

<sup>13</sup> In the poll, 61% of Jewish Israeli’s saw the Palestinian-Israeli population as a threat to Israel’s security. 80% did not want the Palestinian-Israeli population to be involved in important political decisions in Israel on, for instance, drawing Israel’s borders in a peace treaty with the Palestinians. A further 31% was in favor of expelling Israel’s Palestinians from the state. Barzilai, Amnon, ‘More Israeli Jews favor transfer of Palestinians, Israeli Arabs - poll finds’, Ha’aretz, 12-03-2002.

The entire Israeli discourse around existential fears to Israel as a Jewish homeland is not new. In 1973, Arie Eliav<sup>14</sup> described, in an article months before the Yom Kippur War of October 1973, as what he saw was the position Israeli Jews took within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and their view on security and the existence of a Jewish state. On Israel's Jews he mentioned that 'We [...] live haunted by the dread of the Holocaust, the fear of annihilation' (Eliav, 1973: 62), a fear which had a large psychological toll on the Israeli Jewish population, according to Eliav. Eliav's line of thought has been described by Wistrich (1997) as the Holocaust trauma in Israel, something which has evolved because of 'continuing Arab hostility and Israel's sense of isolation' (Wistrich, 1997: 13). Wistrich explains how the Holocaust, or Shoah, has become a central part of Jewish identity, but also contributed to an important part of Israeli identity and perception; the conclusions drawn from it have contributed to what he calls a 'straightforward survivalism', the idea that 'only a strong State of Israel can ensure that the horror of the Nazi massacre will not recur' (Wistrich, 1997: 14). The Holocaust has become part of the Israeli consciousness. As Wistrich explains in the months preceding the 1967 War, 'the threats of extermination coming from Arab capitals ominously recalled traumas that had barely healed in the intervening quarter of a century' (Wistrich, 1997: 17). He also attests that Israel in recent decades has, to a certain extent, politically instrumentalized the Holocaust, claims which have more vocally been proclaimed by dissident Israelis and Diaspora Jews<sup>15</sup>. Wistrich refers to Israeli politicians drawing comparisons between the Nazis and the Shoah and the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the late Yasser Arafat (Wistrich, 1997: 17). However, as he also argues, the paranoia as some would describe the use of the Holocaust within Israel society to describe Palestinian nationalists or Arab leadership have some grounding, as the often hostile relationship between Israel and its neighbours is not entirely imaginative, nor has been the long history of persecution faced by the Jewish people (Wistrich, 1997: 18). With the Holocaust leaving such a thorough impression on the Jewish identity, Wistrich concludes that 'the Holocaust [has] come to replace the founding myths of the Jewish State as a major source of its *raison d'être*',

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<sup>14</sup> Arie Eliav is a former Secretary General of the Israeli Labor Party, and was what currently can be described as a 'dove' in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, rallying for recognition of the Palestinian people as a nation and advocating withdrawal from the Territories already in 1968-1969, see Gorenberg (2006): 175-176.

<sup>15</sup> The most prominent among them in recent years have been Avraham Burg and Norman Finkelstein. Norman Finkelstein has focused on the political instrumentalization of the Holocaust among the American Jewish community, see Finkelstein, N., 2000. *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering*. Verso Books. The book has been applauded by some scholars, such as Holocaust historian Raul Hilberg, but also severely criticized by others, such as genocide scholar Omer Bartov. Avraham Burg, former Knesset speaker and Knesset member for the Labor Party, has also attested that Israel should move away from putting the Holocaust at a center stage in Israeli discourse, see Burg, A., 2008. *The Holocaust Is Over. We Must Rise From Its Ashes*. Palgrave MacMillan.

replacing original 'ideals of a model socialist society' (Wistrich, 1997: 19). Zertal (2005) describes how the Holocaust has also been used in Israel as a territorial tool. On a spiritual level, some Zionists argued after the Holocaust that the only way to achieve redemption and to prevent another Holocaust was to 'preserve' the unity of the land, or to fight the partition of the Land of Israel as an outcome of Israeli independence in 1948 (Zertal, 2005: 185-186). Overall, since 1948 and especially since 1967, Zertal claims that Holocaust imagery has become part of a growing nationalistic discourse and usage for territorial control, especially in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

So, when observing Israeli discourse on the conflict, in line with two of the most pressing issues within the conflict from an Israeli perspective - the right of return for Palestinian refugees, and recognition of Israel's Jewish identity by the Palestinians (Shamir and Shikaki, 2005: 314) -, the influence of the Holocaust (Wistrich, 1997; Zertal, 2005) and a perceived existential threat (Shamir and Sagiv-Schifter, 2006) can be clearly seen. As Shamir and Shikaki state, 'the consistent evasion of Israel's identity by the Palestinian leadership has been perceived by Israeli Jews as a sign of a hidden agenda. Israeli Jews believe that it indicates a plot to annihilate Israel as the state of the Jewish people, either by means of force or demographically, by implementing the right of return of return for millions of Palestinians to Israel' (Shamir and Shikaki, 2005: 315).

So one can conclude that the relationship between many Jewish Israelis versus Palestinians Arabs inside and outside of Israel, as well as its relationship with the Arab world, is one build up of distrust and fear of existential threat to Israel as a Jewish state from a Jewish-Israeli perspective, and Holocaust imagery has become part of Israeli discourse to address these issues. As Rabinowitz explains, 'Jews are suspicious of Arabs' intentions, which are often interpreted as irrational' (Rabinowitz, 1992: 518). This issue of trust can also be seen in the entire debate on demographics, both within the debate on a final status solution to the conflict as well as within the debate on demographics within Israel, as elaborated upon before by Rouhana and Sultany (2003). On a deeper level, one could argue that this debate boils down even further to the idea on how the Israeli-Palestinian, or Israeli-Arab, conflict should be described and, most importantly, perceived: is it a conflict over resources, a war of different cultures, or a conflict of two nationalist movements competing over the same piece of land? According to Haidar and Zureik (1987), supported by Inbar (2009), the conflict is essentially one of nationalist movements competing over a land - a Zionist-Jewish movement and a Palestinian-Arab movement with opposing nationalistic claims, which have not been able so far to find a solution. But although several angles can be taken to look at the conflict,

it is clear that debates on preserving a Jewish identity and Jewish territorial control over the land, the initial purpose of the first Zionists, and securing the land to prevent the 'annihilation' of a Jewish homeland have become core values in Zionist ideology on land and territory.

## **2. Diaspora**

### **2.1. Diaspora and diaspora politics**

The word 'diaspora' has been under constant change in recent years. Had it always been a concept to describe the Jews living outside of the Land of Israel (although it was also used in old times to describe groups such as Greeks living outside of the Greek lands), in recent times it has been used by an extensive number of immigrant groups. When trying to describe what a diaspora is, I will use the definition given by Shain and Barth, who describe a diaspora as 'a people with a common origin who reside, more or less on a permanent basis, outside the borders of their ethnic or religious homeland - whether that homeland is real or symbolic, independent or under foreign control' (Shain and Barth, 2003: 452). The entire diaspora phenomenon is enormously complex, containing a wide variety of actors, agencies and processes (Sheffer, 2003: x). The way in which diasporas, and individuals within those diasporas, develop in relationship to their home countries is a complex and ever-expanding field. Whereas some within the diaspora opt for total assimilation in their host societies, others opt for separation from these very same societies; where some are deliberately or undeliberately decreasing their ties to their homelands, others are preparing for an eventual return to it (Sheffer, 2003: 23-26). And also within those diaspora communities who decide to invest substantial efforts and resources in creating elaborate organizations dedicated to nurturing relationships between their home countries and their host countries, different motivations exist. Whereas some are mostly concerned with promoting the well-being and ensuring continuity of their diaspora communities, others are more fixed at extending support to their homelands (Sheffer, 2003: 26). These processes have been described under the concept of 'diaspora politics'.

According to Shain and Barth (2003) when discussing diaspora politics, 'Diaspora members identify themselves, or are identified by others - inside and outside their homeland - as part of the homeland's national community, and as such are often called upon to participate, or are entangled, in homeland-related affairs' (Shain and Barth, 2003: 452). Concerning this entanglement, Shain notes that 'Diasporic interests in homeland affairs are the product of a multiplicity of motivations, among them the desire that there be harmony/confluence of interests between them and their kin in their respective homelands' (Shain, 2002: 280). However, the framing of specific interests can be a contested issue within both the diasporas and their homelands.

## 2.2. Relations between Israel and the Jewish diaspora

Let me first start with saying that an impressive amount of books, articles and overall literature has been written on relations between the Jewish diaspora and Israel<sup>16</sup>. In a way, the relations between the Jewish diaspora and Israel are unique. There is a certain ‘extraordinary distinctiveness [to] the Israeli case’ (Scheffer, 53, in: Barnett 1996). According to Scheffer, ‘the Jewish Diaspora’s remarkable persistent and unsurpassed contributions to the establishment of the Jewish state’ (Scheffer, 53, in Barnett: 1996) is noteworthy and, again, unique in the world. That does not mean that there hasn’t been a great diversification of ways in which Jews in the diaspora look upon Israel and give meaning in different ways to what entails a certain contribution. Or the way in which Zionism was received and is still being received within the different Jewish communities across the world.

The history of the current state of Israel and its connection to the Jewish diaspora is deeply intertwined. They are to such a far extent connected to each other that on the one hand, the modern state of Israel could never have existed without the diaspora, while on the other hand an important factor of cohesion within the modern Jewish communities in the diaspora could not have existed without the existence of Israel. The far majority of Israeli Jews and their descendants came to Israel from the diaspora only recently, most of them only after World War II, around the time of the establishment of the state of Israel. Because of this many still have connections to the places outside of the current state of Israel they or their (grand)parents originated from - either through such things as family relations, language or cultural traditions.

Looking at the role Israel plays within the Jewish diaspora, either ‘physically’ (as, for instance, a Jewish organisation directly involved with Israel) or ‘mentally’, part of a way in which Israel contributes to the construct of Jewish identity, some key elements can be identified. First and foremost, it should be noted that the notion of ‘being Jewish’ does not merely revolve around religion, but also (or in some cases rather) ethnic, cultural and historical components give expression to Jewish identity; and with the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, as Rebhun and Levy note in the case of U.S. Jews, ‘Zionism and commitment to the Jewish state have turned into a major focus of communal cohesion’ (Rebhun and Levy 2006: 392). For many, it has become a pillar of Jewish self-identification.

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<sup>16</sup> See among others Ben-Moshe, D. and Zohar Segev, *Israel, the Diaspora and Jewish identity*, 2007: Sussex Academic Press, Brighton, UK.

In the last few years, diaspora groups have become more focused on issues dividing Israeli society, leading to a certain symbiosis between some of these groups and its respective Israeli counterparts, their 'allies'. This symbiosis has not only been brought forward from within foreign Jewish communities, but also vice versa have Israeli interest groups brought their issues abroad, to find Jewish diasporic support for their political or social agendas (Shain, 2002: 304).

### **2.3. The diaspora, Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict**

To understand the role and the attitudes of the diaspora towards Israel when it comes to its policies in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, whether this focuses on domestic Israeli affairs, the domestic affairs in the diasporas' own countries or in the international arena, it is important to get an impression of the 'issues on the agenda' in Israel. For a long time, the most pressing issue on Israel's agenda has been the issue of security.

Since the Six Day War in 1967, up to the Yom Kippur War in 1973 and, most pressing in recent times, the First and - foremost - the Second Palestinian Intifada in the last two decades, Israel's security interests have been at the centre of attention both within Israel as well as within the Jewish communities outside of Israel when dealing with the conflict. The beginning of the Second Intifada in 2000, along with the collapse of the Oslo Process<sup>17</sup> and, a year later, the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks in the U.S. have taken 'Jewish [...] security dilemmas one dramatic step further' (Shain and Bristman, 2002: 69). As Shain and Bristman also note on these developments in recent years, 'For almost a decade, many Israelis and diaspora Jews believed that a comprehensive Middle East peace would alter fundamentally both Israel's Jewish character and relations between the sovereign Jewish state and Jewish existence in the West' (Shain and Bristman, 2002: 69). Elaborating further on this, on diaspora-Israeli relations and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, 'Peace would have enabled Israel to achieve a level of normalization that would have loosened the bonds of involvement with and responsibility for the diaspora, while releasing the diaspora from burdensome entanglements with Israeli security issues that had overshadowed their lives in their countries of domicile for over a generation' (Shain and Bristman, 2002: 69). But issues of security still dominate Israel - diaspora relations, leading to strong bonds of involvement between Israel and the Jewish diaspora.

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<sup>17</sup> The Oslo Accords were a set of arrangements between Israel and the PLO, signed in 1993, meant as a framework for future peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, and also provided for the creation of a Palestinian National Authority.

A country where this bond is highly visible is the United States. As John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt show, the connection American Jews have with Israel has traditionally been strong, even mentioning authors claiming that not a single ethnic group in the U.S. has held such a strong commitment and involvement with a foreign country as American Jews have with Israel (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007: 115). Looking at the size of the U.S. Jewish community, estimated at somewhere around 5.4 million<sup>18</sup> and 7.0-7.4 million<sup>19</sup> individuals, this community - which is by far the largest diaspora community - has always been at the forefront of involvement with Israel by Jewish communities outside of the Holy Land. It has also empowered this specific diaspora community in playing a significant role in Israeli policies and Israeli discourse itself. That does not mean that every Jewish individual in the diaspora is concerned with Israel; when looking at opinion polls taken in the U.S. in recent years, a significant percentage<sup>20,21</sup> of Jewish respondents do not feel a close connection to Israel. Nevertheless, a majority of the American Jews seem to do - although that does not necessarily have to mean they also agree with Israeli policies or come in Israel's defence (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007: 115).

When talking about the role Jews from the diaspora play when it comes to either defending or disagreeing with Israeli policies within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, again the primary focus in this is on the United States, which is the scene of a large number of both Jewish 'pro-Israel' groups<sup>22</sup> as well as - especially in the last number of years - Jewish groups described either as 'pro-peace', 'critical of Israel' or 'pro-Palestinian'<sup>23</sup> (dependent on who describes them). Please note that this distinction is rather crude, as several of these Jewish 'critical of Israel' and 'pro-peace' groups describe themselves as being 'pro-Israel' but in a different way than seems to be acceptable in public discourse<sup>24</sup>. There is also a fair amount of

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<sup>18</sup> Estimate from the Jewish Agency (2007), 'Jewish Agency: 13.2 million Jews worldwide on eve of Rosh Hashanah, 5768', <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/903585.html>

<sup>19</sup> Estimate from Brandeis University (2007), 'Brandeis study finds U.S. Jewish population is significantly larger than previously thought', [http://my.brandeis.edu/news/item?news\\_item\\_id=8093&show\\_release\\_date=1](http://my.brandeis.edu/news/item?news_item_id=8093&show_release_date=1)

<sup>20</sup> See the '2004 National Survey of American Jews', [www.jazo.org.il/press/2005/march/surveytwo.doc](http://www.jazo.org.il/press/2005/march/surveytwo.doc). In the survey, 26% of American Jews polled say they are "Not Very" emotionally attached to Israel, and 10% says they are "Not At All" emotionally attached to it.

<sup>21</sup> See the '2009 Annual Survey of American Jewish Opinion' by the American Jewish Committee, [http://www.ajc.org/site/c.jilTI2PHKoG/b.5472819/k.D6D7/2009\\_Annual\\_Survey\\_of\\_American\\_Jewish\\_Opinion.htm](http://www.ajc.org/site/c.jilTI2PHKoG/b.5472819/k.D6D7/2009_Annual_Survey_of_American_Jewish_Opinion.htm). In that survey, when asking the question 'How close do you feel to Israel', 22% of the respondents say they are "Fairly distant" to Israel, whereas 8% say they are "Very distant" to Israel

<sup>22</sup> According to Mearsheimer and Walt, dozens of organisations - not necessarily entirely Jewish, some with a Jewish component - fall within this category in the U.S. alone (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007: 116). Best known are organisations such as AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee), the American Jewish Congress, ZOA (Zionist Organisation of America), the American Jewish Committee and the ADL (Anti-Defamation League).

<sup>23</sup> Best known at the moment are organisations such as J Street, Brit Tzdek v'Shalom (which merged with J Street at the end of 2009), Americans for Peace Now and Jewish Voice for Peace.

<sup>24</sup> J Street Executive Director Jeremy Ben-Ami described his organization in an interview with the Jerusalem Post as 'pro-Israel', saying 'Being pro-Israel means ensuring that, over the long term, Israel will continue to be a safe and secure home for the Jewish people, so that we will never again have to suffer persecution, injustice and

dissent and also several different discourses within these respective ‘pro-Israel’, ‘pro-peace’, ‘critical of Israel’ and ‘pro-Palestinian’ groups - as is also the case within the mainstream pro-Israel groups it should be noted -, but I will not get into too much detail on that now. Not only American Jews are active in this field; also within Europe, a large number of Jewish organizations, or organizations with a significant Jewish involvement, exist which are engaged in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, such as the European-centered European Friends of Israel<sup>25</sup>. Most European Union countries though have their own national organizations involved on this issue. However, it should be noted that in Western Europe (in which most of Jewish diaspora politics in Europe concerning Israel take place, in countries with big Jewish communities such as France, Great Britain and Germany), there is a weaker tradition of political lobbying among the Jewish communities than there is in the U.S., and it should also be noted that due to the geographical dispersal which causes additional barriers (such as language differences), Jewish communities in (Western) Europe have a smaller combined strength than American Jews have (Shain and Bristman 2002: 70-71). Despite these disadvantages vis-à-vis the U.S., several groups have made themselves a powerful voice heard in their respective societies. In the Netherlands, both the CIDI and Een Ander Joods Geluid (A Different Jewish Voice) have been at the centre stage concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in both the public and the political arena.

#### **2.4. The Dutch Jewish community**

Both CIDI and A Different Jewish Voice are part of the Jewish landscape of the Netherlands. The Dutch Jewish community is highly diverse, and to get a better impression of both lobbying groups, it is of importance to describe the Jewish community they are part of, and the relations between the Dutch Jewish community and Israel.

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the number of Jews living in the Netherlands was estimated at approximately 41,000 to 45,000 individuals, of whom 30,000 were Jews according to the Halakha<sup>26</sup> and 11,000 to 15,000 were so-called ‘father Jews’<sup>27</sup> (Van Solinge

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oppression anywhere in the world’. He disagreed with the notion of being anti-Israel, claiming that those people are ‘rejecting the notion of the right of the Jewish people to a state that didn’t exist before, and that its establishment was a mistake’, something he does not identify with as a ‘Zionist’ himself. See “Israel’s rights ... and wrongs”, Ruthie Blum Leibowitz, Jerusalem Post, April 30<sup>th</sup> 2009.

<sup>25</sup> ‘Gala launches ‘European friends of Israel’’, Ronny Sofer, YNet, September 14<sup>th</sup> 2006, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3303717,00.html>.

<sup>26</sup> The Halakha is a collective body of Jewish religious laws as well as customs and traditions. Someone who is Jewish according to the Halakha has either two Jewish parents, a Jewish mother or has been converted in an Orthodox Jewish way.

<sup>27</sup> ‘Father Jews’ are Jews who only have a Jewish father, which doesn’t make them Jewish according to the Halakha. A part of them does retain a bond with Judaism, a Jewish identity or the Jewish community. Some progressive Jewish communities are open to ‘father Jews’.

and De Vries, 2001: 30). The Jewish population in the Netherlands is marked by a high median age, a high degree of education and a high level of prosperity. But the Dutch Jewish community is also marked by a high secularization rate, and no more than 25% of the community is actually part of a Jewish congregation. As Brasz notes, 'The so-called 'organised Jewish community' (the Jewish congregations and the Zionist federation) number no more than 9,000' (Brasz, 2001: 152). The traditional segment of the Jewish community, organized in the Nederlands Israëlitisch Kerkgenootschap (NIK), has seen a vast decline in number since the end of World War II - from some 20,000 individuals in 1947 to approximately 5,000 individuals in 1999 (Brasz, 2001: 152). Progressive Judaism, through the Nederlands Verbond voor Progressief Jodendom (NVPJ), has gained quite some ground in the last 60 to 70 years however, from a small community of mostly German immigrants (as Germany had been, up until the Shoah, the center stage of Progressive Judaism, replaced by the United States in the last few decades<sup>28</sup>) to some 2,500 in 1999 (Brasz, 2001: 152). Some 7,000 to 10,000 Israelis or descendants of Israelis have made the Netherlands their home in the last couple of decades, forming some 25% of the current Jewish population in the Netherlands.

## **2.5. The Dutch Jewish community and Israel**

For a lot of Jews, Israel is of some importance in shaping their Jewish identity (Van Solinge and De Vries, 2001: 169). Expression to this is given in several ways: either through aliyah<sup>29</sup>, through the support of Zionist organisations and supporting Israeli causes, or through maintaining bonds with family and friends in Israel. More than 14,000 Dutch Jews (Van Solinge and De Vries, 2001: 74) have left for Israel since the founding of the modern State of Israel in 1948, although a large segment of them - some 55% according to some estimates (Van Solinge and De Vries, 2001: 75) - returned to the Netherlands in a later stage. Some 60 percent of Dutch Jews say they have some connection to migration, either to Israel or to some other country. In 1995, the Israeli census reported 11,682 Dutch Israelis, of which 4,500 had

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<sup>28</sup> According to the National Jewish Population Survey 2000-2001 by the United Jewish Communities, 35% of American Jews call themselves 'Reform', whereas 39% of Jews affiliated to a synagogue are affiliated to a Reform congregation (and 42% belong to a Progressive synagogue when including the 3% of Jewish households belonging to a Reconstructionist synagogue, a branch of Progressive Judaism). A total of 1.4 million American Jews identify as Reform. See [http://www.ujc.org/local\\_includes/downloads/6262.pdf](http://www.ujc.org/local_includes/downloads/6262.pdf). A total of 1.7 million Jews worldwide identify as Progressive Jews, see the website of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, <http://wupj.org/index.asp>.

<sup>29</sup> Literally, 'ascend'. Aliyah is the name used to describe immigration to Israel or - before 1948 - the Land of Israel.

been born in the Netherlands and the rest being Israeli-born with either one or two Dutch-born parents (Brasz, 2001: 153).

The relationship between the Dutch Jewish community and the state of Israel has seen several evolvments. Until the 1960s, the Jewish community was to a far extent Israel-centered. At the end of that decade, around the time that the ‘first generation’<sup>30</sup> turned into adulthood, societal change proved to have its impact on the Dutch Jewish community as well. When it came to Israel ‘Young Jews became concerned for the rights of Palestinians and could no longer comfortably use conventional Zionist terminology when defending the rights of Israel’s Jews’ (Brasz, 2001: 155). The anti-Vietnam protests and the anti-Apartheid movement changed the way in which young Jews looked at Zionist discourse, which led to a group of young Dutch Zionists to attack the leadership of the community ‘for lacking good answers to the growing criticism of Israel’ (Brasz, 2001: 155). Some young Jews identified closely with Third World liberation movements and terminology, which led some older members of the Jewish community to worry about this development, feeling that a lot of non-Jews involved in these movements were also anti-Israel (Brasz, 2001: 155). However, another important historical event which actually became a source of pride and confidence about Israel within the community, replacing immediate post-World War II tendencies of Dutch Jews to assimilate and keeping a low Jewish profile, was the Israeli victory during the Six Day War in 1967 (De Vries, 2006: 80). This is not unique to the Dutch Jewish community; as Hartman and Hartman explain, the Six Day war was ‘a source of pride about what the Jewish people [...] had achieved and could achieve in the future’ (Hartman and Hartman, 2000: 396) for worldwide Jewish communities. It also laid down a more ‘common worry about the vulnerability of the state’ (Hartman and Hartman, 2000: 396), giving extra meaning to the attachment of diaspora Jews to Israel.

Nowadays, when it comes to Israel, some 57% of Dutch Jews feel a strong connection to it, although some two-thirds of Dutch Jews are also critical towards the country. No more than 11% feel no special connection to Israel, and a mere 1% have negative feelings towards it. There are several indicators to explain a certain felt connection to Israel. They can be separated in several categories: descent; age; and religious self-identification (Van Solinge and De Vries, 2001: 171-172). Looking at the issue of descent, those Jews who have two Jewish parents feel most strongly connected to Israel. After that come those with a Jewish mother and non-Jewish father, and those with a Jewish father and a non-Jewish mother. When

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<sup>30</sup> The ‘first generation’ are the children of Shoah survivors, many of them born in the immediate years after World War II during the baby boom. A baby boom is a period marked by a greatly increasing birth rate.

looking at the aspect of age, younger Jews tend to feel less of a bond with Israel than older Jews. Whereas 66% of the Jews born before 1924 and 64% of Jews born between 1924 and 1944 feel a strong connection to Israel, this same strong connection is only felt by 43% of Jews born after 1965. Solinge and De Vries suggest that the pre-World War II and “in-“World War II generations have these stronger connections due to a more positive and emotional attitude towards Israel, also viewing it more often than young Jews as a possible sanctuary and a source of pride and militancy (Van Solinge and De Vries, 2001: 172-175).

When it comes to the latest indicator, the issue of religious self-identification, a shift in attitudes has been suggested, starting in the 1930s, up to the Shoah, the founding of Israel in 1948 and the way in which Israeli society developed in the last decades. Zionism, initially a mostly secular project - religious nationalism only developed significantly as political force after the 1967 War (Eldar and Zertal, 2007: 203) - has slowly been attracting more traditional, religious Jews. A reason given for this is the way in which a more national-religious trend has been emerging in Israel in the last two to three decades (Van Solinge and De Vries, 2001: 173). This same trend has also led, apparently also within the Dutch Jewish community, to a decreasing connection felt by Jews who are not that religious. One of the reasons for this, Solinge and De Vries assume, is the political course of Israel in the last couple of decades, which resulted in lost of support among progressive-secular Jews in the Netherlands. Overall, whereas 84% of Dutch Orthodox Jews feel a strong connection to Israel, this declines to 44% of secular Jews<sup>31</sup> (Van Solinge and De Vries, 2001: 172-173). In line with the stronger connection felt towards Israel by religious Jews compared to a weaker connection felt by secular Jews, it is also interesting to note that whereas up to 90% of religious Jews have ever visited Israel, this declines to 42% among secular Jews (Van Solinge and De Vries, 2001: 176). This conclusion, whereas religious, and especially Orthodox or traditional Jews, feel a stronger connection to Israel is also shared by Hartman and Hartman in their research after denominational differences within the American Jewish community and attachment to Israel. In their research, Orthodox Jews were found to feel the strongest connection to Israel (Hartman and Hartman, 2000: 412-413).

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<sup>31</sup> It should be noted that Solinge and De Vries use two 'types' of secular Jews: secular Jews who are not in any single way participating in religious practices; and secular Jews who at times do hold on to certain religious practices, out of - for instance - family tradition or social habit. The first category was used in this example; among the second category, the percentage who feel a strong connection to Israel increases to 61%, still considerably lower than Orthodox or more traditional Jews (Solinge and De Vries, 2001: 172).

Bonds between Israel and the Jewish diaspora remain strong, and have been continuous due to Israeli security dilemmas and the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Fragments of the Jewish diaspora have actively engaged in diaspora politics, and whereas the focus has been mostly on the large Jewish community in the United States, it is also present in other diaspora communities. Those engaging in diaspora politics rally in favour of various causes, whereas some take a profile rather critical of Israel and Israeli policies. In the Netherlands, most within the Jewish community feel a connection to Israel, similar to other Jewish communities in the diaspora. Within the Dutch Jewish community, several organisations and individuals engage in diaspora politics, with the CIDI and Een Ander Joods Geluid, representing both the pro-Israel Jews and the Jews more critical of or opposed to Israeli policies, being the most prominent. Their views on Israel's borders and territory will be discussed later on.

### 3. Israel, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and territorial developments

To get a better understanding on how the theoretical discourse of Zionism on territory and borders worked out ‘on the ground’, it is important to elaborate further on territorial and border developments in the Mandate area of Palestine before 1948, and in Israel after 1948. Several significant historical developments, especially the Six-Day War in 1967, have had a crucial impact on Israeli discourse. The ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, centred in the last forty years around Israel’s occupation of the Palestinian Territories, has been pivotal in defining the current debates. In this chapter, a focus will be put on the historical developments before 1967 and the historical developments after 1967 up until 2009.

#### 3.1. A history until 1967

A geographical solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has always been the source of great debate and one containing a plurality of options. The internationally accepted Road Map for Peace, which envisions a two-state solution<sup>32</sup>, an Israeli state and a Palestinian state side by side, is the outcome of a geographical debate spanning more than a century, dating back to the first Zionist colonists coming to the shores of what was then Ottoman-ruled Palestine, looking for a homeland for the Jewish people.

As Morris (2009) and Gans (2008) show, many of the first Zionist colonists brought with them a vision of a Jewish homeland spanning to the Jordan River, and saw their claims as uncontested. Although they were hampered by an Ottoman Empire not looking for any Jewish homeland to be established at its territory, ‘as Zionists, they took it as self-evident that the Land of Israel belonged to the Jews and to no one else.’ (Morris, 2009: 37). Nevertheless, they were anxious not to be too open on the establishment of a state, fearing the reaction of the Ottoman rulers.

When the British got control over historical Palestine after World War I, a new era rose at the horizon, especially with the Balfour Declaration of 1917, calling for *a* Jewish home in Palestine - although Zionist leaders had preferred the text to call for *the* Jewish home in Palestine (Morris, 2009: 38-39). In the years following, Zionist leaders pushed for more Jewish settlements across the region, as far as the East Bank of the Jordan (Morris, 2009: 40-43). Many of the settlements, including those at the East Bank of the Jordan, were outside of

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<sup>32</sup> The Road Map for Peace was first initialized in 2002 and given form in 2003, the broad outlines of the plan being accepted by both Israel and the Palestinians. The basic goal of the Road Map is a permanent solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; see Council of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.cfr.org/publication/7738/>. The plan was proposed by the United States, the European Union, the United Nations and Russia.

what was described by some Zionists as the 'Jewish heartland' in Palestine, the mountainous region in the centre of the Mandate area, around Jerusalem and Hebron. This was mainly the result of the large Arab population in this area, as well as due to economical and geographical reasons (Romann, 1990: 372-373).

In 1922, the Churchill government published a so-called 'white paper', designating the borders of what would become the area of British-ruled Palestine. It left out the East Bank of the Jordan. This 'white paper' caused a split in the Zionist movement: whereas some Zionist leaders such as David Ben-Gurion, who would later become the first president of Israel, approved of the plan - that is, reluctantly - as it still called up for the establishment of a Jewish home in Palestine, others disapproved, seeing the paper as limiting Jewish historical claims on the land (Morris, 2009: 43-44).

One of the opponents to this 'white paper' was Ze'ev Jabotinsky. Born as Vladimir Yevgenyevich Zhabotinsky in Odessa, which at that time was situated in the Russian Empire, in 1880, Jabotinsky joined the Zionist movement in 1903 after pogroms broke out against Jews in the town of Kishinev<sup>33</sup>. He soon became the leader of the right-wing (Revisionist) Zionist movement, which envisioned a Greater Palestine and a territorial claim of the Jews to the entire Land of Israel. Faced with an increasingly nationalistic Arab population in the 1920s and 1930s in reaction to the growing Jewish presence, Jabotinsky pressed for an Arab minority in a Jewish majority state spanning the territory of Greater Palestine, with equal civil but no national rights (Morris, 2009: 43-44). His plan was, however, rejected by the Zionist Congress. Until his death in 1940, Jabotinsky stayed active in the Revisionist Zionist movement, founding a rival to the World Zionist Organization which he called the New Zionist Organization in 1935, and establishing the military arm of Revisionist Zionism, Irgun Tzvai Leumi - simply known as the Irgun -, in 1937.

While Revisionist Zionism sought for a Greater Palestine where Arabs were allowed to be a minority but could not express their national rights, other Zionist groups as well propagated views dissimilar to the broad mainstream visions of the World Zionist Congress and the general socialist-dominated Zionist movement. A small group of Zionist intellectuals in the 1920s for instance pressed for a radically different approach compared to the approach expressed by Revisionist Zionism: that of a binational state for two peoples, both enjoying national rights. One of the first groups to focus on binationalism was a group called Brit Shalom, a group made up of Jewish intellectuals who were worried by what they saw as the

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<sup>33</sup> Biography of Ze'ev Jabotinsky at the Jabotinsky Institute of Israel website, <http://www.jabotinsky.org/Site/content/t2.asp?Pid=123&Sid=10>.

fierce opposition of the Arab population towards Zionist aspirations (Morris, 2009: 45) and because of that tried to promote cooperation between Jews and Arabs. The group stayed small as long as it existed, and eventually disbanded after not agreeing on issues such as Jewish immigration to Palestine and demographics, as well as not being able to find Arab support for their ideas. Some of its members founded several other groups focused on binationalism in the decades following, such as Agudat Ihud; however, their influence would always remain marginal, and, as some argued, highly utopian (Morris, 2009: 46-58). Some Zionist leaders from time to time did call up for a binational state - but in those cases, a binational state was merely seen as a stepping stone towards an independent, Jewish state. One exception was said to be David Ben-Gurion, the first Israeli prime minister, who proposed a plan in 1929 for a federal, binational state in the Mandate area, with room for both Jewish autonomy and Arab autonomy in separate parts in the proposed state (Goldstein, 1988). Although he did not exactly share the same vision on binationalism as, for instance, Brit Shalom, as he believed contrary to Brit Shalom that a binational state should have a Jewish majority, his plan did envision national rights for both Jews and Arabs. Ben-Gurion's plan was not accepted by his political party, Mapai; instead, it voted for the parity plan proposed by another leader of Mapai at that time, Berl Katznelson (Goldstein, 1988: 464). Eventually, Ben-Gurion left his initial idea on a Jewish-Arab binational state by 1934, propagating a Jewish state to be established instead, probably as an outcome of ongoing political and historical developments at that time, such as the rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazis in Germany and growing waves of Jewish emigration to Palestine (Goldstein, 1988: 466).

In 1936, the British Peel Commission was established, headed by William Robert Peel, with the goal 'to investigate the [deterioration of the] situation [in Palestine] and to devise policy recommendations' (Inbar, 2009: 266). In 1937 the Commission recommended partitioning the land in two states, one Jewish and one Arab, in the Mandate area of Palestine (Inbar, 2009: 266). Whereas the Arabs and even the British government rejected the proposal, the Zionist leadership reluctantly agreed, although no more than 20% of Palestine was reserved for a Jewish state. Zionist leaders agreed to the partition proposal due to the immense pressure felt to save Europe's Jews from the threat posed by the Nazis. Furthermore, the immense Arab pressure building up on Britain left no room for rejecting the proposal in order to push for a bigger territorial share; so, after a fair amount of discussion, the Zionist Congress agreed to the Peel commission's recommendation of forming two states (Morris, 2009: 60-63).

The Peel plan, as the paper by the Peel commission was known, contained several aspects which were deemed unacceptable by both the Arab leadership and the British government. One recommendation called for the forced relocation of parts of the Arab population to what would become the Arab state in the Mandate of Palestine; on the basis of this plan lay the forced relocation of most of the Greeks living in Turkey and Turks living in Greece to their respective 'home countries' (Morris, 2009: 63). The idea of forced transfer had already crossed the minds of some Zionists before the Peel commission presented it, coming out of the idea that a Jewish state with a Jewish majority and an Arab minority would be in the state's best interest considering several Arab revolts which had occurred in the Mandate of Palestine in the decades before. And with a large number of Jews trying to flee Europe to escape the Nazis, the presence of a big Arab minority - which could grow to a majority in the future - was seen as a burden. However, the Zionists were aware of the considerable opposition to the plan by the Arabs and the British, so 'although the transfer idea periodically gripped the imagination of this or that Zionist stalwart [...] it was never adopted as a goal or policy platform by the Zionist movement or any of the main Zionist political parties' (Morris, 2009: 65).

The Shoah, or Holocaust, served as a tragic turning point in Western public opinion on the need for a state for the Jewish people. The United Nations, in response to a request by the British government, founded the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) in May 1947, to investigate what the best option would be for a future government in the Mandate of Palestine (Khalidi, 1997). Its conclusion by a majority of the Committee's members was to establish two states, one Jewish and one Arab. A resolution in favour of two states was laid down in the UN and was accepted, despite opposition to it by the Arab member states and the Palestinian-Arab population. As Morris describes it, the 'Yishuv's political mainstream full-throatedly hailed the UN partition resolution as a laudable turning point in Jewish history and endorsed a two-state solution.' (Morris, 2009: 78). Romann (1990) says on this that 'the Jewish national movement gained sovereignty by accepting the principle of territorial compromise, according to the territorial-demographic formula' (Romann, 1990: 373), in that the Jews would be a demographic majority in their own state. In the UN partition resolution, fifty-five percent of the Palestinian Mandate west of the Jordan River was reserved for a Jewish state, while the other forty-five percent was reserved for a Palestinian-Arab state (Khalidi, 1997: 9-11). The acceptance of the resolution by the Jewish population and its opposition to it by the Palestinian-Arab population and the Arab countries, and the retreat of British troops out of the Mandate area in the months to follow, erupted in a civil war,

eventually leading up to the Arab-Israeli War of 1948, known in Israel as the War of Independence and among the Palestinians as al-Nakbah or the Catastrophe (Rabinowitz, 1994: 28). After an armistice was signed in 1949, the Israeli state covered some seventy-eight percent of the Palestinian Mandate, an increase of territory of almost fifty percent compared to what was decided upon in 1947 by the UN. Some historians believe that this was an outcome of Plan Dalet, a plan designed by the Haganah<sup>34</sup> to get control over Jewish settlements and strategic points outside of the defined boundaries by the UN of the newly-created Jewish state (Pappé, 2003; Khalidi, 1988). According to Khalidi, the goal of Plan Dalet was for additional land to be absorbed by the Jewish state, quoting Israeli sources that ‘the purpose of Plan Dalet was “control of the area given to us by the UN in addition to areas occupied by us which were outside of these borders and the setting up of forces to counter the possible invasion of Arab armies after May 15”’ (Khalid, 1988: 16). Khalidi links this to a broader objective of the Israeli leadership to conquer more land than was assigned to the Jewish state and to expel the Palestinian-Arab population, a view shared by scholars such as Norman Finkelstein (1991) and Ilan Pappé (2006). Finkelstein argues that one of several ‘myths’ unlocked by Israeli historians in the 1980s was that the Zionist leadership in the Palestinian Mandate enthusiastically embraced the partition plan. Rather Finkelstein believes that the leadership was aiming for expulsion of the Palestinian-Arab population, saying that ‘Ben-Gurion and his lieutenants were intent on expelling the Arabs from Palestine. The tactics deployed in the successive offensives by the Zionist military forces were tailor-made to achieve this end’ (Finkelstein, 1991: 82).

However, other New Historians, such as Benny Morris, as well as other Israeli historians object to this view, claiming that although a Plan Dalet existed, a deliberate conquering of land to enlarge the Jewish state and in the process ethnically cleansing the Palestinian-Arab population was not an objective of the Israeli leadership. As Morris puts it, ‘the fact that in the late 1930s Ben-Gurion and the majority of the Zionist leaders favoured a “transfer” solution to the problem of the prospective Arab minority in the prospective Jewish state, and that during 1948 Ben-Gurion and most of the Yishuv’s leaders wished to see as few Arabs remaining as possible, does not mean that the Yishuv adopted and implemented a *policy of expulsion*’<sup>35</sup> (Morris, 1991: 103).

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<sup>34</sup> The Haganah was a Jewish paramilitary organization founded in 1920 and which laid the foundation for the Israeli Defence Forces in 1948.

<sup>35</sup> Emphasis added by Benny Morris.

So while one can conclude that whether or not the conquering of the Galilee and the Negev was either the outcome of a deliberate envisioned plan to enlarge the Jewish state and expel the Palestinian-Arab population, or no more than the practical outcome of war, what's for sure is that the issue remains contested up to this day. In 1949, armistice agreements were signed between Israel and Syria<sup>36</sup>, Israel and Jordan<sup>37</sup>, Israel and Egypt<sup>38</sup> and Israel and Lebanon<sup>39</sup>, creating armistice lines which have been dubbed the 'Green Line'.

After 1948, as elaborated earlier on by Kimmerling (1982), most of the Jewish population and Israeli leadership were first and foremost satisfied with that there was a Jewish state, especially in the wake of the Shoah and the large numbers of Jews from Arab countries flocking to the country (Morris, 2009: 79-80). Although some Zionists kept striving for a Greater Israel outside of the armistice lines of 1949, most of the political leadership was trying to 'gain recognition and legitimacy for these boundaries' (Kimmerling, 1982: 197), the boundaries of the state put down in 1948. Trying to enlarge the Jewish presence in predominantly Palestinian-Arab areas within the state of Israel, such as the Galilee, was another goal during the years following 1949, to raise Zionist control within its borders.

### **3.2. 1967 and thereafter**

*“ A religious party more than any other [...] is commanded not to give up one inch of holy soil in the borders promised by God ”*

Chairman Bnei Akiva, youth wing National Religious Party, on the Israeli presence in the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) after 1967 (Gorenberg, 2006: 93)

On June 5 1967, the Six Day War broke out between Israel and an Arab coalition of Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Iraq. The war lasted only a couple of days, but had huge territorial consequences. Israel captured the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) from Jordan, the Sinai and Gaza from Egypt and the Golan Heights from Syria. In the days, weeks and months following, a debate in Israel ensued on the future of these captured territories. Actors of both the Zionist right as well as the Zionist left were excited by the victory (Ram, 1998: 523), and

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<sup>36</sup> The Israeli-Syrian General Armistice Agreement signed on 20-07-1949 in Mahayanim, see digital UN archives, <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/E845CA0B92BE4E3485256442007901CC>.

<sup>37</sup> The Israeli-Jordanian General Armistice Agreement signed on 03-04-1949 in Rhodes, see digital UN archives, <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/F03D55E48F77AB698525643B00608D34>.

<sup>38</sup> The Egyptian-Israeli General Armistice Agreement signed on 24-02-1949 in Rhodes, see digital UN archives, <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/9EC4A332E2FF9A128525643D007702E6>.

<sup>39</sup> The Lebanese-Israeli General Armistice Agreement signed on 23-03-1949 in Ras En Naqura, see digital UN archives, <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/71260B776D62FA6E852564420059C4FE>.

some saw it as erasing the ‘wrong-doing’ of the establishment of the State of Israel some twenty years before which, in their eyes, split the Land of Israel. As Israeli historian Gershom Gorenberg explains, the armistice lines of 1949 between Israel and its Arab neighbours, which were seen by a fair amount of the Israeli mainstream as *de facto* borders, were seen as a grave injustice by others on the more extremes, ‘for whom, quite consciously, the borders were a violation of their emotions and their ideology’ (Gorenberg, 2006: 26), as such holy and historical places such as Hebron were separated from the Israeli state.

The capture of East Jerusalem proved to be one of several victories filled with nationalist rhetoric during the Six Day War. As Webber explains, although Israel formally had control over West-Jerusalem since 1948, it ‘was not the true Jerusalem’ (Webber, 1981: 7). All that represented this ‘true’ Jerusalem in the eyes of some Jewish Israelis, ‘the direction of nostalgic longings’ (Webber, 1981: 7), as Webber calls it, was at the Jordanian side of Jerusalem; the Wailing Wall (the *Kotel*), the Jewish Quarter in the Old City: they were not in Israeli hands. And although the secular leadership in Israel had ‘sublimated this ancient nostalgia and redirected national pride towards the symbols of modern Zionist accomplishments’ (Webber, 1981: 7), many traditional Jews and nationalists still longed to it.

A good impression of the nationalist tide that swept the nation during the 1967 War were the lines of a new song by Israeli singer Naomi Shemer. It was written at the request of Jerusalem mayor Teddy Kollek, and was called ‘Yerushalayim shel zahav’, Jerusalem of Gold. It was a song loaded with a sense of secular nationalism, which received a boost during and in the aftermath of the 1967 War. It recalled Jerusalem and the land beyond its borders, a romantic relationship between a nation (the Jews) and its land. It recalled the Dead Sea, and Jericho. No Arabs were mentioned in the song. The lands were empty, lost, waiting for the Jewish people. It was a song so depictive of the atmosphere that had arisen within Israel during that time (Gorenberg, 2006: 24-25).

<p>Yerushalayim shel zahav  Veshel nehoshet veshel or  Halo lekhol shirayikh  Ani kinnor</p> <p>Chazarnu el borot hamayim  Lashuk velakikar  Shofar koreh behar habayit  ba'ir ha'atikah.</p>	<p>Oh, Jerusalem of Gold  And of light and of bronze  I am the lute for all your songs</p> <p>The wells are filled again with water,  The square with joyous crowd,  On the Temple Mount within the City,  The shofar rings out loud.</p>	<p>Figure 1, chorus of  ‘Yerushalayim shel  zahav’, by Naomi  Shemer, 1967</p>
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When Moshe Dayan, Israeli Minister of Defence, entered East Jerusalem, he exclaimed 'We have reunited the dismembered city [...] We have returned to our most holy places, returned in order never to be separated from them again' (Gorenberg, 2006: 37). Dayan himself was responsible for conquering the entire West Bank during the Six Day War, pressured by Yigal Allon, a left-wing politician who was a noted territorial maximalist and who was described by the influential Israeli poet Haim Gouri as the 'prophet of the Whole Land' of Israel (Gorenberg, 2006: 15-16). Despite the nationalist spirit which seemed to overwhelm the government and Israeli public opinion, not all were so keen on holding on to the occupied (or, as others put it, 'liberated') territories. On June 9<sup>th</sup> 1967, a day before the official ending of the Six Day War on June 10<sup>th</sup> 1967, a proposal was sent by the Military Intelligence Department of the Israeli Defence Forces to Dayan and Yitzhak Rabin, who at that time was Chief Staff of the IDF. It hinted at pulling back to the armistice lines of 1949 in favour of a peace treaty and the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and in Gaza. The proposal never received an answer (Gorenberg, 2006: 39).

Some got cold feet after Israel had conquered the West Bank and Gaza in 1967, while initially advocating in favour of it. When Allon noted that, contrary to what he had expected, the Palestinians living on the West Bank didn't flee in great numbers and decided to stay put, he became fearful of the prospect of an additional one million Arabs living inside a future, enlarged Israeli state. Facing a possible future of a binational state, Allon laid the foundation of a plan on the territorial future of the West Bank later called the Allon Plan (Gorenberg, 2006: 40, 51-53). In it, Allon outlined the need for Israel to have defensible borders, arguing that with hostile neighbours looking for its destruction, the 1949 armistice lines were hardly defensible and only encouraged Arab states to attack Israel (Allon, 1976: 40). From this position, he proposed a geographical solution to the occupation of the West Bank where Israel held parts of it on the basis of geostrategic assets, while giving most of the West Bank back to Jordan, especially the areas with a large Palestinian-Arab population. As Allon said, 'this type of solution would leave almost all of the Palestinian Arab population of the West Bank under Arab rule' (Allon, 1976: 47). The need to hold strategic assets in the West Bank, or 'Judea and Samaria' as Allon called it, was proven according to Allon later on during the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

Double feelings existed among Israeli politicians following the 1967 war, a battle between feelings of emotion and excitement of reclaiming 'lost lands' versus its realistic implications for the State of Israel. At a meeting of Mapai, a left-wing party part of the

leading left-wing Alignment Bloc in the Israeli parliament, prime minister Levi Eshkol voiced the dilemma felt by many that, on the one hand, the West Bank and Gaza belonged to Israel on Biblical grounds; but on the other hand, the adding up of one million Arabs (the number of Arabs living in the Occupied Territories) to the state of Israel would certainly pose a threat to its existence as a Jewish state. As Gorenberg rightly puts it, ‘the prime minister succinctly introduced both sides of the debate that would henceforth define Israeli politics’ (Gorenberg, 2006: 46). Furthermore, Eshkol feared that the occupation of the West Bank would cause resentment among international actors.

Despite the arguments against the annexation of any land in the West Bank, most political parties were in favour of annexing East Jerusalem, claiming it belonged to Israel (Gorenberg, 2006: 47). There was also huge public support for the annexation of East Jerusalem, with some 90% of the Israeli public in favour of it (Gorenberg, 2006: 58). Eshkol soon decided to annex it, afraid of mounting international pressure not to do it. On June 29<sup>th</sup> 1967 Jerusalem was officially ‘reunited’, and the city council of East Jerusalem was disbanded (Gorenberg, 2006: 60).

There was also a strong call for the claiming (or rather, as some would say, reclaiming) of lands on the West Bank which were deemed important to Jews, which could be used for future urban development (in the case of East Jerusalem) and of lands - past settlements - which were left behind during or prior to the Israeli War of Independence (Gorenberg, 2006: 47-48). One of these settlements - or, to be correct, group of settlements - would become extremely important in the future battle for land on the West Bank: the Gush Etzion Bloc.

As said, in the first months after the Six Day War, a debate ensued within the Israeli establishment on the future status of the Occupied Territories. Dayan proposed a formal annexation of the West Bank and Gaza, and giving no autonomy to the Palestinians on the issues of Foreign Affairs and Defence. As Dayan put it, if King Hussein of Jordan, whose kingdom had been the ruler in the West Bank between 1948 and 1967, wanted peace, he had to acknowledge the Jordan River as the border between Jordan and Israel (Gorenberg, 2006: 50-51). Allon, the territorial maximalist with a new urgent fear for binationalism, proposed the founding of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza, without certain strategic and historically important lands which should remain in Israeli hands, such as the Hebron Hills and the land along the river Jordan and the Dead Sea. Some so-called ‘minimalists’ (those opposing the Israeli presence in the Occupied Territories), such as the influential Minister of Justice Shapira (Mapai), pressed for giving the West Bank back to Jordan, out of opposition to

colonialism and fear for a binational state (Gorenberg, 2006: 51-52). This reasoning was also voiced, and is still being voiced, by others.

Dayan's plan was eventually adopted (Gorenberg, 2006: 59). It was resonating to the magic feeling that had engulfed Israeli society since its victory in the 1967 war. In opinion polls, a large fragment of the Israeli public (71%) supported the annexation of the West Bank, in line with the earlier mentioned support for the annexation of East Jerusalem. Besides nationalistic arguments, a lot of Israelis were in favour of annexing the West Bank out of security concerns, the idea of acquiring and keeping land to keep the State of Israel safe (Gorenberg, 2006: 84).

However, opposition to the Occupation, and thus to the 'Whole Land of Israel' thought, was present from day one after the end of the Six Day War - not only from politicians such as Shapira, but also from activists and cultural figures such as Amos Oz (Gorenberg, 2006: 86-89).

Not long after the Six Day War had come to an end, the first Israeli settlements in the newly conquered territories started to arise, most prominently in the Golan Heights (Gorenberg, 2006: 96-98). The government was hesitant in giving any official approval to this development - which was an outcome of civilian actions -, but didn't object to it either. Within the Israeli government, a legal debate ensued on the legality of these settlements. Theodor Meron, one of the leading Israeli legal experts, asserted that settling any part of the Occupied Territories was illegal according to the 4<sup>th</sup> Geneva Convention. Countering the argument from some that the Convention did not apply to the West Bank because there had never been a real recognized border but merely an armistice line, Meron said that 'those claims [...] would not convince the court that mattered, the court of world diplomacy' (Gorenberg, 2006: 101). Eshkol, however, was put under enormous pressure of politicians and activists to agree to the settlements, most prominently the Gush Etzion Bloc. At the end of 1967, he spoke out in favour of ending the status quo on the occupation and come with a more detailed plan on what to do with the conquered lands. He followed partly the Allon Plan. On a different level, which can be seen as an outcome of the nationalist debate in Israel which had ensued after the Six Day War on the conquered territories, the West Bank was officially renamed 'Judea and Samaria' - the Biblical Jewish names for the area - in official documents, while the term 'occupied territories' was changed in 'administered territories' (Gorenberg, 2006: 124). A pivotal role in these first developments was the religious-nationalist Zionist Right. Although many from the Left in Israel, as shown, were supportive of Israel's presence in the newly-acquired territories in 1967, and Israel's settlement policies gained ground with

the efforts from several left-wing governments, parties and individuals, it was the religious, Zionist Right which started materialize it by 'being there' - starting actual settlements in the West Bank. One of the main players in this field which arose after the Six Day War, and more importantly after the 1973 Yom Kippur war, was Gush Emunim, the Block of the Faithful (Eldar and Zertal, 2007: 183-184). It evolved as one of several protest groups in the 1970s, at a time of confusion in Israel after the 1973 War and ongoing developments in the West Bank (Weissbrod, 1982: 265). The main principle of Gush Emunim has been described as keeping and settling the entire Land of Israel (Eldar and Zertal, 2007: 212) and preventing the emergence of a Palestinian state (Makovsky and Benedek, 2003: 27). This principle went hand in hand with a rejection of claims of Palestinians on the land. In religious terms, the Palestinians along with the broader Arab world were described as a Biblical foe.

In the years that would eventually follow, the Israeli government continued to be divided on the issue of settlements and holding on to the Occupied Territories (not only the West Bank and Gaza but also including the Golan Heights and, at that time, the Sinai). Negotiations with Jordan did not lead to an agreement. There was a strong need among many Israeli leaders, among secular nationalists and among religious-nationalist Zionists, to hold on to lands which were important on strategic grounds or, especially in the case of many religious-nationalist Zionists, on emotional or religious grounds. But the issue of what to do with the Palestinian-Arab population continued to stir up emotions. Golda Meir, the successor of Eshkol as prime minister of Israel, believed that the conflict between Israel and the Arab world was not about territory, but rather about the Arabs wanting to annihilate the Jews. It was one of the reasons for her to exclaim that 'annexation [of the West Bank] [means] an end of the Jewish state' (Gorenberg, 2006: 190). Just like Dayan she was not in favour of granting the Palestinian-Arab population of the West Bank Israeli citizenship. Meanwhile, the number of Israeli settlements and Jewish Israelis living in these settlements grew, and many religious Zionists started settlements near or in areas such as Hebron, causing tensions with the local Palestinian population. Some left-wing Israelis started to object to the ongoing occupation and settlement construction, and prominent Labour politicians such as the earlier-mentioned Arie Eliav spoke out in favour of retreating from the Territories and acknowledging the right of the Palestinian people to have their own state (Gorenberg, 2006: 240). The Labour movement, at that time still the leading political force in Israeli politics, nevertheless decided otherwise, coming out in favour of ongoing construction beyond the 1949 borders. One of the reasons for Labour to do so was its fear of losing more right-wing elements within Labour such as Dayan, and its fear of the growing right-wing parties such as Likud (Gorenberg, 2006: 247-248).

October 1973 saw the Yom Kippur War, a war between Israel and several Arab states, most notably Egypt and Syria (Gorenberg, 2006: 255). Although Israel won the war, it caused confusion among many Israelis. The settlements in the Golan Heights, which until that time had been seen as a security asset, did not hold. For many religious Zionist soldiers and settlers, it strengthened their beliefs that they were there to fight against the 'darkness' (Gorenberg, 2006: 261). Labour openly started to talk about 'territorial compromise', of giving up parts of the territories it had occupied after 1967 in exchange for peace and defensible borders. There was also talk on recognizing the Palestinian people and their right to an independent state (Gorenberg, 2006: 263). On the other hand, right-wing parties which were not in favour of territorial compromise gained a considerable number of parliamentary seats during the elections of December 1973, and Gush Emunim, a nationalist settler movement, came into existence (Gorenberg, 2006: 266). Gush Emunim would soon hasten the pace of new settlements in the Occupied Territories, often resulting in a clash with the government and causing friction within the government on what road to follow. Nevertheless, the movement gained solid ground, supported by nationalist and right-wing Israelis and unwilling to compromise on territorial claims.

1977 would eventually change the Israeli landscape completely, when Likud won the elections and for the first time since the founding of the state of Israel the Labour movement lost its power as leading political force (Kimmerling, 1982: 200; Gorenberg, 2006: 356). At that time, Israeli society and Israeli politics were still heavily divided on the issue of settlements, which was one of the main factors influencing Israeli debates on territorial claims and future borders. As Gorenberg (2006) would put it, 'the settlements [...] represented a return to ethnic conflict over the whole land. Looked at it from one angle, the settlements were the colonial project of a sovereign state; seen from another, they represented a return to the struggle before statehood' (Gorenberg, 2006: 360).

In 1979, Israel signed a peace treaty with Egypt and gave back the Sinai, which Israel had conquered in 1967. Many settlers were heavily opposed to the agreement, but couldn't prevent the agreement and its implementation, which meant the dismantlement of all Israeli settlements in the Sinai (Eldar and Zertal, 2007: 70-74). As a response, fearful of what could happen to other settlements in the Occupied Territories, the settler movement sped up the building of new and enlarging of existing settlements in the beginning of the 1980s. However, it soon became clear that the Likud-government actively supported the expansion of the settler project (Eldar and Zertal, 2007: 97-99). At the same time, Peace Now (Shalom Achshav), an Israeli left-wing peace movement, started to openly criticize the settlements for both the

obstruction it meant for the peace process and the high financial costs for Israeli society. Growing criticism among Labour politicians directed at the settlements caused a clash between Labour and Likud. However, at the same time, the so-called 'hilltop youth' of Gush Emunim started settlements deep in the Occupied Territories, at times at heavily contested lands.

In 1988 the First Intifada broke out. Although a Likud-Labour government between 1988 and 1990 and an entirely right-wing government from 1990 to 1992 continued building settlements, a predominantly leftwing-government of Labour, Meretz and Shas won the elections of 1992 on an anti-settlement platform (Eldar and Zertal, 2007: 116). The Labour movement started to see the damage done by the settlements in being an obstacle to peace. 1993 saw the Oslo Accords, which gave room for the establishment of a Palestinian Authority and the retreat of Israel from almost all of the West Bank. Fierce opposition against the Oslo Accords was heard from the religious-Zionist right. The settler movement understood that especially the 'outposts' would end up at the wrong side of the 'border', leading to fierce protests and a clash between the government and Gush Emunim and other religious-Zionist settler groups (as well as their allies and political representatives). Almost paradoxically, however, the financing of settlements and settler infrastructure by the Israeli government continued. In response to the Oslo Accords, an extremist religious-nationalist settler, Yigal Amir, killed Yitzhak Rabin, at that time Israel's prime minister and responsible for signing the Accords, during a rally in 1995 (Eldar and Zertal, 2007: 153). It led to condemnation throughout Israeli society and accusations of incitement by the religious Right.

But even under the predominantly left-wing government of Labour, Meretz and Shas, no real action was undertaken against the already existing settlements. Although it did agree to a settlement freeze, it excluded the settlements in the Jordan Valley and East Jerusalem (Eldar and Zertal, 2007: 132-133).

In the wake of increasing terrorist attacks by militant Palestinians throughout Israel, a right-wing government led by Likud was again elected in 1996. Under this first Netanyahu-government, large-scale illegal construction by Israeli settlers took place (Eldar and Zertal, 2007: 307). Overall, more than 100 new settlements would arise in the West Bank after 1995 (Eldar and Zertal, 2007: 306). In 2000, under a government led by Ehud Barak of the Labour Party, Israel was close to a peace agreement with the Palestinians at Camp David. However, the peace agreement failed, and Barak vented his frustration about what he saw as Palestinian obstructionism. At his return from the Camp David negotiations in October 2000, Barak said that there was 'no partner for peace' at the Palestinian side, something which would later

prove to be one of the fatal blows given to the peace movement which pressed for territorial compromise within a two-state solution<sup>40</sup>. With the eruption of the Second Intifada that same year, the peace process came to a standstill. In 2002, in response to a wave of terrorist attacks inside of Israel, the government decided to build a fence - or wall according to some - to defend itself from terrorists coming from the West Bank (an earlier fence or wall between Israel and the Gaza Strip had already been build under the Rabin government of the early 1990s) (Eldar and Zertal, 2007: 396). This separation barrier was highly controversial from the beginning. Because it was build for a large part in the West Bank, it was deemed as illegal by the International Court of Justice (Eldar and Zertal, 2007: 399). It was build east of the large settlement blocs near the Green Line such as Ariel and Ma'ale Adunim, so that these settlements became situated on the 'Israeli' side of the barrier, closed in by the separation barrier to the east and the Green Line to the west. Israeli human rights organizations accused Israel of violating Palestinian human rights by confiscating Palestinian land and limiting the movement of Palestinians living in areas surrounded by or near the separation barrier. It also saw the barrier as a political tool to annex the settlement blocs to Israel under a future peace agreement. According to one of the leading Israeli human rights organizations, B'Tselem, '[t]he overall features of the Separation Barrier and the considerations that led to the determination of the route give the impression that Israel is once again relying on security arguments to unilaterally establish facts on the ground that will affect any future agreement between Israel and the Palestinians' and '[i]t is reasonable to assume that, as in the case of the settlements, the Separation Barrier will become a permanent fact to support Israel's future claim to annex additional land'<sup>41</sup>. But the Separation Barrier was not only criticized by Israeli human rights organisations; it was initially also criticized by leaders of the settler movement, fearing that the Separation Barrier, which was build east of the large Israeli settlement blocs near the Green Line such as Ariel and Ma'ale Adunim, would in fact, as B'Tselem and others claimed, become a future border between Israel and a Palestinian state, excluding a large number of settlements located deeper in the West Bank (Eldar and Zertal, 2007: 398, 419-420). However, after the settler leaders sensed Israeli public opinion rallied behind the idea of the barrier, it changed tactics, instead trying to get as much settlements as possible on the 'Israeli' side of the wall or fence, something in which they for a large part succeeded (Eldar and Zertal, 2007: 421-422).

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<sup>40</sup> See 'Peace Out. The decline of Israel's progressive movement', Helena Cobban, Boston Review, 15-07-2009, <http://bostonreview.net/BR34.4/cobban.php>.

<sup>41</sup> See 'Separation Barrier', B'Tselem, [http://www.btselem.org/English/Separation\\_Barrier/](http://www.btselem.org/English/Separation_Barrier/).

In 2005, a government led by Ariel Sharon, who had also been responsible for building the Separation Barrier, decided to withdraw from the Gaza Strip by evacuating the settlement bloc Gush Katif (Eldar and Zertal, 2007: 429). Many settlers, mostly religious Zionists, fiercely objected to its dismantlement, but couldn't prevent an evacuation in the end. Although overall Israeli public opinion, despite strong opposition, was in favour of the dismantlement, public opinion changed in the years following, when rocket attacks by Hamas and other Palestinian militants from the Gaza Strip directed at Southern Israel started to take place. It led Shimon Peres, Israel's president, to exclaim that the evacuation of Gush Katif was a 'mistake'<sup>42</sup>. The rocket attacks had a profound effect on Israeli attitudes towards the conflict and the Palestinians. Many Jewish Israelis expressed doubts at an independent Palestinian state, fearing that it would threaten Israeli security if turning into what was dubbed a 'Hamastan'<sup>43</sup>. Stopping these rockets was eventually used as the main justification for Operation Cast Lead in December 2008<sup>44</sup>. Since 2005, settlement building in the West Bank has continued, although in December 2009, a settlement freeze was proclaimed; however, the freeze excluded East Jerusalem, deemed by current Israeli prime minister Netanyahu as 'our sovereign capital' where no restrictions on building should be implemented<sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> Ben Gedalyahu, Tzvi, 'Peres Confesses Gaza Expulsion was a Mistake', Israel National News, 18-02-2009, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/130019>.

<sup>43</sup> See 'Peace Out. The decline of Israel's progressive movement', Helena Cobban, Boston Review, 15-07-2009, <http://bostonreview.net/BR34.4/cobban.php>.

<sup>44</sup> Operation Cast Lead, also known as the Gaza War, lasted from December 27, 2008 until January 18, 2009. According to the Israel, the two objectives leading to the Operation were 'to stop the bombardment of Israeli civilians by destroying Hamas mortar' and rocket launching apparatus and infrastructure' and 'to reduce the ability of Hamas and other terrorist organizations in Gaza to perpetrate future attacks against the civilian population in Israel'. See 'Gaza... Hamas... Conflict... Facts!', website Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/GazaFacts/>.

<sup>45</sup> Ravid, Barak, 'Netanyahu declares 10-month settlement freeze 'to restart peace talks'', Ha'aretz, 08-12-2009, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/1130636.html>.

#### 4. Current debates in Israel on borders and a geographical solution

In March 2008, the Tami Steinmets Center for Peace Research in Tel Aviv, Israel surveyed the Jewish Israeli public on the concept of land, on how it saw the Palestinian Territories and what solutions to the conflict it either endorsed or rejected<sup>46</sup>. A majority of 55 percent called the Palestinian Territories ‘liberated’, whereas 32 percent saw it as ‘occupied’. Another majority of 57% did not see the Green Line as the future border between Israel and the Palestinian Territories, but favoured a future border incorporating the big Israeli settlement blocs on the West Bank into Israel, as well as making the Palestinian Arab regions of Israel part of a future Palestinian state.

These numbers indicate a gap between Israeli public opinion and the standard international opinion on a future independent Palestinian state and its borders. The notion of the Palestinian Territories as being liberated seems to resonate with an overall different Israeli point of view towards the Territories since 1967, thoroughly elaborated on by several authors (Eldar and Zertal, 2007; Gorenberg, 2005), in which the West Bank, or Judea and Samaria as it became known, were seen, especially by nationalist Zionists, as deeply connected to the state of Israel.

When looking at the current debate in Israel on its future borders in the framework of a two-state solution, the solution as generally accepted by the international community as a solution to the conflict, some developments can be detected: the idea of a two-state solution can still count on a general majority, though slimming, in Israel<sup>47</sup>; a large part of Israeli society does not view the Green Line as a future border between Israel and the West Bank; and the call away from the two-state paradigm has become louder and louder in recent years, both from the (extreme) left as from the (extreme) right. To see the two-state solution as propagated in Israel, among the Palestinians and in the international community as presenting an analogous idea would be a misunderstanding. Although the general principle behind it as a solution in which an Israeli state exists alongside a Palestinian state, the motivations behind it, the ideological formation and the geographical formation of a Palestinian state (which can at the same time be seen as a reshaping of Israel as well, as it will not only fix the borders of a Palestinian state, but also that of the Israeli state) differ greatly, both between the actors in the

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<sup>46</sup> For the March 2008 Peace Index of the Tami Steinmets Center for Peace Research, see <http://www.spirit.tau.ac.il/xeddexcms008/index.asp?siteid=5&lang=2>.

<sup>47</sup> According to a poll done by the Institute for National Security Studies commissioned by Ha'aretz in the first months of 2009, 64% of the Israeli-Jewish adult population is in favour of a two-state solution. See Eldar, Akiva, 'Haaretz poll: 64 percent of Israelis back two-state solution', Ha'aretz, 17-06-2009.

international arena, as well as within the different societies. When looking at Israel, huge internal differences can be noted on the issues of geographical borders, the character of a Palestinian state and the character of Israel alongside a Palestinian state. It contains views ranging from a total removal of all Israeli settlements from the West Bank, a forced relocation of population groups to significant territory exchanges.

When it comes to public opinion on the two-state solution, and opposed to it the one-state solution, Allegra and Napolitano (2009) distinguish between four groups within Israeli society. The first one is the 'Israeli Peace camp', comprised out of Israeli leftish political parties such as Meretz-Yachad and the left-wing of the Labour Party, as well as Israeli human rights and peace organizations such as Peace Now (Shalom Achshav) and left-wing intellectuals such as Amos Oz and A.B. Yehoshua. They are in favour of a two-state solution on the basis of the Geneva Initiative<sup>48</sup>, which advocates for an almost total Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and a fair land swap in case of Israeli annexations. Second come the 'pragmatists', politically represented by the mainstream within the Labour Party and Kadima and represented by Israeli politicians such as Tzipi Livni, Ehud Barak and Shimon Peres, who are in favour of a two-state solution as well but refrain from giving an exact blueprint of Israeli withdrawal, leaving the possibility open of more extensive Israeli annexations. The third group are the 'maximalists', who find their political representation in political parties such as Likud and Yisrael Beitenu and support the idea of separation between Israel and the Palestinians but who have 'never expressed a formal commitment' (Allegra and Napolitano, 2009: 10) to the two-state solution, instead maintaining the status quo (although Avigdor Lieberman, the leader of Yisrael Beitenu, has come out in favour of the two-state solution on the basis of strict separation between Jews and Palestinians). The fourth and final group are the ones in favour of a binational state - a one-state solution -, the so-called 'radicals', advocating the dismantling of the Jewish state. Allegra and Napolitano (2009) do acknowledge that these distinctions are rather crude, as some 'groups' can be quite close to each other in outlook and their view on a solution to the conflict. Their categorization

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<sup>48</sup> See [www.geneva-accord.org](http://www.geneva-accord.org). The Geneva Initiative or Geneva Accord was initiated in 2002 in Switzerland and brought together leading Israelis and Palestinians to form a peace proposal. In December 2003 the Accord was officially presented based on consensus between both delegations. In Israel it has drawn support by Meretz-Yachad and many in the left-wing of the Labor Party, such as Ophir Pines-Paz and Yuli Tamir. It was also supported by well-known Israelis such as authors David Grossman, Amos Oz and A.B. Yehoshua. The Accord tries to present an end to the conflict and an end to all claims, is in favor of two states - an Israeli and a Palestinian - living side by side, a comprehensive solution to the Palestinian refugee problem, the annexation of the large Israeli settlement blocks to Israel on the basis of a 1:1 land swap with the Palestinians for all the land annexed, a demilitarized Palestinian state and Jerusalem as the shared capital for both states.

nevertheless seems to be quite accurate in describing the far majority of Israeli Jewish opinion.

When it comes to the future borders between Israel and a Palestinian state within a two-state solution, it has seemingly become an accepted vision that their future borders should not follow the Green Line. Rather, the incorporation of the large Israeli settlements near the Green Line to Israel have become fairly 'mainstream', while a land swap could be undertaken to compensate the Palestinian state for the loss of land on their side. The principle of 'land for peace' has been an important part of peace plans and peace initiatives directed at the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since 1967, such as the earlier mentioned Geneva Initiative or the Clinton plan in 2000 during the Camp David negotiations (Makovsky and Benedek, 2003).

#### **4.1. A critical view on the two-state solution**

The idea of a two-state solution gained ground especially in the 1980s, when the so-called demographic factor became part of Israeli discourse on Israel's presence in the Palestinian Territories after 1967 (Morris, 2009: 163). It should be noted that, as said before, a two-state solution along the Green Line was already endorsed after 1948 - although the 'other' state besides Israel at that time was not a Palestinian one but Jordan. This endorsement was mostly an outcome of the Shoah, which led to the belief that Israel should be grateful for just being there, as a state for the Jews regardless of the size of its territory. It was also an outcome of realistic Zionist notions of international relations (Morris, 2009: 75). It became clear for many Jewish Israelis by the 1980s that demographically, Palestinians would soon outnumber Jewish Israelis in Israel and the Occupied Territories combined. Adding to that, the occupation of the Palestinian Territories could not last forever; as Morris (2009) notes, 'even the Likud leadership came around to the view that in the long term, ruling over another (and hostile) people was no longer tenable' (Morris, 2009: 164). A solution had to be found. In addition to that, support among the Israeli public for the Jewish settlements in the Palestinian Territories declined during the First Intifada (1987-1993), weakening the reason to stay in the Occupied Territories. For the political leadership in Israel it soon became clear that Israel and the Palestinians should be separated in two states (Morris, 2009: 163). This idea of separation was not new; as Zureik claims, 'Israel's policies toward the Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line remain tied to demographic considerations' (Zureik, 2003: 621) - this has been the case even immediately after the guns fell silent in 1967, as was depicted in, for instance, the earlier discussed Allon Plan (Allon, 1976; Gorenberg, 2006). This idea of separation was

clearly seen in research on Jewish-Israeli opinions concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the wake of the Oslo Accords and the Camp David negotiations in 2000. A rejection by an overwhelming majority of the Jewish public when it came to the return to Israel of Palestinian refugees and their offspring who had fled contemporary Israel in 1948, and the strong support for closed borders between Israel and a future Palestinian state resonated with fears that otherwise, the demographic composition of the state of Israel would be altered. For the majority of Israeli Jews in favour of a two-state solution, there was a shared belief that ‘the establishment of a Palestinian state is necessary for Israel to safeguard its own identity as a democratic and Jewish state’ (Hermann and Yuchtman-Yaar, 2002: 609).

The Oslo Accords of 1993 gave a practical meaning to how a two-state solution should look like. Since then, however, the debate on the two-state solution and how it should look like has not stayed still. On the contrary, a range of opinions on the two-state solution have nowadays entered academic and public discourse in Israel, creating a dynamic debate.

Much of that debate focuses not only on the reason why a two-state solution is the preferred solution to the conflict, but also focuses on its perceived obstructions. These obstructions can be put into several categories: Israel’s settlements in the Palestinian Territories; reluctance from the Palestinian side to acknowledge the right to a state for the Jews; and issues of security.

An essential part of the debate among those Israelis favouring a two-state solution revolves around what exactly will become the future borders of a Palestinian state, which automatically also has implications for Israel’s borders. The existence of a large number of Israeli settlements on the West Bank has complicated this debate. Should Israel’s settlements be incorporated in Israel within a peace deal with the Palestinians or not? And which? And also on the issue of the viability of an independent Palestinian state and the mere existence of the settlements a debate has ensued. To what extent do they cause an obstruction for a Palestinian state to come into existence?

When it comes to the latter debate, it should be noted that in recent years, a seemingly growing number of Israeli academics and politicians, mostly affiliated with the left-wing part of Israeli society, have come to see the existence of a large number of Israeli settlements on the West Bank as an imminent threat to the two-state solution. Some may argue that with the current status on the ground in the West Bank and the political climate in Israel, a two-state solution is, despite being preferable, already no longer viable; others see the settlements as a serious threat, but still believe that a viable Palestinian state can be formed alongside Israel.

According to the secretary-general of Peace Now in August 2008, as quoted by Shalom, 'The Green Line has been almost totally blurred, and settlement blocs are swallowing up the isolated settlements. Israel is expanding the settlements and turning the longed-for separation from the Palestinians (through the establishment of a Palestinian state) into an impossible task' (Shalom, 2008: 62). Shalom gives several reasons why, despite this perceived threat of the settlement policies towards a two-state solution, the settlement project has not been adjusted to the possible consequence of heading to, as many supporters of a two-state solution argue, a binational state - a one-state solution. His three main arguments can be summed up as follows: certain 'longstanding ideological norms in Israel' (Shalom, 2008: 65), such as settling the land; an awareness in Israeli society and in the political sphere that the settlements can and probably will influence the future borders of Israel (whether that will either be within a framework of a two-state solution or other alternative solutions); and a social-economic reason - since the housing east of the Green Line, in the settlements, is generally cheaper than in Israel proper, the settlements could be 'a potential solution for the socio-economic hardship of various population groups in Israel' (Shalom, 2008: 65). In line of what others such as Eldar and Zertal (2007) argue, and what has already been described before, 'The settlement enterprise is an expression of the aspirations, beliefs, and interests of powerful political-economical forces in Israel. These forces represent a wide range of decision-making loci [...] The fact that the settlement enterprise continues and has even gained momentum, including under left-wing governments not overly sympathetic to the cause, is proof of this.' (Shalom, 2008: 66). Meanwhile, the consequence of this ongoing support for the settlement project by successive Israeli governments has become a challenge to the two-state solution according to Klein, who claims that the 'territorial expansion and containment of the Palestinians on the occupied territories [have] produced a one-state reality that is unsustainable (and undesirable) to the majority of Israelis' (Klein, 2008: 8). Opposition to the settlements seems, for a large part, been given in by fears of obstructing a Palestinian state into existence, which would also threaten Israel as a (Jewish) state.

A complicating matter in this however is that despite this latter criticism, the settlements still receive a fair amount of support among the broader Israeli population, as already explained before. In a recent Israeli opinion poll, a mere 15 percent of the Israeli Jewish population is in favour of removing all Israeli settlements in a final status agreement, although an additional 43 percent is willing to evacuate the small and isolated settlements (or

'outposts')<sup>49</sup>. This attitude explains why most peace proposals discussed in and by Israel, from the Camp David negotiations to the Geneva Accord, discuss the possibility of border adjustments within an Israeli-Palestinian peace solution to include the bigger Israeli settlement blocs in Israel. It should, however, be said that Israeli-Jewish opinions on the subject of settlements have varied in recent years<sup>50</sup>. Nevertheless, as explained by Shalom (2009), overall speaking the settlements, especially the big settlement blocs near the Green Line, still receive considerable support within Israeli society for a variety of reasons.

As discussed earlier, support started to arise within segments of Israeli society in favour of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza after the Yom Kippur War in 1973, although there were already Israelis speaking out in favour of a Palestinian state before that (Gorenberg, 2006: 263). For those Israelis in support of a two-state solution, Palestinian reluctance to acknowledge a two state-solution, mostly described as a Jewish-Israeli state alongside a Palestinian state, has proven to be problematic. Many Israelis remain sceptic about the willingness of the PLO to accept a two-state solution (Morris, 2009: 132-133). And many point at the founding chapter of and opinions voiced by Hamas, the militant Palestinian organisation currently in control of the Gaza Strip, to prove that the organisation rejects the existence of a Jewish state (Morris, 2009: 154-160). The acceptance of a Jewish homeland, as the original Zionists foresaw, which turned into a state in 1948, is deemed as crucial for some Israelis within a two-state vision, but also for Israeli society on a whole. As Hermann and Yuchtman-Yaar note, 'Israel is a young society that has been engaged from its very inception in 1948 in a continuous struggle to ensure its existence in, *and acceptance by*<sup>51</sup>, a politically hostile environment' (Hermann and Yuchtman-Yaar, 2002: 598). As Tzipi Livni, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and current leader of Israel's biggest political party Kadima, put it, there should be talk on a 'two nation-state solution', a nation-state for the Palestinians and a nation-state for the Jews. It is seen as the logical outcome of Israel's acknowledgement of Palestinian self-determination<sup>52</sup>. The idea of the acknowledgement of Jewish self-determination grows strong among all Israeli political orientations, so it seems; in a newsletter of American for Peace Now, author and self-described 'dove' A.B. Yehoshua warned for the binational state as a 'political monster', citing demographic considerations and a situation in which a minority of Israeli Jews would live in the same state with a majority of

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<sup>49</sup> Eldar, Akiva, "Haaretz poll: 64 percent of Israelis back two-state solution", Ha'aretz, 17-06-2009.

<sup>50</sup> For instance, in 2002, a poll conducted among Israeli Jews saw 49% of respondents in favor of abandoning the settlements. See Barzilai, Amnon, 'More Israeli Jews favor transfer of Palestinians, Israeli Arabs - poll finds', Ha'aretz, 12-03-2002.

<sup>51</sup> Emphasis added by the author of this thesis.

<sup>52</sup> Shavit, Ari, 'The two nation-state solution', Ha'aretz, 23-04-2009.

Palestinians, which would mean that the 'Jewish state' would vanish because that sort of state would be one which will not be recognized by many Israeli Jews and Jews worldwide<sup>53</sup>. These demographic considerations are also heard as a reason to support a two-state solution by noted extreme-right politician and current Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs Avigdor Lieberman. In 2004, Lieberman presented an outline of the 'Populated Area Exchange Plan' through which a two-state solution should be reached. Within the plan, 'Israeli Arab towns like Umm el-Fahm bordering the West Bank would go to Palestine and West Bank Jewish settlements bordering the Green Line to Israel', while the 'new border would be drawn to reflect a new reality of two almost purely ethnic states, one Jewish and one Arab'. Palestinian Arabs within Israel would only be allowed to stay if they would swear allegiance to the Jewish state<sup>54</sup>.

In recent years, this criticism on the viability of the two-state solution, whether it's focused on settlements or acknowledgement of both Jewish and Palestinian self-determination, has increasingly gained ground; several articles published in 2003 and 2004 contesting the solution received considerable notice (Sussman, 2004: 8). Sussman (2004) identifies several directions from which criticism is coming. He distinguishes them more specifically in the following categories: Israelis who fear that a two-state solution is undermined or no longer possible by changing 'facts on the grounds' in the Palestinian Territories and/or a failure in reaching an agreement between the parties involved in the past - by which some point at the perceived unreliability of the Palestinians; Israelis, mostly (extreme) left-wing, who adopt a binational state, a state either separated among ethnic lines in two sort-of distinct communities, or a state in which individual rights transcend ethnic communities (South Africa is used as an example); Israelis, mostly right-wing and affiliated to the settler movement, proposing a one-state solution through annexation of the West Bank and Gaza while maintaining a Jewish character - which can be pursued either through favouring Jewish Israelis over Palestinians, or through ethnic cleansing; and Israelis who favour an agreement in which the Palestinians receive a certain degree of autonomy over (parts of) the Palestinian Territories, while assuring - for instance, through gerrymandering - a Jewish majority in the Knesset. Yet others, such as former Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon in the past, have given their support to the idea of supporting a Palestinian state in 'pieces', annexing large parts of the Palestinian Territories. Some have argued that this implies a *de*

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<sup>53</sup> Newsletter American for Peace Now, 23-11-2009.

<sup>54</sup> Leslie Susser, 'Bulldozer at the Helm', Jerusalem Post, 27-04-2009.

*facto* Israeli-controlled Palestinian state, compromised out of ‘Bantustans’ - an analogy borrowed from Apartheid South Africa (Sussman, 2004: 9).

Much of the criticism directed towards the two-state solution can be identified within the framework of Israeli security concerns. In an article published in the spring of 2009, Efraim Inbar, director of the Begin-Sadat (BESA) Center for Strategic Studies<sup>55</sup>, argues that a ‘peaceful outcome in accordance with [...] [the two-statism] paradigm is unlikely to emerge in the near future’ (Inbar, 2009: 265). His assertion revolves around two main arguments which are connected to the ideal of ensuring Israel’s security: the Palestinian national movement and Zionism as nationalist and political ideology are ‘not close to a historical compromise’ (Inbar, 2009: 266), echoing earlier stated concerns on scepticism among many Israelis that the Palestinians are actually willing to accept Israel as a state; and so far, the Palestinians have been proven unable to build a state (Inbar, 2009: 266).

Inbar asserts that in recent years, there has been a sharp rise of feelings among the Jewish Israeli public that there is ‘no partner’ for peace among the Palestinians, that they are not willing to make peace, echoing former prime minister Ehud Barak after the failed 2000 Camp David Summit (Inbar, 2009: 272). This has increasingly led to a belief that Israel should undertake action unilaterally, such as was the case with the separation barrier on the West Bank, or the pull-out of the settlements in Gaza in 2005 (Inbar, 2009: 272). The idea that there is no party for peace also resonates with increasing security threats an independent Palestinian state could have on Israel, something which is also echoed in the political sphere. Moshe Ya’alon (Likud), current Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Strategic Affairs, argued at a conference organised in the Knesset in early 2009 that an independent Palestinian state would pose a security threat due to its perceived (economic) instability. Rejecting a two-state solution, he came out in favour of a status quo, asserting that it would be better to ‘manage’ the conflict through reforms and economic development of the Palestinian Authority by Israel<sup>56</sup>. And after the speech of Netanyahu at the Bar Ilan University in which he endorsed a two-state solution<sup>57</sup>, Benny Begin, considered one of the main ideologues of the right-wing flank of the Likud and son of former Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, called the two-

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<sup>55</sup> The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies was founded in 1993, and “seeks to contribute to the advancement of Middle East peace and security by conducting policy-relevant research on strategic subjects”. See the website of the BESA Center for Strategic Studies, <http://www.biu.ac.il/Besa/index.html>. It is affiliated to the Political Science Department of Bar Ilan University in Ramat Gan.

<sup>56</sup> Gill Hoffman, ‘Palestinian entity cannot be formed’, Jerusalem Post, 26-05-2009.

<sup>57</sup> ‘I told President Obama in Washington, if we get a guarantee demilitarization, and if the Palestinians recognize Israel as the Jewish state, we are ready to agree to a real peace agreement, a demilitarized Palestinian state side by side with the Jewish state’. See for the full text of his speech <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1092810.html> (Ha’aretz, 14-06-2009).

state solution no solution, claiming that the past had showed that making territorial concessions by Israel had never led to peace, but only to more suffering and security threats on Israel's side, referring to the Gaza pull-out in 2005 and subsequent rocket attacks by Palestinian militants from Gaza<sup>58</sup>. Besides that, Begin also claimed that the Israeli colonists on the West Bank were in fact 'implementing the Israeli nation's right to Israel', with the Land of Israel seen as compromising Israel, the West Bank and Gaza. Within Likud, Member of Parliaments such as Tzipi Hotovely<sup>59</sup>, Danny Danon and Yariv Levin are considered supporters of this line. Bradley Burston, a regular contributor to Ha'aretz, has said that although the majority of Israelis during the last parliamentary elections on February 10<sup>th</sup> 2009 had voted for political parties in favour of a two-state solution, the rockets fired by Hamas on southern Israel in the last couple of years had caused serious concerns with many Israelis why they would support a two-state solution. Would an independent Palestinian state not be a threat to Israel, by bringing Gush Dan<sup>60</sup> and Ben Gurion Airport<sup>61</sup> within the range of Palestinian weaponry and rockets? According to Burston, this doubt was not merely restricted to right-wing voters, but could also be felt among many left-wing Israelis, even those voting for Meretz-Yachad<sup>62</sup>. A same sentiment was said to be the reason for Netanyahu's initial reluctance to come out in favour of a two-state solution, fearing that a Palestinian state would 'abuse its sovereignty to forge alliances, import arms and build an offensive military capability to threaten Israel'<sup>63</sup>. Although Netanyahu has spoken out in favour of Palestinian self-determination, saying that the 'Palestinians should have the ability to govern their lives', he has also stressed that at the same time they should not 'threaten ours [as Israelis]'<sup>64</sup>.

#### **4.2. Alternative solutions**

Criticism of the implementation of the two-state solution has led some to question the two-state solution as a geographical solution to the conflict, and propose alternative solutions. As Allegra and Napolitano (2009) pointed out, these solutions can either be put in those

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<sup>58</sup> Mualem, Mazal, 'Benny Begin: Two-state solution is no solution', Ha'aretz, 11-06-2009.

<sup>59</sup> Tzipi Hotovely, of Likud, is a self-described religious right-wing Zionist, actively opposing the two-state solution and pressuring Netanyahu not to make any territorial compromises. She was the organiser of a Knesset conference called "Alternatives to the Two-State Outlook" on May 26<sup>th</sup> 2009. She was called one of the Young Israelis of the Year 5769 (Jewish calendar) by the Jerusalem Post, calling her one of the top ideologues of Likud. See Jerusalem Post Magazine, 'Young Israelis of the year: MK Tzipi Hotovely, 30: Trying to change the world', 17-09-2009; Gil Hoffman, 'Politics: Two-state alternatives', Jerusalem Post, 27-05-2009; Shahar Ilan, 'The freshman', Ha'aretz, 19-02-2009.

<sup>60</sup> Gush Dan is the metropolitan area around Tel Aviv, and is the by far largest metropolitan area of Israel, harboring some 3 million people, or 40 percent of Israel's total population.

<sup>61</sup> Ben Gurion Airport is the largest airport of Israel, located near Lod, some 15 kilometers southeast of Tel Aviv.

<sup>62</sup> Burston, Bradley, 'The racist Israeli fascist in me', Ha'aretz, 02-06-2009.

<sup>63</sup> Krieger, Hilary Leila, 'AIPAC to lobby for two-state solution', Jerusalem Post, 04-05-2009.

<sup>64</sup> Ravid, Barak, 'Clinton: no retreat from two-state solution', Ha'aretz, 01-03-2009.

favouring a 'status quo', those longing for separation with the Palestinians but not through a two-state solution or those rallying in favour of a binational state.

When it comes to those favouring separation with the Palestinians but who have objections to the two-state solution, a discourse has evolved which has been ongoing since 1967. Many have dubbed this discourse 'maintaining the status quo', such as the earlier mentioned Moshe Ya'alon<sup>65</sup>. In essence, such a view seems especially to lack a clearly defined solution. It is part of a discourse Allegra and Napolitano (2009) have described as one focusing more on policy implementation, practical steps, 'than [on] a fundamental choice to be taken with respect to the ultimate solution' (Allegra and Napolitano, 2009: 12). So, instead of being opposing a two-state solution and bringing a new solution into Israeli discourse, it rather objects to what a two-state solution might bring and on its possible consequences without having a clearly defined alternative to implement a solution.

Giora Eiland, a retired IDF general and senior researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies in Tel Aviv, has propagated in favour of what can be dubbed a three-state solution (Eiland, 2008). In his proposal he argues that the West Bank and Jordan form a union on the one hand, while the Gaza Strip will become part of Egypt, similar to the situation before 1967<sup>66</sup>. The outlines of a current Palestinian state, Eiland argues, are too small territorially to make it viable, which would make a Palestinian state unstable and a security threat to Israel. It would also decrease the likelihood of Palestinian militant extremists such as Hamas to gain control over the Palestinian Territories. But even if more moderate elements would gain control in the Palestinian Territories, Eiland remains sceptic, arguing that the Palestinians are not mostly dealing with creating their own state, but are rather searching for 'justice', 'victimization' and 'revenge' and pressing for a right of return of Palestinian refugees to Israel which would mean the end of the Jewish character of the state.

It is interesting to note that Eiland does not, in fact, reject a two-state solution. He does not merely limit himself to the earlier mentioned three-state solution. An alternative solution which has been Eiland propagated has been dubbed 'increasing the pie', enlarging the Gaza Strip with Egyptian land, offering Egyptian land in southern Israel in return while Israel can annex the big settlement blocs on the West Bank. In that way, Eiland argues, a Palestinian state can enlarge its territory, making it more stable while decreasing instability in Israel because of opposition to the dismantling of the settlements by large parts of Israeli society and

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<sup>65</sup> Gill Hoffman, 'Palestinian entity cannot be formed', Jerusalem Post, 26-05-2009.

<sup>66</sup> Eiland, Giora, 'No chance for 2 states', YNet, 03-04-2009.

due to the large financial costs accompanying such dismantlement, estimated by Eiland at some 30 billion dollars (Eiland, 2008: 18-19).

Others, favouring a Great Israel, many of them part of the religious Right, have objected to the entire concept of a Palestinian state on what has been called 'Israeli' or 'Jewish' land. They have come up with different geographical solutions. For instance in May 2009 Member of Knesset Aryeh Eldad of the National Union, a nationalist political party with four seats in the Israeli parliament, called upon the Jordanian government to grant Jordanian citizenship to the Palestinians, claiming that Jordan was in fact the 'real' Palestinian state and that the Jordanians had responsibility over the Palestinians<sup>67</sup>. The call generated a lot of attention and criticism, first and foremost from the Jordanian Foreign Ministry<sup>68</sup>. Eldad defended his bill by claiming that there can be two states, one Jewish and one Palestinian, but that the dividing line should be the Jordan River, with the eastern part (Jordan) the Palestinian one, and the western part the Jewish one (including the West Bank, or, as Eldad calls it, Judea and Samaria). Peres discredited the plan as a provocation and said that any peace deal should be made between Israel and the Palestinians directly, not without any Palestinian consent. With his proposal, Eldad identified himself with Revisionist Zionism, which excludes the possibility of a Palestinian state in the West Bank (Judea and Samaria).

But Eldad is certainly not the first to bring this 'Jordanian option' on the table. In fact, as stated earlier, the first Zionists actually saw their claim on the entire Land of Israel, up to the Jordan River, as uncontested. Moshe Arens, a former prominent Likud politician and settler, has recently been vocal in proclaiming that a Palestinian state already exists, called Jordan, and that the two-state solution is actually creating a second Palestinian state<sup>69</sup>.

While those in favour of a status-quo or the 'Jordanian option' are mostly aligned to the right-wing of Israeli politics and society, there has also been debate on alternative solutions among left-wing Israelis. Two main thoughts can be described among this group: those in favour of a federation, and those in favour of a binational state.

One of the proponents of an Israeli-Palestinian federation has been Uri Avnery, a well-known Israeli peace activist and former Knesset member<sup>70</sup>, and founder of peace groups Peace Now and Gush Shalom<sup>71</sup>. In 1957, when he was a writer for the Israeli magazine *Haolam Hazeh*, Avnery called for an independent Palestinian state, a call which became

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<sup>67</sup> Azoulay, Yuval, 'Peres: 'Jordan is Palestine' plan is baseless hallucination', *Ha'aretz*, 27-05-2009.

<sup>68</sup> Keinon, Herb, 'Jordan summons Israeli ambassador on bill', *Jerusalem Post*, 26-05-2009.

<sup>69</sup> Arens, Moshe, 'Don't hold your breath', *Ha'aretz*, 23-06-2009.

<sup>70</sup> See Knesset website, Uri Avnery entry, [http://www.knesset.gov.il/mk/eng/mk\\_eng.asp?mk\\_individual\\_id\\_t=238](http://www.knesset.gov.il/mk/eng/mk_eng.asp?mk_individual_id_t=238).

<sup>71</sup> Gush Shalom was founded in 1993 and is a radical Israeli peace group, see [http://zope.gush-shalom.org/index\\_en.html](http://zope.gush-shalom.org/index_en.html).

louder after 1967<sup>72</sup>. He has been in favour of a federation, but does insist that the term ‘federation’ has different meanings in different parts of the world, and that he does not mean to push for an idea which would be unacceptable for both Israelis and Palestinians. On a practical level, he believes that a plan for a federation consists of four stages: proclaiming a Palestinian state on the basis of the 1967 borders; ‘fair arrangements’ on issues such as water distribution and working on reconciliation; the establishment of joint institutions; and, within a broader framework in the Arab world, a union to the model of the European Union, for which Avnery coins the term ‘Semitic Union’.

Additionally, considerable ‘noise’ has been heard among a small group of Israelis rallying for a binational state. The idea of a binational state focuses mainly on a state in which both Israelis and Palestinians live side-by-side with shared civil rights in a neutral state, so not containing either a Jewish or a Palestinian ‘character’. Its support for it among Israelis and Jews in the diaspora has always been slim, although it has always in some form existed since the heydays of political Zionism. Since the founding of modern-day Israel, the Israeli Communist Party (Rakah, later called Maki, nowadays one of the leading forces in the left-wing party Hadash), whose main supporters came from the Palestinian-Israeli community but nevertheless always had a considerable segment of Jewish-Israeli supporters, has always taken an anti-Zionist stance, promoting binationalism instead (Allegra and Napolitano, 2009: 6). However, just like earlier movements such as Brit Shalom (Morris, 2009: 45-48), their support base was small. Most current proponents of binationalism, such as Meron Benvenisti, Tony Judt and Jeff Halper, use two main lines of thought to support their ideas: the inability of reaching a two-state solution due to ‘facts on the grounds’ in the Palestinian Territories (e.g. the far-reaching Israeli settlement policies); and an actual ideological component favouring a democratic one-state solution with shared citizenship for Israeli Jews and Palestinians alike.

Since the 1980s one of the most vocal supporters of a binational state has been Israeli political scientist Meron Benvenisti. A considerable number of articles and books have been published by him on this subject<sup>73</sup>. Until the beginning of 2009 Benvenisti was a columnist for the left-wing Israeli newspaper Ha’aretz. As a well-known contributor, he was active in propagating the binational solution. Benvenisti claims that with the Oslo Accords in 1993 and its aftermath, a de facto binational state was created as Israel continued to control the

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<sup>72</sup> Avnery, Uri, ‘Federation? Why Not?’, Gush Shalom website, 21-11-2009, <http://zope.gush-shalom.org/home/en/channels/avnery/1258646087/>.

<sup>73</sup> See for instance his book Benvenisti, Meron, 1995. *Intimate Enemies: Jews and Arabs in a Shared Land*, Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Palestinian Territories, even through the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in parts of the West Bank<sup>74</sup>. In recent years, with no independent Palestinian state established so far, the Palestinians have used the binational paradigm more frequently in discussing a final status solution. According to Benvenisti, Israel should at least discuss this option, as other options are hardly likely to succeed. A transfer of populations cannot be morally justified, and separation in two states seems hardly likely because of the existence of the vast settlement project which has thoroughly entangled Israel with the Palestinian Territories, a position already adopted by the political scientist in the early 1980s<sup>75</sup>. Looking at this current reality, a democratic binational state could actually be a refreshing alternative according to Benvenisti. As he claims, 'The model of a division into two nation-states is inapplicable [...] [It] doesn't sit with the scale of the entanglement that exists in large parts of the country'. Benvenisti sees a democratic Israeli-Palestinian federation as a just solution to the conflict, as it addresses collective ethnic-national rights as well as ensures political minority rights<sup>76</sup>.

In 2003, British-Jewish historian Tony Judt wrote an article on the one-state solution in the *New York Review of Books* which caused controversy in the academic community (Judt, 2003). In it, Judt spoke out in favour of a one-state solution using several arguments. First, Judt thought that the idea of a Jewish nation-state, where Jews are 'set above others', was simply not at home in a globalized world, in a sense that it was rooted in other times, the times of ethnic nationalism, something which - according to Judt - was no longer adequate (Morris, 2009: 6). Secondly, the Oslo Process of 1993, which was based on the assumption of two separate states, had failed, mostly because of Israeli obstructionism, and could not be resurrected again. That it would not be able to be resurrected again was, according to Judt, due to the impossibility of removing the Israeli settlements - seen by him as a real obstruction to a two-state solution - and hundreds of thousands of Israeli settlers from the Palestinian Territories. Furthermore, with a demographic development in favour of the Palestinian population in Israel and the Palestinian Territories in a sense that their numbers would surpass those of Israeli Jews in the future, would leave Israel - if it would continue its occupation over the Territories - with two possibilities if it would be in favour of preserving a Jewish identity to the state of Israel: throwing out most of the Palestinian Arabs; or choosing for a regime

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<sup>74</sup> Benvenisti, Meron, 'The binational option', Ha'aretz, 07-11-2002, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=227850>.

<sup>75</sup> Benvenisti, Meron, 'Cry, the beloved two-state solution', Ha'aretz, 06-08-2003, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=326313&contrassID=2&subContrassID=14&sbSubContrassID=0&listSrc=Y>.

<sup>76</sup> Benvenisti, Meron, 'Which kind of binational state?', Ha'aretz, 20-11-2003, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=363062>.

akin to Apartheid in which a minority - the Jews - would rule over a majority - the Palestinians. However, according to Judt, this was an option probably not preferable by most of the Israeli population.

So, due to Israel's inability to withdraw from the Palestinian Territories from the one hand, and its possible unwillingness to either force most Palestinians from the land or impose an Apartheid regime to maintain Israel's Jewish identity on the other hand, left a two-state solution impossible. Rather, according to Judt, elaborating on his assumption that ethnic nationalism was outdated in today's modern world to begin with, it would not only be the most likely, but also the most desirable option for Israel to focus on a binational state in which Israeli Jews and Palestinians would share the same rights in a pluralist society. In focusing on an inability to actually create a viable Palestinian state, Judt follows the argument of Benvenisti, although the first, more than the later, also seems to perceive a binational state as a desired outcome.

By coining the term 'Apartheid', Judt places himself in a broader debate in which Israel's occupation of the Palestinian Territories is linked to the Apartheid era in South Africa<sup>77</sup>. Although I don't wish to elaborate too much on this debate within Israel, it is used by some when discussing the two-state solution, or rather its obstruction to the two-state solution, and others use the Apartheid analogy to actively advocate in favour of a one-state solution. Jeff Halper, co-founder of the Israeli peace group Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHN)<sup>78</sup>, has been one of several Israelis who has coined the words 'Bantustans'<sup>79</sup> and Apartheid to describe Israeli policies in the Palestinian Territories and its implications for a future geographical solution to the conflict. The idea behind the 'Bantustan' analogy as explained by Halper is the perceived creation of autonomous, Palestinian-controlled 'islands' in the West Bank containing a majority of the Palestinians on a minimum of Palestinian Territory, to ensure a Jewish majority in a future Israel with a maximum annexation of Palestinian land (Halper, 2004: 106). Halper links this to his idea on the "matrix of control", the way in which Israel controls the Palestinians, through annexing Palestinian land or continuing a military presence and subsequent influence (Halper, 2004: 105). Because

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<sup>77</sup> In recent years the analogy between Israel's occupation of the Palestinian Territories and Apartheid has become more frequently used, both within Israeli and Jewish circles as well as beyond. For some extra reading see Aloni, Shulamit, 'Yes, There is Apartheid in Israel', CounterPunch, 08-01-2007; Benvenisti, Meron, 'Bantustan plan for an apartheid Israel', The Guardian, 26-04-2004; Carter, Jimmy, 2006, 'Palestine Peace Not Apartheid', New York: Simon and Schuster; Sarid, Yossi, 'Yes, it is Apartheid', Ha'aretz, 09-11-2009; et al.

<sup>78</sup> See the website of ICAHD-USA, <http://icahdusa.org/about/jeff-halper>.

<sup>79</sup> 'Bantustans' were enclaves in Apartheid South Africa and designed by the white leadership to separate the black population from the white and colored population in separate reserves, where they were given 'fake' autonomy. They were officially called 'Bantu homelands', from the black Bantu people living in South Africa; this later evolved to the word 'Bantustan'. See Avnery, Uri, 'An Eskimo in Bantustan', gush-shalom.org, 21-01-2004.

Halper believes that this matrix of control is in its final stages, and there is no viable way in which it can be reversed, he advocates the establishment of a single, democratic state<sup>80</sup>.

But support of a binational state has not only been voiced by ‘radicals’ on the left, but also, though in a different form, by members of the right. Uri Elitzur, a former close aide to Netanyahu, has advocated in favour of formally annexing the West Bank along with its Palestinian population, creating a *de facto* binational state in Israel and the West Bank<sup>81</sup>. Claiming that all other options have failed, he sees a binational state with shared citizenship as the only solution. But in contrast with earlier mentioned, leftish proposals on a binational state, Elitzur does mention that the terms on which such a state is formed is one recognizing the state as a Jewish state. Tzipi Hotovely, on her part, has recently been vocal in formally adding ‘Judea and Samaria’ to Israel, while considering to give the Palestinian population Israeli citizenship if they pass for a loyalty test<sup>82</sup>.

Concluding, when defining contemporary discourse on Israel’s territory and borders, especially in the framework of a territorial solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there seems to be a consensus in Israeli society, though only with a small majority, that a two-state solution will define Israel’s borders and territory in the future. The borders of an Israeli state, however, seem to be contested even within this solution. For a lot of Jewish Israelis, the large settlement blocs near the Green Line will have to become part of Israel proper in a future peace agreement. Even for those favoring a two-state solution, a Palestinian state is looked at for a large part from a security paradigm, fearing its possible negative influence on Israel’s security. Nevertheless, the fear of losing a Jewish majority and thus Israel’s character as a Jewish state, or else the fear of losing its democratic character, has prompted many Israelis to rally behind a two-state solution, in opposition to what is seen as the alternative, a binational state.

However, a fair share of Israeli public opinion, either not fearful of demographics or believing in alternative solutions or at least the fallacy of the two-state solution, have positioned itself against the two-state solution. Those in favor of a Greater Israel, either on nationalistic or on religious grounds, or those putting the security threat which an independent

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<sup>80</sup> In a speech before the United Nations Conference on Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People, Halper described his future vision on a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as followed ‘... Given [...] reality on the ground, the most practical solution [to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict] seems to be unitary democratic state offering equal citizenship for all. If that is the case, our slogan in the post-road map period will be that of the South Africans’ struggle against apartheid: One Person, One Vote.’ See Halper, Jeff, ‘One State: Preparing for a post Road-Map struggle against apartheid’, fromoccupiedpalestine.org, 05-09-2003.

<sup>81</sup> Hoffman, Gill, ‘Palestinian entity cannot be formed’, Jerusalem Post, 26-05-2009.

<sup>82</sup> Somfalvi, Attila, ‘Likud MK: Annex West Bank, consider citizenship for Palestinians’, YNet, 20-12-2009.

Palestinian state can present to Israel above demographic considerations, have called the two-state solution a threat to Jewish historical and religious rights, or to Israel as a whole. Others, believing that separation between Jews and Palestinians is either no longer possible or not just, have rallied behind the idea of a binational state, with equal rights for Jews and Palestinians. It seems that contemporary Israeli discourse on territory and borders, rooted in ongoing debates on territory and borders since the start of the Zionist movement, is still highly diverse, entailing a large number of options where Israel's sovereign territory stops and its border should be drawn.

## **5. Jewish lobbying groups in the Netherlands and the Israeli territorial and border debate**

As pointed out in chapter 3, ties between Israel and the Jewish diaspora are abundant, and segments of the diaspora engage actively in diaspora politics. Two of the more well-known Jewish organizations in the Netherlands involved in diaspora politics on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are the CIDI and Een Ander Joods Geluid. CIDI, established in 1973, and Een Ander Joods Geluid, established in 2001, have become the more dominant Jewish voices on the conflict, both operating from different angles, in the last couple of years. As chapter 4 has shown, the territorial and border debates in Israel are still prominently present in Israeli public discourse in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As diaspora organizations, this chapter will take a closer look at the CIDI and Een Ander Joods Geluid and their opinions on territory and borders concerning the state of Israel and within the framework of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. By doing so, I will try to present an answer to the question to what extent these lobbying groups follow and incorporate Israeli discourse on the same issue of territory and borders.

### **5.1. Centrum Informatie en Documentatie Israël (CIDI)**

The Centrum Informatie en Documentatie Israël (Center for Information and Documentation on Israel, CIDI) was established in 1974, after two members of the Jewish community - Bob Levisson, a jurist and a Progressive rabbi later in life, and David Simons, professor of Law - started the initiative in December 1973 to establish an organisation which would represent the voice of the Jewish community on Israel and the Middle East in the wake of the Yom Kippur War. The goal of CIDI was formulated in 1974 as ‘to educate and promote knowledge among the Dutch public on Israel, the Middle East and remaining concerns in which Jews are involved’ (Kortenoeven, Naftaniel and Nagan, 2006: 37). Since then, CIDI has been vocal on a broad range of issues, among which being involved in the public and political debate on the Middle East and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the monitoring of anti-Semitism in the Netherlands have been the most important. It also participates or has participated in a number of umbrella organizations and partnerships, such as the Centraal Joods Overleg (CJO, Central Jewish Counsel)<sup>83</sup>. Since 2002 CIDI has a youth organisation called CiJO, the CIDI Jongeren

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<sup>83</sup> The Centraal Joods Overleg (CJO) was founded in 1997 as a coalition of several Jewish organizations to represent the interests of the Jewish community among the government and the public. The umbrella organization has seven members: the three main religious streams (the Orthodox-Jewish NIK, the Sephardic-Jewish PIK and

Organisatie (CIDI Youth Organisation). It has formulated its goals as ‘enriching the public and political debate [...] by being a moderate voice in fierce debates and by searching in a productive way for a solution by empathizing with all parties which are involved in the conflict’<sup>84</sup>. Richard Priem, the chairman of CiJO, has said outsiders have called CiJO both too leftist and too radical, while others have accused it of being too pro-Israel<sup>85</sup>. Although the CiJO should be seen as separate from CIDI, it is not totally independent of CIDI and does not formally disagree with what it says, according to Priem.

Although the CIDI has always advocated itself as being a pro-Israeli organisation, it claims it has never shunned away from criticism towards Israel if deemed necessary (Kortenoeven, Naftaniel en Nagan, 2006: 41). It has been critical on Israel’s settlement policies, and claims to have been one of the first Dutch organisations advocating in favour of a two-state solution<sup>86</sup>. According to Ronny Naftaniel, the director of CIDI, the reason for CIDI to oppose the Israeli settlement policies on the West Bank has been the obstruction the settlements can be when striving for a two-state solution<sup>87</sup>, which eventually diminishes the chances of Israel to be and stay a Jewish state. In a recent official statement, CIDI called the ongoing Israeli settlement policies as posing a threat to the two-state solution, disruptive of Palestinian daily life and of putting a heavy burden on Israeli defences<sup>88</sup>. Within a two-state solution, however, Naftaniel and CIDI do believe that Jews still have the right to live in the West Bank and, if also preferable by the settlers themselves, be equal citizens in a future Palestinian state<sup>89</sup>. In the Israël Nieuwsbrief, the newsletter of CIDI, Naftaniel said in a commentary in which he condemned violence by Israeli settlers that ‘Jews do have the basic right to live in the West Bank, but only as peaceful civilians *in any state whatsoever*<sup>90</sup>, not as a human blockade against a safe and descent Israel’<sup>91</sup>. Using more religious-nationalistic terms, CIDI researcher Wim Kortenoeven opposed in an opinion piece written in Israël

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the Progressive-Jewish NVPJ, formerly LJG), the Federation for Dutch Zionists (FNZ), Jewish Social Work (JMW), the CIDI and the Dutch-Jewish Youth (NJJ), the latter encompassing several Jewish youth groups. Een Ander Joods Geluid is not a member organization of the CJO. See the website of CJO [www.cjo.nl](http://www.cjo.nl) (in Dutch).

<sup>84</sup> See the CiJO website, ‘Wat is CiJO?’,

[http://www.cijo.nl/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=44&Itemid=53](http://www.cijo.nl/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=44&Itemid=53) (in Dutch).

<sup>85</sup> See interview with Richard Priem, 03-11-2009.

<sup>86</sup> See interview with Ronny Naftaniel, 06-11-2009.

<sup>87</sup> CIDI commentary by Ronny Naftaniel, ‘CIDI commentaar: de nederzettingen’, 08-07-2009, [http://www.cidi.nl/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=462&Itemid=273](http://www.cidi.nl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=462&Itemid=273) (in Dutch).

<sup>88</sup> CIDI press release, ‘Vrede Nu rapport over nederzettingen is voorbarig’, 06-03-2009, [http://www.cidi.nl/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=278&Itemid=58](http://www.cidi.nl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=278&Itemid=58) (in Dutch).

<sup>89</sup> See interview with Ronny Naftaniel, 06-11-2009.

<sup>90</sup> Emphasis added by the author of this thesis.

<sup>91</sup> Column of Naftaniel in the Israël Nieuwsbrief, ‘CIDI: Hard optreden tegen settler provocaties’, 09-12-2008, [http://www.cidi.nl/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=74&Itemid=269](http://www.cidi.nl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=74&Itemid=269) (in Dutch).

Aktueel, the newsletter of Christenen voor Israël<sup>92</sup> organization, those who want to ‘deny Jews the right to settle in Judea and Samaria’<sup>93</sup>.

Ronny Naftaniel has been the director of CIDI since 1980, and from that position has been the ‘face’ of CIDI in the last three decades. Before he joined CIDI, Naftaniel was one of the founding members of the Werkgroep Israël (Working Group Israel). The Werkgroep Israël, a group made up of progressive Jewish and non-Jewish intellectuals, was founded after the Yom Kippur war in 1973 and in the wake of declining unconditional support for Israel in Europe<sup>94</sup>, and was meant as a progressive voice supporting Israel in what was perceived as the dominance of the pro-Israeli Federation of Dutch Zionists and the pro-Palestinian Netherlands Palestine Committee in Dutch public opinion on the Middle East<sup>95</sup>. Despite its focus on being a pro-Israeli organization, it tried to position itself on both sides of the conflict, working both with CIDI after 1974 as well as with the Netherlands Palestine Committee. It was in support of a two-state solution. It was disbanded in 1982, with some of its members joining CIDI, while others rallying in favour of the newly-founded peace bloc Peace Now (Shalom Achshav) in 1978; others joined Een Ander Joods Geluid after 2001<sup>96</sup>. Naftaniel left for CIDI in 1976.

Although CIDI encompasses a broad range of views on the conflict, the general line voiced out in the public has been one following, on broad lines, what can be described as the ‘majority opinion’ in Israel on its borders within a future agreement with the Palestinians. According to Naftaniel, a majority of CIDI supporters voted for centre party Kadima during the mock elections organised by CIDI during the last Israeli elections in February 2009. Naftaniel himself is, as said, a vocal proponent of the two-state solution. When you don’t come to a separation between the Israelis and Palestinians, according to Naftaniel, you risk threatening not only Israel as a Jewish state, but also Israel as a democracy. In a binational reality, you either give full rights to the Palestinians which would end Israel as a Jewish state, or you decide to withhold them equal rights, ensuring a Jewish-controlled state but ending Israeli democracy. Both options are deemed unacceptable by Naftaniel. Priem voices similar

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<sup>92</sup> Christenen voor Israël (Christians for Israel) is a Protestant-Christian organization which ‘wants to make Christians in the Netherlands and worldwide aware of the significance of the Jewish people in Gods handling with this world’ and tries to achieve this by ‘giving Biblical education on Israel and encouraging and supporting the Jewish people’. See ‘Wie zijn wij?’, <http://christenenvoorisrael.nl/over-ons/wie-zijn-wij> (in Dutch).

<sup>93</sup> Kortenoeven, Wim, ‘Een ander Israël’, Israël Aktueel, 22-03-2007, <http://www.christenenvoorisrael.nl/actueel/artikelen/27-artikelen/809-een-ander-israel> (in Dutch).

<sup>94</sup> Digital city archives of Amsterdam on the Werkgroep Nederland-Israël, no. 1354, <https://stadsarchief.amsterdam.nl/archieven/archiefbank/overzicht/1354.nl.html> (in Dutch).

<sup>95</sup> Kagie, Rudie, ‘Voorspelbaar joods geluid’, Vrij Nederland, 18-09-2009, <http://www.vn.nl/Wad-mediabank-pagina/Voorspelbaar-joods-geluid.htm> (in Dutch).

<sup>96</sup> See interview with Raymond Nethe, 22-10-2009.

concerns, and says he is first and foremost in favour of a two-state solution because it is in the interest of Israel itself<sup>97</sup>.

When it comes to the issue of Israel's future borders in a two-state solution, Naftaniel opposes the Green Line as the border between Israel and West Bank out of 'realistic' options. According to the director of CIDI, some of the settlements near the Green Line, such as Ariel and Ma'ale Adunim, harbour such a large population that it is impossible to evacuate them. Instead, he supports the idea of a land swap. Priem seems to follow this line as well, saying that although he believes that the future border between Israel and the West Bank can follow the Green Line, the big settlement blocs near Jerusalem should be part of Israel, and a land swap is needed to compensate the Palestinian state for this lost territory. Nevertheless, both Naftaniel and Priem seem to be in favour of the idea of dismantling other settlements in order to achieve peace. Priem said that in 2005, the CiJO rallied in favour of the evacuation of the settlements in Gaza. He does understand that many Israelis have become sceptic when it comes to evacuating the settlements, as the evacuation of Gush Katif did not bring peace in and around the Gaza Strip but instead brought rockets as a 'gift' back, pointing at the thousands of rocket attacks by Palestinian militants at Southern Israel in the last couple of years. Scepticism or even outright opposition to these evacuations, not merely out of security concerns but also as it seems out of ideological opposition, can be heard more fiercely among others within CIDI. Wim Kortenoeven described the evacuation in Gush Katif, which went hand in hand with the evacuation of several other Israeli settlements in the West Bank as well, 'the [...] deportation of some 9,000 Jews from the Gaza Strip and northern Samaria'<sup>98</sup>.

When discussing the issue of Jerusalem, Naftaniel noted in a column in the *Israël Nieuwsbrief* that he does not agree to the idea of making East Jerusalem the capital of a Palestinian state on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, countering that Jerusalem and especially the Old City with the *kotel* has always been central to Jewish religious life and that the city already had a Jewish majority before the birth of either the Israeli state and the Palestinian people<sup>99</sup>. Nevertheless, Naftaniel has said that the Arab parts of East Jerusalem

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<sup>97</sup> See interview with Richard Priem, 03-11-2009.

<sup>98</sup> A reprint of an earlier article by Wim Kortenoeven in *Israël Aktueel* at [dejaap.nl](http://www.dejaap.nl), 'Kruistocht der veragtelijke arische antizionisten', september 2005, <http://www.dejaap.nl/2009/12/kruistocht-der-veragtelijke-arische-antizionisten/comment-page-1/> (in Dutch).

<sup>99</sup> Column of Naftaniel in the *Israël Nieuwsbrief*, 'EU-verklaring over Jeruzalem', 08-12-2009, [http://www.cidi.nl/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=595&Itemid=273](http://www.cidi.nl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=595&Itemid=273) (in Dutch). In the column he writes on Jerusalem (translated from Dutch): 'Jerusalem and especially the Old City with the Western Wall has always been the center of Jewish religious life. Jerusalem determines the direction of prayer in Judaism and long before there was even the state of Israel or the Palestinian people there was already a Jewish majority in the city'.

could form the capital of a Palestinian state<sup>100</sup>, excluding the Old City not only because of the argument that it is central to Israel and the Jewish people, but also on the argument that has never been Arab.

He further notes that an exception could be made for the Temple Mount due to its religious significance for Muslims, favouring an extra-territorial status. Priem also believes East Jerusalem to be the capital of a Palestinian state, but is in favour of an international police force to guarantee a level of security both for Israel and a Palestinian state. CiJO as a whole backs a two-state solution on the basis of the Clinton Proposals or Clinton Parameters of 2000<sup>101</sup>, according to Priem.

Responsibility in the conflict is also a theme recurring in CIDI. According to Priem, the Palestinians are at this point responsible for making the first steps towards a two-state solution. They should prove that they are willing to make steps, for instance by battling anti-Semitism. The same goes for the broader Arab world. Priem also links this to concerns of security from Israel's side. Israel can only succeed in its goal of being a safe haven for the Jewish people if anti-Semitism is successfully battled<sup>102</sup>. From that perspective, he also understands that Netanyahu demands a certain degree of demilitarisation of a future Palestinian state. Naftaniel also asserts that a certain degree of demilitarisation is needed, although he does not see that as a condition to peace negotiations. The director of CIDI furthermore asserts that a Palestinian state is dependent from what leadership it has; if Hamas in its current form will take over leadership in the Palestinian Territories, it will be unacceptable to recognize a Palestinian state because of Hamas its goal to destroy Israel<sup>103</sup>.

As said before, CIDI portrays itself as a pro-Israeli organization, apparently without aligning itself specifically either to the Israeli left or the Israeli right, although it seemingly does reject the extreme left or the extreme right due its support of a two-state solution. At activities and events by CIDI, members of the broad Israeli political spectrum are invited to

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<sup>100</sup> See interview with Ronny Naftaniel, 06-11-2009.

<sup>101</sup> The Clinton Proposals or Clinton Parameters were guidelines presented by American president Bill Clinton for solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It proposed the following on territorial and border issues: 94 to 96% of the West Bank as well as the Gaza Strip would be reserved for a Palestinian state, the other 4 to 6% on which the large Israeli settlement blocs near the Green Line were located would become part of Israel, encompassing some 80% of Israeli settlers in the West Bank at that time; for the land Israel got on the West Bank, Israel should in return give Israeli land near the West Bank border to the Palestinian state, as well as make a passage over land between Gaza and the West Bank; Jerusalem should become the capital of two states, with the Jewish neighborhoods under Israeli control and the Palestinian neighborhoods under Palestinian control; this principle is also extended to the Old City - the *kotel* will be under Israeli sovereignty whereas the Temple Mount or *Haram* will be under Palestinian sovereignty. See 'President Clinton's proposals', *Le Monde diplomatique*, 23-12-2000, <http://mondediplo.com/focus/mideast/clintonproposal200012>.

<sup>102</sup> See interview with Richard Priem, 03-11-2009.

<sup>103</sup> In 2007 CIDI publicized a book on Hamas in which it pointed at the basic desire of Hamas to destroy Israel, see Kortenoeven, Wim, 2007. *Hamas - portret en achtergronden*, Soesterberg, the Netherlands: Uitgeverij Aspekt.

talk on a range of issues. Speakers have included Avigdor Lieberman<sup>104</sup>, Ofir Pines-Paz<sup>105</sup>, Benny Morris<sup>106</sup>, Ami Ayalon<sup>107</sup> and representatives of think tanks such as the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs<sup>108</sup>. The overall focus of CIDI when it comes to Israeli discourse seems to be at a rather broad spectrum of politicians, opinion makers and other individuals or organisations that are involved with the conflict. In the Netherlands, CIDI works with a broad range of Zionist organisations and/or Dutch branches of Israeli organisations, including Bné Akiva, Haboniem Dror<sup>109</sup>, Poale Zion<sup>110</sup> and Likud Nederland<sup>111</sup>, many of whom are also aligned politically to Israeli political parties or movements. Several (former) employees and board members of CIDI are directed aligned to these parties, such as Poale Zion<sup>112</sup>. Cooperation with these organisations has taken place during events such as the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the state of Israel in 1948<sup>113</sup> and in support of the Gaza War at the end of 2008 and the beginning of 2009<sup>114</sup>. This seems to indicate that CIDI tries to be in

<sup>104</sup> 'Lieberman spreekt beheerst bij CIDI', CIDI website, 12-11-2009,

[http://www.cidi.nl/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=571&Itemid=58](http://www.cidi.nl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=571&Itemid=58) (in Dutch).

<sup>105</sup> 'Israëliëse minister Pines-Paz van Binnenlandse Zaken spreekt op CIDI conferentie', CIDI website, 17-03-2005, <http://www.cidi.nl/isnbr/2005/hoofd4-0505.html> (in Dutch). Ophir Pines-Paz was, until his resignation in the beginning of 2010, a Knesset member and former Minister for the Labour Party, aligning himself with the peace camp. See Jonathan Lis, 'Labor stalwart Ophir Pines-Paz leaves Knesset, party and politics', Haaretz, 10-01-2010, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1141261.html>.

<sup>106</sup> 'Colloquium over zionisme goed bezocht', CIDI website, 15-12-2005, <http://www.cidi.nl/isnbr/2005/hoofd3-1805.html> (in Dutch). During the course Morris gave at the University of Amsterdam within the CIDI college program, he criticized post-Zionists such as Meron Benvenisti for leading Israel to a binational state. Morris was also a guest speaker for CIDI more recently, talking on the Palestinian Nakbah, see 'Benny Morris over de Nakba', CIDI website, 06-06-2008, <http://www.cidi.nl/isnbr/2008/hoofd1-0408.html> (in Dutch).

<sup>107</sup> Ami Ayalon is a former Israeli politician for the Labor Party who, along with Palestinian professor Sari Nusseibeh, wrote down the 'The People's Voice Peace Initiative', meant as a combined Israel-Palestinian initiative to come to a peace agreement. Published in 2002 it had gathered 150,000 Israeli and 125,000 Palestinian signatories in 2004. On the issue of land and territory it has proclaimed that it is in favour of a two-state solution with the Green Line serving as a border between the two states, which places its territorial outlook within the Israeli left. See <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/12bBackground.pdf>. See for Ami Ayalon's visit to CIDI to talk about his plan <http://www.cidi.nl/isnbr/2005/hoofd1-0105.html> (in Dutch).

<sup>108</sup> One of CIDI's invitees for its events has been Dan Diker, an Israeli political analyst working for the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, see <http://www.cidi.nl/info/bk2005-12-19.html> (in Dutch).

<sup>109</sup> Haboniem Dror is a socialist-Zionist youth movement and the biggest Jewish movement in the Netherlands with approximately 400 members. It was formed in 1982 out of the merger of two Jewish socialist-Zionist youth movements, Haboniem and Dror. Several of its core principles include equality, justice and social democracy. See website [www.haboniem.nl](http://www.haboniem.nl) (in Dutch).

<sup>110</sup> The Dutch branch of Poale Zion was founded in 1905. Poale Zion describes itself as a 'progressive Jewish, social-Zionist' organisation which strives for 'a democratic, peaceful and pluralistic Israel'. Internationally it's part of the World Labour Zionist Movement and is linked to both the Israeli Labour Party (Avodah) and the more left-wing Meretz-Yachad party. It speaks out in favour of a two-state solution and calls the Israeli settlements 'an obstacle to peace'. See website <http://www.poale-zion.nl/home.html> (in Dutch).

<sup>111</sup> Likud Nederland is affiliated to the Likud party in Israel. See [www.likud.nl](http://www.likud.nl) (in Dutch).

<sup>112</sup> The current chairman, Alon de Lieme, has also been an employee of CIDI. Willem van der Sluis, member of the advisory council of Poale Zion, is also a board member of CIDI. See <http://www.poale-zion.nl/home.html> (in Dutch).

<sup>113</sup> The event was organized by de Federatie Nederlandse Zionisten (Federation of Dutch Zionists) along with Mifgash, CIDI, the CJO and the three major Jewish religious movements. See <http://www.cidi.nl/news/2008/070508a.html> (in Dutch).

<sup>114</sup> On January 9th 2009 a large manifestation was held in The Hague, organized by different Jewish and non-Jewish organisations, including CIDI, the Federatie Nederlandse Zionisten, Christenen voor Israël and different Jewish-religious organisations. See [http://www.cidi.nl/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=143&Itemid=1](http://www.cidi.nl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=143&Itemid=1) (in Dutch).

touch with broad Israeli opinion and discourse on the conflict. However, when it comes to its outspokenness on territory and borders, CIDI seems to be more inclined to follow the discourse used within Kadima and the Israeli Left, due to its fierce support of the two-state solution and its criticism of Israeli settlement projects, something which is less evident among Israeli right-wing parties such as Likud. A reason for this could lie in the earlier-mentioned ties of active members of CIDI with Zionist organisations like Poale Zion. In an interview with a Dutch magazine in 2000, Naftaniël said he was a supporter of the Israeli Labor Party<sup>115</sup>. Overall speaking though, it seems that CIDI tries to be in touch as much as possible with Israeli majority opinion, which, as explained before, is in favour of a two-state solution and the removal of part of Israel's settlements in the West Bank. This could be an outcome of CIDI's role, as put down at its founding in 1974, to represent the entire Jewish community as the most prominent voice on Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Its earlier mentioned cooperation with a variety of Zionist organisations from the entire political spectrum is also part of this.

## **5.2. Een Ander Joods Geluid**

Een Ander Joods Geluid (A Different Jewish Voice) was founded in 2001 through an advertisement in the Dutch daily newspaper *Het Parool*<sup>116</sup> in which a number of progressive Jews spoke out on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, taking - according to the undersigned - a more critical stance towards Israeli policies and its role in the conflict as opposed to the more established Jewish organizations. In the advertisement the group - eventually expanding in successive advertisements to some 250 to 300 Dutch Jews - called upon a viable, peaceful and just solution to the conflict resulting in a Palestinian state alongside Israel. Furthermore it supported the idea of Jerusalem as the capital of two states, of Israel and a Palestinian state. It also spoke out in favour of ending the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories, removing all Israeli soldiers and colonists from the Territories, in exchange for peace and security. After the initial advertisement in *Het Parool*, other advertisements by Een Ander Joods Geluid calling for these same objectives appeared in other newspapers (such as the daily *Volkskrant* and the weekly *NIW*<sup>117</sup>). This move to openly criticize Israel and the perceived stance of the established Jewish community on Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was seen as controversial; some within the Jewish community argued that it went

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<sup>115</sup> Arjen van der Ziel, 'Ronny Naftaniël', *FEM Business and Finance*, 19-02-2000, <http://archieffembusiness.nl/2000/02/19/nummer-8/Ronny-Naftanil.htm> (in Dutch).

<sup>116</sup> Advertisement in *Het Parool* under the name of Een Ander Joods Geluid, 25-10-2001.

<sup>117</sup> The *NIW* stands for *Nieuw Israëlitisch Weekblad*, the only major Jewish weekly in the Netherlands.

against the mainstream Jewish line on Israel and the conflict, unequally and at times falsely addressed Israel for its policies<sup>118</sup> and harmed Jewish unity which was perceived as crucial in its defence of Israel. Nevertheless the organisation gained ground, although its support base among Dutch Jews has always been limited.

In the years since its founding in 2001, Een Ander Joods Geluid has adopted guidelines and published a variety of articles, engaged in debates on the conflict inside and outside of the Jewish community and been at the forefront of several controversies. From the time of its establishment, it has spoken out in favour of a two-state solution, as was seen in the advertisements through which Een Ander Joods Geluid introduced itself before the Dutch public. In its grounding principles, it calls out for a Palestinian state alongside Israel, with Jerusalem as a shared capital for both states<sup>119</sup>. It furthermore calls out for an end of the Israeli presence and the Israeli settlements in the West Bank, referring to the UN resolutions 242 and 338<sup>120</sup>. In several articles in the media, the current and past chairmen of Een Ander Joods Geluid - Jaap Hamburger and Max Wieselmann - have elaborated significantly on an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, calling upon Israel to cede its occupation and its settlement policies in favour of an agreement with the Palestinians. The Israeli occupation has been described as a colonialist policy, meant to bring as much land as possible under direct Israeli control, and calling past immigrants - the Jews who have made aliyah to Israel since the establishment of Zionism as a political ideology - the new occupiers due to the ongoing Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories<sup>121</sup>. Since its founding, Een Ander Joods Geluid has been vocal on the power relationship between Israel and the Palestinians when dealing with the conflict, believing that Israel as the stronger party should also take up responsibility. This was also the response by Een Ander Joods Geluid to an organisation

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<sup>118</sup> Criticism directed at Een Ander Joods Geluid could be heard for instance from the ranks of Likoed Nederland, the Dutch branch of the Israeli Likud party. In a letter sent in to the NIW, Likoed Nederland accused Een Ander Joods Geluid of not wanting to see the Israeli side of the conflict and of solely identifying with the Palestinians because they manage to be 'the underdog' in Dutch public opinion. Likoed Nederland questions the 'criticism' of Een Ander Joods Geluid and the extent to which they give a voice to a (large) dissident part of the Dutch-Jewish community. See 'De "kritiek" van Een Ander Joods Geluid' ('The "criticism" of A Different Jewish Voice'), 16-11-2001, <http://www.likud.nl/brief33.html> (in Dutch).

<sup>119</sup> For an online version see <http://www.eajg.nl/index.asp?navitemid=1> (in Dutch).

<sup>120</sup> UN resolution 242 - November 22<sup>nd</sup> 1967 - requests for a Special Representative for the Middle East to reach for an agreement between the parties involved in the aftermath of the 1967 Six Day War, and affirms that the UN is looking for a just and lasting peace, which includes a withdrawal by Israel from the Occupied Territories, see <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/240/94/IMG/NR024094.pdf?OpenElement>. UN resolution 338 - October 22<sup>nd</sup> 1973 - calls upon an immediate ceasefire between the fighting parties - at that time the 1973 Yom Kippur War was taking place - and to adhere to UN resolution 242, see <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/288/65/IMG/NR028865.pdf?OpenElement>.

<sup>121</sup> Jaap Hamburger, 'Israël verdrijft Palestijnen op kousenvoeten', Nederlands Dagblad, 19-09-2009, see <http://www.nd.nl/artikelen/2009/augustus/19/israel-verdrijft-palestijnen-op-kousenvoeten> (in Dutch).

called the Dutch Coalition for Peace<sup>122</sup>, which in 2002 called up to an end to the then ongoing-Second Intifada. What was ‘missing’ in their call, according to the board of Een Ander Joods Geluid, was the acknowledgement that there was a basic unequal relationship between the two parties which put the brunt of the responsibility for the conflict with Israel and Israeli policies in the past<sup>123</sup>.

Since its inception, Een Ander Joods Geluid - ‘as many freshly founded organizations’, according to two of its founders, Anneke Jos Mouthaan and Max Wieselmann (Anstadt, 2003: 70-71) - has seen several internal disagreements and subsequently some of the original founders have left the organisation. For some, this had to do with the way in which the organisation presented itself in the media, especially by some spokespersons such as Hajo Meyer<sup>124</sup>, who has been one of the founders as well and is currently still a board member, taking an anti-Zionist stance most of the time<sup>125</sup>. His main criticism towards Israel has been his argument that Israel is repressing the Palestinians in the same way as the Nazis repressed the Jews during the 1930s before the Holocaust, by enlarging the threat posed by the Palestinians and Arab nations to the state of Israel, by using collective punishment against the Palestinian population and by ‘dehumanising’ them (Meyer, 2003).

As said before, the official viewpoint of Een Ander Joods Geluid on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is that the parties should strive towards a two-state solution. Opposition to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories is intertwined with this. According to Jaap Hamburger, current chairman, a two-state solution should mean that a Palestinian state will be economically viable, territorially contiguous within the borders from before the Six Day of 1967, with East-Jerusalem as its capital<sup>126</sup>. The only way to come to such a state is by the immediate ending of the Israeli occupation, a move which Israel could do unilaterally, according to Hamburger, but should be preferably done in coordination with the Palestinian

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<sup>122</sup> The Nederlandse Coalitie voor vrede (Dutch Coalition for Peace) was a joint organisation of Jews, Palestinians and Muslims in the Netherlands calling for an end to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. In a letter in the Dutch daily Trouw on March 19<sup>th</sup> 2002, the organisation called for a retreat of Israeli forces from the Palestinian Territories to its positions before the Second Intifada, a cease-fire, a stop to Palestinian suicide attacks, an end to all violence, a normalisation of ties and an end to Israeli settlement policies. Among the members of the Dutch Coalition for Peace were CIDI-director Ronny Naftaniël and CIDI-chairman John Manheim, as well as Dutch-Jewish politician for the Labor Party Judith Belinfante and Dutch-Moroccan politician for the Labor Party, current mayor of Rotterdam, Ahmed Aboutaleb.

<sup>123</sup> A copy on paper of the response by Een Ander Joods Geluid to the Dutch Coalition for Peace is in the possession of the author of this thesis.

<sup>124</sup> See interview with Max Wieselmann, 28-10-2009.

<sup>125</sup> Evert van Vlastuin, ‘Hajo Meyer: Nooit vrede in Gazastrook’, Reformatorisch Dagblad, <http://www.refdag.nl/artikel/1390162/Hajo+Meyer+Nooit+vrede+in+Gazastrook.html> (in Dutch). In the interview Hajo Meyer remarks that he sees the Zionist experiment (the creation of the state of Israel) as having failed, and accuses Israel of executing the same sort of policies and practices against the Palestinians what the Nazis did to the Jews in the 1930s.

<sup>126</sup> See interview with Jaap Hamburger, 13-11-2009.

Authority, as the removal of most Israeli settlers could be accompanied with some fierce resistance by the settler movement, as was also seen during the dismantling of Israel's settlements in Gaza in 2005. Hamburger does believe that there could be a possibility from the side of the Palestinian Authority to grant Palestinian citizenship to those Israeli settlers who are willing to live in a Palestinian state as Palestinian citizens.

The viability of a future Palestinian state is not only central in an understanding of a two-state solution by Hamburger, but can also be heard by others within Een Ander Joods Geluid<sup>127</sup>. This also goes for the possibility of incorporating Israeli settlements or Israeli settlers in a future Palestinian state. As former chairman Max Wieselmann says, 'the [Israeli] settlements are illegal and they should be dismantled, but if both parties come to a different understanding on this, so be it'.

Although there seems to be a general understanding on how a Palestinian state should look like - it should be economically and territorially viable, preferably on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, with Jerusalem as a shared capital for both Israel and a Palestinian state -, differences can be seen within Een Ander Joods Geluid when it comes to the arguments why there should be a Palestinian state in the first place within the framework of a two-state solution. For some, this seems to boil down to a sense of identification and ensuring the viability of Israel as a state. As one of the interviewed stated, although she would be unwilling to either call herself pro-Israeli or pro-Palestinian, but rather pro-peace, she does care about the endurance of Israel in the future, citing family history and a shared history with the Jewish people as a whole as one of her arguments, as well as the given fact that her mother is Israeli and she has family in Israel<sup>128</sup>. She also feels more of a connection with Israel than with the Palestinians, from the perspective that she feels more connected with Israel in the role of a self-critic, a role she cannot play when it comes to the Palestinians. A Palestinian state and peace is needed in that sense to make sure Israel is there to stay. In a same way does one of the other interviewed state that he is more connected with Israel for it being a predominantly Jewish state, also citing that because of his belief that Israel is abandoning the Jewish ethics and its history - the Shoah and ongoing persecution throughout the Jewish history -, and he himself being a Jew, he is obliged to speak out against wrongdoings by Israel both within the Palestinian Territories as well as towards the non-Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel itself. He stands firmly behind the existence of Israel, but one within the pre-1967 borders and

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<sup>127</sup> See interview with Siri Amrit Khalsa, 21-10-2009; see interview with Raymond Nethe, 22-10-2009; see interview with Max Wieselmann, 28-10-2009.

<sup>128</sup> See interview with Siri Amrit Khalsa, 21-10-2009.

an equal state for all its citizens<sup>129</sup>. Although he finds it important that Israel and Israeli society knows about and acknowledges its role in the Palestinian Nakbah in 1947-1948, he considers it done, an event which should not be used to challenge the current existence of Israel.

For others, this point of view seems to be less outspoken. Hamburger calls it an ‘ambivalent emotional band’ he has with Israel, but above all states the reason for Israel to end the occupation of the Palestinian Territories as the obligation the state has to adhere to international law. In the interview, Hamburger recalls and agrees with the words of Gideon Levy<sup>130</sup>, who once said at a public event in Amsterdam that he was ‘not pro-Israel, not anti-Israel, not pro-Palestinian, not anti-Palestinian, but anti-occupation’. For Wieselmann, a two-state solution is not necessarily an ideological choice, and he believes that the world has to be careful in not treating the two-state solution as a dogma. It could be well possible that a majority of the Palestinians is not in favour of a two-state solution, and that is a sentiment which you have to take into account when talking on a solution. If most Palestinians want to strive towards a binational state, than that is something which should become part of the debate and something which Een Ander Joods Geluid should not shun. Although a two-state solution is envisioned in its statutes, Wieselmann proposes that it may be brought back to just the basis of Israeli and Palestinians living in peace and security, leaving open the possibility of reaching this basis in the framework of either a two-state solution or a binational state. For Wieselmann it is understandable that many Palestinians still see many Jewish Israelis as immigrants who took over their land.

Zionism itself seems to be a contested issue within Een Ander Joods Geluid. Some of its members, such as the earlier mentioned Hajo Meyer, deem Zionism to have failed, and have created an anti-Zionist outlook (Meyer, 2003). Wieselmann understands how Zionism has developed as a historical given and that many Jews may have decided to move to Palestine to escape persecution and to be free, but he does stress that Zionism was in fact one of several streams of thoughts among Jews in Eastern Europe and that many Jews thought, before the Shoah, that Zionism was not the answer to persecution. Wieselmann himself is not attracted to the Zionist principle of a Jewish homeland, and feels that escaping persecution as

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<sup>129</sup> See interview with Raymond Nethe, 22-10-2009.

<sup>130</sup> Gideon Levy is a ‘radical’ columnist for the liberal daily Ha’aretz newspaper in Israel, and has been called the ‘patron saint to its most loyal readers for his relentless campaign against the occupation’ and has ironically been “credited” for ‘a thick file of subscription-cancellation notices’ at Ha’aretz because of his coverage. See Glain, Stephen, “Ha’aretz’, Israel’s Liberal Beacon”, The Nation, 06-09-2007, <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20070924/glain>.

a Jew and feeling safe does not automatically mean that the solution should be a Jewish homeland where Jews are a majority.

Een Ander Joods Geluid seems to focus on (extreme) left opinion makers in Israel when it comes to incorporating Israeli discourse in its opinions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Israel's borders and territory. Israeli opinion makers which are mentioned at their website, in personal interviews and who have been invited to speak on behalf of the organisation include Ha'aretz journalists Gideon Levy and Amira Hass, New Historian Ilan Pappé and peace activist Uri Avnery. In articles by Levy which can be found on the website of Een Ander Joods Geluid, he speaks of settlements as illegal<sup>131</sup> and has used the Apartheid analogy to explain - parts of - the occupation of the Palestinian Territories by Israel<sup>132</sup>. Amira Hass, a well-known Israeli journalist covering the Gaza Strip for Ha'aretz, has been vocal in her opposition to Israel's occupation of the West Bank and its policies towards Gaza<sup>133</sup>. In a speech by Hamburger at a local meeting of the Dutch Green Party the chairman said that, with adjustments, Een Ander Joods Geluid could support three conflict solutions which have been proposed so far: the Geneva Initiative, the Roadmap to Peace and the Arab Peace Initiative<sup>134</sup>. The Geneva Initiative has found direct support among left-wing Israelis such as the left-wing Meretz Party and the left-wing of the Labour Party. During the same speech, Hamburger also noted that Een Ander Joods Geluid adopts points of view from what he calls 'the Other Israel', composed of parts of Israeli *civil society* or 'critical' Israelis abroad. This can also be seen by trips of Israeli human rights and peace activists to the Netherlands organized or supported by Een Ander Joods Geluid, such as Yehuda Shaul in September 2009<sup>135</sup> and Jeff Halper and other activists in May 2008<sup>136</sup>. Most of these activists represent organizations known for their opposition to the occupation of the Palestinian Territories, whereas some, such as Jeff Halper, advocate in favour of a binational state. Within the Netherlands, Een Ander Joods Geluid also works together with organisations such as SIVMO<sup>137</sup> and gate48<sup>138</sup>,

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<sup>131</sup> Levy, Gideon, 'Only psychiatrists can explain Israel's behavior', Ha'aretz, 10-01-2010; Levy, Gideon, 'Settlements are fertile ground for Jewish terror', Ha'aretz, 02-11-2009; Levy, Gideon, 'Netanyahu: put your money where your mouth is', Ha'aretz, 19-02-2009.

<sup>132</sup> Levy, Gideon, '28 kilometers of distilled apartheid', Ha'aretz, 31-12-2009.

<sup>133</sup> Fisk, Robert, 'Amira Hass: Life Under Israeli Occupation - By an Israeli', The Independent, 26-08-2001.

<sup>134</sup> Speech by Jaap Hamburger at a local GroenLinks (GreenLeft) meeting on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in Groningen, 13-10-2009.

<sup>135</sup> 'Breaking the Silence in De Balie', 25-09-2009, <http://www.eajg.nl/index.asp?navitemid=12&type=3&item=2555> (in Dutch).

<sup>136</sup> Een Ander Joods Geluid and its sister organization SIVMO invited several Israeli human rights and peace activists to present 'the Other Israel' in the Netherlands during the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the state of Israel in May 2008. Activists represented organizations such as ICAHD, New Profile, Physicians for Human Rights - Israel, B'Tselem, Combatants for Peace and Zochrot. '60 jaar Israël in de media', 05-06-2008, <http://www.eajg.nl/index.asp?navitemid=12&type=3&item=1702> (in Dutch).

<sup>137</sup> SIVMO stands for 'Steuncomité voor Israëliëse Vredes- en MensenrechtenOrganisaties', and was established at the beginning of the 1990s. It is involved with fundraising for Israeli peace groups and human rights

which have strong ties with left-wing organisations and individuals in Israel with most of them being highly critical of Israel's occupation of the Palestinian Territories. It should be noted that Een Ander Joods Geluid also focuses on opinions and voices not linked to Israel but linked to pro-Palestinian media and pro-advocacy groups, both internationally such as the Electronic Intifada<sup>139</sup> as well as nationally, such as the Netherlands Palestine Comite<sup>140</sup>.

Looking both at CIDI and Een Ander Joods Geluid, several basic points of view can be described. Both organisations rally in favour of a two-state solution, although in both organisations, claims on either 'Judea and Samaria' - within CIDI - or opinions in favour of a binational state - within Een Ander Joods Geluid - seem to exist. In its outlook, CIDI seems to be more aligned to mainstream Israeli opinion on agreeing on a land swap with a Palestinian state, bringing the large settlement blocs near Jerusalem in the Israeli state, whereas Een Ander Joods Geluid holds more firmly to the Green Line, unless the Israelis and Palestinians come to a fair, equal understanding of a land swap. CIDI more than Een Ander Joods Geluid seems to be in favour of granting Israeli settlers citizenship in a Palestinian state, claiming that these settlers also have a right to live in the West Bank. Een Ander Joods Geluid seems to be more inclined to hold on to arguments of international law which sees the settlements as illegal, although this is a contested issue in Israel itself.

Whereas the emotional bond with Israel and the need for a Jewish homeland is clearly visible within CIDI, this seems to be more ambivalent within Een Ander Joods Geluid, where some do feel a (strong) connection with Israel, but others feel this bond less, also opposing the existence of an Israeli state or not excluding the option of a binational state. In that sense, Een Ander Joods Geluid seems to position itself more in (extreme) leftish circles in Israel whereas CIDI is more on line with a general public sentiment in Israel.

This also becomes clear when looking at Israeli or Israeli-focused sources of influence within CIDI and Een Ander Joods Geluid. Whereas CIDI focuses on more mainstream organisations and individuals, such as a broad range of representatives of Israeli parties and Dutch branches of Zionist organisations, Een Ander Joods Geluid puts a focus on more (extreme) left-wing organisations and individuals both in Israel, of which many are aligned to

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organisations in the Netherlands. Organisations receiving money from SIVMO include B'Tselem, Gush Shalom and ICAHD. See [www.sivmo.nl](http://www.sivmo.nl) (in Dutch).

<sup>138</sup> gate48 is a Dutch-Israeli organisation founded by three Israeli women living in the Netherlands who are opposed to Israel's occupation of the Palestinian Territories and the enforced separation between Israelis and Palestinians. See [www.gate48.org](http://www.gate48.org).

<sup>139</sup> See <http://electronicintifada.net/>.

<sup>140</sup> See <http://www.palestina-komitee.nl/> (in Dutch).

human rights groups and peace organisations, as well as in the Netherlands, such as SIVMO, gate48 and the Netherlands Palestine Committee. Due to its stated goal to represent the voice of the Jewish community in the Netherlands on Israel and the Middle East, CIDI seems to be more focused on representing mainstream Israeli and Dutch-Jewish opinion, while Een Ander Joods Geluid has adopted a profile more focused on (extreme) left-wing organisations and individuals both within the Dutch-Jewish community as well as within Israel.

## Conclusion

Zionism developed itself as a nationalist movement among Europe's Jews in search for a Jewish homeland in Palestine or the Land of Israel to escape persecution and safeguard a Jewish identity. What the exact territory of this homeland would be and where its borders would be located was not at all clear for the first Zionists, and gave rise to different territorial outlooks. The Jewish claims on Palestine had several justifications: the religious centrality of the land in Judaism, and the historical claims on the land as the birthplace of the Jewish people; and a different approach focused on the use of the land, that those who actually used and cultivated the land were also the ones having the most justified territorial claim.

In a territory where there was a majority presence of Arabs, the Zionist movement focused the territorial build-up of a homeland on practically settling and conquering the land. The first focus was put on gaining a majority in parts of the territory, as so to claim the land on demographic grounds. When it became clear the Palestinian land would be partitioned in a Jewish and an Arab part, tactics changed, and the Zionist movement pushed for a more territorially dispersed presence, despite being fewer in number than the Arab population. 1948 saw the birth of the Israeli state, the 'crown' on Jewish self-determination in the land.

The territorial outlook changed between 1948 and 1967. The political leadership of the country experienced an influx of Jewish immigrants from war-torn Europe and the Arab world. It settled with being able to give a safe haven for these immigrants in a Jewish-controlled state. But that status quo was drastically altered after the Six-Day War in 1967, in which Israel conquered the Sinai, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights. Nationalistic feelings engulfed Israeli society, and before the end of 1967, the first settlers, many secular but also an increasing number of religious Zionists, had started settlements in some of the conquered territories. In the years following, the settlement project became increasingly dominated by national-religious Zionists, exclaiming the conquered territories were meant for the Jews on Biblical grounds. Still, the settlements were not merely started on religious or historical grounds; some settlers, policymakers and politicians actively encouraging - partial - domination over the occupied territories did so out of security or strategic reasons, hoping to create a territorial barrier against possible future conflicts with its Arab neighbours.

After 1973 and 1977, the territorial outlook further changed. The Yom Kippur War in 1973 proved that the settlements were not only a strategic asset, but at times a security

liability as well. The Labour movement, which until 1977 dominated the Israeli political landscape, had an ambivalent relationship towards the occupation and the settler movement. Settling the land was deeply embedded in the psyche in the movement; but the ongoing occupation could threaten the Jewish majority in Israel demographically, due to the large Arab population in the Occupied Territories. Parts of Labour started to speak out in favour of (territorial) self-determination of the Palestinian people. The settler project became increasingly associated with the right-wing and the national-religious population. In 1977, when the right-wing Likud, a political party born out of the Revisionist Zionist movement striving for maximal territorial control over the whole Land of Israel, defeated Labour in the elections, the settler movement was greatly empowered. Nevertheless, it was the Likud government which in 1979 returned the Sinai to Egypt in exchange for a peace agreement.

The 1980s saw an increasing opposition to the settler project among Israel's population. Its high financial costs and its negative influence on the peace process gave rise to further opposition to the settlements. In the 1990s, under the Oslo Accords, the outlines were drawn for Palestinian self-determination and a Palestinian state, which meant that a number of settlements would have to disappear, much to the dislike of the settler movement. However, ongoing terrorist attacks by Palestinian militants on Israelis, failing peace negotiations such as the Camp David negotiations in 2000 and the start of the Second Intifada at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century made the Jewish-Israeli population sceptical of peace. A Palestinian state was slowly turned into a security liability in Israeli public opinion and Israeli distrust of the 'real' intentions on the Palestinian and Arab side mounted, while especially the larger settlement blocs near the Green Line became so intertwined with Israel that fewer and fewer Israelis were willing to give them up in a peace agreement.

A two-state solution, an Israeli state alongside an independent Palestinian state, can still count on the support of a majority, though slimming, segment within the Jewish-Israeli population. It is still seen as the best way to preserve a Jewish majority and thus a Jewish character in a democratic Israeli state. But security concerns mount, and the 'land for peace' ideal has severely eroded in popularity. Debates on alternative solutions have gained ground in Israeli discourse, from binationalism to preserving a status quo and waiting 'for better times'. The outlook of the two-state solution itself has also been subject to differentiating views.

Debates on Israel's territory and borders have not limited itself to Israel, but have made their way to the Jewish diaspora as well. Zionism as a nationalistic movement has its roots in the diaspora, and many diaspora organizations and individuals are engaged in

contemporary Israeli debates and discourse. Two Dutch-Jewish organizations, the CIDI and Een Ander Joods Geluid, are two of the most vocal Jewish organizations on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in Dutch society. Both hold strong views on the Israeli border and territorial debate, especially in the light of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and contemporary debates after 1967. Both are in favour of a two-state solution, but especially on the side of CIDI, security concerns and a territorial agreement incorporating the large Israeli settlement blocs near the Green Line to Israel place them amidst the Israeli mainstream. Een Ander Joods Geluid, where some actively reject an Israeli Zionist state or keep the option for a binational state open, are more in line with the more (extreme) left side of Israeli discourse, generally advocating a total Israeli retreat to the Green Line. Whereas among CIDI, an emotional bond to - the Jewish state of - Israel generally seems to be strong, this bond is less strong among Een Ander Joods Geluid, although there is a diversification of opinions on this. The opinions voiced by CIDI can be best described as reflecting Israeli majority opinion, an outcome of CIDI's stated purposes to represent 'the' Dutch-Jewish voice on Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its close involvement with mainstream Dutch-Jewish organisations and a variety of Zionist organisations in the Netherlands. Een Ander Joods Geluid, on the other hand, positions itself in more (extreme) left-wing circles, both in its connections with (extreme) left organisations and individuals in Israel as well as in the Netherlands.

Concluding, the Israeli debate on territory and borders has not stopped after the founding of Israel in 1948, but has increasingly been part of Israeli public discourse, especially after the Six-Day War in 1967. With still no clear sovereign borders, an ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict with a strong territorial component and a plurality of territorial opinions among Israel's population and beyond, Israeli discourse on territory and borders is still ever ongoing. This debate is reflected in the Jewish diaspora, where these very same opinions can be heard. In the Netherlands, the components of the mainstream debate in Israel can be found among CIDI, whereas (extreme) left discourse can be heard within Een Ander Joods Geluid. It is arguable that as long as no definitive territorial solution is found, the debate will keep centre stage in Israeli and diaspora discourse on the conflict for the coming years.

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