

**The  
Crisis  
of  
Zionism**

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Again and again, Jewish texts connect the Jewish right to sovereignty in the land of Israel to Jewish behavior in the land of Israel. In the words of Jeremiah, "If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever."

Today, too, Israel's physical survival is bound up with its ethical survival. Whether or not Israel's nuclear weapons and antimissile shields can protect it from Iran, Hezbollah, and Hamas, they will be of no use on the day that hundreds of thousands of Palestinians march, nonviolently, to demand the very "equality of social and political rights" that Israel promises in its declaration of independence. And if American Jewish leaders continue to defend the Israeli government at the expense of Israeli democracy, they may find their own children and grandchildren cheering those protesters on.

I will try to give my son and daughter a sense of the immensity of what they have been given, of the agony that prior generations endured so that Jews could have a state. And I will tell them that their duty is to help ensure that this time, Jewish sovereignty does not fail. I will tell them, if they see that video of Khaled Jaber calling for his father, that I learned of his story because brave young Israelis chronicled it, Israelis who believe in the promise of Israel's independence declaration, which envisions a nation that pursues "freedom, justice, and peace as envisaged by the Hebrew Prophets." I will tell them that that pledge, made when the stench of Jewish death still hung over Europe, and amid a war for Israel's very existence, is their patrimony. If Israel betrays that promise, it will be a stain upon their lives. I will tell them about their great-grandmother, who spent her life fleeing sinking ships. And tell them that today Israel-democratic Israel-is the ship that must not sink. The birthright they must not squander. The dream that must not die.

# 1

## The Crisis in Israel

**A** SA ZIONIST, I BELIEVE THAT AFTER TWO MILLENNIA OF HOME-lessness, the Jewish people deserve a state dedicated to their protection in their historic land, something enjoyed by many peoples who have suffered far less. As a partisan of liberal democracy, I believe that to honor that history of suffering, a Jewish state must offer equal citizenship to all its inhabitants. In the spirit of Hillel, it must not do to others what Jews found hateful when done to them. Are these principles in tension? Absolutely. There will always be tension between Israel's responsibility to the Jewish people and its responsibility to all its people, Jewish and non-Jewish alike. But as the scholars Alexander Yakobson and Amnon Rubinstein have noted, "Tension between values, in and of itself, is no indication that one of the competing values is illegitimate." If there is tension between Zionism and liberal democracy, there is also tension between economic development and environmental protection, or government spending and fiscal discipline, or civil liberties and national defense, or many other goals that governments rightly pursue.

At the heart of the Zionist project is the struggle to reconcile these two valid but conflicting ideals. If Israel fails in that struggle, it will either cease being a Jewish state or cease being a democratic one. Today, it is failing, and American Jews are helping it fail.

Theodor Herzl would be distraught, but not surprised. The man who founded the Zionist movement did not merely want a Jewish state. He wanted a Jewish state that cherished liberal ideals. And he knew that to create such a state, Jews would have to wage a battle for its soul. In 1902, he wrote a novel called *Altneuland* (*Old New Land*) about a future Jewish country. Herzl's Jewish country is an impressive place. It guarantees freedom of speech and freedom of religion; rabbis enjoy "no privileged voice in the state." The book's hero, a presidential candidate named David Littwak, speaks Arabic, and one of his closest allies is an Arab engineer from Haifa. In their political party, Littwak tells a visitor, "We do not ask to what race or religion a man belongs. If he is a man that is enough for us."

But, Littwak admits, "there are other views among us." Their foremost proponent is a Rabbi Geyer, who seeks to strip non-Jews of the vote. Herzl modeled Geyer on an anti-Semitic demagogue in his native Austria, thus raising the specter that once Jews enjoyed power they might persecute others in the same way gentiles had persecuted them. The novel ends with the campaign between Littwak's party and Geyer's. "You must hold fast to the things that have made us great: To liberality, tolerance and love of mankind," one of Littwak's supporters tells a crowd. "Only then is Zion truly Zion!" In his final words, the outgoing president declares, "Let the stranger be at home among us." After a fierce contest, Littwak's party wins, Geyer leaves the country, and in the novel's epilogue, Herzl implores readers to make his Zionist dream **come true.**

As a vision of the Zionist future, *Altneuland* has its problems. While Herzl believed deeply in equality for individual Arabs, he could not imagine an Arab national movement demanding a state in Palestine of its own. (His rival, the cultural Zionist Ahad Ha'am, knew better, insist-

ing that "This land is also their national home . . . and they have the right to develop their national potential to the best of their ability.") Still, for all its flaws, *Altneuland* shows that while Zionism was a nationalist movement, it was also, from the beginning, a liberal one. (Even those early Zionists who identified themselves as socialists mostly shared a liberal conception of freedom of conscience and equality under the law.) Zionism's founding fathers—men like Herzl, Moses Hess, and Leon Pinsker—were children of the Enlightenment. Earlier in their lives, each had hoped that as the nations of Europe dedicated themselves to the rights of man they would eventually extend those rights to Jews. When anti-Semitism refused to climb into history's grave, and instead reincarnated itself in racial, pseudoscientific form, the Zionist intellectuals lost faith in Europe and decided that only in their own state could Jews live safe, full lives. But they did not lose faith in Enlightenment ideals; they transplanted them. "We don't want a Boer state," wrote Herzl in his diary, expressing revulsion at racist Afrikaner nationalism. **«But a Venice.»**

But Herzl knew that a tolerant, cosmopolitan republic like Venice was not preordained, that Jews were entirely capable of birthing a Boer state. This conflict, between the desire to build a Jewish state premised on liberal democratic principles and the temptation to flout those principles in the name of Jewish security and power, runs throughout the Zionist enterprise. It is the battle every Zionist generation wages against itself. In May 1948, in "The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel," the state's founders promised "complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex." Yet in the war that preceded and followed those majestic words, Zionist forces committed abuses so terrible that David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, declared himself "shocked by the deeds that have reached my ears." In the town of Jib, in the Galilee, Israeli soldiers pillaged Arab houses, and when the residents protested, took them to a remote location and shot them dead. During the war, roughly 700,000 Arabs left Palestine, and irrespective of whether most

left their homes voluntarily or were forced out, Israel refused to let them return.

In the struggle to build a Jewish state in the face of implacable foes, the liberal ideals outlined by Israel's founders were brutally flouted. But the fact that those liberal ideals existed at all created space for democratic struggle. When the war of independence ended, Israel gave citizenship to the Arabs still living within its territory, which was more than the refugees gained in most of the Arab countries to which they fled. The rights of Israeli Arabs were curtailed, to be sure: in Israel's first decades, most lived under martial law. But Arab and Jewish Israelis joined together to protest this blatant discrimination, and in 1966 martial law was lifted. Massive inequities remained, but it was possible to believe that, slowly and fitfully, the gap between Zionism and liberalism was narrowing, that Israel was moving in the direction of Herzl's dream.

Then, in 1967, the Six-Day War turned history's trajectory upside down. With its Arab neighbors poised to attack, Israel struck first, fought brilliantly, conquered the West Bank of the Jordan River, among other territories, and began to settle the land (a process made easier by the Arab world's apparent refusal to offer peace, even if Israel gave the new territories back). For a country built by pioneers, this was natural. Settling land-especially land as rich with biblical meaning as the West Bank-was in the Zionist DNA. The problem was that this time, liberal ideals did not tether the Zionist project. A year after it eliminated its most flagrant discrimination against its own Arab citizens, Israel made itself master of millions of Palestinian Arabs who enjoyed no citizenship at all. Suddenly, Rabbi Geyer had a kingdom of his own.

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It is as if *Altneuland's* election had ended with each party governing part of the land. In David Littwak's Israel, the Israel born in 1948, liberal Zionism, to some extent, exists. Israel's Arab citizens enjoy individual rights like freedom of speech, assembly, and worship. They sit in Israel's parliament, the Knesset, and on its Supreme Court. Arab Israe-

lis also enjoy the kind of group rights for which many ethnic and religious minorities yearn. They maintain their own religious courts and, their own, state-funded, Arabic-language schools and media. Indeed Arabic is one of Israel's official languages. Arab citizens have also made dramatic educational and economic gains under Israeli rule. The political scientists Ilan Peleg and Dov Waxman note that in 1948 the illiteracy rate among Israeli Arabs was 50 percent. By 1988, it was 15 percent.

In a nation that has lived since its creation with the ever-present threat of war-a strain that would have turned countries less nourished by liberal ideals into police states-these are impressive accomplishments. The very anti-Zionist critics who attack Israel most ferociously often rely on the work of Israeli historians, Israeli journalists, Israeli human rights activists, and Israeli lawyers. Yet they rarely acknowledge that the ability of Israelis, including Arab Israelis, to damn their government in the harshest of terms-and rarely see the inside of a prison cell-says something admirable about the Zionist project. It is far from clear that, under similar circumstances, any of the democracies that criticize Israel's human rights record would have done better. Arab Israelis, after all, share an ethnicity with the states and organizations against which Israel has repeatedly gone to war. And some-though not most-Arab Israelis sympathize with those adversaries. Certainly, no American familiar with the way the United States government treated German Americans during World War I, Japanese Americans during World War II, or even Muslim Americans during the "war on terror"-during wars that, unlike Israel's, mostly took place thousands of miles from America's shores-has any cause for sanctimony.

Still, as important as it is to honor Israel's accomplishments, it is even more important to deepen them. And while liberal Zionism is not a fantasy within Israel's 1967 lines, it is far from a fully fledged reality. The Or Commission, tasked by the Israeli government with investigating conditions for Arab Israelis in 2003, found that "government handling of the Arab sector has been primarily neglectful and discriminatory." **This is: pc::npr'llh+... .. \*\*L... ..**

part because of historic restrictions on Arab access to Israeli public land, Arab citizens today own less than 4 percent of Israel's land even though they constitute almost 20 percent of its population. A 2010 study by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development found that Israel spends one-third more per Jewish Israeli student than per Arab Israeli student.

There are other inequities, too. While Arab political parties do serve in the Knesset, by long-standing tradition Israeli prime ministers do not include them in their governing coalitions. Most Arab Israelis do not serve in the Israel Defense Forces, a key vehicle for advancement in Israeli society. (Though a small Arabic-speaking religious minority, the

Druze, and some Bedouin, do.) And perhaps most fundamentally, Israel's flag features a Jewish star, its national anthem speaks of "the Jewish soul," and its immigration policy grants Jews, and only Jews, instant citizenship. Israel is not unique in these respects. The British, Australian, New Zealand, Swiss, Greek, Slovak, Swedish, Norwegian, Finnish, and Danish flags all feature crosses. Germany, Ireland, Finland, Greece, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, and the Czech Republic—all democracies—maintain immigration policies that favor members of the state's dominant ethnic group. But all this is cold comfort to Arab Israelis, most of whom feel like second-class citizens, and in important respects, truly are.

Reconciling Zionism and liberal democracy within Israel's 1967 lines requires two kinds of changes. First, it requires eliminating those inequities that are not inherent to Zionism itself. Being a Jewish state does not require Israel to pursue discriminatory land policies or to spend more on its Jewish citizens than on its Arab ones. To the contrary, such policies violate the "full and equal citizenship" promised Arab Israelis in Israel's declaration of independence. Similarly, maintaining a Jewish state should not prevent Arab parties from joining government coalitions. While it is true that the major Arab parties do not endorse Zionism, neither do some ultra-Orthodox Jewish parties that regularly sit in the Israeli cabinet. And while it is unrealistic to

expect most Arab Israelis to serve in the military (an obligation from which ultra-Orthodox Jews are also largely exempt), the Israeli government should encourage, and eventually even require, them to perform some form of national service, making it clear that greater service to the state and better treatment from it go hand in hand. Finally, as Herzl makes clear in *Altneuland*, there is nothing in the Zionist project that requires Israel to cede control over marriage to clerics, thus forcing Jews who marry in Israel to be married by a rabbi and Christians or Muslims to be married by a minister or imam. Instituting civil marriage, and thus giving Arabs and Jews the right to marry inside Israel across religious lines, would not only mean greater liberty for Israel's Arab citizens but for its Jewish ones as well.

Accomplishing all this would be extremely difficult, but not impossible. In fact, one Israeli prime minister moved in exactly this direction. During his second stint in office, between 1992 and 1995, Yitzhak Rabin doubled spending on education for Arab Israelis, ended the discrepancy between the amount the government paid Jewish and Arab families per child, and built dozens of health clinics in Arab Israeli communities. He introduced affirmative action to boost the number of Arab citizens in Israel's civil service and, while he didn't formally include Arab parties in his government, he did rely on their support in the Knesset, and thus gave them an unofficial role.

But even if future Israeli leaders were to follow Rabin's path, they still would not eliminate the inequity in Zionism itself. As a Jewish state, Israel's anthem, flag, and Jewish right of return would still afford Jewish Israelis a sense of national belonging and national refuge that Arab Israelis lack. This fundamental tension between Zionism and liberal democracy cannot be fully resolved within Israel's borders. But it can, to some extent, be resolved outside them. Were Israel to permit the creation of a Palestinian state that enabled a Palestinian right of return and expressed Palestinian identity in its anthem and flag, Arab Israelis, like diaspora Jews, would have a country that expressed their special character as a people, even if they chose not to live there. The struggle

for a liberal democratic Zionism, therefore, cannot be merely a struggle to afford Arabs individual and even group rights inside a Jewish state. It must also be a struggle to satisfy the Palestinians' national yearning for a state of their own. If Israel's founders endorsed the first goal in May 1948, when they created a Jewish state that pledged "complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex," most Zionist leaders endorsed the second in November 1947, when they embraced the United Nations' plan to partition British Mandatory Palestine between a Jewish and Arab state. In recent decades, however, the struggle to achieve both these goals has been crippled by Israel's behavior in the land it conquered in 1967. For the past forty-four years, on the very land on which Palestinians might establish their state—the state that could help fulfill the liberal Zionist dream—latter-day Rabbi Gevers, secular and religious alike, have forged an illiberal Zionism that threatens to destroy it.

The boundary between David Littwak's Israel and Rabbi Geyer's winds vertically from just below Nazareth in the north to just above Beer-sheba in the south. To the west of that line, Israel is a flawed but genuine democracy. To the east, it is an ethnocracy. In the Israel created in 1948, inequities notwithstanding, citizenship is open to everyone. In the Israel created in 1967, by contrast, Jews are citizens of a state whose government they help elect; Palestinians are not. Jews carry identity cards with blue covers, which allow them to travel freely among the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the rest of Israel. West Bank Palestinians carry identity cards with orange or green covers, which deny them access to East Jerusalem, large chunks of the West Bank, and the rest of Israel unless they gain a special—and hard-to-obtain—permit. Jews in the West Bank who violate Israeli law go before civilian courts that afford them the full measure of due process. Palestinians who violate Israeli law go before military courts where, according to a 2007 study

by the Israeli human rights group Yesh Din, defendants are often held for months or even years before trial and where fewer than 1 percent are found innocent. This boundary, between a nation where Jewish power is restrained by democratic ideals and a territory where Jewish power runs wild, is called the "green line." Its existence is what keeps the possibility of liberal Zionism alive.

But the green line is fading. In 1980, around twelve thousand Jews lived east of democracy, with another seventy thousand or so in East Jerusalem, where Palestinians can seek Israeli citizenship but are not born with it. Today, that number is three hundred thousand (with roughly two hundred thousand more in East Jerusalem), and the Jewish population of the West Bank is growing at three times the rate of the Israeli population inside the green line. In 1980, the Knesset did not contain a single Jewish settler. Today, Israel's foreign minister lives halfway across the West Bank. Over time, democratic and nondemocratic Israel have become Siamese twins. They share the same telephone system, bus system, road system, rail system, water system, and electricity grid. In 2010, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called Ariel, a settlement that stretches thirteen miles into the West Bank, "the heart of our country." Many Israeli maps and textbooks no longer show the green line at all.

"The moment of truth," warns former Knesset speaker Avraham Burg, "is coming very fast." One day, maybe five years from now, maybe fifteen, maybe it has already happened, the green line will disappear: West Bank settlers will have grown so numerous and so entrenched within the Israeli government, rabbinate, and army that it will be impossible to remove enough of them to create a viable Palestinian state with a border near the green line. When that happens, Zionism as a liberal democratic project will die. If Israel honors the promise in its declaration of independence to provide "full equality of social and political rights" to all the people under its domain, a country of roughly 6 million Jews and 1.5 million Arabs will add close to 2.5 million new Arab citizens in the West Bank and another 1.5 million in the Gaza Strip, which, **accordim!to** intfrnMirm:: ll:: ur :: nrl t'hp T hnt-o...l C...m...'' .. .. . -----'' T----\_1

still occupies even though no more Jewish settlers live there. And those new Arab citizens will have a population growth rate almost so percent higher than Israel's Jews. By honoring the democratic promises of its founders, Israel will commit suicide as a Jewish state.

Some on the far left yearn for that day. They believe that given the inequality inherent in Zionism, the only truly liberal option is a secular, binational state on all the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. But binationalism barely works in placid countries like Canada and Belgium. (It failed in Czechoslovakia, where in 1993 the Czech and Slovak populations opted for divorce.) Jews and Palestinians, by contrast, have spent much of the last century at war. Only a fantasist can imagine that the army they shared would be anything but a cloak for rival militias. Make Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip one country and you will resurrect the Jewish-Arab conflict of the 1930s, when Palestine was under British control. Except this time the British won't be there to play referee. The result won't be liberal democracy; it will be civil war.

If, on the other hand, Israel occupies the West Bank in perpetuity without granting citizenship to its Palestinian inhabitants, it will remain a Jewish state, but become an apartheid one. That prophecy may grate on Jewish ears, but it comes from two former Israeli prime ministers, Ehud Barak and Ehud Olmert, both of whom have warned that this will be Israel's fate if it permanently rules, but does not enfranchise, the Palestinians beyond the green line. In theory, Israel could remain a democracy within its 1967 lines even as it forever denied Palestinians in the occupied territories the right to vote. But as Abraham Lincoln famously observed, countries that try to practice freedom and despotism side by side generally "become all one thing or all the other." Or as Israel's finance minister, Pinchas Sapir, warned soon after the Six-Day War, "If we keep holding the territories, in the end the territories will hold us."

Every day, Sapir's prediction grows more true. On the one hand, within the green line, the struggle to fulfill the liberal democratic vision outlined at Israel's birth has continued. In the 1990s, the Knesset passed two "Basic Laws" that put legal scaffolding on the human rights guarantees in Israel's independence declaration, and in a series of stirring decisions, the Supreme Court has used those laws to bar the Israeli security services from practicing torture and from sentencing suspects who are not present at trial. These rulings, declared Chief Justice Aharon Barak, represent a "constitutional revolution," and there have been other liberal "revolutions" as well. In recent decades, Israeli historians have challenged cherished myths about Israel's founding, documenting that Israelis were victimizers, as well as victims, at their nation's birth.

But at the same time, Rabbi Geyer's Zionism has infected democratic Israel, stunting the growth of liberal values and spawning authoritarian ones in their stead. Take the prohibition on the use of violence to resolve political disputes, one of liberal democracy's most basic prerequisites. In the West Bank, that prohibition barely applies. "Settler attacks on Palestinians in the Occupied Territories," reports the Israeli human rights group B'Tselem, "have become routine." Some militant settlers, in fact, have formalized this violence in something called the "price tag" policy. For every Israeli government attempt to restrict settlement growth, they vandalize Palestinian homes, torch Palestinian fields, beat Palestinian men. For every act of law, a little pogrom.

Palestinians attack Jews in the West Bank, too, of course. In March 2011, for instance, two Palestinian men from the village of Awarta broke into the nearby settlement of Itamar and murdered Ehud and Ruth Fogel and three of their children, Yoav, Elad, and Hadas, in their beds. Elad, aged four, was strangled to death. Hadas, aged three months, was decapitated. The murderers later said that had they found the Fogels' three other children, they would have killed them, too.

But what distinguishes Palestinian terrorism and settler terrorism is the Israeli government's response. The Fogels' murder sparked a massive manhunt, which resulted in the killers serving five consecutive life

terms in jail. Indeed, when Palestinians attack Jews, the Israeli army often puts entire villages under curfew, and perpetrators sometimes have their homes bulldozed. By contrast, according to a 2011 study by Yesh Din, fewer than 10 percent of reported settler attacks against Palestinians even result in indictments, let alone convictions. "For all practical purposes," explains the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, "the law is not the law, the settlers are the sovereign."

This culture of impunity would be dangerous enough were it confined to the West Bank. But people who grow habituated to lawlessness and violence do not shed those tendencies when they cross a line on a map. In 1996, a settler drove his car into one carrying Yossi Sarid, a cabinet minister from the dovish Meretz Party, trying to force it into a nearby ditch. The settler was later made a representative of the official settler body, the Yesha Council. In 2002, Hebrew University classics lecturer Arnie Vardi was shot while trying to help Palestinian farmers harvest their vineyards. The settler who shot him went free. In 2006, Baruch Marzel, a settler and the leader of the far-right Jewish National Front Party, declared at a campaign rally that the government should "carry out a targeted killing against [anti-occupation activist] Uri Avnery and his leftist collaborators." Marzel currently serves as an aide in the Knesset. In August 2008, a prominent rabbi in the Settlement of Alon Shvut argued that members of the dovish group Peace Now might be eligible for the death penalty under Jewish law. The following month, Hebrew University professor Ze'ev Sternhell—a Holocaust survivor, veteran of four of Israel's wars, internationally renowned scholar of fascism, recent winner of the prestigious Israel Prize, and impassioned critic of the occupation—was wounded when a pipe bomb exploded at his home. Near the scene, police found flyers offering one million shekels to anyone who killed a member of Peace Now.

After the attack on Sternhell, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert warned that "an evil wind of extremism, of hate, of maliciousness, of violence, of losing control, of lawbreaking, of contempt for the institutions of state, is passing through certain sections of the Israeli public." This

"evil wind" emanates from only a small minority of settlers. But in the words of General Gadi Shamni, who oversaw Israeli forces in the West Bank from 2007 to 2009, that small minority enjoys "the backing of part of the [settler] leadership, both rabbinical and public, whether in explicit statements or tacitly." For instance, Dov Lior, the head of the West Bank's rabbinical council, has called Baruch Goldstein, who murdered twenty-nine Palestinians at Hebron's Cave of the Patriarchs in 1994, "holier than all the martyrs of the Holocaust." In the mid-1990s, Lior and other prominent settler and pro-settler rabbis implied that Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's willingness to cede land to the Palestinians made him a *rodef* (pursuer) or *moser* (traitor), a transgression they claimed was punishable by death. Emboldened, one of their disciples, Yigal Amir, murdered Rabin as he was leaving a peace rally. Since then, Israel's internal security service, the Shin Bet, has repeatedly warned of new assassination plots against Israeli leaders suspected of being willing to give up parts of the West Bank.

But violence is only the most obvious way in which the antidemocratic culture of the West Bank menaces the culture of democratic Israel. Another is racism. The polling on Israeli Jewish attitudes toward Arabs is shocking. Seventy percent of Jewish Israelis, according to a poll by the Israel Democracy Institute, oppose appointing Arab Israelis to cabinet posts. A survey by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation found that 49 percent of Jewish Israelis aged twenty-one to twenty-four would not befriend an Arab. (Among Arab Israelis of the same age, 19 percent said they would not befriend a Jew.) Fifty-six percent of Jewish Israeli high school students, according to a survey by Tel Aviv University's School of Education, do not believe that Arab citizens should be allowed to run for the Knesset. And a poll by the Truman Institute at the Hebrew University reported that 44 percent of Jewish Israelis believe that Jews should avoid renting apartments to Arabs. (All of these polls were conducted in 2010.)



As painful as it is for Jews to admit that race hatred can take root among a people that has suffered so profoundly from it, the ground truth is this: occupying another people requires racism, and breeds it. It is very difficult to work day after day at a checkpoint, making miserable people bake in the sun, or to blow up a family's house as they watch, or to cut off water to a village in the Jordan Valley because Palestinians are barred from living in most of that section of the West Bank, and still see the people you are dominating as fully human. In democracies, too, of course, governments sometimes subject citizens to intrusive, even degrading, forms of control: people wait in endless lines for a document from some tyrannical clerk or watch the police tow away their car because they have not paid their parking tickets. But as citizens, they are not powerless. They can take legal recourse, even scream that they will get the offending official fired, and thus remind their tormentors that they are equals in the eyes of the law. In so doing, they not only assert their own dignity, they force the people in power to acknowledge it, too. In the West Bank, however, where Palestinians are barred from citizenship, that human leveling rarely occurs. When Israelis perform tasks that invite them to see Palestinians as less than fully human, and those Palestinians lack the power to prove them wrong, the result, in the words of the Israeli novelist David Grossman, is that "we set up a sort of 'block' in our souls . . . we accustom ourselves to relations like those between master and slave."

Research by the Hebrew University social psychologist Itai Maoz has shown that the less Jewish Israelis interact with Arabs as equals, the less they support Arab and Palestinian rights. That is true for settlers, who in a 2010 Truman Institute poll were less than half as likely as other Jewish Israelis to cite democracy as Israel's most important value. But it is also true for many younger Jewish Israelis, who are less likely than their elders to have had an Arab acquaintance and thus more likely to have interacted with Palestinians in a sustained way only during their military service in the West Bank. Demographic changes also help explain why young Jewish Israelis are more intolerant than

their elders. Still, it is no coincidence that the segment of Israeli Jewry most supportive of granting Arab citizens equal rights are the very people old enough to remember an Israel where every Arab actually **was a citizen.**

But the occupation breeds hatred even among Jewish Israelis who never set foot in the West Bank. The reason is that it breeds fear. Palestinians held for decades as noncitizens by an occupying army will periodically rebel, sometimes in dignified and nonviolent ways, sometimes in grotesque and unforgivable ways. And every time Palestinians in the West Bank commit violence, it foments hatred inside the green line. When Jewish Israelis are dying in terrorist attacks, they grow enraged at their fellow Arab citizens, whom they suspect of sympathizing with the enemy. And when Arab Israelis see the Israeli army killing their cousins—and they are often, literally, cousins—across the green line, they grow enraged at the Israeli government, and thus exhibit exactly the militancy that Jewish Israelis suspect them of.

There is a basic tension between Arab and Jewish Israelis. The Jewish Israelis want Israel to be a Jewish state; the Arab Israelis don't. But when the occupation recedes, Arab Israelis grow less hostile to the Jewish state, Jewish Israelis grow less hostile to Arab Israelis, and reconciling liberal democracy and Zionism becomes easier. It is no coincidence that the "golden age" of Jewish-Arab relations inside the green line took place under the prime ministership of Yitzhak Rabin in the 1990s, at the very time that he was launching the Oslo Accords. As Jewish Israelis grew less afraid of West Bank Palestinians, it became politically easier for Rabin to reach out to the Arab citizens of Israel. And as those Arab citizens saw movement toward greater equality inside the green line and toward a Palestinian state beyond it, they became more loyal to Israel. According to the sociologist Sammy Smooha of the University of Haifa, the percentage of Arab Israelis who rejected Israel's right to exist dropped from more than 13 percent in 1988, during the first intifada, to less than 7 percent by 1995, Rabin's last year in office. Over that same time span, the percentage of Jewish Israelis who

opposed the right of Arab citizens to vote dropped from almost 43 percent to less than 31 percent.

Since then, this virtuous cycle has turned into a vicious one. When the second intifada erupted in the West Bank in 2000, Arab Israelis joined in, throwing stones, burning tires, and torching buildings. The Israeli police responded by killing thirteen Arab citizens. For many Jewish Israelis, it was confirmation that Arab Israelis were a fifth column, attacking the Jewish state just when it was most vulnerable. For Arab Israelis, it was confirmation that Jewish Israelis saw their lives as cheap. Since then, both sides have done their best to exacerbate the fears of the other. Arab Israelis are growing more radical. The percentage who reject Israel's right to exist, having dropped from 13 percent in 1988 to less than 7 percent in 1995, spiked to 24 percent in 2009. In 2003, Sheikh Ra'ed Salah, head of the "northern wing" of the Islamist movement in Israel, was arrested on suspicion of raising money for Hamas. In 2006, Arab Knesset member Azmi Bishara traveled to Lebanon, where he praised Hezbollah.

Many Jews have responded by embracing Avigdor Lieberman, who has rocketed to political power by targeting what he calls the "enemy within." Lieberman, whose Yisrael Beiteinu Party has grown from four Knesset seats in 1999 to fifteen today, is the political incarnation of the anti-Arab racism that the occupation breeds. He spent a brief period of his youth in Meir Kahane's Kach Party, which advocated expelling Arabs from Israel and criminalizing sex between Arabs and Jews. More recently, key members of Yisrael Beiteinu have called for amending Israel's Basic Law that promises equal marriage rights to Jews and non-Jews in order to deny citizenship to Arabs from outside Israel who marry Israel's Arab citizens. In 2006, Lieberman proposed revoking the citizenship of anyone who did not swear loyalty to the Israeli state, flag, and national anthem, and in 2009 he led an effort—which the leaders of the Likud, Kadima, and Labor parties also backed—to ban two anti-Zionist Arab parties from running for the Knesset. That same year, *Haaretz* reported that when Yisrael Beiteinu held its annual con-

ference in the Galilee, a region where many Arab Israelis live, throngs of party activists chanted "Death to Arabs" at passing cars. In the 2009 elections, Lieberman's party came in third. In the mock voting held in Israeli high schools, it came in first.

Lieberman is currently Israel's foreign minister. He is joined in Benjamin Netanyahu's cabinet by housing minister Ariel Attias from the Sephardi ultra-Orthodox party, Shas, who in 2009 said he regards it "as a national duty to prevent the spread of a population that, to say the least, does not love the state of Israel"—in other words, Israel's Arab citizens. In the same speech, Attias volunteered that he does not "think that it is appropriate [for Arabs and Jews] to live together." Given those sentiments, it's no surprise that in 2011 the Knesset passed a law giving small Israeli communities greater latitude to bar Arab Israelis from moving in. Or that prominent lawmakers from Yisrael Beiteinu, Likud, and Kadima have all endorsed a law removing Arabic as one of Israel's official languages. "No other Knesset," notes *Haaretz*, "has submitted so many bills under the guise of 'preserving state security' that show open preference to Jews over Arabs in all walks of life."

This vicious cycle, in which the illiberal Zionism beyond the green line destroys the possibility of liberal Zionism inside it, not only breeds intolerance toward Arab Israelis; it also breeds intolerance toward dissident Jewish Israelis. The more Israel entrenches the occupation, the more isolated it grows around the world. And the more besieged Israelis feel by criticism from without, the less tolerant they become of criticism from within. In Israel today, it is not only Arab citizens who are routinely described in the language of treason, so are Jews who actively oppose Israel's policies in the West Bank. In 2011, according to the Israeli Democracy Institute, 53 percent of Jewish Israelis said "a speaker should be prohibited from harshly criticizing the Israeli government in public." In 2010, according to Tel Aviv University's Steinmetz

Center for Peace Research, 57 percent of Jewish Israelis said that human rights groups that expose "immoral" conduct by the state should not be permitted to operate freely, a ten-point increase since 2003. The message of the study, warned the Tel Aviv University social psychologist Daniel Bar-Tal, is that "the Israeli public is not tolerant or pluralistic."

Benjamin Netanyahu's government has exploited these sentiments, and fanned them, in an effort to cripple organizations that criticize the occupation. In early 2010, a right-wing group called Im Tirtzu claimed that the United Nations Commission led by Judge Richard Goldstone that harshly criticized Israel's conduct during the 2009 Gaza war had relied heavily on research by Israeli human rights organizations. A Knesset member from Netanyahu's Likud Party promptly charged the New Israel Fund, which funds some of those human rights groups, with treason, and a Knesset member (and settler) from Yisrael Beiteinu launched an investigation into Im Tirtzu's claims. The result was a bill to dramatically increase the administrative burden on Israeli human rights groups that receive funding from foreign governments. After an international uproar, the bill failed. But in 2011, Netanyahu endorsed new legislation, introduced by a Knesset member from Yisrael Beiteinu, to impose a special tax on Israeli human rights groups that receive foreign government funding. And that same year, the Knesset passed a law making it illegal for Israelis to boycott not only Israel as a whole, but even individual settlements, a practice advocated by prominent Israeli writers like David Grossman, Amos Oz, and A. B. Yehoshua. The terrible irony is that even as Israel's leaders defend the Jewish state against international isolation by invoking its liberal democratic character, their own policies are eroding it.

The vicious cycle is becoming a downward spiral. In 1988, after Meir Kahane advocated the forced "transfer" of Israel's Arab citizens from the country, his party was banned. In 2010, in a speech before the United Nations, Israel's foreign minister, the former Kahane disciple Avigdor Lieberman, proposed "right-sizing the state" by "moving borders to better reflect demographic realities." In other words, redrawing

Israel's border so as to exile hundreds of thousands of its Arab citizens against their will. When asked about his foreign minister's proposal, Benjamin Netanyahu said Lieberman's speech had not been coordinated with him, but did not disavow its substance.

"Population transfer," warns left-wing Knesset member Dov Khenin, "has turned from a nightmare into an operational plan." In 2009, Daniel Gordis, senior vice president of the Shalem Center, an Israeli think tank with close ties to the Netanyahu government, declared that while "on the surface, there are almost innumerable reasons to denounce transfer . . . the picture is not nearly as one-sided as it is often portrayed . . . population transfers do not need to be catastrophic for those moved." Perhaps, Gordis mused, Arab countries could be enticed to take in those Arab citizens that Israel expelled. "Alternatively, perhaps the international community could raise sufficient funds and offer massive cash settlements to those Israeli Arabs willing to relocate." Raising the subject, Gordis declared, "has filled me with . . . pain," but Israelis must "finally confront head-on the *kinds* [his italics] of choices that they will soon have to make." Many, it seems, are ready. A 2010 poll by the Israeli Democracy Institute found that 53 percent of Jewish Israelis want their government to encourage Israel's Arab citizens to leave.

just one politician, one commentator, one poll. But in the words of retired Israeli judge Boaz Okon, "Like in a children's connect-the-dots coloring book, where connecting random dots creates a picture, so in Israel, if you connect a number of horrifying, multiplying incidents, you begin to see a monster." The Israelis most committed to liberal democracy see Herzl's dream slipping away. And here in the United States, the most powerful leaders of the American Jewish establishment insist on seeing almost nothing at all.

## 1. THE CRISIS IN ISRAEL

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