THE AMBIGUITIES OF MINORITY PATRIOTISM: LOVE FOR HOMELAND VERSUS STATE AMONG PALESTINIAN CITIZENS OF ISRAEL

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The article sheds light on minority patriotism in ethno-national states. It utilizes the experience of the Arab minority in Israel demonstrating that patriotism develops in clear interdependence with the dominant ethos of the state. The ethnic citizenship model dominant in Israeli political culture does not incorporate the national or cultural identity of all Israeli citizens equally, rendering Israeli patriotism among Arab citizens more questionable. As a result, Arab patriotic attachment has gradually shifted from civic Israeli to Palestinian patriotism.

Discussions of patriotism emanate from the assumption that this phenomenon exerts a great influence on our lives. Patriotism's emotional connotations raise substantive questions about a society's identity, its goals and its interaction with its surroundings. This directs our attention not only to the primordial aspects of any particular society, but also to questions touching on the notions of citizenship and shared public good in multinational societies.[1] Thus minority patriotism becomes an interesting phenomenon to explore. What are the objects of patriotic attachment for minorities and what draws their loyalty turn out to be interesting questions. They are of special scholarly relevance in contexts in which minorities are excluded from state identity and from equal access to state institutions. Such a situation exists in the case of the Arab minority in Israel. The state is defined as a Jewish state and is viewed by the Jewish majority as articulating the right of self-determination of the Jewish people. Under these circumstances, where is Arab patriotism directed and how does it relate to the Israeli state? This article seeks to answer these questions by examining the Arab political discourse with regard to patriotic attachment. The rising tension

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between the state and its Arab minority make such an endeavor of empirical as well as theoretical importance. Since most literature on patriotism takes the perspective of the majorities in liberal and democratic settings as their starting point, examining minority patriotism in an ethno-national context can contribute to our understanding of the complexities of this human phenomenon. Before exploring the dynamics of Arab patriotism in Israel, it is necessary to reframe the epistemological and the theoretical discussion of patriotism in general.

Majority versus Minority Patriotism and the State

In his treatment of the issue of patriotism, the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor claims that the characteristics of modern societies demand that patriotism exist.[2] Given that these societies are based on the spontaneous support of their own members, loyalty becomes one of the central values that preserves and guarantees their very existence. Patriotism in this sense is a political perception according to which one's society is perceived as a public value of essential importance in given circumstances. This public value is critical for social cohesiveness and for society to function in a democratic manner.

One important component of patriotism that Taylor discusses is citizen participation in the democratic process, which functions as the primary assurance for a political society to exist. Such equal participation necessitates not only commitment to a common or shared project, but also a certain sense of partnership among all citizens. Patriotism in this context can be thought of as a shared sense of belonging that strengthens/enhances the identification of citizens with their collective experiences. Thus Taylor considers belongingness an essential component, inherent in the foundation, for creating a sense of patriotism in the socio-political context.

Juergen Habermas addresses patriotism from a different perspective, invoking the idea of 'constitutional patriotism' as a means of reconciling differences in complex societies and overcoming the lack of substantive consensus on values.[3] He proposes the idea of universal legal principles, manifested in procedural consensus, in order to establish a common basis and the necessary attachment of all citizens to the state. According to this view, patriotism is both a rational loyalty and an emotional attachment to a

common civil enterprise that is deliberatively determined through open and equal communicative action between individuals.

Benjamin Barber suggests that patriotism relates, first and foremost, to the normal need people have in regard to their connection to and relation with their most immediate environment—a situation that tends to expand to a level at which a sense of identification extends to a very large group of individuals which perceives itself as a nation or a people.[4] In the American context, he claims, patriotism means constitutional faith that is expressed in democratic forms of local community and civil patriotism, which reflect political principles, the first of which is the value of freedom.[5] To overcome what Barber sees as the negative sentiments associated with patriotism, he suggests that people should direct their loyalties to conventions based on equality and a liberal political perspective.

The views of these three thinkers suggest that the very existence of a community with a democratic way of life necessitates that patriotism exist. In their view, patriotism is a positive phenomenon, whose goal is to ensure the continuity of the community as a public good in itself, aside from the community's values and moral perspective, which must suit a vision of democracy and equality. Therefore, Taylor, for instance, claims that democratic communities cannot allow themselves an excess of inequality, for feelings of alienation, neglect, and indifference among minority groups that result from inequality are likely to cause serious harm to democracy, legality, and civility. Democratic societies, which are self-governed public enterprises, demand a high level of solidarity among members of the political community. The success of these enterprises cannot be ensured without a significant level of a shared identity among members of the political community.

This understanding of patriotism presupposes the existence of a state operating as a framework that promotes a public good for the entire population.[6] But the reality of the state is not always uniform among all its citizens. In ethno-national states, in which not all citizens belong to the dominant ethno-cultural group, policies of the state and models of citizenship offered to minority groups have great influence on the type of attachments these groups develop toward state institutions.[7] It seems that the desire to tie patriotism to the state reflects the expectations of the dominant national cultures more than it captures the ontological reality in many, if

not all, multicultural political settings.[8] Viewing patriotism as an attachment to the state alone eliminates a great deal of the social, cultural, and political components of human reality, especially when speaking of minorities that are not included in the ethos of the state in which they live.[9] In cases in which one ethno-national group dominates the state and defines its public good, minorities do not develop a patriotic attachment to the state; such is the case with the Tamils in Sri Lanka, the Basques in Spain and the Tibet people in China.[10]

Several scholars of patriotism have established that the patriotism found in multi-national states is not uniform across the various national groups in most states in the world.[11] Patriotism in multi-ethnic social reality demonstrates that humans can become attached to various objects, each requiring different levels of identification and loyalty.[12] These levels of identification and loyalty are not always harmonious. They may clash, necessitating that a hierarchy between the different objects of identification be imposed. In such a state of affairs, the object of patriotic reference and the level at which it satisfies basic human needs—such as identity, security, belonging, and providing a practical understanding of reality—become important components for understanding patriotism.

These ambiguities of patriotic feelings and attachments make the exploration of minority patriotism of central theoretical and empirical importance. Following the theoretical framework explicated in the previous paragraphs, this article explores the dynamics of patriotic attachment among the Palestinian-Arab minority in Israel. It will demonstrate that patriotism is a socially constructed attachment that fulfills an important role in the formation of group identity and its maintenance in the face of internal disintegration and external infiltration. It will demonstrate that minorities that cannot develop patriotic feeling towards their own state tend to develop counter-patriotic attachments that challenge the state for loyalty. The Arab minority in Israel developed different forms of patriotisms at different stages, which has been manifested in changing symbols of attachment. Arab patriotic attachment ranges from a simple romantic love of the homeland and the nation, to loyalty to the state, to counter-state patriotism that manifests itself in taking action countering state policies of control. The changing dynamics of Arab patriotism, beyond its theoretical importance, is

a major source of change in Arab politics in Israel and the rising tension between this minority and its ethno-national state.

Romantic Patriotism

The connection to the land and the shared Palestinian experience prior to 1948 have never lost their vigor in the consciousness of the Arab citizens of Israel. Link to place was an important component of political behavior for a Palestinian nation that found itself transformed virtually overnight from homeowners to strangers in their homeland. The new political reality demanded a diplomatic and cautious pattern of behavior in light of the cruelty of the 1948 War, during which many Palestinians were forced from their homes and the land of their birth. The demographic upheaval caused by the war, together with the political changes prompted by the creation of the State of Israel, resulted in cognitive dissonance between the bond to land and earth—which had been a characteristic of the Palestinians prior to the appearance of Zionism—and a sense of ontological insecurity among the population following the war. Most Palestinians were seized by fear and grief, for against their will they were turned into Israelis. In addition, they were also disappointed and shocked by the defeat of the Arab armies. On the other hand, the Israeli military administration's rule over Arab-populated areas in the country expressed the state's suspicion toward this population.

In light of this reality, place became the main object of identification for Palestinians in Israel.[13] The meaning of place has shifted with time from attachment to a particular locale of habitation to an abstract conception containing the whole land of Palestine. Hence, the emotional link to land became a central component of Palestinian existence, and maintaining this existence entailed a deep bond to places of residence and the surrounding landscape. Accordingly, one of the primary means for maintaining their identity, expressing both a nostalgia for the past and a sense of the injustice done to them, was the yearning for the land—an attitude that came to be exalted over time. This connection to the physical environment, more than just an instrumental expression, extolled the emotional bond with the land in the most physical sense. Therefore, attachment to land in the particular and abstract sense became a kind of new holiness based on the most basic of instincts.

This tie was expressed on the individual level in the adoption of various means of ensuring one's existence, without addressing the new overall reality affecting the entire population. The sense of insecurity felt in the new reality, instigated and exploited by state authorities to instill new patterns of loyalty, increased mutual suspicion between members of the Palestinian population itself.

The Palestinian notion of preserving the connection to the land was strengthened once the voracious intentions of Israeli authorities became known—in part through the continuous invention of new methods for government inspectors to expropriate land from the Arab population and transfer it to various state institutions and private Jewish ownership. The protest against the various dispossession and confiscation policies reflected the emotional-existential link and the love for the land.[14] It became clear to many in the Palestinian population that this process was part of an effort to slide the ground from under the feet of the Palestinian nation that was left under the rule of Israel, and thus to leave it destitute and completely dependent on the favors of the authorities.[15] This sentiment was particularly powerful in light of the cooperation with the dispossession policy by conservative circles of the population, especially traditional tribal leaders, which reaped the benefits of the authorities' 'benevolence.' In a poem written after the 1956 Kufur kassem massacre,[16] Tawfiq Zayyad condemns the 'cruel ruler, collaborating ruler with the power of the sword, the *mukhtar*, the land broker.'[17] While the poem expresses suspicion toward the authorities and their collaborators, it also communicates the value of the land as a central component in the existence of the Arab population in Israel. Faraj Nur-Salaman's book *The Innocent and the Executioners* focuses on the issue of Palestinian collaborators, condemning the reality that gave them power in society.[18] Hannah Abu Hannah wrote also about the land brokers and the *mukhtars* in Arab villages as a malignant disease that must be stamped out because it endangers the continuation of Arab existence on the land of Palestine. In his book, *Stories from the Oven*, Abu Hannah describes the wretchedness of the collaborators, who desecrate their people's honor and belittle the human value of their children and relatives in order to curry favor with Israeli officers of the military regime.[19] The intense manner which characterizes his treatment of the lost homeland and the desire for release from the yoke of the new socio-political reality

is captured well in the short passage that follows, taken from the end of Zayyad's poem written after the Kufur Kassem massacre:

> On this magical plot of land. Here . . .
> in the proud Galilee and Nazareth
> We have a homeland suffering from a wound
> One morning her bird was frightened
> And became broken with a weak wing
> Our homeland is bound in manacles
> And the nation is scattered outside the borders
> But . . . one day we will rise up with intense vigor
> To restore the right that refused to be forgotten
> We will restore it
> We will restore it with the rage of fire and iron
> And we will make it a Garden of Eden once again.[20]

Zayyad's words express nostalgia for the past and a political bond to the land extending beyond mere sentimentality. His words mirrored the feeling in the hearts of a majority of Palestinian citizens of Israel, but which most of them dared not express in such an explicit and public manner, for the conditions created by the military administration, the atmosphere of fear and the desire for survival, demanded a certain repression of these feelings.

Love of the homeland and its tie to the Palestinian nation were important components in the daily lives of many Arabs inside Israel. Their spiritual and physical existence was not disconnected from the nationalist endeavor that preceded the 1948 War, and therefore their actions, as well as their literature, expressed a kind of spiritual continuity.[21] Their writing was an attempt to bridge the gap that has been created between the physical reality—in which the Palestinian nation was torn apart—and the longing to continue the spiritual experience via poetic and literary means. It was thus an act of defiance against the new reality that was imposed upon them—which separated the nation from its homeland—to sustain by various means their spiritual and cultural existence. The physical and abstract bond to the land and love for it were reproduced in poetry and literature. The patriotic poetry that was produced excited all who were exposed to it and resuscitated the sense of a shared destiny and ties to a common past. Surveys of the literary creations of Palestinians in Israel during the 1950s and 1960s indicate that many writers sought to inspire an atmosphere

of continuity in the wake of the events of 1948 by invoking the homeland in the most romantic, abstract and general terms.[22]

In this context, Avraham Yanon claims: 'The Arab writer in Israel sees himself as an "armed writer." As an artist, his mission is first and foremost socio-national. His art is a prism of the nationalist battle, but is at the same time a weapon in the very battle itself.'[23] The attention Palestinian writers and poets in Israel give to the motif of land and homeland parallels the manner in which these subjects are addressed by Palestinian authors and poets living in exile. Many artists concentrated their writing on the land and the strong connection to it, as well as the destiny of the Palestinian people and in particular the fate of the refugees. Mahmoud Darwish, for example, who lived in Israel as a displaced Palestinian until July 1970, addresses the Kufur Kassem massacre as the epitome of Israel's attitude toward the Palestinians, because it was intended to frighten the Arabs and chase them from their land. He concludes one of his poems, using a tragic personification in order to transform the tombstones of the dead into 'a supporting hand' for the Palestinians who 'will remain' on their land in Israel.[24] Darwish's emphasis on remaining is a protest against Israeli policies of dispossession and a defiance of its attempts to de-Palestinianize his homeland.

In literature and poetry, the image of the battling writer repeats itself in firebrand devotion to expressing the nation's pain and the land's distress. Darwish expresses this feeling in his poem 'A letter from exile,' written in 1963. The poem emphasizes the loss of self-worth that comes with losing one's homeland and the misery of refugees when a man lives in a place to which he does not belong. Darwish refers mainly to himself as 'present absentee' like many thousands of Palestinians who were compelled to abandon their villages of origin and live in other villages nearby inside Israel. He also manages to capture the feelings of many Palestinian refugees who had to struggle with the cold and harsh treatment they felt from other Arab societies that absorbed refugees following the 1948 War. Darwish concludes his poem by saying 'What is a man worth/Without an address/Without a homeland/Without a flag/What is the worth of a man?!'[25]

The basic patriotic sentiment felt by many Arabs is also found in the expressions of alienation from the new political reality and in demonstrations of sharp protest against the Israeli government's

policy of suppression. Much of this policy expressed contempt, disregard and a basic lack of respect for human rights by the government and its institutions, and the Palestinians expressed their feelings toward it via poetry and prose that used simple and vernacular language. It was thus a kind of latent or veiled protest against the wretched reality shared by many Palestinians as a result of the policies of the Zionist movement and the State of Israel. Fuzi al-Asmar, who ultimately left Israel because of the harsh political circumstances in which the Palestinians found themselves, protested against the rupture created among members of his people, which violated every basic right accorded to every other group in society. In his book *Damoniyat*, named for the village of his birth Da'amon, he writes:

> It is my right that we will see the sun
> We will annihilate the black tent
> The diaspora
> And we will eat olives, we will water the vineyard
> From our melody
> We will sing from above the hills of Jaffa
> And Haifa the love song
> We will plant love in our green ground
> This is my right
> And I won't find shelter anywhere else but in this right.[26]

Mahmoud Darwish was more scathing in his protest against the provocation of the contempt contained within the Israeli political discourse toward Arabs. In his poem 'Identification card' he expresses an exaggerated personal pride as a member of the Arab nation. Darwish captures the rustlings in the hearts of many Palestinians, for whom the loss of their homeland to European Jewish settlers was a tragedy with catastrophic dimensions. In sharp fashion he expresses the frustration, rage and defiance Palestinians feel toward the Israeli establishment and the existing socio-political reality, as evident in the following lines:

> Record it: I am an Arab
> My identification number is . . . fifty thousands
> I have eight children
> And the ninth should come next summer
> Are you angry!
> Record it: I am an Arab
> Who toils with his brothers in the quarry

I have eight children
for whom I extract a loaf of bread, a book and clothing from the rock
But I do not ask you for charity and benevolence
Nor do I humiliate myself on your door step
Are you angry?
Record it: I am an Arab
I have no name, no credentials
I am but a spirit living patiently in a land full of rage
My roots hit deep in the land much before the birth of time
My father comes from a family of tillers
Not of noblemen
And my grandfather was a peasant
with no distinguished lineage
Who taught me pride of the soul
Before he taught me to read books!
Record it: I am an Arab
The color of my hair . . . like coal
The color of my eyes . . . brown
My identifying marks: my head is covered with *kuffyah* and *Iqal*
My palm is as hard as a rock
And scratches whoever touches it
My favorite food: olive oil and thyme
My address: I am from a forgotten and isolated village
Its streets have no names
And all of its men in the field and the quarry
Loving the communism
Are you angry?
Record it: I am an Arab
You robbed me of my father's vineyards
And the lands I used to plow with all my children
You left me and all my grandchildren nothing but these boulders
Is it true that your government will take them too?
If so, record it as a heading for the front page:
I do not hate people . . . I do not steal
But, if I starve I eat the flesh of those who rob me
Beware, beware of my hunger and my anger!![27]

The first signs of the politicization and institutionalization of the bond to the soil began to appear as early as the mid 1950s. The clear distinction drawn between identification with homeland and nation versus identification with the state began taking institutional form. While the Jewish population merged state and homeland, a clear dichotomy between the 'land' of the homeland and the state was being established among Arabs in Israel. This was expressed in the particular manner by which Arab

intellectuals and political activists used language. In order to escape the dilemma created by the new political reality, significant segments of the Palestinian intelligentsia used terms expressing a plurality of meanings and of values appropriate for the problematic circumstances.[28] People referred to Palestine as 'our land' in order to emphasize the link of Arabs in Israel to the soil of their original homeland. In order to circumvent the use of the term 'Arabs of Israel,' which the authorities frequently used but was unacceptable to most of the population to which it was applied, people used the phrase 'Arabs of this land,' or 'Arabs of 1948.'[29] Although people refrained from using the adjective 'Palestinian'—in consideration of the public mood that prevailed among the Jewish population at the time—these expressions contained protest against the dominant Zionist discourse that appropriated the ground of the homeland and ascribed it to the Jewish nation. Such semantic expressions marked the beginning of the fight against the exclusivity of rights over the land that the Zionist movement attributed to itself.

The identification with the homeland and the protest over the dominant political discourse in Israel were also evident in the political organizing carried out by nationalist and communist Arab activists following the events of 1 May 1958. One decade after the establishment of the state, a process got underway that brought together nationalist activists and Arab leaders of the Communist Party—a development that was opposed by the party's Jewish leadership. Against the background of clashes with Israeli police, Arab politicians and intellectuals founded the 'National Front.'[30] While this is not the appropriate forum to discuss the circumstances surrounding the Front's establishment, it is important to point out that in its very first publication regarding its activities, the Front emphasized its patriotic bond through its defense of the interests of the Arab population in Israel. A pamphlet announcing the creation of the Front demanded that the legitimate rights of Arabs [in Israel] be honored, including:

1. The return of villagers to their villages;
2. The return of expropriated lands to their owners;
3. Abolition of the military regime and an end to nationalist suppression;

4. Abolition of racial discrimination among citizens and a guarantee of equality for all social classes;
5. Use of the Arabic language in all official institutions;
6. The return of refugees.[31]

The Front's pamphlet focused on the central concerns of the Arab population, and articulated the wishes of many to whom the policy of land expropriation and the internally displaced persons (present absentees) problem was a matter of great importance. The primacy of the land issue is evidenced by the attempt of Front leaders to establish a newspaper that was to be called *Al-Ard* [The Land]. One leading Front activist justified the selection of the name as follows:

> Because the land is the symbol of Arab existence in the country, because the government's policy is to expropriate Arabowned lands in order to cut the powerful bond pulling them to their homeland, and because the real battle between the Zionist movement and the Arab liberation movement is taking place on Palestinian land, it was decided to call the newspaper *Al-Ard*.[32]

Claiming that the newspaper posed a danger to state security, Israel's military regime did not permit *Al-Ard* to be founded, and prohibited the development and institutionalization of the *Al-Ard* movement in the early 1960s.[33] The state's Central Elections Commission even barred the movement from participating in the sixth Knesset elections, contending that 'its promoters deny the integrity of the state of Israel and its very existence.'[34] Against this backdrop, different discourses and patterns of behavior developed exhibiting a variety of characteristics and methods for the Arab population to express its patriotic sentiments. One such pattern was patriotic pragmatism, which is a pattern of attachment and loyalty new to Arab society, as it has evolved in the context of the Israeli state. Patriotic pragmatism pertains to Arab society in Israel, referring to it as a social unit manifesting special characteristics that distinguish it from all other groups in its surroundings. It is Palestinian in its history and memory, but Israeli in its civil reality. The designation of Arab society in Israel as part of the Palestinian people was initially abstracted without making allowances for its Israeli underpinnings. As a result, this community was subsumed under the term 'the Arab public' in the political discourse of the dominant Arab political elite.

Civic Patriotism

Despite the fact that nationalistic pride and love for the land were in their hearts and were captured in Arab poetry and literature, Palestinian Israelis were embedded in a new political reality. For many of them fear and a sense of capitulation were expressed in their resignation to the rules of the new political game, even if this was only considered to be a choice of last resort. The new state's mechanisms for exerting control, as expressed in the military regime, and the primacy given to the role of the clan and ethnic leaders in Arab towns and villages, encouraged the development of behavior patterns expressing the overall population's reconciliation with the new reality. In this context, it is important to point out that most Palestinians who remained on their land were villagers characterized by patterns of thought that were traditional in nature. Therefore, in light of the fact that the political, cultural, and economic leadership of the Palestinian nationalist movement did not remain within the physical territory of Israel, the local traditional leadership became the central focus. Social structure and official policy served as fertile ground for the construction and implantation of a collective consciousness characterized by the principles of accommodation and adaptation to a new reality.

Consequently, love of homeland and devotion to geographical locations produced patterns of thought and behavior at whose heart were to be found both civic patriotism and a certain reluctant acceptance of the political reality which did not neglect feelings of connectedness to the Palestinian land and a sense of being part of the nation that had lost its homeland. In many cases this patriotism was camouflaged by universal ideologies like communist internationalism or appeared in a humanitarian and cosmopolitan guise. This was expressed by ambivalent political behavior and in complex literary works which formulated clear statements discretely or even cryptically.

Many Palestinians in Israel wanted to create two worlds—the old and the new—simultaneously. The tension between the need for a sense of belonging—which was partially generated by the absence of ontological security, recreated on a daily basis in political-economic realty—and the burden of survival gave rise to patterns of distorted behavior. For example, many Palestinians in Israel accepted the convention that voting for Knesset candidates

appearing on the Arab lists, which were associated with the Mapai party (the predecessor to the current Labor Party in Israel), was the best way to advance the Arab population's interests.[35] This belief was translated into political reality, the sincere hope being that it would convince the authorities of the Arab's good intentions and cause them to show him compassion. This process was reflected in a complex political discourse, amounting to what sociologists in Israel have nicknamed 'Israelization.'[36]

The best illustration of this process can be found in the celebrations of the Israeli day of independence that took place in Arab towns and villages. Israeli state leaders, including army officers, were welcomed in big receptions in Arab villages that sought to convey their loyalty to the state. The Israeli flag decorated most streets of these villages that lacked basic transportation infrastructures, running water systems, and electricity. This pattern of behavior was augmented by a trend in works of literature and journalism that praised Israeli reality, produced primarily by Arab educators employed by the Ministry of Education. The peak of this process was the poem, which nobody endorses anymore, that celebrated Israeli Independence Day as a national day for Arab citizens, saying:

> In my country's independence day
> the crooning birds start singing
> Happiness spread over in all villages
> between the plain land and the valley.

Another example that illustrates this trend in Arab efforts to reconcile Israeli policies and meet official expectations of loyalty and obedience is the poem written by Sami Mzigiet, saying:

> A beam sparkled in the Middle East
> flash lighting the gloomy night
> Is this a comet in the sky
> pointing pagans to the place of the manger
> Or, is it Israel whose light shines
> like a sun illuminating the Western sky.[37]

The sense of precariousness with regard to security and the constant fear of the authorities' arbitrary hand prompted many Palestinians to resign themselves to the perception that being accepted by the state and achieving any kind of integration into it was the best technique to guarantee survival. They did not necessarily accept the Zionist ethos nor act out of a conviction that the

state was also theirs. Nevertheless, in the absence of an established intellectual, political, or cultural elite, over time this technique became the strategy that led a majority of Palestinians to live within the conventions of the hegemonic Israeli national discourse, albeit without adopting its ideological and normative underpinnings. In an endeavor to survive, Israeli Palestinians integrated components of their national and cultural identity with their new identity as citizens of the state. On the one hand, they voted for the Mapai lists of Knesset candidates and hosted state leaders, including security officials, while on the other they listened to the speeches of Egyptian President Jamal Abdel Nasser—whom they idolized—on *Sawt al-Arab* [Voice of the Arabs] radio broadcasts from Cairo. Azmi Bishara expressed this consciousness well when he said: 'The "Israeli Arabs" are without a doubt the artisans of "catering," but also artists of the game of reality and the stage.'[38]

Those who put the deepest imprint on Palestinian behavior patterns in Israel and embodied the aspiration to strike a better and more dignified combination between the Palestinian past and Israeli reality of the present were Arab leaders of the Communist Party. These leaders were Arab patriots as well as realistic politicians. They sought to develop a new type of civic patriotism based on class affiliation that overcomes the negative implications of narrow ethnic nationalism common among most Jews in Israel. They also sought not to succumb to the submissive behavioral patterns that characterized part of the traditional leadership of the Arab community and some Arab intellectuals who were employed by the Ministry of Education to promote an Israeli Arab political identity affiliated with the Jewish state. Arab communist leaders sought to develop a political ideology and ethos that could balance between their cultural identity and civic affiliation.

Arab communist leaders maintained national slogans that were redefined to accommodate to Arab presence in Israel. While utilizing Arab national imagery, they sought to establish clear borders between the new reality of the Arab citizens of Israel and the rest of the Arab world. Although this process was not necessarily completely international it led to the development of a new ambivalent political discourse that escaped tight confines of space, place, and identity. The Communist Party that produced the Arab political and intellectual elite in Israel highlighted the cultural model it favored by introducing the political slogan of 'two states

for two nations,' stressing the Green Line as the legitimate border for the State of Israel. This change took some time to crystallize but it became the central marker that differentiated the party from Zionist parties in the Israeli political system. This change was the purest expression of acceptance of Israeli citizenship, in principle, as the legal-political framework in which Arabs in the future would struggle for their civil rights as Israelis. Within this framework Palestinians in Israel became 'the Arab public in Israel,' a depiction that blurred national affiliation as a central mobilizing mechanism and as a source of romantic affiliation.

Arab communist leaders expressed their patriotic positions in a universal civic language. They propagated the interests of the Arab community in Israel while downplaying its nationalist sentiment and favoring a civil worldview. Their faith in their Marxist-Leninist thinking allowed them to bridge the gaps between the political reality in which they lived and the political discourse which they espoused. This perhaps explains the statements of communist leader Tawfik Toubi, when he said that 'Communist Party membership is fostering man's most inner virtues—unbounded devotion and willingness for self-sacrifice for matters of the people and the working class, undaunted readiness to fight while maintaining modesty and integrity of character.'[39] Although Toubi does not name the people he is referring to, it is unreasonable to assume that he was speaking of a people other than the Israelis. Israeliness was viewed as a possible civil identity that Jews and Arabs can share if they swear allegiance to the legacy of the working class as formulated in the Marxist tradition.[40] The political discourse of the party denounced both Zionism and Arab nationalism as antagonistic to brotherhood and unity of 'nations.' They envisioned a civic state based on the universal value of each person in which Jews can have a refuge from external threats.

In an, at that time startling, political speech to the 13th Congress of the Communist Party, Emile Habibi claimed: 'In defense of the Arab-Palestinian nation's right to self-determination and the right of the refugees to return to their land, our party defends the right of the people of Israel to self-determination and a peaceful life, freedom and security in its homeland.'[41] Habibi's speech expresses his worldview regarding the conditional moral relationship between Palestinian and Jewish rights of self-determination. What is interesting in the context of this speech is

his strategic location as speaker in relation to Israel, on the one hand, and to the Palestinian people, on the other. In his speech Habibi uses the concept 'our country' referring to Israel. He, for instance, asks: 'What good will come to our country or any other in the Middle East from being dragged after [the chariot of imperialism]?' In another context he says, 'Many parties exist in *our country*, parties turning right and parties turning left.' As was already said, Habibi's expression 'our country,' refers to Israel, which according to his belief is supposed to be a country/state for both Arabs and Jews equally. Hence, he claims:

> Our party is proud to have captured the support of the Arab masses on our land. This support proves that the path of our party is the path of peace, brotherhood—the future of Israel. Our Arab nation is proud to support the Communist Party, despite the means of oppression and terror it faces. This is proof of the maturation of our nation's consciousness, its readiness to fight and its faith that democratic powers will be victorious in our land. This is proof of our nation's devotion to Jewish-Arab brotherhood, which the Communist Party has built and established, and to the confidence that Jews and Arabs can live in a *shared homeland* in equality, brotherhood and peace.[42]

Despite Habibi's strategic stand on civil discourse within the state's framework, he attacks Israeli policies and demands a return to the United Nations partition plan of 1947. Habibi's position reflects his civic patriotism, as evident in the following:

> The communists, because they are communists, feel maximal responsibility for the nation's future. The Communist Party is the conscience and dignity of the nation. Therefore, the label Jewish and Arab communists give the path within their party's framework as the only way to settle the Israeli-Arab conflict is conclusive proof that this plan expresses the true interests of the two nations and is the program of patriots with the heaviest sense of responsibility toward the nation and its future. The communists are patriots who proudly withstood all chauvinistic incitement and police terror.[43]

This political stand, reflected in Habibi's political discourse, accepted Arabs in Israel as part of the 'Israeli nation,' while simultaneously demanding the right to self-determination for the Palestinians according to the partition plan, and expressed his honest patriotic feelings. The primary concern of the communists was to liberate the Arab population inside Israel from the yoke of the military administration, achieve equality between Arabs and Jews, and

establish a shared civic culture of Israeliness. On the other hand, there was a consistent demand for Israeli recognition of the rights of the Palestinians to establish a state alongside the State of Israel, to which would be returned territories captured by Israel in the War of 1948, and to which homeland refugees could return.

These demands, expressed repeatedly by the party's Arab leaders, over time became a bone of contention between Jewish and Arab leaders in the party, until it finally split in 1965.[44] Arab leaders were not fond of the growing intimacy between Jewish communists and state leaders. This growing intimacy led Arab leaders to suspect some of their Jewish comrades and raise questions concerning their loyalty to a civic model of the Israeli nation.[45] The final split in 1965 could be seen as an attempt by the Arab leaders of the party to assert the civic option, especially when the process of abolishing the military government was reaching its peak. With the termination of the military administration in 1966, Arab communists became more and more immersed in the daily battles over the authorities' policies of discrimination and oppression against Arab citizens of the state. The fight for civil equality became the embodiment of their patriotism, of their commitment to a civic model of citizenship that respects the equal access of all citizens to state institutions. They invested much of their effort towards achieving distributive justice for their constituency.

More than anything else, the party slogan of 'Israeli patriotism and proletariat internationalism' captioned the civic model that characterized the communist leaders' worldview. Arab activists in the party stood at attention for the singing of the Israeli national anthem before the Israeli flag at the party congress. In demonstrations the party arranged for Israeli flags and red flags to be hoisted side by side. Arab party members identified with the party slogans, which had Israeli nuances, from an idealistic belief that the moral basis on which Israel rested was based on the brotherhood of nations, which also necessitated the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel. The 'protest' policy, on which the party prided itself, rejected the Zionist characteristic of the state and the signs of capitalism that began to appear in its economy.

The communists believed in a state that would express the Jewish nation's right to self-determination without harming the moral right of the Palestinian people to establish their homeland and return the refugees to their homes. The class perception of

the Israeli-Palestinian conflict drove many Arabs with a strong patriotic awareness to believe that there was no clash of issues in Jewish-Arab cooperation based on the Communist Party platform.

The power of the Communist Party arose from the fact that it was the lone non-Zionist party that openly criticized the government's oppressive policies and demanded equal rights for Arab residents.[46] Arab support in the party began rising when it was targeted by the authorities as a result of its critical voice vis-á-vis the government, mainly after the Kufur Kassem massacre and the Sinai War in 1956. The constant criticism that appeared in the Arabic-language party newspaper *Al-Ittihad* and the magazine *Al-Jadid* was interpreted as a patriotic stand by an increasing portion of the Arab public and reinforced support of the party during Knesset elections. Arab leaders in the party saw themselves as representatives in the Knesset for the Arab population, and acted according to a sense of patriotic mission. The party won an increasing majority of Arab votes in Knesset elections and dominated the Arab political scene in the 1970s–80s.

Communist leaders saw themselves as the intellectual vanguard of Arab citizens in Israel. They were compelled to fight government discriminatory policies. But they also 'rejected irresponsible infantile revolutionary extremism,' as Tawfiq Zayyad said in a contribution to the *Journal of Palestine Studies* in 1976.[47] They claimed that 'irresponsible Arab chauvinist statements, threatening Israelis with destruction, played into Zionist and imperialist propaganda, prior to the June 1967 war.'[48] Therefore, moderation and 'muddling through' was seen as the right path to follow in order to achieve a just solution to the Palestinian problem and bring Israel to recognize 'the right of Arabs to exist and to develop on their land and in their homeland.'[49]

The battle of the Arab communists contained a strong cultural dimension, which strove to preserve the Arab cultural tradition and the population's nationalistic identity through various means, the main one being the opening of the newspapers and the magazines of the party as a platform for Arab authors and poets. In the absence of an independent Arab press, *Al-Itihad* and *Al-Jadid* became the primary forum for Arab cultural productions, opposing the various government means of mobilization among the Arab educated strata.

Pessoptimist Patriotism

More than anything else, Emile Habibi's literary works mirror the essence of the civic patriotism iterated above by Zayyad and Tuma. Habibi aspired to explore his people's ethical and moral quandaries, while creating brilliant links to events or historical narratives from the Arab past. His simple language, interwoven with allegorical and complex concepts, reflects to a high degree the depth of the Arab personality in view of the tragedy visited upon it and the complex circumstances Arabs in Israel were compelled to confront. In his short stories, Habibi draws the general outline of daily life for Arabs in Israel. He positions them in a social framework that reflected their 'ironic intimacy.' He describes their shared experiences and reflects on their common destiny. The repeated experiences in his various stories reflect ontological dilemmas that feed a complex Israeli-Palestinian personality with different and even clashing sets of values.

The link to the past and the longing for the social reality that characterized their lives prior to 1948 are the threads that link all of Habibi's stories. The concepts of 'forgetting' and 'memory' appear as dialectic opposites that shape and characterize the Israeli-Arab personality. The encounter with Palestinian society after the War of 1967 raises difficult emotional and moral dilemmas, reviving the personality of the Arabs and instilling in them a new life. But this same encounter produces pangs of conscience over everything related to all that deals with the forgetting that characterized those patterns of behavior which became acceptable among the Arab population in Israel. Habibi mourns the past and revives the collective memory in an attempt to patch up the rift created between various parts of the Palestinian nation following the 'Nakba' (catastrophe) of 1948.

In his short story 'And for the end . . . the Almond flower,' Habibi draws a portrait of the 'Arab Israeli' who tried hard over the years to cultivate the art of evasion and survival while in a continuous battle with memory and forgetting. This issue of forgetting and memory is reflected in other dimensions of the Arab personality, which span between mind and feeling, and circumscribe natural innocence in the face of a complex social reality. Like the conscience of the Palestinian minority in Israel, Habibi is amazed at the spectacle of political, social, and cultural complexity,

and elucidates the dilemmas of conscience troubling his people. He emits a painful sigh in light of this reality, and claims:

> Pity man! Does he act to slay the memories that he cannot bear? I thought that the heart of people without conscience is hardened to stone and they don't feel pangs of the heart. And here there is no such thing. If man is weak and doesn't have in his power to slay his conscience, he slays his memory![50]

Prolonged pangs of conscience are an inseparable part of the emotional reality of the Arab population in Israel. But, given that the sense of powerlessness in the presence of continuity of existence is not the best feeling, Habibi transforms the battle and constructs a cornerstone in the likeness of the Israeli Palestinian. In another short story, 'When Masoud was happy with his cousin,' Habibi draws complex lines around the faint personality of Masoud, who is nicknamed 'radish.' Masoud becomes aware of his connection to his family living across the border. His relatives are refugees living in the West Bank. The happiness produced through their meeting after the 1967 War is the symbol for the patriotism in the hearts of Palestinians in Israel. The renewed connection between family members strengthens Masoud's pride and his self-confidence, and its composition reflects the social, cultural, and national texture of the nation. In addition, as is Habibi's habit, the nickname 'radish' was not chosen randomly. Despite its smell, the radish grows underground, which symbolizes authenticity and rootedness in the soil. Not only is the radish, which symbolizes the Palestinians in Israel, unable to exist without the earth; the earth is an inseparable part from the essence of the radish, just as it is an inseparable part of Palestinian existence in Israel.

This world of symbols, like other allegories seen in Habibi's stories, poses a challenge to the Zionist historical narrative and emphasizes the existential conditioning of the Palestinian nation concealed in the bond to the land. Habibi points to the political awareness of the younger generation that grew up under Israeli rule, and stresses its battle against symbols of the Israeli political establishment. Habibi, who for our purposes symbolizes the quandaries of the Israeli Palestinians, apprises his readers of the need for wisdom and pragmatism in the fight for national honor and the campaign to preserve Palestinian culture. The battle is an inseparable part of the essence of Arab existence in Israel. The

Arab population should not break the rules of the game nor burn any bridges that may be needed in the future. For example, when Masoud acts against symbols of the authorities, such as letting the air out of the tire of a police vehicle, he always prepares a path of retreat that prevents him from getting caught. This manner of fighting symbolizes, in the general aspect, the necessity for political action that takes into consideration the political reality without abandoning the nationalist past and its main symbol—the land.

The picture of the world that emerges from Habibi's writing characterizes the lives of most Palestinian citizens of Israel. On the one hand, their collective consciousness has continued and become crystallized, and the link has been renewed to other parts of the Palestinian nation, such as the bond with the Arab world following peace agreements with Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority, which increased their self-confidence as an inseparable part of the Palestinian nation.

On the other hand, the new way of life under Israeli rule required extra caution and sober political realism. Habibi, the central Palestinian author in his community, developed in his work a microcosm of the world of Palestinian Israelis. He was and remains a Palestinian patriot to the very fiber of his being, but he remains, like all Palestinians in Israel, a captive of his Israeli citizenship. This citizenship entails 'symbolic violence,' which is expressed in its political meanings that are shaped by the expanding Jewish existence on the same soil that is considered by the Palestinians as homeland.[51] The citizenship that provides spaces for Arab political and cultural expression entails national connotations that clash with the Palestinian identity of the land.[52]

The Israeli Palestinian-ness is a combination of historical and cultural memories that do not always cohere and in many cases collide. Habibi expressed this conflict in words and concepts reflecting feelings of hope mixed with sadness. He loved the Palestinian homeland and sought to revive it in new forms and guises. He reflected his love for the land and the Palestinian people not only in his depictions of the landscape and a variety of sites, but also in the use of language and the revival of collective memory, in his use of ideas, sayings, proverbs and stories from a Palestinian heritage. He used simple language, but one with authentic roots, deeply embedded in the ground, which recall the political and cultural wisdom of the common Palestinian. Using this backdrop, Habibi tried to

prime the consciousness of the Jewish majority, by exposing it to the inner struggles and complexities of the collective existence he represents.[53] He sought to raise the Jewish majority's awareness of its responsibility for the injustices that were and continued to be done to his people and his homeland.

Habibi's novel 'The Pessoptimist' is the symbol imprinted on himself as well on all Palestinians in Israel. The Pessoptimist, the main character in the novel, whose full name is *Said Abu-Alnahs* [lucky, the father of bad luck] *Almotasha'il* [the Pessoptimist], is neither devoid of personality and nor a complete ignoramus. As an anti-hero, he possesses a complex personality and a rooted past. Pessimism and optimism are mingled in a complex way that calls up both the tragic longing for the past and a rejoicing over the fate of those Arabs who remained on their land after hundreds of thousands of their brethren were expelled in 1948. Habibi uses the quasi-historical story in order to present the battle he/Palestinians in Israel is/are waging with history. He reenacts a history in which there is a constant struggle between the forces of freedom and longing for liberty and the durability of free will on one side, and the forces against the aspirations for freedom on the other. The story reflects the complex reality and the laws of the conflict imprinted on it, touching on the sources of the desire to be freed from the burden of the unjust reality, but without an immersion in blind xenophobia or burning hatred. The story presents the various streams of life that exist and interweaves them with the greater historical reality. The link to events from the past, which are then coupled to events of the lives of the Palestinian community in Israel, is intended to revive the collective heritage and memory and to mobilize the forces for the battle against material and cultural disinheritance while stressing the cruelty of the present reality.

In his story '*Ikh'tayeh*,' Habibi emphasizes the link between language and territory and recalls the cultural occupation of his land, with the changing of the Arab names of the places and sites to Hebrew names.[54] He brings up his fears of the harsh reality faced by the Palestinians, and reflects his insecurity in light of the trampling foot of the political and cultural establishment. Habibi expresses his fear of the loss of 'freedom from the longing for this land inside this land, freedom from longing for Haifa inside Haifa.'[55] Habibi's words reflect the fears of Palestinians in Israel

for their identity and for their connection with their past in face of the grand Judaizing processes taking place in Israel.

The Land Day, in memory of the bloody events that took place 30 March 1976 in protest of land confiscation policies, marked a very serious collective attempt by Israeli Palestinians to break the political framework presented to them by the Israeli authorities.[56] This day heralded a great potential for sharp protest that had accumulated over the years and reflected the growth of a new awareness of the social space that had developed over time. Not only did it release feelings of anger and insult into the Israeli public space, but also it was a kind of collective therapy and a rejection of the rules of the game imposed by the dominant majority. This day generated an important impetus for the construction of 'sociological solidarity' among the Palestinians in Israel. It served as the turning point towards a release from the cognitive patterns and political frameworks reflected by civic patriotism and marked the embarking upon a long campaign to patterns of active national patriotism, which have found a variety of different manners of expression over the years. This change does not mean that civic patriotism was completely left by the wayside. While it continued, this pattern of thought and behavior provided shelter and support, which were essential conditions for the production of a new pattern of Palestinian patriotism that was proud, angry, and more provoking. Palestinian patriotism in Israel is becoming more assertive and self-confident. A new generation arose among the Palestinians in Israel, a generation that, unlike its parents, was born in the state, was educated by its institutions, and has its own point of reference for the different physical and social surroundings.[57] This pattern will be the focus of the following pages.

Palestinian Patriotism

Behavioral patterns have developed in recent years that indicate increasing demonstrativeness in Palestinian patriotic sentiments and a willingness to express them in a collective manner. The politics of memory and the revival of the Palestinian heritage, while creating a bond between themselves and nationalist characteristics, have come to characterize the collective behavior of the Palestinian population over the last 20 years.[58] This process is reflected in changes that occurred over the years but that take on a different

connotation today. The sociological and communicative prominence of the Palestinian population in the Israeli public space was influenced by factors from inside Israel, from both the region and the globe. Media globalization processes, just as the recent developments in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, greatly influenced the identity of Palestinians in Israel, but the internal processes in Israel were a no less significant influence. The political, economic and cultural processes, experienced by Israeli society as a whole and by the Arab sector in particular, led to changes in the social structure and the public discourse that characterize the relationship system between the Jewish majority and the Palestinian minority. Despite the difficulty in covering the entire gamut of these changes, some of them can be singled out as directly linked to the phenomenon of patriotism amongst the Palestinian population.

Three primary phenomena, expressing the activation of patriotic sentiments, are chosen to provide a window to understanding the changes taking place in the collective consciousness and the desires of Palestinians in Israel. The first phenomenon addressed is the visits of internally displaced persons (IDPs), known in Israel as the 'present absentees,' to their villages of origin, whose physical remains still exist today not far from where they currently live. These visits have taken place since 1948. But in recent years they underwent an institutionalization process and occur on set dates that symbolize the resurrection of historical heritage and memory. They take place under the banner of the Palestinian flag, thereby symbolizing the attachment to the land as well as to the nation. The second phenomenon is the rehabilitation and remodeling of religious and historical sites which the state has controlled since the 1948 War. This has also been institutionalized in recent years and, beyond the link to religious rituals, it has acquired a patriotic dimension that cannot be dismissed. The third phenomenon is related to the status of the Arabic language in Israel and the battle to prevent its becoming an abandoned language in the Israeli public sphere, regardless of the fact that it is recognized as an official language of the state.

(A) Pre-Sensing the Absent Past [59]

From the Palestinian point of view, the most tragic consequence of the 1948 War was the creation of the refugee problem. Refugees

were not only those who were expelled or fled to Arab regions out-
side the 'green line,' but also those whom the state law has depicted
as 'present absentees' and whom international law calls IDPs. This
group refers to those Palestinian-Arabs living as refugees in neigh-
boring villages or in distant locations inside the state, after they
were expelled from or forced to leave their villages in the wake of
the 1948 war or thereafter. They numbered somewhere between
30,000 and 50,000 immediately following the war.[60] Today most of
them live near their original villages and, as a result of an Israeli
government policy first established in 1948 and still in effect, they
are not permitted to return to their homes. The emergency regu-
lations, which were instituted by the British Mandate in 1945, were
utilized by the Israeli army to declare captured villages as military
zones.[61] This policy prevented refugees from returning after the
fighting subsided.[62] IDPs were denied the right to use their prop-
erty, which along with the land of other refugees was transferred
into government hands.[63] Since the emergency defense regula-
tions are still in effect today, visits by IDPs to their villages—which
in many cases are only a few hundred or even dozen yards from
their present homes—are illegal. Therefore, IDPs are forbidden
entry onto their original lands. These lands are put to Jewish use
under the supervision of the Israel Land Authority (ILA) based on
priorities set by the state to serve the interests of the Jewish ma-
jority. In most cases Jewish communities were established on Arab
lands, with the legal owners living as IDPs nearby.[64]

    The link to the original place of residence and the aspiration
to return to it have been an important component of Palestinian
existence in Israel. If for Palestinian refugees currently residing
in Arab countries this link over time became one of romance and
memory, by contrast the IDPs saw, felt, and experienced the place
of their original homes on a daily basis. With their own eyes they
witnessed how their lands underwent various transformations and
were given to foreigners. The wound of 1948 was relived on a
daily basis. In her story 'A hired worker on his land,' Najwa Ka'war-
Pharah depicts the Arab laborers compelled to work as hired hands
on their own land after the authorities expropriated it and trans-
ferred it to Jewish control. She recounts how the tractors plowing
the land plow into the flesh and the heart of the Arab laborers and
wound it. On behalf of many of her people, and especially for those
living in a constant state of alienation, she says explicitly, 'No, I will

absolutely not exchange my homeland—even if the wound hurts—
for another homeland.'[65] The purest expression for the centrality
of place in the collective memory of Palestinians in Israel is the
communal memory of the villages Ikrit and Bir'am, from which
the Israeli army ordered the residents to leave for security reasons
in November 1948.[66] The residents of the villages agreed to leave
their vilages based on the promise that they would be let back into
the villages when the fighting was over, a promise that to this day
has not been fulfilled. The struggle of the descendants of these
village residents with the state authorities, which continues today,
expresses in the fullest of terms the special link to place in the
consciousness of Arabs in Israel.[67]

   In recent years the public and legal battle of the IDPs to re-
turn to their places of residence has been intensified by organized
frequent mass visits to the demolished villages.[68] In addition, the
IDPs established in 1992 the 'Committee for the Defense of the
Rights of Displaced Persons from 1948—Citizens of the State of
Israel,' a federation which includes more than 40 local associa-
tions established by persons displaced from various villages. The
declared goal of the committee is 'to return [IDPs] to the villages
from where they were uprooted or expelled by the army.'[69] Despite
the economic and social integration of the majority of displaced
persons into their new villages, most of them, even those who are
second and third generation, prefer returning to their original
communities over receiving compensation.[70]

   The voice of the IDPs is constantly growing stronger, as aware-
ness has increased of the plight of the some 200,000 displaced
persons, and a significant number in the greater Arab population
has become involved in the issue. The IDPs' committee holds var-
ious meetings of its members with the goal of increasing the Arab
public's awareness of the problem and of the need for mass sup-
port among the population in order to find a solution. In recent
years, the various village committees began organizing mass visits
to demolished villages on three set dates, while spontaneous visits
initiated by individuals and groups have also taken place. The visits
are a type of collective experience, flooding the Palestinian mem-
ory with pain and distress every time anew, and thus visitors to the
villages share an experience with tens of thousands, if not hundreds
of thousands of Palestinians. Despite the legal prohibition on en-
tering the demolished villages, the IDPs have succeeded in making

the visits into a patriotic march, which expresses a sharp protest and high degree of willingness to fight for the right to return to their roots. Marchers experience the collective memory—which includes feelings of sadness, sorrow, and pain—that are also shared by the younger generation, even though the young did not directly experience the events of the 1948 war. The abstract sense of loyalty to the original place of habitation expresses the loyalty and deep attachment of Palestinian Arabs to their homeland and history.

Visits to the villages are held on three different dates: the day that the specific village fell into Israeli hands in the War of 1948, on Land Day, 30 March of every year, and on the day the State of Israel declared its independence. Holding the visits on these particular dates is intended to revive the memory of the past and especially the link between the founding of Israel and the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem. The number of participants in these marches continues to grow every year, and residents of the villages where the displaced persons currently reside join the marches as a display of solidarity and protest. The visits are carried out as general parades, which include the waving of the Palestinian flag and singing of nationalist Palestinian songs. Such symbols express patriotic feelings and serve to create an atmosphere of mobilization that helps harness wide societal circles to join the effort to revive the memory of the 1948 War and its tragic consequences.

Breaking the chain of silence surrounding the IDPs problem and holding the marches ensures that a generation of Palestinian children has a deep awareness of the events of 1948 and the tragedy that befell their families. The marches express the deep ties to the site and great willingness to make sacrifices in order to return. They also entail a sharp protest against the state and its policies. They come to express the IDPs narrative, claiming that none of them left their homes willingly and that the state has ripped them away from what is considered to be the most precious of all, home. The memory of loss is repeated during the marches as a collective statement against the insult of the past and the role the state still plays in keeping it fresh. The IDPs emphasize the hollowness of their Israeli citizenship and the impossibility of the demand to identify with state institutions. In recent years, an increasing number of IDPs have turned to the Israeli Supreme Court in an attempt to achieve the legal decisions that will allow their return to their villages.[71]

(B) Reviving the Religious Link to the Land

Religion has fulfilled an important role in constructing the collective consciousness among different nations. The attempt of the Jews to revive their heritage after a 2000-year absence serves as an inspiration for many national groups. The official archaeological policy of the State of Israel turned every site in the country into a potential target for the discovery of roots of the Jewish past. Similarly, since its establishment, the state's patronage policy in regard to all Muslim Waqf property (assets that belong to the Muslim congregation) has created growing distress among wide circles of the Palestinian population.[72] The 'absentee property law' transferred to the state's control large amounts of land, including the assets of the Muslim Waqf that were managed until 1948 by the Supreme Muslim Council.[73] This step was a harsh blow to the status of Muslim Palestinians and strengthened the religious nuances of the national struggle.

Throughout the years a large number of Muslims have become highly anatgonistic to the fact that the Jewish state controls their religious institutions and resources. A growing number of people have mobilized to bring about a change in the state's policy toward the Muslim population and the status of their community. It was not until the rise of the Islamic Movement in the early 1970s that a turnaround occurred in the attitude of the Palestinians in Israel toward the religious aspect of the national problem.[74]

The Islamic Movement aspired to revive the religious awareness of the Muslim community living in Israel, and thus to widen the arena for the conflict with the state. Religion was transformed into a central component in the mobilization of Palestinians in Israel to join the struggle against political discrimination and primarily against 'the desecration of sites holy to Muslims such as the assets of the Waqf, mosques and cemeteries.'[75] The dissemination of religion and attempts to deepen faith among the public had a central practical dimension that went beyond the spiritual bounds of religiosity. The Islamic Movement is a nationalist political movement that constructed an inherent link between the Muslim faith and the national rights of the Palestinians, as expressed in religious sentiments that enhance a sense of belongingness and of man's link to his historical, social, cultural, and spiritual environment. The Islamic Movement's activities concealed emotional and

religious sentiments that would come to strengthen the material and spiritual attachment of the people to specific religious sites as well as to the land of Palestine in general.

In May 1991, the process of deepening patriotic feelings among Muslim Palestinians in Israel was expressed and reinforced by the decision of the leaders of the local Muslim councils inside the Green Line to establish a public association—Al-Aqsa Association—to protect Muslim holy sites and ensure that they be properly cared for. The Association declared that it 'closely watches [the holy sites] in order to care for, renovate and liberate them, and this is done via comprehensive and detailed research of all sites of the Waqf and holy locations. The Association details how to reach these sites by means of creating a tourist map that specifies all the important locations. It also carries out a comprehensive mapping of the entire country in order to uncover sites that were hidden or destroyed.'[76]

The establishment of the association was associated with the rising power of the Islamic Movement in the municipal government. In the 1989 elections, the Movement decided to enter the campaign and a few of its leaders ran for mayoral posts in different localities. The movement won leadership of several cities and councils and brought a large number of its members into the local bureaucracies. This step marked a success for the movement. The new Islamist mayors embarked upon a public relations campaign seeking to mobilize Moslem society to defend the holy places for Muslims.[77]

The Association's comprehensive activity won wide support, something that was expressed in financial contributions and the participation of large numbers of people in volunteer renovation activities in holy places. This phenomenon has contributed significantly to strengthening the sense of self-pride in the entire Muslim population of Israel. The Association aspired to reinforce the population's patriotic feelings and to enhance these sentiments by directing them toward constructive channels of rebuilding the past.[78] In the course of a decade, the Association transformed its activities into a comprehensive program expressing an ideological, legal, and practical challenge to the state authorities dealing with sites holy to Muslims. Despite disagreements within the Islamic Movement, which have also spread to the Association, public support of the Association's activities has continued to grow

and strengthen. The Association has managed to give its activities a nationalist dimension, and thus to attach itself to other civil and religious bodies of the Palestinian minority in Israel. It coordinates its activities with the Supreme Follow-up Committee of the Palestinian population in Israel and with other associations of unmistakable nationalist character. The Association initiated an extensive project in the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem's Old City that drew thousands of volunteers to the site.

The renovation of Muslim mosques and cemeteries in the country is meant to illustrate a wider process of deep disappointment and growing suspicion toward the authorities' activities, as well as to convey the Palestinian population's willingness to take upon itself the care for its heritage through mutual cooperation and assistance that will contribute to tackling its political, economic, and cultural adversity. The Al-Aqsa Association represents a leap in the patriotic sentiments of the Palestinians in Israel, the goal being to revive the heritage of the past and to foster the spiritual bond to the ground, plus an instrumental link to it. Thus the Association issues not only a political challenge to the view of the land according to Zionist legacy, but a spiritual one as well.

(C) The Language War

Arabic is an official language of the State of Israel, and as such can be used in official documents and in many institutions, such as the Knesset and the courts. Despite this, Arabic is not afforded respect on the formal and informal levels.[79] The Arabic language is perceived as the language of the enemy, and as a result has always been ascribed an inferior status in the Israeli public sphere.[80] This attitude does not fit well with the special respect Arabs give to their language. In addition to its status as a holy language in the eyes of many Arabs, Arabic is also a symbol of cultural identity. The famous poet Hanah Abu-Hanah defined the land and the language as 'the two basic foundations for preserving our existence and our future.'[81] Years ealier, Mahmud Darwish declared in one poem that 'land is inherited like language.' This viewpoint has characterized Israel's Arab population since the creation of the state. But in recent years there has been a noticeable awakening of interest, and special attention has been given to the status of Arabic in the Israeli public sphere. As part of a greater whole, the interest in

language and its place in collective awareness have become clear expressions of active patriotism.

The experience of Arabs in Israel has led to the penetration of the Hebrew language into their daily lives. In informal discourses, many Arabs, especially those from the younger generation, use Hebrew words while speaking Arabic.[82] This trend has been supported by the language policy in Israel, in particular that of the Education Ministry. By means of Arabic language courses, the Education Ministry strove to denationalize the language of Israel's Arabic-speaking population, by devaluing Palestinian identity, reflected in the choice of literary works taught at Arab schools.[83] In addition, one should add that Israel has adopted a clear policy of Hebrewizing the public sphere. One example is the changing of the names of streets and sites from Arabic to Hebrew, as well as omitting Arabic from traffic signs in different areas of the country.[84]

While this trend continues and spreads, we are witnessing a counter campaign led by Arab intellectuals, public figures, and civil organizations, expressing concern for the status of the language and its cultural and national meaning. This response is an expression of the anxiety felt concerning the status of Arabic, as well as of the growing aspiration to revive the link between language and Palestinian heritage and culture.[85] Arab intellectuals perceive the Arabic language to be a pillar of Palestinian existence in Israel. Many hoped to raise the awareness of the Arab public—which in increasing numbers uses Hebrew and foreign concepts—of language as a central component of Arab mental and cultural structure and existence. This trend can be seen in the attempts to use legal and formal arguments to halt the decline of Arabic's status. In 1990, for example, when it became known that the Education Ministry intended to declare the next academic year the 'Year of the Hebrew Language,' many Arab writers and intellectuals quickly demanded that it be called 'Year of the Hebrew and Arabic Languages.'[86] In this context, Arab schools held special study days on the subject of the Arabic language and its cultural, national, and historical roots.

Arab legal and human rights organizations also turned to the courts in order to fight for Arabic's place in the public sphere. In a 1997 petition to the Supreme Court against various government ministries, the Adallah organization called for 'the use of the Arabic language on direction and warning signs on inter-city roads in the country.'[87] Two years later, in 1999, Adallah filed a complaint

against six municipalities of mixed Arab-Jewish cities in Israel on the same issue: 'Why they do not use the Arabic language on all direction signs, instruction signs, warning signs . . . as well as on all signs in public places, to the degree that Hebrew is used, with correct spelling and grammar?'[88]

Alongside this formal development, one also finds an awakening on the informal level. Since the mid-1990s, several Arab intellectuals have made a great effort to establish an 'Academy for Language' to address the status of the Arabic language and make available Arab translations of Hebrew concepts which are in general use. These efforts have born fruit, and in 2000 an NGO termed 'The Arabic Language Academy' was established, which created working ties with The Academy for the Arabic Language in Cairo. The association's activities are still in their infancy, but it is an illustration of the growing public awareness and of efforts being invested to preserve the Arabic language in a difficult environment that threatens its status. This same trend can be found in the efforts being made in various cities to restore the original Arabic names to the streets whose names were changed after 1948. This development is particularly strong in Haifa, one of the cultural centers of the Arab population in Israel.[89]

Towards Conclusion

In light of what has been said so far, Palestinians in Israel, given the identity and policies of the state, are not and, it seems, cannot become Israeli patriots. Instead they are increasingly becoming Palestinian patriots, attached to the land and the nation of Palestine and identified with its aspirations. The state, with its emphasis on its Jewish identity by means of Jewish and religious symbols and policies, has limited the possible development of Israeli patriotism among the Palestinian population. The objects of formal Israeli patriotic identification derive from the Jewish religious world. Israeli citizenship was never formulated in a way that would enable Arabs to develop an emotional sense of constitutional patriotism or feel identified with the political or national reality that developed in Israel. This fact has limited the effectiveness of civil patriotism and nourished a Palestinian patriotic attachment. Notwithstanding that, Palestinian patriotism among Arab citizens of Israel is selective. It differentiates between love for homeland

and nation, on the one hand, and attachment to the institutional manifestations of the emerging Palestinian state, on the other. Arabs in Israel still view themselves as part of the Israeli reality. This duality is best manifested in the fact that Arab Knesset members swear allegiance to the State of Israel and its laws, including those that define the state in Jewish terms, and at the same time raise the Palestinian flag in protest rallies or Palestinian memorial days.

In theoretical terms, the Palestinian experience in Israel demonstrates the complexity of patriotic attachment and its manifold meanings in complex social realities. Patriotism cannot be properly defined unless located in context. The objects of patriotism differ based on circumstances, giving patriotism a different meaning in different situations. This study has demonstrated that national minorities can hardly develop patriotic feelings towards a state that does not offer them a citizenship model with which they can live. Any citizenship model that does not respect and incorporate the identity of the minority renders civic patriotism among this minority void. Furthermore, state institutions that do not offer minorities a legal and judicial scheme that makes them equal breed resentment in the members of these minorities. It seems that states have to be loyal to their citizens as much as, if not more so than, they demand their citizens to be loyal towards them, if they want them to be patriotic. Patriotism is a contingent category that depends on the deep sense of respect, freedom, and equality. States that do not respect these needs and rights would be asking for the impossible if they were to demand genuine patriotism from disadvantaged citizens.

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31. Kahwaji, p. 439

32. Ibid., pp. 187–96 and p. 446.

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68. Persona interview with Chairman of the Displaced Persons Committee, attorney Wakim Wakim, 19.2.2001.

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