**Nationality, Narratives and Identity**

**The History of Israel/Palestine**

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* + - 1. Introduction: What is nationalism? What is a nation?
         1. Liel asks these questions, then questions our answers. “If a nation is about shared values, then do all Christians form a nation?”
         2. One View: nationalism is primordial (see Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*):

Nationality has to do with evolution (especially of natural characteristics),

With ethnicity (meaning a shared heritage, language, and ancestry),

With a connection to a specific geographical area, and

Nationality implies a right for self-determination and integral nationalism.

* + - * 1. Another “Modern” View: nationalism is a construct (see B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*):

It is an artificial phenomenon,

It is the result of a central authority, of technological development, and of an industrial economy, and

There is civil nationalism, the daily referendum of the people. People choose every day to “be” a part of their nation.

* + - 1. Question: Is Judaism a Nationality?
         1. Some say that it is not; there is no such thing as a “Jewish race.” Others say that the State of Israel wraps itself in the Jewish religion, and that full citizenship belongs only to Jews.
         2. One View: Judaism is a nationality.

The Jews originated from a Judean tribe.

Its central belief has to do with Exodus, with being the elect, with exile and return.

The national tradition is rooted in Jerusalem.

It has to do with heritage and language.

* + - * 1. Another View: Judaism is a belief.

One can convert to Judaism.

Jews come from diverse ethnic origins.

There is no Jewish ethnicity.

The Jewish tradition has to do with practices, not DNA.

* + - 1. Zionism.
         1. Its history.

It emerged in the 19th century as a version of nationalism. The answer to the “Jewish problem” is for the Jews to be loyal to their own nation.

It called for the re-establishment of a Jewish Homeland. Zionism called for a “shelter for the Jewish people in a Jewish land.”

Zionism saw itself a liberation movement.

* + - * 1. Theodor Herzl’s Vision. He wanted a secular state that would be Jewish in culture.

Eastern Jews saw in Zionism a “shelter” for Jews, a place where they could be free and independent, and the only place would be the land of the Bible, because God promised it to Abraham.

Western Jews saw in Zionism a modern concept that would help Jews to be Jews by their culture (not by land). They tried to buy land in Africa as well as in Argentina and the USA.

* + - * 1. Types of Zionism.

Labor. Zionism aimed to establish kibbutzim and to expand them, one settlement at a time. Ben Gurion is the archetypal Labor Zionist. The Jewish state would be established by actions and practices. This group focused on social justice, more than the state.

Liberal (Likud). Liberal Zionism argued that the biblical land is unimportant. The important thing is diplomacy and the recognition by other nations of Israel. Rothschild and the Balfour Document were important. The Liberal Zionists united with Religious Zionists and in 1977 became the majority.

Spiritual. Spiritual Zionism (Chabad and the Hassidic movement) spoke about a “spiritual center for Jews.” They wanted to rebuild the Temple, the Third Temple. The temple could only be on the Temple Mount.

Religious. Religious Zionism said: “The messiah will come only if we create a religious state, as the Bible commanded us” (Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook).

Revisionist. Ze’ev Jabotinsky called for a revisionist Zionism that was influenced by Russian nationalism. It sought to combine Palestine with Jordan. Their anthem said, “On this nation, there will be full equality among the sons of Abraham, of Jesus, and of Mohammad.”

* + - 1. Nationalism in the Middle East.
         1. Many of the Middle Eastern nations only came to be after World War I.

Egyptians did not call themselves Egyptians until after Napoleon; before they considered themselves Arabs.

In Tunisia, the French taught the native people that they are “Phoenicians.”

* + - * 1. The Decisions of the British and French. Britain recognized a “British home” for Jewish people, and this was a novelty.
        2. Nationalities.

Ottoman Times. Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq were all part of a single entity, “The Land of the North.” Yemen was the “Land of the South.”

There were the Levantines and the Kurds.

Egypt was part of the “Arab” lands.

* + - * 1. Pan Arab Nationalism.

It emerged in the 19th century.

It focused on Arab culture heritage and language, “Al Nahda” (the “revival” of Arabism as distinct from Ottoman culture).

It regarded Arabism as a Semitic ancestry.

It emphasized the Arab (not “bedouin”) revolts against the Ottomans.

Pan Arab Nationalism achieved global recognition after World War I. The Balfour document said that the Hashemites, Husseins, Hejazi would have possession of their own lands.

* + - * 1. Palestinian Nationalism.

Emerged in the 20th century.

The Primordial Theory would say that Palestinians have similar origins (in history and ancestry).

The Palestinian population remained the same under all conquerors.

Canaanites and Philistines were united under Dhaher al Omar (who was the autonomous [Arab](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab) ruler of northern [Palestine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestine_(region)) during the mid-18th century, 1690-1775).

The Modern Theory would say that Palestinian Nationalism is a product of Colonialism and Zionism.

In 1834 and in 1936 there were Arab revolts in Palestine.

Proponents include Haj Amin al Husayni (who was a [Palestinian Arab](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestinian_people) nationalist and [Muslim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim) leader in [Mandatory Palestine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandatory_Palestine). 1897-1974), Izz a Din al Qassem (a [Syrian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syria) Muslim preacher and a leader in the local struggles against [British](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Empire) and [French Mandatory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Mandate_of_Syria) rule in the [Levant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Levant), and a militant opponent of [Zionism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zionism) in the 1920s and 1930s), and Yaser Arafat and the PLO.

* + - * 1. Discussion. Some would say that Arab Nationalism “died” in 1967. Palestinian Nationalism took its place. Outside of Palestine “pan Islamism” emerged. The pillars of Palestinian identity (according to Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*) can be described as follows:

Recognition of the importance of the land of Palestinian.

Defense of the land from foreign conquerors.

Defense of al Aqsa mosque.

All Palestinians should have a “right of return.”

There are “parallel loyalties.” One can be a Palestinian and also Christian. Palestinian Christians appreciate the importance of the purity of the al Aqsa mosque.

* + - 1. Summary and Commonalities. What are the parallels between the “nationalities” of Israel and Palestine?
         1. Commonalities.

Both nationalities have primordial and modern roots.

Both identities have strong connection to the land.

Both identities have religious and secular aspects.

Both identities resulted from conflict and persecution.

* + - * 1. Questions.

Is this a religious or national conflict?

Can identities such as “Jewish Arab” or “Palestinian Israeli” exist?

Is this a zero sum game?

Is there any other political option?

* + - * 1. My reflection: The distinction between primordial and modern is false. By “modern” Maghen really means “post-modern,” because his definition of modernity is based on a critical reception of the concept of “primordiality.” The word “primordial” is also inadequate, because there are things we once accepted as “primordial” – namely, the concept of race – which we now know to be very fluid and unclear.