



Competing Concepts of Land in Eretz Israel

Author(s): Ilan Troen and Shay Rabinou

Source: *Israel Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 2, Special Issue: Zionism in the 21st Century (Summer 2014), pp. 162-186

Published by: [Indiana University Press](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/israelstudies.19.2.162>

Accessed: 10-02-2016 00:20 UTC

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Indiana University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Israel Studies*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

# Competing Concepts of Land in Eretz Israel

## ABSTRACT

With the establishment of the State of Israel, Zionist claims to Eretz Israel became realized. Disputes over the authenticity of those claims, however, have continued unabated to this day, and are challenged by counter-claims. Their assertions extend far beyond criticizing the actions of the Israeli government; rather, they focus on the legitimacy of the Jewish state, and the idea that in Palestine there should be “Jewish” land. Zionism, which was founded on the idea of Jews returning to their homeland in the East, is challenged in maintaining its rights in Eretz Israel because its opponents mark it as irrevocably and permanently Western or in other ways “foreign” to the land. The first part of this article examines the nature of Zionist claims and contemporary counter-claims. The second part focuses on the challenges inherent in carrying out the normal activities of a modern state in such a contested land. Activities that would elsewhere seem mundane—mapping, zoning, tree-planting, preserving nature, and hiking—are skewed by assertions of the alleged foreignness of Zionism. By examining these and other activities, the paper will illustrate and explore the sometimes-overlooked real-world implications of this unresolved historical debate.

## INTRODUCTION

IT WAS SIMPLER FOR ZIONISM TO CLAIM THE LAND OF ISRAEL/PALESTINE a century ago. During the British Mandate the abbreviation E.I. or Eretz Israel [Land of Israel] appeared regularly on government documents in connection with Palestine. More prosaically and pertinently, the Yishuv distributed road maps that bore the title: “Palestine (E.I.) Road Map”.

This was the practical expression of the 1917 Balfour Declaration and of the 1922 League of Nations Mandate for Palestine that recognized rights of Jews in the land. Further recognition followed through the 1947 UN partition plan and the reality of 60-plus years of statehood. Nevertheless, this past century has not only witnessed the realization of Zionist claims to E.I. but a growing chorus of challenge to that reality. Opposition to the Jewish state is not only expressed in opposition to specific policies of different governments, but in deep cultural, historical, and legal conceptions. The contest between Zionism and its opponents will surely continue well into the twenty-first century.

We explore this competition in two parts. First, we examine the principled frameworks of opposition to Zionism beyond Israel's particular policies and actions. It is the legitimacy of a Jewish state that is at issue, and of the very idea that Palestine should accommodate a "Jewish" homeland. The sources of opposition are varied but complement each other in the polemics over Jewish claims. The common thread is that Jews are foreign to a country that belongs to the natives or the indigenous peoples. It is a perspective that Hebrew-speaking, native-born Jews with names deriving from the landscape and the country's Hebrew past may find hard to assimilate but it is there and, in some respects, stronger now than at the beginnings of Zionism. In sum, opponents of Zionism, which was based on a return to the homeland in the East, reject Zionism as irrevocably and permanently Western.

The second part presents several select illustrations of the challenges explored in the first part. Any modern, democratic state has controversies over how to use its land and resources. It is usual for citizens to dispute whether the state or individual citizens may use land for residential or industrial purposes, national needs, recreation, nature preservation, and celebration of history. All these become immeasurably complicated when the authority of the state is questioned. For example, if an area or site is to be preserved for its historical significance and to nurture collective memory, which historical incident and whose historical memory are to be privileged? And, at the most basic level, how are the maps to be drawn; what are the paths citizens are encouraged to take for enjoying the present and reflecting on the past? In the case of Eretz Israel, such decisions are skewed by the overarching and insinuating framework of the alleged foreignness of Zionism. There are many ways to illustrate this anomaly in the Zionist experience: obvious issues are determining the use of water in a semi-arid land, the competition between economic and national interests over the placement of roads and the building of infrastructure, deciding where

individuals and groups of citizens may build their homes and workplaces. Instead we will interrogate apparently innocuous and prosaic topics: the placement of walking paths and the planting of trees. That these occasion controversy illustrates the depth and complexity of the challenge facing Zionism in the twenty-first century.

## COMPETING CONCEPTIONS OF OWNERSHIP

Zionists who made aliyah yearned for a natural and easy connection with the country. The phrase employed in the 1922 League of Nations Mandate for Palestine and repeated throughout the discourse on the relationship of Jews to Palestine reflects what once had been common wisdom. Recalling the wording of the Balfour Declaration of 1917, the Mandate's preamble affirmed that Palestine was an appropriate venue for establishing "a national home for the Jewish people." It affirmed that "recognition has thereby been given to the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and to the grounds for *reconstituting* [our emphasis] their national home in that country."<sup>1</sup> Re-constitution had a significance also found in other key concepts: re-turn, re-claim, re-build, re-store. The reiterated "re", or "again", was crucial. It was clear for that generation that the relationship between Eretz Israel and Jews had never been lost and that it was now being renewed. The sense of recapturing identity with the Land of Israel has been brilliantly detailed in Boaz Neumann's *Land and Desire in Early Zionism*.<sup>2</sup> Pioneers believed in their deepest beings that they were at one with a land in which they had come to invest their sweat, tears, joy, and blood. Their offspring, termed "sabras" by the 1930s, were believed to be the fulfillment of this longing to return and that they could again be genuine natives in their historic homeland. As we shall try to demonstrate, to claim the status of natives is a tenuous proposition.<sup>3</sup>

There are three principal sources of criticism with which this part of the paper is concerned: a brief comment on the unanticipated discomfort among some Jews over the concept of "Jewish" land; a traditional unwillingness to accept the legitimacy of Zionism in Christian churches; and a secular historical revisionism that favors the indigenous among whom Zionists are not counted. The Muslim critique is long-standing and unchanged. However, it has become more vociferous and effectively disseminated with the proliferation of political and fundamentalist Islam. We do not here address Muslim Arab claims and opposition.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, we will not discuss here the well-rehearsed debates over Marxist or leftist views of Zionism as a

colonial-settler society. Our focus will be primarily on opposition rooted in theologically based interpretations of history and in secular historical narratives, both of which reject the idea of “again” and disconnect contemporary Jews from what they perceive as their homeland. Before setting off on this course, which is espoused by non-Jews, we would be remiss without brief reference to another form of criticism that has emerged within the Jewish community itself.

#### *INTERNAL JEWISH CRITICISM*

Jewish anti-Zionism was often rooted in a repudiation of multiple loyalties and identities at a time when citizenship had only recently or grudgingly been extended to Jews. In the twenty-first century, multiple loyalties are not likely to be a contentious issue. Jews are citizens and are well-integrated, particularly in the English-speaking Diaspora. Yet, the model of the modern state in which multiple loyalties are of diminishing concern nevertheless poses a significant challenge to the idea of a Jewish state. The United States, Great Britain, Canada, and Australia are societies of great diversity and where ethnic or national claims in the public square have been significantly diminished. The spread of universalistic values in these de-ethnicized societies erode support particularly among the liberal Jews for the particularistic politics or concerns of a Jewish state. Indeed, the very idea of a state that is characterized “Jewish”, let alone the notion of “Jewish” land, arouses principled criticism.<sup>5</sup>

The struggle entailed for Jews to gain recognition in a world order of the twentieth century that privileged “peoples” as the legitimate sponsors of modern states has been increasingly distanced. Few experienced or even remember the historic and existential struggle of Jews to gain entry to Palestine, purchase land either legally or surreptitiously, establish and defend settlements, and build institutions. Nor are there many who experienced the reality of Jewish life in the Middle East, including Palestine, where Jews lived in a society organized by ethnic and religious identities formalized into the millet system of the Ottoman Empire and continued through the British Mandate. This pattern was familiar to Eastern European Jews, who comprised the bulk of the settlers. They, too, came from societies where ethnic and religious identities mattered in the public sphere and Jewishness was a liability. It may be ever more difficult to explain the joy and sense of historical self and national realization that masses of Jews felt as they deposited contributions in the ubiquitous and celebrated JNF blue boxes to purchase land for Jews and plant trees to restore and reclaim the promised land of milk and honey central to religious practice and collective memory.

As we shall see further, the JNF itself has emerged as a central and symbolic target of what is wrong with contemporary Israel.

However one evaluates Peter Beinart's well-known claim that liberal Jews are "distancing" themselves from Israel, alienation is a real issue for many. Beinart has sensationalized what scholarship has long noted.<sup>6</sup> The political and social ecology of Jews living in Israel and in liberal democracies such as the United States is distinctively different. It matters whether one lives securely as a minority within a majority or as a majority under threat in a land long identified as one's own. While many Israelis might theoretically imagine themselves living in an individualistic, liberal society that privileges and elevates individual rights even over those of the collective, the fact is that American Jews find liberalism more congenial to their politics than do Israelis.<sup>7</sup>

There are now a host of NGOs that attempt to implant in Israeli society the values of American liberalism. American Jewry funds many such organizations committed to redressing an extensive litany of criticism leveled against the state: the discrimination explicit in the Law of Return; the role of established religion in a democratic society; doubts about a legal system operating without a formal constitution; concern with inequities in majority-minority relations; and an array of issues appropriate to a human rights agenda from how Israel conducts wars to defining its national symbols. A recent study has delineated a gradual and probably irrevocable decline over the last 30 years in earmarked funds to national or Zionist institutions even as the total amount is the same.<sup>8</sup> The great majority of contributions are now directed to NGOs operating outside the control of Israel's government and often critical of it. Moreover, AIPAC, ADL, AJC, and other "establishment" organizations are challenged by newer ones such as the New Israel Fund, JStreet, Jewish Voice for Peace, B'tselem, and Americans for Peace Now. The blatant opposition and discord are unprecedented. A common thread is a demand for equal rights for the Arab citizens of Israel. Although far from being a necessary corollary, such sympathy faults privileging Israel as a "Jewish" state. Discerning instances of prejudicial policies in a subtle and profound way has eroded the legitimacy of "Jewish" control over E.I. not only with regard to territories beyond the 1949 Armistice lines, but within them.

#### *CHRISTIAN OPPOSITION*

Were it not for pro-Zionist sentiments within Protestantism, it is unlikely that Zionism could have enjoyed as much traction as it did in the decades prior to and subsequent to the Balfour Declaration. Indeed, it is unlikely

that reasons of state alone would have persuaded British Foreign Minister Arthur Balfour to issue the document that granted Zionism international recognition and legitimacy. The extensive literature of Christian pro-Zionism is challenged by a growing counter-literature spawned by Christians critical of Israel. Their objections are rooted in theologies as ancient as Christianity itself that had previously been held in abeyance or restrained. Before moving on to this topic, it is well to comment on the significance of religious discourse in claiming land—any land, but particularly the land Judaism, Christianity, and Islam consider holy.<sup>9</sup>

Through the European Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, claims to land were commonly justified in religious terms: The Lord sanctioned the legitimacy of rulers and assigned them control over territory. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam generated diverse and even contrary understandings of this principle. However, no matter how deeply any tradition and its variant were held, such religious-based claims could have persuasive power only within the community of believers. In contrast, claims based on secular arguments could be brought before international bodies where territorial disputes were considered. Nevertheless, religious claims continue to lurk beneath the surface of secular arguments and continue to intrude on public debates couched in secular terms.<sup>10</sup>

We are suggesting that the theological challenges to the Jewish state are profound and widespread. For all the massive and unquestioning support of many Evangelical Christians for a Jewish state, other Christian churches have been openly hostile to Israel. The Vatican opposed the creation of Israel and gave first official recognition only in 1993, after the Oslo Accords.<sup>11</sup> The Vatican could not be left behind after the PLO recognized Israel. Yet, even then, as today, the PLO does not readily accept Israel as a “Jewish” state. The same is true of the Catholic Church. In a 2002 document, *A Sacred Obligation*, a group of moderate Catholic theologians who seek accommodation with Jews while expressing sympathy for the Arab position, admit to Judaism as a contemporary living modern faith enriched by centuries of development; they view God’s Covenant with the Jewish people as everlasting and thereby depart from supersessionism or replacement theology; and they affirm the importance of the Land of Israel for the life of the Jewish people. In so doing they recognize both Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews as legitimate inhabitants of the Land. However, they do not explicitly accept a Jewish state and so avoid commenting on the Jewish right to sovereignty in their historic homeland.<sup>12</sup>

To recognize Israel without approving of Zionism is a pragmatic act. On the ground, it has been Christian Arabs, most from the Eastern

Orthodox, particularly the Greek communities long resident in the Holy Land, that have been the most resistant to Zionism as well as key actors in the formulation of Arab and Palestinian nationalism. In addition to leadership in the PLO, Christian personalities figured prominently in hostile organizations. From George Antonius and Constantine Zurayk to George Habash, Archbishop George Makarios, and Edward Said, Christian Arabs have played a leading role in opposing the Jewish state, some with words and others with violence. As the Christians on the ground, they had and still have great weight in the deliberations of foreign church bodies.<sup>13</sup>

Traditional theology that holds that Christianity replaced Judaism has been a common denominator in the hostility towards a Jewish state. This tradition holds that with the coming of Jesus, God's promises had been fulfilled and the message of Christianity was henceforth universal rather than embodied in the mission of a particular nation. This universalism precluded a divinely sanctioned return to Zion and the reestablishment of an independent Jewish polity. Islam would carry this further by asserting that Palestine was holy to Muslims and that neither Jews nor Christians could claim the land as their own.

It is important to observe that not all Christians have accepted this notion of succession. There are distinct and divergent orientations towards Jews and Zionism. For many Evangelicals there is an eschatological vision that may soon be enacted in a divine drama, in which Jews assembled in the Holy Land have a defined role. Moreover, for some liberal Protestants, Jews will act in history without such a final drama, and God continues to have a relationship with them. Both conservative and liberal views uphold a hermeneutics or appreciation of early Christianity in which the relationship between Christianity and Judaism was never severed. Not surprisingly, it is these traditions that are most favorably disposed to a return of Jews to the Holy Land through Zionism.<sup>14</sup>

In the contemporary, non-Evangelical landscape, there are numerous challenges to Zionism. Since there are a very small number of Protestant informants from any denomination in Israel/Palestine, much of the criticism of Israel at church synods comes from Arab Greek Orthodox or Catholic congregations. They claim to speak with authority since they are the "living stones" of Christianity. That is, they are the authentic descendants of the earliest Christians who claim never to have left the land.<sup>15</sup> Some Palestinian Christians even claim to be descendants of Bedouin who migrated north from Saudi Arabia to numerous lands including Palestine. They reject Zionists as outsiders who interrupt the natural, established order of the Holy Land with specious claims that are an affront and a practical



danger. In a clear triumph of faith over documentary evidence—or its absence—Israelis are unwelcome “Western” newcomers who have taken over their land, usurped their rights, and are the cause of their contemporary misfortune. These are the voices that testify in debates over whether to impose BDS—boycott, divestment or sanctions—in mainline Protestant churches.

It is in Liberation Theology that contemporary replacement theology as well as anti-colonial and anti-Zionist rhetoric coalesce. Probably the best-known exponent of Christian Liberation Theology is Naim Ateek, an ordained Episcopalian minister born in Beit She’an who grew up in Nazareth and was trained in Christian institutions in Israel/Palestine and the U.S. Through the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem, which he founded, his writings and influence extend far beyond his immediate confessional community in Israel. Like many Arab Christians he harbors complaints about specific Israeli policies and a narrative that emphasizes the *naqba* and its consequent injustices.<sup>16</sup>

His objection to Zionism is fundamental. For Zionism, the Bible is a foundational text that shapes contemporary culture and actions of modern Jews. Palestinian Liberation theologians recast ancient Hebrews as modern Palestinians yearning for the fulfillment of what they take to be their foreordained right. They appropriate the story of the Exodus, the idea of a Promised Land and the return of its people to mastery over it, and rewrite the story with the language of post-colonial politics. Using secular terms such as “natives” and “indigenous” they seek to establish Palestinians as the Holy Land’s sole authentic “living stones”.

#### *JEWS AS NATIVES*

Zionism invested an enormous amount of thought and praxis in demonstrating that Jews were natives. In Eretz Israel they recovered their sacred language of Hebrew and transformed it into an instrument for building a modern society; they sought and found themselves beneath the surface of the land through archaeology; they interrogated ancient texts for historical links as well as applications to the present; they consciously minimized centuries of exile and secularized the ideal of “ציון שיבת” [Return from Zion] from a divine to a human event; and more. They firmly believed in the “return” to the east as home—hence they termed their movement: **Zionism**. Out of the richness of a national, religious culture that had defined Jews for the millennia, they acted on the premise that realities could be overturned. Yehuda Halevi’s longing could be accomplished: “My heart is in the East, and I am at the ends of the West”.

There was, in fact, considerable historical truth in the belief of return. For most of Jewish history, a majority of Jews lived in the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern world. The balance of Jewish demography began to shift only in the sixteenth century, and massively so only in the nineteenth, when European Jewry increased from 60 to more than 80 percent of the world Jewish population, only to decline precipitously from WW II and the Holocaust through the present. While Jews have long been part of Europe—as one French Jewish intellectual has stated, “We were here before the Gallois”—Jews have been through most of their history a Middle Eastern/Asian people and are becoming so again. The notion of “return” is not necessarily chimerical and finds expression in various theories of cultural identities among contemporary Israelis in such notions as Mediterraneanness, Canaanism, Arab Jews, and New Jews.<sup>17</sup>

Zionism’s critics charge that the intention to artificially transform Jews into natives is a modern deception designed to serve colonialist ends. However, as we have learned from Benedict Anderson, inventing a national identity is widespread in the modern world. We have already suggested that the historical narrative of some Palestinian Christians is an assertion without demonstrable substantiation. Muslim Palestinians, too, imagine an unbroken continuity with the land. When coupled with assertions of exclusivity—i.e., there can be only one “native” in any one locale—such a claim can be used to delegitimize others. That is where the discourse of competing claims is clearly heading.

Consider the opening statement of *The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel*: “We are the Palestinian Arabs in Israel, the indigenous peoples, the residents of the States of Israel, and an integral part of the Palestinian People and the Arab and Muslim and human Nation.”<sup>18</sup> This formulation, produced by some of the leading Palestinian intellectuals in Israel, serves as the basis for de-legitimizing Zionism. Perhaps the most aggressive use of indigenism in challenging the state is employed by Bedouins. In a confrontation that has been growing since the 1970s, independently organized Bedouin encampments in the Negev, considered “illegal” by the state, are championed as unjustly “unrecognized” by Bedouins, based on their claims as the indigenous people and the consequent primacy of their claims to the land.<sup>19</sup>

Morphing “native” into “indigenous” is not accidental. It is a clear and direct borrowing of newly formulated legal principles in international affairs as peoples in different parts of the world challenge the authority of the modern state. Since the 1960s the idea of indigenous rights has been gaining recognition. First initiated by the International Labor Organization

to protect Indian tribes in Central and South America, it quickly came to embrace Australian aborigines and Canadian First Peoples as well as Native Americans in the Southwest. In large measure this movement was intended to protect the indigenous from the rapacious behavior of capitalism and imperialism. In 2007, the UN issued a Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which the US and Canada ultimately signed but only with the reservation that indigenous rights do not trump those of the contemporary, sovereign state. In instances where recognition was apparently given without reservation, it has been actually been ignored in Indonesia, India, and African states. States throughout the world are concerned that unraveling the hodgepodge of their identities could be politically problematic, if not explosive.

The Israeli experience is exceptional in this context. The construction of the Negev Bedouin as an indigenous people began in the 1990s in publications by Bedouin scholars and sympathizers. In 2005, Bedouin activists asked the UN to recognize Bedouins in Israel as an indigenous people with all the rights pertaining thereto. This campaign is now actively challenged. In a recent court case (March 2012)—popularly known as the al-Araqib case—the Negev District Court, after considering the advice of experts from opposing sides, concluded that it could find no evidence for substantial Bedouin settlement in the Negev prior to the nineteenth century. Even on arrival, Bedouins maintained a nomadic life that rarely involved establishing agriculture or dwellings on a permanent basis.

The Eastern Mediterranean littoral became an attractive target for migration for numerous peoples and individuals from within and outside the Ottoman Empire. The Albanian, Mehmet Ali, moved to Egypt to become its leader in the early nineteenth century and sought to extend Egyptian control into Palestine. Egyptian settlers entered Palestine in significant numbers in the nineteenth century. Arabs moved down to the Negev from Hebron at the same time. Circassians arrived from the Caucasus in the 1870s. From Beirut to Jaffa and Alexandria, the Mediterranean coastal regions of the Ottoman Empire attracted migrants to a region that was poised for development and integration into the international economy.

This migration included Jews. The Jewish Chelouche family, for example, moved to Jaffa from North Africa in the mid-nineteenth century to become pioneers in founding Neve Tzedek, the forerunner of Tel-Aviv. Other Jews came from Kurdistan and Yemen as well as Eastern Europe. The total population of Palestine doubled in the nineteenth century. It grew about 20 times in the twentieth, with Jews comprising a significant

portion of this extraordinary development. There is no reason why others could become natives but not Jews.

We could make this point another way. Aside from the Marsh Arabs near Basra in southern Iraq and the Berbers of North Africa, the Bedouins of Israel's Negev are the only other people in the Middle East who are listed in the UN's international registry of indigenous peoples. This is the result of an organized campaign for inclusion. Bedouins in neighboring states are not engaged in staking similar claims. This movement for an indigenous identity is integral to casting Jews as colonial-settlers. Academics who champion the Bedouins as the indigenous may also advance characterizing Israel as a Jewish ethnocracy and replacing it with a de-ethnicized "state of all its citizens". This phenomenon is the secular equivalent of replacement theology. A century of successfully developing a Zionist society has not been enough to set aside the challenge to the Jewish presence and claim to Eretz Israel.

The question then begs itself: how much time is necessary for Jews to become natives? Consider, for example, the experience of Amos Oz, the author of many books including the quasi-autobiographical *A Tale of Love and Darkness* (2005). Oz takes us into the European world of his parents and their relatives and friends, as recreated in Mandatory Jerusalem. A central theme of the novel is the suicide of his mother who did not adjust to the new/old land. But this autobiographical/historical novel is also about Oz's own rebirth. Born Amos Klauzner into a famous family of quintessential European intellectuals, he rebels and leaves Jerusalem to go down to Kibbutz Hulda in the lowlands near the coastal plain. Klauzner was transformed into the sabra Oz even as a host of other former Europeans and Israeli-born took new names and transformed themselves. This was the praxis of the invitation for "reconstitution" through Zionism. David Green became David Ben-Gurion, Shertok became Sharett, Golda Meyerson was transformed into Golda Meir, and so forth. If one accepts that Ben-Gurion can never be considered an Oriental, but remained European, perhaps even a colonialist, does this also hold for Amos Oz? Yitzhak Rabin? Or consider Meron Benvenisti, Ronit Matalon, and others with deep roots in Palestine and the lands of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>20</sup> Do they never become genuine in this new country? In sum, when do Jews and their descendants, European-born or Middle-Eastern in origin, become genuine "natives"? Never?

## COMPETING CLAIMS: CHALLENGING THE JNF AND MARKING THE LANDSCAPE

The first part of this article dealt primarily with competing ideological and theological claims on the Land of Israel. This section will illustrate how challenges to Zionism play out on the ground. Our examples will primarily draw from two spheres of interaction with territory that cover the length and breadth of the Land: first, the land administration and forest-planting activities of the Jewish National Fund; and second, the marking of hiking trails across the country by the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel.

### *KA'ADAN, AL-ARAQIB, AND THE JEWISH NATIONAL FUND*

During the first century of Zionist settlement, the JNF provided the icon that symbolized the Jewish commitment to return and rebuild Zion. Its blue collection boxes were ubiquitous and were clearly marked with a map of land purchased by Jews and for Jews with donations from all over the world. In the pre-state period, this mass effort was essential and appreciated with pride and certainly without criticism. The concept of Jewish land was natural in a country where land was designated as belonging to ethnic groups or organized religions, and ownership by Jews was legally circumscribed. The establishment of Israel removed disabilities and limitations but did not make the JNF redundant. Israel's first government transferred newly acquired land, some of which had been the property of Arabs now living outside Israel, in order to distance itself from potential controversies over land ownership. In contemporary Israel, it is therefore the JNF rather than the state that is often the target and criticized for maintaining allegedly undemocratic policies. Establishing a formula to elide the charges of discrimination will challenge both politicians and legal experts. Maintaining that land was purchased by Jews and for Jews will not be enough to blunt opposition.

Two recent court cases involving the JNF have come from two different directions to challenge Zionist claims over the Land of Israel. In the Ka'adan case, which was before the court for much of the 1990s, Israel's highest court was faced with the prospect of excluding Arabs from JNF land that was expected to be "Jewish". In the 2012 al-Araqib case, an increasingly militant Arab sector within Israel challenged the principle of state land ownership by asserting prior claims of ownership by a distinctive people—the Bedouin.

In the Ka'adan case, an Israeli Arab family filed suit for the right to purchase a home in an all-Jewish community established by Jewish settlement

agencies on land acquired by the Jewish National Fund. The case reflects on the right of Arab citizens to purchase land and build their homes in areas designated for Jews. Prohibition of land sales on the basis of nationality or religion are widely questioned in democratic societies as an unacceptable limitation of the rights of individuals. Regarding Ka'adan, a 1998 editorial in *Ha'aretz* forcefully challenged the practice of exclusion:

After fifty years of statehood, can there be a moral justification for designating lands exclusively to Jews while consciously discriminating against Arab citizens of the state that suffer from severe housing problems? Are concepts such as “the conquest” [*kibush*] of land, or the “redemption” [*g'ula*] of the land or the “Judaization” [*yehud*] of the land, which were of significance in the period prior to independence, still valid in a state that pretends to equality in its relations with its citizens?<sup>21</sup>

The policy of the Supreme Court, under the leadership of the liberal Chief Justice Aharon Barak, had been to urge the opposing sides to work out a solution on their own. While citizens' rights groups may find this lamentable, the Court's delay of four years in intervening in such a sensitive and defining issue was noteworthy. It is unlikely that the Court would have hesitated to favor security and national interests over individual rights in the past. In this instance, Barak ruled in favor of the Arab family, but carefully noted that this was not a precedent for cases involving national security interests, nor did it prejudice the right of specialized, homogenous communities—such as kibbutzim or religious neighborhoods—to exclude dissimilar individuals. If the possibility of peaceful coexistence with Arab neighbors somewhat alleviates security anxieties, the state will likely come under increasing pressure to acknowledge the rights of individual citizens without reference to the community with which they are associated. This would be a significant step in a society that is apparently still consciously struggling to become “normal” within norms associated with Western democracies.<sup>22</sup>

Movement in this direction will be cautious and within the particular context of the Jewish historical experience. That is, the justices found that democratic and egalitarian principles are deeply rooted within Judaism and noted that Jews were on the forefront of movements for civil rights and justice. Thus, when they finally decided in favor of the Arab family's petition, all declared that Israel can be both a Jewish and a democratic state, yet they sought a remedy to a particular situation rather than a precedent for fundamental reform. In this spirit, although much of the judges' opinion was based on American precedents, particularly those rooted in civil

rights litigation, none claimed that Israel should become “a state of all its citizens”, or an imitation of a de-ethnicized and individualistic American civil society. The covenantal and collective base of Israel as a Jewish state remained intact. Indeed, they emphasized that Israeli democracy can and must be derived from Jewish sources and historical experience. For the foreseeable future, there is likely to be considerable residual power in the founding collective ideals and traditions even among secular and outward-looking Jewish intellectuals.

While the Ka’adan case represents an attack against the idea that land should belong to the Jewish people, the al-Araqib case—decided in March 2012 by the Be’er Sheva district court—supports this very idea regarding Bedouin Arabs in Israel. By making the claims of “indigeneity” mentioned earlier in this article, the residents of the unrecognized village in the Negev seek to assert a historic Bedouin Arab right to the land that supersedes any rights claimed by the Jewish state.

Residents of al-Araqib claim, as Bedouins do across extensive areas of the Negev, that they have resided there at least since early in the Ottoman period, have cultivated the land and paid taxes on it, and possess ownership documents. By Bedouin custom and Ottoman law, they assert that the land is theirs. The state argued that in fact the land was abandoned and uncultivated, and that the documents offered do not prove ownership. The argumentation between the sides extended to an examination of Bedouin history in the Negev. Advocates for the Bedouins view them as “indigenous” to the Negev and invoke this version of history to buttress their claims of ownership.<sup>23</sup>

The court considered the advice of experts from both sides and concluded it found no evidence for substantial Bedouin settlement in the Negev prior to the nineteenth century. Moreover, Bedouin tribes who are recorded as present in the sixteenth century are largely no longer present in the nineteenth. On arrival in the Negev, Bedouins maintained a nomadic life that rarely involved establishing agriculture or dwellings on a permanent basis. The court found Bedouin evidence of permanent cultivation and ownership lacking, and in sum, denied the claims of indigeneity. Nevertheless, this will surely not be the last Palestinian or Bedouin attempt to challenge the state by advancing a historical and cultural narrative. Antagonists will continue to assert divergent interpretations of history in the polemics of claiming Israel/Palestine, and the arguments will involve the courts, scholarship, and politics.<sup>24</sup>

In both of these cases, the Jewish National Fund carried out national policy. The establishment of the State of Israel removed impediments to

Jewish ownership of land, but did not make pre-state national institutions like the JNF entirely redundant. By transferring newly acquired land to the JNF—some of which had been the property of Arabs now living outside the boundaries of Israel—the state distanced itself from charges that it was preserving land only for Jews. In contemporary Israel, it is therefore the JNF rather than the state that is often the target for criticism in maintaining undemocratic policies and engaged in controversy.

During its long history, the JNF has developed the land for agriculture; it has built dams, reservoirs, and parks; and it has planted about a quarter of a billion trees. This latter activity is the one for which the JNF is perhaps the best-known, and is the most visible way in which Israel's semi-arid land, once largely denuded of trees and greenery, has been transformed over the past century. No less than agricultural settlements, JNF forests reflect the Zionist achievement in restoring the land to the fertility celebrated in the Bible.

Once a subject of celebration, the JNF's forest-planting activities are now viewed as highly politicized in their role of enacting national policy. Indeed, the land occupied by al-Araqib was intended for JNF forestation. Critics argue that using a JNF forest to cover the scattered and ramshackle buildings of al-Araqib is a blatant example of how the Zionist authorities obscure the long Palestinian presence in the land. By preferring imported conifers to local trees such as the olive, the JNF affirms the foreign nature of Zionist colonization, erasing the reality and memory of the Arab connection to the land. Transforming al-Araqib into a forest, then, is a crime of theft and erasure, not another achievement in "making the desert bloom".

The debate over forests has been a continuing theme in literature and art. In his 1934 short story "Under the Tree", Agnon writes of a conversation at Degania, where he shares with a sheikh—the "officer of the Ishmaelites" (*sar ha-ishma'elim*)—his intention to plant imported trees on "our land in Degania". The sheikh observes that Jews are planting forests and orchards, and making the land green as if the territory belongs to them. In an extended colloquy, the Arab shares the heroics and suffering he and his ancestors have endured in the violent defense of a land that he also considers his own. Agnon's story is prophetic, published two years before the outbreak of the 1936–1939 Arab Revolt.<sup>25</sup>

Nearly three decades later, in 1963, A.B. Yehoshua published "Facing the Forest", an early story of a fire that consumed a JNF forest planted over the ruins of a Crusader castle and an Arab village depopulated in the War of Independence. A mute and gleeful Arab watchman sets the fire that reveals the hidden village.<sup>26</sup> Nearly four decades after Yehoshua's story—at



Brandeis in 2012—the Lod-born Palestinian artist Dor Guez presented an installation depicting a JNF forest used for recreation and shade, similarly planted over the ruins of a Palestinian village. Guez rues the fact that the JNF planted only “foreign trees”, as if its activities—and by extension, the activities of the Zionist movement—were a colonialist endeavor that expunged the native presence in the country.<sup>27</sup>

The struggle over ownership of land between Jews and Arabs is not as simple as “foreign” pine trees versus “native” olive trees. However, plants, like humans, are ever-migrating. The sabra cactus and the Jaffa orange both serve as symbols of legitimacy and rootedness in the land for Jews and Arabs, and yet the sabra came to Palestine from Mexico in the seventeenth century, and the Jaffa orange came originally from China. Similarly, the Aleppo pines—often known now as Jerusalem pines—planted by the JNF are now a part of Israel’s cultural and physical landscape. Amid all the discussion of their political uses, the function of forests as recreational areas is diminished and obscured.

#### ISRAEL’S NETWORK OF HIKING TRAILS

Hiking trails in Israel stand at the intersection of all of the phenomena outlined above. They offer an illuminating lens for examining competing claims to Eretz Israel. As a country-wide network, uniformly marked on the ground by the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI), the trails cover all of Israeli territory, including the Golan Heights and the West Bank. The *simun shvilim* (marked trails) maps, upon which the trails are depicted, similarly cover the country in a series of 20 high-resolution sheets. With the trail markings and the trail maps as guides, hundreds of thousands of Israelis of all ages explore the country every year, marking with their feet the borders and contours of the land. In recent years, though, the trail network itself has become a battlefield for internal disputes over land use, as well as disputes between Zionism and other political ideologies.<sup>28</sup>

Anthropologists and human geographers have described the ritual value of walking and trail-marking as ways of demarcating territory, and transforming undifferentiated space into known and articulated place.<sup>29</sup> Early Zionist immigrants to Eretz Israel who explored their new country on foot asserted their right not simply to live there, but to move freely in it, to dwell in it, and to sink deep roots that connected them to the ancient past. Organized recreational hiking began around 1920 at the hands of Zionist youth movements and educational institutions, and took on an Eretz-Israeli character as it merged with old ideas about “walking the Land” as described in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>30</sup> Youth who hiked to Masada during the

1920s and 1930s felt that they were literally following in the footsteps of the Jewish kings, rebels, and ascetics who had once made that territory their home. The “knowledge of the Land” that they gained through walking and other interactions with the Land was called in Hebrew *yedi’at ha’aretz*—an intimate and biblical knowledge that strongly implied possession.<sup>31</sup>

Beginning during the 1936–1939 Arab Revolt, hiking became a clandestine means by which Jewish paramilitary units trained in the field and obtained military intelligence. Experienced youth movement guides became Palmach scouts. The old routes to sites like Masada functioned both as paths to *yedi’at ha’aretz*, and also as means toward preparing for armed conflict.<sup>32</sup> Israeli trail-marking was born in this climate, one week before the UN vote on partition in November 1947, on the main route to Masada along the shores of the Dead Sea. The first marked trail in Eretz Israel, created by the special approval of the Haganah General Staff, was the first marked hiking trail in the Middle East, and signaled the determination of Jewish youth to assert their right to explore their homeland despite the dangers of climate, terrain, and even war. Conscious of the threat the trail would pose to Bedouin claims over the surrounding territory, the Jewish trail-blazers used ladders to paint the markings high up on stones, where they would not be easily erased.<sup>33</sup>

When the SPNI led an effort to begin marking trails again in the early 1960s, different parties supported the effort because it enabled them to assert their own territorial claims. The SPNI saw hiking trails as a means of mobilizing youth to explore backcountry areas and become aware of pressing environmental issues. The Ministry of Education saw the marked trail network as a tool for teaching *yedi’at ha’aretz* and for further integrating outdoor education into the official curriculum. The IDF saw marking and mapping hiking trails as a way of heightening Israeli presence near the Green Line, which ran just four kilometers north of Ein Gedi, and was frequently crossed by Bedouin Arabs. All of these dynamics remained in play as the SPNI and its supporters marked trails around the Eilat Mountains in the mid-1960s, and in the northern Judean Desert and the Golan Heights after 1967.<sup>34</sup>

By the 1980s, Israeli trails had penetrated the interior of the country, enabling hiking to engage a broader segment of the Israeli public. The SPNI’s field schools served as hubs of the trail network, from which guides led popular educational hikes. The Ministry of Education continued to integrate hiking into the public school curriculum, and *ha’tiyul ha’sbnati*—the annual school hike—maintained its traditional status as an important component of outdoor youth education. As increasing numbers of young

men and women traveled overseas after completing their army service, Israeli trail-planners began planning a world-class hiking route inspired by the Appalachian Trail in the United States.<sup>35</sup>

One might have thought at that point that the Israeli claim to possession of the Land through *yedi'at ha'aretz* had come to full fruition. Not only had Israelis thoroughly explored every corner of the country, but they had also left marks as evidence of their exploration, and as signs that they would return to explore it further. The dominance of the trail system as a mediator between Israelis and Eretz Israel, as well as its prominence on the landscape, drove some veteran hikers and scouts to assert their own trail-related claims to the Land. They argued that the trails represented a form of development that had gone out of control, and that they had the right to live in a country that still had unspoiled areas, void of human habitation.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, in nature reserves and national parks, it was illegal to depart from marked trails—that is, trails marked by the SPNI. In large parts of the country, then, hikers had no choice but to use the trails unless they were willing to break the law.<sup>37</sup>

Debates continued as SPNI trail-planners worked during the mid-1980s to construct the route of *Shvil Israel*, the long-distance route known in English as the Israel National Trail. Given the depth of Israel's culture of hiking, and the prominence of marked trails across the country, the public did not take the matter of a “national trail” lightly. People from across Israel sent ideas for the trail's route to the SPNI, but the main point of contention was related to politics and ideology: whether the trail should enter Judea and Samaria, or avoid the West Bank entirely. The outbreak of violence during the First Palestinian Intifada, however, rendered it impossible to mark and hike an eastern route.<sup>38</sup> Then came Madrid and Oslo, and in the political climate that prevailed in 1995, President Ezer Weitzman formally unveiled the trail's final route: it stayed almost completely within Israel's pre-1967 lines, and avoided the Golan Heights, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and even Jerusalem.<sup>39</sup>

Since that time, Israel's national trail has had to compete with other articulations of “national trails” advanced by parties on the right and the left. Settlers from Judea and Samaria remain unhappy with the trail's route, and began in 2009 to create an alternative *Shvil Israel* that splits from the main route south of the Kinneret, crosses the West Bank from north to south by way of Jerusalem, and rejoins the main trail near Arad. In 2011, Israeli and Palestinian activists worked together to create a “Palestinian National Trail” that crosses Area C of the West Bank, beginning north of the Green Line near Meitar and running north toward Hebron. The trail's

planners—inspired by *Shvil Israel* and conscious of trails' ability to assert a people's claim of connection to land—painted the blazes to look like miniature Palestinian flags.<sup>40</sup>

Religion, no less than politics, has found expression in trails. In 2000, in preparation for the Pope's visit to the Holy Land, two Palestinian tourism organizations partnered to create the Nativity Trail, a Christian pilgrimage route connecting Nazareth and Bethlehem.<sup>41</sup> The trail is marked on maps, but not on the ground, because it is not designed for independent travelers. Rather, by leading walking tours through Israel and the West Bank, the trail's organizers hope to foster solidarity between foreign Christian pilgrims and the Palestinian Christians who live along the route. Journeying along the Nativity Trail from Nazareth to Bethlehem with Palestinian guides and staying in Palestinian homes brings tourists into contact with both the stones of the land and the "living stones". It creates the sense that the people and the land are deeply connected, and that they share a history and a destiny. It is the flipside of the Zionist relationship between people and land as articulated through hiking—and a direct response to it.

Trails that follow in the footsteps of Jesus are contentious even outside the context of competing national movements, and highlight internal Israeli disputes over how the country should be portrayed to outsiders, and which parts of the country should be visited by tourists. In the early 2000s, the Ministry of Tourism announced a plan to create a pilgrimage route for Christians through the Galilee. After years passed and nothing took shape, Israeli entrepreneurs created the path themselves, and enlisted the SPNI's help in painting its markings. The 65-kilometer path became known as the Jesus Trail, and true to its name, it connected notable Christian sites throughout northern Israel—most of which were found in Arab towns and villages like Kafr Kana, where Jesus is said to have turned water into wine.<sup>42</sup>

The Ministry of Tourism supported the effort until 2011, but withdrew just before unveiling its own Christian pilgrimage route across the Galilee, known as the Gospel Trail. Citing security concerns, the Ministry said the trail would not enter Arab towns and villages, but instead would stay in JNF forests. The ensuing competition between the grassroots Jesus Trail and the government Gospel Trail over which side of Israel would be shown to Christian tourists was widely covered in international media outlets, but has already largely resolved itself.<sup>43</sup> Few pilgrims have visited the Gospel Trail. Its forest-based route does not encounter a single Christian site until its very end, when it overlaps the Jesus Trail. Security concerns notwithstanding, the Jesus Trail attracts thousands of pilgrims every year, and now serves as a model for future themed trails created by the SPNI for tourist use.

Other SPNI trails highlight other Israeli conversations over the use of land. In the case of the recently created Be'er Sheva Trail, the SPNI created a marked hiking route designed to counteract the effects of urban sprawl and inhibit Bedouin squatters from encroaching on state lands. In a 2012 working paper, the trail's creators describe the 42-kilometer path as circumnavigating the city and thereby creating a "green belt" that will continue to exist even after the city grows beyond its present boundaries.<sup>44</sup> Whether or not the trail interests potential hikers, it takes advantage of the fact that once marked on the ground and on topographical maps, it is difficult to erase. The open spaces, existing footpaths, and rights-of-way that make up the trail's corridor will therefore likely be factored into future plans for Be'er Sheva's expansion. In this case, the trail stakes a claim for environmental preservation and responsible urban planning, and has generated little controversy.

By contrast, a SPNI trail designed to circumnavigate the Sea of Galilee has been years in the making. According to Israeli law, the shores of the Kinneret are a national resource and should be accessible to all Israelis. However, as anyone who has traveled or hiked near the lake can attest, much of the shoreline is occupied by restaurants and private beaches that claim control of the land to the water's edge, and charge money for entry. In 2004, groups of Israeli youth working with the SPNI asserted that fences and walls should be removed in order to ensure public access. Meanwhile, the SPNI forced the issue by marking the "Kinneret Trail" along the shoreline. In 2006, the National Council for Planning and Construction sanctioned the trail by writing an amendment to the National Master Plan for Beaches.<sup>45</sup> Seven years later, though, the trail is still not complete. The private businesses that profit from limiting access to beaches—as well as Christian organizations that control holy sites along the shorelines—have fought the initiative in court, and the status of the trail is not yet resolved.<sup>46</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In so many ways Zionism is a success story. Israel has recently been admitted to membership in the OECD in acknowledgment of its achievements in building a modern, democratic society with an advanced economy. Few non-Western nations that emerged in the post-WW II world have been so recognized. Israel has also achieved considerable "reconstitution". Now approaching a population of 8 million with more than 6 million Jews, Israel functions creatively and productively in Hebrew in all areas of modern life

from the arts and politics to science and the economy. Israel has also produced a good number of Nobel Laureates. By this and many other measures there should be reason for optimism and even celebration.

Yet Zionism is uneasy. While Israeli intellectual and physical products are found throughout the world, its place in the family of nations, as at the UN, is often that of a pariah. The general dissatisfaction with Israel's policies towards the Palestinians is surely a main reason. However, while one can envision a future in which a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict enables the Jewish state to devote more of its energy to continued development along normal paths, conflicting claims over Eretz Israel are multidimensional and cannot all be addressed solely through political agreements.

Once Israel's final territorial borders are established, and peace agreements are made with all of its neighbors, Israel will still have to deal with external objections to the existence of a Jewish state on theological and historical grounds. Jews have a unique presence in human history and the world community. For all the sympathy Zionism has enjoyed in realizing an age-old dream of return to the homeland, there has also been religious and philosophical rejection of its legitimacy to an extent that is probably rare among the numerous states created in the post-WW II period. Debates over the historical narrative that justifies the state's creation will continue to have internal and external consequences.

The issues we have emphasized in the second part of this article—planting trees and marking paths—touch on interpretations of the past that offer differing views of the primacy of different groups' rights to inhabit and control the land. When tree-planting and trail-marking are governed by one interpretation of rights, they infringe on others. Moreover, resistance to the implications of constituting a state as "Jewish" comes not only from non-Jewish citizens of Israel, but also from co-religionists who live in different societies, and who find the significance and implications of ethnic historical nationalism distasteful and unjust. At the same time, they touch on the difficulties of allocating and responsibly using land in a small country with limited resources and an ever-growing population. All these tensions will continue to spur debate over responsible stewardship of the land.

For those who live, work, and walk in the old/new land, the past resonates everywhere and informs how the future may be imagined. The same landscape engenders distinctive meanings and associations. Navigating the Eretz Israel/Palestine countryside in the twenty-first century will in all likelihood continue to be an experience that both reflects and stimulates competition. One may hope for a lessening of tensions but competition, if only in the imagination, will surely persist.

## NOTES

1. <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/o/2FCA2C68106F11AB05256BCF007BF3CB>
2. Boaz Neumann, *Land and Desire in Early Zionism* (Waltham, MA, 2011).
3. Oz Almog, *The Sabra; The Creation of the New Jew* (Berkeley, 2000); Tamar Katriel, *Talking Straight: Dugri Speech in Israeli Sabra Culture* (Cambridge, 1986).
4. See, for example, Jacob Lassner and S. Ilan Troen, *Jews and Muslims in the Arab World; Haunted by Pasts Real and Imagined* (Lanham, MD, 2007).
5. Tony Judt, "Israel: The Alternative," *New York Review of Books* 50.16 (23 October 2003); Leon Wieseltier, "Israel, Palestine, and the Return of the Binational Fantasy; What is Not to Be Done," *The New Republic*, 27 October 2003.
6. Peter Beinart, *The Crisis of Zionism* (New York, 2012); See an example of the criticism of this view in Bret Stephens, "Peter Beinart's False Prophecy," *Tablet Magazine*, 26 March 2012, <http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/94872/peter-beinarts-false-prophecy>.
7. Deborah Dash Moore and S. Ilan Troen, eds. *Divergent Jewish Cultures: Israel and America* (New Haven, 2001).
8. Eric Fleisch and Theodore Sasson, *The New Philanthropy: American Jewish Giving to Israeli Organizations* (Waltham, MA, April 2012).
9. Daniel Langton, *Children of Zion: Jewish and Christian Perspective on the Holy Land* (Cambridge, 2008); F. Michael Perko, "Contemporary American Christian Attitudes to Israel Based on the Scriptures," *Israel Studies* 8.2 (2003):1–17.
10. Gideon Shimoni, "The Right to Land," in *The Zionist Ideology*, ed. Gideon Shimoni and Hayim Avne, 333–88 (Hanover, NH, 1995).
11. Uri Bialer, *Cross on the Star of David: The Christian World in Israel's Foreign Policy, 1948–1967* (Bloomington, IN, 2005).
12. <http://www.jcrelations.net/en/?id=986>.
13. [http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/bds\\_in\\_the\\_pews\\_european\\_us\\_and\\_canadian\\_government\\_funding\\_behind\\_anti\\_israel\\_activism\\_in\\_mainline\\_churches](http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/bds_in_the_pews_european_us_and_canadian_government_funding_behind_anti_israel_activism_in_mainline_churches).
14. Arthur R Eckardt, "Toward a Secular Theology of Israel," *Religion in Life: A Christian Quarterly of Opinion and Discussion* 48 (1979): 462–73; Carl Hermann Voss and David A. Rausch, "American Christians and Israel, 1948–1988," in *Essential Papers on Jewish-Christian Relations in the United States: Imagery and Reality*, ed. Naomi W. Cohen, 279–306 (New York, 1990).
15. 1 Peter 2:5: "You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood."
16. Naim Ateek, *Justice and Only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY, 1989).
17. Yehouda Shenhav, *The Arab Jews: A Postcolonial Reading of Nationalism, Religion, and Ethnicity* (Stanford, 2006); David Ohana, *Israel and its Mediterranean Identity* (New York, 2011).

18. Mossawa Center and the Heads of Local Arab Councils Committee. Last modified 15 January 2013. <http://www.mossawacenter.org/en/item.asp?aid=943>.

19. Seth J. Frantzman, Havatzelet Yahel, and Ruth Kark, "Contested Indigeneity: The Development of an Indigenous Discourse on the Bedouin of the Negev, Israel," *Israel Studies* 17.1 (2012): 78–104; Yahel Havatzelet, Ruth Kark, and Seth Frantzman, "Are the Negev Bedouin an Indigenous People?" *Middle East Quarterly* 19.3 (2012): 3–14.

20. Meron Benvenisti's father David immigrated to Palestine from Salonika during the Second Aliyah and became one of the Yishuv's foremost explorers of Eretz Israel. Despite feeling ambivalent about his father's work, which included the Hebraization of the map of the Negev during the 1950s, Meron Benvenisti sees himself and his fellow Israelis as wholly belonging to Eretz Israel. See Meron Benvenisti, *Conflicts and Contradictions* (New York, 1986), 33: "How foolish are the attempts to compare us to the Crusaders; how utterly absurd is the perception of us as a bunch of rootless drifters. The seedling, planted almost one hundred years ago, has grown into a robust and ramified tree, with roots deeply thrust in the soil of moledet."

21. "Prejudice by Nationality," *Ha'aretz*, 29 March 1998.

22. Bagatz 6698/95, *Quaadan v. Israel Lands Authority, et al.*

23. Civil Case File Nos. 7161/06, 7275/06, 7276/06 III4/07, III5/07, 5278/08, *Suleiman Mahmud Salaam El-Uqbi (deceased) et al. v. The State of Israel et al.* (15.3.12). See, too, "Court rejects 6 Beduin Negev land lawsuits," *Jerusalem Post*, 19 March 2012; Nadav Shragai, "The True Story of Al-Araqueeb," *Israel Hayom*, 19 March 2012 [Hebrew].

24. *Op cit.*

25. Samuel Joseph Agnon, *Under the Tree in Kol sipuray shel Shmuel Yosef Agnon* (Tel-Aviv, 1964), Vol. 2, 449–61 [Hebrew].

26. A. B. Yehoshua, "Facing the Forests," in *Three Days and a Child* (New York, 1970), 131–74.

27. Gannit Ankori and Dabney Hailey, *Dor Guez: 100 Steps to the Mediterranean* (Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, 2012).

28. The history of the development of Israel's hiking trail network is dealt with extensively in Shay Rabineau, "Marking and Mapping the Nation: Simun Shvilim and the Creation of Israel's Hiking Trail Network" (PhD diss., Brandeis University).

29. See Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca, 1970); Yi-Fu Tuan, "Sacred Space: Explorations of An Idea," in *Dimensions of Human Geography: Essays on Some Familiar and Neglected Themes*, ed. Karl W. Butzer, 84–99 (Chicago, 1978).

30. Anita Shapira, *Land and Power: The Zionist Resort to Force, 1881–1948* (Oxford, 1992), 270. For more on how hiking in the Yishuv, and later Israeli hiking, was shaped by ideas found in Jewish religious texts, see Zev Vilnay, *The Tiyul and Its Educational Value* (Jerusalem, 1950), 5–15 [Hebrew].



31. Yoram Bar-Gal, *Moledet and Geography in One Hundred Years of Zionist Education* (Tel-Aviv, 1993) [Hebrew].

32. Oz Almog, *The Sabra: The Creation of the New Jew* (Los Angeles, 2000), 171–4.

33. Hillel Birger, “Marking Ramblers’ Paths in the Judean Desert,” *Teva va-Aretz* 6 (1959): 237–8 [Hebrew].

34. For a brief summation of the parties involved in simun shvilim during the project’s early days, see Ofer Regev, *Forty Years of Blossoming: The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel, 1953–1993* (Tel-Aviv, 1993), 50–1 [Hebrew].

35. Ori Dvir, “The Simun Shvilim Project and Shvil Israel,” in *Landscapes of Eretz Israel: Sefer Azaria Alon*, ed. Gabriel Barkai and Ely Schiller (Jerusalem, 2000), 187–8 [Hebrew].

36. This dispute reflects a tension that was present in early Labor Zionism. Writers like A.D. Gordon and Martin Buber idealized hard work on the Land as a key means by which Jews could reconnect with the Jewish homeland. While development inevitably sprung from such work—that side of the equation was glorified in the works of poets such as Natan Alterman—Gordon and Buber venerated nature in its unspoiled form. As shown by Boaz Neumann in *Land and Desire in Early Zionism* (Lebanon, NH, 2011), the pioneering youth of the Second Aliyah sought to attain yedi’at ha’aretz through primal encounters with the virgin Land. Veteran hikers such as Menahem Markus, in a similar spirit, hiked extensively in the Sinai during the 1970s for lack of unmarked territory in Israel, and have since opposed much of the SPNI’s trail-marking work. See Menahem Markus, “It’s Also Possible Without the Cult of Signs,” *Teva va-Aretz* 254 (1993): 42–5 [Hebrew].

37. State of Israel, “Law of National Parks, Nature Reserves, National Sites, and Memorial Sites,” *Sefer ha-Hukim* 1397 (1992): 230.

38. Dvir, “Simun Shvilim Project,” 188.

39. The only place where the trail crossed the Green Line was at Latrun, which remained in Jordanian possession after the War of Independence; trail planners only realized this after the fact. Ironically, Latrun was where the opening ceremony for Shvil Israel was held. Circumstances surrounding the creation of Shvil Israel are detailed in Dvir, “Simun Shvilim Project,” 182–88.

40. Shira Poliak, “Palestinian National Trail to Open Over Weekend,” *Jerusalem Post*, 22 June 2011.

41. The Siraj Center for Holy Land Studies and the Alternative Tourism Group, both based in Beit Sahour near Bethlehem, are the lead organizations behind the Nativity Trail. See [http://www.walkpalestine.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=51:nativity-trail-&catid=36:upcoming-tours](http://www.walkpalestine.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=51:nativity-trail-&catid=36:upcoming-tours). Accessed 1 February 2013.

42. Anna Dintaman and David Landis, *Hiking the Jesus Trail and Other Biblical Walks in the Galilee* (Harleysville, PA, 2010).

43. See, for example, Moshe Gilad, “Following the Path of Jesus in Northern Israel,” *Ha’aretz*, 5 December 2011, <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/features/>

following-the-path-of-jesus-in-northern-israel-1.399540; Brad Wetzler, "Hiking Through Biblical Backcountry," *New York Times*, 24 June 2012, TR9; Dennis Lewon, "The Jesus Trail: Hiking from Nazareth to the Sea of Galilee," *Backpacker* 40.2 (March 2012): 70–80.

44. Arc Gal Hart and Ohad Kochavi, "The Round tBe'er-Sheva Trail," unpublished SPNI/Israel Trails Committee working paper, 2011.

45. Moshe Gilad, "Walk Around Water," *Ha'aretz* Online, 12 October 2012. <http://www.haaretz.com/news/features/walk-around-water.premium-1.470280>. Accessed 1 February 2013.

46. Shai Yagel, SPNI Trail-Marking Coordinator, telephone interview with Shay Rabineau, 27 January 2013.