

THE RELATION BETWEEN COLLECTIVE TRAUMA AND
CIVIL SOCIETY: JEWISH CITIZENS OF ISRAEL AS A CASE STUDY

By

Seda Kirdar

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Chair:

Prof. Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana

Prof. Christos Kyrou

Prof. Louis W. Goodman
Dean of the College or School

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SEDA KIRDAR

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

AU ID: 217 12 68

“Brother, brother, what are you saying? I mean, you have blood on your hands!” Dunya cried in despair.

“The blood that’s on everyone’s hands... that flows and has always flowed through the world like a waterfall, that is poured like a champagne and for the sake of which men are crowned in the Capitol and then called the benefactors of mankind. Well, just take a closer look and see what’s really what!”

*_FYODOR DOSTOYEVSK
Crime and Punishment*

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FOREWORD: THE HOLOCAUST, EVER-PRESENT

The magnificent landscape of Jerusalem was shining beneath a hot July sun. By this time I had been in Israel for over a month interviewing historians, psychologists, commentators and filmmakers, all of whom were Jewish citizens of Israel. I asked them to express their opinions and experiences about the meaning of the Holocaust and how its memory resonates in the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I also wanted to learn what led ordinary citizens to maintain a notion of victimization resulting from the memory of the Holocaust.

Two questions guide this project: what are the implications of a society that despite having suffered its own catastrophic events, has nevertheless, replicated a degree of suffering upon others? How have many Israeli citizens failed to empathize with Palestinians who are passing through in their own Nakba (the catastrophe)? Marc Ellis has considered this paradox, noting that:

“Instead of the healing and normalization of the Jewish condition, the force of Israel has deepened our wounds. In a paradoxical way, by externalizing our pain and inflicting it on another people, we are becoming more distant from the sources and resources of our own possible healing ... What the Nazis had not succeeded in accomplishing – the undermining at a fundamental level of the very essence of what it means to be Jewish – we as Jews have embarked upon. I witnessed this in the hospitals and in the streets where Palestinians, struggling to assert their own dignity, were being systematically beaten, expelled and murdered by those who had suffered this indignity less than fifty years earlier.”¹

This project examines how past trauma is received collectively upon a society and how it goes on to manifest itself in the public opinion and policy. As a case study, I examine the tragedy of the Holocaust and its shared meaning to the Jewish citizens of Israel. Several characteristics set

¹ Marc H. Ellis, *Israel and Palestine: Out of the Ashes: The Search for Jewish Identity in the Twenty-First Century*, London: Pluto Press, 2002, p. 156

Jewish citizens of Israel apart from each other, such as their origin, family backgrounds, culture, traditions and ties with the religion. However, the majority of Israeli citizens thinks and responds to the Holocaust in similar ways. The Holocaust has shaped the collective identity and soul of the nation.

Before my interviews, I was curious how the Holocaust influenced the formation of Jewish-Israeli identity broadly and how it affected Israeli-Palestinian discourse more specifically. I had been researching how these notions of victimization that emerged from the Holocaust contributed to the intractability of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I suspected that traumatic events could stir up collective remembrance through myths, stories and rituals that pass from generation to generation, often resulting in a shift to some extent in that society actions and policy making processes. The aggression that the state of Israel exhibits towards Palestinians may be explained as a manifestation of this collective trauma and the consciousness of Jewish victimhood. The memory of the Holocaust has fostered an emotional response within many Jewish people, one that has conveyed an eternal sense of victimization. Therefore, to maintain the state's existence and preserve its identity, the society is more likely to comply with aggressive policies through militaristic ventures that are allegedly undertaken to ensure survival. Pumla Godobo Madikizela explains this cycle; "there are countless examples in the history of government by people who have risen out of oppressive rule to become oppressors themselves."²

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The concept of individual trauma is a subject of several researchers. For instance, Judith Herman argues that,

² Pumla Godobo Madikizela, *A Human Being Died That Night: A South African Woman Confronts the Legacy of Apartheid*, New York: First Mariner Books, 2004, p.16

“When the events are natural disasters or "acts of God," those who bear witness sympathize readily with the victim. But when the traumatic events are of human design, those who bear witness are caught in the conflict between victim and perpetrator. It is morally impossible to remain neutral in this conflict.”³

Herman describes traumatic events as extraordinary, not because they seldom occur, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life. Traumatic experience forces victims to face issues lying outside the boundaries of personal and collective frames of reference.⁴

Scholars have largely worked on the phenomenon of a society transmitting collective trauma from one generation to succeeding generations. Antonius C. G. M. Robben and Marcelo M. Suarez-Orozco further the concept of individual trauma and talk about the term of massive or collective trauma. This term applies to any society, ethnic group, social category or class which has been exposed to extreme circumstances of traumatization, such as natural disasters, technological catastrophes, and social, political, cultural, gender, ethnic, or religious persecution.⁵ The collective trauma becomes more embedded when it transfers to a society's political psychology. According to Yaacov Y.I. Vertzberger,

“The collective trauma as a political psychology is a shattering, often violent event that affects a community of people (rather than a single person or a few members of it) and that results from human behavior that is politically motivated and has political consequences.”⁶

³ Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: the Aftermath of Violence- from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*, New York: BasicBooks, 1997, p.7

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Antonius C.G.M. Robben, Marcelo M. Suarez-Orozco, *Cultures Under Siege: Collective Violence and Trauma*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p.22

⁶ Yaacov Y. I. Vertzberger, “The Antinomies of Collective Trauma: a pre-theory”, in *Political Psychology*, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Vol.18, Issue 4, 24 October 2003, pp.863-876

Vetzberger argues that such an event affects all psychological defense barriers and leaves those with a sense of vulnerability. At this point, Vetzberger makes an important contribution to the field by talking not only of collective trauma, but also of collective violence.⁷

These approaches provide some starting points for a more precise concept of collective trauma. First, like individual trauma which damages the inner structure of a person, collective trauma also damages the structures of a community. Secondly, individual trauma has a direct impact on a person's relationship with the others. Collective trauma also affects the community's behavior to other communities. Common phenomena to this attitude are unilateral methods, such as, threats and identifying the enemies. Moreover, the assumptions that individuals and societies form after a traumatic ordeal go on to reframe basic values, and more broadly, the way in which the community understands the world and itself. When people come together to remember, they enter a domain beyond that of individual memory.⁸ At this point, myths, rituals, national memories come to the stage as a collective traumatic memory.

Literature dealing with collective trauma also suggests that affected societies have a new identity formation after the collective trauma that they have experienced. This new identity is much more vulnerable and fragile, having assumptions for the other communities through its collective memories such as myths, rituals and national memories. I predict, after the post trauma, this new identity hinders the society having progressive and peace-oriented relationships with its outside communities. Since the society still has been traumatized through its myths,

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992. For recent elaborations, see Iwona Irwin-Zarecki, *Frames of Remembrance: the Dynamics of Collective Memory*, New Brunswick: Transaction, 1994; and Peter Burke, "History as Social Memory", in *Memory, History, Culture and the Mind*, edited by Thomas Butler, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990, pp. 97-113

rituals and national memories, the people living in that society still think their identity and existence are being threatened. They start dehumanizing and identifying the ‘other’ as an enemy.

Collective trauma then is an important concept to examine because it reveals so much about the intricate interaction between trauma and public policy. How a society may break these cycles of trauma should gain more sustained attention in the future, because of the implications it has for creating sustainable peace. The 2009 Gaza War is particularly concerning because it possesses such escalation with mutual hatred and hostility in the region.

THEORETICAL APPROACH

Social-psychological approaches provide a starting point for conflict analysis since these approaches deal consider the variegated nature of the human experience alongside the social factors that are inherent in every conflict. For a comprehensive understanding of conflict, social psychology as a frame of analysis should be employed. The suffering and trauma are the results of the conflicts and war and without addressing them; there can be no mitigation of the conflict and healing process. These less-visible consequences of violent conflict should be paid more attention for the sustainability of the peace. Godobo-Madikizela, a well-known South-African psychologist for her contributions to the study of social influence in social psychology argues “In South Africa, the past continues to exist, because it is not past. The traumatic events seem still so vivid that it is as if they are happening in the moment. The uses of tense defy the rules of grammar cross the boundaries of past and present in an illustration of the timelessness of traumatic pain.”⁹ The literary historian Lawrence Langer has called this concept of “durational time”, in relation to camp survivors after the Holocaust. Durational time refers to camp memories which remain forever present in the minds of many former prisoners. It is the time-

⁹ Godobo-Madikizela, p. 89

camp time, frozen time- in which many of them could not put their traumatic memories behind them.¹⁰ For many of these former prisoners the past and the present are a continuous time phrase which has mass of myths, lies and fantasies.

Psychological analyses also have so much to offer regarding the aftermath of trauma. Glynis Breakway argues that tremendous disruptions like trauma threaten a person's identity. The processes of identity (assimilation, accommodation, and evaluation) are unable to comply with the principles of continuity, distinctiveness, and self-esteem, which habitually guide their operation.¹¹ Not surprisingly, we can expand the argument to encompass that of nation states. Here, collective trauma threatens the nation's collective identity and challenges continuity of both beliefs and behavior. It also challenges distinctiveness in various ways. When the event happens within the community, it threatens the self-understanding or collective myth of being a special community. As mentioned, this collective trauma arises from a huge number of traumatized individuals within a community. In this case, the individuals have been directly or indirectly exposed to the traumatic event. Collective trauma then emerges from the pain that is radiated by individual trauma onto the community. According to Heinberg, in the aftermath of trauma, a whole culture can be threatened in its existence, and this loss, cultural bereavement, affects the individuals, comparable to the loss of their own identity, with culturally specific symptomatic results.¹²

My research analyzes the long-term influences of traumatic events on individuals and societies, the ways in which these individuals relate themselves to their traumatic past. Therefore, this

¹⁰ Lawrence Langer, *Admitting the Holocaust and Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory*, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1993, p.20

¹¹ Glynis Marie Breakway, *Coping with Threatened Identities*, New York: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1986, p.76

¹² Richard Heinberg, catastrophe, "Collective Trauma & the Origin of Civilization", <http://www.newdawnmagazine.com>, accessed on January 10, 2009

topic calls for social-psychological frameworks. It seeks to address extremely complex issues in protracted conflicts. This study aims to contribute a perspective for the Holocaust's continual psychological impact on the Jewish citizens of Israel and their relationship with their neighbors.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

In the first chapter, I present the project's methodology and research design. I also talk about the data, challenges and limitations of my project.

In the second chapter, I offer a historiographical overview of scholarship that has explored the memory of the Holocaust as a central component to the collective identity of Jewish citizens of Israel. Israel's story started with the 1948 War and a great silence that surrounded the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. This silence continued with the newcomers in the 1950s. In 1960s relation with West Germany brought the attention of the meaning of the Holocaust to the Israelis. The real incident that broke the silence was the Eichmann trial. With the 1967 War Israelis started recognizing a deeper meaning of the Holocaust. The meaning of the Holocaust became the collective identity of the Israelis. I also discuss the politics of the Holocaust that was employed by the state itself around these events. The State internalized and mobilized this trauma in ways that would manifest itself in foreign policy. Analyzing these major events allows for a deeper understanding of the psycho dynamics of the Jewish citizens of Israel.

In the third and fourth chapters I discuss my findings through a series of interviews that I conducted. I also offer some conflict analysis approaches to reach a better understanding of these findings. In doing so, I hope to explain the patterns that emerge in the sociological and psychological theories.

In chapter five, I argue Jewish citizens of Israel's unconditional support for the state's policies and harsh offensive tactics toward Palestinians within the framework of social dominance theory. I also discuss Israel's denial of recognizing Palestinian suffering.

In the last chapter, I discuss the implications of these findings within the context of Jewish citizens of Israel and Palestinians. Finally I wish to make it clear that this work aims to explore, question and analyze the Jewish citizens of Israel and their approach to their neighbors, particularly Palestinians. It is intended to elaborate a society's attitude toward outsiders by exploring their traumatic past. As long as there is no understanding for the past, there is no hope for creating sustainable peace. The deep sense of past and its linkage to the present creates a crucial role of victimization within the Jewish citizens of Israel. Psychologically, this victimization rationalizes the discrimination toward the Palestinians and justifies the harsh political and military tactics employed against them. This cycle of violence, intolerance and dehumanization hinders Jewish citizens of Israel having a peace oriented approach toward Palestinians.

CHAPTER 1

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study discusses the conceptualization of collective trauma. The question raised is whether and how individual concepts such as trauma, coping and identity are transposed to the collective level. These concepts usually originate in studies of the individual level, but are described a collective level as well. I try to analyze this transposition can be made and in what respect a community can be thought to be traumatized.

The questions are raised are: Is a collective trauma the sum of traumatized individuals, or is it more than that? What does Holocaust represent to the individuals and whole community? What happens when a community or a nation deals with devastating events in its past? How is the identity reshaped while coping the collective trauma? How violence and mourning prearranged into collective narratives and what are is the connection between the collective and the individual experiences? How are cultural formations in communities, including symbols, local narratives, and rituals stir up collective remembrance, often resulting in a shift in that society's mass actions and policy making processes? And finally in which ways the state employs its collective trauma in the politics?

The questions asked in the interviews attempted to analyze the meaning of the Holocaust within the Jewish citizens of Israel. To be able to reach a much better understanding of the Holocaust, the interviewees talked about their professionals and expertise in their field, not about their individual experiences.

RESEARCH DESIGN

To conduct this research I have mainly used the case study approach and focused on Israeli society. Case study approach is necessary since this research is highly qualitative. Robert K. Yin notes that “The case study approach is preferred in examining events, but when the relevant behaviors can not be manipulated. The case study’s unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence- documents, artifacts, interviews, and observation”¹³. Also my initial aim was to explore, question and analyze the trauma of the Holocaust, I had to find underlying reasons by asking questions. Yin argues: ““in general, case studies are [the] preferred strategy when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context.”¹⁴

COLLECTING THE DATA

I have conducted 12 open-ended interviews during 2 weeks period in Israel in July 2009. However I was able to use 9 interviews in my study. The reason why I did not use the other three interviews was they would not fit in my study, and simply distort the aim of this research project. The interviews were conducted one-on-one. The interviews took place at locations recommended by the interviewees; in home settings, at local cafés in different cities, Haaretz Press in Tel Aviv, at Hebrew and Tel Aviv University and Yad Vashem in Israel. The interviews were set up prior to my arrival to Israel and an abstract of my study was offered to interviewees.

I have typed my questions before the interview and have discussed all of them during the interview. During the interviews I have used an open order for the questions to make the interview natural. Since my interviewees have talked about their professionals and expertise, not

¹³ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research Design and Methods*, 3rd ed., Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2003, p. 13

¹⁴ Ibid. p.1

about their individual experiences, there was no psychological harm. With the permission of the interviewees, I have recorded the interviews. So that, no part of the conversation would be lost. I have received a verbal consent from the interviewees which were all audio recorded at the beginning of the interviews. I also have indicated that audio recording is an integral part of the study and if the participants found any question sensitive; they had the right to cancel the interview. They also knew that the interview could be terminated at any point if they wished.

PARTICIPANTS

The participants were historians, columnists, psychologists and film producers. They all are the Jewish citizens of Israel and currently reside there. The basic characteristic that qualified someone as an interviewee was their expertise on the trauma of the Holocaust and the relevance of their work with the Jewish citizens of Israel.

ANALYZING THE STUDY

I have used coding to analyze the transcribed interviews. Coding is an analytical tool to highlight certain noted characteristics in comparison. Different participants often use the similar words or phrases to express the same idea. These “*repeating ideas*” shed light on the study and help us to analyze them in terms of certain psychological theories.¹⁵

First, I reviewed and transcribed all relevant material from the interviews. After considering the interviews, I have determined the repeating ideas. This has enabled me to examine patterns that emerged in the data. Ultimately, this has made me aware of a deep

¹⁵ Carl F. Auberach, Louise B. Silverstein, *Qualitative Data: An Introduction to Coding and Analysis*, New York and London: New York University Press, 2003, p.37

understanding of the significance of their responses. According to my interviewees' responses I was able to pick the psychological theories that I could employ to conduct my study.

CHALLENGES

Because of the deep complexity of the subject, interview questions should aim to analyze 'how' and 'why' some certain feelings exist in the society. Interview questions are extremely important to be able to understand the patterns and employ certain psychological theories. Even I carefully constructed a list of open-ended questions; some participants chose not to answer the question in the same way or seemed to give short answers. Another challenge that I faced while in Israel was some participants were hesitant to accept my interview and skeptical about my study. I had to reassure them about the aim of my research giving all bibliography that I have used and details in my background and upbringing. Moreover, since I do not know Hebrew, I have communicated with the interviewees in English. Except of one interviewee the participants were fluent in English. With one interviewee I have repeated the questions in different ways to be able to fully understand his thoughts and feelings. One more additional challenge I have faced in Israel was the limited time frame and resources to conduct all my interviews. Four of my qualified interviewees had to postpone their appointments due to the conferences that they had to attend and health problems to later days which I was not going to be able to stay in those dates in the country.

CHAPTER 2

THE JEWISH CITIZENS OF ISRAEL AND THE MEANING OF THE HOLOCAUST

Yad Vashem sits upon the west side of Mt. Herzl, the Mountain of Remembrance, as a “commemorative” site that houses the collective memory of the Jewish people. The original name of Yad Vashem derives the Biblical verse: “And to them will I give in my house and within my walls *a memorial and a name (Yad Vashem)* that shall not be cut off”¹⁶ The complex contains the Holocaust History Museum, Museum of Holocaust Art, International School for Holocaust Studies, sculptures, outdoor commemorative sites, archives, a research institute, library, educational center and a publishing house. It has more than fifty million of pages of documents, thousands of collection of testimonies of the Holocaust survivors, photographs and films. Established in 1953 through the Yad Vashem Law, this museum is Israel’s official memorial to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. One and a half million people visit the museum every year including Heads of States. The museum’s message is clear; “the uniqueness of the Holocaust and its universal lessons” must never be forgotten.¹⁷

However, the memorial places the Holocaust within the broader context that chronicles Jewish suffering and persecution through the ages. Starting with a verse from Exodus, The Torah urges the Jewish people to remember the past, demanding that Jews, “remember this day on which you went free from Egypt, the house of bondage, how the Lord freed you from it with a mighty hand.”¹⁸ The museum continues displaying the continuous memory of the Jewish people by a citation from Elkhanan Elkes, leader of the Jewish council of Kovno, Lithuania, “Remember that which Amalek did to us: remember everything, do not forget for the rest of your

¹⁶ Isaiah, Chapter 56, verse 5

¹⁷ <http://www.yadvashem.org>, accessed on 27 March 2009

¹⁸ Exodus, chapter 13, verse 3

lives, and pass on as a holy testament to the coming generations that the Germans killed, slaughtered and murdered us...”¹⁹ According to this view the Holocaust is a singular episode in the long saga of Jewish people and historical memory is the key for Jewish people. Elkhanan Elkes associated Amalek, the leader of a tribe hostile to the ancient Israelites, with Nazis. The museum also commits itself to the revindication of Jewish people –“when they kept their hands raised in the way of the new Israel- and to the ultimate defeat of the eternal foe, “God said to Moses: Write this remembrance in the book... that I will surely erase the memory of Amalek from under the heavens.”²⁰ At the last corridor, Yad Vashem leaves the visitor with a strong emphasis on educating the younger generations about the Holocaust by using the Jewish tradition of “Vehigadeta Lebincha” (And you will tell your children).²¹ Each succeeding generation must remember the Nazi genocide against the Jewish people and pass the story of it to their children.

Today in Israel, every citizen knows the history of the Holocaust. There are special programs dedicated to the Holocaust Studies. The media broadcasts Holocaust documents and the stories of the survivors. In the Israeli cities there are benches and gardens dedicated to the victims. It is not surprising to see a black-white picture of a Holocaust victim shown by his or her relatives over a conversation at the street. Second- and third-generation survivors integrate the Holocaust into their identity through their relationships with their parents. Meanwhile, all of these accumulated memories of Holocaust are ensonced in the Israeli educational system and other Israeli institutions. Shimon Peres, President of the State of Israel, verified this notion on his speech at the opening of Yad Vashem, “If you will take away from our people the memory, we

¹⁹ <http://www.yadvashem.org>, accessed on 27 March 2009

²⁰ Exodus, Chapter 17, verse 14

²¹ Avner Shalev, [Message from the Chairman of the Directorate](#), *yad-vashem booklet* (English edition), p. 3

shall not have a future. If you will take away our heritage, we shall not have a vision. And we need a memory and a future, a heritage and a vision.”²² Erna Paris observes:

“The Jews remember their history as they are enjoined to do by their ancient texts. The ultra-Orthodox remember that the Messiah will arrive at the end of days and that Jews are commanded to prepare for that joyful event; Jewish humanists remember the biblical prophets and their insistence that responsible men and women must try to make the world a better place for all peoples, the religious nationalists living in their barricaded Israeli settlements also remember- they have no doubt that the soil on which they have built their homes is the Land, a realization of God’s ancient promise to his people, secular Zionists remember their faith in the values of physical labor, productivity, communal sharing and a defended homeland. But the collective memory of Israel as refuge and homeland continues to permeate the entirety of Israeli society. In Israel no memory is more powerful than the Holocaust, and at its core lies the belief that Jews were deserted by the world.”²³

Nancy Coover Andreasen explains trauma as, “a psychological feeling of intense fear, helplessness, loss of control, and threat of annihilation”²⁴. At the collective level, “it is a real or perceived threat to the survival of individuals, or a support system, or a larger community or culture.”²⁵ This phenomenon can negatively impact even the largest and most diverse societies even if the majority of individuals do not experience the trauma or tragedy first hand. As Paris observes, just as the Holocaust and its trauma imposed a posthumous collective identity on its six million victims, so it formed the collective identity of Israel, not just for the survivors who immigrated to Palestine after the war but for all Israelis.

2.1. UNDERSTANDING THE HOLOCAUST

Works of scholars regarding the origins of the Holocaust include the fields of anthropology, philosophy, political science, economics, sociology, history, and psychoanalysis as well as other

²² Peres speech, <http://www.yadvashem.org>, accessed on 12 March 2009

²³ Erna Paris, *Long Shadows: Truths, Lies and History*, New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2001, p.319

²⁴ Nancy Cover Andreasen, ‘Posttraumatic Stress Disorder’ in *Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry*, 4.ed. H. I. Kaplan, B.G Sadock, Baltimore: Maryland, Williams and Wilkins, 1988, p. 4

²⁵ Barry Hart, *Peacebuilding in Traumatized Societies*, Lanham: Maryland, University Press of America, 2008, p.6

psychology-related approaches. Even today after tremendous of work that has been conducted for understanding the Holocaust, we are not able to present a coherent answer why this human tragedy has occurred.

One issue often stressed by the participants in this discourse was trying to find reasons for the Holocaust. Ernst Nolte's work is worth looking at. In his work; "*Vergangenheit die nicht vergehen will*" ("*The Past that will not Past*"), Nolte tries to find similarities with the Nazi crimes and Stalinist crimes. He asserts that "a notable shortcoming of the literature about National Socialism" was the failure to admit that all Nazi deeds "had already been described in the voluminous literature of the 1920s...with the sole exception of the technical process of gassing".²⁶ He continues by asking:

"Was the Bolshevik murder of an entire class not the logical and factual precondition on the 'racial murder' of National Socialism? Cannot Hitler's most secret deeds be explained by the fact that he had not forgotten the rat cage, the murders committed by the Bolsheviks? Did Auschwitz in its root causes not originate in a pass that will not pass?"²⁷

For Nolte, the Gulag may have been the reason for Auschwitz, although precisely how, still remains unclear. He argues somehow the Nazis were "copy-cats" who did it because the Russians did it first, and the Nazis were afraid that Russians might do it to them. Nolte's emphasis on similarities between Nazi and Bolshevik policies might offer a point however; this can not overshadow the singularity of the Nazi crimes. The murder of Jews was unique because never had a nation with the authority of its leader decided to exterminate a particular group of humans, including old people, women, children, and infants, and actually put this determinacy into practice by all the means of governmental power.

²⁶ James Knowiton, trans. Truett Cates, *Forever in the Shadow of Hitler? Original Documents of the Historikerstreit, the Controversy Concerning the Singularity of the Holocaust*, Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press International, 1993, pp. 21-22

²⁷ *Ibid.* p.22

Another aspect about the Holocaust is its human dimension. In his book, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, Daniel Jonah Goldhagen seeks an answer to the question of “how could the Nazis (or more simply for Goldhagen, the Germans) possibly have done what they did to the Jews: not only tried to kill every man, woman, and child but also behaved with such cruelty, humiliation and brutality?”²⁸ His answer is such a behavior can be explained by long-standing ‘eliminationist antisemitism’ which is an uncritical, stereotypical conception of German national character and this special mentality grew out of medieval attitudes from a religious basis but was eventually secularized.²⁹

Many scholars do not include such an insistence. For example, Omer Bartov brings a counterargument to Goldhagen’s explanation and concerns the uniqueness of the Holocaust. He argues:

“What was- and remains- unprecedented about the Holocaust is a wholly different matter, which Goldhagen avoids threatening: the industrial killing of millions of human beings in factories of death, ordered by a modern state, organized by a conscientious bureaucracy, and supported by a law-abiding, patriotic, civilized society.”³⁰

Robert Lifton furthers this discussion by offering a portrait of Nazi doctors. He argues in order for the Nazi “medical” experiment to be successful, doctors in Auschwitz had to relate to their environment as if it were some kind of fantasy and not part of the real world.³¹ There was an absence of awareness, not only of one’s surroundings but also of oneself. To make it work over and over again this psychological cutting off of one’s sense of reality needed constant

²⁸ Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, London: Vintage, 1997, p.5

²⁹ Ibid. p. 7

³⁰ Omer Bartov, *Germany's War and the Holocaust: Disputed Histories*, New York: Cornell University, 2003, p.126

³¹ Robert Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of the Genocide*, New York: Basic Books, 1986, p.422

justification. Lifton also advanced the notion of “doubling” in which the perpetrator operates in terms of a double self, whereby one part of the self “disavows” the other. He states:

“What is repudiated is not reality but the meaning of that reality. Nazi doctors knew that they were participating in the policy of selection of Jews for the gas chambers. But they did not interpret “selection” as murder.”³²

On a similar note Hannah Arendt analyzes Adolf Eichmann’s tribunal testimony after the Auschwitz concentration camp commander was captured by Israeli secret police. Arendt seeks “to know how long it takes an average person to overcome his innate repugnance toward crime, and what exactly happens to him once he has reached that point”³³ Although Arendt did not have a chance to question Eichmann, she was able to come to a conclusion that Eichmann had a conscience, “within rather odd limits”³⁴ Therefore she concludes that Eichmann was not a sadistic individual psychology “programmed” monster to engage in mass killings and extermination, but rather he had contemplated what he was doing. She points out that the ones participated in such mass killings “were not sadists or killers by nature; on the contrary, a systematic effort was made to weed out all those who derived physical pleasure from what they did.”³⁵ Therefore, according to Arendt there is no evidence that the majority of those who had participated in such killings are sadistically inclined.

2.1.1. Obedience to Authority

Stanley Milgram’s famous experiment what might be called pathological obedience had a simple setup. ³⁶ The subjects of the experiment agreed to take part in a study of memory and learning. The experiment designs two people. One of them is designated a “teacher” and the other a

³² Ibid.

³³ Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, New York: Penguin,, 1994, p.93

³⁴ Ibid.p.95

³⁵ Ibid., p.105

³⁶ Stanley Milgram, *Obedience to Authority: an Experimental View*, New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1974, p.33

“learner”. The teacher is told that the study is concerned with the effects of punishment on learning. The learner is conducted into a room, seated in a kind of miniature electric chair. His arms are strapped and an electrode is attached to his wrist. He is told that he will be read lists of word pairs and then be tested on his ability to remember the second word of a pair when he hears the first one again. Whenever he makes an error, he will receive electric shocks. The focus of the experiment is the teacher. The teacher is a genuinely naive subject who has come to the laboratory for the experiment. The learner, or victim, is actually an actor who receives no shock at all. The point of the experiment is to see how far a person will proceed in a concrete and measurable situation in which he is ordered to inflict increasing pain on a protesting victim.³⁷

At the end of the experiment Milgram concluded that subjects recruited from various segments of society, both educated and uneducated, would obey when ordered to administer painful, dangerous electric shocks to fellow human beings in the name of scientific experiment.³⁸ There are two conclusions of this process: First, personal morality is replaced by the presumption that the supreme virtue is obedience. Second, the individual feels free to renounce personal responsibility for the consequences of his action. He or she is ordered to shock another human being by a prestigious scientist in a white lab coat, who reassures the subject, "Don't worry; I'll be responsible for what happens." With the disappearance of self of responsibility the person then gives up thinking.³⁹

2.1.2. Crimes of Obedience

In searching for a psychological explanation for mass violence, Herbert C. Kelman's "Crimes of Obedience" provides another theoretical apparatus to the topic. His model consists of three

³⁷ Ibid. 3-4

³⁸ Ibid.p.5

³⁹ Ibid.p.8

stages; authorization, routinization and dehumanization.⁴⁰ The first two stages; authorization and routinization exist in the institutions of state power--particularly the army.

In the authorization stage, a situation is redefined in such a way that standard moral principles are held not to apply, and participants are encouraged to consider themselves absolved from making personal moral choices. Perpetrators of human right violations redefine morality and start believing that they can commit systematic murder and other atrocities “for the greater good”.⁴¹ Kelman stresses the power of the authority by suggesting that “obedience to authority is legally and morally encouraged. Subordinates may be faced both with sanctions to compel obedience and with an ideology that glorifies it”.⁴² The Nuremberg trial, for example raises questions about the issue of moral, as opposed to legal, guilt, and innocence. The Nazi criminals never denied their involvement in what they had ordered, encouraged, or supported. What they denied was that it was criminal.⁴³ Again, the members of the Germany’s Nazi party believed they were doing nothing wrong. The policy was to see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil--therefore admit no evil.

Beyond this, the second stage, routinization proceeds by repeating a certain action so often that it is performed without critical thought, apparently automatically. Typically, the perpetrator starts off with rationalization, to convince himself of the legitimacy of his acts. Then he begins to communicate his rationalization to others. At this point it is no longer a rationalization but a “truth” that releases the perpetrator from any sense of guilt he may still feel about his devil deeds. At the Routinization level there are two functions. As Kelman argues:

⁴⁰ Herbert C. Kelman and V.Lee Hamilton, *Crimes of Obedience: Toward a Social Psychology of Authority and Responsibility*, New York: Yale University Press, 1989, pp. 16-19

⁴¹ Ibid. p.16

⁴² Ibid. p.75

⁴³ Lawrence Langer, *Holocaust and Human Behavior*, Boorkline, Mass: Facing History and Ourselves Foundation, 1994, p.351

“First, it reduces the necessity of making decisions, thus minimizing the occasions in which moral questions may arise. Second, it makes it easier to avoid the implications of the action, since the actor focuses on the details of the job rather than on its meaning. The latter effect is more readily achieved among those who participate in massacres from a distance- from their desks or even from the cockpits of their bombers.”⁴⁴

Kelman also talks about “the normalization of atrocities” by euphemism. For instance the SS had a set of *Sprachregelungen*; “language rules”, to govern their extermination program.⁴⁵ They used this sanitized language to project an image of scientific professionalism. The “Final Solution” was presented as a historic act of social program that had to be undertaken to purify and improve the German genes. Even German, Aryan children were encouraged to be proud of this social program. This language was employed to enhance the rational-bureaucratic efficiency by the grand policy. In this specific “objective” language, concentration camps were called as “administration” and extermination camps were used in terms of “economy”.⁴⁶

The third stage, dehumanization, permeates the culture through media, such as journalism, TV, film, and the spoken word.⁴⁷ At the dehumanization stage the society strips the ‘enemy’ of a common humanity and identifies them as an ‘other’ or an enemy. Therefore, to maintain the state’s existence and preserve its identity, the society is more likely to comply with aggressive policies thorough militaristic ventures that are allegedly undertaken to ensure survival. Dominick La Capra captures this stage in his work, *History and Memory after Auschwitz*, arguing that Jews are represented as vermin; animals that seem to be a little too large for mice yet not quite the size of rats in the children comic books in the Nazi Germany. Germans were depicted as vicious, wild, strong cats.⁴⁸ The depiction of people as animals has ironic sides.

⁴⁴ Kelman, p.18

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Arendt, p.64

⁴⁷ Kelman, p.19

⁴⁸ Dominick La Capra, *History and Memory after Auschwitz*, New York: Cornell University Press, 1998, p.163

The Nazi ideology itself was dehumanizing its victims into less than human beings. And the Jews were like mice to the terrifying powerful cats of the Nazis.⁴⁹

Indeed, any analysis of the Holocaust contains limitations and challenges. These psychoanalytic perspectives contribute much to analyze the complexity of the Holocaust. In the rest of this chapter I argue the ways in which the trauma of the Holocaust has become the collective identity of the Jewish citizens of Israel. I also analyze how the trauma has Holocaust has been employed by the state itself since Israel's establishment.

2.2. JEWISH-ISRAELI IDENTITY FORMATION

"We will not let the Holocaust deniers (referring President of the Islamic Republic of Iran; Mahmoud Ahmadinejad) perpetrate another Holocaust on the Jewish people," Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel said in his speech at the Yad Vashem Memorial on the Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day), He continued; "This is the highest responsibility of the State of Israel and of myself as prime minister."⁵⁰ From all appearances, his policy would emerge from this dictum.

Established in April 12, 1951 through the Knesset, Yom HaShoah is commemorated with candle lighting, speakers, poems, prayers, and singing. Every year on the Holocaust Remembrance Day, at ten in the morning, a siren is sounded where everyone stops what they are doing and stands in remembrance. Often, six candles are lit to represent the six million who

⁴⁹ Please see Mary Mills, "Poisoning Young Minds in Nazi Germany: Children and Propaganda in the Third Reich, in *Social Education*, Vol. 66, 2002; Robert S. Wistrich, *Demonizing the Other: Anti-Semitism, Racism & Xenophobia*, London: The Gordon and Breach, 1999, p.225 ; Arnold Arluke, Clinton Sanders, *Regarding Animals*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996, p. 162; Erin Steuter, Deborah Wills, *At War with Metaphor: Media, Propaganda and Racism in the War on Terror*, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008, p.51, Gregory Wegner, *Anti-Semitism and Schooling Under the Third Reich*, New York: RoutledgeFarmer, 2002

⁵⁰ Etgar Lefkovits, *PM: We Won't Allow Another Holocaust*, The Jerusalem Post, 21 April, 2009, <http://www.jpost.com>, accessed on 25 April 2009

perished in the genocide. Holocaust survivors speak about their experiences and remind the populace of the traumatic events. At the ceremonies people read verses from Torah for in an effort to remember those that died and to try to reach an understanding of the huge number of victims.

In Israel no memory is more powerful than the Holocaust. The memory of the Holocaust shapes the society, culture as well as the politics of the state itself. Tom Segev observes that, “the most fateful decisions in Israel; such as the mass immigrations of the 1950, the Six-Day War, and Israel’s nuclear project were all conceived in the shadow of the Holocaust.”⁵¹ Since the establishment of Israel, the Holocaust has been the event around which policy makers have fashioned both domestic and foreign policy. The collective memory of the mass murders have mobilized the society around a seize mentality that has consistently shaped identity and driven state initiatives.

The Holocaust had a profound foundation from the very beginning of the foundation of the State itself. On the other hand with the foundation of Israel, the new Jewish-Israeli identity was created. As Professor Garshin Baskin suggests:

“The collective identity is part of a process of two thousand years of exile and persecution. The Jewish people have a collective identity of being persecuted, being discriminated against wherever they are. The Zionist movement which began over a hundred years ago aimed to change that, to create a different, positive identity. There is a very famous play that was written in the early years of the Zionist movement by an author named Haim Hazaz. The playwright had a court room which he put Jewish history on trial and what he said in the play was Jewish history was guilty of being passive. Something always happening to the Jews rather than the Jews determining what has happened to them. The moral story was of course the Zionism was a break away from the Jewish history. We are going to stand up and say “We are independent, free people. We are going to fight for the freedom and independence. We are going to seek to have our own

⁵¹ Tom Segev, *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust*, New York: Henry Holt, 2000, p. 11

state. We are going to make history. The history is not going to be done to us.”
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Michael Ben-Yair makes a similar point suggesting that the new Jewish-Israeli identity was created in the light of Zionism. The Zionist dream holds an ideology that Jews are a people or nation like any other and should gather together in a single homeland. As Ben-Yair states:

“The state of Israel was born because the Zionist movement realized it must find a solution to the Jew’s persecution and because the enlightened world recognized the need for that solution. The enlightened world’s recognition of the solution’s moral justification was an important, principal factor in Israel’s creation. In other words, Israel was established on a clear, recognized, moral base.”⁵³

To reach a better understanding of how the memory of the Holocaust has shaped Israeli identity and policy we must turn to specific events following the creation of the state in 1948. These events illustrate the ways in which Israeli policy stood justified in accordance to the events of the Second World War. That said, while leaders around the world recognized that the Holocaust had driven a consensus for Jewish State and indeed, Jewish leadership would continually take the traumatic event as license to expand the State’s border, Israeli citizens themselves were reluctant to make this immediate connection. Naturally, in the immediate wake of the horrific event, many Jewish people sought to bury the weight of such extreme terror. By 1948, the year that Israel formally achieved statehood, most Israelis maintained silent recognition surrounding the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. Even through the 1950s, newcomers to Israel continued this silence over the Holocaust. This began to permanently change by early 1960s when West Germany brought the notorious Adolf Eichmann to trial. Eichmann’s orchestration of the systemic killings thrust the issue to the fore once again. In the midst of the 1961 trial, Israelis articulated a deeper meaning to the Holocaust and began to shape their identity and

⁵² Gershon Baskin, “Interview by Author”, Israeli-Palestine Center for Research and Information (IPCRI), 9 July 2009

⁵³ Michael Ben-Yair, “*The Six-Day War’s Seventh Day*”, in *The Other Israel: Voices of Refusal and Dissent*, ed. Roane Carey, Jonathan Shainin, New York: The New Press, 2002, p.13

policy around it. This reached a climax with events of the Six-Day War in 1967 and would bring about a set of territorial arrangements that continue to engender conflict through the present.

2.3. 1950S, ISRAEL AND THE GREAT SILENCE

The 1947 UN Partition Plan designated 55 percent of the area for the future Jewish state while 45 percent was designated for the Arab population.⁵⁴ At the end of the 1948 war, the proportion of the newly born state of Israel changed to about 80 percent for the Jewish people and 20 percent to the Palestinians. Moreover, the 1948 War displaced over 700,000 Palestinian Arabs – all of whom became refugees while the remaining Arabs within Israel’s newly expanded borders were placed under martial law. Taking up residency in refugee camps, most found themselves impoverished within months and having lost everything that they had once claimed for their own. Martial law had a catastrophic effect on the Arab population in Israel as they now found themselves economically and socially isolated from the society. This situation continued through the 1950s.⁵⁵

Since Israel’s creation came at a high cost to the Palestinian population and resulted in the refugee problem, Israel came to justify their actions in the name of unity. The first and strongest justification was that, “the Holocaust had proven once again that the only solution to the Jewish problem was an independent state in Israel” and no matter at what cost this was going to be achieved⁵⁶ The declaration referred to the Holocaust. As the first prime minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, read from the scroll of independence at Knesset;

“The catastrophe which recently befell the Jewish people - the massacre of millions of Jews in Europe - was another clear demonstration of the urgency of solving the

⁵⁴ United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181, *Future Government of Palestine*, 29 November 1947, www.un.org, accessed on 25 April 2009

⁵⁵ Segev., p. 298

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p. 185

problem of its homelessness by re-establishing in Eretz-Israel the Jewish State, which would open the gates of the homeland wide to every Jew and confer upon the Jewish people the status of a fully privileged member of the comity of nations. Survivors of the Nazi holocaust in Europe, as well as Jews from other parts of the world, continued to migrate to Eretz-Israel, undaunted by difficulties, restrictions and dangers, and never ceased to assert their right to a life of dignity, freedom and honest toil in their national homeland.”⁵⁷

According to this view, Eretz-Israel was the homeland for the Jewish people and they could only be expected to find safety and security in their national homeland. Second, Israeli military leaders claimed that an Arab displacement never occurred. In this view during 1948 and 1949, by the call from their leaders, Palestinian refugees ran away of their own accord and voluntarily left their homes and properties. Since it was a war, “most Israelis accepted this myth as the core of Israel’s self-perception”⁵⁸ By denying that the any forced displacement had occurred, Israelis could more easily justify that they were not stealing occupied land but rather, merely rightfully repopulating their ancestral homeland⁵⁹. As chief historian of Yad Vashem, Dan Micham suggests:

“In the Jewish history the establishment of the state was a dream came true. It was also a messianic message for religious people. Within the Jewish aspect there is a certain connection and even a relief that after this disaster there was something awarded to the Jewish people.”⁶⁰

In July 1950, the Israeli government passed a law called “The Law of Return”. The Law of Return stated that every Jew in the world has the inherent right to settle in Israel as an automatic citizen; it emphasizes the purpose of Israel as a homeland for all Jews. However, the law does not define the term Jew. According to Judaism to be considered Jewish, the person’s mother has to be a Jewish. Law of Return gives the right to return to even non-Jews who are either children

⁵⁷ Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel*, 14 May 1948, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA>, accessed on 27 April 2009

⁵⁸ Simha Flapan, “*The Birth of Israel: Myths and Realities*”, in *The Palestinian Problem* eds. Andrew C. Kimmens, New York: H. W. Wilson, 1989, p.194

⁵⁹ Edward W. Said, *The End of the Peace Process*, London: Granta Publications, 2002, p.9

⁶⁰ Dan Michmam, “Interview with Author”, Yad Vashem, 15 July 2009

or grandchildren of a Jewish person, regardless of gender. It gives them the right to immigrate to Israel and become a citizen upon arrival. When David Ben-Gurion drafted this law in the shadow of the Holocaust, the definition of who was properly Jewish seemed self-evident. It meant that whomever the Nazis deemed Jewish and sent to the death camps was to be offered refuge in the newly established State of Israel.⁶¹ From time to time he would state; “Aliyah (immigrating to Israel) saves Jews from destruction... We must do everything to save them.”⁶²

According to Tom Segev, the most vital reason for promoting immigrants was to secure the state’s borders and enhance its military power. Ben-Gurion believed the only way to make this a reality was to secure a steady stream of Jewish immigrants who were actively ready to contribute to the state’s security. By steadily absorbing immigrants, Ben-Gurion believed that, “We might have captured the West Bank, the Golan, the Galilee, but those conquests would not have reinforced our security as much as immigration. Immigration gives us more strength. The future of the state depends on immigrants.”⁶³ But these intentions never came to the fore as strongly as a discourse on the Holocaust and preserving Jewish identity within the contours of a nation-state. Indeed, Ben-Gurion, instead of verbalizing the true importance of immigration and the constant growth of Israel asserted that Holocaust demonstrated an utter lack of compassion for the Jewish people. Thus, the only remedy was an independent state that would guarantee the security of Jewish people.

Not surprisingly, Israel’s first foreign policy initiative was to facilitate the departure of Jews from around the world and bring them to Israel as citizens of the new nation. Israel, the young state which had fought for its independence, was welcomed with sympathy from its

⁶¹ Debate on the law of return and law of citizenship, July 3, 1950, *Proceedings of the Knesset 6* (Jerusalem, 1951) trans., S. Weinstein, in Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*, 2. ed. Oxford University Books, 1995

⁶² Tom Segev, *1949, The First Israelis*, trans. Arlen N. Weinstein, Owl Books by Henry Holt and Company, 1998, p..97

⁶³ Ibid.

Western allies, such as the US, England and France as well as West Germany, Soviet Union and Poland. It was seen as a democratic, well-intentioned state, a home for the survivors of the Holocaust and for the refugees that were being oppressed by every regime in their past. Of course it was also a place where these nations could send their own Jewish populations.

By 1949 newcomers began arriving to Israel from Eastern Europe, Asia, North Africa, West Europe and America.⁶⁴ When they arrived to this newly established country, they were all strangers to each other with little in common other than their religion. They all spoke different languages, had adopted different cultures, and had wildly divergent economic backgrounds and skills.

Although the Holocaust provided the moral and political exigencies for the state's creation as well the justification within the Knesset for aggressive foreign policy geared toward expansion; there was seldom mention about the Holocaust within the society. The memory of the Holocaust was individual rather than being a collective memory.⁶⁵ First of all, the Holocaust was specific to the Ashkenazi Jews – all of whom had their personal catastrophic stories. The other newcomers immigrating from North Africa, the Middle East or Latin America were not subjected to such annihilation. Moreover, it was already hard to live together. The economy soured. The country had to be rebuilt again after the 1948 War. Therefore, there was a mutual unspoken agreement about the silence within the society. Holocaust survivors decided to keep their memories in private. Instead of looking at the past and memorizing the suffering of the Holocaust, they preferred looking at the morally better future and rebuilding their country.

Micham suggests:

⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 96 "The largest group of immigrants to arrive in 1949 was from Poland(47,000), North Africa (39,000), Yemen(35,000), Turkey(26,000) and Bulgaria(20,000)"

⁶⁵ Paris, p. 328

“The relation and connection with trauma in the early years of Israel was different in a way that on the one hand there was trauma and pain and suffering that everybody knew. On the other hand there was something new to be built up. And the question was how much we have to relate to the past. The first years of the state the notion was “we should emphasize the present and future”. Coping through with the traumatic events was a personal matter. In the public memory the emphasis was on the suffering of the Jewish people as whole. We call it “usable past”. Public memory chooses certain issues that the catastrophe of what happened in Europe and was a proof to a need for the state. You find it in the declaration of the independence state of Israel. The emphasis was: the memory of the Shoah and the lessons that we have to learn from the Shoah. The personal coping was individualistic and had left to the individuals to cope with.”⁶⁶

Michman furthers his argument on the Holocaust historiography. During the first years of the state, there was a group of historians who were the survivors of the Holocaust. Their overall argument was the Jewish people as a nation had failed in the Holocaust. As Michman states:

“The historiography was a medical doctor. Goal of these historians who dealt with the Holocaust was to find the sources of the Jewish failure in the Holocaust in order to be able to build the nation. And that came from the survivors not from the locals who grew up here and have not experienced the Holocaust by themselves. The nation was as a body and history was a kind of treatment. Historiography was a way to make the prognoses of the failure of the Jewish people. Even these survivors kept their traumatic memories in private and tried to find the reasons for the Jewish failure.”⁶⁷

Segev makes a similar point by saying when the state of Israel brought into existence, the central emphasis was on the idea of the “new Jew”. As he notes:

“The “new man” that Zionism wished to create would be the opposite of the persecuted and submissive “old Jew” ... The new Zionist society would represent creative, socialist, secular progress, imbue its children with sovereign pride and with the ability to defend themselves and their honor”⁶⁸

However, this unspoken silence had consequences on the society. Vamik Volkan discusses this silence in terms of what he calls a “chosen trauma, a disaster in which an identifiable enemy

⁶⁶ Dan Micham.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Segev, *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust*, p.515

group has intentionally inflicted pain, suffering, shame humiliation, and helplessness on its victims.”⁶⁹ He argues that, “in psycho-political terminology, chosen traumas are not mourned.”⁷⁰ He on continues that this “may happen because a group feels too humiliated, angry, or helpless to mourn its chosen trauma and so instead passes on the memory ... ethnic identity evolves through history, as the inability to mourn the chosen trauma influences the social and political ideologies of the particular group.”⁷¹ In other words, when a trauma occurs, there’s anxiety and helplessness. But if the trauma is caused by others, and if the affected people remain passive, then the emotional impact is more widespread and shared. Among the attributes emerging from form of trauma are helplessness, shame, humiliation and inability to be assertive. Volkan mobilizes the following as evidence of this phenomenon:

“A large number of the survivors who arrived in Israel in the 1940s, without families, were put immediately into mental hospitals for depression. Many of these patients’ official files did not even mention that they were victims of the Holocaust; among certain mental health professionals, there was a conspiracy of silence. The Holocaust survivors could not relate their experiences openly. They were given the nicknames “soaps” implying that they were weak people who could easily be washed away. It was only years later that the nickname publicly known: Nazis used to make soap out of the bodies of victims. The effort to ignore the Holocaust was short-lived and ineffective.”⁷²

Volkan goes to note the transgenerational transmission that occurs when an older generation externalizes their traumatized self on to a new generation. The new generation then becomes a reservoir for the unwanted, troublesome parts of an older generation. Because the elders have influence on a child, the child observes their wishes and expectations and is driven to act on

⁶⁹Vamik D. Volkan, Gabriele Ast, William F. Greer, Jr., ed., *The Third Reich in the Unconscious; A Study of Transgenerational Transmissions of Shared Trauma and its Consequences for Identity Formation*, Philadelphia: Brunner-Routledge, 2001, p.13

⁷⁰ Vamik D. Volkan, ‘Chosen Trauma.’ *Mind and Human Interaction*, 3: 13, 1991

⁷¹ Volkan in *The Third Reich in the Unconscious: A Study of Transgenerational Transmission of Shared Trauma and its Consequences for Identity Formation*, p.13

⁷² Vamik Volkan, *Blood Lines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997, p.45

them. It becomes the new generation's task to mourn, to reverse the humiliation and feelings of helplessness pertaining to the trauma of their descendants.⁷³ Volkan also makes a critical point by suggesting the usage of the chosen trauma by political leaderships. He states:

“A chosen trauma reflects the “infection” of a large-group’s mourning process. A reactivation of a chosen trauma serves to link the members of a large group. Such reactivation can be used by the political leadership to promote new massive societal movements, some of them deadly and malignant.”⁷⁴

As Volkan observes, years later by the new generation, the Holocaust would indeed become a collective remembrance and key to the memory of the Jewish people. It was also going to be used by political leaders to strengthen their position or mobilize the public.

2.4.THE DECISION TO REMEMBER: KEEPING THE MEMORY ALIVE, EICHMANN TRIAL

In his book *Eichman In My Hands* Peter Malkin, the Israeli secret policeman, who captured Adolf Eichmann on the streets of Buenos Aires talks about the hours he spent with him after his capture and before Eichmann was sent to Israel for his trial. Malkin expresses his frustration in trying to discover some elements of humanness in Adolf Eichmann. At one point, Malkin told Eichmann about his sister's son and how he was taken away to be killed in the Auschwitz: “He was just your son's age. Also blond and blue-eyed, just like your son, and you killed him,” Malkin iterated to Eichmann.⁷⁵ Eichmann looked, “genuinely perplexed by the observation”, as if Malkin said something wrong. He waited for a moment to see if Malkin would clarify his statement. Then Eichmann responded: But he was Jewish, wasn't he?”⁷⁶ At another point in their conversation Eichman added, “You must believe me! I was always an idealist. Had I been

⁷³ Ibid., p.43

⁷⁴ Volkan in *The Third Reich in the Unconscious: A Study of Transgenerational Transmission of Shared Trauma and its Consequences for Identity Formation*, p.37

⁷⁵ Peter Z. Malkin, Henry Stein, *Eichmann in My Hands*, New York: Warner Books, 1990, p. 214

⁷⁶ Ibid.

born Jewish, I'd have been the most fervent Zionist.”⁷⁷ Malkin reports that Eichman expressed no conscience and humanness. However, Malkin reported a change within himself:

“Those sessions changed me to reflect on my own actions in ways I never had before. I realized that in the course of my career I had participated in the actions that were unjust, perhaps even criminal. Always I had followed my supervisor’s orders absolutely; most of the time for what seemed noble reasons...yet also because it was also a matter of habit. I would never be that easy on myself again, or find excuses to deny the hard evidence of my eyes, and ears, and heart. For the fact is as simple as it is inescapable: if the conscience stops functioning, even occasionally, one is in mortal danger of losing oneself.”⁷⁸

After Malkin captured Adolf Eichmann, he informed Ben-Gurion of it. After a short while of his capture, Eichmann was brought to Israel. On 23 May 1960, Ben-Gurion made one of the most dramatic announcements of Eichmann’s capture at the Knesset:

“It is my duty to inform you that a short time ago the security services apprehended one of the most infamous Nazi criminals, Adolf Eichmann, who was responsible, together with the Nazi leadership, for what they called ‘the final solution to the Jewish problem’- in other words, the extermination of six million of Europe’s Jews. Adolf Eichmann is already imprisoned in this country, and will soon be brought to trial in Israel under the Nazi and Nazi Collaborators (Punishment) Law of 1950.”⁷⁹

According to Tom Segev, in spite of his dramatic speech at the Knesset, Ben-Gurion had no interest of Eichmann’s capture. In his letters to Yitzhak Y. Cohen, Ben-Gurion always emphasized the capture of Adolf Eichmann was not very important to him. He was concerned about the historical importance of the incident. The essential point was that the trial took place in Jerusalem. Segev observes:

“Ben-Gurion had two goals: One was to remind the countries of the world that the Holocaust obligated them to support the only Jewish state on the earth. The second was to impress the lessons of the Holocaust on the people of Israel, the younger generation. The younger generation was to learn that Jews were not lambs to be led to be slaughtered but, rather a nation able to defend itself. The trial was meant to inspire

⁷⁷ Ibid., p.213

⁷⁸ Ibid., p.220

⁷⁹ Segev in *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust*, pg. 326

them with national pride, to remind them that for them there was only once country in the world, that only one country could guarantee security for Jews, and that was the state of Israel.”⁸⁰

The trial began in April 1961, and took four months from April to August 1961. As a witness Eichmann, spoke as though he had no conception as to why he faced arrest. To him, he was merely there to clear up a misunderstanding. After all, it was not his decision to have initiated the annihilation of the Jews. He claimed that he was simply part of the division of labor that carried out the task. He had only done what he had been told to. Moreover, Eichmann did not even claim to possess any virulent Jewish hatred. In his testimony Eichmann stated:

“The notion that I was among the fanatics in persecuting the Jews is greatly mistaken. During the entire period after the war the fact that all my superiors have placed all the guilt on me had bothered and upset me. In fact, I never expressed myself in any terms that could indicate any fanaticisms on my part and there is no blood on my hands. Witnesses here have created an utter fabrication. The accumulation of testimony and documents in court seems very persuasive at first glance, but it can be misleading...I was asked by the judge if I would like to make a confession, as did the commandant of Auschwitz. Rudolf Hoss was the man who actually carried out the mass executions. My position is different. I never had either the authority or the responsibility to give orders. I never carried out executions as Hoss did. Had I received an order to carry out those executions, I would not have tried to simply evade it with a lame excuse. As I declared in my interrogation: with no choice but to obey orders, I would have shot a bullet into my head to resolve the conflict between conscience and duty.”⁸¹

Eichmann’s testimony brought a lot questions and became a subject to many scholars about the human mind and authority. Among one of these was a famous Jewish German political theorist, Hannah Arendt’s work. She was imprisoned in Carn Gurns, a concentration camp in Vichy France, but was able to escape after a couple of weeks. As a political theorist and philosopher Arendt dealt with the nature of powers, politics, totalitarianism and authority in her works. First of all Arendt was critical of the political and ideological aspects of the trial. She

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 327-328

⁸¹ Ibid. p.355

was also among the Jewish intellectuals critical of Ben-Gurion's Israel, which she believed was overly nationalistic, religious and unwilling to make concession on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Secondly, in her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* she concluded that the persecution effort to depict Eichmann as a sadistic monster was fundamentally wrong. Her thesis was that the Holocaust was not perpetrated by the sadistic fanatics but rather ordinary people who accepted the orders of their superiors and participated in a genocide under the notion that they were simply 'following orders'.⁸²

Arendt's extraordinary work created a worldwide debate on the nature of evil and complicity. Not surprisingly, many nationalist Israelis rejected her work and its implications. The Israeli people wanted to believe that anyone who would perpetrate such horror and atrocity was different than them and possessed a fundamentally separate worldview. Many in Jewish society wanted to believe that the Jewish people had a special claim to righteousness while the Nazi perpetrators had reserved a permanent spot in eternal damnation. Arendt, on the other hand, viewed the Holocaust as the logical outcome not of an inherently evil society but one that had simply embraced the mechanized scientific rationalism of industrial modernity.⁸³

In spite of this controversy of Arendt's critics, Ben-Gurion fulfilled his goals. Structured by the Israeli government, the trial was closely watched throughout the world. From West Germany to England, Poland to the USA, the whole Western world followed the trial with sympathy. The only countries that were skeptical and distant to Israel were the Arab countries in the Middle East because of Israel's war crimes and expulsion of the Palestinian population in the 1948 War. Ben-Gurion knew that Israel as a state should have depicted themselves innocent and vulnerable to be able to have the sympathy of the world. Fritz Bauer, a German Jew who was

⁸² Arendt, p. 17

⁸³ Paris, pg.318

the chief prosecutor for the West German state of Hessen, and Isser Harel, the director of MOSSAD between 1952-1963, were told to create a rumor that Adolf Eichmann had a sanctuary in Kuwait and like other Nazi criminals who were hiding in Arab countries, he was working from there to destroy the Israel and commit another Holocaust on the Jewish people.⁸⁴

Ben-Gurion's second goal was to inspire the Israelis with national pride. Within a week after the Eichmann's capture the silence that dominated the Israeli society in 1950s was broken with publicity that the trial generated. Within the twenty four hours Eichmann's capture and apprehension in Israel for trial were the headlines on all of the newspapers. The TV channels started broadcasting the news live in front of the building that Eichmann was being held in.⁸⁵ The nation was stunned. It was a dramatic shift in the way Israelis related to the Holocaust. The whole of Israel was reading the news from the papers and watching the TV broadcasting on the upcoming trial. It was one of the most emotional and shocking incident that hit the Israelis. Michman argues that:

“The Eichmann trial is the beginning of the privatization of the Holocaust. It is not just 6 million as a number. It hasn't just happened there. We have these survivors who survived from this catastrophe, telling their stories and have been living among us now. There was much more attention on the survivors by the public. This was very important. It was the first official general approach. Survivors started talking about their stories. More and more memoirs started being published. There was a flood of individual stories. This also impacted young generation. They started willing to learn more about the Holocaust and its individual sufferings.”⁸⁶

Eichmann's capture was perceived as a great victory in Israel. Putting Eichmann in a Jewish court and jail was a great honor for the society. Finally a huge silence was broken within the Israelis. The trial of Eichmann brought the horrifying memories of the Holocaust survivors to a

⁸⁴ Isser Harel, *The House on Garibaldi Street: Classics of Espionage*, Routledge, 2. Edition, 1997, pg. 161

⁸⁵ David S. Wyman, Charles H. Rosenzweig, *The World Reacts to the Holocaust*, Baltimore M.D.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, pg. 873

⁸⁶ Dan Michman.

surface. The shame, denial and humiliation of the Holocaust that covered the society in the 1950s were replaced by the victory, revenge and punishment. As Hannah Yablonka states:

“I don’t believe the first 15 years after the war the Israelis did not understand or could not understand actually the Holocaust was also a private tragedy. They did not think about it as a micro tragedy. They used to talk about the “6 millions who were perished” without understanding actually survivors was the part of the Shoah story as well. The survivors were conceived as new immigrants that should help build the nation. In the late 1960s with the Eichmann trial the Israelis started to understand and speak about the murderers’ guilt. During 1950s Jews who were not part of the trauma considered themselves the healthy part of the Jewish nation. Later on when survivors of the Holocaust became meaningful and the Shoah became such a crucial element of the Jewish national soul everybody wanted to belong to this identity.”⁸⁷

The unexpected announcement of Eichmann’s capture along with the emotional explosion resulted in the Israelis expressing their unspoken anxiety. It was as if any lapse in mission, national unity, or identity since the 1948 War and the Declaration of Independence had evaporated with the capture of Eichmann and the broader national discussion on the meaning of the Holocaust that it ultimately engendered.

2.5. RELATIONS WITH THE WEST GERMANY

In addition to its profound impact of Israel, the Eichmann Trial also set the stage for reconciliation with West Germany. Though political relations started in 1952 with the issue of reparations it was not until nearly a decade later that Israel welcomed West Germany as a trusted ally. In 1952, after heated debates in the Knesset the Reparations Agreement was signed between the Chancellor of West Germany Konrad Adenauer and David Ben-Gurion. In 1959 Israel started selling arms to West Germany. Because of his policy Ben-Gurion was criticized by his political opponents and the scholars. The opposition pointed out the controversy of his

⁸⁷ Hannah Yablonka, “Interview with the Author”, Tel-Aviv, 14 July 2009

policies by selling arms to West Germany in light of the event twenty years prior. In 1960s with the appearance of critical thinking in the West Germany, the relations became moderate between West Germany and Israel. However, the Israeli public remained unready to develop diplomatic relations with Germany. Yet, perhaps ironically, it was the trial of Eichmann that moderated anti-German sentiment in Israel. After four years later of the Eichmann trial, diplomatic relations started in 1965 with the first German Ambassador to Israel arriving that year.

In 1952, the West German government started facilitating the compensation of Jewish victims with three different agreements under the Reparations Agreement. The first one was; individual claimants received payments according to the terms of the Law on Indemnification. The second one was a separate agreement with Israel that would subsidize the absorption and rehabilitation of several hundred thousand Jewish refugees. The third and the last agreement was that the German Government “negotiate at the same time a financial settlement with the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, an umbrella of all major Jewish organizations.”⁸⁸ The organizations represented at the Claims Conference received today’s equivalent of one billion dollars for 12 years toward helping Holocaust survivors who had not received adequate financial compensation.⁸⁹

These early measures began to ease tensions between the two nations until the West German weekly magazine *Der Spiegel* reported that Israel was selling arms to Germany. Most of the press and opposition criticized Ben-Gurion. However according to Ben-Gurion selling arms to the West Germany was permissible for the following reasons. First, Ben-Gurion claimed that West Germany was different than East Germany since it wanted to compensate Israel

⁸⁸ Norman G. Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering*, 2.ed., New York: Verso, 2003, pp. 84-85

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* p.86

whereas there was still a denial within East Germany. Segev mentions the debate between Ben-Gurion and the minister of health, Yisrael Bazrila at the cabinet:

“Ben-Gurion: Do you think it is forbidden to sell arms to Germany? In which religious code is that written?

Barzilai: It is not written in any code, but I think we shouldn't be selling arms to Germany.

Ben-Gurion: Is it just West Germany, or is East Germany forbidden, too?

Barzilia: The East, too.

Ben-Gurion: Why did you go to East Germany then? I refused to respond to a German professor about a book on Spinoza, even though he is one of the world's most righteous men. I said that had he been a professor in Switzerland, I would have written happily.

Barzilia: In my opinion, it is possible and necessary to go to all international conferences in East and West Germany. Everyone goes. You went to West Germany before us.

Ben-Gurion: West Germany is permissible. Not East Germany. They are murderers and robbers who have not returned to their loot. West Germany, at least wants to compensate us. The East murdered and inherited, too. There is a difference between West and East Germany.”⁹⁰

The opposition criticized Ben-Gurion harshly for his willingness to sell arms to West Germany. Ben-Gurion's policy was said to have been an insult to the victims of the Holocaust: “Israeli weapons to Hitler's generals...Only, Ben-Gurion and his lackeys are capable of being the devil's advocate” said Shmuel Mikunis, who was a communist Knesset member. Manahem Begin continued “All those who washed their hands with Jewish soap, are they to carry Jewish weapons as well? Should these holy Jewish arms be put in the hands of these German soldiers?”⁹¹ However the opposition was not able to halt Ben-Gurion's policy. Yet the opposition conceded months later and the representatives of Israel went to West Germany to negotiate the sale of Soltam mortar shells.

In 1960, Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion met with German Chancellor Conrad Adenauer in New York City to discuss the “new Germany” and the “new Israel.” Prior to this

⁹⁰ Segev in the Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust, p. 313

⁹¹ Ibid. p. 316

more formal meeting, Israel had already established a military relationship with Germany started with in 1959. However, the Israeli public was not ready to develop diplomatic relations with Germany. Paradoxically the event that moderated anti-German sentiment in Israeli public was the Eichmann trial. After all, during this trial, the Israeli press also kept close watch on the reactions of the West German press, political parties and the society. The impression was that Germans were following the trial with a large measure of sympathy for Israel. Actually West Germans started taking an interest in their country's Nazi past at the beginning of 1960s. Especially in 1960s the younger generation started raising questions regarding the role of their parents in the Third Reich.

The insistence of this critical and interrogative way of thinking about the Nazi past started appearing within the West German society.⁹² The media shifted the attention to the public debates and documentaries about the Nazi past. In 1963 West German TV channel started broadcasting of a fifteen-episode television series on the Third Reich. Millions of people watched this TV series in West Germany. This all societal shift brought the question of ordinary German citizenship in the Nazi crimes. German scholars started working on the human mind and the authority. Also they created works that questioned the society structure and the ordinary citizen's role in the Nazi past.⁹³ As a result of this entire societal shift, the Eichmann trial was followed with an interest in West Germany. West German press broadcasted the trial almost every day. The society also showed sympathy for Israelis and supported them. According to Michman critical way of thinking in the West Germany had an impact on Israeli scholars:

“In the 1960s, especially in the second half of the 1960s, starting with the West Germany there were student revolts which caused the change. There was a

⁹² Konrad H. Jarausch "Critical Memory and Civil Society: The Impact on the 1960s on German Debates About the Past" in Philip Gassert and Allan E. Steinweiss, *Coping with the Nazi, West German Debates on Nazism and Generational Conflict*, eds., New York: Berghahn Books, 1955-1975, p.21

⁹³ Ibid. p.20

democratization movement in the universities. In the West Germany there was a revolutionary approach from young people. They started asking their parents about their role in the Nazi period. Also in the Holocaust discourse there was no special term for the Jews suffering. In 1960s, the word Shoah started being used more and more. Shoah is a Hebrew word but it became THE SHOAH. It started being used the fate and suffering of the Jews in the Holocaust in Europe. German scholars started questioning the authority and social structure. This affected Israel as well. Israeli scholars started not only dealing with the lessons of the Holocaust but also with its trauma as well.”⁹⁴

To sum up, ironically, German-Israeli reconciliation did not lead to the forgetting of the Holocaust. Conversely, with the financial compensation, creation of political and military relationships, formal diplomatic relations and cultural exchanges brought the consciousness of the Holocaust to a much deeper and stronger level. By the 1980s, after the United States, West Germany was the closest ally to Israel, as each fostered strong, economic, military and diplomatic relations.

2.6. 1967 SIX DAY WAR

In the spring of 1967, Syrian government stated that Israeli forces were massing in northern Israel to attack Syria. Clashes between Israel and Syria had been escalating for more than a year. The tension rose up with the Israeli leaders verbalized that it might be necessary to bring down the Syrian regime if it failed to end Palestinian commando attacks against Israel from Syrian territory. Responding to a Syrian assistance, in May 1967 Egyptian troops entered the Sinai Peninsula. Couple of days later, Egyptian president Gamal Abdel-Nasser asked the UN Force stationed between Israel and Egypt to evacuate their positions. The Egyptians occupied Sharm al-Shaykh and proclaimed a blockade of the Israeli port of Eliat, arguing that access to Eliat was

⁹⁴ Dan Michman.

through Egyptian territorial waters. Nasser then signed a defense agreement with Jordan complementing Egypt's existing cooperation with Syria. Thus, Israel was surrounded.⁹⁵

Israel's held their collective breath. These measures shocked and frightened the Israeli public. Within couple of days volunteers started coming to serve for the army⁹⁶. Elderly people and children prepared bomb shelters. Volunteers who arrived to Israel dig up part of Tel Aviv beach for sandbags.⁹⁷ People emptied shelves in the stores, filled sandbags.⁹⁸ The Chief Rabbinate declared 1st of June 1967 a day of fast and prayer at this crucial hour for the nation.⁹⁹ It was the first time in the country's history after the 1948 Independence War that nearly all Israelis were standing shoulder to shoulder with apprehension and solidarity. Jews who were not subjected to the Holocaust, this time felt that if they did not survive this time, their fate would be the same as the European Jews.¹⁰⁰ With the influence of the media and the politicians, a lot of people believed in the assumption that it was not a war for the 1948 occupation but rather, a

⁹⁵ Ian J. Bickerton, M.N.Pickerson, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict; A History*, Melbourne, Australia: Longman Cheshire, 2.ed., 1991 pg. 131

⁹⁶ "Thousands Volunteer for Israel: Ten of thousands of American Jews are expected to turn out on Sunday for what the organizers say will be the support for Israel. The Israeli Embassy in Paris has so far registered 500 names from the hundreds of volunteers wishing to fight for Israel in the event of war", The Jerusalem Post, Friday, 26 May 1967, Eyyar 16, 5727, Safar 17, 1387, Vol. XXXVII, No: 11969, accessed at archives of National Library, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, accessed on 12 July 2009

⁹⁷ "Volunteers dig up part of Tel Aviv Beach", Photo by Miller, Photographers note:"The people of Israel have risen in a way that is admirable almost beyond belief", The Jerusalem Post, Monday June 5 1967, Eyar 26, 5727, Safar 27, 1387, Vol. XXXVII, No.11977, accessed at archives of National Library, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, accessed on 13 July 2009

⁹⁸ "Stocking a Shelter: Hega, the civil defense authorities have issued posters explaining how to shock a communal shelter in a multi family dwelling or factory", The Jerusalem Post, Monday 30 May 1967, Iyar.20, 5727, Safar.21, 1387, Vol. XXXVII, No:11972, accessed at archives of National Library, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, accessed on 12 July 2009

⁹⁹ "Rabbinate Calls for Fast on Thursday", The Jerusalem Post, 31 May 1967, Iyar 21, 5727, Safar 22, 1387, Vol. XXXVII, No. 11973, p.5, accessed at archives of National Library, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, accessed on 13 July 2009

¹⁰⁰ Hannah Yablonka.

religious war that aimed to annihilate the Jewish people.¹⁰¹ The whole speech, who was a commentator and a former Knesset member for Mapai:

“What is at issue is the existence or nonexistence of the Jewish people. We must crush the new machinations of the New Hitler at the outset, when it is possible to crush them and survive. It is irresponsible not to believe Nasser has been writing and saying for the last twelve years. Neither the world nor the Jews believed the sincerity of Hitler’s declarations. Nasser’s fundamental strategy is the same as Hitler’s.”¹⁰²

The newspaper also compared Nasser’s speech; “If Israel wants war-fine: Israel will be destroyed” (Nasser, 1967) with the Hitler’s speech; ‘If the Jews drag the world into war, world Jewry will be destroyed” (Hitler, 1939).¹⁰³ The newspapers also covered Nasser’s involvement in the Yemen civil war and Egyptians used chemical weapons in the civil war with the help of German scientists. All of those headlines brought back the depression and anxiety of the old Holocaust. The Jewish people once again believed they were in danger of being obliterated.¹⁰⁴

Tom Segev argues the deep fear in the Israeli society three weeks before the 1967 War. He states:

“It was a very deep fear that the Jewish citizens of Israel had experienced before the Six Day War. It was almost a non rational fear that second Holocaust was going to be employed by Egypt. This time not only European Jews, the Jews who were not subjected to the Holocaust also experienced this extreme fear. Many empty spaces in Tel Aviv were decided to be used as cemeteries. Especially many Rabbis prepared people to be calm and ready for the extermination. They certainly believed that another Holocaust was going to happen. In May 1967, before the war Israelis absolutely felt themselves helpless and weak again.”¹⁰⁵

Segev also stresses the linguistic speeches. He mentions that the word “extermination” started being used with the Holocaust. The word has historical concept. It means to kill all Jewish

¹⁰¹ Donna Rosenthal, *The Israelis: Ordinary People in an Extraordinary Land*, New York: Free Press, 2005, p. 207

¹⁰² Segev in *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust*, p. 391

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Michael Brecher, *Decisions in Israeli’s Foreign Policy*, New Haven: Yale University, 1975, p. 333

¹⁰⁵ Tom Segev, “Telephone Interview with the Author”, Tel Aviv, 6July 2009

people, not only Israelis. It was used by the Hitler to get rid of all Jewish people. Before the 1967 War, “newspapers in Israel were talking about Egypt’s plans to exterminate Israelis. This created an extreme fear within the civil society”¹⁰⁶

On May 14 1967, The Jerusalem Post published a special edition for the Arab’s hatred for Jews.

David Kimche states:

“A new ideology based on hatred of the Jew, General Yehoshafat Harkabi, who has made a special study, has shown how the Egyptians have developed their own brand of anti-Semitism. Israel is presented as a cancer in the body of the Arab world which must be removed.”¹⁰⁷

As a similar note thousands of Readers’ Letters to the Editor of the Jerusalem Post reflected the same mentality. As one these letters states:

“Israel has been continuously threatened with simple psychical destruction, meaning genocide, completing Hitler’s job by responsible Arab leaders, such as Nasser and his aide Shukelry, and others. These declarations represent official policy and not newspaper of rhetorical threats.”¹⁰⁸

The war ended on 5 June 1967. The Israeli army conquered the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank, the East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights in six days. Israelis embraced the war with great triumphalism. On June 7 1967 Minister of Defense, General Moshe Dayan’s message was on the first page of all Israeli newspapers:

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ David Kimche, “*As the Arab Seeds*”, The Jerusalem Post, Monday 14 May 1967, Eyar 4, 5727, Safar5, 1387, Vol. XXXVII, No. 11959, accessed at archives, National Library, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, accessed on 12 July 2009

¹⁰⁸ “Tell World the Facts” by Reuren Avnari, Readers’ Letters to the Editor of the Jerusalem Post, Haifa, 12 June 1967, Sivan 20, 5727, Rabia Awat 21, 1387, Vol. XXXVII, No. 11996, accessed at archives, National Library, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, accessed on 13 July 2009

“I would like to thank you all of those who have expressed their good wishes on my appointment as Minister of Defense. To all of Israel and to the Israel Defense Forces, I extend my wishes for victory in our struggle.”¹⁰⁹

Prof. Baskin emphasizes the Six Day War on the Jewish citizens of Israel telling that it was a shift within the society from victimization to victory. As he argues:

“Before the war, people in the Arab states were calling for the destruction of Israel. And Israel was a small, tiny country with a Holocaust mentality. Jewish citizens of Israel thought that they were on the edge of destruction. After 6 Days, Israelis woke up and found out that they had tripled the size of their country. They have destroyed the army of Egypt and Syria. They have conquered all the West Bank. They liberated Jerusalem. They have gone back to the Temple Mount, the holiest place for the Jewish people. Religious Zionists saw this as a message from the God. It was the God’s revenge. It was God’s award to the Jewish people. The redemption was on the way. The Messiah was coming. Many people asked during the Holocaust “Where was God? How could he let this happened?” So the answer to that was 1967 War for many people”¹¹⁰

The victory of the 1967 War and the fear of the second Holocaust brought the Israelis into a national identity. The Holocaust would indeed become the key to the Israelis. From that day until today the Holocaust was always going to be used, mentioned and be remembered in every debate, political speech or even a simply conversation. As Segev states:”After the 1967 War, the more time passed, the more the Holocaust became the part of the society.”¹¹¹ The Holocaust became an event to all citizens of Israel no matter what their origins and culture were. It would indeed become the identity of the Jewish soul. A survey conducted by The New York Times

¹⁰⁹ General Moshe Dayan, Minister of Defense, The Jerusalem Post, Wednesday June 7 1967, Eyar 28, 5727, Safar 29, 1387, Vol. XXXVII, No. 11979, accessed at archives of National Library, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, accessed on 13 July 2009

¹¹⁰ Gershon Baskin.

¹¹¹ Tom Segev.

Israel Poll in 1989 showed that 68% percentage of Israeli people still believed that “If they could, Arabs would commit a holocaust against the Jews in Israel”¹¹²

When we look at the usage of the Holocaust in the politics, beginning of the 1970s, Israeli politicians realized the powerful meaning of it. A lot of them comprehended that by controlling the memory of the Holocaust they would maintain their status quo. Segev asserts no one politicized the Holocaust as Menahem Begin:

“He missed no opportunity to exploit the Holocaust in debating his political opponents and used it to justify his policies and to shore up his political position. During President Sadat’s visit and the ensuing debate over the agreement that required Israel to withdraw from the entire Sinai Peninsula, almost everyone referred to the Holocaust. It served both the supporters and the opponents of the treaty. Begin accompanied Sadat on a visit to Yad Vashem- gave his guest the standard Israeli version of the Holocaust’s lesson; “No one came to save us – neither from the East nor from the West. For this reason, we have sworn a vow, we, the generation of extermination and rebirth: Never again will we put our nation in danger, never again will we put our women and children and those whom we have a duty to defend – if necessary at the cost of our lives – in range of the enemy’s deadly fire.” In a letter to Ronald Reagan, he wrote that the destruction of Yasser Arafat’s headquarters in Beirut had given him the feeling that he had sent the Israeli army into Berlin to destroy Hitler in his bunker.”¹¹³

In his controversial book, *The Holocaust Industry*, Norman Finkelstein makes the argument of the Holocaust being used as an indispensable ideological weapon by Israel.¹¹⁴ According to him, in the modern world when such notions of power, interest, and ideology are no longer used, “all that remains in the bland, depoliticized language of “concerns” and “memory”.”¹¹⁵ Therefore, the Holocaust memory is “an ideological construct of vested interests”, exploited by organized American Jewry to deflect criticism of Israel and its own morally indefensible policies.¹¹⁶

¹¹² *New York Times Israel Poll*, March 1989, www.icpsr.com, accessed 21 February 2009

¹¹³ Segev in *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust*, pg. 368 and 400

¹¹⁴ Finkelstein, p.3

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* p.5

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* p.149

According to Finkelstein the politicization of the Holocaust has had a devastating impact on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Finkelstein argues:

“This Holocaust dogma has conferred total license on Israel: Intent as the Gentiles always are on murdering Jews, Jews have every right to protect themselves, however they see fit. Whatever expedient Jews might resort to, even aggression and torture, constitutes legitimate self-defense. Boas Evron observes that it “is really tantamount to a deliberate breeding of paranoia. This mentality condones in advance any inhuman treatment of non-Jews, for the prevailing mythology is that ‘all people collaborated with the Nazis in the destruction of Jewry,’ hence everything is permissible to Jews in their relationship to other peoples”¹¹⁷

Erna Paris makes a similar point suggesting the Israeli pollster Hancock Smith’s findings on Israeli society. She argues that Jewish citizens of Israel believe that the Western power did nothing to save the Jews during the Second World War. She continues by adding: “This is a powerful indictment and it has a strong influence on the way Israelis act. The point is that people here start with the belief and it colors what they see.”¹¹⁸ Overall, this cohort of new historians of Israel have dispelled much of the Zionist mythology and challenged traditional Israeli assumptions regarding Israeli history. It is now widely accepted that the Palestinians were ethnically cleansed and deported in 1948.¹¹⁹ However, scholars debate on whether this cleansing and deportation was the intentional motives of Zionist policy or consequences of by-product of war.

In this chapter, I have discussed how an unresolved collective trauma leads to situations in which whole society face with the threat of losing their identity and existence. I also have discussed how chosen trauma has occurred and it has passed to the new generation. Because the elders have influence on a child, the child observes their wishes and expectations and is driven to

¹¹⁷ Ibid. pp.50-51

¹¹⁸ Erna Paris, *The Garden and the Gun: A Journey Inside Israel*, Toronto: Semaphore Press, 1991, p. 52

¹¹⁹ See Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, London: Oneworld publications, 2006; Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989; Hillel Cohen, *Army of Shadows: Palestinian Collaboration with Zionism 1917-1948*, Los Angeles: University of California, 2009

act on them. It becomes the new generation's task to mourn, to reverse the humiliation and feelings of helplessness pertaining to the trauma of their descendant. Finally I have discussed in which ways the state has employed the Holocaust and mobilized this trauma in ways that would manifest itself in foreign policy. Even the very creation of Israel hinged on the belief that the Holocaust – while extraordinary in its scope and brutality – was consistent along a tradition of Jewish oppression that necessitated the security that a new state would allegedly provide. After the 1948 War that resulted in formal independence, one discerns several key moments where the trauma of the Holocaust mobilized the state's foreign and domestic policy. Perhaps, most noteworthy was the Eichmann Trial and the 1967 War. In each instance, the memory of the past provided the necessary fuel for the nation to proceed. Of course, in this procession, the Palestinian people have often been left out. In the name of security, territorial integrity and state sovereignty, Israel has consistently formulated a policy of exclusion based on the inclusion the world's Jewish people. This unfortunate decision has led to Palestinians undergoing their own trauma.

CHAPTER 3

COLLECTIVE REMEMBRANCE

A middle-aged man approached me, extending a black and white photograph depicting a family. He relayed that, “These are my family members who were executed in the Holocaust.” Then he continued “It is very important for us to keep the memory alive and never let our children forget about what the Nazis have done to us and how the whole world was silent about it.” I took a tour to the Yemenite Quarter while I was in Tel Aviv, Israel in July 2009. A lady who was a tour guide and lived close to the neighborhood showed us the Quarter telling its inhabitant’s stories. After the tour, she invited us to her house for cold fresh lemonade. After a minute everyone in the room was talking about the Holocaust and Iran’s willingness to create another Holocaust on the Jewish people.

I wanted to have their opinions on the Israeli- Palestinian conflict. However, when the aforementioned man who showed me his family picture spoke about the “Middle-Eastern terrorists and the evils of Islam” I saw people in the room including, our tour guide, nodding their heads. I quickly changed my mind, realizing that it was not a suitable environment to talk about the Palestinians. The attitudes of these people, ages ranging from 30 to 50, made me realize one more time the power of the Holocaust memory on the ordinary Jewish citizens of Israel. The notion of eternal Jewish victimization justifies and rationalizes the discriminative policies that the State employs. Gideon Levy makes a similar point telling that:

“There is manipulated fear. There is victimization. There is claim of “we are the only eternal victims, the one in danger and can be destroyed anytime”. It is such a paradox actually. In reality Israel has one of the strongest army in the world and has the strongest ally, the US. The victimization was always there and Jewish people of Israel have always compared their pain with the other ones. There have been other genocides in the history and there are civil wars killing thousands of

people but for Jewish people nothing was like the Holocaust. Golda Meir said once ‘After the Holocaust Jews have the right whatever they want’ So that is what most Israelis think. ¹²⁰

Before my trip to Israel and before conducting my interviews, I hypothesized that the ordinary Jewish citizens of Israel would have a deep understanding of the uniqueness of the Holocaust, but they would also have a denial of the universal human capacity for destruction and violence. They would see themselves as eternal victims, however, they would ignore that this capacity of ‘banality of evil’ also may exist within their own society. Therefore by the impact of media and the education system in Israel this perspective would prevent them from seeing the others as victims and themselves as potential perpetrators.

The majority of my interviews and my observations of ordinary Jewish citizens of Israel confirmed my hypothesis. From my interviews and daily talks with the Jewish citizens of Israel I have taken several notes of the Jewish feeling of being eternal victims throughout the history. In the streets of Tel Aviv, there are memorials of the Holocaust. Commemoration and memorials are analyzed as an attempt at mourning and an effort to repair the psychological damage of the past traumas. As Jeffrey Olick states: “Commemoration is a way of claiming that the past has something to offer the present, be it a warning or a model”¹²¹ In the media everyday there are individual memoirs of the Holocaust. Even the children’s channel shows programs inform children about the Holocaust This older population marks the the final years that the survivors of the Holocaust are still alive; people want to make sure to record their memory and keep their

¹²⁰ Gideon Levy, “Interview with the Author”, Haaretz Press, Tel Aviv, 12 July 2009

¹²¹ Jeffrey K. Olick, “Genre Memories and Memory Genres”, in eds. Keith Raynor, *American Psychological Review*, No. 64, Washington DC: APA Publications, 1999, p. 381

memory alive. The Holocaust is even used in the daily language: If a soccer team loses, the players joke about it saying it was like the Shoah.

I also have observed people talking about the Middle-Eastern terrorists and evils of Islam. The Gaza War in winter of 2008-2009 is particularly worrisome because the Haaretz-Dialog poll shows widespread public support for the Gaza campaign. Less than 10 percent see the operation as a "failure."¹²² Despite pictures from Gaza depicting massive destruction and a large number of wounded and killed, including women and children, 82 percent of the public believe that Israel has not "gone too far" with the military force it is exercising against Hamas.¹²³ This means that almost all Israel's Jewish citizens warmly supported the operation, its goals, firepower and management.

3.1. SOCIAL CONTEXT OF MEMORY

To develop an understanding of the Holocaust's impact on the Jewish citizens of Israel, Maurice Halbwachs' *social context of memory* approach is ideal. Halbwachs explored the ways in which present concerns determine what of the past we remember. Every society shows and requires a sense of continuity with the past. Collectively, imagined past is crucial for the unity of the society and a shared past is the key element for the reconstruction of social solidarity.¹²⁴ The function of remembering is not to transform the past but to promote a commitment to the society by symbolizing its values.

Halbwachs' contribution to the study of social memory is the establishment of the connection between a social group and collective memory. He asserted that every society

¹²² "Yossi Verter, "Polls Show Most Israelis See IDF Action in Gaza", Haaretz, 15 October 2009

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Maurice Halbwachs, "The Social Context of Memory" in *Theories of Social Remembering*, Barbara A. Mistral, Berkshire, England and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2003, p.50

establishes a memory of its own past that is unique with the society. This unique identity is the starting point. He also argued that the power of the group memory depends on the social power of the group that holds it. By holding the past, the group memory conveys an illusion and timeless continuity. Also Halbwachs' theory sees collective memory as *a record of resemblance* and this record ensures that *the group remains the same*.¹²⁵

Gideon Levy makes a similar point by telling how the trauma of the past and being Jewish has created a unique identity that unifies the Jewish citizens of Israel even when they do not have much in common. He states:

“The Holocaust is playing a great role by unifying this society. It also creates a mutual exterior enemy. When we look at Israeli society, actually we don't have much in common. First of all, it is a society of immigrants. People all have different backgrounds and traditions. There are Russian immigrants for example, or Ethiopian immigrants. What do they have in common exactly? There are settlers for instance or Hasidic Jews. What is the commonality between me and the Hasidic Jew? There is no commonality at all. Israel in that sense is actually disintegrating. First stage of the state was successful. Everyone started speaking Hebrew and they have gotten their Hebrew names. After that when we look at the society today only power unifies us is the trauma of the Holocaust and the threat of our identity by our external enemies.”¹²⁶

If there are diverse opinions about the past or its link with the present it is again the group's responsibility to prevent this change. The group who holds this power receives this change as a threat to their society's existence and identity since the collective memory is a manifestation of their identity.

Halbwachs aimed to prove that a society's collective memory is dependent. He stated:

¹²⁵ Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, trans. F.J. AND V.Y.Ditter, London: Harper Colophon Books, 1950, p. 86

¹²⁶ Gideon Levy.

“People usually believe that they are free in their thoughts and feelings, when in fact they draw on the same part of common thinking and understanding.”¹²⁷

“Although we are participants in the events’ as individuals, our memories remain collective because our ideas originated within it and because our thinking keeps us in contact with that group. However we do not need the actual presence of others to preserve our memories”¹²⁸

He continued: “In fact I continue to be a subject to the influence of a society even when I have walked away from it: it is enough that I carry within me, in my spirit, all that allows me to classify myself with reference to its members, to reimmerse myself in their milieu and their own particular time, and feel myself a very much a part of the group”¹²⁹

So Halbwachs stated it is the individual who remembers, although this individual is located in a specific group context, and this draws on this social context to remember the past. Halbwachs also argued that memories are bound together. These memories are sustained because they form a part of a whole aggregate of thoughts, feelings and interests common to a group. So, complexity and coherence in public memory correspond to complexity and coherence at the social level.¹³⁰

At the same time, one finds that many Jewish citizens of Israel have collectively constructed the past as a crucial for the component for maintaining the present unity of the society. In Israel for the Jewish citizens Israel, the past is not continuous present. As Prof. Baskin suggests:

“The Holocaust is part of the heritage of the Jewish people and this country. Even today 61 years after the state of Israel was founded and 64 years later after the Holocaust there is not even a single day of the week we don’t find something in the newspaper and on the press about the Holocaust. It is with us all the time and we are reminded of it all the time. It is part of the identity of the people. And

¹²⁷ Ibid. p. 45

¹²⁸ Ibid. p. 23

¹²⁹ Ibid.p.128

¹³⁰ Misztal, p.52

remember that 40 percent of the Jews living here didn't go through the Holocaust but it is part of their heritage as well. It is a national people's heritage. It is part of the identity. And it is being made that way over and over again; every day we are reminded about the Holocaust."¹³¹

Halbwachs asserts that every society establishes a memory of its own past that is unique with the society. Israel's official memorial Yad Vashem's message is clear; "the uniqueness of the Holocaust and its universal lessons" must never be forgotten. Prof. Baskin states:

"It is very important for Israeli foreigners understand who we are. We don't allow any foreign leader who comes here to come here without visiting the Holocaust museum, Yad Vashem, on their first day of visit. This is part of the protocol. People say you can't begin to understand Israel unless you understand the Holocaust and the trauma of the Holocaust. We especially don't want Europeans to forget what they did. America allowed the Holocaust to happen. It could have bombed the concentration camps. It could have bombed the Auschwitz. And they didn't. The world was silent. So Israel is always reminding the world that it was silent"¹³²

Prof. Baskin emphasizes on the importance of the Holocaust for Jewish citizens of Israel. He states the majority of the people see the Holocaust as unique compared to the other genocides in the history. He states:

'Israel will always remind the world that the Holocaust was different from any of the genocide. Rwanda there was genocide but it wasn't a killing machine. It was a society that went crazy. Germany was a killing machine. It was organized killing of all the Jewish people. It was a well designed and mechanized plan to kill as many Jews possible in the shortest time possible. So there has never been anything like it and Israel will make sure that everyone remembers that there has never been anything like it. "¹³³

As we see, In Israel the function of remembering the past traumas is to promote a commitment to the society. The duty to remember is a duty to keep the memory of suffering alive. As Jack

¹³¹ Baskin.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

Kugelmass suggests “The moral order requires memory and memory in turn demands certain narrative forms.”¹³⁴ Therefore, the enormity of the Holocaust cannot be forgotten.

3.2. THE INSTITUTIONS OF MEMORY

In today’s democracies, collective memory is increasingly shaped by specialized institutions such as schools, courts, museums, and the mass media. The growing number of “ideas, assumptions, and knowledge that structure the relationship of individuals and groups to the immediate as well as the more distant past”¹³⁵ is formed, interpreted and preserved by public institutions. In Israel, schools and media are other important vehicles besides museums to transmit the past of the Jewish people to the new generations.

Today, the most important role in the construction of collective memories is played by the mass media. The shift from relying only on face to face exchanges to electronic processing on the word brought a new conception of the past¹³⁶ and thinking of the societies. The input of media on how and what we remember is a crucial factor influencing the society’s approach to the outside. As Prof. Michman argues; in media, especially in Israeli movies, there is much more of a focus on individual suffering of the Holocaust. The number of movies about the Holocaust in the media, especially about the memoirs is enormous and there has been much greater attention by the society.¹³⁷ However, Prof. Baskin criticizes the Israeli media’s approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He states:

¹³⁴ Jack Kugelmass, “Missions to the Past: Poland is a Contemporary Jewish Thought and Deed” in Paul Antze, *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*, London: Routledge, 1996, p. 195

¹³⁵ Daniel J. Sherman, *The Construction of Memory in Interwar France*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999, p. 2

¹³⁶ Misztal, p. 22

¹³⁷ Dan Michman.

“Media and press play a big role in Israel and it is populist. They want to sell newspapers. Television channels want to increase their ratings. Unfortunately violence sells, peace doesn’t sell. Bloody pictures give rating on the television. Story of school children from Israel and Palestine meeting each other and playing soccer is not news. But if there is a football game and an Arab kid stabs a Jewish kid, it’s on the first page.”¹³⁸

Gideon Levy makes a similar point about the negative role of the media on the society. As he suggests, the media in Israel is much more negative than the educational system. As he states:

“The role of media in Israel is critical, dramatic, and criminal. Much of the media has turned into a governmental organ. For Israeli television viewers, Palestinian suffering is nonexistent. Media dehumanizes Palestinians and show that they are not human beings, while attacking on Jews are portrayed over and over again. It shows the Israeli narrative rather than the Palestinian narrative. The media is more critical than the education system, because it is more influential.”¹³⁹

Another important vehicle for the preservation of the memory is the educational system. In 1980, a special curriculum of the Holocaust was introduced at the schools. In schools students started creating their family trees. The survivors of the Holocaust started telling their stories in classes as guest speakers. In secondary schools, children started to watch movies about the Holocaust in classes and reading about the memoirs of the survivors. However, there is a common sense that children should not be learning about the Holocaust when they are too young. The underlying reason of it is “young children are not able to understand past versus present.”¹⁴⁰ Teaching about the Holocaust to the young generation may re-traumatize the younger generations leaving them with unmerited burden of humiliation, anger, fear, and hatred. As Yaniv states:

¹³⁸ Gershon Baskin.

¹³⁹ Gideon Levy.

¹⁴⁰ Yaniv Segalovich, Interview with the Author, Tel Aviv, 20 July 2009

“I was almost five when the teacher started talking about the Holocaust. And I remember already knowing that there was a really bad man named Hitler who killed almost all Jewish people. I also remember having discussions with my classmates about all the specific horrors that happened in the Holocaust”¹⁴¹

“I think every child in Israel have a story like this,”¹⁴² Alon told me on the same topic. “When I was four or five, I remember having nightmares about Hitler coming into my room, taking me to a forest, and killing me. And the paradox is I am a Mizrahi Jew. None of my family members were subjected to the Holocaust. My family has immigrated to Israel from Iraq and they did not have any traumatic experiences.”¹⁴³

According to Prof. Baskin, the education system in Israel is pluralistic. There are different kind of schools, teachings methods and textbooks. He states even though there is no educational plan that teaches hating the Arabs, a lot of people come out of the educational system having a lot of stereotypes about the Palestinians. As he states:

“Official textbooks don’t teach peace and there are a lot of stereotypes in some of the textbooks. But you have a choice to use which textbook and it depends on the teacher. There is no educational plan that teaches you hating the Arabs but a lot of people come out of the educational system hating Arabs. Life experience is stronger than what you learn at schools. What you see in your daily life, on television, radio, newspaper is stronger than what any teacher is going to tell you at class.”¹⁴⁴

With the beginning of the decomposition of the Eastern bloc, and opening of Poland, school trips to Poland started. Even these school trips receive some criticism: Prof. Michman thinks this is an important tool to strengthen the Jewish identity. As he states:

“There have been two types of criticism for these journeys. It builds patriotic pride. Students are taken to these concentration camps and the notion is the whole

¹⁴¹ Yaniv Segalovich.

¹⁴² Alon Levi, Interview with the Author, Tel Aviv, 20 July 2009

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Gershon Baskin.

world was against to the Jews. This is the first criticism. The other criticism was on the psychological level. You take 16, 17 year old young people to concentration camps. You put them face to face with the worst atrocities of the history and not everybody is mature enough to cope with it. Overall this is an important project and essential to strengthen the Jewish identity and teach the universal humanistic lessons of the Holocaust.”¹⁴⁵

Yoav Shamir, an Israeli film maker directed a documentary called *Defamation (Hashmatsa)* about anti-semitism in today's world in 2009 summer. The film is presented as the journey of a young man who has grown up in Israel without experiencing anti-Semitism on a quest to discover what it is and how it affects people.¹⁴⁶

Yet, the most affecting scenes in the documentary involve the class of Israeli teenagers visiting Auschwitz, a former Nazi death camp in Poland. The students speak beforehand of how they are taught that anti-Semitism flourishes everywhere in the world and that by traveling beyond their nation's borders they are constantly at risk. For instance, at one scene, one of the tour guides at the bus warns the students not to speak Hebrew on streets of Poland and to be careful of the anti-Semitism.¹⁴⁷ There is another scene of children eating snacks on the bus while going to Auschwitz and watching historical footage of emaciated Jews in the notorious concentration camp. The documentary depict the youngsters making the emotional journey from giggling innocence and guarded fear into the camp's horror where the crushing images leave them distraught and weeping, and then outraged.¹⁴⁸

Thus far, I have discussed the power of the trauma of the Holocaust within the Jewish citizens of Israel in the lights of Maurice Halbwachs' social context theory. The society who holds its traumatic past as an important key to their identity may hinder creating empathy to

¹⁴⁵ Dan Michman.

¹⁴⁶ *Defamation (Hashmatsa)*. Dir. Yoav Shamir. 2009. Film.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

other's suffering. With the impact of public institutions, such as schools and media this may prevent the society's ability to connect with its neighbors since they will perceive every diverse identity construction as a threat to their existence. The remaining chapters will further elaborate and evaluate these findings.

CHAPTER 4

VICTIMIZATION AND ITS OUTCOMES

4.1. ENEMY IMAGE; DEHUMANIZATION PROCESS

Heidi Burgess defines the “enemy” as anyone that is not in our own group.¹⁴⁹ “Our group” can be clarified as any identity, our ethnicity, race, language or religion. In conflicts people from the same groups tend to see the opposing group as, especially negative. This negative image creates the “other” in the eyes of the group members. The opposing group becomes inferior to one’s own group and is seen as “enemy”.¹⁵⁰ Alternatively, anthropologist Howard Stein notes that “enemies are neither ‘merely’ projections, nor are they ‘merely’ real,”¹⁵¹ concluding, they are both. Since groups externalize and project their unwanted elements onto their enemies, they are also products of the group’s fantasies. Volkan makes a contribution to the topic stating that:

“When neighbors become enemies, they do not wish to acknowledge any degree of similarity, for that concession would diminish the distinctions between them. Enemy neighbors who do share similarities will stress and elevate the importance of major differences, such as language, skin color, religion, history, food, music, dance, or folklore and exaggerate the importance of minor differences.”¹⁵²

He then offers an example of how Israelis differentiated themselves from Palestinians at an Arab-Israeli dialogue series sponsored by the American Psychiatric Association. He states:

“During lunch, when all participants ate together for design, an Israeli might recount having eaten a certain dish in an Arab restaurant in Jerusalem and would explain that Israelis have that dish too, but that the recipe was slightly different.

¹⁴⁹ Heidi Burgess, *Enemy Images; In-Groups and Out-Groups*, October 2003, Beyond Intractability, <http://www.beyondintractability.org>, accessed on 12 September 2009

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Howard Stein “On Professional Allegiance in the Study of Political Psychology”, *Political Psychology* 7, 1986, p.248

¹⁵² Volkan, *Blood Lines: From Ethnic Terror to Ethnic Terrorism*, p.108

While people of different cultures like to talk about what makes their recipes unique, the importance of small distinctions in food preparation habits testifies here to the importance of maintaining separate group identities.”¹⁵³

At the checkpoints of Israel, one could see a definite “us” versus “them” attitude. Palestinians who line up for hours to pass the check points to get to work receive countless orders to stand straight, look forward, or not to look in the eyes of soldiers. They are even ordered to sing the Israeli national anthem or to swear or say derogatory words that humiliate Palestinians. The Israeli soldiers spend hours taking Palestinians apart and lining them back together to assure that they do not carry any bombs or are smuggling anything. Sometimes a person who waits for hours at the checkpoint is rejected for the entrance and asked to come back another day.

Bernard Ottenberg furthers the topic of “us” versus “them” by suggesting “two types of splitting.”¹⁵⁴ He explains that in the first phase, a splitting between “us” versus “them” is created by the group. “Them” is the enemy that is outside the group. If this splitting is too strong, in where members of the opposing group are considered to be less than human, the “other” becomes a target for dehumanization.¹⁵⁵ According to Ottenberg, dehumanization is “a composite psychological defense which results in a diminished perception of and feeling for humanness in oneself and others”¹⁵⁶ Neve Gordon adds that this process occurred extremely rapidly in Israel. He argues:

“A few months following the eruption of the second intifada, thousands of billboards , posters, bumper stickers and graffiti began to appear, with slogans

¹⁵³ Ibid. p.102

¹⁵⁴ Bernard Perry Ottenberg and Fritz Redl, “Dehumanization: A Composite Psychological Defense in Relation to modern War” in eds. Milton Schwebel, *Behavioral Science and Human Survival*, Palo Alto CA: Science and Behavior Book, 2003, p.64

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. p.78

like “No Arabs, No Assaults”, “Expel Arafat”, “Kahane Was Right¹⁵⁷” and “The Criminals of Oslo Should be Brought to Justice”. But , as it turned out, this was just the beginning, Stickers stating “No Leftists, No Assaults” were printed to accompany the ones exclaiming “No Arabs, No Assaults”, while little by little a whole new brand of posters directed against Palestinian citizens of Israel appeared on the scene: “Do Not Employ Arabs”, “Enemies Should Not Be Offered a Livelihood”, “ We Will Assist Those Who Do Not Provide Work for Arabs”. One poster even provided a detailed list of taxi companies that employ Arab citizens and companies that don’t.”¹⁵⁸

A pioneering research study conducted by Daniel Bar-Tal, one of the leading political psychologists, shows that an Israeli Jewish sense of victimization has been perpetuating the conflict with Palestinians. Bar-Tal argues that” Most of the nation retains a simplistic collective memory of the conflict, a black and white memory that portrays Jews in a very positive light and the Arabs in a very negative one.”¹⁵⁹ This memory along with the ethos of the conflict and collective emotions such as fear, hatred and unresolved anger, turns into a psycho-social infrastructure by society that have involved in an intractable conflict. Bar-Tal argues that this infrastructure gives rise to the culture of conflict in which Israelis and Palestinians are deep immersed, fanning the flames and preventing progress toward peace. He claims that in this type of environment it is almost impossible to imagine a possibility that the two societies will be capable of overcoming the psychological obstacles without outside help¹⁶⁰. Bar-Tal concludes his study as suggesting: “The sweeping support for Operation Cast Lead confirmed the main diagnosis that Israeli Jews’ consciousness is characterized by a sense of victimization, a siege

¹⁵⁷ Rabbi Meir Kahane, an American who founded the Jewish Defense League in the 1960s and later immigrated to Israel, founded the Kach party, which advocated expulsion of the Palestinians. In 1988 Kach was declared a racist party by the Israeli government and was banned from the Knesset. In 1994 following the attack on Muslim Palestinians praying at a mosque in Hebron by a Kahane follower, Kach was outlawed. Rabbi Meir Kahane was assassinated in New York in 1990.

¹⁵⁸ Neve Gordon, “ The Enemy Within”, in *The Other Israel: Voices of Refusal and Dissent*, p. 101

¹⁵⁹ Akiva Elder, “*Is an Israeli Jewish Sense of Victimization Perpetuating the Conflict with Palestinians?*” An Interview with Daniel Bar-Tal, 30 January 2009, Haaretz, accessed on 31 January 2009

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

mentality, blind patriotism, belligerence, self-righteousness, dehumanization of the Palestinians and insensitivity to their suffering.”¹⁶¹

4.2. THE PEOPLE’S ARMY

Jews during World War II are commonly compared to sheep going to slaughter, since they did not resist and marched silently to their death. In the Israeli discourse, the concept of “sheep” represents vulnerability, weakness, helplessness and passivity. As I discussed earlier; after the Holocaust, to reverse this understanding and “in terms of saving Jewish souls”¹⁶² scholars started paying attention to the individual heroic deeds and uprisings, such as the Warsaw ghetto uprising. Also with the establishment of Israel, a new Israeli-Jewish identity was created. The Zionism was a break away from the Jewish history that has always been victimized. With the establishment of the state, “the new Jew” would stand up and fight for his independence. The new Jew would make the history instead of the history being done to him.

Today in Israel, there is a common understanding that if Jewish people had an organized army, they wouldn’t have been subjected to the Holocaust. Segev asserts that the reason why Israel spends so much on its military and has one of the strongest army in the world is because of this deep fear of being weak again and being exterminated.¹⁶³ Israel’s professed need of an atomic project then is explained by this deep fear that the event precipitating the Holocaust could once again be replicated.¹⁶⁴ Distressingly, today in Israel in spite of its tremendous human rights violations, Jewish citizens of Israel overwhelmingly support the Israeli Defense Forces. Bar-Tal argues the close connection between the collective memory, “past persecutions of Jews” and

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Idith Zertal, *Israel’s Holocaust and the Politics of Nationhood*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p.10

¹⁶³ Tom Segev.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

society's support for its army. He suggests the more significant the memory of persecution and belief of "the whole world is against us" the stronger tendency to adopt Zionist narratives.¹⁶⁵

Zahava Solomon has also stressed the importance of the Israeli Defense Forces in Israel. As she explains:

"In Israel, Israeli Defense Forces is the people's army. In general except of the ultra orthodox Jews and minorities that are prohibited by the law, almost everyone serve in the military so it becomes a people's army. For so many years Jews didn't have a country, they didn't have an army. People felt they were going to be persecuted anytime, anywhere and they wanted have a secure place. Obviously it creates such cohesion and support. Parents usually support the army which their children fight. How can you criticize your own flesh of blood and your own children?"¹⁶⁶

Solomon then maintains that the siege mentality and its accompanying sense of insecurity reflect a paranoia that extends far beyond the threats to the state. However a lot of people are very much afraid that If Israel didn't have a strong army, they wouldn't survive today. Prof. Solomon also states that the victimization mentality of Jews hinder their progress toward peace with Palestinians. As she explains:

"In occupied territories the situation is absolutely horrible. It is horrible for the Palestinians and it's not doing us any good too. I am very sorry that we didn't pull out our forces and let them be and there is not a reachable solution now. But there is a great fear also. When you are very anxious you see the treat in everywhere. Traumas of the past make any of us untrusting and suspicious. It happens because of the fear. I don't justify what soldiers are doing. I don't think that no one should be treated like that. There is a vicious circle because of this fear. The reality is people are motivated by fear. They are mistrusting. Once you were victimized it is pretty much that's what you learn, either you go and become a victim or perpetrator. And usually, especially men in this society would say why would I become a victim once again?"¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Bar Tal

¹⁶⁶ Prof. Zahava Solomon, Interview with the Author, Tel Aviv University, 19 July 2009

¹⁶⁷ Zahava Solomon.

In this chapter I have discussed the perceived and actual level of helplessness and victimization that has inflicted on a society and its outcomes. I have argued how the unresolved traumas of the past split certain groups of people and created a negative image of the “outsider”. I also have discussed how this splitting of “us” versus “them” in extreme levels creates a target for dehumanization for the “other”. Finally I have argued how this dehumanization process creates a security-oriented society.

CHAPTER 5

JEWISH CITIZENS OF ISRAEL AND “THE OTHERS”

Jewish residents of Israel remember, commemorate and valorize 1948 as the year they established a national and independent home land after so many years of Jewish suffering. Yet for millions of Palestinians who were inhabitants of the land, 1948 is a day that is remembered as “Nakba” (the day of catastrophe). It is also the year that thousands of Palestinians were massacred and deported by the Israeli Defense Forces and became refugees in the neighboring countries of Lebanon and Jordan. Moreover, they faced numerable atrocities. For instance in May 1948, as part of Plan Dalet, 5,000 soldiers attacked the city of Jaffa. They established positions in the Jewish neighborhoods surrounding the city.¹⁶⁸ Over 70,000 Palestinians, who lived in Jaffa until that time, were forced to leave their homes while upwards of 95% of the Palestinians were expelled, mainly to Gaza and to Beirut, Lebanon.¹⁶⁹

5.1. WHO WILL OWN THE PALESTINIAN SUFFERING?

“We support peace,” or so claimed Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in a speech before the U.S. Naval Academy during the peace summit in Annapolis, Maryland on November 27, 2007.¹⁷⁰ He continued that, “we demand an end to terror, an end to incitement and hatred. I believe it is time. We are ready to compromise.”¹⁷¹ However, Olmert’s words may not reflect the current mood of the Israeli politics. Today, when we look at the NGO reporters doing field

¹⁶⁸ Ian J. Bickerton, and M. N. Pierson, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 2nd ed., Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1991, pp. 90-94

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ehud Olmert, “Annapolis Conference”, www.bbc.co.uk, Memory Hall, US Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, 27 November 2007., accessed on 5 February 2009

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

research and surveys in the region, the deportation policy of the Palestinians continues apace while efforts at a lasting peace are seldom pursued. From the beginning of the Israeli occupation, in 1967 through 1992, when Israel ceased deportations, 1,522 Palestinians were deported from the Occupied Territories.¹⁷² None of the deportees had been charged with a criminal offense nor tried and convicted. Therefore, by law, they must be considered innocent of any offense.¹⁷³

Noga Kadman's influential article, "1987-1997 A Decade of Human Rights Violations" brings up very interesting points about the deportation of Palestinians. Kadman argues that Israel seals and demolishes houses of Palestinians as punishment for violent acts for which a family member was suspected or convicted¹⁷⁴. According to the statistics, since the beginning of the intifada, Israeli security forces have totally demolished at least 447 houses and sealed at least 294 houses in the Occupied Territories. In addition, at least 62 houses were partially demolished, and at least 118 were partially sealed¹⁷⁵. Kadman has noted that, "since 1967, Israel has expropriated more than one-third of East Jerusalem, and has built some 40,000 housing units for Jews on this expropriated land, but not one unit for Palestinians. The placement of Jewish neighborhoods in the eastern part of the city is designed to blur the dividing line between eastern and western Jerusalem."¹⁷⁶

B'Tselem advances Kadman's statements. In the article "House Demolition During Operations against Wanted Persons" it is argued that "in September 1992, the IDF began to use massive firepower at houses in which persons it defined as "wanted" were suspected of hiding.

¹⁷² The figures for 1967 to 1982 are taken from the reply of Minister of Defense Ariel Sharon to a parliamentary query of MK Mordechai Virshubski, 1983 Knesset Records 95, p. 1145. The figures refer to deportation orders that had been issued. The figures for 1982-1987 are based on the 17 December 1992 press release of the Palestinian organization PHRIC, and refer to the number of individuals actually deported.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Noga Kadman, *1987-1997 A Decade of Human Rights Violations*, B'Tselem The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, Jerusalem, January 1998, p.10

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. p.14

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. p.17

From then until the end of 1995, security forces totally destroyed eighty-one houses and partially destroyed seventy-five houses in this manner. ¹⁷⁷ In fact, each are further corroborated by data from 1989 that was obtained from the Office of the Coordinator of Activities in the Territories. These documents reveal that of the 1053 requests for family reunification submitted in the West Bank, 250 were approved, and of the 305 submitted in the Gaza Strip, 192 were approved. In 1990 through the end of July, 139 of the 334 requests submitted in the West Bank were approved, and of the 261 requests from the Gaza Strip, 187 were approved.¹⁷⁸

Yuval Ginbar and Bassem Eid both present the problematics of ‘illegal residency’ in their article “Renewal of Deportation of Women and Children from the West Bank on Account of Illegal Residency”. In 1989, between May and December, more than 200 people, mainly women and children, were deported from the territories¹⁷⁹. The deportations were done under the “illegal residency” policy. The deportations separated wives from their husbands and children from their parents. By virtue of the testimonies, “a unit of soldiers would enter a village, gather all males between the ages of 16 and 60 in a single location, and order those who were to be deported to get ready immediately to leave their homes.”¹⁸⁰ 46% of those deported were women, 50% children, and 4% men. Approximately one tenth of the women deported were pregnant at the time of deportation, and many of the deported children were very small infants.¹⁸¹

Especially the Operation Cast Lead which started 27 December 2008 and lasted three weeks is worrisome. After the IDF’s attack on Gaza, Israeli authorities reported that 1,166 Palestinians were killed in the offensive, the majority of whom they claimed were militants. However,

¹⁷⁷ See B’Tselem, *House Demolition during Operations against Wanted Persons* (Information Sheet, May 1993).

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Yuval Ginbar, Bassem 'Eid, *Renewal of Deportation of Women and Children from the West Bank on Account of 'Illegal Residency*, B’Tselem, Jerusalem, October 1991, pg.15

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid. Appendix, pg.28

human rights groups have put that number approximately 1,400 Palestinians were killed, mostly civilians.¹⁸² Thirteen Israelis were killed during the attack: 10 soldiers and three civilians.

After the Gaza War Richard Goldstone, a South African Jew and a former South African Constitutional Court scholar, led a mission created by the United Nations Human Rights Council to investigate international human rights violation related to the Gaza War. The 574-page document concludes that serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law were committed by both Israel and Hamas during the Gaza conflict.¹⁸³ The report accuses Israel of deliberately using "disproportionate force"¹⁸⁴ in the three-week operation and imposing "a blockade which amounted to collective punishment"¹⁸⁵ in the conflict. It concludes that the "Israeli military operation was directed at the people of Gaza as a whole, in furtherance of an overall and continuing policy aimed at punishing the Gaza population, and in a deliberate policy of disproportionate force aimed at the civilian population."¹⁸⁶

As soon as the report was released, it received a lot of outraged feedback from the Israeli officials and public. Israeli officials said the report was clearly one-sided and legitimized terrorism.¹⁸⁷ President of Israel, Shimon Peres, accused the report of "being a mockery of history".¹⁸⁸ He also added: "It fails to distinguish between the aggressor and a state exercising its right for self defense."¹⁸⁹

¹⁸² Bethany Bell, "Counting Casualties of Gaza's War", BBC News, Jerusalem, 28 January 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk>, accessed on 12 July 2009

¹⁸³ "UN Backs "Gaza War Crimes" Report", BBC News, 16 October 2009, www.bbc.co.uk, accessed on 22 October 2009

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Barak Ravid, Natasha Mozgovaya, "Netanyahu Calls UN Gaza Probe a "Kangaroo Court" Against Israel", Haaretz, 16 October 2009, www.haaretz.com, accessed on 18 October 2009

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

Eight months after the conflict, very little reconstruction has taken place in Gaza because of the strict Israeli-imposed blockade. The stated aim of the blockade is to weaken Hamas's leadership but aid agencies say it serves only to punish the civilian population.¹⁹⁰

5.2. SOCIAL DOMINANCE THEORY

An outsider can be perplexed by the attitude of Israel's disproportionate force aimed at Palestinians and Jewish citizens of Israel's support on Gaza War. Jim Sidanius and Felicia Pratto bring an interesting perspective of Israel's discriminative policies toward Palestinians by offering *social dominance theory*.¹⁹¹ Social dominance theory "concerns identifying and understanding the specific intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, and institutional mechanisms that produce and maintain group-based social hierarchy."¹⁹²

The main principle of the theory is societies are based on sexism, ethnicity, nationality, and so on. Social hierarchies consist of "a hegemonic group at the top and negative reference groups at the bottom. More powerful social roles are likely to be occupied by hegemonic group members."¹⁹³ Since the hegemonic group is more dominant than the negative reference groups, it possesses more political power.¹⁹⁴ Social hierarchy is driven by three stages: aggregated individual discrimination aggregated institutional discrimination and behavioral asymmetry.¹⁹⁵ These stages are regulated by legitimizing myths. Legitimizing myths consist of attitudes, values, belief, stereotypes, or ideologies that provide moral and intellectual justification for the

¹⁹⁰ Martin Kramer, "On Second Thought", in *Journal of Adelson Institute for Strategic Studies*, Issue No.3, p.1, Jerusalem: Shalem Center, January 04 2009

¹⁹¹ Jim Sidanius, Felicia Pratto, "Social Dominance Theory: A New Synthesis" in *Political Psychology: Key Readings in Social Psychology*, ed. John T. Jost, Jim Sidanius, New York: Psychology Press, 2004, p. 320

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Jim Sidanius, Felicia Patto, *Social Dominance: an Intergroup Theory of Social Hierarchy and Oppression*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 31

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. p.321

social system. Prejudiced beliefs such as racism, nationalism and classism are the manifestations of this same principle of social hierarchy. This unequal distribution of social value is justified and defended by use of various social ideologies, belief, myths and religious doctrines.¹⁹⁶ These kinds of beliefs are important because they influence whether people accept or reject social policies that influence intergroup relations. Legitimizing myths provide intellectual and moral justification for the institutional discrimination and militaristic ventures.¹⁹⁷ The extent to which “an individual endorses legitimizing myths depends upon whether he or she generally endorses, desires, and supports a system of group-based social hierarchy.”¹⁹⁸ In short, the more firmly myths are tied to the basic values and points of view of the culture, the more supportive the society will be for the government’s policies and militaristic ventures.

Social dominance theory is a way to analyze Israel’s discriminative policies by legitimizing the myth of the Holocaust. The Holocaust understandably has had a profound influence from the very foundation of the state of Israel. Even the experience of being a persecuted people has been a part of Jewish identity for centuries; the Holocaust represents the most extreme and unique example of the Jewish suffering and dehumanization that has been occurred. By the establishment of the state, the “new Jew” that Zionism wished to create was the opposite of the persecuted, helpless, humiliated and weak “old Jew”. Therefore, instead of mourning, the “old Jew” have internalized his suffering and passed the memory to the next generations. When the older generation has externalized their traumatized self on to their grandchildren, it became the new generation’s responsibility to mourn and to reverse the humiliation and helplessness pertaining to the trauma of their grandparents. Therefore this chosen trauma of the Holocaust has become the identity of the Jewish citizens of Israel.

¹⁹⁶ Sidanius. Social Dominance: an Intergroup Theory of Social Hierarchy and Oppression. p.34

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. p.234

¹⁹⁸ Ibid. p.323

Because of the mythic dimension of the Holocaust in Jewish-Israeli society, eternal victims cannot do anything wrong. In the Jewish-Israeli social consciousness, the Holocaust continually reminds the people of what would happen to Jews if they were without a homeland and unable to protect themselves. This notion of victimization gives them the ability to refuse any responsibility for their part in perpetuating the violence. Michael Ignatieff makes a similar point by arguing that:

“Peoples who believe themselves to be victims of aggression have an understandable incapacity to believe that they too have committed atrocities. Myths of innocence and victimhood are a powerful obstacle in the way of confronting responsibility, as are atrocity myths about the other side.”¹⁹⁹

The belief of victimization has a profound impact on Israel-Palestine conflict. Palestinians are perceived as a threat to the Jewish citizens of Israel’s existence. The majority of Jewish citizens think if Palestinians had a strong army, they would be willing to exterminate Jews. The theory also explains the ways in which a dehumanization process toward Palestinians is advantageous for Israelis’ to adopt. Neve Gordon argues that it is not unusual to see “Arab-looking residents refrain from using public transportation and from going to Jewish neighborhoods and shopping centers”²⁰⁰. He also adds it is not surprising “when driving in the city to see groups of Arab men being searched at gunpoint by Israeli police, their faces against the wall and their hands in the air”.²⁰¹ This set of values, beliefs and stereotypes produce a moral justification for the government’s discriminative policies as well as the military’s disproportionate force toward Palestinians.²⁰² When we look at the public opinion on the Gaza War, almost three weeks after

¹⁹⁹ Michael Ignatieff, *The Warrior’s Honor: Ethnic War and the Modern Conscious*, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1997, p.176

²⁰⁰ Neve Gordon. p. 101

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Prof. Uri Davis, Interview with the Author, Jerusalem, 11 July 2009

the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, a Haaretz-Dialog poll showed widespread public support for the Gaza campaign. Despite pictures from Gaza depicting massive destruction and a large number of wounded and killed, including women and children, 82 percent of the public believe that Israel has not "gone too far" with the military force it is exercising against Hamas.²⁰³ This means that almost all Jewish citizens of Israel support the operation, its goals, and management. As the cycle of violence consumes more lives, the majority of Jewish citizens of Israel are in favor of the government's assassination policy.²⁰⁴ As we see, the status of victim continues to evoke public sympathy even when victim's circumstances have changed. Ellis questions this cycle of violence by asking, "Have we as Jews become an oppressor nation? Have the lessons of the Holocaust, which we teach religiously to everyone in the world, been lost to us?"²⁰⁵

Breaking the cycle of violence is an ongoing struggle between Jewish citizens of Israel and Palestinians. Empathy and recognizing the other's suffering are the first steps to break this cycle. Ignatieff brings an interesting point on the role of reconciliation and past traumas. He states:

"The chief moral obstacle in the path of reconciliation is the desire for revenge. Revenge is commonly regarded as a low and unworthy emotion, and because it is regarded as such, its deep moral hold on people is rarely understood. But revenge – morally considered – is a desire to keep faith with the dead, to honor their memory by taking up their cause where they left off. Revenge keeps faith between generations; the violence it engenders is a ritual form of respect for the community's dead – therein lies its legitimacy. Reconciliation is difficult precisely because it must compete with the powerful alternative morality of violence."²⁰⁶

Ignatieff further suggests the only way to stop the cycle of violence is to form a respect for the dead by a sincere apology that does not erase what was done. He then adds: "To deny the reality

²⁰³ Yossi Verter.

²⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 99

²⁰⁵ Ellis, Israel and Palestine: *Out of the Ashes: The Search for Jewish Identity in the Twenty-First Century*, p.1

²⁰⁶ Ignatieff, p. 188

of these deaths is to treat them as a dream, as a nightmare. Without an apology, without recognition of what happened, the past cannot return to its place as the past.”²⁰⁷

In this chapter I have discussed human rights violations perpetrated by the state of Israel toward Palestinians. I have argued Jewish citizens of Israel’s unconditional support for the state’s discriminative policies and harsh offensive tactics toward Palestinians within the framework of social dominance theory. Legitimizing myths of attitudes, values, belief, and stereotypes provides moral and intellectual justification for the social system. Finally I have discussed Israel’s denial of recognizing Palestinian suffering. An atmosphere in which an entire nation is in denial of recognizing “the other’s” suffering is the first obstacle to break the cycle of violence.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.* p.189

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This research project recognizes the importance of analyzing the underlying roots of a conflict. Indeed, with these roots lie causal factors that most typically undergird and sustain conflict. The primary conclusion of this study is that sustainable peace processes can only be achieved through deep analyses of social and psychological approaches and careful cultural observations – all of which play a critical role in long-lasting conflicts. The findings of these analyses and observations must be taken into consideration in implementing political, economic, and social policies.

Scholars such as Fisk²⁰⁸, Galtung²⁰⁹, and Fisher²¹⁰ argue that sustainable peace can only be achieved by satisfying basic human needs instead of using militaristic ventures and state level aggression. One of the primary causes of long-lasting conflicts is people's unyielding drive to meet their unmet needs on the individual, group, and societal level.²¹¹ The findings of this research add to the evidence and support for taking this understanding as a primary approach for sustainable peace.

6.1. SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

After the interviews and text analyses that I have conducted, it became clear that the Holocaust is a part of the national identity of the Jewish citizens of Israel. Several characteristics set Jewish citizens of Israel apart from each other, such as their origin, family backgrounds, traditions and ties with the religion. However, the majority of Jewish citizens of Israel thinks and responds to

²⁰⁸ Larry J. Fisk, John Schellenberg, *Patterns of Conflicts: Paths to Peace*, Toronto: Broadview Press, 2000

²⁰⁹ Johan Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means*, London: Sage Publications Ltd, 1996

²¹⁰ Simon Fisher, *Working with Conflict: Skills and Strategies for Action*, London: Zed Books, 2000

²¹¹ Terrell A. Northrup, "The Dynamic of Identity in Personal and Social Conflict," in *Intractable Conflicts and their Transformation*, ed. Louis Kriesberg, Terrell A. Northrup and Stuart J. Thorson, Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1989, p. 55

the Holocaust in similar ways. The Holocaust has shaped the collective identity and soul of the nation. Besides this, the study revealed four significant findings.

Primarily, I found that like any victim of a violent crime or other traumatic circumstance, The traumatic events that necessitated and justified the creation of Israel ensured that its identity would be harnessed by tragedy and fear. The deep sense of past and its linkage to the present created a role of victimization that has continually given cover to the perpetuation of the Israeli state violence as a means to manage conflict. Psychologically, and also with the impact of institutions such as education system, and media this sense of victimization rationalizes the discrimination toward the Palestinians and justifies the harsh political and military tactics employed against them. This cycle of violence, intolerance and dehumanization hinders Jewish citizens of Israel having a peace oriented approach toward Palestinians.

The second major finding was the linkage between the Holocaust and Israel's highly militarized security-oriented approach. The weakness and helplessness of Jewish people during the Second World War created the understanding that if Jewish people had a strong army, they wouldn't have exterminated by the Nazis. The idea of having a strong militaristic power as a solution to prevent the Holocaust led Israel having a security-oriented society with great paranoia, fear, anxiety, and dissociation from the self and others. My third finding revealed the importance of the institutions such as educational system and media on the public. Schools lacking peace-oriented approach and media dehumanizing Palestinians must be addressed if a lasting peace is ever to take hold in the region. Dehumanization, hatred, and fear perpetuate the destructive patterns of violence of cycle. Finally, this has revealed that the political manipulation turned the Arabs into spiritual brethren of the Nazis. Restored relations with Germany enabled Israelis to receive the German reparations and compensation money. At the same time they

continued to express anger to remember and never forget by reincarnating the Nazi spirit into the Arab body.²¹² In other words, Jewish citizens of Israel have displaced their anger and revenge from one old adversary to a new one. This continuously transmitted trauma of the Holocaust has left Israeli society feeling vulnerable, defensive, hostile, and paranoid in many respects.

6.2. THE KEY TO PEACE

Chosen traumas happen when a group feels too humiliated, angry, or helpless to mourn its trauma, so it passes on the memory to the next generations. As the new generation receives the trauma, it becomes their responsibility to mourn. Therefore chosen trauma becomes of the person's identity. Having an enemy enhances group cohesion. The negative image of the enemy creates the "other" in the eyes of the group members. The opposing group becomes inferior to one's own group. Extreme fear and uncertainty strengthens the enemy image and dehumanizes "the other". The group starts seeing "the other" inferior and as a threat for their existence. During times of conflict with the negative impact of institutions such as education system and media the group portrays their aggression as a largely defensive effort while designating the aggression of the other party's offensive. Modifying such a relationship would likely threaten many people in Israel by being a part of this cycle of violence.

Yehezkel Landau gives an example of this vicious cycle of violence and dehumanization process:

"During the Lebanon War in 1982, one of the soldiers who returned from the front to protest against the war was named Shuki. He told a story about his experience going into the Ein Al-Hilweh refugee camp outside Sidon, where his unit was ordered to clear the camp of PLO fighters. Shuki and his comrades fought their way into the camp, shooting as they went, taking care not to harm civilians. Suddenly two refugees came in their direction carrying an object and

²¹² Avraham Burg, *The Holocaust is Over; We Must Rise from Its Ashes*, New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2008, p. 78

yelling at the soldiers. Shuki and his buddies screamed back at them, urging them to get out of the way. Since the two men were only about 20 yards distant, the soldiers could quickly make out that they were carrying a crate of Pepsi Cola and could decipher their screams as invitations to have a drink! Shuki later reflected: "If they had been 200 yards away, we would have shot at them and been glad to hit them." And he asked: "How far away does a human being have to be before he becomes a target? How close must he be before we see he is human?"²¹³

Breaking the cycle of violence is essential not only to create sustainable peace but also to free the society of fear, anxiety and paranoia. First of all, in societies trying to break the cycle of violence, hatred, and revenge, it is crucial to acknowledge the human rights abuses that were committed by both sides. It has been documented that ordinary people under certain circumstances are capable of greater evil than we could have ever imagined.²¹⁴ If ordinary people are capable of greater evil, then they should be capable of greater virtue as well. The first step to break the cycle of violence in Israeli -Palestinian is to acknowledge the human rights violations that were committed by both sides. The second step is creating a dialogue between Jewish citizens of Israel, Palestinian citizens of Israel, and Palestinians. Dialogue, of course, will not solve every problem faced by these groups. But dialogue creates availability for broadening our models of justice and for healing deep wounds in these groups by acknowledging and recording what has been done. Dialogue humanizes the dehumanized and confronts perpetrators with their wrong-doing. Through dialogue, victims as well as the society "come to recognize perpetrators as human beings who failed morally, whether through coercion, the perverted convictions of a warped mind, or fear."²¹⁵ At this point, creating a national language for

²¹³ Yehezkel Ladau, "Rehumanizing the "Enemy" and Confronting Ourselves" in *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture*, Vol.3, No.1, Jerusalem: Al Amal Press, 1996

²¹⁴ Please see Elie Wiesel, *Night*, New York: Hill and Wang, 1960; John Conroy, *Unspeakable Acts, Ordinary People: The Dynamics of Torture*, New York: Knopf, 2000

²¹⁵ Godobo-Madikizela, p. 119

collective reconciliation is crucial. This occurs through institutions such as the media and educational system.

As geopolitical forces continue to shift dramatically, new means of conflict resolution will become paramount toward building and ensuring a peaceful future. The goal among policy makers then must be to emphasize the use of human centered approaches, taking into account the intricate methodologies of social and psychological relationships rather than violence and military adventurism.

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