Oded Haklai, *Palestinian Ethnonationalism in Israel* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 243 pp. ISBN 978-08-12-24347-5

This volume uses the majority-minority framework to analyse the dynamics of the historical relationship between the founding (and later the national) institutions of the state of Israel, Israeli society and the Palestinian Arab Citizens of Israel, termed PAI in the volume. This acronym incorporates a marker of national identity and of political belonging and is used here to indicate "an indigenous and national minority" (pp. 1 and 10). One of the questions which this book tries to address is when PAI politics in Israel become ethnonational, especially considering that the relations between the majority and the minority started off on the basis of the minority's quiescence in the 1950s and 1960s, a statement that recurs in the volume (pp. 13, 32, 67, 70–72, 82). Within this framework, Haklai looks at which factors contributed to the transformation of PAI politics from a struggle that he categorizes in terms of class—not by chance historically, the minority was mobilized through the Communist Party—to one of ethnicity, thus making "ethnonational demands on the state" (p. 1).

One of the answers can be found in the changes that the institutional structure of the state of Israel underwent: the more the majority fragmented politically and retreated from key areas of public and economic life—e.g., with the liberalization waves of the 1980s—the more the political activism of the minority took an ethnonationalist turn, voiced by organizations which claimed to speak on its behalf. And while this structural explanation certainly plays an important part in Haklai's argument, the author also discusses a more broadly intended cultural dimension, which becomes central for the argument in the second part of the volume: the global emergence of the ethnonationalist discourse in the 1990s, starting for example from the break-up of the former Yugoslavia and culminating in the 2007 UN "Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People." In this context, it is worth highlighting the fact that Haklai does not adopt the paradigm of uniqueness so often applied to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; as he states, majority-minority relations "are of global relevance" (p. 10) and the lack of a comparative perspective would hinder more than advance understanding.

This volume is divided into six chapters that cover the history of relations between the Jewish majority and the Arab minority in the 20th century, from the British Mandate into the first decade of the 21st century. Chapter one, entitled "Transitions in Minority Political Activism, Grievances, and Institutional Configurations," falls outside of the chronological timeline, as it expands

the theoretical argument. Central to this chapter, and thus to the book, are various notions and/or variables which are explained and articulated in the first part of the chapter and then checked against the PAI case in the second part. Among them, the notion of the *autonomy of the state*, i.e. its ability to realize objectives beyond the "demand and interests of organized social groups" (p. 14); secondly, the idea that "a minority can react differently to institutionalized disadvantage in different time periods" (p. 17); thirdly, the concept that there is no correlation between economic disadvantage and ethnic grievance; and fourthly, the role played by minority leaders in reacting to the policies of the majority. We are then led through an analysis of two last variables: *state extensiveness* and *cohesion*. The former is defined as "the variable range of social and territorial space occupied by the institutional infrastructure that constitutes the state"; the latter refers to "the extent to which the polity in question behaves as an integrated and unified entity" (p. 26). To support the comparative approach, Haklai discusses each of these variables, comparing the case of PAI in Israel with various other national European or extra-European cases. It is in this section that Haklai summarizes the history of the relationship between Israel and its PAI minority from his theoretical standpoint.

> In an ethnically dominated state, an institutional balance in which political fragmentation and state withdrawal from public space infringe on central government capacity to control the minority—but not to the extent that the dominant group is forced to renegotiate its dominant position, despite organized minority opposition—is conducive to the formation of minority political organization that champion minority nationalism and make assertive ethnic demands on the state.   (p. 27)

Chapter two, entitled "State Formation and the Creation of National Boundaries," looks at the formative period of both the State of Israel and of the Arab-Israeli (and Israeli-Palestinian) conflict, i.e. the British Mandate. Here Haklai again uses a comparative framework to downplay the uniqueness of Israel's process of state formation and to explain how in Israel, as in various other places, one section of the population—usually the elite—came to own and dominate the state, affirming its ethnic connection to it through the process of state formation. With the partial exception of this comparative perspective, this chapter does add much to what historiography has already produced on the period of the British Mandate. Not by chance, Haklai focuses on land, immigration and institution-building (World Zionist Organization [WZO], the Jewish Agency, the Histadrut, and Mapa'i), topics which have been widely explored. The use of Ronen Shamir's "double colonialism" interpretative frame-

work, or the more complex legal historical framework put forward by Assaf Likhovski,[1] could have been helpful to explain *why* "the strong leadership of the Yishuv" was able "to utilize the opportunities created by the British Mandatory state" (p. 47) as well as *why* no "effective and expansive prestate military and civil administrative institutions that could lay the foundations for a future [Arab] state" (p. 52) were realized. This chapter can be seen as a long and general introduction to the following three chapters that offer content and analysis within the theoretical framework elaborated in the introduction and chapter one.

Chapters three, four and five represent the heart of the book; they seem to form the original nucleus around which the volume took shape. Together, these chapters represent an interesting and important excursus on the development of the status, politics, leadership, individual and collective reactions of the PAI minority in the state of Israel, from the 1950s to the present. Chapter three concentrates on the ways in which the state established its domination over the territory and among the population—indigenous and immigrant—in various ways: by means of legislation;[2] by means of Judaization of the territory (supported by legislation and economic and agricultural policies), a process whose details and terminology has been extensively discussed in the works of Oren Yiftachel and others whom Haklai quotes widely;[3] and by those means common to many states that aim at constructing a strong national identification (flag, anthem, memorials for the fallen, etc.). As is well known, Israel's state symbols overlap with religious ones (starting from the creation of a flag inspired by the Jewish prayer shawl); the same can be said for the correspondence between religious and civil calendars, a theme that found its first elaboration in the mid-1980s in the classic book by Charles Liebman and Eliezer Don-Yehiya.[4] The chapter addresses the relation between the state and

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[1] R. Shamir, *The Colonies of Law: Colonialism, Zionism and Law in Early Mandate Palestine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); A. Likhovski, *Law and Identity in Mandate Palestine* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

[2] 'Emergency Land Requisition Law' (1949), 'Law of Return' (1950), 'Absentee Property Law' (1950), 'Land Acquisition Law' (1953), 'Special Status Law' (1952—granting special status to the Jewish Agency), and 'Citizenship Law' (1952—that naturalized non-Jewish immigrants).

[3] O. Yiftachel, *Ethnocracy: Land and Identity Politics in Israel/Palestine* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

[4] C.S. Liebman and E. Don-Yehiya, *Civil Religion in Israel: Traditional Judaism and Political Culture in the Jewish State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

the PAI in the 1950s and 1960s and then in the 1990s, thus leaving the reader somewhat puzzled as to the development of these relations in the 30 years in between. These can, however, be found in chapter four, the longest chapter of the book, which analyses in depth and detail the patterns of political and social mobilization of the PAI between the 1950s and the late 1970s.

Chapter four, entitled "From Quiescence to the Communist Party," analyses the transition of Arab politics in Israel between the 1960s and the 1990s, from mobilization within the bi-national Israel Communist Party (ICP), the "single most popular political organization among Arab voters" throughout the 1970s and 1980s (p. 71), to the emergence in the 1980s of non-parliamentary organizations that began to make claims in the name of ethnonationalism. The first half of the chapter focuses on the ICP's history, structure, composition, and electoral results; it addresses the question of the Jewish domination within the party and the gradual integration of PAI, and it examines some of its political battles, for example the call to extend the Law of Return to Palestinian Arab refugees of the 1947–1949 war. In the context of this history, 1965 represents an important watershed as it was at this point that an Arab majority faction seceded from the ICP "in protest over their [own] marginalization" to form Rakah, a new pro-Soviet political formation that spoke and made claims specifically on behalf of the PAI minority. This did not represent an emergence of the PAI ethnonational paradigm as yet, as complaints voiced against Jewish ethnically-based resource allocation were made in the name of principles of universal citizenship, a trend that continued throughout the 1970s and 1980s (p. 77). The party thus never demanded a separate PAI sphere, nor did it question the legitimacy of the state. At the same time however, Rakah helped the emergence of non-parliamentary organizations which could link more effectively with the PAI masses: among them was the National Committee for the Defense of the Land (NCDL), which played a major role in mobilizing PAIs against the government's New Development Plan for the Galilee (the largest expropriation scheme since the 1950s). The rallies and demonstrations that followed on March 30, 1976 became the precedent for the recurring demonstrations of Land Day. As chapter five demonstrates, after this decade, the ethnonationalist trend in PAI politics was irreversible.

Before following this thread into the 1980s and 1990s, Haklai temporarily interrupts the historical flow to present the period examined thus far from a different point of view, i.e. through the prism of the control exerted on the PAI population since 1948. Haklai's argument goes well beyond an analysis of the military administration imposed on PAIs until 1966. Relying on the

characterization of Ian Lustick,[5] he describes at length the three pillars that supported Israeli control: first, the isolation of the Arab population from the Jewish majority and its fragmentation; second, keeping PAIs economically dependent upon the state for development; third, co-opting the Arab elites through client-patron political dynamics (p. 83). In these pages the author returns to, and addresses more fully, the oft-mentioned presumed quiescence of the PAIs during Israel's first 25 years. It then becomes clear that such a quiescence, assumed somewhat uncritically in the volume until this point, is to be ascribed to the control exerted on PAIs by the Israeli security apparatus, the military administration and the aforementioned tripartite strategy of control. The failure and dismantlement in 1964 of the organization al-Ard, established in 1959 by young, educated Arab intellectuals (students and lawyers) is a case in point. As Haklai states, the association was not given permission to print a newspaper, its members and activists were harassed and denied travel permits, until both members and association—which followed Nasser's pan-Arab call and which did not recognise the state of Israel—dispersed. A tight control of the public and a national discourse that shaped the boundaries of the national identity were also part and parcel of this strategy to keep PAIs quiescent: the state controlled the media (radio and newspapers) available at the time; teachers in Arab schools were Jews; Arab teachers had to undergo security checks; and the political scene was dominated by Mapa'i which also largely controlled the economy through the Histadrut. Exploiting the hierarchical family structure characterizing this section of the population and the rivalry between families, Mapa'i also came to dominate PAI politics. Such domination was pervasive, as demonstrated also by the high voter turnout among PAI still in the 1960s (pp. 93–94).

The abolition of the military government in 1966 was part of a broader process of transformation towards a less centralized state, for example through the partial liberalization of the media with the establishment of the Israel Broadcasting Authority (IBA) in 1965 and the emergence of a vibrant civil society that started to "question the norms that supported Labor dominance" (p. 99). This was true both for the Jewish and the Arab public spheres, as the development of the protest movements of the 1970s demonstrated. In the conceptual framework of this volume, the history of the Black Panthers (the movement of Jews of Arab provenance/descent which challenged the

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[5] I. Lustick, *Arabs in the Jewish State: Israel's Control of a National Minority* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980).

social and economic subordination imposed on them by Labor in the name of ethnonational goals/unity) thus becomes indicative of a first congruence of goals of minorities fighting in a political framework which imposed sacrifices on them and limited their opportunities in the name of ethnonational control. The end of the 1960s saw the gradual decay of the networks of patronage which had supported the dominance of Labor; when Likud came to power in 1977, it was not as able to control either the state and its apparatus or the minorities with the same strategies used by Labor.

Chapter five discusses the ethnonational phase of PAI involvement in Israeli politics. Haklai looks at four documents, collectively known as the Vision Documents, elaborated between 2006–2007 by various PAI organizations:[6] *The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel*, *The Haifa Declaration*, *The Democratic Constitution* and *An Equal Constitution for All? On the Constitution and the Collective Rights of Arab Citizens in Israel*. Haklai looks at the similarities and differences between these four documents, pointing to the one feature which is common to all, i.e. the presentation of the PAI as the indigenous and native people of the land, a characterization that lays the basis for the ethnic type of claims put forward by the PAI: language protection; distinct and autonomous political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions; self-government in the sphere of education; control over resources, planning and development; social welfare and communication; and freedom to maintain ties with Palestinians and Arabs elsewhere (p. 116). This new political program based on ethnonational claims re-shaped the orientation and functioning of PAI politics in Israel in the last ten years, with special reference to the mobilization through civil society organizations. Among them: "The Arab Center for Alternative Planning" (ACAP) established in 2000, "Mossawa" and "Adalah," the "Arab Association for Human Rights," "Ittijah: the Union of Arab Community Based Organizations" and some Islamic organizations. This part of the chapter is more descriptive, as Haklai details these associations one by one, looking at their aims in relation to their political platforms and the Israeli Jewish political context in which they operate.

Chapter six anticipates the conclusions of the book, analyzing how the relations between state and society changed in Israel over the last decade. Here Haklai recalls some of the concepts elaborated in chapter one (e.g., state

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[6] These are listed on p. 114: "The National Committee for the Heads of the Arab Local Authorities" (NCHALA), "Mada al-Carmel: The Arab Center for Applied Social Research"; "Adalah: the legal center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel"; the "Mossawa Center: the Advocacy Center for Arab Citizens in Israel."

extensiveness) to close the circle of 60 years of majority-minority relations from the presumed quiescence of the PAI to the presence of an ethnic civil society active and vociferous in its demands.

This volume is rich, varied and interesting, but its organization and structure are not fully convincing; the trajectory of the PAI minority, from its presumed quiescience to ethnonationalist mobilization is clear, as is the fact that such transformation occurred within a relationship between the minority and the majority, where the two parts depended upon each other. While this point is central to the argument of the book, there is no mention of the idea of "relational history" as elaborated by Zachary Lockman, i.e. the idea that the identity of each of the two partners in the relationship, conflictual or otherwise, is given by their relation.[7] Moreover, the way in which the argument of this book is constructed and is articulated is far from linear. The flow of the historical narration is often interrupted to present the same events or situations from a different perspective; there are chronological jumps that do not help to make a rather complex picture more easily understandable. On the one hand, these interruptions offer a more complex and complete picture; on the other, they do not contribute to a deeper understanding of this process.

Despite its heavy reliance on models taken from the social and political sciences, this is a book on the *history* of the relations between a minority and a majority in power in Israel from the 1950s to the present. Particularly for the central chapters of the book, which deal with the British Mandatory period, the 1950s up to the 1970s, one wonders why little, if any, primary sources are used (governmental sources, for example, or local administrative papers, or the press), with the exception of some newspapers and local publications. The same cannot be said for the last chapters, which make extensive use of the documents produced by the PAI NGOs making ethnonationalist claims, and where these primary sources are well integrated with a good number of interviews with leaders and activists. It is a shame that only the closing chapters of the volume incorporate and discuss written and oral primary sources as when these are given the chance to speak and lead the argument, the volume becomes truly innovative.

Marcella Simoni
Università Ca' Foscari, Venezia, Italy
msimoni@unive.it

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[7] Z. Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).