Israeli Sociology's Young Hegelian: Gershon Shafir and the Settler-Colonial Framework

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"National histories are unique but unexceptional."[1]
"But they [Zionist Israelis] were not exceptional in pursuit of their goal. They were ordinary cleansers."[2]

In April 2014, the Center for Near Eastern Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) convened a conference titled "The Settler Colonial Paradigm: Debating Gershon Shafir's Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict **on Its 25th Anniversary." This essay emanates from the conference. I first chart the dialectical emergence of Shafir's thought out of Israeli sociology, and then gauge its impact on the growing presence of the settler-colonial framework in the study of Palestine/Israel. The analysis of Shafir's book shows how a powerful hegemony has produced its disavowal. The examination of Palestine/Israel as a settler-colonial situation past and present underscores the benefit of studying this topic comparatively and as part of a global phenomenon.**

Introduction

Iɴ 1989 Gershon Shafir published a pathbreaking book: *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882–1914.*[3] This essay charts the dialectical emergence of Shafir's thought out of Israeli sociology, and gauges its impact on the growing presence of the settler-colonial paradigm in the study of Palestine/Israel. Presenting the evolution of Shafir's thought as an intellectual history in context, I opt for an insular examination of Israeli scholarship. The point of narrowing the scope of analysis is to exemplify how powerful hegemonies dialectically produce their own radical disavowals. It should not be taken to mean that Shafir's scholarship is parochial (it is patently anything but), nor that I am oblivious to the invaluable contribution of others, especially Palestinians, to settler-colonial studies.

I should clarify in what sense this argument is valid and in what sense it isn't. Shafir left Israel shortly after graduating from Tel Aviv University, irrevocably as it turned out, to study for his MA at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and his PhD at the University of

California, Berkeley. He was subsequently appointed to the University of California, San Diego, where he still teaches. It would be therefore inappropriate to argue that Shafir's dialectical emanation from Israeli sociology was institutional, like that of his teachers and other important interlocutors who remained in Israel. It is even possible to intuit that distance played a role in affording Shafir such a radical scholarship—although it should also be stated that expressing a radically critical stance on Israel is not easier in the United States than it is in Israel itself; it is perhaps even harder. Despite his continuing meaningful contact with the Israeli academy (most notably, see *Being Israeli,* the important book Shafir co-authored with Yoav Peled[4]), the argument's validity pertains to the realm of ideas. He is a product of the hegemony that he has disavowed—at least physically—from afar.

An Analogy

The Young Hegelians' underlying dissatisfaction with the grand master focused on his Absolute Spirit, which, in their view, was a thinly disguised divinity. A junior member of that group of radical disciples, which laid the most philosophically systematic foundation of atheism, was one Karl Marx; he would later criticize the Young Hegelians for an understanding of materialism that was abstract and ahistorical. Arguably then, atheism was the origin of Marxian thought. In that initial phase, Marx's Young Hegelian sources of influence were two (except for Engels, which is a different story). One was Ludwig Feuerbach's sharp critique of both Christianity and Hegel; the other was Bruno Bauer, who was Marx's mentor and friend, but later dissociated himself from both Marx and Engels, as they turned to materialism.

This essay is framed as an analogy, which, like any analogy, has both insights and limitations. Whilst written in a matter-of-fact register, *Land, Labor and Origins* was the most radical— intellectually, and with clear political implications—challenge to Zionism penned by a Jewish Israeli scholar.[5] Retrospectively, it is also a central text in an unfolding paradigmatic shift, in which the history of modern Palestine and Israel is being reconsidered within the framework of comparative settler-colonial studies. It is important to bear in mind that this paradigmatic shift is not limited to institutionalized scholarship. It has been adopted as the chief analytical tool by political movements like Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions and by the adherents of a common state in Palestine/Israel.[6]

The analogy to Marx as a Young Hegelian is twofold. Shafir is the product of a dissenting trend from hegemonic Israeli sociology, which did to the Zionist Absolute Spirit what the Young Hegelians had done to Hegel's (and to religion in general). In addition, Shafir's work, especially *Land, Labor and Origins,* did to his Young Hegelian sociologist-elders what Marx's had done to Feuerbach and Bruno Bauer—in Shafir's case, Yonatan Shapiro and Baruch Kimmerling.

The analogy ceases to obtain in terms of the shift from sharp intellectual analysis to political prescription, never mind revolutionary politics. Marx's Eleventh Feuerbach Thesis, "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it," has no equivalent in Shafir's writing.

The "New" in the New Israeli Historians

To appreciate the achievements of critical Israeli sociology, it might be helpful to make a comment on the self-designated New Historians.

There is no question that the studies by these historians of the 1948 war and other events have had an explosive consequence since the late 1980s both within and outside the academy in Israel, Europe, and the United States. Accounts of the reception of books and articles by, most notably, Simha Flapan, Benny Morris, Ilan Pappé, Tom Segev, and Avi Shlaim are well-documented and well-known. However, notwithstanding the heated political and scholarly debates these have generated, it is rarely asked in precisely what sense the New Historians posit a new historiography and, crucially, in precisely what sense their historiography challenges Zionism and Zionist scholarship. It is certainly true that the New Historians put forth a fundamental revision of the false Zionist narrative of the 1948 war, and that this is extremely important and valuable, as was highlighted again most recently by Avi Raz's *The Bride and the Dowry,* possibly the finest example of the new Israeli historiography, which deals with the aftermath of 1967 war.[7] It is equally true, however sacrilegious it may sound, that the New Historians offer neither a new historiography nor a radical critique of Zionism as ideology and praxis. It should be noted that Pappé is an exception, in the sense that, his work on 1948 notwithstanding, he has explored other conceptual avenues in several articles.[8]

Looking at it retrospectively, Shlaim admits the absence of methodological newness. Pointing to Morris's 1988 *Tikkun* article as the origin of the coinage, he observes: "The adjective 'new' was perhaps too dramatic and more than a shade self-congratulatory. It was also misleading in that it implied the development of a new methodology in the study of history. In fact the new historians used a conventional historical method; it was the material they found in archives and reported in their books and articles that was new, or at least partly new."[9]

Interestingly, the absence of conceptual newness or radical critique overwrites variations in political affiliation and extrascholarly pronouncements: Morris is a right-wing Zionist; Shlaim endorses partition and a two-state solution; Pappé is a radical post-Zionist, who supports a common state in Palestine/Israel, and is a very active public intellectual. But in terms of scholarly work and its political implications, from Morris's tame *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem* (1987) to Pappé's vehement *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (2006), this new historiography is underlain by serious limitations: the studies are traditional political, diplomatic and, to some extent, military histories. There is nothing wrong with thoroughly documented and eloquently written political history as such—to my mind, it is preferable to the deluge of cultural studies. However, the exclusive focus on what Fernand Braudel termed *histoire événementielle* perforce confines the questions, as well as the temporal and spatial scope and sources of historical investigation. In an essay I shall return to later, Patrick Wolfe addresses the twofold lacuna that inheres in this new historiography: notably its failure, on the one hand, to examine the structure of the Zionist colonization of Palestine from its inception as the underlying context for the Nakba; and, on the other, to examine the Nakba, and the Zionist colonization of Palestine in general, comparatively and thus underscore the global context of settler colonialism.[10]

The main endeavor of the new historiography is to reconstruct a narrative of what happened in the period 1947–49 on the basis of, chiefly, declassified documents in state archives, both in Israel and elsewhere. The question underlying this new inquiry is whether or not there exists indisputable documentary evidence for an Israeli master plan to carry out an ethnic cleansing—the term itself was of course not used at the time—of Palestine. (Additionally, the new historiography shows the Zionist resolve to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state, regardless of the Palestinians' stance on partition.) The question itself is legitimate and interesting, and the search for an answer should be respected. The political and moral implication has been that the answer to this question, even if it is not emphatic (for example, there were expulsions and a policy of no return, but no master plan as such[11]), would determine Israel's responsibility for the Nakba, and whether the birth of the state was an original sin, an immaculate conception, or a hybrid of the two. Cast in this manner, the discussion becomes excessively Jewish Israeli in both scope and perspective, and excludes the vantage point of the Palestinian victims as well as the comparative analysis. The question of whether a settler-colonial situation in which indigenous labor was eschewed (with exceptions) but the land was coveted, and the settlers triumphed, could have had any other result, regardless of their documentable master intention, is not raised.

The political and moral consequences of this framing are also problematic. The rights of those rendered refugees cannot hinge solely on the provable intention of the victors. For the Nakba's victims, the precise original intention of the victimizer ultimately matters little. Moreover, the scholarly and literary archive of the Palestinian experience clearly shows little interest—both at the time and retrospectively—in whether behind their woes lurked a comprehensive master plan.

As far as Israeli scholarship is concerned, the fundamental challenge to the Zionist "Absolute Spirit" emanated not from the historians but from the historical sociologists. Israeli historians— again, those concerned exclusively with Israeli history—are typically insular and inattentive to international currents in their discipline. The underlying assumption is that of exceptionalism and of a series of events whose explanation is immediate and specific. On the contrary, the sociologists, whether hegemonic or critical, have been beholden to their discipline and their work has always been crafted in the universal language—with all the attendant problems of this universality—of sociological terms, concepts, and theories. No one in their right mind could argue, for example, that *the* hegemonic sociologist, S. N. Eisenstadt, was at any stage of his career divorced from the most recent developments in the sociological discipline, and in the social sciences and humanities in general, even after he had lost his indisputable doyen status.

A Brief Sketch of Israeli Sociology

The foundational phase of Israeli sociology, from 1948 to the mid-1970s, coincided, not coincidentally, with the absolute hegemony over the Israeli state and society of Labor Zionism and its chief party, Mapai. In that period the uncontested doyen, indeed ruler, of Israeli sociology was S. N. Eisenstadt. He chaired the Hebrew University's sociology department from 1951, following Buber's retirement, to 1969. Under his leadership, Israeli sociology in Jerusalem was as much a state agency as it was an academic unit, and Eisenstadt and his disciples were Labor Zionism's

unabashed organic intellectuals, to use Gramsci's term. Under Eisenstadt's iron rule, much like Ben-Gurion's statism, the mushrooming of critical trends was not even a theoretical possibility.[12]

It is important to note that although my interest in Eisenstadt in this essay is confined to his writings on the structure and development of Israeli society, the international recognition he received stemmed from a much wider scope. Eisenstadt wrote numerous studies on what can be defined as the comparative modernization of, in his terminology, civilizations and empires, their different paths to modernity, and relative success and failure. His work on the Yishuv and Israel, which I analyze below, was just one component of his voluminous oeuvre.[13]

The sociological paradigm which reigned supreme under Eisenstadt's guidance was American functionalism, a framework which views society as an organic body that functions properly and in a stable manner when all its parts are in harmony. In the American case, it not only explained but also ideologically justified a capitalist democratic structure, and encouraged its global spread. Owing to the dual role Eisenstadt and his entourage played in Israel's nation- and state-building project, American functionalism did not constitute a mere theory for describing and analyzing Israeli society; it was also a prescriptive tool for shaping it. The combined descriptive/prescriptive application of the theoretical framework legitimized and buttressed the hegemony of Labor Zionism's political elite; it prescribed the mechanism for the absorption of Middle Eastern immigrants as a subordinate community, which needed to be modernized; and it enabled the absolute exclusion of the Palestinian citizens of the state not so much by oppressing them directly—that role was reserved for the military government and its mobilized Orientalists—but by making them invisible. Being a community altogether absent from society, they figuratively exemplified the extent to which settler-colonial consciousness is predicated on the notion of *terra nullius*.

Eisenstadt's connection to hegemonic American sociology—personal, ideological, scholarly, and institutional—was through Talcott Parsons and Edward Shils. The latter adored him and thought that he was the most important Weberian sociologist of his time. This is not the appropriate occasion to dwell on American functionalism and the role it played in shaping the ideology of what became U.S. settler imperialism,[14] but Eisenstadt's adoption and application of it was perfectly executed, so the iconic status accorded him by Parsons and Shils is unsurprising. At the heart of Israeli functionalism was the social system, as an organism-like creature whose order, stability, and modernizing development are sustained by the inculcation and reproduction of core values and ideas. This is a neat Parsonian construction. Shils enters Eisenstadt's fray through the concept of center and periphery, for these core values and ideas were created by a political center, the pioneering Labor elite of the Second and Third Aliyahs or waves of immigration. Consensus, ideological commitment, and democratic, Western development were secured by the inculcation in perpetuity of these core values into two societal spheres: a semiperiphery, consisting of nonpioneering German immigrants and petit bourgeois East European ones; and a periphery comprising Middle Eastern immigrants, who upon arrival represent a traditional civilization and must therefore be modernized if they are to be absorbed. As noted, the Palestinians did not exist even as enemies or a potential fifth column. This is not the place for such an exercise, but Eisenstadt's project could be analyzed as a classic instance of settler-colonial social sciences and ideology, and it is telling that his inspiration came from another settler-colonial nation.

Elitist or Conflictual Sociology[15]

That the irrevocable collapse of the hegemonies of Labor Zionism and Eisenstadt's functionalism coincided, from the mid-1970s forward, is meaningful. The cracks that had begun to appear gave rise to several dissenting sociological schools, none of which would become hegemonic; rather, the emergence of the elitist, Marxist, feminist, and colonization schools of sociology bespeaks a certain level of fragmentation and loss of centralized control. The almost complete absence of Palestinian Israeli sociologists—dissenting or servile—from the academy has persisted despite the appearance of these dissenting schools. The elitist school had a formative impact upon Shafir, and he offers the most comprehensive articulation of the colonization school, and hence I focus on these two schools.

Inside the confines of the permissible within Zionism, Yonatan Shapiro's elitist or conflictual sociology was not only chronologically the first paradigmatic challenge to the Hebrew University's functionalism, it was also the most transformative in two ways: first, in and of itself; second, in its formative and, crucially, dialectical impact upon Shafir. I say dialectical advisedly because Shafir would later create a historical sociology that both broke out of Zionism's Absolute Spirit and was appreciatively critical of Shapiro—to recall the analogy I propose, just as Marx's break with Hegelianism is comprehensible only within the framework of his critical indebtedness to Feuerbach.

Shapiro was deeply influenced by Ralph Dahrendorf at the London School of Economics, where he earned an MA, and C. Wright Mills at Columbia University, where he attained his PhD. From Dahrendorf, Shapiro absorbed the centrality in modern politics of the organization, the bureaucracy, and the apparatus, as well as the assumption that the chief conflict is among organizations rather than classes. With Mills, Shapiro became highly suspicious of core values and ideas, of their primacy in the causal chain. His attention was drawn by Mills to the conservative-elitist Italian thinkers Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca (although neither Mills nor Shapiro was politically sympathetic) and to Gramsci's understanding of hegemony.

In his historical sociology, Shapiro replaced core values with power, its accumulation and deployment, and asserted that Israel was not a liberal democracy but a purely procedural one, the coincidental result of the fact that under Mandatory rule the Yishuv leadership had not possessed legally coercive power and had been forced to contend with a community whose consent was formally voluntary. He fundamentally rewrote the history and sociology of pre- and post-state (roughly 1930s–80s) Jewish Israeli society. It is the account of a political elite—Labor Zionism's and Mapai's specifically—which was successful in obtaining control over economic, political, and social resources. Not only did the Labor elite concomitantly produce ideological and cultural core values which were self-serving but they also, acutely and successfully, inculcated these core values as the objective and almost uncontested purpose of the budding nation as a whole. This made the four-decade-long Labor Zionist domination a case of classical Gramscian hegemony.

Shapiro's oeuvre developed in two main phases.[16] In the first, he mercilessly debunked the myth of the pioneering idealism of Labor Zionism's (and Israel's) founding elite. At the heart of his reconstruction was the effective alliance between the World Zionist Organization (WZO) and the Labor elite. Then came the division of labor within that elite, in which the leadership, supplied by

the Second Aliyah (1904–14), created the core values and policies, with the Third Aliyah (1918–24) providing the immigrants who, forced to accept a subordinate role, built and manned the octopus-like apparatus that encompassed the mass-parties, the Histadrut (the trade union federation), the WZO and its various agencies, and the state bureaucracy. The Labor elite's role was to disseminate and inculcate the core values, secure consent, and mobilize political support. Only in the 1960s, with the demise in one way or another of the Second Aliyah's chief figures, did the Third Aliyah supply the leadership in Levi Eshkol and Golda Meir.

The second phase of Shapiro's lifework, his publications in the 1980s, rested on the argument that the Labor elite had failed to produce successors and thus to reproduce itself, and hence the electoral failure of 1977 and irrevocable loss of hegemony. Drawing on the generation theory of Karl Mannheim, the Hungarian sociologist of the first half of the twentieth century and a central figure in developing the sociology of knowledge, Shapiro showed that those who were formed under the elite's tutelage—Moshe Dayan, Yigal Allon, and Yitzhak Rabin most notably—did not constitute a political generation capable of succeeding the elite, chiefly because their formation was bureaucratic rather than political, and parochial to boot. They could be effective as servile executors of policies formed elsewhere, mainly through their military career,[17] but utterly failed once they were required directly to act in the political arena, and do so as leaders.

The bottom line of the way Shapiro challenged (Labor) Zionism's Absolute Spirit can be cast in two forms. In historical-sociological terms, he offered a comprehensive alternative—both evidentiary and theoretical—to the primacy of core values and ideas that were accorded absolute explanatory power, and to the status of Israel's founding figures as pioneering idealists. In rhetorical terms, his corpus of work constituted an ironic narrative in lieu of an epic one. Irony is perforce distance. Shapiro failed to address the presence of the indigenous Palestinians as pivotally intrinsic to the formation of the Israeli state and society. His story is simultaneously ironic and, like the one it set out to refute, an *Arabrein*.

Settler Consciousness

On the basis of my work on settler-colonial ideology and consciousness, I would submit that their deepest expression takes on a bifurcated form. That bifurcated consciousness expresses itself in two discrete narratives: one tells the story of "who we are"; the other tells the story of "our" engagement with the indigenous people. The acute point is not that settlers, especially liberal settlers, do not recognize the presence of natives, the conflict with them, and even the fact that in the otherwise glorious path to nationhood, they were wronged. Rather, the acute point is that the two narratives must remain discrete and, like Euclidian parallel lines, must never converge. The first narrative tells the intrinsic story of who we are, "us"; the second tells the extrinsic story of what we did, "them." An observation like George Fredrickson's,[18] whereby there can be no American or South African history that is not simultaneously the history of the presence of and interaction with the indigenous population, is not just an anathema to settler consciousness; it is an impossible thought.

The Zionist Israeli case fits perfectly within this characterization. The two discrete narratives are these. The first, the story of who we are, is an intrinsic emanation from an ideological construction

called Jewish history, and secondarily, in its Labor guise, an emanation from the attempt to realize a socialist utopia. The second narrative is the extrinsic story of, in that language, the Arab Problem. That the narratives might be related, that they indeed should be collapsed into one, is inconceivable and not permissible. To take one important example, the outstanding historian of Zionism and Israel, Anita Shapira, has written much about the 1948, or Palmach generation, and the centrality of the Bible and the landscape of rural Arab Palestine for their identity. She has also written on the Nakba, from an exclusively Jewish Israeli perspective, in her extensive commentary on the writer S. Yizhar.[19] These two types of writing remain utterly disconnected, indeed bifurcated. Even an invitation to relate one to the other, in the shape of a ruthless (and sincere) confession made by the most lucid articulator of the Palmach generation's identity, the poet Haim Guri, went unheeded. In his memoir Guri says: "We loved the villages we blew up."[20] The possibility that rural Arab Palestine (in itself and as enabler of biblical fantasies) was so central for the 1948 generation's identity that they erased it in 1948 and then nostalgically craved it, and that therefore "our" collective identity and the so-called Arab Problem are inseparable stories, does not occur to Shapira because the bifurcated settler consciousness does not permit this inseparability.

Settler Colonization

It is in this respect that the colonization school of Israeli sociology has fundamentally challenged Zionism's Absolute Spirit. Before proceeding with the sociologists themselves, I should at least note important contributions which I don't discuss here due to constraints of space rather than importance. One came from the dissenting, radical, anti-Zionist Socialist Organization in Israel, more commonly known as Matzpen (Compass, in Hebrew), which appeared in the early 1960s. The other was unearthed by two radical Jewish-American historians of the Middle East with deep ties to Palestine/Israel, Joel Beinin from Stanford University and Zachary Lockman from New York University. It is significant that Lockman has had a fruitful and direct engagement with Shafir's work—to which I shall return—but none with the 1948 historians.

The first Israeli sociologist who began to collapse the history of Israeli state and society, on the one hand, and the history of Palestine's colonization, on the other, into one (sociological) history was Baruch Kimmerling. Unlike Shapiro and his student Shafir, Kimmerling was a product of the Hebrew University's sociology department both as a student and scholar. He was a student of Eisentadt's student, Moshe Lissak. Uri Ram encapsulates Kimmerling deftly: "[The] combination of caution and boldness is typical of Kimmerling's own disposition. . . . His work exemplifies the cutting edge that an established Israeli academician can explore, but also its limits. [Kimmerling] moves a step ahead of his colleagues, as if to test the ground for them, yet the step is not so bold as to risk the loss of his academic standing."[21]

Although Kimmerling's writing was ample and continued to develop thematically and conceptually, I focus here solely on one early book, *Zionism and Territory: The Socio-Territorial Dimensions of Zionist Politics*,[22] published in 1983. The reason is simple: together with a byproduct from the same year (*Zionism and Economy*), this book is the only study by Kimmerling that could have been available to Shafir when he wrote *Land, Labor and Origins*. He reviewed both books as a doctoral student.[23]

Kimmerling carefully avoided the designation settler-colonial society and opted for the more innocuous immigrant-settler society. Although my analysis of Shafir's intellectual trajectory is patently historicist (that is, what he thought and could have known when he wrote *Land, Labor and Origins* rather than later in his career), it might be interesting to look at his retrospective, and rather personal, commentary on Kimmerling a few years after the latter's untimely death.[24] I dwell on this point because it is located where politics and scholarship intersect, even if Palestinians do not need Israeli Jewish scholars to tell them that what they have encountered has been a settler-colonial onslaught. Shafir rejects existing explanations for why Kimmerling refrained from using colonialism, either generally or settler-colonialism specifically. He discards a number of claims: first, that Kimmerling was first and foremost a political—and only secondarily historical—sociologist; second, that his entire oeuvre was dedicated to Israeli politics and society and that he did not produce comparative studies; and third, that he was cautious in the way that Ram's observation quoted above suggests.[25]

Shafir is especially keen to refute the allegation of cautiousness. Indeed, he insists that "for me Baruch's daring was his personality's main feature." Shafir even intimates that Kimmerling told him that when he had conceived his doctoral dissertation, on whose basis *Zionism and Territory* was written, his Hebrew University's sociological elders had warned him that he would be risking not only the loss of academic status but also the prospect of academic employment.[26] The gist of Shafir's alternative explanation is that Kimmerling's modus operandi was to create a private nomenclature, "Kimmerlingisms" Shafir calls them, both in Hebrew and English. The most well-known of these is probably "politicide," which Kimmerling coined to describe the purpose of Ariel Sharon's policy toward the Palestinians. Shafir further argues that later on, in the wake of his own *Land, Labor and Origins,* Kimmerling had no difficulty in accepting, proudly, that his work was foundational for the new "colonialist paradigm" in Israeli sociology.[27]

Shafir's explanation is not implausible, but I think that the debate is wanting in, again, historicist sensitivity to Kimmerling's own context in the early 1980s. In that period, the C word was unthinkable even among defiant Israeli scholars, and Kimmerling's referential world did not include the pronouncements of Arghiri Emmanuel in *New Left Review,*[28] the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Research Center in Beirut, or the Matzpen thinkers both inside and outside Israel. Moreover, some of Kimmerling's remarks indicate that he was not at the time aware of the analytical distinction between metropolitan (which is ill-suited to explain the Zionist colonization) and settler colonialisms, and that the latter is structurally more lethal from the indigenous vantage point especially in cases where native labor is eschewed rather than exploited. Bluntly put, that Kimmerling was "advised" by senior faculty not to write critically on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict if he wanted academic employment is credible, and it is still not unheard-of advice in Israel or in the United States. This, however, does not mean that at the time of writing his dissertation and subsequently converting it into *Zionism and Territory* he was considering the settler-colonial terminology and then cautiously discarded it. In Kimmerling's mind at the time, Palestine/Israel, North America, Australasia, and the Pieds-Noirs in French Algeria were immigrant-settler cases, not settler-colonial ones. His *retrospective* acceptance that his work fitted well within a "colonialist paradigm" was significant, but without *Land, Labor and Origins,* Kimmerling would have had no cause to reflect on whether his *Zionism and Territory* implied a

settler-colonial situation, and there would not have been a "colonialist paradigm" in Israeli sociology that Ram could identify.

And yet Kimmerling was the first established academic Israeli scholar, not only sociologist, to stray from Zionism's Absolute Spirit in two crucial ways. First, he gave the presence of the native Palestinians and the encounter with them intrinsic explanatory value for the formation of Israeli society itself. Second, Kimmerling compared Palestine/Israel to another major settler-colonial case, the United States, and thereby implicitly challenged the underlying assumption of exceptionalism.

Kimmerling's basic framework was Frederick Jackson Turner's famous frontier thesis from 1893. According to Shafir, Kimmerling became interested in frontier theories in general only when he wrote his book, not the dissertation on which it drew.[29] Turner averred that what he called American "rugged individualism" and popular democracy stemmed from the ever-expanding Westward frontier in that process of settler colonization. Kimmerling refines Turner's thesis—whose own validity need not be discussed here—in the context of applying it to Palestine/Israel. Essentially, in Turner's scheme the two parameters of frontierity (an English Kimmerlingism)—individualism and popular democracy—and resulting political culture are constant. In his application of this scheme to the colonization of Palestine, Kimmerling transforms Turner's constant parameters into variables. Accordingly, whereas in the American continent there prevailed what Kimmerling defines as high levels of frontierity, that is, an abundance of cheap or even free land (how land was made free or cheap is another matter), in Palestine, inversely, the level of frontierity was low, if there was a frontier to speak of at all.[30] To put it more brusquely than Kimmerling did, for a variety of reasons in Palestine it was more difficult, certainly before 1948, to wrest the land away from the indigenous people and eliminate them than it had been in North America.

Interestingly, what Kimmerling analyzes under the refinement of the Turnerian euphemism of frontierity levels, was cast in a much clearer register by a fascinating settler entrepreneur and theoretician on whom I can't dwell here, Moshe Smilansky (1874–1953). He immigrated to Palestine in 1890, became a wealthy citrus grove owner who employed both Arabs and Jews, and was one of Brit Shalom's founders. He did some serious reading of the settler-colonization literature of his time, and was especially influenced by the French economist Pierre Paul Leroy-Beaulieu's *De la colonisation chez les peuples modernes*. Smilansky concluded in the early 1930s: "Our country is not desolate and empty of inhabitants. Whilst in other unsettled countries there lived savage or semi-savage people, who could be bought or killed and subsequently disinherited, the inhabitants of our country are not a savage people, who should be ignored. The deed of revival, the deed of redeeming the land, cannot be done by force."[31]

Thus, the low level of frontierity in the Zionist colonization of Palestine led to collectivism rather than "rugged individualism," to an ethos and political culture in which national resources—economic as well as cultural—are accumulated and deployed collectively, and the goals are also determined collectively. To be facetious, I would add that, differences notwithstanding, what the two colonizing nations do share is the ethos of sanctimonious brutality.

Shafir's Materialist and Settler-Colonial Paradigm

I would like now to explain the critically dialectical emergence of *Land, Labor and Origins*—and of Shafir's work in general—out of the lineage of Israeli sociology and the realities of Palestine/Israel, and why it was the most radical scholarly challenge to Zionism's Absolute Spirit penned by an Israeli scholar.[32]

Intellectually Shafir was influenced by his own reading of Marx and Marxist thought, by his teacher Yonatan Shapiro, by Kimmerling's *Zionism and Territory,* and by George Fredrickson who, when Shafir worked on his PhD at Berkeley, was nearby at Stanford. Politically, there were two formative events: the first, the 1967 war, is candidly acknowledged by Shafir; the impact of the second, the 1982 Lebanon war, is my circumstantial intuition. Shafir's statement about the 1967 war's impact on his thinking is an interesting instance of history as a dialogue between the present and the past. It sums up the radical implication for his work in a nutshell: "The aftermath of the Six Day War revealed the gap between the evidence of Israeli society's gradual but definite transformation through its manifold relationships with the Palestinian Arabs who came under Israeli occupation, and the Palestinians' invisibility in historical and sociological accounts of the early formation of Israeli society. Although throwing off mental habits is always a slow process, I came eventually to the conclusion that, during most of its history, Israeli society is best understood not through the existing, inward-looking, interpretations but rather in terms of the broader context of Israeli-Palestinian relations."[33]

The 1982 Lebanon war, in my view, radicalized a generation of Israelis of a certain sociocultural provenance, who at the time were in their mid-twenties to late thirties. I myself am part of that phenomenon. Looking at the decade from that war to the Oslo accords without the benefit of hindsight, it was a period in which the most radical leftist movement since Matzpen began to galvanize and could have become a real political force. (Even Benny Morris, who refused military service in the occupied territories in 1988, was jailed.) In hindsight, we of course know that it tragically failed to realize that potential. To use a generational analysis à la Shapiro, it is a group that proved unable to transform successful protest into collective and sustained political action. Instead, it has expressed itself in the idiom of individualistic intellectual pursuit, with a certain degree of esprit de corps. At the time, Shafir was intensely active in the inner circle of Peace Now's Tel Aviv chapter, the movement's radical wing, which organized and led the big demonstrations protesting the 1982 war and especially the Sabra and Shatila massacre in the refugee camps of Beirut. It is not possible directly to document the impact of that experience on Shafir's work, but I would venture that it played a role in facilitating such a radical text as *Land, Labor and Origins,* which after all appeared during the same decade.

What were Shafir's major moves vis-à-vis Israeli sociology? First, he completely rejected the functionalism of Eisenstadt and his two outstanding disciples, Moshe Lissak and Dan Horowitz, in a more fundamental and radical way than Shapiro and Kimmerling had done. It is not a coincidence that Lissak responded to Shafir's work in an ill-tempered outburst, which elicited an important article by Shafir.[34] Second, Shafir absorbed Shapiro's ironic view of core values, ideas, and ideology as explanatory factors, though neither thought that these should not be addressed.

Shafir may have also internalized Shapiro's underlying emphasis on power and conflict, even if his own understanding of power and conflict was entirely different.

Shafir was deeply critical of Shapiro on three central points: first, and most crucially, the utter absence of the settler/indigene conflict from Shapiro's interpretation of Israeli society, in which sense it was indistinguishable from its functionalist foe; second, Shapiro's sole focus on conflict among organizations, and his argument that the conflict was deeper and emanated from socioeconomic processes and land/labor formations; and, third, the teleological nature of the functionalist and elitist schools that assumed Labor Zionism's hegemony a priori and accorded Labor Zionism's ruling elite hyperagency, unconstrained by material circumstances.

Lastly, Shafir could not be uninspired by Kimmerling's Turnerian *Zionism and Territory,* for it was the first Israeli study in which the settler situation was considered as a crucially intrinsic explanation for the formation of Israeli society. But here too, Shafir was critical and transcended Kimmerling. His critique was multilayered: while he did not reject the frontier as a theme, Shafir showed that Turner's, and consequently Kimmerling's, understanding of the frontier was insufficiently concrete, both conceptually and historically; Shafir argued that although in Kimmerling's work the indigenous people vaguely loom on the horizon, the precise ways in which the process of colonizing them shaped the colonizing society was not adequately analyzed; and, finally, Kimmerling's work did not explore the economic conditions that shaped the settler land and labor formation, most notably the acute labor crisis among the settlers of the Second Aliyah coupled with their inability to purchase land.

The alternative, antithetical opus Shafir produced amounted to a possible paradigmatic shift at the time it appeared and has resulted in the development of critically radical scholarship since then. Its signal value lies in the simultaneity of its contribution, which is both particular and global. *Land, Labor and Origins* is as much a paradigm-changing contribution to Palestine/Israel studies intellectually and politically as it is a substantial contribution to settler-colonial studies.

Let me highlight the book's chief achievements. Earlier I explained the bifurcated settler historical consciousness, whereby nation formation and collective identity on the one hand, and interaction with the indigenous society on the other, remain two discrete, self-contained, and dichotomous narratives. Shafir collapsed them into one narrative. Dissecting the most hallowed Zionist institutions, namely, the cooperative settlements (of which the kibbutz is the best known), the Histadrut, and the Jewish National Fund, he shows that their formation can only be understood in terms of the colonization of the two essential spheres for any settler project: labor and land. This lethal blow to Zionism's Absolute Spirit is dealt with a rare combination of theoretical sophistication, as well as meticulous archival research and evidentiary documentation.

Land, Labor and Origins offers the most thorough analysis of the material base of the formation of Israeli society simultaneously with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Some commentators on Shafir's work argue that it is excessively materialist and economistic (a point I shall return to). However, in view of the sheer absence of that dimension as an ambitious and far-reaching explanation for the formation of the Israeli state and society, the materialist emphasis was timely and essential. I say far-reaching advisedly. Consider this observation in Shafir and Yoav Peled's *Being Israeli,* which won the Middle East Studies Association Albert Hourani Book Award in 2002. In that study, *Land, Labor and Origins* informed an exploration of Israeli citizenship: "The most distinguishing

characteristic of the Jewish Labor Movement in Palestine was that it was not a labor movement at all. Rather, it was a colonial movement in which the workers' interests remained secondary to the exigencies of settlement. Keeping this observation in mind will allow us to properly describe the movement's institutional dynamics and understand the variety of citizenship forms it fostered."[35]

Land, Labor and Origins also offered the first systematic globalization of Palestine/Israel's modern history. By globalization I mean this: the integration of the Zionist colonization of Palestine and the settler-indigene conflict into the comparative study of the global phenomenon of settler colonialism from the late sixteenth century forward. It is in this respect that Shafir's adoption and adjustment of Fredrickson's *White Supremacy* is most evident, exhibiting the insightful potential of comparative settler colonialism at its best: the idea is not to conclude that all settler nations are identical but to heed specific historical trajectories, on the one hand, and to insist that morphological similarities are comparable and cohere into a global phenomenon, on the other.

Finally, Shafir's study put forth a new periodization. Periodization is a scholarly tool rather than an obvious emanation from the historical experience. By pushing back the formative period to the initial phase of Zionist colonization, 1882–1914 (that is, in Zionist parlance, the arrival of the First and Second Aliyahs), Shafir diachronically shows that the foundations of the conflict and Israeli society predated the military and openly ideological phase, and that what shaped later developments was the material nature of the land/labor formation. Moreover, Shafir argues, the formation in which settlers covet the land but eschew indigenous labor, known in the taxonomy of settler colonies as "pure settlement," explains Labor Zionism's policy of partition or, in its current iteration, the two-state solution. As will be shown later, this argument elicited criticism from an appreciative reader, but it was nonetheless original and thought-provoking.

Shafir condensed all this in an essay that appeared 10 years after the publication of *Land, Labor and Origins*:

> The Second Aliya's revolution against the First Aliya did not originate from opposition to colonialism as such but out of frustration with the inability of the ethnic plantation colony to provide sufficient employment for Jewish workers, i.e., from opposition to the particular form of their predecessors' colonization. The Second Aliya's own method of settlement, and subsequently the dominant Zionist method, was but another type of European overseas colonization—the "pure settlement colony" also found in Australia, Northern U.S., and elsewhere. Its threefold aim was control of land, employment that ensured a European standard of living, and massive immigration. . . .This form of pure settlement rested on two exclusivist pillars: on the WZO's Jewish National Fund and on the . . . Histadrut. The aims of the JNF and the Histadrut were the removal of land and labor from the market, respectively, thus closing them off to Palestinian Arabs.[36]

The Impact of *Land, Labor and Origins*

Organized by the Palestine Society and the London Middle East Institute at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London (SOAS), a paradigmatic shift was apparent in the

March 2011 conference titled "Past is Present: Settler Colonialism in Palestine." One result of the conference was a special issue of *Settler Colonial Studies* (*SCS*) bearing the same title.[37] Another result was made possible by the inordinately high attendance, mostly students and activists, which the conference drew at the University of London's Senate House on Malet Street. For two days attendees were exposed to a framework that helped them make sense of both the present and the past of Palestine in the context of a *global* historical phenomenon. Moreover, the conference's presenters were not only scholars of Palestine/Israel studies, but also those who specialize in settler colonialism as such (chiefly Australians). Shafir was among the participants and, unsurprisingly, offered a bridge between the local and the global.[38]

The guest-editors of *SCS*'s special issue emphasize the importance of this paradigm shift in their introduction. They especially insist that in order to understand the catalog of events in the history of Palestine/Israel, the 1948 Nakba most notably, "the settler colonial *structure* underpinning them must be a central object of analysis."[39] The language of the statement bears the clear mark of an oft-quoted observation made by the outstanding scholar of settler colonialism, Patrick Wolfe, who participated at the SOAS conference: "Settler colonies were (are) premised on the elimination of the native societies. The split tensing reflects a determinate feature of settler colonization. The colonizers come to stay—*invasion is a structure not an event.*"[40]

The guest-editors also remind us that the settler-colonial framework undergirded the analysis (and activist education) of two important bodies in the 1960s and 1970s: one was the PLO's Research Center, based in Beirut, and the other was the Socialist Organization in Israel Matzpen, whose cofounder, Moshe Machover, continued to write on the conflict within that framework.[41]

The special issue recognized the importance of *Land, Labor and Origins,* and one of the essays was, as hinted earlier, Zachary Lockman's thought-provoking commentary on the book.[42] Lockman appreciates the foundational prominence of *Land, Labor and Origins* but he contests the overwhelming value Shafir accords the material land/labor formation of a pure settlement colony, and the period in which it occurred (1904–14). He further argues that Shafir's approach is excessively economistic, and cannot account for such crucial factors as state violence and the constant search for an international patron. Such developments postdate the period which Shafir regards as formative and they were obviously extra-economic. Lockman insists, for instance, on how absolutely crucial the Zionist dependence upon an international patron was, long before the unconditional U.S. umbrella for Israel existed. "Indeed, without British support and protection the Zionist project in Palestine would simply not have gotten very far. It is, for example, highly doubtful that, even after almost two decades of large-scale immigration, settlement and development under British protection, the Yishuv on its own could have withstood the 1936–1939 Palestinian Arab revolt against British colonial rule and Zionism[.]"[43]

Australians and Palestinians

A notable feature of the SOAS conference was the collaboration of three "types" of scholars: Palestinians, Australians, and dissenting Israelis. In what follows, I dwell on two texts that exemplify both the ascendancy of the settler-colonial analysis and the place of *Land, Labor and*

Origins within it. One was written by an Australian scholar and the other by a Palestinian one, although the latter did not participate at that conference.

The impact of *Land, Labor and Origins* is evident in the writing of two important Australian scholars, Patrick Wolfe, mentioned above, and Lorenzo Veracini. This is significant because Australia is presently the hub of settler-colonial studies. I would venture that without *Land, Labor and Origins,* Wolfe's and Veracini's writing on how Palestine fits within the framework of settler colonialism would have been far less seamless. It is not implausible to suggest that although their reading on Palestine/Israel is rather impressive and thorough, and the perspective they offer is fresh and insightful, their eureka moment resulted from engaging with *Land, Labor and Origins.* Rather than list their references to Shafir's work,[44] I prefer to substantiate this point by dwelling on one significant text: Wolfe's contribution to said SOAS conference, which he subsequently developed into an article for the special issue of *SCS.*[45]

As hinted at earlier (in the discussion of the New Historians), Wolfe's article does three things masterfully. First, he places the Nakba in the structural context of the Zionist colonization of Palestine, thereby charting a much more meaningful context than the documentable intentions of Zionist leaders prior to and during the 1948 war. Second, whilst not insensitive to the traumatic enormity of the Nakba (to the contrary, in fact), he places the event in a second context, that of comparative settler colonialism and particularly the pure settlement formation, in which the settlers covet the natives' land but eschew the natives' labor. In doing so, he is able to point out what was unique—but also unexceptional—about Israel/Palestine. Third, Wolfe introduces the notion of pre-accumulation. In a settler situation, pre-accumulation is an inherent advantage settlers have over the indigenous people. The settler pre-accumulation is twofold: capital, which is accumulated elsewhere but pours into the colony; immigration, which, in addition to violence, can transform the colony's demography in favor of the settlers. Whereas the demographic advantage of immigration is obvious, Wolfe's analysis of the capital aspect of the Zionist pre-accumulation is especially astute. He points out that the Zionist settlers enjoyed a crucial economic advantage not only vis-à-vis the indigenous society but also in comparison with other settler-colonial projects elsewhere. The capital pre-accumulation of settler projects elsewhere emanated from speculators and investors (that is, banks and settlement companies and schemes), which obliged these settlers to productivity *and* profitability. From the Second Aliyah forward, Zionist settlers enjoyed a pre-accumulated capital that neither expected nor sought profit but increasingly became ideological capital. Thus shielded from the capitalist marketplace, Labor Zionism's cooperative settlements were beholden to ideological productivity and labor but not to profit.[46]

I should highlight two pivotal and related points where Wolfe invaluably draws on Shafir. I do this not to undermine Wolfe's remarkable essay but rather to concretely illustrate the pivotal place of *Land, Labor and Origins* in the conceptualization of Palestine/Israel as a settler-colonial case. The first point concerns the models of colonization that informed the early and formative phase of Zionist planning. Wolfe states: "As Gershon Shafir has shown, Zionist settlements in Palestine were modelled on European experiments elsewhere, initially the French colonization of Algeria [First Aliya] and subsequently Bismarck's germanization of East Prussia [Second Aliya]."[47] Informed by two Israeli geographers, Shlomo Hasson and Shalom Reichman, Shafir showed the formative impact of the German settler colonization in the Ostmarch—and the concomitant

attempt to dispossess and remove the local Polish inhabitants—upon two German-Jewish settlement experts in Palestine and their allies in Europe: Franz Oppenheimer, Arthur Ruppin, and Otto Warburg. Until 1948—when state violence and lawfare (notably, the 1950 Law of Absentees' Property) were added with dire consequences—that impact had ungirded what can be considered the most significant structural change in the Zionist colonization project: the passage from what Shafir termed the ethnic plantation of the First Aliyah, designed by the technocrats of Baron Edmond de Rothschild (of the French branch of the Rothschild banking family) and derived from French Algeria, to the pure settlement colony (the Labor cooperative settlements), designed by Oppenheimer and implemented by Ruppin, and derived from the German East Prussian colonization project at the end of the nineteenth century.[48]

That irrevocable passage had far-reaching consequences, and this is not the appropriate venue to rehearse them. To bring to the fore the most significant consequence, whereas the French model was predicated on cheap native labor, the German model of pure settlement colony ideologically eschewed such labor. From a settler perspective, the latter formation renders the indigene superfluous. Both as a material reality and a frame of mind, it is that formation which fundamentally accounts for not only Labor's adoption of partition but also for the fact that Israel's real problem with the Palestinians has always been, long before 1967, their mere presence.

The second point is the fact that the structure of Wolfe's article bespeaks Shafir's most original argument. After addressing the spatial and temporal background (pre-accumulation and the late Ottoman regime in Palestine), Wolfe recounts how the settler formation was created by analyzing *labor and land in that order.* I stress "in that order" because it shows that Wolfe got the subtlety of Shafir's argument right, and it suggests that he thought that Shafir himself had gotten it right. This most original argument is that the passage from the ethnic plantation formation to the pure settlement colony had begun not with the sphere of land but with that of labor. To scholars of settler-colonial studies this seems counterintuitive because in global settler/indigene strife, so much hinges on the seizure of land (by the former from the latter). The uniqueness of the settler-colonial situation in early-twentieth-century Palestine is that the process of the natives' dispossession comprises the dire material reality in which the critical lack of labor for settlers of the Second Aliyah threatened to nip in the bud the Zionist project.

The Second Aliyah's settlers were for the most part unattached young men and women who immigrated at the moment when Rothschild was beginning to pull out and before the Zionist Organization began to buy land through its agencies. That they themselves would be able to purchase land was in the realm of the imponderable. In order to remain in Palestine they needed wage-labor and fast. These settlers sensed it through the growing rate of emigration and the recurring bouts of suicide among them. The "Conquest of Labor" campaign, which was meant to oust the Palestinians from the ethnic plantations and replace them with Jewish workers, had failed;[49] so did the subsequent Orientalist attempt to import Yemeni Jews, the assumption being that since they too were Orientals they would compete better with the Palestinians and at the same wage levels. Out of this failure, however, and under Ruppin's tutelage rather than as an attempt to realize some socialist utopia, the first cooperative settlements emerged simply to afford the settlers a livelihood and to make sure that they remained in Palestine. That set in motion a

labor market which was exclusive of Palestinians and gradually engendered the pure settlement frame of mind, which with the passage of time prevailed and became hegemonic.

To this day, Zionist apologists[50] (and Kimmerling himself to start with) argue that Zionism was not a colonial project because it was not predicated on the exploitation of Arab labor.[51] This is essentially correct. That is why Zionism was not colonial in an abstract sense, and certainly not a case of metropolitan colonialism. That is also why, precisely because it was from a very early stage exclusive of native labor, the Zionist project was a typical pure settler colony, with its own distinctive trajectory.

Contextualizing the Nakba not unlike Wolfe, but focusing solely on the colonization of land, Areej Sabbagh-Khoury's remarkable PhD dissertation also illustrates the centrality of the settler-colonial framework and *Land, Labor and Origins*'s place in it.[52] Coadvised by Yehouda Shenhav (Tel Aviv University) and Joel Beinin (Stanford), her dissertation was written at the sociology department where Shafir had studied with Shapiro. I say remarkable not only because of the work's quality and originality. I know of no other indigenous scholar who has excavated the settler archives so thoroughly, not only Zionist and state archives, but also those of Marj Ibn 'Amer's kibbutzim. The critical reconstruction of the formation of settler nations by dissenting products of these nations is familiar enough, as this essay demonstrates. But such a reconstruction of the dispossession of her own people by an indigenous scholar, and the probing into the consciousness and collective memory of the settlers on the basis of their own archives, is something I have not seen thus far.

Sabbagh-Khoury's framework is explicitly set forth: settler colonialism.[53] She underscores the fact that even scholars who were not committed to that framework, but for whom the *re*placement of the indigenous people by the settlers was pivotal, were drawn to the comparative dimension. Sabbagh-Khoury exemplifies this through Meron Benvenesti's work on the Hebraization of Palestine's toponymy, in which he notices the equivalent British practice "in every territory in which they chose to settle—from Ireland in the seventeenth century to Kenya's highlands in the twentieth; in Canada, Australia and Rhodesia."[54] Within Israeli sociology, she mostly engages with Kimmerling's work. *Land, Labor and Origins,* though it deals with an earlier period, is more conceptually harmonious with her own argument precisely because it offers the early settler-colonial method of land appropriation. Especially pertinent for Sabbagh-Khoury is Shafir's analysis of how this was facilitated by "the integration of the Middle East into the modern world-economy system and European capitalism's penetration into Palestine mainly through the creation of a land market and a new class of land purchasers."[55]

Sabbagh-Khoury's understanding of the settler-colonial approach is astute and subtle. At the end of the conceptual discussion, she observes that

> [s]ettler colonialism is therefore not an orderly theory but an interpretative framework, which enables the examination of a series of societies that have been shaped since the early-modern period to the twenty-first century as settler societies . . . Its importance lies in the attempt to replace the use—which is frequently obtuse—of the term "colonialism," with the emphasis upon the discrete characteristics of the colonization processes, predicated on not only relations of domination but the dispossession of the natives and their replacement by a colonizing population.

> Whereas the concept of "settler society" [Kimmerling's] leaves the question of rule and sovereignty open, the concept of "settler colonialism" preserves a crucial component in the discussions on colonialism [more broadly]—the question of power and sovereignty.[56]

Finally, my own work on the subject could not have been thought of, let alone written, without *Land, Labor and Origins.* My engagement with it was this. I understood why Shafir eschewed ideas, ideology, and core values. However, I am interested in intellectual and literary history, and have been influenced by Marxian thought. The more convinced I became of Shafir's analysis of the material formation the more I suspected, to put it somewhat crudely, that if the base was settler-colonial then there likely should be a settler-colonial superstructure to go with it. In a sense, the work I have done in this field can be read as a sequel to Shafir's. It adds to the land/labor formation the examination of such themes as ideology, consciousness, and literary imagination.[57]

Politics

In his inimitable fashion, Perry Anderson wrote of some critical Israeli scholars: "The outstanding intellectual achievement of the work of Benny Morris, Avi Shlaim, Gershon Shafir, Baruch Kimmerling, Tom Segev, is now widely acknowledged. One edifice after another of official Zionist mythology has been dismantled. But the fearless research and uncompromising judgment that have been typical marks of their investigations of the past stop suddenly short in the present, as soon as political questions are posed. Analytical lions, these authors are prescriptive lambs."[58]

Anderson's biblical metaphor captures Azmi Bishara's essay on Kimmerling.[59] Bishara is appreciative of the discursive shift represented by the progressive margins of the Israeli academy in general and sociology in particular. He concludes (not unlike Ram), however, that Kimmerling remained within the academic establishment's framework. Bishara, too, points to Kimmerling's avoidance of the term colonialism. He argues that despite the strides that Kimmerling and others made in criticizing and revising the Zionist narrative of the genesis of the Israeli state by bringing in the once-absent indigenous Palestinians, they failed to address the problem of the settler-colonial state.[60]

Although the focus of Bishara's essay is Kimmerling, he extends his observations to Shafir's *Land, Labor and Origins*, which he holds in high esteem for its theoretical sophistication and intrepid depiction of the early, and formative, phase of Zionist colonization. However, Bishara insists that this intellectual achievement is diminished by the fact that his work "remains descriptive," because Shafir refrains from assessing how the settler-colonial history persists in the shape of a settler-colonial state.[61]

Bishara is well aware in that in a later book, Shafir and Peled's *Being Israeli* (alluded to earlier), the question of citizenship is taken up. He refers to that study, in which the authors show that the settler-colonial structure has persisted and certain groups—not only Palestinians—have been relegated to second- and third-class citizenship. Nonetheless, it irks Bishara that Shafir and Peled adopt a comparative framework, and therefore, "in their view, that is the situation of most of the [settler-colonial] democracies."[62] This comparison, in other words, which insists that Israel is a

democracy no less than other settler-colonial nations, is for Bishara tantamount to legitimating Israel in its current legal, political, and institutional structure.

The political critique of the Israeli scholars by Anderson and Bishara are of a different order. Anderson castigates them for failing explicitly to disavow the so-called peace process from Oslo on: "Not one seriously queries Oslo, let alone Camp David. More than one gushed over Barak. None has proposed any alternative to the hypocrisies of the 'peace process.'"[63] It may not be implausible to infer that for Anderson the patent disavowal of Zionist scholarship and mythology should have engendered commensurate positions on the politics of the present. Bishara censures the political aspect of the scholarship itself and also implicitly makes a subtler distinction among the critical Israeli scholars. He has no bone to pick with Morris or Shlaim because they have nothing to say on the Zionist colonization of Palestine and the subsequent structure of a settler-colonial state. He is frustrated with Shafir in particular because, in Bishara's view, the latter's is brilliant sociology from which the political prescription, in the scholarship itself, is absent.

I both agree and disagree with Bishara's frustration. To express the agreement, I resort to Marx again and use Kimmerling's politicide as an example. Marx understood that the cyclical crises of capitalism did not result from corruption or mismanagement but were (are) inherent to capitalism's development. That is where Kimmerling's analysis was insufficient. He brilliantly captured Sharon's strategy but failed to understand—as Marx had with capitalism—that Sharon had not gone astray and departed from the so-called peace process; he rather brought it to its logical conclusion. Politicide is inherent to the hypocrisy and asymmetry of the peace process as much as the erasure of the pension funds of tens of millions is inherent to capitalism's cyclical crises. I disagree that a text such as *Land, Labor and Origins* is merely descriptive. Such a depiction ignores the deeply radical political significance of that work, even if it is written in a matter-of-fact register, and even if the corresponding politics of the present has not been forthcoming. That political significance has not gone unnoticed by scholars like Sabbagh-Khoury and Wolfe. Moreover, for both of them, the comparative framework is politically acute.

Joseph Levy, the fictional director of the massive operation of Jewish exodus from Europe and of Palestine's colonization in Herzl's novel, *Altneuland* (1902), opens his account of that operation thus: "*I divided a map of Palestine into small squares, which I numbered.*"[64] Contrary to the delusion of the post-Zionists, the dividing and the numbering goes on, which makes *Land, Labor and Origins* an essential book not only intellectually but also politically; not only for understanding the past but also for making sense of the present.

About the Author

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ENDNOTES

1   Patrick Wolfe (in reference to Paul A. Kramer's observation on national and comparative histories), "Purchase by Other Means: The Palestine *Nakba* and Zionism's Conquest of Economics," *Settler Colonial Studies* 2, no. 1 (2012): p. 135.

2 Perry Anderson, "Scurrying towards Bethlehem," *New Left Review* 10 (July–August 2001): p. 13.

3 Gershon Shafir, *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). (A second edition was issued by the University of California Press in 1996). This essay is timely, I believe, not only because of the book's quality in itself or because of the symbolic twenty-fifth anniversary, but because comparative settler-colonialism is becoming the sine qua non framework for a fresh analysis of modern Palestine and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, past and present. In this ongoing paradigmatic shift, *Land, Labor and Origins* is a foundational text. I should like to deeply thank the participants for their insights and comments and, as CNES director, the staff. The participants were Asli Bali, Laleh Khalili, Areej Sabbagh-Khouri, Murat Yildiz, Beshara Doumani, David Myers, Joel Beinin and, last but not least, Gershon Shafir. I am also grateful to Jonathan McCollum.

4 Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

5 Only Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin's Benjaminian essay on exile carries the same critical critique, though its register is more politically overt than Shafir's. By Benjaminian, I mean that Raz-Krakotzkin's reading of Zionist historiography against the grain is explicitly inspired by Walter Benjamin's "Theses on the Concept of History." See Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, "Exile within Sovereignty: Toward a Critique of the 'Negation of Exile' in Israeli Culture [in Hebrew]," in 2 parts, *Theory and Criticism* 4 (1993): pp. 23–56, and 5 (1994): pp. 113–32, respectively.

6 These activists and intellectuals prefer the term "common state" to either binational state or one state.

7 Avi Raz, *The Bride and the Dowry: Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians in the Aftermath of the June 1967 War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012).

8 See for instance Ilan Pappé, "Zionism as Colonialism—A Comparative Perspective on Diluted Colonialism in Asia and Africa," in *Between Vision and Revision: A Hundred Years of Zionist Historiography* [in Hebrew], ed. Yehiam Weitz, (Jerusalem: Salman Shazar Center, 1997), pp. 345–65, and "Shtetl Colonialism: First and Last Impressions of Indigeneity by Colonised Colonisers," *Settler Colonial Studies* 2, no. 1 (2012): pp. 39–58.

9 Avi Shlaim, "Preface to the Second Edition," *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (London & New York: W. W. Norton, 2014), p. xvii.

10 For an eloquent and insightful analysis that addresses this twofold lacuna, see Wolfe, "Purchase," pp. 133–71.

11 Whether Plan Dalet was such a plan, and whether the Nakba's expulsions strictly implemented it, is hotly debated. My point is that making it the pivot of discussion should not be permitted, by which I mean that I object—intellectually, politically, and ethically—to the erasure of the victims' perspective and the concomitant privileging of the perspective of the perpetrators by according overwhelming primacy to their intentions. An examination of the Nakba that stresses the structure of Zionist colonization, its comparable, settler-colonial nature, and its consequences for the victims, restores the victims' perspective—master plan or no master plan.

12 I am aided by Uri Ram, *The Changing Agenda of Israeli Sociology: Theory, Ideology, and Identity* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1995), especially pp. 23–47.

13 In addition to Ram (above), this brief overview draws on the following texts by Eisenstadt: "The Sociological Structure of the Jewish Community in Palestine," *Jewish Social Studies* 10 (1948): pp. 3–18; "The Process of Absorption of Immigrants in Israel," *American Journal of Sociology* 57 (1951): pp. 223–46; *Israeli Society* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967); and "The Disintegration of the Initial Paradigm of Studies of Modernization—Reexamination of the Relations between Tradition, Modernity, and Social Order," in *Tradition, Change, and Modernity* (New York: Wiley, 1973), pp. 98–115.

14 I use settler imperialism because I agree with some American scholars (Aziz Rana most notably), who show how the United States had begun as a settler colony and gradually became a settler empire, which retained characteristics of the United States' formation as a settler-colonial project.

Imperialism is appropriate because the United States either acquired contiguous territories which it settled and integrated, or controlled many regions globally through various means but without the colonial conquests of the European powers it supplanted.

15 For a detailed analysis, see Ram, *Changing Agenda,* pp. 69–97.

16 For the first stage, see Shapiro's *The Formative Years of the Israeli Labor Party: The Organization of Power 1918–1930* (London: Sage, 1976); *Democracy in Israel* [in Hebrew] (Ramat Gan: Massada, 1977); and "Was the Yishuv a Consent-Based Democracy? A Reply to Dan Horowitz" [in Hebrew], *State, Government and International Relations* 26 (1984): pp. 85–93. For the second stage, see *Elite without Successors: Generations of Political Leadership in Israel* [in Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Sifriyat Poalim, 1984); and *The Road to Power: Herut Party in Israel* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989). Where possible I mention English editions even though I read the Hebrew original.

17 Or, in the case of Shimon Peres, through the state bureaucracy under Ben-Gurion's patronage.

18 George M. Fredrickson, *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981).

19 Anita Shapira, "Ben-Gurion and the Bible: The Creation of a Historical Narrative?" [in Hebrew], *Alpayim* 14 (1997): pp. 207–31; "The Bible and Israeli Identity" in *Between Vision and Revision: A Hundred Years of Zionist Historiography* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2006); and "Khirbat Hiz'ah—Memory and Forgetting [in Hebrew], *Alpayim* 21 (2000): pp. 9–53.

20 Haim Guri, *I, a Civil War* [in Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuhad, 2004): p. 189.

21 Ram, *Changing Agenda,* p. 179.

22 Baruch Kimmerling, *Zionism and Territory: The Socio-Territorial Dimensions of Zionist Politics* (Berkeley, CA: Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1983).

23 Shafir's review appeared in *Contemporary Sociology* 13, no. 3 (May 1984): pp. 333–34.

24 Shafir, "Israeli Exceptionalism and the Question of Colonialism in Baruch Kimmerling's Sociology," *Israeli Sociology* [in Hebrew] 15, no. 1 (2013): pp. 163–75 (translation is mine).

25 Shafir, "Kimmerling's Sociology," pp. 170–71.

26 Shafir, "Kimmerling's Sociology," p. 171.

27 Shafir, "Kimmerling's Sociology," pp. 171–72.

28 Arghiri Emmanuel, "White-Settler Colonialism and the Myth of Investment Imperialism," *New Left Review* 73 (May–June 1972): pp. 35–57.

29 Shafir, "Kimmerling's Sociology," p. 169.

30 See also Ram, *Changing Agenda,* pp. 179–83.

31 Nitza Ben-Ari, *S. Yizhar: A Life Story* [in Hebrew], vol. 1 (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2013), pp. 404–5n70.

32 Shafir's book was the first radical challenge to the hegemonic Israeli sociological narrative and while it remains so, there have been others since, including my own *Returns of Zionism: Myths, Politics and Scholarship in Israel* (New York: Verso Books, 2008).

33 Shafir, *Land, Labor and Origins,* p. xi.

34 Moshe Lissak, "'Critical' Sociology and 'Establishment' Sociology in the Israeli Academic Community: Ideological Struggles or Academic Discourse?," *Israel Studies* 1, no. 1 (1996): pp. 247–94; Shafir, "Israeli Society: A Counterview," *Israel Studies* 1, no. 2 (1996): pp. 189–201.

35 Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 37.

36 Gershon Shafir, "Zionism and Colonialism: A Comparative Approach," in *The Israel/Palestine Question: Rewriting Histories*, ed. Ilan Pappé (Taylor and Francis e-Library, 2005), p. 79.

37 Omar Jabary Salamanca, Menza Qato, Kareem Rabie, and Sobhi Samour, eds., special issue, *Settler Colonial Studies* 2, no. 1 (2012). The editors' introduction is on pp. 1–8.

38 I presented at the conference and hence my observation on the proceedings.

39 Jabary-Salamanca et al., "Past is Present," p. 2. Emphasis is in the original.

40 Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London: Cassell, 1999), p. 3. Emphasis added.

41 Jabary-Salamanca et al., "Past is Present," p. 8n5.

42 Zachary Lockman, "Land, Labor and the Logic of Zionism: A Critical Engagement with Gershon Shafir," *Settler Colonial Studies* 2, no. 1 (2012): pp. 9–38.

43 Lockman, "Land, Labor and Logic of Zionism," p. 29.

44 In addition to the already referenced article by Wolfe (on which more below), see also Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (December 2006): pp. 387–409; and Lorenzo Veracini, *Israel and Settler Society* (London: Pluto Press, 2006).

45 Wolfe, "Purchase," pp. 133–71.

46 On pre-accumulation see Wolfe, "Purchase," pp. 136–40.

47 Wolfe, "Purchase," p. 151.

48 In addition to Shafir and Wolfe, see also chapter 2 of Piterberg, *Returns of Zionism*, pp. 51–92.

49 See "From Land to Labor: Unequal Competition and the 'Conquest of Labor' Strategy," in Shafir, *Land, Labor and Origins,* pp. 45–90.

50 For a useful summary of their views, see again Shafir, "Kimmerling's Sociology," pp. 163–75.

51 They also argue that Zionism had not possessed the backing of a metropolitan power. This argument was variously refuted but I do not dwell on it here.

52 Areej Sabbagh-Khoury, *Colonization Practices and Interactions at the Frontier: Ha-Shomer ha-Tzair Kibbutzim and the Surrounding Arab Villages at the Margins of the Valley of Jezreel/Marj Ibn 'Amer, 1936–1956* [in Hebrew], Tel Aviv University, submitted in 2014. The translations from Hebrew are mine.

53 The dissertation's introductory chapter is titled: "Theoretical Framework: Settler Colonialism." The title is borne out by the content, of course.

54 Sabbagh-Khoury, *Colonization Practices and Interactions,* p. 2n4.

55 Sabbagh-Khoury, *Colonization Practices and Interactions,* p. 2.

56 Sabbagh-Khoury, *Colonization Practices and Interactions,* pp. 2–3.

57 Notably Gabriel Piterberg, *Returns of Zionism* (2008); and "Literature of Settler Societies: Albert Camus, S. Yizhar and Amos Oz," *Settler Colonial Studies* 2, no. 1 (2011): pp. 3–49.

58 Anderson, "Scurrying towards Bethlehem," p. 24.

59 Azmi Bishara, "Israeli Sociology and Baruch Kimmerling [in Arabic]," *Al-mustaqbal al-'Arabi* 394 (December 2011): pp. 7–33. This essay is also the introduction to the Arabic translation of Kimmerling's Hebrew book *Immigrants, Settlers, and Natives* (Tel Aviv: 'Am 'oved, 2004). Translations from Arabic are mine.

60 See especially Bishara, "Israeli Sociology," p. 8.

61 Bishara, "Israeli Sociology," p. 29.

62 Bishara, "Israeli Sociology," p. 30.

63 Anderson, "Scurrying towards Bethlehem," pp. 24–25.

64 Theodor Herzl, *Old-New Land* [1902], trans. Lotta Levensohn (New York: Bloch, 1941), p. 186.