THE TRIUMPH
OF ISRAEL'S
RADICAL RIGHT

AMI PEDAHZUR

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1922   The British Mandate for Palestine.

1929   The massacre of the Hebron Jews. One of the most devastating clashes between Arabs and Jews in Palestine.

1933   Adolf Hitler appointed as Chancellor of Germany

1936   The Great Arab Revolt. The first organized uprising of the Palestinians. Consists of commercial strikes, demonstrations, and violent attacks against British forces and the Jewish population.

            Peel Commission—A royal commission established to inquire as to the causes for the Arab revolt.

1938   Woodhead Commission—A committee formed following the failure of the Peel Commission to bring an end to the revolt. One of its tasks was to provide a plan for the partition of Palestine.

1939   The White Paper (aka the MacDonald White Paper) restricts the immigration of Jews to Palestine as well as the purchase of lands by Jews.

1942   Wannsee Conference and the Final Solution to the Jewish Question

1944   Hunting Season (Saison)—The struggle between the Haganah and the Etzel (Irgun), during which the Haganah hands Etzel activists over to the British authorities.

1947   David Ben-Gurion sends the "Status Quo" letter to the leaders of Agudat Yisrael. The letter formalizes the pivotal status of Orthodox Judaism in the future State of Israel.

            The United Nations general assembly votes in favor of the Partition Plan for Palestine.

1948   Plan D—Devised by the Haganah, its objectives include the transformation of the various Jewish fighting forces into an army as well as to gain strategic advantages during the final weeks of the British Mandate in Palestine. The most controversial

aspect of the plan is the decision to take over territories that the UN designated for the Arab State and to subsequently expel their Palestinian residents.

War of Independence—1948 Arab–Israeli War.

The Declaration of Independence and the official formation of the State of Israel.

Declaration of a state of emergency, which has prevailed ever since.

The *Altalena* Affair—David Ben-Gurion's decision to sink a ship that was purchased by the Etzel, carrying weapons, supplies, and immigrants to Israel.

The enactment of the British Emergency Regulations of 1945. These regulations permit the state to disarm the pre-State militias, most notably the Etzel.

The subjection the Palestinian Citizens of Israel to military rule.

1950   The Law of Return—Israel's main immigration law which is based on the *jus sanguinis* principle. It gives an advantageous status to Jews who wish to immigrate to Israel.

The Absentees Property Law—Enables the State of Israel to seize lands and properties of Arabs who fled or were deported from Palestine during the 1948 War. The law is enforced by the Custodian of Absentee Property, a branch of the Ministry of Finance. Following the 1967 War it extends to East Jerusalem.

The Population Dispersal Policy—Aimed at settling Jews in peripheral areas, mostly near the borders and in close proximity to Arab population centers.

The formation of the first Development Town (Beit Shemesh) as well as Ma'abara (Transitional Camp) for immigrants. Many of those sent to development towns and Ma'abarot, are Sephardic (or Mizrahi) newcomers. In the following decades these settlements turned into Israel's main economic peripheries and became the symbol for "Second Israel."

1952   Law of Citizenship or Nationality Law—Specifies the ways by which individuals who are not eligible to immigrate to Israel under the stipulations of the Law of Return may acquire Israeli citizenship.

1956   The Sinai War.

1958   Basic Law: Knesset—Institutionalizes Israel's parliamentary system and electoral rules. Israel follows the model of a unicameral parliament. The parliament (Knesset) consists of 120 members. Elections are to be held every four years. Voters are asked to cast a ballot for a party of their choosing. The number of seats that each party gains in the Knesset is proportional to the number of votes it received in the nationwide ballot. The Knesset elects the executive branch. In order to form a cabinet, a candidate must gain the support of at least 61 Knesset members.

1960 Formation of Israel Land Administration which holds 93 percent of the lands in Israel.

1964 The Central Elections Committee and the High Court of Justice disqualifies a party (the Socialist List) from running for the Knesset. The disqualified party is an Arab party, which advocated abolishing the Jewish character of Israel and turning it into a binational State.

1966 End of the Martial Law for the Palestinian Citizens of Israel.

1967 The Six-Day War between Israel and three main Arab countries: Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. During the war Israel occupies vast territories: the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria and the West Bank, the Jordan Valley and East Jerusalem from Jordan.

 Khartoum Resolution—A document summarizing the Arab League's response to the outcome of the war. Best known for its third paragraph: no peace, recognition, or negotiations with Israel.

 The First Settling Activity—the reestablishment of Kfar Etzion—a Religious Kibbutz in Gush Etzion, which was destroyed by the Arab Legion in 1948.

 The "Allon Plan"—The plan was never officially adopted but served as a template for the Labor-led cabinet's settling activities.

1968 Zionist religious Jews, supported by Allon, established the first settlement in the West Bank by taking over the Arab-owned Park Hotel in Hebron.

 The formation of the Golan Residents Committee.

1969 The War of Attrition between Israel and Egypt.

 Elections to the 8th Knesset—Following the Six-Day War and the economic recovery, the Alignment led by Golda Meir enjoys a landslide victory.

1970 Black September—The deportation of the PLO forces from Jordan and their resettlement in Lebanon.

 The reestablishment of Kfar Darom—A religious Zionist community in the Gaza Strip which was captured by the Egyptian Army in 1948.

 Jewish Ancestry Amendment—Expands the incidence of the Law of Return. According to the amendment, for purposes of immigration to Israel, the definition of a Jew is extended beyond the religious boundaries (i.e., an individual who was born to a Jewish mother). It includes grandchildren and spouses of Jews regardless of their religious practices.

1971 Rabbi Meir Kahane arrived in Israel. Shortly afterwards he establishes the Jewish Defense League in Israel, which was later registered as the Kach Party.

1973   The Yom Kippur War between Israel, Egypt, and Syria.

Elections to the 9th Knesset—the Alignment led by Golda Meir won again. However, the right-wing bloc led by Menachem Begin increases its power.

1974   The release of the first report of the Agranat Commission—an official National Commission of Inquiry appointed to look into the events that led to the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War. Though the commission does not point a finger at the prime minister and her cabinet, increasing public pressure leads Golda Meir to step down. Yitzhak Rabin is asked to form a new cabinet.

The formation of Gush Emunim as a faction of the National Religious Party, Mafdal.

The establishment of Keshet, the first settlement of Gush Emunim in the Golan Heights.

1975   The establishment of Kedumim, the first settlement in the heart of the West Bank. This was a compromise reached after a long struggle between the cabinet and the Elon Moreh enclave, which was determined to settle in nearby Sebastia.

1977   Elections to the 9th Knesset—Begin leads the Likud to its victory in the elections. The formation of the first right-wing cabinet in Israel. Begin and the minister of agriculture, Ariel Sharon, give a significant boost to the expansion of settlements in the heart of the West Bank.

Anwar Sadat's visit to Israel.

1979   The peace accords with Egypt in which Israel agrees to full withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula.

1980   Basic Law Jerusalem—Formalized the de facto annexation of East Jerusalem to Israel. The law is condemned by the international community.

The formation of the Yesha Council.

1981   Elections to the 10th Knesset—the Likud under the leadership of Menachem Begin wins again.

The Golan Law—Israel formally annexes the Golan Heights. This law is also condemned by the international community.

1982   The struggle against the removal of the Sinai settlements.

The First Lebanon War—Israel invades Lebanon in response to repeated attacks by the PLO, which was based in the country. A secondary objective, revealed later, was Ariel Sharon's plan to turn the balance of power in the country in favor of Israel. The PLO forces leave Lebanon and resettle in Tunisia. IDF forces remain in Lebanon for 18 years, coping with a new challenger, Hezbollah.

The massacre in the Sabra and Shatila Palestinian refugee camps of Lebanon. Perpetrated by the Phalanges-Kataeb Party, Israel's allies. IDF forces permit the Phalanges militiamen to enter the refugee camps; the IDF forces do nothing to stop the massacre. An Israeli Commission of Inquiry (aka Kahan Commission) did not find the IDF directly responsible but held senior officials including Ariel Sharon, defense minister, accountable. As a result, Sharon was forced out of the Ministry of Defense. Prime Minister Begin resigns shortly afterwards and is succeeded by Yitzhak Shamir.

1984   Elections to the 11th Knesset—A draw between Labor and the Likud in the elections lead to the formation of a National Unity Cabinet.

Meir Kahane's Kach Party wins a seat in the Knesset.

Shas enters the national arena.

Operation Moses—A covert operation for bringing Jews from Ethiopia to Israel.

1985   Amendment 7a to the Basic Law: Knesset. Legislated in response to Kahane's attempts to advance anti-Arab and anti-democratic bills. The amendment stipulates the conditions under which parties can be disqualified from running for the Knesset.

1987   The first Palestinian Intifada (Uprising). One of the main consequences of the uprising is the gradual closure of the Israeli labor market for Palestinian workers from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Since the Israeli economy relied heavily on these workers, the state decides to replace them with foreign workers.

1988   Kach is disqualified in accordance with Amendment 7a.

Elections to the 12th Knesset—Another draw between Labor and the Likud leads to the formation of the second National Unity Cabinet, led by Yitzhak Shamir.

1990   The beginning of the large wave of immigration from the former Soviet Union to Israel.

Meir Kahane is assassinated in New York.

The National Unity Cabinet falls apart. Yitzhak Shamir forms a right-wing coalition government.

1991   Operation Solomon—a second covert military operation aimed at bringing the remainder of the Ethiopian Jews to Israel.

Madrid Peace Conference.

1992   Israel's electoral reform. In effect from 1996 to 2001. Introduces several changes, most notably the adoption of a two-ballot voting system: one ballot for the prime minister and the other for a party. The reform is intended to lead to more

independence of the executive and legislative branches from one another.

The Constitutional Revolution—the legislation of two basic laws: Human Dignity and Liberty, and Freedom of Occupation. The laws empower the judiciary at the expense of the legislative branch.

Elections to the 13th Knesset—the right-wing bloc loses the elections. Yitzhak Rabin forms a Labor-led coalition.

1993   The Oslo Accords—"Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements" (DOP).

1994   The Massacre in the Cave of the Patriarchs. Perpetrated by Kahane's follower Dr. Baruch Goldstein. In response, the cabinet declares Kach and its splinter party, Kahane Chai, as terrorist groups.

The Cairo Agreement and the official formation of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

The Peace Accords with Jordan.

1995   Taba Accords (aka Oslo B).

The assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by a Jewish zealot. Shimon Peres succeeds him.

1996   Operation Grapes of Wrath (aka the April War)—A sixteen-day military campaign in Lebanon. Artillery shelling of the village of Qana, by the IDF, leads to the death of 102 refugees at a UN base.

Elections to the 14th Knesset—Binyamin Netanyahu forms a right-wing coalition.

Inauguration of the Western Wall Tunnels—Clashes between Palestinian and Israeli forces.

1997   Protocol Concerning the Redeployment in Hebron (aka the Hebron Agreement). The first agreement between Israel and the Palestinians following the election of Binyamin Netanyahu as prime minister. The agreement was accompanied by the Bar-On Hebron Affair.

1998   The Wye River Memorandum.

1999   The Elections to the 15th Knesset—Ehud Barak, the leader of the Labor Party (Yisrael Ahat at the time), defeats the incumbent Binyamin Netanyahu.

2000   The IDF's full withdrawal from Lebanon.

Camp David Summit.

The Al-Aqsa Intifada (the second Palestinian Uprising) accompanied by clashes between Palestinian Citizens of Israel and the police.

2001   Special Prime Ministerial Election—Ariel Sharon, the leader of the Likud defeats the incumbent prime minister, Ehud Barak.

World Conference against Racism (aka Durban 1 conference).

9/11 Attacks.

2002   Operation Defensive Shield—Israel's largest military operation in the West Bank aimed at cracking down on the terrorist groups dispatching suicide bombers to the Israeli heartland.

The cabinet approves the plan to erect a barrier between Israel and the West Bank.

The cabinet adopts a plan to deport illegal foreign workers.

The road map for Peace—introduced by President George W. Bush. The objective of the plan is to de-escalate the Israeli-Palestinian struggle and to lay the foundation for renewal of the peace talks.

2003   Elections to the 16th Knesset—Sharon leads Likud to victory.

Ariel Sharon presents the Disengagement Plan (aka the Separation Plan) at the Herzliya Conference.

2005   The publication of the "Sasson Report."

The implementation of the Disengagement Plan.

The Big Bang—Sharon leaves the Likud and forms a new party, Kadima. Shortly afterwards he falls into a coma. Ehud Olmert, his deputy, is appointed as prime minister.

2006   Elections to the 17th Knesset—Ehud Olmert presents the "Convergence or Realignment Plan." Kadima wins the elections.

Mivtza Gishmey Kayitz (Operation Summer Rains) in Gaza.

The Second Lebanon War.

The Winograd Commission—The commission of inquiry into the events of military engagement in Lebanon in 2006.

The beginning of the illegal wave of immigration from Africa to Israel through the border with Egypt.

2007   Annapolis Conference.

2008   Ehud Olmert is forced to resign. Tzipi Livini succeeds him.

        Operation Cast Lead (aka the Gaza War, 2008–2009).

2009   Elections to the 18th Knesset. Kadima gains most of the seats in the Knesset.
        However, Binyamin Netanyahu, the leader of the Likud, receives the support of the
        majority of the parties and forms a right-wing cabinet.

        Netanyahu delivers the "'Bar Ilan Speech" in which he accepts the Two-State
        Solution. The speech is followed by a ten-month moratorium on construction in the
        West Bank settlements.

2011   The Knesset adopts new laws aimed at solidifying the Jewish character of the state
        and limiting the freedoms of minority groups and left-wing organizations.

The Triumph of Israel's Radical Right

Introduction

On the morning of the May 19, 1999, two days after the national elections, I leafed through the *Ha'aretz* newspaper, as was my daily habit. When I arrived at the opinion section, I felt a shiver of excitement run down my spine; the editor had published the op-ed that I had sent in a day earlier. My piece was first published under the heading "The Radical Right 1999." It put forward the argument that the common definition of the radical Right in Israel, which was based on notions of territorial expansionism and the establishment settlements in Greater Israel (Eretz Yisrael HaSheleima), should be extended to include ethnic exclusionism as well as anti-democratic ideas—the same qualities that featured prominently in election propaganda campaigns of the Shas and Yisrael Beiteinu political parties. If we adopted this perspective, I argued, the power of the radical Right in the new parliament should be considered an unprecedented phenomenon in Israel's history.[1]

This elucidation, which had struck me some time before, I credit to Piero Ignazi, who is among the most important scholars of the radical Right in Europe.[2] In August 1998, I had the privilege of spending two intense weeks in the company of doctoral students and senior scholars at a workshop held by the European Consortium for Political Research, the subject of which was political parties. During the course of the workshop, each of the doctoral students was asked to present his or her research to a leading scholar and receive that scholar's comments. I admit to being a little weak-kneed as I presented my doctoral work on the institutionalization of the Israeli radical right-wing parties before the entire forum. Much to my relief, the atmosphere at the conference was far more relaxed than that to which I was accustomed in Israel.

My fledgling presentation was received with politeness. I attributed the mild smattering of questions and comments from the audience to a combination of good European manners and the fact that conference attendees longed to wrap up the morning session and make a dash for the dining room. I was delighted to discover that the conference organizers, Ferdinand Müller-Rommel and Kurt Richard Luther, had arranged that I would lunch with Professor Ignazi. On the way to the dining room Professor Ignazi asked me in a parenthetical fashion why my study focused only on the settlers' parties but omitted parties that fostered xenophobia and criticized democracy. At that moment, I failed to produce a satisfactory reply, and this niggling question continued to bother me on my way back to Israel. It soon forced me to reexamine the definition of the radical Right in Israel and to extend the boundaries of my research accordingly.[3] More than a decade after my op-ed was published the Israeli radical Right has proven to be a multifaceted political movement that became the dominant force in Israeli politics.
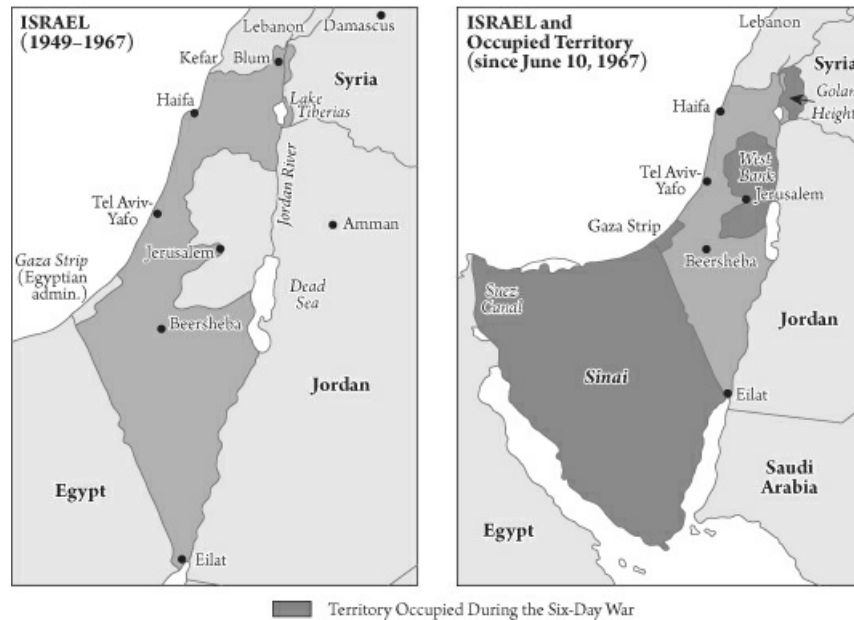
Figure I.1 Israel's Borders before and after the Six-Day War *Source:* Issues in the Middle East, Atlas, U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 1973. Israel 1949–1967 and Israel and Occupied Territory since June 10, 1967. U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

Ehud Sprinzak's seminal works predominantly focused on the rapidly emerging settlers' movement and parties.[4] As he predicted, before its absorption by its successor, this camp, to which I will refer as the "old radical Right," left a remarkable mark on Israel. When Sprinzak's book was published in 1991, the number of Jewish settlers in the West Bank stood at a little over 94,000.[5] By 2008, it had more than tripled at 290,000. This figure does not include the Jewish residents in East Jerusalem, whose number increased by 69,000 in the course of seventeen years and in 2008 stood at 184,000. Furthermore, a quick look at the maps reveals the degree to which the dispersion of the settlements in the West Bank and Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem had changed since the early 1990s. Until the signing of the Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestinians, the settlers—as well as most Israeli cabinets—were interested mainly in enhancing the Jewish presence in the West Bank and thus supported the establishment of settlements in close proximity to the Green Line.[6] Today, the settlers' main goal is to prevent the possibility of an Israeli withdrawal from these areas and the formation of a viable Palestinian state. New settlements and outposts continue to be erected in the heart of the West Bank and at the center of Palestinian population centers in Jerusalem. This is only one element, however—and not necessarily the most important one—in a much larger picture.

The new radical Right—which seeks to enhance the ethnic discrimination of non-Jewish minorities, to undermine the remnants of the liberal democratic foundations of the state, and to fight the elites—was successful in fusing its agenda with Israel's formal policies. This process can be observed in various realms. For example, Arab citizens who leave Israel for academic pursuits find that after living for a few years abroad, their citizenship has been revoked. Other citizens of Palestinian origin that submit requests to marry non-Israelis are often rejected by the authorities for unspecified "security reasons."[7] Foreign workers in Israel whose visas have expired are subject to a strict deportation policy.[8] Many of them are hunted down and arrested by

Israel's newly established Immigration Authority and find themselves incarcerated without due process until their date of deportation.[9] On other fronts, the Supreme Court, the state's media, and academic institutions—which many in the radical right consider to be elitist and advocates of liberal values—are submitted to continuous attacks in hopes of rendering them weak and terrified.

Setting the Stage—Israel's Old and New Radical Right

The Israeli radical Right is a phenomenon that can be easily recognized if one happens to come across it. For this reason, despite its rapid growth and immense impact on the country's domestic and foreign policies, few have actually taken the trouble to conceptualize it.[10] In other parts of the world (most notably Western Europe, which still struggles with the recent history of Fascism), the topic has secured a prominent place on many scholars' agendas over the last two decades, despite the fact that the actual impact of the radical Right remains limited.[11] The lively discussion among European scholars regarding the proper way to conceptualize this contemporary phenomenon resembles the problems with which Israeli scholars are faced. For example, why label it as "radical" rather than "extreme" or "populist"? Further, should a group's position on a single issue—immigration policy, in the European case—serve as sufficient criteria for determining whether or not that group belongs to the radical right?[12] Or are entities like the radical Right ideologically multifaceted?[13]

For many years, the terms "radical," "extreme," and "populist" Right were used interchangeably. The lack of clear conceptualization generated confusion and slowed down the progress of research in the field. I was fortunate because when I launched my own research in the mid-1990s, academic discussion in this field was already in full swing. Cas Mudde, the researcher most commonly associated with the conceptualization of the ideology of the European Right, was highly aware of the lack of conceptual clarity. Thus, he spent many years carefully delineating the exact features of the phenomenon[14] and offered to collapse its various conceptualizations under the broad category of "populist radical Right," which consists of three main elements:[15] nativism, authoritarianism, and populism.[16] A review of the most recent literature in the field suggests that the majority of scholars adopted this path and gravitated toward Mudde's definition.[17]

Mudde's refined approach, after being subject to several necessary adaptations due to the particularities of the Israeli context, provides a solid foundation for the new demarcation of Israel's radical Right. Further, it keeps the book aligned with Sprinzak's definition in his seminal book on the topic. Sprinzak's conceptualization of the radical Right is very close to Mudde's and contains both nativism and populism, two of Mudde's three pillars.[18]

Nativism

Nativism is the core feature of both the old and new radical Right in Israel. Specifically, it holds that the "states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group (the nation) and that nonnative elements (individuals and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state."[19] The nativism of the Israeli radical Right consists of three elements. The first,

which is paradoxical by nature, is the aspiration that the individuals who live within the borders of the sovereign State of Israel belong to the "Jewish ethnicity," even if they were not born in Israel. Meanwhile, native Arabs, foreign workers, and other individuals who do not belong to the Jewish ethnic collective should be deprived of full citizen rights. In a more extreme version of nativism, such individuals should not even be allowed to live in the State of Israel. The second component of nativism is the absolute and exclusive right of the Jewish people over Greater Israel.[20] In the updated version, this includes the borders of the sovereign State of Israel as well the territories that were occupied in 1967: the West Bank, the Golan Heights, the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, and the jewel in the crown, East Jerusalem. The third component is the rejection of those liberal or multicultural ideas that pose a challenge to the first two components.

Authoritarianism

The second element in the ideology of the radical Right must be understood in its Israeli context so as to distinguish it from European models. Authoritarianism, as Mudde defined it, is the belief that society must be founded on and ruled by a stringent set of laws that shape the entirety of an individual's life. Insubordination results in severe sanctions.[21] Contemporary European authoritarianism is rooted mostly in modern secular ideas. Thus, it demands full subordination of every part of society to the authority of the state or leader and seeks to reinforce the notion of "law and order" in its strictest sense. But outside of Western Europe, including in the case of Israel, the boundaries between right-wing radicalism and religious fundamentalism can be less distinct.[22]

Therefore, authoritarianism in Israel should be defined as the aim to expand the reach of the Jewish legal and penal frameworks, known as *Halakha*, within the constitutional structure of the State of Israel as well as in the quotidian life of its citizens. In the extreme version, adherents to religious authoritarianism aspire to transform the state into a theocracy.[23]

Populism

Much like the term radicalism, populism was defined in different, sometimes contradictory manners.[24] Some scholars referred to populism as a political style while others considered it to be a full-fledged ideology. Even among scholars who relate to populism as an ideology, there seem to be wide areas of disagreement. In some cases, the differences can be explained by regional dissimilarities. For example, recent advances in the study of Latin American politics have pulled the concept away from the context of exclusionary right-wing groups and utilized it for studying the emergence of inclusionary left-wing ones.[25] Mudde defines populism as an ideology that depicts society as polarized between two homogenous yet antagonistic groups: the pure people and the corrupt elite.[26] Politics, according to the advocates of populist ideology, should express the general will of the pure people. In Israel, the populist worldview perceives the media, the civil society, the universities, and especially the judiciary as institutions controlled by small yet powerful left-wing elitist groups that manipulate the rest of society in accordance with their narrow interests. The worldview of the elite is described as unpatriotic and aimed at subverting the Jewish nature of the State. The populists claim that these institutions must be abolished or restored to the people so that their actions may represent the wishes of the pure

population.[27]

The Radical Right and Policy Making

For decades, scholars researching the radical Right in countries around the world focused their spotlight on one main actor: the political party. This fact shouldn't come as a surprise. Throughout the twentieth century, political parties played a pivotal role in both democracies and dictatorships. Furthermore, radical parties from both the Right and the Left that rose to power either democratically or by brute force were responsible for many of the dramatic, as well as horrific events, of that century. The main questions that most scholars of the contemporary radical Right explore include: Under what conditions do radical right-wing parties emerge? Who votes for them and why? And what are the main causes of their electoral successes and failures? The volume and quality of the scholarship in the field is exceptional. It may seem that every stone on the road to answering these questions has already been overturned. But electoral success, though I do not question its significance, is only one step down a long road. According to the well-known definition by Joseph Schumpeter, "a party is a group whose members propose to act in concert in the competitive struggle for political power."[28] At the end of the day, for most politicians, getting elected is a means to an end. Whether they are motivated by personal ambition or ideological zeal, they are interested in leaving a mark by turning their convictions into policies. However, the distance between being elected and actually making policies is long,[29] particularly for radical right-wing parties.[30] Thus, in this book, my objective is to provide an answer to the following question: Under what conditions does the radical Right succeed in the making and implementation of policies?

The Changing Configuration of the Radical Right

In order to answer the above question, we should first stop referring to the political party as our main unit of analysis. Indeed, in its early decades Israel, like many other countries, was under the controlling grip of political parties.[31] However, over the years the center of gravity shifted, and parties worldwide have lost much of their sway.[32] The parties that represented the masses and relied on their continuous materialistic support disappeared and were replaced by parties with a narrow and volatile base of voters. The main source of funding of these parties is the state.[33] Radical right-wing parties were particularly vulnerable. During the second half of the twentieth century, these parties, which only several decades earlier were so prominent, found themselves ostracized. They have seldom enjoyed significant electoral achievements in national parliamentary elections.[34] Even in the few cases when they have in fact accumulated significant political clout, more moderate parties were concerned with preserving their reputations and treated their radical Right counterparts like pariahs, generally refraining from inviting them to take part in coalitions.[35] Even if radical right-wing politicians did overcome these barriers and joined the cabinet table, they quickly found that their opportunities to shape policy were still limited.

In general, when a tough policy on a sensitive issue is made—and it may often correspond with the position of the radical Right—it is in the interest of the more moderate parties to present

it to the public in softer and more appealing packaging. By doing so, moderates benefit in two ways. First, they promote a popular policy, such as restrictions on immigration. Second, they prevent the radical right-wing parties from racking up political capital.[36] In light of these barriers it appears that if we adopt an approach in which political parties are still the key pillars of the contemporary policy making process, we will lose the key to understanding the success of the radical right. The present-day political landscape compels us to adopt a more flexible unit of analysis, namely "the political network."[37]

Political networks are a subcategory of social networks.[38] Due to the lack of an agreed-upon definition for this concept, which only recently made its mark in the academic literature,[39] I define the political network as "a loose and dynamic composite of political actors whose worldview on various issues overlaps and who frequently come together for the purpose of shaping policies in the spirit of their shared ideology." Networks of this type include a wide range of actors: social movements, special interest groups, political parties, individual members of parliament, and civil servants. The boundaries of political networks are elusive and tend to expand, contract, and change their shapes quite often. Due to this dynamic nature, networks are devoid of both a clear hierarchy and regulations. Consequently, political networks are not easy to delineate. Their structure instead resembles an entangled web of subgroups, each of which has its own characteristics and agendas.[40]

Political networks thrive in ambiguous settings.[41] Weakening states that are characterized by expanding areas of "gray" serve as an ideal environment in which networks can operate successfully.[42] By gray areas I refer to institutions with overlapping domains of authority, fuzzy legal frameworks, and unclear regulations. Even strong states that enjoy an extensive degree of control over their respective societies do not prevent such networks from operating.[43] The fluid quality of these networks enables them to easily break through the cracks in the barriers of the political process.[44] They usually maneuver slowly and elusively, and follow an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary path.

Networks operate in many ways.[45] To give just two illustrative examples, if a political party that is associated with a network fails to enter policy-making circles, it is possible to mobilize members of other parties who do succeed in getting elected and to collaborate with them in order to advance common goals. No less interesting is the recruitment of bureaucrats who are in positions of influence on policy making, by central actors in the network, and even the installation of civil servants in such positions. In many countries, bureaucrats wield much more power than is customarily attributed to them.[46] Unlike elected officials, they spend a considerable part of their career in one ministry, are well-versed in its maze of regulations, and, in situations in which there is a lack of consistency at the elected political level, they become both makers and implementers of policies.[47]

To sum up, the fluid configuration of the network and the fact that it is not easy to attribute its different segments and operations to one big political maneuver enables it to slowly permeate the state, operate from within, and cumulatively advance its agenda. Only if we move the camera lens backwards to the point where it is possible to observe the process from a greater distance in terms of both time and space can we grasp how much larger and more powerful is the whole in comparison to the mere sum of its parts.

Today, radical right-wing political networks operate in many parts of the world. However, their success in shaping policies on the national level is still limited.[48] Actually, it is impossible to identify recent cases in which they have become the central political force in a given country[49]

—with the exception of Israel.

The Success of the Israeli Radical Right: General and Particular Factors

Some of the factors that facilitated the recent success of the Israeli radical Right could be manifested in other countries and thus be tested in comparative research, while others are unique to the Israeli context. Among these general factors are: party system traits as well as the rules of electoral processes; tensions between centers and peripheries; and shifting political agendas. These factors have already received meticulous scholarly attention.[50]

But the case of Israel engenders hypotheses regarding other factors that have, so far, generated less interest. The first is demography. Demographic shifts have been carefully examined by scholars of the radical Right who are interested in anti-immigrant sentiments among veteran inhabitants of the absorbing societies.[51] However, demographic shifts have other outcomes that could be relevant for the radical Right. The combination of decreasing birthrates among some societal segments, increasing birthrates among others, and large waves of immigration within and between continents are changing the political landscapes in many local and national arenas.[52] Contrary to conventional wisdom, newcomers to a political scene sometimes support the radical Right, a fact that can result in sweeping policy changes. The departure from individualism is the second factor. Voters in democracies are traditionally considered to be self-interested and independent.[53] However, there are cases, especially in developing democracies, where voting is hardly an individual act. Strong primordial ties to a clan, an extended family, an ethnic community, or a religious sect can lead to collective voting. In tight-knit communities, leaders often mobilize their followers and provide them with clear voting instructions that they follow to the letter.[54] Radical right-wing parties, especially those that represent distinct ethnic or religious groups, are likely to be beneficiaries of this phenomenon. Finally, there are leaders. The impact of the personality of a single leader on history in general, and in the context of radical movements in particular, has been the subject of countless studies.[55] Charismatic leadership has also been studied with respect to the ways in which radical right-wing parties mobilize support[56] and with respect to their ability to institutionalize and endure.[57] However, the behavior of maverick or charismatic radical right-wing leaders in office and their actual impact on the formation and the implementation of policies have yet to be explored.

As for the more contextual factors, I elaborate in chapter 1 on some distinctive features of Israel that contribute to the success of the radical Right. Yet, more broadly, three unique pillars have shaped the collective mind-set of the Jews in Israel: the political culture; institutions; and, consequently, political behavior by both the elites and the masses. It is impossible to gain a good grasp of Israeli politics without keeping these factors in mind at all times.

Israel experienced an unusual trajectory of state formation. Global developments in the nineteenth century led to the emergence of Jewish nationalism. By the early twentieth century, Jews from various countries, who had little in common beyond their ethnicity and religious heritage, had begun to arrive in growing numbers to Palestine, which was already inhabited by Arabs. The Jewish state was born half a century later. By the time of its inception, the very foundations of a nation state—such as shared recent memories, common language, and culture—were still lacking, even within the dominant Jewish community. During the first two decades of

its existence, while Israel was still learning to walk on its own two feet and at the same time coping with tremendous economic and security challenges, the fledgling nation continued to absorb masses of Jewish immigrants. The formative decades of the state were marked by continuous upheavals and massive population growth. This dramatically impacted the state's characteristics and fertilized the soil for the emergence of a strong radical Right.

The Jews who immigrated to Israel had at least one thing in common: they were all victims of anti-Semitism, discrimination, persecutions, and pogroms, which were widespread in their countries of origin for many centuries. The holocaust of the European Jewry was, of course, the peak. Many of the immigrants who arrived at the shores of Palestine (and later Israel) throughout the 1940s and 1950s were survivors of the Nazi systematic effort to exterminate the Jewish people. The scars caused by centuries of anti-Semitism left distinctive marks on the infant Israeli society.[58] This trauma generated a nation constantly on edge, which continues to suffer from a continuous sense of collective anxiety and a highly developed survival instinct.[59]

The persistent conflict with the Arab world and the impassioned rhetoric that accompanied it only exacerbated this collective anxiety, creating a sense of intractability and hopelessness[60] and leading the Jews in Israel to rely upon (and glorify) their nation's security establishment.[61] The large Palestinian minority that remained inside Israel's sovereign borders after 1948 posed a continuous challenge to the anxious majority group. Even today, many Jews consider the Palestinian citizens of Israel to be a fifth column. Ethnic relations in the country are marked by deep divisions, sharp segregation between the communities, and an enduring sense of mistrust.[62] In the coming chapters I discuss the consequences of this reality as well as the opportunities that it presented to the radical right.

Challenges, Methods, and Caveats

In this section I weave the methodological discussion into my personal journey on the road to understanding the Israeli radical Right. Toward the end of the summer of 1995, the Israeli political system reached a boiling point. Every day seemed worse than the previous one. The streets were constantly crowded with protesters who adamantly objected to the implementation of the Oslo Accords and threatened to remove Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin from power.

Having just finished my first year as a graduate student, the time came for me to pick a topic for my master's thesis. I knew that I wanted to study the Israeli radical Right, I just did not know how and decided to seek advice. The natural person to approach was Professor Ehud Sprinzak, Israel's leading authority on radicalism. After sitting terrified outside his office while waiting for him to arrive, I discovered that (luckily for me) Professor Sprinzak was a gracious person. After a thirty-minute conversation in which he tried to figure out what kind of research I wanted to pursue, he came up with an idea: "So many scholars are currently looking into the protest of the settlers from the West Bank, but no one is following the growing discontent of the Golan Residents Committee with the Rabin administration. Why don't you go to the Golan Heights and check out what is going on there?" He had hit the nail on the head. Not only were the Golan Heights relatively close to my hometown, Haifa, but the only political scientist who studied the Golan Residents Committee, Professor Yael Yishai, was a member of the faculty at the University of Haifa.

By the very next day I signed up for Professor Yishai's seminar on political movements in Israel. The seminar was held every Sunday morning at 8:15 a.m. The only thing that I can

remember about the first meeting is strategizing how to approach the professor and get to write a thesis under her supervision. By the time I gathered the courage Yael was long gone, and I promised myself to be more determined the following week. The next meeting was held on November 5, the day following what was supposed to be the largest rally in support of the Oslo process. Tragically, this rally, which was held in the heart of Tel Aviv, turned into one of the darkest events in Israel's history. While walking toward his car, Yitzhak Rabin was shot three times by Yigal Amir, a right-wing radical who was hoping to put an end to the peace process by assassinating the prime minister. Neither the professor nor the students had much sleep that night, and the atmosphere in the classroom was dark. On that day I decided to stop procrastinating and to launch my research. Yael Yishai was even more resolute than I was. That same day, she signed on to be my advisor and became the driving force behind my research for many years.

Based on the advice that I received from Ehud Sprinzak and with the relentless support of Yael Yishai, I engaged in field research in the Golan Heights. I wanted to figure out what motivated the Golan settlers, many of whom were members of Rabin's Labor Party, to join the radical right's fierce campaign against him and to determine the consequences of their struggle. Eventually, the thesis turned into a broader study of the Jewish settlements in the Golan Heights.[63] I concluded that despite the burning commitment of the activists and the generous incentives that the government offered, the Israeli attempt to inhabit the Golan Heights with Jewish settlers could not be regarded as a success story. Only few Israelis were tempted to settle this beautiful and tranquil piece of land. With this observation in mind, I decided to devote my PhD dissertation to studying a much more successful settling endeavor: the one in the West Bank. Mainly I was interested in the factors that facilitated the institutionalization of the parties that were committed to the Greater Israel ideology.[64] I spent the next two years interviewing leaders and activists of the Israeli radical Right and combing through archival materials in an attempt to find answers to my questions. During that period, I was lucky to meet Bruce Hoffman, the chair of the Department of International Relations at the University of St. Andrews at the time. Bruce was happy to share his encyclopedic knowledge of Jewish radicalism in the pre-State era and was generous enough to let me dig into his own personal archives.

In the years that followed, I broadened the scope of my research on the Israeli radical Right. Soon after I submitted my dissertation, I launched an offshoot research project in which I utilized the concept of "defending democracy" in order to assess Israel's responses to the various challenges posed by the radical Right over the years.[65] As a young faculty member at the University of Haifa, I was lucky to find a great group of scholars and graduate students who shared my interests. Together we devised public opinion polls, which followed the expansion of right-wing radicalism among Israeli Jews on an annual basis.[66] We also studied the evolving ideology of the radical Right[67] and identified factors that enabled the parties of this camp to gain significant power in Parliament.[68]

After a fifteen-year journey in which I have followed the Israeli radical Right's every move, I feel that this political phenomenon has reached a significant milestone. In my opinion, the radical Right has become the most influential power in Israeli politics. As such, it deserves to be studied from a fresh and comprehensive perspective. It is important to note that this book is not politically motivated. While separating one's views from any research is not easy, especially when discussing such a contentious topic, I believe that it is doable, and I have done the utmost to control for any personal biases that I may have.

The fact that the study of political networks is still in its infancy poses quite a few

methodological challenges to the scholar who wishes to investigate them. The first obstacle relates to the contemporary dominant paradigms in political science. Most of us have been raised to observe a certain unit of analysis: a leader, an elite group, a political party, a social movement, and, of course, formal institutions and the general public. The different methods for studying each of these actors are clearly outlined in the relevant literature. The problem with political networks is that they result from the interaction of a wide range of actors from each one of the above units of analysis, and this can create methodological chaos.[69]

The second obstacle is the logic of the study. Research protocols generally seek to find correlations between variables and to establish the manner in which one variable affects the other. Further, such models are expected to provide an answer as to why a certain effect took place in a specific way and not another.[70] When an amorphous structure (such as a political network) is the central unit of analysis in a research, it poses a significant challenge. Its constantly changing configuration should be regarded as an independent variable critical to explaining various consequences.[71]

The above concerns have merit. However, it is important to remember that when we encounter political developments that are hard to comprehend (let alone study), our initial tendency is to stick to the familiar. Consequently, in many cases we overlook important phenomena for the sake of methodological rigor. As I hinted earlier in this section, this tendency is evident in the existing research on the contemporary radical right. The majority of scholars in the field focus on the predictors of the success of political parties. It is relatively easy to monitor the successes and failures of political parties by tracing their electoral achievements. It is also not terribly complicated to identify the variables that correlate with different electoral outcomes. The data is easy to attain and satisfies the most scrupulous methodological demands. While I acknowledge the importance of the electoral process as well as methodological rigor, my main interest lies in the outputs of these political processes. More specifically, I am interested in identifying the factors that facilitate success in the formation and implementation of radical right-wing policies. Delineating such policies, cracking open the black box of the policy-making process, and identifying the factors that shape radical right-wing policies are much more complicated.[72] Thus, despite the fact that this road is not fully paved, I have chosen to tackle what appears to me to be a cardinal political issue. This decision comes with a price tag, namely the degree of methodological rigor. For the purpose of this book, which should be accessible to readers who are not specializing in social network analysis, I have decided to follow a softer qualitative research design, which relies on the experience of other researchers who have studied social networks and looked into their impact on policy and politics, as well as no small measure of intuition.[73] It has been a long process of trial and error. There is still a significant distance to go until a solid research method of political networks can be devised. Rapid progress is being made, though, especially in the quantitative realm.[74]

Plan of the Book

In order to provide support to my argument that the ascendance of the radical Right in Israel, which Sprinzak identified more than two decades ago,[75] has in effect developed into a full-fledged victory, I structure the remaining chapters as follows. In the first chapter, I introduce the Israeli radical Right's historical and institutional antecedents and follow its evolution during the formative era of the state. In chapter 2 I move toward analyzing the ideology, trajectory,

predicaments, and eventual decline of the old radical Right. I devote the third chapter to introducing the new radical Right, which took root in Israel in the early 1970s and has never since strayed from its triumphant path. In chapters 4 through 8, I offer a combination of chronology and analysis for the radical Right's race to power over the last two decades. In each chapter I look into several policy areas on which the radical Right tried to leave a mark and discuss the means it applied to attain its goals. I highlight both successes and failures. In chapter 4 I portray the institutionalization of the settlers' network as a response to the outbreak of the first Intifada and analyze its main endeavors during that period. In chapter 5, I review the significant transformations that took place in Israel during the three-year period between the seeming defeat of the Right in the elections and the assassination of Rabin. The final gasps of the old radical Right, the reconfiguration of the network, its many successes (and occasional failures) in subverting the peace process will stand at the heart of the chapter. In chapter 6 I shift much of my attention to the domestic arena, especially to the social and political dividing lines that facilitated the rapid consolidation of the various elements comprising the new radical Right. Notwithstanding, I follow the role of the radical Right in pushing the peace process toward a cliff. In chapters 7 and 8, I cover the period between the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada and Operation Cast Lead in the Gaza Strip. Contrary to the common belief that the second Palestinian uprising and Israel's consequent withdrawal from Gaza served a major blow to the radical Right, I argue that these events actually benefited this camp. By the end of that period, the Israeli public gave up on any hope for peace, the remnants of what used to be the Israeli peace camp were decaying rapidly, and the radical Right network enjoyed unprecedented prosperity in each and every policy arena. I structure the conclusions slightly differently. Alongside a breakdown of the recent leg of the radical Right's victorious spree, I zoom in on the policy realms in which this camp had its major achievements, as well as those in which it was less successful, and offer a cautious assessment of these developments as they relate to the future of Israel.

1
The Antecedents of Israel's Contemporary Radical Right

For almost one hundred years, there has been an ongoing and fierce struggle in Israel or Palestine, depending on one's viewpoint, between two young nationalistic movements: the Jewish and the Palestinian. The struggle focuses on the questions: Which is the true native group in this small strip of land that, since 1948, has been recognized as the State of Israel? Is it the Palestinians, whose origins are in the Middle East and Africa and who gathered on this territory over the course of hundreds of years? Or is it the Jews, who were sparsely scattered on this piece of land until the nineteenth century but regarded Eretz Yisrael as the historical origin of their people and the theological mainstay of their religion?[1]

Modern-day Jewish nationalism appeared with the emergence of the Zionist movement, which arose in Europe during the nineteenth century and was profoundly influenced by the galvanization of European nationalism. The rapid growth of the movement can be attributed to the fear that gripped the Jews in the wake of anti-Semitism that swept across the Continent; the dominant factions of the Zionist movement searched for a course or solution that would somehow enable them to transform the Jewish Diaspora into a sovereign nation.

One hazard in the research of political history is the tendency to judge the past through the prism of the present. For example, anti-Zionist circles today commonly locate the roots of Jewish nativism in a reference made by Lord Shaftesbury and later by the British-Zionist writer Israel Zangwill, who described Palestine as a "land without a people for a people without a land."[2] Zangwill is accused of purposely ignoring the fact that the land had been populated with hundreds of thousands of Arabs and was bustling with the life of its local residents. Even so, it is worth remembering that, in those times, the international political order and the Middle East theater in particular were completely different than they are today. Palestine, or Eretz Yisrael, and its neighbors were under the rule of a declining Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century. The concept of nationalism that sprang from Europe and left its mark so deeply on many of the continent's Jews slowly made its way to the Middle East. Palestinian nationalism, which was removed from the pan-Arabian context, coalesced in response to the emergence of Zionism, or Jewish nationalist ideas that formed and evolved following the decline of the Ottoman Empire in the late nineteenth century.[3] It is therefore possible to understand, without justifying, the fact that many of the leaders of the Zionist movement failed to realize that the land upon which they cast their eyes and in which they sought to establish their "national home" was already home to another people.[4]

The Zionist movement accomplished its first significant achievement when the Balfour Declaration was published in 1917. Great Britain, which had captured Palestine from the Ottomans and was subsequently granted a mandate from the League of Nations to govern the territory, recognized the right of the Jews to establish a national home in Eretz Yisrael. In 1922, the British Mandate authorities ratified their commitment to the Zionist movement. Largely in the wake of the Jewish leadership's overestimates, the British believed that the post–World War I flow of Jewish immigrants to Palestine would significantly increase, and as a result they agreed to assist in the absorption of the refugees. However, these estimates proved to be inflated, and

the expected flood of immigration turned out to be only a trickle. At the same time, the British gradually began retreating from their pro-Zionist policy.

The rise of Nazism in Germany opened the floodgates. Many European Jews, not all of them Zionists, searched for a country that would provide them with a safe haven, and scores of thousands of refugees left Europe for the shores of Palestine. The upsurge of Jewish immigrants was a thorn in the side of the Palestinian movement and did not conform to British policy at the time. The tension between the two national movements gradually increased and was manifested in eruptions of violence, eventually reaching a climax in the Great Arab Revolt of 1936. In response to these events, the British launched a royal commission of inquiry headed by Lord Peel. Members of the commission, who carried out a thorough job, concluded that two national movements with polarized aspirations had formed on the land of British Mandatory Palestine, and the struggle between them had become a zero-sum game.[5] The commission recommended a division of the land between the two movements. According to their plan, the Jewish state was to extend over about 17 percent of the territory of Western Eretz Yisrael, including the Galilee, the Jezreel and Beit Shean Valleys, and the northern coastal plain. The Arab state was to include the territories of the West Bank, the Negev, the southern coastal plain, and the Gaza Strip. A relatively narrow corridor, including Jaffa, which extended across the central area eastward to Lod and from there to Jerusalem, was to have remained under international control. The mixed cities of Safed, Tiberias, and Haifa were to remain under international sovereignty as well.[6]

The Palestinian leadership completely rejected the Peel Commission's recommendations. The mainstream of the Zionist leadership adopted the principle of division with several reservations, and the Jewish Agency presented the concept to the Woodhead Commission, which was established in April 1938. The Jewish community living in Palestine since the late nineteenth century, known as the Yishuv (settlement), was in turmoil and gave no rest to its leadership. The hawkish faction of the Labor movement (led by Menachem Ussishkin, Yitzhak Tabenkin, and Berl Katznelson), the Revisionist movement (led by Zeev Jabotinsky), and representatives from the religious Zionists all joined the Palestinian position and rejected the Peel Commission's recommendations. Although it was never implemented, partitioning the land between the nations became the main point of departure for the Jewish community's policy in the following period and served as the basis for most of the proposed solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. By introducing the concept of partition, the Peel Commission helped extricate the Jews and the Palestinians from the dead-end, zero-sum game in which they were trapped.[7]

In the absence of a willingness on behalf of the Palestinians to accept the partition arrangement, the heads of the Jewish Agency interpreted the partition proposal in accord with their own interests and explained it on the basis of two operative principles. The first principle was the drawing of defendable borders for the Jewish state. The second was to ensure that the state's territory would be occupied by a Jewish demographic majority. As a result, it was decided that the settlement of the country's borders, which was a central component of the Zionist movement's activities, would continue, even at the cost of a confrontation with the Mandate authorities.[8] The White Paper, published in 1939 and initiated by the British colonial secretary Malcolm McDonald, was a low point as far as the Jewish community was concerned. The document overwrote the British commitment to establish a Jewish state and promoted the notion of a binational state instead. Furthermore, the White Paper included new regulations that imposed severe restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine and the purchase of lands by the Zionist movement.[9]

However, the dramatic events taking place in Europe at that time made it difficult for the

British to implement their policies. The persecution of the Jews and the Nazis' systematic annihilation of them increased the pressure on the leadership of the Jewish community in Palestine to absorb the steadily increasing numbers of immigrants. Most of the Zionist organizations within Eretz Yisrael took an active part in both the illegal immigration of 80,000 refugees to Palestine and their rapid assimilation into the Jewish community, despite the danger of a head-on confrontation with the Mandate authorities.[10] From the time the initial immigrants arrived in Palestine in the late nineteenth century until the expiration of the British Mandate government, the Jewish community grew from 20,000 to 650,000 men and women.

On May 14, 1948, David Ben-Gurion, the first prime minister of Israel, delivered a speech in which he declared Israel's independence: it was the last day of the British Mandate in Palestine. The speech reflected the guidelines formulated by the Zionist leadership following the partitioning idea. The Jewish leadership had begun to stray from the original guiding principles outlined by the Peel Commission as early as 1947, when the Jews and Palestinians had disagreed over the UN partition plan. The Haganah's (Defense) Plan D, which was never officially adopted, laid out the strategic infrastructure for the activities of its fighting forces. Military operations initiated by the Jewish community's leadership were designed to ensure full control of the areas that were apportioned to the Jewish state in the UN partition plan, to protect Jewish settlements that were not included in the plan, and to create territorial continuity among all Jewish settlements.[11]

For a number of years, the events of 1948 were at the center of an ardent debate between historians from the Zionist mainstream and researchers from a more critical school of thought.[12] Today, however, it is hard to find scholars who have reservations about a number of basic developments. Despite the fact that the Zionist leadership had not laid down clear-cut guidelines regarding the expulsion of Palestinian citizens, local commanders from the Haganah and the Palmach were granted a large degree of freedom to devise an expulsion policy and immediately execute it. Subsequent to the declaration of independence and after the armies of neighboring Arab countries joined the campaign, the threat hovering over the Jewish community significantly increased, and the nascent Israeli army received clear orders to take firmer action.[13] This time the decisions were not left to commanders in the field. The deportation of 50,000 residents of Lod and Ramle in July 1948 was apparently carried out in full knowledge of David Ben-Gurion.[14] In the later stages of the war, when the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) had gained the upper hand and were operative in border settlements in the Galilee and the Negev, military commanders regained the authority to formulate policy regarding the Palestinian population. As the fighting subsided, the State of Israel was in control of the territories allocated to the Jewish state by the Peel Commission, the territories that were intended to be under the authority of the international community, and most of the territories apportioned to the Arabs (excluding the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip).

The first provisional cabinet of the State of Israel was based on the Minhelet HaAm, or HaMemshela HaZmanit (the provisional government of Israel), which included representatives from most political camps. Among them were David Ben-Gurion and Moshe Sharett who represented the Labor movements, Peretz Bernstein (the Liberals), Moshe Shapira (the religious Zionists), and Yitzhak-Meir Levin (the ultra-Orthodox or Haredim). These leaders, most of whom believed in political pragmatism, were a far cry ideologically from what could be then defined as the radical Right. Nevertheless, they did not express misgivings at the fact that the State of Israel's new borders were much more extensive than those that were originally allocated.[15]

The Roots of Israel's Secular Nativism

The emergent spirit of Israeli nativism was prevalent among the commanding echelons of the Israel Defense Force, which was established two weeks after the declaration of independence and was principally founded on the previously existing Palmach forces. Officers in the IDF reflected the gap between the veteran political leadership and the first generation of Sabras—those native-born Israeli Jews for whom modern Hebrew was their native tongue. These young and self-assured fighters, among them Moshe Dayan and Yigal Allon, served as role models for the youth of the new state. Dayan and Allon represented a secular and socialist but at the same time nationalist and militant elite. They knew the history of the Jewish people very well and roamed the trails of Eretz Yisrael with the Bible as their guide. In their worldview, which over the course of years became the core of Israeli policy-making procedure, the Jewish people's renewed sovereignty in their ancient homeland was intertwined with immediate security considerations.[16]

The most important ideological representative of this secular nativism was the Kibbutz Hameuhad (United Kibbutz) movement;[17] Yigal Allon was raised on its ideology. In 1936 Yitzhak Tabenkin and members of this movement had already integrated Jewish nativism with international socialism, ideas that have often come into conflict with one another. The Bible, Jewish history, and archaeology all served as "proof" that the Jewish-Israeli community in Eretz Yisrael was the newest link in the chain of Jewish sovereignty that had been severed by the Romans some two thousand years earlier. The lands of Eretz Yisrael, as they saw it, stretched far beyond the eastern bank of the Jordan River.[18] The members of this movement came from a particularly activist faction. Tabenkin's followers enthusiastically supported the establishment of Jewish settlements in areas of strategic importance, even at the cost of confrontation with the British authorities. In 1946 Tabenkin was among the founders of the political party Ahdut HaAvoda Poalei Zion, which was committed to the notion of the Greater Land of Israel and strongly opposed the partition plan. At the same time, this new branch advocated the establishment of a revolutionary international workers' movement, showed sympathy for the Soviet Union, and harbored a deep hostility toward the Revisionist movement whose nativism was not much different from theirs.[19]

The Origins of Israel's Populism

Twenty-three years earlier, Zeev Jabotinsky, Zionist activist, intellectual, and publicist, withdrew from the World Zionist Organization (Histadrut HaZionit). Jabotinsky's experience in the WZO was fraught with obstacles and clashes with the dominant socialist factions. The straw that broke the camel's back for Jabotinsky was the weakness demonstrated by the Zionist leadership in the face of what he perceived as the British authorities' pro-Arab policy. In his article "The Iron Wall," which was written as early as 1923 and became one of the founding texts of the revisionist movement, Jabotinsky said that Jewish and Arab nationalist movements were on a collision course, with the struggle for Eretz Yisrael the central issue. He concluded that the conciliatory approach adopted by the leadership of the Jewish community in Palestine toward the Mandate authorities, as well as their reliance on British forces to provide protection for the Jewish community, was fundamentally flawed. In light of this conclusion he demanded the immediate establishment of an effective Jewish defense force or, in his words, an "iron wall,

which the native population cannot breach."[20]

In 1925 Jabotinsky established the Alliance of Revisionists Zionists (Zahar). The creation of this alliance was a milestone marking the ideological fault line that, in due course, would draw the boundary between Left and Right in the State of Israel. Many in the Zionist movement regarded the Revisionists as a radical, right-wing faction. The main ideological reason was that Jabotinsky was an advocate of "monism,"[21] in his case meaning a commitment to pure ethnic nationalism. In this version of the monistic ideology, the ethnic community is a unit greater than the sum amount of its individuals; thus, the individual's life becomes meaningless in the absence of the community.[22] This approach diametrically contradicted the tendency of most Zionist factions to integrate nationalism and other ideas, primarily socialism, and hence accounted for much of Hakibbutz Hameuhad's hostility toward the Revisionist ideology. Another reason for the hostile attitude toward the Alliance of Revisionist Zionists lay in the militaristic characteristics of the Betar youth movement, which was founded in Eastern Europe and was deeply influenced by Jabotinsky's views. For many of the Zionist leaders, the military parades and brown uniforms of the Betar members evoked images that were somewhat reminiscent of the Fascist movements that flourished in Europe.[23]

In the following two decades, the relationship between the Yishuv's leadership and the Revisionist Zionists deteriorated markedly. Hatred simmered below the surface and often resulted in violent outbursts. The Revisionists repeatedly stated their deep revulsion toward the ideas of socialism and communism that were so dear to the Labor parties, and they demanded that a liberal economy be established in the future Jewish state. Furthermore, many Revisionists continued to describe Great Britain as the enemy of the Jewish people and insisted on continuing the fight against it, despite the position of the Yishuv leaders, who agreed to put their differences with the British aside during World War II when they joined the campaign against their mutual Nazi enemy. Ironically, on the subject of nativism, and more specifically on the question of the entitlement of the Jewish people to Eretz Yisrael, the Revisionist Right had quite a lot in common with a considerable number of left-wing socialists. Both the Revisionists and the heads of Ahdut HaAvoda Poalei Zion believed that the borders of Eretz Yisrael should lie on both sides of the Jordan River.[24]

Jabotinsky's bleak 1923 forecast did in fact materialize as the violent clashes between the Jews and the Palestinians escalated. The Irgun Underground—also known by its Hebrew acronym Etzel (HaIrgun HaTzvai HaLeumi BeEretz Yisrael) and throughout this book referred to as Etzel, split from the Haganah on the grounds that the latter was not willing to take a more aggressive stance against the Arabs. They adopted Jabotinsky's views, making them the main party line. In 1933 the tension in the Jewish community reached a peak with the assassination of Haim Arlozoroff, head of the political arm of the Jewish Agency. The Arlozoroff murder was preceded by sharp criticism on behalf of the Union of Zionist Rebels (Brit Habirionim), the extremist faction of the Revisionist movement. Arlozoroff was denounced as a traitor for his involvement in the negotiations with the Nazi Germany over the Transfer Agreements (Heskemei HaHavara), which allowed the emigration of Jews from Germany together with their property. The British police arrested leaders of Brit Habirionim for their alleged involvement in the murder, and the fact that Ben-Gurion pointed an accusing finger at the Revisionists did not make their situation any easier. Even the absence of substantial evidence linking the Revisionists to the crime did not help them to extract themselves from the defensive position into which they had been pushed. Ironically, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, leader of the religious Zionist movement and the first Ashkenazi rabbi of Eretz Yisrael, was among the most prominent Zionist

leaders who came to their defense. This was an important intersection for the Revisionist and the religious Zionist blocs. However, it would be another four decades before these two movements would eventually strike their alliance and change the course of Israeli history.

Despite the fact that the hostility between the higher ranks of the Haganah and the Etzel did not abate during the 1930s, the German invasion of Poland in 1939 and the onset of World War II provided a window of opportunity for cooperation. The generally inflexible Etzel showed a pragmatic side, declared a cease-fire in its operations against the British, and joined in the struggle against the common enemy: Nazi Germany. The decision to collaborate with the British was received with severe disapproval by many of the Revisionists. Internal conflict intensified during 1940, the year of Jabotinsky's death, and eventually led to the Etzel's division and the founding of a new underground: the Stern Gang or Lehi (Lehi Lohamei Herut Israel), led by Avraham Stern.[25]

The Lehi espoused a more dogmatic worldview than the Etzel. Members of the former demanded that the struggle against British imperialism be pursued and believed that Greater Israel, which belonged in its entirety to the Jewish people, must be conquered by force. Israel Eldad (Scheib), one of the more prominent ideologues of the movement, was also among the first to suggest the idea of transfer, which later became a recurring premise of the Israeli radical Right. In Eldad's opinion, there was no reason why the Palestinian minority should remain within the borders of Eretz Yisrael after its liberation. The Lehi's ideology, which had been deeply influenced by the spirit of Jabotinsky, was not uniform among all members of the underground group. The dominant faction espoused a nativist outlook with a strong affinity for religious authoritarianism. For this reason, the Lehi became appealing to the youths of Brit Hahashmonaim, an activist youth movement from the religious Zionist bloc. At the other end of the spectrum, there were also those who represented the Canaanite ideology; these activists rejected the Diaspora and were interested in strengthening the link between the early people who lived in Palestine and the Jews that populated it in the twentieth century. They rejected the notion that Judaism should serve as a basis for nationalism and supported the integration of the new Israelite community into the region by creating a common culture with the Arabs. They hoped that this would unite the people of the area around their common origins in the ancient land of Canaan. Nevertheless, the combination between nationalism and religion proved to be a natural fit and gained dominance in the movement. Decades later, the Lehi legacy would become a model to be imitated by Rabbi Meir Kahane and his followers. Lehi's burning hostility toward the Mandate authorities led the underground to engage in questionable actions that ultimately led to its undoing; there were even members of the Lehi who believed that the Nazis and Jews had common interests. In exchange for the transfer of European Jews to Palestine, members of the Lehi tried to forge connections with Nazi Germany and assist in their struggle against Britain. These actions stunned the leaders of the Yishuv and reinforced their belief that the Lehi was a Fascist movement.[26]

Toward the end of World War II, Menachem Begin, formerly the commissioner of Beitar in Poland, was appointed the commander of Etzel. Begin's appointment was a turning point for the Etzel, which had evolved from the Haganah organization. Begin brought the Etzel even closer to its Revisionist ideological core. Unlike previous leaders of the organization who fought alongside the British, he took a hard line against the Mandate authorities, a fact that marked him as a nuisance in the eyes of the Haganah's leadership. This was not the first time that Begin was thought of as problematic; since his first days in the Beitar movement, Begin showed that he was an independent thinker and could display a strong oppositional streak.[27] In 1935, when he was

only twenty-two years old, Begin confronted Jabotinsky, whom he admired, when he thought that a Jabotinsky-led Beitar was not militant enough. Furthermore, Begin's theatrical flair and charisma made him a popular speaker. To his many opponents, who had reservations regarding his sentimental and pathos-filled speeches, Begin was a populist.[28] His promotion to commander of the Etzel fueled Ben-Gurion's hatred for him and engendered one of the most difficult relationships in Israeli politics. It was to last for many decades.

The hostility between the Haganah and right-wing underground movements peaked in the "Hunting Season" (or Saison) events of 1944. Under directions from its senior leaders, the Haganah formed a special task force, which initiated operations against members of the Etzel and even handed many of them over to the British secret police.[29] During the final years of the British Mandate in Palestine, several attempts were made to reconcile the hawkish movements, but the few cases that concluded in some degree of cooperation were short lived. The Jewish Resistance Movement (Tnuat HaMeri HaIvri), which was established in 1945 and was a union of the three underground movements, fell apart after many civilians were killed in the bombing of the Jerusalem King David Hotel on July 22, 1946. Although the bombing was a joint operation of the various underground movements, the Etzel was considered directly responsible for the action.[30] Three years later, in 1948, a month after the declaration of independence and at the height of the consolidation of the various resistance movements into a national army, the country seemed to be standing on the brink of a civil war when the *Altalena* was sunk. Ben-Gurion and Begin were the main actors in this tragedy, and the event proved to be a dramatic final chord in the struggle between the Haganah and the Etzel. The *Altalena* was a weapons ship that had been acquired by the Etzel in 1947 before the resistance movements had agreed to converge into the Israel Defense Forces. Begin agreed to divide the weapons that were in the hold of the ship among the different IDF units but requested that a share be set aside for the Etzel members that still fought together in Jerusalem. Ben-Gurion strongly opposed even limited autonomy for combat units with distinct ideological qualities that differed from those of the sovereign state in whose army they served. He demanded that all resistance fighters become fully integrated in the IDF and that the military's commanders resolve the question of the distribution of weapons. But the tense negotiations with Begin ran aground and finally Ben-Gurion gave the order to sink the ship off the beach of Tel Aviv. In an emotional speech, Begin instructed his people to surrender and ultimately prevented the further escalation of violence. Etzel members were placed under arrest, and the organization underwent a rapid conversion into a political party—Herut, which promptly earned itself the reputation of a radical right-wing party.[31] A statement published soon after in the *New York Times* in December 1948 argued that Herut was reminiscent of Fascist and Nazi parties. The manifesto generated significant impact because of its signers, including Albert Einstein and Hannah Arendt.[32]

The transition from underground activities to parliamentary politics did not reduce the intensity of Ben-Gurion's animosity toward Begin. When Ben-Gurion announced that the first government was formed "without Herut and Maki [HaMiflega HaKomunistit HaYisraelit, the Israeli Communist Party]," he marked the boundaries of the political consensus in Israel.[33] But this was an unbalanced equation. On the left side of the political spectrum, Ben-Gurion removed the most extreme signs of communism, but at the same time he kept an opening for other pro-Soviet parties such as Mapam (Mifleget HaPoalim HaMeuhedet, or the United Workers Party). On the right, Begin excluded the Herut Party. The party's ideology was right wing, but it is doubtful whether it could have been defined as radical at the time.[34]

Continuing along the same lines as Jabotinsky, Begin extolled the virtues of Jewish nativism.

He also reiterated the rights of the Jewish people to the lands of Eretz Yisrael on both sides of the Jordan River.[35] These two principles largely coincided with the conceptions of the activist faction of the Mapam Party, which was not a partner in Ben-Gurion's coalition but was an integral part of the family of Labor parties. Radical aspects could not be detected in either Begin's support for a liberal economy or in his firm opposition to socialism and communism. Furthermore, and unlike the Labor leaders, Begin showed a deep commitment to democratic values and the principle of the rule of law. Thus, contrary to the claim that populism was a key element in Begin's ideology, it was essentially a political style.[36]

As a politician, Begin improved his charisma and rhetorical skills, and elevated them to the level of an art. He delivered his most effective opposition speeches in public squares rather than in the Knesset. One of the most dramatic manifestations of this took place on January 7, 1952, during a protest rally against a reparations agreement that the Israeli government was trying to negotiate with Germany. The country's leadership regarded the normalization of relations with Germany as a necessary evil; for Ben-Gurion, this was a price worth paying for the stabilization of a weak Israeli economy. Begin, on the other hand, viewed this as subservience to a nation that less than a decade earlier had been engaged in the systematic annihilation of the Jewish people. During the demonstration, he urged his excited audience to action when he called for civil disobedience against the "evil government" that had sold the trampled dignity of the Jewish people for money. At the end of his speech, he led a large group of protesters toward the Knesset building.[37] The volatile march concluded in a violent clash between protesters and security forces, and in yet another speech, in which Begin mocked Ben-Gurion with the epithet "hooligan." Ben-Gurion, who feared that this might be an indication of a coming rebellion, considered deploying military forces to restore order. As he perceived it, Begin was capable of doing anything to further his worldview.[38]

Although the personal hostility between the two leaders persisted, the number of political disputes between them declined during the mid-1950s to the late 1960s. While conflicts such as these had at one time provoked struggles between the Left and the Right, the Israeli political system had undergone a rapid process of institutionalization that helped restrict political debates to the confines of the Knesset. It was with good reason that Ehud Sprinzak referred to this period as "the golden era of Israeli parliamentarism."[39] From many scholars' perspectives, though, a critical fact with far-reaching effects on Israeli society and politics had simply receded from view. During those years, most of the Zionist parties were actively fusing the principle of Jewish nativism in the institutions and laws of the State of Israel.

The Institutionalization of Jewish Nativism

Jewish nativism became a formative element in Israel's laws and policies since the early days of sovereignty. In 1950 the Knesset passed the significant Law of Return, which granted a clear preference to Jewish immigrants to Israel over non-Jewish ones. It is hard to argue with the rationale of this law, which remains in effect today. The state's intended goal was to provide a haven for the Jews who for centuries had been subjected to anti-Semitism and persecutions. However, the law created an almost impassable series of obstacles for members of other ethnicities wishing to immigrate to Israel. Particularly problematic was the issue of the status of Palestinian refugees.[40] The Law of Citizenship, passed two years after the Law of Return, only perpetuated the problem. Although the law granted Israeli citizenship to the non-Jewish citizens

of the British Mandate, this right was based on the condition that these newly appointed citizens remained within the country's borders at the end of the 1948 war. In this, Palestinian refugees were denied Israeli citizenship after being expelled or fleeing from their homes during the fighting or when the Israeli borders closed, thereby preventing them from returning to their homes.[41] In addition, Palestinians who were accorded Israeli citizenship were not made into citizens with equal rights in a democratic state; to this day, the gaps between the civil statuses of Jews and Arabs are considerable.[42]

In 1948 Israel declared the establishment of a military government in densely Arab-populated areas. Acting under the "Emergency Defense Regulations of 1945," regional military governors restricted the freedom of movement of Palestinian citizens. The martial law also enabled the government and security services to closely monitor them and control their daily lives.[43] In addition, both refugees and the Palestinian citizens of Israel were the main casualties of massive land expropriations. Along with the Israel Land Administration, Jewish groups outside of Israel who were active in land acquisition during the settlement period became owners of more than 90 percent of the country's territory. In 1960 the Knesset passed the Israeli Lands Law, one of the Basic Laws, which provided the legal infrastructure for the nationalization of land.[44]

The institutionalization of Jewish nativism was not restricted solely to the legal sphere: it had also more subtle manifestations. In 1951 the Israeli government adopted the population dispersal policy. The country's leadership, which was required to absorb large waves of immigrants within a short time, believed that settling the newcomers in the outlying areas was an important national duty. By establishing agricultural settlements along its borders, the state intended to create an alternative solution for the many immigrants who converged upon the already densely populated cities and at the same time provide the country with a security buffer zone. Another objective of this policy was to induce a change in the demographic balance in these frontier areas that, at the time of the declaration of independence, had an Arab majority. The goal was to "Judaize" the periphery and prevent Palestinian communities from potentially attaching their villages to neighboring Arab countries or thwart future demands for the independence of these regions.[45] Many Jews, mostly immigrants from North Africa, were settled in the Negev, the Galilee, and the Beit Shean Valley—without ever being asked for their opinion. Decades later these peripheral settlements served as the starting point for Israel's right-wing parties' successful race to power.[46]

Another, more elusive, expression of the ideological cross-party agreement to maintain a Jewish majority was the development of an unwritten rule that excluded Arab parties from governmental coalitions. This was an adaptation and extension of the principle "without Herut and Maki." Written evidence of this agreement, which is in force even today, cannot be found, but facts speak in the absence of such a document. Throughout the history of the State of Israel, no Arab political party has ever been invited to be part of the coalition, even if the latter were led by left-wing parties.[47] The main consequence of this unwritten rule is that any ballot cast for an Arab party in parliamentary elections is in effect a wasted vote because these parties never have the opportunity to join the policy-making processes of the executive branch.[48] Furthermore, even in the Knesset these parties have been excluded from legislative procedures regarding issues that are critical to Israel's future.

These laws and practices, and many others as well, have led scholars with a critical orientation to the conclusion that the State of Israel does not fit the liberal democracy model, despite its wish to be recognized as such. According to these researchers, the models that most

aptly describe the Israeli regime are the "ethnic democracy"[49] or "ethnocracy."[50] Although these models are not fully analogous, both underscore the fact that the state has committed to perpetuating the dominance of the Jewish majority and granting it a framework of institutional benefits, which ensures its superiority over other ethnic groups, most notably the Arabs. A consequent argument made by Sammy Smooha holds that since the official position of all the Zionist parties in Israel is essentially nativist, no political space was left for the emergence of a radical Right such as the one that emerged in Europe in recent decades.[51] However, on this point I disagree. Unlike other variants of democratic regimes, the "ethnic democracy" serves as an ideal habitat for the growth of such right-wing radicalism. In Western European democracies, radical ideas stray to various degrees from the dominant political culture.[52] In many cases, attempts to anchor them in policies and even to introduce them into the political discourse provoke broad disapproval among the public. In ethnic regimes, on the other hand, such ideas are fully embedded in the dominant political culture and are manifested on a daily basis in governmental practices. Smooha's argument lies in the assumption that the ideological spectrum in every regime is identical and static. His sole focus on Jewish-Arab relations leads him to conclude that while radical movements and political parties in liberal democracies fill the ideological void on the right side of the political map, in ethnic regimes this same space is already occupied by the state. In reality, the ideological spectrum is multidimensional and reflects a large variety of issues. It is also highly elastic and varies from country to country and from one time period to another.[53] Therefore, in ethnic or nativistic regimes, the ideology of the radical Right is more radical than in liberal democracies. Furthermore, elements of the ideology are embedded in the institutions and practices of the regime and perpetuate a radical right-wing political culture.

The Consolidation of Religious Authoritarianism

The central role played by the issue of ethnic relations in the defining of the Israeli regime sidelined the question of the role of religion in the state's evolution and its effect on the nature of the regime.[54] There is not and has never been a separation of religion and state in Israel. The considerable clout wielded by Orthodox Jewry in state institutions has had a significant impact on the development of religious authoritarianism, on the departure of Israel from the family of liberal democracies, and also, in no small part, on the growth of the radical Right.[55] Religious nativism in Israel—which is characterized by a theological justification for settling every part of the Promised Land—is identified mainly with religious Zionism. This is synonymous to religious nationalism, which is an activist faction of Zionism that combines nationalism and Jewish religious faith. Those who adhere to this ideology are modern Orthodox Jews; they combine Orthodox Jewish values and a modern way of life. It is from ultra-Orthodox Judaism, however, that the roots of religious authoritarianism derive. Ultra-Orthodox Jews, or Haredim, are groups that adhere to the strictest interpretation of Orthodox Judaism.[56] Despite the existence of sundry ultra-Orthodox factions, the ultra-Orthodox sector on the whole can be characterized as a society that rejects modernity. Ultra-Orthodox communities feature a hierarchical structure in which each group has a rabbi or a council of rabbis to which it looks and whose rulings it follows.[57]

Over the years, ultra-Orthodox Jewry has been ambivalent toward secular Zionism and the state it created. According to their point of view, and in sharp contradiction to the ideology of the religious Zionist movement, the emergence of secular Zionism was not a part of a larger Jewish

redemption process but rather a deviation from it. They also feared that the emergence of Jewish nationalism would alienate the nations of the world. This fear was embedded in the belief that the failed revolt against the Romans led to the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE and consequently brought about the deportation of the Jews from Israel. Hence, they concluded that Jewish communities should always find ways to live in peace with the nations of the world in order to guarantee their own survival. The establishment of the secular State of Israel was perceived by most ultra-Orthodox communities as a provocation, and they therefore looked at it with a substantial amount of suspicion.[58]

Despite the tendency of the ultra-Orthodox communities to live in segregated neighborhoods and their initial reluctance to take an active role in the state's formation, it should not be concluded that they did not have an interest in shaping various aspects of Israel's public sphere. The ultra-Orthodox have a dogmatic worldview. They regard their way of life as the only virtuous path and believe that all Jewish people of Israel should adhere to their beliefs and practices. Therefore, even before the state was established, they tried to influence the public space in accordance with their worldview.[59] The socialist Zionist leadership's willingness to accept dictates from the small ultra-Orthodox minority can be explained by both emotional and practical motives. Most of the country's founding fathers had ultra-Orthodox roots. The Holocaust, which destroyed Jewish life in Europe, led them to the conclusion that the State of Israel was the only place where rebuilding the theological center of the Jewish people was possible. Such sentiments were not their only considerations. Before the vote on the UN partition plan, Ben-Gurion made efforts to ensure that the disputes that threatened to tear apart the Jewish community would not lead UN member states to fear that the Jewish state would be shrouded in constant chaos. He was concerned that such an image would lead those countries that leaned toward supporting of the establishment of the Jewish state to reconsider their position. Therefore, it was important to placate the ultra-Orthodox Jewish leadership (many of whom were represented by the Agudat Yisrael—Union of Israel—Party) and to ensure that when the UN investigation committee, which solicited the views of all of the Yishuv's political camps, approached the leaders of the party, they would express their unconditional support for the founding of a Jewish state.[60]

Unlike his attitude toward other political factions at that time, Ben-Gurion demonstrated an atypical degree of flexibility toward the ultra-Orthodox. In a document that defined what would later be known as the status quo arrangement, the Zionist leadership agreed to meet the following four commitments: declaring that Saturday would be the country's official sabbatical and a day on which Jews were forbidden to work; guaranteeing that only kosher food would be served at state institutions; determining matrimonial laws in accordance with the values of Orthodox Judaism; and certifying an autonomy that would allow the ultra-Orthodox to maintain independent educational frameworks for their children (where the state's authority would be limited). Approximately two years later, the Haredim strongly opposed the adoption of a constitution in Israel since they believed that such a charter must reflect the laws of the Torah. Once again, Ben-Gurion revealed a great degree of flexibility and agreed to postpone the drafting of such a constitution indefinitely.[61]

Despite the ultra-Orthodox's inherent hostility toward democracy, they became well versed in its workings.[62] They recognized that their ability to mobilize electoral support outside the boundaries of their communities was quite limited. Therefore, the Haredim resorted to three main methods. First, they perpetuated their control over bureaucratic institutions that were responsible for ensuring the dominance of Jewish Orthodoxy in the country. They did this by joining the

religious Zionists in the struggle for the establishment and continued existence of an extensive network of religious bureaucratic bodies, which included, among others, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the chief rabbinate, the rabbinical courts, the Unit for the Enforcement of Shabbat Laws in the Ministry of Labor, and religious councils in local municipalities. Second, they engaged in a shrewd exploitation of the fact that, despite their modest size, ultra-Orthodox Knesset factions were often crucial in the formation of coalitions and guaranteeing their stability. Over the course of many years, they routinely avoided fully embracing any one of the political blocs in Israel and were thus able to maintain their bargaining power. Their third modus operandi has been deterrence. Whenever ultra-Orthodox leaders feared that despite their strong political standing, the state was formulating a policy not to their liking, young Haredim took to the streets in violent demonstrations that often shook Israeli society.[63]

In this manner, a small minority was able to influence policy making on two levels. First, they secured extensive autonomy in all aspects of the administration of their community life. In order to protect themselves from the external damaging effects of modernity, leaders of the ultra-Orthodox Jewry instructed their communities to completely withdraw and thus isolate themselves in their neighborhoods and communities, a policy that persists today. This includes taking care that their children are educated only in independent self-managed institutions and refraining from reading secular newspapers or watching television. Ultra-Orthodox Jews receive the resources necessary for their autonomous existence from the state, which provides them with land for the establishment of separate neighborhoods, subsidized housing, and the necessary budgets for running their education system. This ongoing seclusion has been remarkably successful. The ultra-Orthodox sector in Israel has been able to raise generations of Israeli citizens who have hardly been exposed to people or ideas that did not pass the strict censorship of its leaders. The belief that their way is the right way and the only way, together with their primal fear of the world around them, has turned the Haredim into the Israeli group with the most hostility toward unfamiliar individuals and ideas.[64] Over the course of many years, they have also prevented their youths from being drafted into the IDF. In their view, military service, which the overwhelming majority of Jews in Israel used to consider as almost sacred, is a waste of time that should be devoted to religious studies. Furthermore, the very idea of a military service completed in cooperation with secular Jews and women creates serious displeasure among the ultra-Orthodox Jews.

As mentioned earlier, the autonomy sought by the ultra-Orthodox Jews has been one-sided. They demand autonomy from the state but refuse to grant the state autonomy from their own ultra-Orthodox agenda. Indeed, the second level on which this sector has made significant achievements is the institutionalization and enforcement of the principles of the status quo. By means of its representatives in the various branches of the public administration, Orthodox leaders have been able to enforce laws and regulations that relate to the everyday life of *all* Jewish citizens of the state. They are exclusively responsible for matrimonial laws. The marriages of Jews in Israel that are conducted outside of the Orthodox framework are not fully recognized by the state, and burials in secular cemeteries are not subsidized by the government.[65] For many decades, they had full control of conversion procedures in Israel and in this fashion have made the adoption of the strict Orthodox Jewish method the primary path of entry into the Jewish faith. While their exclusive hold over conversion procedures have loosened over the years, the ultra-Orthodox are still in charge of enforcing "kashrut" (kosher) laws, which prohibit Jews from working on Shabbat and holidays, selling bread to Jews during Passover, or selling nonkosher meat in communities with religious character. In state institutions such as the military,

hospitals, and governmental offices, there is a careful observance of kashrut laws in the spirit of ultra-Orthodox Judaism; and these entities are expected to provide only kosher food. The Orthodox chief rabbinate of Israel is the sole official allowed to provide a kosher certificate and kashrut supervisors are appointed by the state to ensure that these laws are upheld.[66]

Israel's Radical Prelude

We can conclude that, during the formative period of the State of Israel, the institutional and cultural seeds were sown that gave rise to the contemporary radical right-wing ideology, which strongly resembles similar manifestations of the phenomena around the world—and even takes it one step further.[67] The importance of this period lies in the consensus among the Zionist parties in regard to the first element of Jewish nativism: the complete integration of the Jewish nation and the State of Israel. This cross-partisan agreement created conditions that institutionalized a preferred status of the Jewish majority. The most prominent example of this situation is the immigration issue. For the Jews of the world, qualifying for Israeli citizenship is a very simple matter. All they need to do is to set off for Israel and ask for citizenship upon their arrival. Non-Jews are not eligible for this right. The second component of nativism—the exclusive right of members of the Jewish people to settle in all parts of Eretz Yisrael—has not garnered such broad support, although it has not been restricted to one political camp. Maximalist territorial aspirations have crossed the lines between Left and Right, bringing together the Revisionists on the Right, the activist factions of the Labor parties on the Left, and the religious Zionists. This brings us to the third element: a complete rejection of all challenges to the Zionist consensus. The institutionalization of Jewish nativism is entirely consistent with the political culture that evolved in Israel; it is fueled by this culture and in turn nurtures it. The vast majority of Israeli Jewish citizens adhere to the state's ethnic bias in favor of the majority group. They perceive it as a natural condition, which does not deviate from the principles of democracy. Occasionally, objections are raised about the ambiguous definition of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state, but they are received with much anger and are rejected outright.

The authoritarian building block, which promoted the agenda of integrating Orthodox Jewish religious practices into the state apparatus, also took shape during Israel's formative period, and like Jewish nativism, it has become a basic element in Israeli politics, even though it never enjoyed consensus among the various Zionist factions. This has been a success for the ultra-Orthodox, who were never part of the Zionist movement. They were able to establish autonomous enclaves and secure the right to cast a veto against anything related to the shaping of the policy of their communities. Furthermore, their tenacity and bargaining power in the absence of a constitution have made Israel into a country whose public sphere has been fashioned to a large extent in the spirit of Orthodox Jewish law. Finally, although populism as an ideology was generally absent from the political culture in Israel at that time, Menachem Begin's populist style blazed the way for the next generation of right-wing leaders who succeeded in turning it into a full-fledged ideology.

2
The Old Radical Right

The most significant development in Israel's contemporary history was the settlement of more than half a million Jews in the territories occupied during the blitz war of 1967 (the Six-Day War), mostly in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The settlement of these occupied territories created an issue that has since torn Israeli society apart. Many Israelis initially believed that the settlements served as a buffer zone between Israel and its hostile Arab neighboring countries. But the two intifadas that followed have disabused them of this idea. For decades, until the events of the Arab Spring of 2011, the peace accords with Egypt (1979) and Jordan (1994) alleviated much of the fear that was caused by the possibility of war with neighboring countries. Meanwhile, the occupied territories themselves became a major source of security concerns. Consequently, the settlers that in the past were perceived by many Jews in Israel as pioneers lost much of the popular support they enjoyed.

Furthermore, during the first two decades of its sovereignty, Israel was considered by citizens and leaders around the world—who were still shocked and in some cases even felt guilt over the Holocaust—as a small David, protecting himself from the mighty Arab Goliath. The settlement operation in the occupied territories, which was initiated during the "Summer of Love" in 1967 and coincided with the end of the global decolonization era, stood in sharp contradiction to ideas that were being proliferated in Western Europe and North America at the time. Gradually, Israel moved from the position of victim to victimizer, and the Palestinians were cast as the victims. The expansion of the settlements correlated with a gradual decline in Israel's popularity around the world. By the first decade of the new millennium, Israel gained a notorious reputation as one of the most unloved countries worldwide, and its very legitimacy as a sovereign entity was challenged. Even so, the settling enterprise was never halted. In this chapter, I introduce the seeds that fertilized the political ground and turned the settlements into such successful endeavors.

The Rebirth of Territorial Nativism

Until the late 1960s, the notion of the Jewish nation settling all of Eretz Yisrael was little more than hypothetical. The reason was simple: the majority of the lands included in the biblical Eretz Yisrael, especially those in the east and north, had become integral parts of Jordan and Syria. As a result, maximalists from the various Zionist movements could only dream about incorporating them into the Israeli nation. However, the Six-Day War turned the tide completely. The new frontier now extended over vast territories, and Israeli political leaders were confronted with the temptation to redefine the country's borders in accordance with the vision of the Greater Land of Israel.[1]

In the weeks leading up to the war (known as "the waiting period"), the Jewish public in Israel suffered from a deep sense of existential fear. The decisive Israeli victory turned everything upside down. The Jews of Israel basked in the glory and savored the humiliation

suffered by the Arab armies. With the expansion of Israel's borders came the ability to visit biblical sites such as Rachel's Tomb near Bethlehem, the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron, and above all the Western Wall in the Old City of Jerusalem—all vital symbols that had been heavily utilized by the Zionist movement during the formative period of the Israeli nation. These new possibilities made the heads of religious and secular Israelis alike spin. In the aftermath of the war, most of them lacked the foresight to ask the question: "What next?"

Unsurprisingly, the political system was not immune from the elation. The Land of Israel Movement (HaTenua Lemaan Eretz Yisrael HaSheleima), founded about a month after the fighting ended, provided the common denominator for both the Revisionists on the right and the activists of Ahdut HaAvoda on the left who despite their deep ideological differences were united by a maximalist perspective on the question of territorial expansions.[2] In a proclamation signed by members of the movement, they demanded the immediate institution of Israeli sovereignty over the territories.[3] The movement's considerable popularity was due in no small part to the reputations of its members; this was also its main weakness. Most members were elderly intellectuals and politicians who were not willing to neglect their various occupations and dedicate themselves to the cause. Disputes were a common occurrence, making it difficult for the group to present a united front. Furthermore, most of the members of the Land of Israel movement had little to no background in organizing a mass movement. Thus, its operational arm, the Young Settler (HaMitnachel Hatzair), never took off the ground, and the same could be said for the political party it launched during the 1969 elections, which barely garnered half a percent of the valid votes. The movement's importance, then, stemmed from the fact that it granted its elitist stamp of approval to the expansionist sentiment that was prevalent among large segments of the Jewish public in Israel after the war.

Rabbi Kook's Followers

The religious Zionists, however, enjoyed much more success. In a matter of a few years this small sector managed to shake the foundations of the Israeli society. For many years, the idea of a Greater Israel was primarily associated with secular Zionist movements, if only because the secular Zionists occupied the center of the political stage. Many members of the religious Zionist camp held views similar to those of the secular Zionists but exercised only limited influence over the political agenda in Israel. After the war, the different groups strove toward the same goal: that of annexing the occupied territories. Nevertheless, the gap between the ideological underpinnings of secular and religious nativism was deep.

Secular nativism is rooted in the past and the present; that is, the movement focused on the historical connection between the Land of Israel and the People of Israel and insisted upon the Jewish people's right to make the old homeland into their modern nation state. The religious radical Right aspired to advance the same goals but drew from deterministic and metaphysical ideology to do so, basing its belief on the coming redemption of the People of Israel. Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, the leading theologian of religious Zionism, already regarded the Balfour Declaration as a stage in this process and referred to it using the term "athalta degeula," which is Aramaic for "the beginning of the redemption" of the Jewish people.[4] The formation of the State of Israel was perceived as another step on the path to salvation. The fact that Israel was established because of the efforts of secular Zionists did not undermine the religious Zionists' attitude toward their country. In their view, the hand of Providence guided the process, and they

subsequently attributed a sacred status to the state.[5] They perceived the Six-Day War as a miracle. The lightning victory, the return to the holy places, and the liberation of large parts of the country that had been promised to Abraham by the Lord were interpreted as clear signs that the redemption was reaching its culmination.[6]

This notion of redemption is a possible explanation for the fact that religious Zionism became the leading force in settling the occupied territories and succeeded where secular attempts had failed. Another explanation, perhaps less dramatic but no less convincing, may be found in the political opportunity that the Six-Day War offered to younger members of the religious Zionist sector. As noted earlier, the group did not stand out in the Israeli political scene until the 1960s. The postwar reality presented the students of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook (son of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook and head of the Merkaz Harav, the flagship Yeshiva of religious Zionism) with a unique and treasured scenario. For religious Zionist Jews, the opportunity to settle near the most sacred sites in Judaism was another step toward completing the People of Israel's redemption process and therefore could not be passed up. Young yeshiva students felt that it was their duty to take up the torch of Zionist fulfillment from the veteran secular movements, who had lost much of their revolutionary fervor after the State of Israel was established. Their strong desire to claim their proper place in Israeli society led to an unprecedented surge of energy.[7]

The Allon Plan

Indeed, the Israeli collective memory tends to associate the first Jewish settlements in the occupied territories with the Gush Emunim movement that was founded in the spring of 1974. But this is an error. The settlement project began to take shape seven years earlier. Reuven Pedatzur aptly identified the sentiment that drove the settlement of the newly conquered territories in the title of his book, *The Triumph of Embarrassment*.[8] To put it simply, the ministers of Levi Eshkol's cabinet who only one week earlier were consumed by fears that Israel's very existence was under severe threat, were surprised by the IDF's swift and unequivocal victory. The new reality caught the cabinet without even a general vision in regard to the question: "What should Israel do in the event of a conquest of large portions of land?" The prime minister and many of his ministers exhibited vacillation and created a void. The void was quickly filled by the two opposing blocs.

The first was led by Moshe Dayan and Shimon Peres, David Ben-Gurion's disciples, who represented the Israeli Workers List—aka Rafi Party (Reshimat Poalei Yisrael). Dayan, the minister of defense who emerged from the war with a halo of a savior, suggested that Israel consolidate its control over all of the occupied territories (known as the "held territories" at the time). He initiated the "Open Bridges" policy that allowed economic integration between Israel and its new frontiers. Dayan also advocated for minimal interference in the daily lives of Palestinians and for providing maximum freedom of movement to both Jews and Palestinians in the occupied teritorries.[9] In due course, this mind-set became known (somewhat oxymoronically) as the "enlightened occupation."[10]

The second camp was led by the ministers of Ahdut HaAvoda Poalei Zion, Yigal Allon and Israel Galili. Allon offered to establish Jewish settlements in the Jordan Valley, Jerusalem, the Golan Heights, and Sinai, but opposed any integration between the Palestinians of the West Bank and Israel. Eshkol, whose health was deteriorating, allowed the two young bucks who were

fighting over his chair to advance their opposing policies.[11]

By July 1967, Allon had conceived a detailed political plan, which aimed at leaving most of the territories under Israeli control. At the same time, he did not wish to preclude a limited territorial compromise. According to the Allon Plan, the State of Israel was supposed to annex the Jordan Valley, a long and relatively narrow strip of land west of the Jordan River. The aim of this buffer zone was to surround Palestinian population centers in the West Bank from the east, thereby limiting their access to the new border with Jordan. Allon did not want to prevent all ties between Jordan and the Palestinians but rather to make sure that this affiliation did not become a security threat to Israel. Therefore, he proposed a corridor in the Jericho area that would provide the Palestinians with access to Jordan under the watchful eyes of the Israeli security forces. In accordance with this approach, Allon also suggested the idea of a corridor that would allow residents of the West Bank access to Gaza.[12] Drawing upon lessons learned in his days in the Palmach and Hakibbutz Hameuhad, Allon knew that the surest way to make an impact was by creating faits accomplis, and this approach would govern the implementation of his political plan. As for the precise legal status of the residents in the area, he felt that this could be decided in future negotiations between Israel and the Arab countries.[13]
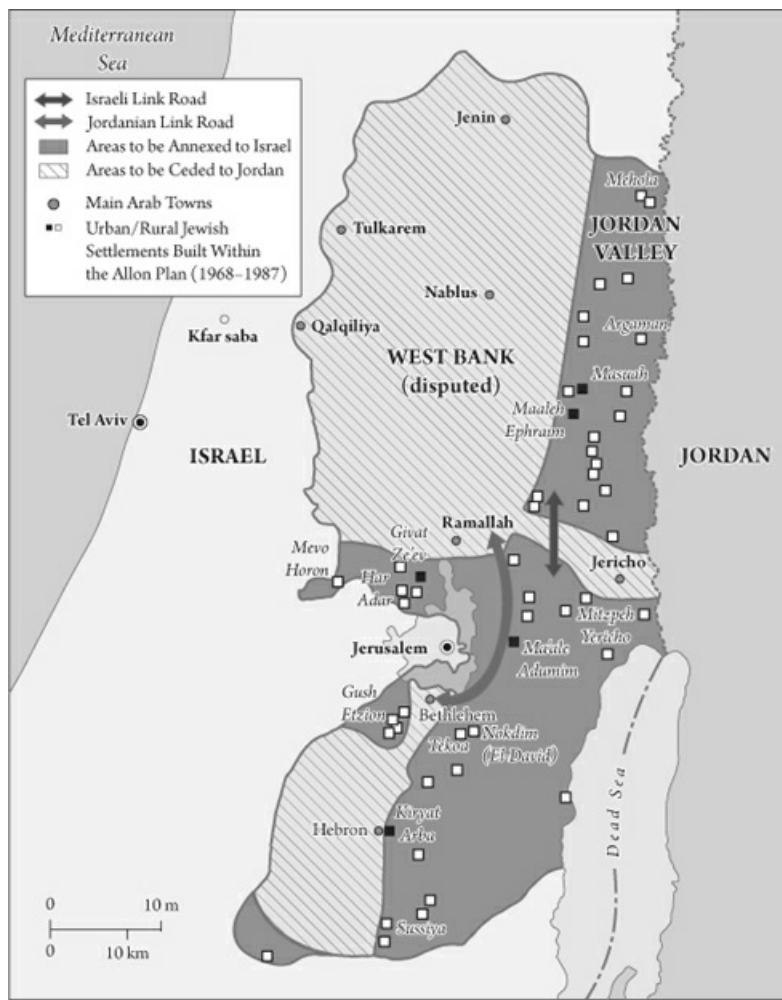

Figure 2.1 THE ALLON PLAN, 1970 *Source*: Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, www.jcpa.org

The Jerusalem Predicament

On one issue there was no difference of opinion between Allon and his colleagues in the cabinet: the annexation of East (or Arab) Jerusalem. The prime minister was quick to appoint Yehuda Tamir on his behalf as the official responsible for the establishment of Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem. The very first priority for the prime minister was to prevent the future disconnection of Mount Scopus from the western part of the city, which had occurred during the 1948 war. The initiative, known as the Bolt (Bariah) Neighborhoods Program, won the enthusiastic support of Teddy Kollek from Rafi, who was mayor at the time.[14] The strong desire to establish a faits accompli led the cabinet to engage in the massive expropriation of land from Arabs and Jews. The neighborhoods of MaAlot Dafna, Ramat Eshkol, French Hill, and Givat Hamivtar were all built on these lands in the late 1960s and early 1970s. At the same time, the state also penetrated the depths of the Old City of Jerusalem and virtually annexed the Jewish Quarter. In 1969 the Company for the Reconstruction and Development of the Jewish Quarter of the Old City was established and placed under the jurisdiction of the government and the Jerusalem Municipality. The goal of this company was to renovate the Jewish Quarter and repopulate it with Jews.[15] However, the government was careful not to breach the non-Jewish quarters of the Old City and especially not the Temple Mount.[16]

While the Bariah Neighborhoods were under construction, another plan was being developed. It was known as the Ring (Tabaat) Neighborhoods plan.[17] This undertaking could no longer be justified by the concern that a renewed division of Jerusalem would leave isolated Jewish enclaves in enemy hands. At the core of the program was a clear objective: the encirclement of Arab Jerusalem on all sides by Jewish neighborhoods. In the south was the Gilo neighborhood, East Talpiot in the southeast, and Ramot, Ramat Shlomo, and Neveh Yaakov in the north. Condemnations issued by the international community due to the large-scale expropriation of private Palestinian lands and the massive settlement in the newly conquered territories did not deter the Labor-led governments, which were pervaded by a sense of mission and a confidence in the justice of their actions.[18]

The Return to Gush Etzion

While it launched the operation to settle the occupied parts of Jerusalem and its surroundings, the Eshkol administration also authorized the establishment of another settlement ten miles southwest of Jerusalem. In September 1967 former residents of Gush Etzion imposed pressure on the cabinet, and a group of young Zionist religious activists led by Hanan Porat was allowed to resettle in Kfar Etzion, a religious kibbutz first established in 1943. On May 13, 1948, following fierce battles, the kibbutz was occupied and destroyed by the Arab Legion and local Arab forces, who massacred many of the kibbutz's Jewish defenders. Three other religious kibbutzim in the Gush Etzion area surrendered, and their residents were taken captive and held in Jordan. Porat, who spent his childhood in Kfar Etzion, argued that the reestablishment of the kibbutz was merely a righting of an historical wrong. Shortly after the request was granted, Rosh Tzurim and Alon Shvut were added to the new Jewish settlements in the Gush Etzion vicinity.[19] Three years later, the same logic helped make it possible to settle Jews in Kfar Darom in the southern part of the Gaza Strip. Aside from Jerusalem and Gush Etzion, the settling operations, which were

inspired by the Allon Plan, were implemented in the northeastern corner of the Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights, and the Jordan Valley. The plan aimed to create a buffer zone along the new frontier that would protect the heartland.

The flaw in the Allon Plan was the self-destructive mechanism embedded at its core. Many of the settlements were peripherally located and therefore far away from the beating heart of the Israeli economy. Employment opportunities for residents in the settlements themselves or in surrounding areas were limited, and commuting two or three hours to Tel Aviv or Jerusalem on a daily basis was far from appealing. Furthermore, winters in the Golan Heights were rough, and summers in the Jordan Valley and the Sinai desert fierce. By the late 1970s, only 4,200 Israelis populated the Golan Heights and 4,300 resided in Israel's eighteen settlements in the Sinai Peninsula. Most of them lived in Yamit, located only four miles south of the Israeli border.[20]

The Allon Plan, with the exclusion of Gush Etzion and Jerusalem, can be considered a failure if we evaluate it on the basis of its objectives. Allon, who was born in Kfar Tavor in 1918 and spent his childhood in the remote Galilee, did not understand the mind-set of the average Israeli of the early 1970s. By that time, most Israelis were not interested in being pioneers. They were much more interested in securing their own well-being than fulfilling a national mission. Furthermore, Allon's settlements contributed little to Israel's national security; they had instead proven to be a burden when they were first put to the test in 1973. The settlers of the Golan were not able to deter the invading Syrian army in the Yom Kippur War and, during the first few hours of the war, the cabinet was forced to devise a swift evacuation plan for the civilian residents of the Golan.[21] This lesson, however, did not register for the prime minister Golda Meir and her successors.

Levinger's Success

A small group of unknown religious Zionist activists succeeded where the preeminent Allon failed. On June 8, 1967, IDF forces stormed the old city of Hebron, and the first Israeli official to set foot in the Tomb of the Patriarch—the city's holiest site—was the chief military rabbi, Shlomo Goren. He had in fact arrived in the city before the IDF occupied it. Goren was a new kind of rabbi in the Israeli landscape. A former fighter in the Haganah and founder of the military rabbinate, he personified the combination of scholarship and activism (though not necessarily in that order). One day prior to his arrival in Hebron, Goren was one of the first to reach the most sacred site for the Jewish people: HaKotel HaMa'aravi (the Western Wall) in Jerusalem. A famous photograph taken that day portrays Rabbi Goren blowing the shofar (ram's horn) next to the wall. He also recited the Shehecheyanu ("Who has given us life"), a prayer reserved for significant occasions.[22] Goren had no intention of limiting his activities to the ceremonial. He approached General Uzi Narkis, commander of the IDF's Central Command, and suggested that they complete the liberation of Jerusalem by exploding the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which were built on top of the Jewish Temple's ruins. His radical proposal was, however, rejected.[23]

Shortly after the war, representatives of the old Jewish community of Hebron approached the cabinet asking to return to their hometown. The Jewish quarter of the city was built in the sixteenth century, and during the period of Ottoman rule it prospered and became a center for a small community of Jewish scholars. But the massacre of the Jews in 1929 and the Great Arab Revolt of 1936 put an end to Jewish presence in the city. As in the case of Gush Etzion, the

Israeli leadership was generally sympathetic to the appeal of the old Hebron Jews. However, Eshkol remained hesitant.[24] A group of young Zionist religious activists that had fought in the Six-Day War decided to take matters into their own hands. The group included Israel Harel, Benny Katzover, Rabbi Haim Druckman, and Rabbi Eliezer Waldman, and was driven by a passionate sense of religious commitment. They were eager to renew the Jewish presence in the city. In the coming decades, these men became prominent figures in the settlers' movement. Their ringleader at the time was Rabbi Moshe Levinger, a devout student of Rabbi Kook. Although they hoped to receive the cabinet's blessing, they were not deterred when Eshkol and his ministers sent mixed messages regarding the situation in Hebron. The young men interpreted the ambiguous response as a green light to carry on with their plan. On April 12, 1968, they celebrated the Passover holiday in the Palestinian-owned Park Hotel, which they had leased a few days earlier for the event. But they had no intention of leaving after the holiday was over. This provocation generated Palestinian protest and angered Eshkol. The young activists exhibited a combination of determination and political savvy: they reached out to Yigal Allon. Although he did not want Jews to settle in heavily populated Palestinian cities, Allon was sentimental about Hebron and believed that it should always remain under Israeli control. Thus, he showed his explicit support to the settlers by visiting their new stronghold. More importantly, he used his ties with the Gush Etzion settlers to smuggle weapons to the group.[25] This was a key moment in the life of the new movement. Although they did not realize it at the time, the settlers made their first steps as a political network. They utilized their informal ties with officials and civil servants and applied soft "divide and conquer" strategies that had proven to be highly effective.

A month later the settlers, who were supported both by Allon and somewhat more implicitly by his rival, Moshe Dayan, received the cabinet's permission to construct a new Jewish neighborhood only a half-mile away from the Cave of the Patriarchs (Me'arat ha-Machpela).[26] The Hebron settlers, who were dubious about the true intentions of the cabinet, did not take any chances. In return for their readiness to leave the Park Hotel, they demanded that they be allowed to settle in a different location in Hebron until their new suburb, Kiryat Arba, was ready to be populated. The cabinet conceded and allowed them to relocate to the IDF headquarters in the city.[27] Thus, as early as 1968, a small group of settlers had devised and consolidated a winning strategy. They created a faits accompli on the ground, mobilized supporters from within the cabinet, and established strong ties with state agencies in the region—most prominently the Israeli Defense Forces.

The IDF was not ideologically motivated, at least not in the pure sense of the word; the pact with the settlers was based on shared interests. In the pre-Intifada era, Israel's control over the occupied territories did not impose too much of a burden on the army. Actually, as I indicated earlier, the belief prevalent within the security establishment was that since these lands served as buffers between Israel's enemies and its heartland, the occupied territories were strategic assets. Further, the formation of civilian settlements in border areas had always been part of the Zionist security doctrine. Hence, the military was happy to provide the eager activists with weapons and resources that they required for defending their strongholds.[28] The settlers' ability to work the political elite as well as penetrate and co-opt various state agencies proved to be their most successful strategy in the decades that followed.[29]

The Bureaucratic Benefits of Territorial Expansions

One of the unintended consequences of the 1967 war that served the first settlers very well was the unprecedented expansion of the Israeli bureaucracy to the new frontiers. Civil servants in different ministries as well as IDF officers identified a unique opportunity for expanding the reach of their offices and thus became ideal candidates for recruitment to the network.[30] From the military's perspective, the occupied territories had much more to offer beyond serving as buffer zones. The Sinai Peninsula was almost three times as large as sovereign Israel. Thus, it provided the air force and other branches of the IDF with much needed space in which they could conduct military maneuvers. The cheap and uninhabited lands also enabled the army to establish large bases. The new military installations required noncommissioned officers as well as officers and so offered an opportunity for rapid promotion to a whole generation of military personnel.

Semi-governmental organizations, which were the executive pillar of the Zionist movement prior to the establishment of the state and were undergoing a painful process of organizational decay after its formation, discovered a source of reinvigoration. The most significant of these was the Jewish Agency, which was formed in 1929 as the administrative branch of the World Zionist Organization. In the pre-State era, and especially under the leadership of David Ben-Gurion (1935–48), the Jewish Agency's main role was settling Jews all over Palestine. It also formed institutions that facilitated the relatively smooth transition to statehood. The success of the organization was, however, a double-edged sword. Once Israel became a sovereign entity, the organization and its powerful settlement department seemed obsolete. But organizations like these did not die easily. The Jewish Agency stepped aside and restructured itself as the main liaison between Israel and world Jewry. It also assumed responsibilities in the absorption of immigrants and in education endeavors. Clearly, these tasks were not as glamorous or as significant as the agency's previous roles.

The post-1967 era created a window of opportunity for the Jewish Agency. The new frontier was a perfect fit for the organization, which enjoyed close ties to the defense establishment and whose major field of expertise had been the establishment of settlements. Ra'anan Weitz, head of the settlement department, and his deputy Yehiel Admoni did not waste time. They soon realized that Eshkol was still perplexed by the outcomes of the war and that his ministers were pulling in different directions.[31] By default, policy making and implementation in the occupied territories was left in the hands of ambitious yet inexperienced bureaucrats under whom the situation devolved into administrative chaos. Weitz and Admoni jumped on the opportunity to utilize their unique expertise in the field of settlement development and unknowingly became invaluable assets for the network.[32] They facilitated the formation of settlements in Gush Etzion, the Jordan Valley, the Sinai Peninsula, and the Golan Heights.[33]

As indicated earlier, while the followers of Rabbi Kook were eager to settle in the West Bank, finding individuals who were willing to settle in the remote peripheries proved much more challenging. The Defense Ministry and the IDF solved the problem by assigning the Fighting Pioneer Youth (Nahal-Noar Halutzi Lohem) with the task. The Nahal was a hybrid branch of the military and the Zionist youth movements that was established in 1948 as part of the effort to augment the Jewish presence on Israel's peripheral areas. The Nahal offered close-knit groups of youth movement graduates with a unique opportunity to stay together as conscripts. In return for a slightly longer tenure in the service, they were asked to divide their time between military training and the formation of new settlements—mostly agricultural ones—along Israel's borders. Many of these semi-military strongholds served as the initial foundations and placeholders for civilian settlements.[34]

By 1972 the cabinet, which was impressed by the Jewish Agency's rapid mobilization and achievements, instructed it to create a new settling division. The objectives of the new unit were to channel state funds (mostly from the Ministry of Agriculture), to identify fertile lands in the occupied territories, and to allocate those lands to farmers who were interested in working them. Since the agency's duties were not specified by law, it quickly expanded its operations to other areas, such as channeling state funds into attractive mortgages, directing budgets for encouraging the formation of small businesses, and initiating the construction of community centers in new settlements.[35]

Another agency that enjoyed a revitalization period in the post-1967 era was the Jewish National Fund (Keren Kayemet Leyisrael—known as its acronym KKL). This organization was established in 1901 and its main objective was to purchase lands in Palestine on behalf of the Jewish people. Funding for the group came from Zionist institutions and activists all around the world. Later, the organization became increasingly active in settlement operations. As was the case with the Jewish Agency, the formation of the state and the establishment of Israel Land Administration (Minhal Mekarkei Yisrael) undermined KKL's activities. However, the organization demonstrated a strong survival instinct. By 1961 KKL reached an arrangement with the Israel Land Administration that secured its future. The agreement was designated to carry out specific projects such as forestation and pavement of roads, and, akin to the Jewish Agency, it committed to pursuing educational endeavors. These new roles put the KKL on the state's payroll. Over the years, state allocations, rather than contributions from world Jewry, became the KKL's main source of income. Yet, the KKL never officially gave up ownership of the lands it purchased, and maintained its unyielding commitment to allocate those lands only to Jews.[36] Like the Jewish Agency, KKL also identified the new frontier as a perfect ground for reviving its glory days. However, it needed more time to reorganize before it threw its hat back in the ring.

Meanwhile, the seventy-two-year-old Eshkol grew weaker. Eshkol's death in February 1969 created a void in the leadership of the Labor Party that was quickly filled by its younger generation, specifically Allon and Dayan. To a large extent, they used the question of the future status of the occupied territories as a vehicle for their internal power struggle.[37] Due to the cabinet's lack of a coherent vision, persistent bickering within the political elite, and attempts by various institutions to expand their operations, Israel's presence in the occupied territories consisted of a tangled web of agents. Most of these were either competing with or ignoring one another. Collaboration was rare. The vague legal structure and lack of guidance from the leadership turned the situation into a bureaucratic wrestling match with very few rules. The settlers could not have hoped for a more favorable scenario.[38]

The Yom Kippur War and the Rise of Ariel Sharon

The situation was just as favorable for the settlers' main patron. No other individual in Israel's history can be credited for the success of the settlers more than Ariel Sharon. Unlike many Israeli leaders, Sharon was not raised in a particularly politicized household. He was born in Kfar Malal, a cooperative settlement (moshav) associated with the Labor movement. His parents, unlike their neighbors, were not Mapai enthusiasts.[39] Sharon joined the Haganah at the age of seventeen and excelled as a warrior in the Alexandroni Brigade during the War of Independence. He never distinguished himself as an ideologue as did many of his peers. He was a very creative and energetic officer; he loved the military and applied himself to developing and improving the

IDF's special forces and infantry brigades. In the 1950s, like many promising young officers, Sharon joined Mapai. This was a calculated step. From the very early days of his military career, it was clear that despite his disinterest in ideologies, Sharon was politically adept. He understood the importance of political power as a tool for advancing his objectives and, in most cases, these objectives were personal. Sharon's politics did not conform to any of the main political camps in Israel. He changed his mind often, sometimes to such a degree that he could be considered Machiavellian. He was first and foremost a man of action: once his mind was set on a goal, it was almost impossible to stop him. To the dismay of many Israeli leaders, including David Ben-Gurion and later Menachem Begin, Sharon preferred to do things his own way, even if it meant that he was disobedient or did not adhere to laws and regulations.

The settlers and Sharon formed a perfect match. The settlers offered vision, passion, and manpower, and Sharon was a man who could make things happen. Their joint ventures provide an example of the argument that, in order to assess the degree of success of a political movement, it is vital to look at actual events rather than to focus on its ideology or even its electoral achievements. In fact, throughout his political career, Sharon never adhered to a clear set of beliefs, and until its very late stages he rarely enjoyed success at the ballot. Yet, without him, the story of the settlements would most likely have taken a completely different direction.

The Yom Kippur War was a seminal event in Israel's history. Its role as a catalyst in the emergence of the radical Right was no less significant than that of the Six-Day War. Unlike the gloomy weeks prior to the Six-Day War, in the period preceding the Yom Kippur War the public was in a completely different state of mind. Although the first years after the Six-Day War were marked by an upsurge in terrorism and the gradual erosion of the IDF's fortitude during the War of Attrition on the Egyptian front, most Israelis were brimming with a sense of power. But the tables turned when Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack during the afternoon of Yom Kippur, October 6, 1973, which evolved into one of the worst wars Israel has ever known. This time it was the Arabs who were celebrating while Israel, battered and beaten, sobered up at once from the preceding six-year period of euphoria. The glory of the generals and the heroes of yesterday became things of the past. A dark melancholy seized the defense minister, Moshe Dayan, champion of the Six-Day War, and symbolized the depth of the crisis. In the elections that were held shortly after the fighting died down, the Labor Party managed to win and form a coalition government, but the wind of change was already felt. Although Dayan was reappointed as defense minister, his power gradually waned. The fate of Yigal Allon, Dayan's sworn political enemy, was not much better; he was appointed as minister of education and culture, but power struggles with Dayan took their toll and prevented him from getting close to the most influential leadership positions.

The crisis brought a new generation of politicians to the center of the political stage. The rivalry between Dayan and Allon was replaced by an even more bitter rivalry between the former chief of general staff, Yitzhak Rabin, who led the IDF to the 1967 victory, and Shimon Peres, the minister of information and one of Ben-Gurion's main protégés.

Still, the decline of the Labor Party had become unavoidable. Public opinion polls indicated a broadening fissure in Israeli society, the beginning of which preceded the Yom Kippur War. In general, the veteran, secular, Ashkenazi, middle- and upper-class center remained loyal to the Labor movement. However, Orthodox Jews, immigrants of North African descent, and less affluent groups yearned for political change.[40] Oblivious of the looming tragedy, in the summer of 1973 the Israeli political parties were preparing for elections scheduled for the upcoming October. Ariel Sharon, who had just retired from the IDF at the rank of major general, was still

frustrated by the fact that his longtime dream to become the chief of general staff had not been realized. He was eager to remain at the center of Israel's decision-making circle. His status as a political novice did not prevent him from attaining this goal. Prior to the introduction of the primaries system, it was impossible for new party members to move rapidly to center stage unless the party's apparatchiks wanted to make it happen. The idea of serving as a backbencher in the Knesset did not appeal to Sharon. Thus, for the first (but not the last) time in his political career, he devised a strategy aimed at benefiting his own personal agenda but which eventually became a game-changer for the Israeli party system.

Unlike a whole stratum of military officers, who were held accountable for the calamity of the 1973 war and were therefore forced to give up their dreams of a military or political future, Sharon emerged as a hero. In a very risky move, he spearheaded his division (#143) during Operation Valiant, in which the division crossed the Suez Canal, surrounded the Third Egyptian Field Army, and cut off its supply lines. The operation took the Egyptian army by surprise and forced the Egyptian leadership to request a cease-fire and subsequently changed the course of the war.[41] Before he left for the front, Sharon, a political novice, completed the formation of the Likud Party, which united five right-wing and center factions: Herut, the Liberal Party, the National List, the Free Center, and the Land of Israel movement.

Sharon's persona as a politician followed the trajectory that he had set during his years in the military. His career was full of twists and turns that always reflected his main priority: power and action over ideas. In 1973 he was elected as a Knesset member of the Likud. Yet, since the Labor Party managed to win the election, he ended up serving as a legislator of an opposition party. Sharon grew impatient, and soon after the elections he left the Knesset and later assumed the role of security advisor to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, the leader of the rival Labor Party, during his first term in office (1974–77).

Unveiling the Myth of Gush Emunim

Meanwhile, another significant process took place: the formation of a new faction within the National Religious Party (Miflaga Datit Leumit—Mafdal) called Gush Emunim (Bloc of the Faithful). No other political group in Israel's history sparked as much scholarly interest as did this movement.[42] The spirit of Gush Emunim, rather than the actual movement, rapidly emerged as the core element of the nativist Jewish radical right-wing network.

The movement's beginnings were humble. A group of Zionist religious activists, many of them graduates of the Merkaz Harav Yeshiva, gathered in February 1974. They met in order to define which ideological boundaries were not to be crossed during the Mafdal's negotiations with Labor representatives, who were trying to lure the party into their coalition. They wanted their party, which was known for its pragmatism, to join the coalition on the condition that the cabinet would not make any territorial concessions.[43] The gathering was held in Kfar Etzion and was hosted by Hanan Porat. Among the participants were settlers from Gush Etzion and Hebron, including Moshe Levinger, Haim Druckman, and Yoel Bin-Nun.[44]

In interviews held by Yair Sheleg thirty years later, the activists who took part at the formative meeting presented different and sometimes even opposing views regarding the factors that triggered the establishment of the movement. However, they all agreed that the Yom Kippur War generated a shockwave, which created a sense of urgency. According to Hanan Porat, up until the war there had been consensus in the Zionist religious camp that the Israeli leadership

should set the tone and lead the process of settling Jews in the recently freed parts of their ancient homeland. But the first settlers became disillusioned with the state's elected officials and concluded that they could not leave such an important mission in the hands of those inept leaders. By the first half of 1974, the cabinet had already signed the disengagement agreements with the Egyptians and Syrians. In these agreements, Israel consented to withdraw from some occupied Syrian territories as part of the accord that put an end to the Yom Kippur War.

Other activists, including Levinger and Uri Elitzur, told Sheleg that the actual reason for the gathering was the sense that following the war, a sentiment existed that was conducive to territorial concessions and had begun to spread throughout Israeli society. These activists considered it their duty to prevent such sentiments from turning into official policies. Only Bin-Nun tied the movement's formation to the change of leadership in the Labor Party. Following the 1967 war the hawkish ministers of the party, most notably Allon and Galili, showed more support for the activities of the settlers than their own leaders from the National Religious Party. In order to avoid a conflict with their powerful supporters from Labor, the activists of the Zionist religious camp did not deviate from the parameters drawn by Allon. However, they never gave up on their plan to settle in the heart of the West Bank. Their dissolution with Golda Meir's cabinet, her resignation in 1974, and the subsequent appointment of Yitzhak Rabin—who had no such commitment to the settlers—as prime minister, freed them to engage in a more adversarial strategy. They felt that the time was right for initiating progress on the ground by establishing Jewish settlements in the heart of the heavily populated West Bank.[45]

For many years Gush Emunim was perceived as a well-organized movement, which followed carefully devised strategies. In fact it was no more than a short-lived, loose network of activists that shared similar but not identical visions.[46] In Israel's collective historical memory, the settlement operation in the northern part of the West Bank—particularly the continuous attempts to put down roots in Sebastia—marked the first Gush Emunim settling effort. But this operation was actually carried out by the Elon Moreh Enclave, a clique within the larger settlers' network, and led by Moshe Levinger, Benny Katzover, and veteran settlers from Hebron, who were joined by Rabbi Menachem Felix. The overlap between the Elon Moreh Enclave and Gush Emunim was in fact limited.[47] Levinger, who took part in the activities of both groups, served as the link between them. Gush activists also volunteered to help their friends but could not claim credit for this settling effort in Sebastia because it was not their initiative.[48] Furthermore, as indicated earlier, Gush Emunim's first settlement, Keshet, was established in May 1974 and was not built in a heavily populated Palestinian area—not even close to one. It was instead located a hundred miles from the West Bank on the ruins of an old Syrian village in the Golan Heights.[49]

The ideology of Gush Emunim reflected the diverse nature of the movement and was far from cohesive. The group's decision to separate from their mother party was an outcome of the latter's decision to join the Rabin-led coalition without receiving a clear commitment from Labor's leadership that their cabinet would not make any territorial concessions. Once again, in retrospect, the founders of the movement admitted that their ideas were, at the first stage of their development as an independent movement, broadly defined and vague. Porat saw the movement as a vehicle by which Rabbi Kook's vision could be realized. The end goal, in Porat's opinion, was to advance the process of redemption. Levinger, did not reject the existence of such broad goals but argued that they never directly influenced the movement's operations. Elitzur took the middle ground, arguing that while the theology of redemption clearly existed in the backs of the Gush leaders' minds, their actions followed a somewhat more concrete agenda: Zionism, security, and settling.[50] These testimonies placed Gush in close proximity to Ahdut HaAvoda

Poalei Zion and, to a lesser degree, Herut. The keyword during the movement's beginnings was activism.

Despite its muddled structure and ideology, Gush Emunim had a dramatic impact on the Israeli political system.[51] The continuously expanding network of settlers simply refused to take no for an answer. They were so energized by the prospect of eternal Israeli control over the occupied territories, and were so committed to the settlement adventure, that they were not discouraged by Rabin's determination to prevent them from setting facts on the ground. They engaged in a war of attrition with the cabinet and the IDF. They utilized every available tie to the elite as well as the bureaucracy, and they prevailed.[52]

Change of Guard In Israel

The emergence of Gush Emunim had another important outcome: it signaled to the heads of the National Religious Party that their time as a centrist and pragmatic party had ended. This coincided with other significant political transformations. By late 1976 it became clear that the era of the Labor as the dominant party in Israel was nearing its end. On December 14, the ultra-Orthodox parties called for a vote of no confidence in Rabin's cabinet. A few days earlier on a Friday afternoon, the first shipment of F-15 fighter jets had arrived in Israel from the United States. A formal ceremony was held in which the new jets were delivered to the Israeli air force, and several cabinet members who attended the ceremony did not manage to return to their homes before the sunset, thus desecrating the Shabbat and infuriating the ultra-Orthodox members of the coalition. The call for a vote of no confidence did not fall on deaf ears. The formerly pragmatic Mafdal leadership was attentive to the new direction its constituents had taken under the influence of Gush Emunim. Two of the party's ministers decided to refrain from voting in favor of the coalition; as a result, Rabin fired them, and the historical alliance between Labor and the Zionist religious camp came to an end.

As the 1977 elections drew near, Ariel Sharon grew restless again. He decided to establish a new party called Shlomzion. During its formative days, Sharon approached individuals from both ends of the political spectrum, asking them to join him. He wanted to position the new party at the center of the Israeli political map and mobilize voters from both Labor and Likud parties. Sharon's hope was to be appointed as a senior minister in either a Labor- or Likud-led coalition. This maneuver provided further verification of his political savvy and even more so of his casual approach toward ideology.

To Sharon's dismay his party, which had initially gained traction, suffered a significant setback when another party entered the political arena, also catering to the center. The Democratic Movement for Change (Tnua Demokratit LeShinui), known by the acronym Dash, was led by former IDF chief of staff and professor of archeology, Yigael Yadin. In order to avoid an electoral humiliation that could have drastically weakened his political future, Sharon engaged in pre-election negotiations with both Dash and Likud in a desperate attempt to merge his party with either one of them, but his efforts were to no avail.

Especially painful for him was the cold shoulder he received from the Likud's head of publicity and his longtime friend, Ezer Weizman.[53] Ultimately, Shlomzion barely managed to secure two seats in the Knesset and, with little political clout, the party merged into the Likud almost immediately. Sharon, whose dream of being the IDF chief of staff was never realized, was hoping to be appointed minister of defense. But the newly elected prime minister,

Menachem Begin, presented the prestigious Defense Ministry to Weizman. Sharon was offered service in a much more junior position as minister of agriculture.

Prima facie, the Ministry of Agriculture had little to do with the creation of settlements in the West Bank. However, the settlement wing of the Jewish Agency received a large part of its budget from this ministry, and furthermore, Begin, who wanted to appease the disappointed Sharon, gave him an extra bonus: chairmanship of the Ministerial Committee for Settlement. This was the only body that had the authority to grant official status to new Jewish settlements inside and beyond the Green Line (the pre-1967 border between Israel and its neighbors). Sharon's status allowed the settlers' network unprecedented access to state resources.[54]

Begin was one of the settlers' most enthusiastic supporters. After taking office, he made a formal commitment to boost settlement initiatives in the West Bank. But a few obstacles stood between his magnanimous promises and their actual execution. Unlike his socialist predecessors, Begin was a great believer in the right to private ownership. As a lawyer, he was respectful toward the judiciary and a believer in due process.[55] His legalistic approach stood in sharp contrast to Sharon's tendency to first act and then, only if required, search for a legal basis. Indeed, to the settlers' satisfaction, Sharon directed his ministerial committee to adopt an official governmental policy for settling in the West Bank.[56] This policy relied on the Allon Plan. However, its guiding principle was to extend the scope of the original plan by specifically encouraging the formation of settlements in the heart of the West Bank. Sharon's main objective was not very different from Allon's. His goal was to create a buffer zone between Israel and the threatening Eastern Front that included Jordan, Syria, and Iraq.[57]

He also hoped to consolidate the Jewish character of greater Jerusalem. Sharon was aware that birthrates among the Palestinians were much higher than those of the Jews, and he was concerned about a gradual demographic shift, which would benefit the Arabs. Therefore, he planned to surround the main Palestinian population centers in the Jerusalem vicinity with Jewish neighborhoods. By doing so he hoped to prevent the territorial expansion of Palestinian villages, which could have led to a spillover effect and eventually the merging of Palestinian communities from both sides of the 1967 Green Line that separates sovereign Israel from the occupied territories.[58]

Sharon proved to be an invaluable asset in the first Likud-led cabinet, which consisted of many ministers who had no governing experience. He mobilized state budgets and formed a political alliance with David Levy, who was appointed minister of housing in January of 1979. To Sharon's great content, his allies from Gush Emunim were as enthusiastic and determined as he was. The young settlers perceived themselves as the new Zionist vanguard—that is, the true successors of the early pioneers who settled in Palestine in the pre-State era and who were not deterred by the heavy-handed response of the Ottoman and later the British Mandate authorities. Like the pioneers, the settlers also adhered to the notion that some objectives were superior to the rule of law. Attaining these objectives justified the subversion of laws, even those of the sovereign Jewish state.[59]

The Legalization of the Settlements

In 1979 Israel's Supreme Court presented a serious obstacle to the settlers, the defense establishment that supported them, and to Sharon himself. Elon Moreh, a settlement located four

miles northeast of Nablus, was established as a compromise between former Prime Minister Rabin and the leaders of the Elon Moreh group, who were determined to settle in nearby Sebastia. Palestinians whose lands were seized for the purpose of the construction of Elon Moreh refused to give up without a fight, and they filed an appeal to the Israeli Supreme Court challenging the expropriation of their lands. In an unprecedented ruling, the justices indicated that the state's actions were indeed illegal.[60] This was a deviation from the court's ruling earlier that year that legitimized the seizure of Palestinian lands for the building of Beit El, a settlement near Ramallah, which was established in November 1977 by another clique of the Merkaz Harav yeshiva graduates. In that case, the court accepted the Ministry of Defense's argument, according to which the settlement was serving a vital security objective and thus gave precedence to Israel's national security over Palestinian property rights.[61]

The court's decision regarding Elon Moreh differentiated between establishing settlements that could have been justified by security reasoning and those whose pretext was merely political. Menachem Begin found himself torn between his wholehearted support for the settlement campaign and his commitment to the rule of law. Hoping to square the circle by making sure that each lot in the West Bank was allocated legally, he paved the way for one of the most creative legal maneuvers in Israel's history.[62] The operation was assigned to Plia Albeck, the daughter of Israel's former state comptroller and sister of the chief rabbi of the Jewish Quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem. Albeck was a brilliant and ambitious lawyer. In 1969, at the age of thirty-one, she was appointed head of the Civil Department in the state attorney's office.[63] Eight years later Attorney General Aharon Barak instructed her to provide a legal opinion regarding the establishment of three settlements in the West Bank: Ariel, Kfar Tapuach, and Homesh. Although she never belonged to the inner circle of the settlers' movement, Albeck's sympathy to their cause turned her into a proxy actor of the network in one of the most sensitive positions within the public administration. In accordance with Begin's formalistic approach, she designed the legal framework for declaring lands in the West Bank state property. Since the ownership of most properties in the region was never properly documented, and because Israeli law did not extend to the occupied territories, she relied on the Ottoman Land Law of 1858 for precedent. This law stipulated that a piece of land that is located at least 2.5 kilometers (1.55 miles) away from the most remote house of the nearest village can be declared state property unless it is being used for agricultural production or documents exists that prove ownership otherwise. By developing and applying this legal framework, Albeck facilitated the ceding of 500,000 acres of land to state ownership. Ninety percent of settlements in the West Bank were built on land that was appropriated using Albeck's legal maneuver.[64]

Begin and Sharon had transformed the settlement ideology into official state policy, but the settlers' network had yet to transform itself from an unrestrained movement that was eager to engage in protest activities, illegal settlement operations, and clashes with the state authorities into an institutionalized body capable of serving as an arm of the state and carrying out its policies. The first step was establishing Amana, the settlement wing of Gush Emunim. Sharon and the leaders of the new wing showed a significant degree of resourcefulness by expanding the role of the Jewish Agency in land transactions.[65] In 1978 Gush Emunim and the Jewish Agency's settlement department had acquired new leadership in Matityahu Drobles, former Herut member of Knesset, and in accordance with the network's strategy, the agency began to put up settlements on the eastern mountain range of the West Bank, an area known as Back of the Mountain (Gav Hahar). The goal of this new plan was to drive a wedge between the West Bank and the Jordan Valley as well as between Nablus and Hebron, thus preventing the

possibility of Palestinian territorial continuity in the West Bank.[66]

The Jewish Agency and Amana became inseparable. They initiated plans for the rapid expansion of settlements; the agency's representatives served as proxies of the settlers' network in different governmental ministries; they provided Amana with consultation services; and, most importantly, they channeled funds. Since the Jewish Agency was not an official institution of the State of Israel but rather a body that represented the Jewish people, it was not expected to adhere to formal procedures that bound the official branches of the state. The agency was therefore capable of diverting funds from both state subsidies and from donations made by Zionist organizations from around the world to Amana. It also used the power granted to it by the state to offer subsidies that encouraged the economic development of selected regions and created employment opportunities for their inhabitants.[67]

In my research of the Jewish Agency, obtaining a detailed account of the way in which the settlement department functioned during that era turned out to be a much more challenging undertaking than I initially thought. In its official publications, the Jewish Agency does not elaborate on the issue. Initially I assumed that this was a matter of poor documentation, but later came to the conclusion that the vague picture of the department's activities served a purpose. The settlers and their supporters in the political and bureaucratic arenas turned this seemingly decaying and dreary organization into a powerful executive wing of the network that carried out their plans without drawing too much attention to themselves.[68] Hence, it was quite perplexing to learn that the settlers' leaders, who were so successful in figuring out the Israeli bureaucratic maze, failed to expand their savvy into the parliamentary arena. Time and time again, the settlers have displayed political clumsiness that could have put their whole project at grave risk.

The Settlers in Parliament

On November 9, 1977, at 8:00 p.m., the entire population of Israel held their breath. President Anwar Sadat of Egypt, who only four years earlier had led his army into battle against Israel in the Yom Kippur War, arrived in Ben Gurion International Airport as an official guest of the State of Israel. This momentous visit took place only six months after the formation of Israel's first right-wing cabinet. The man who personified the bitterest adversary of Israel was warmly greeted by Menachem Begin, the ultimate hawk, whose election had led many Israelis to believe that a new era of war was dawning. The majority of Israelis were exuberant. It seemed that the whole country was rallying around their prime minister, with one exception: the settlers.[69]

Despite the elated atmosphere, the visit presented the Israelis with some sobering facts. In his speech to the Knesset, Sadat made it very clear that a peace treaty with Egypt would result in nothing short of a full Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula. The idea of giving up land and removing settlements stood in sharp contrast to Begin's longtime ideology as well as his public statements. To the settlers' dismay, the prime minister was determined to explore every possible route in the effort to sign a peace treaty with Israel's most formidable enemy. Over the next eighteen months, Begin and Sadat led teams of negotiators who engaged in serious attempts to reach an agreement. Beyond the Egyptian unequivocal claim for the whole Sinai Peninsula, they were also determined to find a solution for the future status of the Palestinians in the West Bank. Eventually, after ten days of intense negotiations in Camp David and with the mediation of President Jimmy Carter, the parties reached a compromise according to which Israel would agree to the establishment of a Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank. Begin, the former

champion of the settlers, now turned into a bitter foe. To add insult to injury, the person who, in one phone call from Jerusalem to Camp David, eased Begin's internal struggle and encouraged him to sign the peace treaty in exchange for the settlers' withdrawal from Sinai, was no one other than Ariel Sharon himself.[70] This should have served as an early warning sign for the settlers that any alliance with Sharon would be volatile and should be treated with a great degree of skepticism.

After recovering from the initial shock, the network began to mobilize. Their first steps were hesitant. Veterans of the Land of Israel movement reached out to various Knesset members in an attempt to form a parliamentary lobby that would slow down the peace talks, but to no avail. Although it created a rift within the Likud, the peace process did not lead to the party's dissolution. Only two Knesset members, Moshe Shamir and Geula Cohen, defected from the Likud and formed a new parliamentary faction known by its Hebrew acronym, Banai (Brit Ne'emanei Eretz Yisrael—Land of Israel Loyalists' Alliance). Eventually, despite their efforts, the Knesset ratified the peace accords with a decisive majority: 84 in favor, 13 against, and 17 abstainers.[71]

With the approach of the 1981 elections, which were held in the midst of the implementation of the peace accords with Egypt, the Tehiya Party was formed on the foundations of Banai. Disheartened by the unsuccessful expansion of their faction in parliament, the leaders of the Tehiya were in desperate need of an energy boost. They were therefore pleased to be endorsed by Gush Emunim. Hanan Porat served as the matchmaker between Yuval Neeman, the leader of the Tehiya, and the spiritual leader of Gush, Rabbi Kook. Initially, Rabbi Kook hesitated. He did not want to alienate other parties such as Likud and Mafdal, where the network had already been represented and gained a significant degree of political clout. Yet after persistent pleas from his students the old rabbi acceded and gave his support to the new party. In the long run, this was a detrimental decision for both the party and the settlers. Tehiya performed poorly in the national ballot and secured only 2.3 percent of the votes. Although their numbers in the West Bank settlements were more impressive (24 percent of the settlers supported the party), it was a bittersweet achievement. Even in the very settlements that it vowed to protect, Tehiya lagged behind Likud.[72] The leaders of the party could not understand why the settlers remained loyal to the same party that had turned its back on them. Neither did the leaders of the settlers. This was not the only surprise that awaited the settlers.

Sharon's First Betrayal

In the second Begin cabinet, which was formed after the elections, Sharon's longtime dream was finally realized with his appointment as minister of defense. His first significant assignment was the removal of the eighteen Israeli settlements in Sinai and their inhabitants. Those settlers who, despite his support of the peace accords with Egypt, still had faith in their loyal ally were shocked. Sharon ignored them.

When the fate of the Sinai settlements seemed to be sealed, central figures in the settlers' network from the West Bank, including Porat, Levinger, Katzover, and Elitzur, mobilized and founded the Movement to Stop the Withdrawal in Sinai.[73] They were not especially attached to the Sinai desert, but in light of the fact that Begin agreed to the idea of Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank, they feared that Israel would become inclined to make further territorial concessions in order to achieve comprehensive peace with its Arab neighbors. Thus, they saw the

struggle in Sinai as their own battle. They brought with them to Sinai many of their followers and comrades from the West Bank and the Golan Heights as well as members of the Religious Zionist Youth Movement—Bnei Akiva, followers of Rabbi Meir Kahane, right-wing secular university students, and even members of Knesset.[74] The protesters were no match for the IDF's bulldozers, which left the Sinai settlements in ruins. Nonetheless, the movement was not a complete failure. Its secondary objective was attained: by provoking the IDF to engage in violent confrontations with the protesters, the Movement to Stop the Withdrawal in Sinai traumatized the Israeli public.[75] At that time in 1982, many Israelis still remembered the *Altalena* Affair that brought the month-old Israel to the brink of a civil war. The residues of the toxic relations it generated between the Left and the Right had yet to dissipate. Furthermore, the ideas of internal strife and violence among Jewish communities were delegitimized for many centuries. Such hatred among rival Jewish groups was considered to be the main cause for the destruction of Second Temple and the tragedies that for millennia had descended upon the Jewish people. Internal struggles were engraved in the Jewish culture as a major factor in weakening the Jews, empowering their enemies, and subsequently jeopardizing the very existence of the nation. Hence, Jewish communities both in the Diaspora and in Israel exhibited strong aversion toward what they referred to as pointless hatred, known in Hebrew as "Sinat Chinam."

Puppeteers

Ariel Sharon's complex personality enabled him to spearhead the destruction of the Sinai settlements and at the same time to facilitate the expansion of those in the West Bank. In 1981 he established the Civil Administration, a new division in the Defense Ministry. Its objective was to relieve the IDF from performing tasks of a civilian nature in the occupied territories. This new branch was supposed to serve as a Ministry of Interior for the Palestinian population. The settlers, all of whom were Israeli citizens, enjoyed the services of the real Ministry of Interior, which expanded its reach to each location in the occupied territories where Israelis were settled. At first glance, these Israelis did not require the services of the new division, but the Civil Administration was the department put in charge of marking lots and allocating land in the West Bank. The most significant unit for the network was the Supreme Planning Commission, which operated from the Civil Administration offices in the settlement of Beit-El. The commission was a civil-military council that operated according to the Jordanian law that prevailed in the West Bank prior to 1967. This legal framework allows for much more flexibility than the Israeli one. Furthermore, as a partly military body, its deliberations and decisions were generally hidden from the public eye and thus subject to little scrutiny.

The highly complex and vague procedures that are often so uninteresting to journalists and so frustrating for researchers were bliss for the network's strategists.[76] Their main objective was to make sure that all the cogs, including the relevant governmental ministries, the Civil Administration, and their allies in the Jewish Agency, cooperated and met their increasing demands. On the rare occasion that a functionary from one of the bodies did not play according to settlers' rules or measure up to their expectations, they used their influence to curb the recalcitrant member or simply replace him or her.[77] One of the most important roles in maintaining the smooth operation of the settlement mechanism was the aide to the minister of defense for settlement matters, a position introduced as early as 1967. While the official function of the aide was to assist border towns and villages in determining their security needs by

assimilating defense systems and devising their defense plans, soon enough this position, which was traditionally filled by a settler or a supporter of the cause, became the network's delegate to the Ministry of Defense.[78]

The peace accords with Egypt and the rapid proliferation of settlements in the West Bank led to another transition in the settlers' network—the formation of the Yesha Council (Moetzet Yesha), which role was to represent the Jewish communities in Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip.[79] The formal date of the council's establishment was December 24, 1980, but its first convention was held in the settlement of Ofra almost two years earlier on October 12, 1978.[80] The official reason for the creation of this body was the need for an umbrella organization, which would represent the unique needs of the municipalities in the West Bank, Gaza, and the Golan Heights in their interactions with governmental ministries.[81] The settlers, in fact, needed more than an interest group whose roles were to secure budgets for their education institutions, street lighting, and sanitary services—they wanted a strong political lobby. The network had a list of ambitious goals, which included the construction of new settlements, the expansion of existing ones, and the paving of new roads between them. It also wanted to convince state officials to offer further financial subsidies and attractive mortgage rates as incentives for middle-class Israelis to move to their localities.[82]

Moreover, the settlers wanted an official body of their own that would lobby for the formal annexation of the occupied territories and prevent any initiation of peace talks that might lead to further territorial compromises. Such diverse needs could not be advanced in the absence of a highly effective political body. The Yesha Council remained loyal to the original spirit of the network's originators. Its structure was highly elastic.[83] There were no clear guidelines to define the exact number of members in the council's leadership, and the election or selection process of council members was never regulated. Furthermore, council members enjoyed open-ended tenure, and the division of labor among them was not formalized. Along with the heads of municipalities and regional councils, the council's leadership included the heads of Amana as well as politicians and public figures who were committed to the network's cause.[84] This elasticity gave the small core of the settler leadership immense power. Their interests were represented in every relevant governmental branch.[85] The parliamentary arena became secondary as the settlers managed to circumvent it and gain disproportional influence in the agencies that actually formulated and carried out policies. Furthermore, they benefited from the ambiguous legal situation in the occupied territories as well as from the large number of agencies and organizations that were in operation there. No one was able to read the situation in these territories better than they were.[86]

The Golden Decade

In April 1984, after a long investigation by Israel's General Security Service, Shabak (Sherut haBitachon haKlali), the police arrested twenty-nine settlers, including some well-known figures in the settlers' network. They were investigated for perpetrating a chain of terrorist attacks against Palestinians in the preceding four years. The revelation of this group, which the press named the Jewish Underground, was considered a crisis point for Gush Emunim. Many of the group's followers were taken aback by the radicalization of their friends and perceived them as a threat to the larger mission of settling the new frontiers of Eretz Israel.[87] However, by that time,

the torch had already been passed on to the Yesha Council, and Gush was no longer vital. By the mid-1980s, despite the peace treaty with Egypt, Tehiya's setback at the polls, and the Jewish Underground debacle, the settlements were thriving.[88]

The success of the settlers' network can be measured easily. From 1981, the year in which Begin formed his second cabinet, to 1992, when the Likud was defeated in the elections, the number of settlements in the West Bank and Gaza almost doubled from 78 to 142. While many Israelis refer to the period between 1977 and 1992 as the Likud era, during most of the 1980s (1984–90) Likud and Labor in effect shared power in national unity cabinets. Labor's leadership became increasingly supportive of some sort of territorial compromise in the West Bank and therefore demanded a slowdown in the establishment of new settlements.[89] Indeed, only seventeen new settlements were constructed during the national unity cabinet era, compared to sixty-six under Likud (1977–84). This is, however, only one side of the story. The decline in the number of new settlements had no impact on the expansion of existing ones. Furthermore, the Jewish population in the West Bank grew at an unprecedented pace from 37,741 settlers in 1984 to 83,055 in 1990. In the latter year, the Likud managed to form a narrow right-wing coalition government with Ariel Sharon as minister of housing. Sharon and the settlers left their bitter past behind them, and the minister was re-embraced by the network. They had a common goal: to right the wrongs committed by earlier national unity cabinets. Sharon surrounded himself with loyalists, including central figures in the network such as Yaakov Katz, who worked in complete synchronization with Zeev Chever, the CEO of Amana. Four months after assuming his new ministerial position, Sharon made a commitment to build 15,000 new housing units in the West Bank.

From its very start, the core of the settlers' network was relatively small, socially homogeneous, and elitist. Indeed, even in the early days there were settlers who deviated from this profile. They resided mostly in Sinai, the Golan Heights, and the Jordan Valley. However, they were a minority and were never as committed to this undertaking as were the young guard of the Zionist religious movement. For many years, the settlers who were generically and mistakenly referred to as members of Gush Emunim considered themselves to be the new pioneers of the land. They were devoted to setting a new ideological course for the people of Israel as well as to settling in Eretz Yisrael.

Despite the ideological sophistication attributed to them by their own members and by scholars, the central figures in the network never developed a comprehensive ideology. They were activists. Their sophistication was manifested particularly in their ability to understand the Israeli bureaucratic maze that had always been labyrinthine but turned truly chaotic after the 1967 territorial expansion, to mobilize the state for the purpose of advancing their agendas, and to obtain such a strong hold on the state that the latter never had a chance to change course.[90] They became the ultimate puppeteers—a skill that helped them in turning their settlements in the West Bank into an extremely successful enterprise. They failed, though, to understand Israeli society. They reached out to the masses unsuccessfully and therefore condemned themselves to being a single-issue movement that two decades later fused into the new Israeli radical Right as a relatively minor element. But things looked very different in the 1970s, when the settlers were regarded as rising social revolutionaries while the prophet of the new radical Right, Rabbi Meir Kahane, was nothing more than an eccentric pariah.

3
The New Radical Right

Yitzhak Ben-Aharon was a member of Ahdut HaAvoda Poalei Zion, a former cabinet member, and one of the few ideologues to spring from the modern Labor Party. Despite his long political career, his image is forever etched in the Israeli collective memory due to his emotional reaction to the Likud's victory in the 1977 elections. "If this is what the people want," he allegedly said, "then the people should be replaced." With these words, he became a symbol of the extent to which the Labor's political elite had become detached from Israeli society.

During the 1950s and 1960s under the Mapai leadership, Israel absorbed large groups of Jewish immigrants, mostly from North African countries, who were called Sephardim (historically, those Jews who originated in the Iberian Peninsula but were expelled in the late 1490s; at a later stage, the term was expanded to include Jews of North African and Middle Eastern origins who were also referred to as Mizrahim (Easterners). The state settled many of these immigrants in the geographically and economically peripheral areas of the country, which contributed to the deepening of the already existing social, economic, and political cleavages. In the early 1970s Jewish society in Israel was deeply polarized between its geographical core, which was associated with the more established Israelis—most of which were secular and Ashkenazi—and the periphery, which was also referred to as Second Israel.[1]

The Peripheries

It is hard to find solid bases for arguments claiming that the state's leaders were acting maliciously with the intention of turning the residents of the peripheries into second-class citizens. After all, they were committed to absorbing Jewish immigrants from all corners of the globe, and despite Israel's dire economic situation during its formative years as an independent state, its leaders regarded immigration to Israel, also known by the Hebrew term Aliyah (Ascendance), as a vital element in the nation-building process.[2] At the same time, the political elite had to cope with the fact that Jewish immigrants from North Africa and the Middle East differed significantly from many of their counterparts. It would be hard to say that the Ashkenazi members of the elite were politically correct or socially sensitive. They did not understand these immigrants, and they belittled and ascribed "primitive" traits to them.

The combination of the country's challenging economic situation and the immigrants' weak political status made the latter all the more malleable in the hands of the authorities. The state provided the immigrants with accommodation in temporary absorption centers, which often consisted of abandoned British military bases or Arab villages in which residents had themselves become refugees and were scattered far and wide. When their numbers increased, the immigrants were given shelter in transition camps called Ma'abarot. Later on, these camps featured prominently in the policies that directed the Jewish population to the periphery. The difficult situation this presented is depicted well by the satirist Ephraim Kishon, himself an immigrant from Hungary, who was housed in a Ma'abara upon his arrival. Kishon used his keen eye and

exceptional talent to successfully capture the complex relations between the establishment and the immigrants in the movie *Sallah Shabbati*. The film's name (which was shared by its protagonist) connoted Jews of North African descent while at the same time punning on the Hebrew words "slihah shebati," which mean "sorry for coming."

The real life of the immigrants, however, was tough and humorless. Most of them were not blessed with the resourcefulness of the fictional immigrant Sallah, did not have command of modern Hebrew, and felt powerless in the face of the mushrooming Israeli bureaucracy. Residents of the periphery were dependent upon the center of the country for almost everything. Representatives of the establishment exhibited a destructive and patronizing attitude by trying to force progress upon the immigrants, strip them of their traditional lifestyle, and reshape them in the spirit of the Israeli Sabra.[3] As early as the 1950s, the discrimination against the residents of the periphery had led to a deep sense of deprivation and injustice, which periodically broke out in demonstrations and even acts of violence.[4] Toward the end of the 1960s, Second Israel reached a critical demographic mass. At the same time, the state enjoyed significant economic growth, but the fruits of this prosperity did not reach the periphery. With his sharp senses, Menachem Begin followed these developments closely.

Uprising

Despite the fact that Begin was Ashkenazi, urban, and educated, his political affiliation and protracted and bitter rivalry with Ben-Gurion caused him to feel rejected by the inner circles in the nation's elite. In contrast to the leaders of the Zionist left-wing parties, he had always felt comfortable with people from the periphery, perhaps because individuals in these parties often shared a common and unifying hostility upon being rejected by the more established cohort. Begin was a skilled and rousing orator—the ideal politician in an era that preceded the proliferation of the electronic media. During public speeches crowds virtually ate from his hand. Despite his distinctive East European accent, he conveyed personal experiences and authentic feelings in a way that spoke directly to his audience. Furthermore, he was emotional and did not hesitate to take advantage of this trait. Begin saw himself as no less Zionist or patriotic than the founders of the state, who replaced Jewish religion with socialism and cultivated the image of the genuine, secular Israeli Sabra. In contrast, though, Begin and his followers never cut themselves off from the Jewish traditions. His message to the peripheries was empowering. He described socialism as an empty vessel in comparison to the richness of Judaism. He explained to his followers that their lifestyles, and not those of the secular elites, embodied the real Zionism.[5] Begin's message was revolutionary, but at the same time, he was a cautious political leader and deeply committed to the nation's destiny. He also harbored a secret desire to gain the recognition of the elites. To maneuver through these obstacles, he handled the reins of his incubating political revolution carefully.

A Free Radical

Rabbi Meir Kahane was free of the inner deliberations that plagued Begin, and this was the secret of the radical rabbi's success. The late journalist Robert Friedman who wrote a biography about Kahane titled it *The False Prophet*.[6] While Friedman's title referenced Kahane's dubious

and contradictory personality, the radical rabbi was in fact prophetic in the sense that, as a politician, he was very much ahead of his time.

Meir Martin Kahane was born in Brooklyn, New York, on August 1, 1932. His background was unique. Kahane's father was born in the city of Safed in Palestine and eventually moved to the United States after graduating from ultra-Orthodox yeshivas in Europe. Young Meir was raised on what some would say were peculiar and, in some cases contradictory, values; his parents were Zionists and followers of the Revisionist movement. As a teenager in New York, he joined the local chapter of Betar and later became a member of the Bnei Akiva movement. Kahane attended Brooklyn College and was simultaneously educated at Mir Yeshiva, an ultra-Orthodox Lithuanian yeshiva in Brooklyn.[7] Later in his life, this eclectic background served him very well. Kahane was able to communicate with Begin and with other Zionist right-wing leaders as easily as he could communicate with leaders of the ultra-Orthodox Jewry. Indeed, when he eventually found himself spurned by the settlers, he reached out to the ultra-Orthodox leadership. While he had been certified as a rabbi at a Lithuanian yeshiva, Kahane became increasingly popular among ultra-Orthodox Jews of all backgrounds. He even found devout supporters among Hassidic Jews, most notably the followers of Chabad (Chochmah, Binah, VeDa'at—Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge), who were at odds with the Lithuanians over issues dating back centuries.

Kahane arrived in Israel during autumn of 1971. Following several run-ins with the authorities in the United States, he was given two options: either stand trial or leave the country. Kahane wasted no time deliberating and immigrated to Israel—a step he later portrayed as an ideological one.[8] At the time of his arrival, the name Meir Kahane was already a well-known "brand name" in Israel. Many admired him for the operations of the militant Jewish Defense League, which he had founded in New York in order to protect elderly Jews from acts of anti-Semitism. In addition, Kahane earned accolades among the Israeli public as a result of his demand for the release of Jews trapped behind the Iron Curtain by communist regimes and the attacks perpetrated by his supporters against Soviet targets in New York.[9] In short, Kahane's reputation preceded him; no one was surprised by the Israeli right-wing representatives' enthusiasm when he arrived in the country.[10] Herut and Mafdal immediately launched campaigns to persuade Kahane to join their ranks.

After realizing that the leaders of the Israeli Right thought of him mainly as reinforcement and never even considered serving up their parties' leadership positions on a silver platter, Kahane announced that his actual purpose in immigrating to Israel was spiritual and that he intended to spend his time engaged in educational activities. It soon became apparent that these stated intentions did not necessarily correspond with Kahane's actual ones. Shortly after settling down in Jerusalem, he established the Jewish Defense League in Eretz Yisrael and began preparing for the Knesset elections.[11] Although he was a new immigrant—a fact that limited his knowledge of the problems of Israeli society and his contact with the Israeli public—Kahane was almost elected to the Knesset in 1973. His party's name, Kach, was an acronym for "Kahane to Knesset" in Hebrew as well as a nod to the Etzel slogan, "rak kach," which means "the only way." Kach gained 0.8 percent of the votes in the 1973 elections, only a tenth of a percent less than the Black Panthers (HaPanterim HaShechorim), a group of first- and second-generation immigrants from North Africa and the Middle East who emerged as the most genuine representatives of the periphery's protest. Kach spent the next three election campaigns on the fringes of Israeli politics, never coming near the representation threshold again.

I remember well the Monday morning of November 5, 1990. Three months earlier, the Iraqi

Army had launched a surprise attack and swept through the territory of its small neighbor, Kuwait. The U.S.-led international coalition served Saddam Hussein with an ultimatum. It demanded that he immediately pull his army out of the pro-Western, oil-rich nation. Not only did the Iraqi dictator ignore the coalition's threats, he also vowed to strike Israel in case of a U.S.-led attack on his forces. At that time, I was a conscript in the IDF's Medical Corps. In the wake of increasing tension in the Persian Gulf, we were ordered to remain on high alert. It was a generally accepted assumption that missiles with alleged chemical warheads were aimed at Israeli cities. During that time, my friends and I always left the radio on in the background and occasionally tuned in for the latest news updates.

On that November morning, we suddenly heard the signal that announced a special news flash. We immediately gathered around the radio with bated breath. Much to our surprise, the news bulletin had no connection whatsoever to the events in Kuwait. The announcer linked to a broadcast in New York, which stated that early reports indicated that Rabbi Meir Kahane had been shot to death following a rally at the Marriott Hotel. When a public figure passes away, especially under dramatic circumstances, the media airs pre-prepared obituary material. In Kahane's case, however, this procedure was not carried out, or at least not fully. The Israeli media instead responded to the assassination with great embarrassment, and the general feeling was that the news programs' producers would have preferred to withdraw the whole issue from their agenda as quickly as possible. Considering Kahane's reputation, this response was not surprising.

Kahanism

During his nineteen years in Israel, Rabbi Meir Kahane evolved into the ultimate scoundrel of the Israeli polity. His simplistic ideology, known today as Kahanism, is the purest and clearest embodiment of all three major defining pillars of the radical Right.[12] Like other factions of the Israeli radical Right, Kahane's agenda was first and foremost nativist. Yet, unlike the religious Zionist settlers who were ideologically and practically committed to perpetuating Israel's control over the occupied territories and to the settling of Jews in the Greater Land of Israel, Kahane's key concern was the Jews *within* Israel. He wanted to remove all foreigners from Israel—first of all Arabs, as well as other foreign influences, such as Western ideas. In this way he deviated from the notion of nativism that prevailed at the time; but Kahane was not completely disinterested in the settlements. The settlers' network, however, presented a genuine problem for him. Despite his resolute efforts to appeal to the settlers and his yearning for their approval, the settlers were extremely suspicious of him, and unsurprisingly Kahane was rarely a welcome guest in the settlements of the West Bank.

Kahane was aware of the fact that most settlers at the time were very different from his usual audiences. The majority of them were religious Zionist, middle-class Ashkenazis who did not share his zeal on issues such as the necessity to deport the Arabs from sovereign Israel. In an attempt to market his ideas to the settlers, Kahane emphasized his commitment to the Greater Israel ideology. He also stressed his plan to turn the Jewish Law (*Halakha*) into the pillar of the Israeli legal system, a fact he actively hid from audiences that were less religiously devout.[13] Despite these efforts, Kahane experienced very limited success with the settlers in the early years. Prominent settler leaders, including Moshe Levinger and Yoel Bin-Nun, explicitly criticized Kahane, analyzing his ideas and undermining their theological validity. Kahanism was

presented as an unsophisticated, incoherent phenomenon. When a group of Kahane's followers wanted to establish a settlement near Kiryat Arba, Amana made sure that the settlement would not enjoy state subsidies and thus prevented the initiative from materializing.[14]

Meir Kahane was finally elected to the Knesset in 1984. This came as a surprise to many Israelis who thought of the hyperactive and loud American rabbi who kept company with a strange-looking group of followers as no more than a pestering nuisance—one that would never strike roots in Israeli politics. They were wrong. By that time, Kahane had already positioned himself as a prominent political leader in the Israeli periphery. Over the previous years, Begin's resignation—a result of the Israeli debacle in the First Lebanon War—changed the face of Likud's leadership. The leader of the party, Yitzhak Shamir, profoundly lacked his predecessor's charisma. Shamir was a tough and ascetic politician. A veteran of Lehi Underground and later the Mossad, he was a devout hawk who was mainly concerned with the advancement of the Greater Israel agenda. Furthermore, Shamir's election followed a bitter struggle with David Levy, a Moroccan-born politician from the peripheral development town of Beit She'an.

Levy, who started his career as a construction worker, rose to the Likud's leadership after years of hard work in local government and in the Histadrut. He was considered to be a genuine representative of Second Israel. His loss to Shamir was perceived as a victory of the center over the peripheries and left many Likud voters disenchanted. At the same time, the Israeli economy was facing a crisis with a skyrocketing inflation rate of 445 percent and an external debt soaring to 212 percent of the country's GDP.[15] The uncertainty and anxiety engendered by the economic crisis fostered the need for reassurance on behalf of the Israeli public. Shamir's government failed to deliver. Kahane, on the other hand, was much more successful and provided an explanation for the root causes of the crisis followed by a set of simple solutions. At fault, according to his account, were two of Kahane's archenemies: the Arab citizens of the state and the "Israeli left-wing elite," an amorphous entity that "collaborated" with the Arabs and sold out the Mizrahi Jews of the peripheries.

I vividly remember the rally that Kahane held in my hometown, Haifa, which had a reputation for being a serene city where Jews and Arabs coexisted in peace. A week prior to the event, streets all over the city were plastered with posters featuring the party's familiar emblem—a yellow fist embedded in a black Star of David next to the rabbi's picture. The location of the rally, Hadar HaCarmel, was chosen carefully. It was a decaying neighborhood, not far from Wadi Nisnas, one of the city's main Arab quarters. Many of Hadar HaCarmel's residents at the time were working-class Jews of North African and Middle Eastern descent. Kahane instinctively understood something that Begin had also realized years before. The Mizrahi residents of the development towns and the underprivileged neighborhoods were only partially "peripheral."[16] They adhered to the dominant Zionist ideology that advocated national unity among Jews. Israel's perpetual struggle with the Arab world pushed them even closer toward the positions of the Zionist center. The fact that they shared cultural and socio-economic traits with the Arab citizens of the state did not serve as a bridge but rather incentivized them to further attach themselves to the Israeli center. This was a significant advantage for those politicians and parties interested in mobilizing Jewish constituents by utilizing the visible cultural and economic rifts between the center and the peripheries.[17] For years Kahane tailored his messages specifically to Mizrahi constituencies. Although they felt an affinity for the Likud, the political and economic circumstances converged to open a political space. Kahane seized this opportunity, and by the middle of the 1980s, his unrelenting efforts paid off: his popularity among the Mizrahi voters soared.[18]

As a teenager with a growing interest in politics, I was captivated by the stories about this controversial politician. I wanted to see him in action, and this rally in the summer of 1984 was the perfect opportunity to do so. The experience proved overwhelming. The bus dropped me off at the site of the already crowded assembly long before it was scheduled to begin. After several attempts, I found a reasonable vantage point from which I could see a group of Kahane's adherents setting up the stage, all of them wearing yellow T-shirts with the party's logo. There was a relatively small podium at the center of the square decorated with the national flag and the party's banners. About an hour later, I noticed that the devotees had rearranged themselves into a different formation. The tallest and strongest among them gathered closer and surrounded the podium.

The uproar intensified as the rabbi exited his car. Protesters from left-wing movements watched the event from a nearby balcony and started chanting "Fascism will not prevail," while Kahane's supporters greeted him with songs of praise. The rabbi himself seemed to enjoy the commotion. He smiled and paced slowly toward the microphone stand, where he waited for a few long minutes until the loud noise faded away. I cannot recall his exact words, but I remember the electricity in the air. Kahane made large gestures with his hands, altered his tone and facial expressions frequently, and successfully fired up his enthusiastic followers. Near the end of the event, he suddenly burst out into song: he stepped off the podium with a microphone in his hand while his ecstatic followers surrounded him, all of them singing "Our Father Lives On" ("Od Avinu Chai"). Kahane was the actor, and the small podium was his stage.

Arabs

Years later I came across a partial transcript of Kahane's speech that day.[19] It was a simplistic, disorganized, and venomous attack against Arabs and the "traitors from the Left." Kahane referred to the Arabs using terms that I had never heard prior to that day. He called them the "worst animals" and "cockroaches." In other events he preferred to use the term "dogs."[20] Kahane vowed that once his party had gained enough seats in the Knesset, he would use his political clout as leverage and pose a non-negotiable demand to be appointed minister of defense. Then, Kahane promised, he would immediately carry out his plan to transfer all Arabs out of Israel. Those who tried to resist would be subject to harsh treatment or, in his graphic terminology, "their throats would be slashed."[21]

It was during these rallies that Kahane felt most comfortable. In such settings he could speak his mind freely while expounding upon the "conniving nature of the Arabs." He reveled in describing how young Arabs stole the jobs of Jewish men while the latter risked their lives serving in the Israel Defense Forces. Kahane drew a metaphorical straight line between this far-fetched scenario and the economic distress felt by many working-class Jewish families. In many cases, he went even farther. The same young Arab men, Kahane maintained, took advantage of what the rabbi proclaimed was their unfair economic advantage. With their pockets always filled with money, they lured pure, innocent Jewish women of Mizrahi origin into their villages. They would do this by disguising themselves as Jews, enticing the unsuspecting girls, and sweeping them off their feet. Once their deceitful mission was accomplished, everything changed. They would hold the women hostage, force them to cut ties with their families, and abuse them. According to Kahane, no one but he and his followers cared about the fate of these poor, fictitious women. As soon as the members of Kach heard about such a case, they came up with a

sophisticated plan, rescued the girl, and returned her to her family.[22] According to Kahane, by the mid-1980s, 3,500 Jewish women were married to Arabs and thousands more were living out of wedlock. They gave birth to tens of thousands of children who were Jewish by religion (by virtue of their Jewish mothers) but were raised as Arabs.[23] Generally speaking, Kahane was not known for being terribly concerned with facts. I attempted to find the sources for Kahane's data, but my search yielded no results. It is safe to assume that his statements were not based on any reliable source. The degree of segregation between Jews and Arabs, especially in the 1980s, impeded such interfaith relationships. However, his listeners were not too concerned with the exact facts either. Kahane skillfully manipulated his crowd and generated fierce emotional reactions; in doing so he tapped into a well of primordial tribal sentiments among his followers almost at will.[24]

Kahane's willingness to exploit the emotions of his audiences was matched only by his skill at adapting his messages to whatever *crise du jour* arose. If one of these Kahane rallies happened to take place shortly after a terrorist attack against Jews, he shifted the focus of his speech to security issues. Kahane emphasized the threat that the Arab citizens of Israel ("the fifth column" in his words) posed to the Jews and blamed the government for being incompetent in its struggle against terrorism. He praised vigilante Jews who perpetrated retaliatory attacks against Arabs. He pleaded with the riled-up crowd to entrust him with the power to "take care" of the Arabs once and for all. Although Palestinian citizens of Israel were hardly ever involved in these acts of terrorism, this fact had very little effect on Kahane's argument.[25]

Lefties

The Arabs always served as the primary target in Kahane's rhetoric. Yet, the Israeli political Left came in as a close second. Kahane's fiery attacks on the old elite exuded the very essence of populism. He developed his own narrative to explain the failed absorption of immigrants from North Africa and the Middle East in the 1950s, pointing an accusing finger at the Mapai Party. According to his version, the secular and socialist elite deliberately broke down the fabric of the Mizrahi patriarchal family. The secular socialists also stripped the immigrants of the Jewish values and way of life that they had preserved for centuries in the Diaspora. Kahane argued that the master plan of the Left was to impoverish the immigrants and turn them into a powerless and disoriented group that would become fully dependent on the mercies of the Ashkenazi elite. The immigrants were forced to take any job that was offered simply to put bread on the table. This enabled the kibbutzim, who were the darlings of the Labor movements, to exploit them for the sole purpose of enriching their own communities.[26] Kahane's ability to convey messages of nativism and populism were the keys to his political success.

Although few knew it, the rabbi was a prolific writer, publishing books in both English and Hebrew. Based on his public addresses, Kahanism cannot be regarded as a profound ideology.[27] However, Kahane's writings provide a clearer picture of the main pillars of his belief system.[28]

Theocracy

The most significant indication of the gap between Kahane the speaker and Kahane the writer is

manifested by the issue of religious authoritarianism. Although it seems that this part of his worldview was very important for Kahane, it concerned the rabbi that by advancing an explicit agenda in which he advocated turning Israel into a Jewish theocracy, he would alienate his main target audiences.[29] His decision to tone it down in most of his public addresses was strategic and indeed, he was walking a very fine line. Most Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox voters were committed to their own parties. The ultra-Orthodox voters were unlikely to disobey the direct orders of their rabbis, who regularly told them which party to support. The religious Zionist constituents were loyal to the Mafdal and/or to the settlers' network, which denounced Kahane and instructed its followers to cast their votes for parties that were consistent with the settlers' own interests. Thus, Kahane depended on the support of more independent voters. This specific set of voters was strongly attached to Jewish tradition and showed tremendous respect for religious leaders. But in their everyday lives they did not practice Judaism in its most stringent form.[30]

Kahane managed to convey an empowering message of Jewish moral superiority over every other religion or ideology. Most prominently, he pitched Judaism as an alternative to Israeli nationalism. The rabbi rarely mentioned the term "Halakhic state" (theocracy) in an explicit manner; he instead reiterated practices that had been institutionalized in Israel for years and presented them in new packaging. For example, he promised further enforcement of the laws that prevented the desecration of the Shabbat. He condemned the small communities of Conservative and Reform Jews in Israel and made a commitment to end their activities. He offered to outlaw abortion and disqualify marriages that were not approved by the rabbinical courts. As I indicated earlier, according to marriage laws in Israel, Jews must be married through the Orthodox chief rabbinate of Israel. Marriage through other Jewish denominations is not recognized by the state. Israeli citizens can be registered as married by a civilian authority only if the ceremony took place beyond the boundaries of the state. Nothing in the rabbi's pledges was a major departure from the status quo agreement. Hence, the message seemed very reasonable to many Jews who defined themselves as traditional.

Kahane was also successful in linking the theocratic agenda to his nativist and populist ideas. For example, he promised to eliminate the Christian mission in Israel, and to deny other religions, most notably Islam, any official status in the Jewish state. Kahane made a clear reference to the Bible and vowed to change the state's name from "Israel" to "Judea." By suggesting that Israel be renamed Judea, the rabbi was reaching back to the period of the First Temple. At that time, Judea was the southern Israelite kingdom. Unlike its northern neighbor, the Kingdom of Israel, Judea remained loyal to the Davidic lineage, kept its religious center in Jerusalem, and maintained a stringent, orthodox interpretation and practice of Judaism. By making this reference, Kahane once again revealed his plan to restructure the state apparatus on the purest foundations of Judaism and to reject all foreign influences. Another reference favored by Kahane was the heroic tale of the Hashmonayim (Hasmoneans).[31] This group led the Jewish rebellion against the Seleucid dynasty and the Hellenistic Jews, who adopted the customs of the Gentiles during the second century BCE. The story of the rebellion served the Zionist movement in its effort to shape the new image of the deep-rooted and independent Jew. Over the years this event, celebrated every year during the holiday of Hanukah, has become increasingly popular among Israelis from all walks of life. Kahane adopted the popular story and updated it. He portrayed himself as a modern Hasmonean who led the rebellion against the corrupt Jews, whom he deemed "Hellenistic." Like their predecessors, these corrupt Jews adopted foreign ideas, including democracy and secularism, which posed an existential threat to Judaism.[32]

Knesset Member

Kahane lived up to his word. Shortly after he was sworn in to the Knesset, Kahane made his first media-oriented provocation by announcing his plan to open an emigration office in the large Arab village of Umm al-Fahm. He stated that his plan was to offer residents of the village generous financial incentives to leave their homes and the country.[33] This was the first in a long chain of provocations from Kahane's parliamentary chamber. He showered the speaker of the Knesset with a barrage of legislative initiatives, mostly relating to the "Arab problem" in Israel.[34] Among other initiatives, these proposed acts included a demand to separate Jews and Arabs in public swimming pools, a legal ban on romantic relations between Arabs and Jews, and stripping the Arabs of their Israeli citizenship, thereby depriving them of any political rights. One bill that caused particular outrage was an amendment to the penal code that would impose a mandatory death penalty on any non-Jew who harmed or attempted to harm a Jew, as well as the automatic deportation of the perpetrator's family and neighbors from Israel or the West Bank. Kahane also endorsed the legalization of vigilantism and wanted the state to demonstrate extreme leniency to Jews who physically attacked Arabs.[35] Many Israelis were alarmed by these proposed bills, and they had a good reason: it reminded them of the Nuremberg Laws of 1935.[36] Kahane's activities also made him increasingly unpopular in the Knesset. Parliamentarians from most parties kept their distance and made sure not to be seen anywhere near him. However, there were a few exceptions to the rule, and a small number of Knesset members from the ultra-Orthodox parties saw nothing particularly wrong with Kahane's agenda.

A Holy Alliance

The 1984 elections, which drew attention from around the world due to Kahane's provocative campaign, were marked by another development that generated much less attention. A new ultra-Orthodox party, Shas (Sepharadim Shomrei Torah, a Hebrew acronym for the Sephardic Torah Guardians) managed to win four Knesset seats. The party was formed two years earlier, as a local initiative, by a group of young, Mizrahi, ultra-Orthodox activists from Jerusalem.[37] In its early days, it was led by Nissim Zeev and Shlomo Dayan. They first mobilized in an attempt to gain representation in the Jerusalem city council.

The Haredi ultra-Orthodox society was an intensified microcosm of the tense ethnic relations in Israeli Jewish society. The Haredi subculture had always been dominated by the Ashkenazi rabbinical elite who perceived ultra-Orthodox Jews of Mizrahi descent as inferior. Sephardic theological and political leaders were expected to follow the dictates of the Ashkenazis. Even their most brilliant students were generally prevented from studying in prestigious Ashkenazi yeshivas, and those who were admitted had to learn Yiddish and to follow the dress code and prayer style espoused by their Ashkenazi counterparts. Ultra-Orthodox Ashkenazim and Mizrahim did not reside in the same neighborhood. They traveled in segregated social circles and hardly ever married members outside their respective groups. Politically, the ultra-Orthodox Mizrahim were traditionally represented by the ultra-Orthodox Ashkenazi party, Agudat Yisrael. Mizrahi leaders were at times added to this party's Knesset faction, but they were usually marginalized.

Rabbi Elazar Shach was one of the most significant theological authorities in Israel. He led

the highly conservative Lithuanian bloc and was head of the prestigious Ponevezh Yeshiva in the city of Bnei Brak. For years he was unhappy because the Hassidic leaders of Agudat Yisrael mistreated his own Ashkenazi followers as well as the Mizrahi Haredis. This dissatisfaction generated a new political alliance between Rabbi Shach and the former Sephardic chief rabbi of Israel, Ovadia Yosef. With the blessing of these two important leaders, the Shas party catalyzed a revolution in Israeli politics.[38]

Shach and Yosef had another thing in common: they were both completely misunderstood by the Israeli Left. Both were thought of as dovish as they were known for their objection to the settlements and their willingness to accept an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories. The leaders of the Labor Party failed to understand that Shach and Yosef's attitudes were anchored in a world-view very different from their own. Shach followed the Talmudic Midrash of the Three Oaths, an old survival code that prohibited the Jews from provoking the nations of the world and from any attempt to expedite the redemption process or the coming of the Messiah. Many ultra-Orthodox believed that the establishment of Israel as a Jewish state *and* the later creation of the settlements (which the religious Zionist rabbinical establishment saw as part of the redemption of the Jewish People) violated the Oaths. Furthermore, it constituted a risky and arrogant intervention by humans in a divine process. Rabbi Yosef followed a similar line of reasoning. He formed an opinion based on the "pikuach nefesh" rule, which places importance upon the saving of human life even above any religious command. Yosef argued that settling the territories put Jewish lives at stake. In so doing, he limited the rule by giving precedence to people belonging specifically to the Jewish ethnicity. However, this important specification was either intentionally or unintentionally disregarded by the leaders of the Labor party. The latter refused to accept the fact that both Shach and Yosef's philosophies stood in sharp contradiction to theirs.

By overlooking this divide, secular left-wing leaders failed to understand that the most significant ultra-Orthodox communities loathed Israeli secularism and viewed it as a misguided deviation from the Jewish People's historical trajectory. Like their counterparts around the world, the ultra-Orthodox communities in Israel were reclusive. They believed in "Dina Demalchuta Dina" or adherence to the "law of the land."[39] For many of them, the secular Zionist law was on the same level as the laws of the Gentiles. To this day, few Jewish groups are as committed to the literal meaning of the "Chosen People" concept and the notion of Jewish superiority as are the ultra-Orthodox (and to a certain degree the Orthodox).[40] One example of this sentiment is their morning prayer, which includes the following: "Blessed art Thou, Lord our G-d, King of the Universe, who did not make me a Gentile [non-Jew] … a slave … and a woman"—in that particular order.[41] Another feature of the ultra-Orthodox, which was mentioned earlier, has been their commitment to maintaining their autonomy and way of life. Members of the community who sought the help of state authorities in resolving intracommunal disputes were ousted. Even worse, anyone who filed charges against a member of his own community was considered a "moser" ("traitor," literally, "informer") who should be punished severely, even by death.[42]

Kahane was well aware of these nuances. He had much more in common with the ultra-Orthodox Knesset members than with any other group of legislators. Indeed, Rabbi Yitzhak Peretz, who led the Shas Party in the 1984 elections, responded to Kahane's election very positively. Unlike other political leaders, including those from the right wing, who made every effort to distance themselves from Kahane, Peretz indicated that although he had never met Kahane, he was very pleased that another Jewish patriot was elected to the Knesset to "balance

out the picture there."[43] This was not surprising. Throughout the following decades it became clear that the leaders of Shas shared many of Kahane's ideas, especially his deep sense of nativism and his insistence that Israel be turned into a theocracy.[44]

A Short-Lived Parliamentary Career

The turmoil caused by Kahane's parliamentary hyperactivism generated harsh reactions in the Knesset and beyond. Shortly after his highly publicized attempt to visit Umm al-Fahm for the purpose of "promoting his emigration agenda," the Knesset directorate downgraded his parliamentary immunity. This step enabled the police to prevent him from entering Arab population centers and provoking their residents. Aware of Kahane's dependence on media exposure, Israel's state-run broadcasting authority, which in the absence of other outlets had a monopoly over the electronic media at the time, took an unprecedented step and decided to deprive him of all media coverage. Kahane, who resented democratic ideas and practices and vowed to abolish them, did not hesitate to resort to them when it suited his purposes. He appealed the decision to the Supreme Court and won.[45] This was only the first in a long list of legal battles. Shlomo Hillel, the Speaker of the Knesset, was embarrassed by the nature of Kahane's proposed bills and prevented them from being brought to the plenum. Kach returned to the court and argued that the speaker had deprived the party of its basic democratic right to freedom of speech.[46]

Surprisingly, despite his political savvy, Kahane overlooked the warning signs that repeatedly appeared. Prior to both the 1981 and the 1984 elections, the Central Elections Committee was approached by parties and individuals who demanded the disqualification of the Kach Party on the grounds of its racist and anti-democratic agenda. In both cases the High Court of Justice allowed Kahane to stand for election in the absence of a law that stipulated concrete conditions under which a political party could be disqualified from running for office. These past experiences with the Court had provided Kahane with an apparent false sense of confidence. He overlooked the fact that the justices explicitly stated that in the case that such legal framework existed, the outcome could have been different.

A year after Kahane first occupied a seat in the Israeli legislature, the Knesset decided to step up to the challenge presented by the Court. It introduced a significant amendment to the Knesset's basic law in which they specified the contingencies of Israel's electoral processes (found in chap. 7a of the basic law—Knesset). The Knesset voted in favor of adopting a "defending democracy" doctrine. This new clause enabled Israeli citizens to bring parties to a hearing before the Central Elections Committee if their platforms openly called for the abolishment of Israeli democracy, advocated racism, or both. The purpose of the hearing was to determine whether the party's ideology indeed violated the constitutional and moral principles of the State of Israel.[47]

The amendment responded directly to Kahane's provocations. However, several right-wing parliamentarians agreed to give their support to the amendment on the condition that it include a third basis for disqualification: those parties that rejected the principle that Israel was a "Jewish state" would be ineligible to run for office. This additional basis was aimed at protecting the Jewish character of the state rather than its democratic one. This was a signal to Arab Knesset members not to take their right to freedom of speech for granted. Unlike radical right-wing parties, Arab parties had traditionally been excluded from the policy-making process and thus

posed no real threat to the Jewish state. Hence, in practical terms, the addition to the amendment was redundant. It did, however, serve another purpose. It allowed politicians from the Right, who chose not to stand up in defense of Kahane's freedoms, to show that they were equally tough on Arab and left-wing elements. By doing so, they essentially hoped to mobilize some of Kahane's voters in the event that Kach was indeed disqualified. In retrospect, this amendment proved to be a dangerous slippery slope.[48] In the following decades members of the Knesset altered the law and chose to ignore its original purpose, elaborating and distorting the amendment. It became a vehicle for restricting the Palestinian citizens' political freedoms while allowing the radical Right to act freely and advance its agenda without interference.

Back in 1985, Kahane chose to ignore the amendment to the law. He did not even take notice of the subsequent adjustment of the penal code, which turned racist slurs into criminal acts.[49] When the first Palestinian Intifada broke out in December of 1987, Kahane was presented with an irresistible temptation; it seemed like a golden opportunity for expanding his support base. Flattering public opinion polls indicated that Kach had the potential to increase its parliamentary representation from one seat in 1984 to seven seats in 1988.[50] Kahane grew smug. He ignored the legal counsel of his lawyers. Rather than toning down his message, he intensified it and increased his provocations. By escalating his rhetoric, he launched his party over a cliff.[51] The High Court of Justice, which finally had legal grounds for critically assessing the party's ideas, did not come to its aid. It rejected Kach's appeal and thus sealed its fate.[52]

Moledet

In 1988, as Election Day approached, observers of Israeli politics speculated that Kahane's frustrated constituents would shift their support to the newly established 'Homeland' Party known in Hebrew as Moledet, which was headed by the retired and decorated General Rehavam "Gandhi" Zeevi.[53] At first glance, Moledet seemed like Kach's logical heir. Like Kahane, Zeevi also championed the policy of transferring the Arabs. Yet, under closer scrutiny, a wide gap became apparent between the two parties.

Kahane, whose main agenda was the removal of all foreign elements from the Jewish state, advocated the forceful expulsion of Arabs from Israel and the occupied territories. Zeevi's reasoning and consequent plan was different. At that point, the radical Right parties, which supported the formal annexation of the West Bank to Israel, were divided by an ongoing debate. The question at hand was what status Israel should grant to the 1.25 million Palestinians who lived in the West Bank. Zeevi argued that the only option for a successful annexation was an Arab-free West Bank. Hence, he promoted the idea of population transfer, either by way of an agreement between Israel and its neighbors or through a state-run system that would offer West Bank Palestinians financial incentives to emigrate.[54] In his televised campaign advertisements, Zeevi tried to blur the lines between his and Kahane's "transfer" concepts in an attempt to appeal to the latter's supporters.[55] His attempt was unsuccessful. When the ballots were counted, the numbers simply did not match his expectations. Moledet gained only two seats in the Knesset, and exit polls indicated that its votes did not come from Kahane's constituents.[56]

This surprisingly meager outcome had little to do with the exact type of transfer policy that Zeevi vowed to implement. It had much deeper roots. Zeevi, a Sabra of Ashkenazi origin, was the ultimate insider, the exact opposite of Kahane. His hawkish worldview was rooted in the

secular ideology of Ahdut HaAvoda Poalei Zion. As a teenager Zeevi joined a socialist youth movement, Mahanot Haolim, and at a later stage he joined the Haganah. Then he signed up with the Palmach and, following the state's declaration of independence, he rose to the rank of general in the IDF. After he was honorably discharged from the military, Zeevi assumed various official roles, including the one of counterterrorism advisor to Yitzhak Rabin during his first tenure as prime minister. Zeevi's background meant that he had no affinity to Kahane's constituents. In the late 1960s, he even referred to Mizrahi Jews as "Levantines," which has a derogatory connotation in Hebrew.[57] He failed to understand that Kahane had reshaped the ideology of the radical Right and had offered his followers, most of whom were outsiders like him, an empowering message. Rather than climbing the slippery "Sabra-Israeli ladder," he presented them with a superior one: the "Jewish ladder." Kahane's message was inclusive and exclusive at the same time—inclusive for the Orthodox as well as the Mizrahi and underprivileged Jews, and exclusive for non-Jews and the secular Sabra elite to which Zeevi belonged.

Passing the Torch: Kahane's True Successors

Yoav Peled analyzed the voting patterns demonstrated by Kahane's former supporters in development towns in the 1988 elections. His conclusion came as a surprise. Peled discovered that many of Kach's supporters gave their votes to one of two ultra-Orthodox parties: the well established Ashkenazi Agudat Yisrael or the emerging Mizrahi force of Shas. Neither party was considered a member of the radical right-wing camp at the time.[58] Together, the two parties boosted their political power when they acquired five additional seats in the Knesset.[59] A third ultra-Orthodox, Ashkenazi party, Rabbi Shach's Degel Hatora appeared on the political scene just prior to the elections and secured two more seats. The ultra-Orthodox parties' unprecedented electoral success in the 1988 elections turned out to be a significant milestone for the Israeli political system. These parties, which traditionally relied on the votes of their well-defined constituencies and made little effort to expand their bases, suddenly increased their power by more than 100 percent. Even so, this fact generated only mild interest among the general Israeli public at the time.[60]

In 1988, a year after the beginning of the Intifada, the Israeli parliament was still at a standstill due to the continuous draw between right- and left-wing camps. The ultra-Orthodox parties were still perceived as parochial and pragmatic. The common belief was that they would join a left-wing-led coalition as easily as they would join one led by the right wing. The prevalent worldview was that their support was up for grabs and could be bought by the highest bidder. In actuality, this could not have been farther from the truth. The expanding ultra-Orthodox constituencies had already sent clear signals to their leaders that the days of political pragmatism were over.

Meanwhile, the disqualification of his party did not deter the tireless Kahane. Once again, he either deliberately ignored or was aloof to the fact that his days as a parliamentarian were over and that the torch had been passed to new political actors. Kahane continued to tour the country and the world, spreading his gospel and raising funds.

On the evening of November 5, 1990, Kahane was wrapping up his speech at the Marriot Hotel in Manhattan. The title of the talk was "The Jewish Idea." Only sixty people attended the lecture, a far smaller audience than he was used to; but this did nothing to stop Kahane from making fiery comments concerning the tide of anti-Semitism that was supposedly looming over

American Jewry. He urged his listeners to immigrate to Israel in order to save themselves. A man dressed as an Orthodox Jew approached Kahane at the end of the talk and most likely caused him no sense of alarm; Kahane was accustomed to engaging in conversations with his followers. However, this person was not a Kahane adherent. He was thirty-six-year-old El Sayyid Nosair, an Egyptian-born, American citizen and a radical Islamic activist. According to eyewitnesses, he was smiling at the rabbi when he pulled out his gun and shot Kahane in the neck and chest. The wounds were mortal. The rabbi, who for years championed the use of violence against Arabs, fell victim to what was later identified as the one of the first jihadi attacks in the West.[61]

Kahane's Legacy

Shortly after his assassination, the fate of Kahane's legacy seemed grim. In the absence of its leader, the Kach Party fell to pieces, suffering from a lack of charisma and political skills among his disciples. The remaining party activists struggled with Kahane's son, Binyamin Zeev, over the party's leadership, legacy, and assets. Eventually the crippled party split into two factions: Kach, which was led by three of Kahane's aides,[62] and Kahane Chai (Kahane Lives), which Binyamin Zeev had established. Both parties were banned from taking part in the 1992 elections.[63]

Two years later, another nail seemed to have been added to the coffin of Kahane's legacy. On Friday, February 2, 1994, at 5:00 a.m., the city of Hebron was dark and quiet. While most of the city's residents were sound asleep, thirteen Jews and eight hundred Muslims congregated for morning prayers in two separate halls at the Cave of the Patriarchs. The Jews, who were celebrating the holiday of Purim, were confined to the synagogue in the Abraham Hall. The Muslims commemorated the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan and gathered in the mosque at Isaac Hall. Baruch Goldstein, a military physician in the IDF reserves, entered the building wearing his IDF uniform and carrying a Galil assault rifle. A native of New York City, Goldstein was a devout student of Kahane and a party activist who had represented Kach in the Kiryat Arba city council. On that morning, though, he had no intentions of praying. He paced quickly through the ancient halls and entered the mosque from the exit door in the back. The Muslim worshipers, who were facing the opposite direction, did not even notice him. Goldstein positioned himself and started spraying the room with automatic fire. He calmly continued to shoot and change magazines until a group of worshipers managed to hit him with a fire extinguisher. The results were devastating. Twenty-nine Palestinians died and 125 were wounded.[64]

The attack took place less than six months after the signing of the Oslo Accords and threatened the fragile peace process. The Israeli cabinet was taken by complete surprise. Prime Minister Rabin and his aides were infuriated. They looked for a response that would appease the Palestinians and the rest of the world, and briefly entertained the idea of removing the Jewish settlers from Hebron. However, the settlers' network was already too strong and the cabinet decided on other options that carried substantially fewer political risks. They formed a formal committee to investigate the events led by Chief Justice Meir Shamgar and added the already declining Kach and Kahane Chai to the list of terrorist groups under the Prevention of Terror Ordinance. This step banned both groups from any political activity. Their offices were closed, and simple acts such as wearing a Kach T-shirt or praising Kahane's ideas became criminal offenses that could carry a sentence of up to three years in prison.

At first glance, the highly sophisticated settlers' network had prevailed, while Kach seemed to have been on the path to oblivion; but this was not the case. Neither the death of Kahane nor the outlawing of his party had eradicated Kahanism.[65] Kahane's ideas formed the missing link that could unify the Israeli peripheries, parts of the religious Zionist camp, and many ultra-Orthodox communities into a much larger and formidable, albeit less cohesive, political network. His all-encompassing yet simple message appealed to more segments of Israeli Jewish society than any other radical right-wing ideology.[66] In the days following Kahane's assassination, Yossi Sarid, who at the time was a Knesset member of the Ratz Party (HaTnuaa LeZkhuyot HaEzrah VeLeShalom—The Movement for Civil Rights and Peace) and one of Kahane's fiercest foes, waxed prophetic. He told the Israeli journalist Nahum Barnea, "Kahanism is now a way of life … Kahanism is moving towards the center while Kahane remained on the outside."[67] In this way, then, Kahane's tireless activism was not in vain.

By the early 1990s, the Israeli radical Right seemed to be progressing on two parallel yet separate paths. The first of these was forged by the settlers' network, which was committed to one central objective: settling as many Jews as possible in the West Bank and thus perpetuating Israeli control over this territory. Interestingly, and despite the fact that they had a different reasoning for their settlement activities, this group adopted the strategies employed by the mostly socialist pioneers of the pre-state era. The settlers had already realized that most Israelis had little interest in their mission and that the exclusive reliance on the electoral process would actually undermine their objectives. Hence, they diverted their efforts toward the state, gaining a significant degree of control over governmental ministries and state agencies that were in charge of allocating vital resources to the settlement enterprise.[68]

The settlers' network seemed to be unaware of or reluctant to acknowledge the other, much wider path that the public followed. Together, the Likud, Shas, and Kach parties offered a vague yet powerful message, which embraced the peripheries and rejected the center. The powerful message of the new Right portrayed traditional Jewish values as a superior alternative to the secular Israeli culture. It offered a pure divide between right and wrong. The old Labor elite was accused of deliberately marginalizing Jewish values in the state, taking advantage of the pure and innocent Mizrahi immigrants, and being far too sympathetic toward the Arabs. This perspective was a breath of fresh air for the bitter constituents on the Jewish periphery. It enabled them to reassess their social standing in the Israeli society and claim the status they felt they deserved.[69]

4
The Radical Right in Jerusalem and Beyond

On December 15, 1987, the Minister of industry and trade Ariel Sharon inaugurated his new home in a ceremony that was crowded to capacity. The event took place just one week after the outbreak of the First Intifada. Sharon's housewarming drew worldwide attention because his apartment was located in the Wittenberg House in the heart of the Muslim Quarter of Jerusalem's Old City. In the twenty years that had elapsed since the 1967 conquest of the East Jerusalem, Israel acted cautiously when Jews who were associated with the growing settlers' network tried to expand their reach to the Muslim Quarter. This quarter has always been considered one of the most sensitive points of friction between Jews and Arabs.[1] However, Sharon didn't appear to be bothered by the riots that spread like wildfire in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip during the preceding week. Furthermore, he did not seem to be losing any sleep over the fact that East Jerusalem vendors had declared a commercial strike in protest of his decision to reside in the Old City.

On the contrary, Sharon enjoyed the considerable attention showered on him by the media. In mock innocence, he explained that residency in the Old City was an ideal solution for him since the daily trips from his home in Sycamore Ranch (Havat Shikmim) in the Negev to his Jerusalem office and back were taxing him. And when critics complained of the high costs associated with securing Sharon's home, he scorned them, saying that he was not the only Jew who chose to live in the Muslim Quarter. As a case in point, he noted that the Crown of the Priests Yeshiva (Ateret Cohanim) was located quite close to his home.[2] However, behind this seemingly casual mention of the yeshiva lay a more complex story. Ateret Cohanim was a clique within the settlers' network. It emerged as one of the two main religious Zionist groups that settled—and continue to settle—Jews in densely populated Palestinian areas located in East Jerusalem and the surrounding villages. Sharon was one of Ateret Cohanim's most enthusiastic and active supporters.
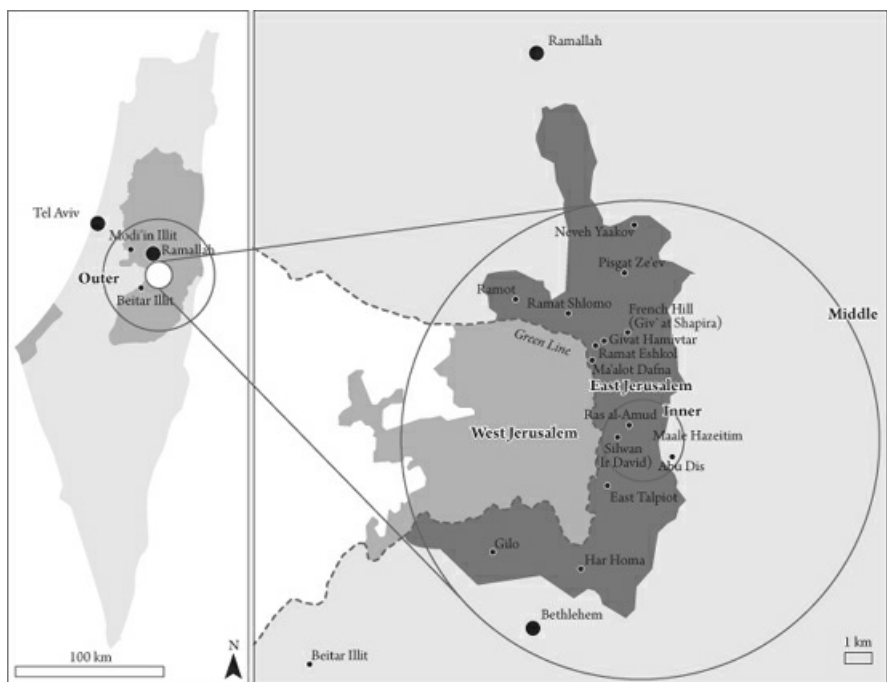
Figure 4.1 THE THREE CIRCLES OF JEWISH SETTLEMENTS AROUND JERUSALEM *Source:* Settlement names and dates of establishment were collected form www.peace.now.org/il, December 2, 2010

Settlements around Jerusalem—The Outer Circle

For those who are not well versed in the history and geography of the city, a demographic map of Jerusalem and its environs may be bewildering at first glance. Jewish and Palestinian neighborhoods crisscross one another in a chaotic mosaic that more closely resembles an abstract painting than a map. In order to minimize some of this confusion, it can be helpful to divide the post-1967 Jewish settlement in Jerusalem into three circles: settlements that surround Jerusalem, Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem, and Jewish strongholds in the Old City.

The Jewish settlements of Modi'in Illit and Beitar Illit in the outer geographical circle area are in fact an extension of settlements in the West Bank.[3] The main difference between these settlements and others lies in the demographic characteristics of their inhabitants. The proximity of both settlements to the Green Line implies that their residents were not necessarily influenced by ideological motives. Settlements that were built a few miles beyond the Green Line and which lie closer to the central metropolitan areas of Israel (i.e., Tel Aviv and Jerusalem) were a kind of magnet for middle-class Israelis. The latter sought to improve their housing without having to move to the relatively cheap peripheries in the northern or southern parts of the country, where they would miss out on the advantages associated with living closer to the center.

During the 1980s there was a significant surge in development that provided a powerful impetus to build within this circle. High birthrates of the ultra-Orthodox community made it the Jewish group with the most significant rates of overall growth, and therefore finding accommodations was not easy. The Haredim preferred to live in urban communities that were as isolated as possible from external influences. Over time, various Israeli governments granted living stipends to Haredim who focused on studying the Torah. These modest stipends were

enough to discourage many of them from entering the labor market. However, they also deepened their poverty and prevented ultra-Orthodox families from improving their housing status in urban centers such as Jerusalem or Bnei Brak in suburban Tel Aviv where properties have always been pricey. Fortunately for the Haredim, there is a well-established solid majority in Jewish Israeli society that supports the perpetuation of Israel's sovereignty in Jerusalem. Many Israelis are not even familiar with the geography of Jerusalem so that as far as they are concerned, construction in the West Bank areas adjacent to the city is considered legitimate and not an act of settlement.[4] Furthermore, until the late 1980s the Israeli political system was split between the Likud and Labor parties in such a way that in order to form a coalition government, each needed the support of the ultra-Orthodox parties. The ultra-Orthodox politicians exploited this situation to the utmost of their abilities. Despite the fact that their constituents and many of their prominent rabbis were drawn to values that were closely associated with the radical Right, they still chose not to commit to any of the political blocs.[5] They used their political leverage to demand the establishment of new isolated neighborhoods that could accommodate the growing population of their communities. The solution was quite simple: new settlements designated for the ultra-Orthodox population were built on the peripheries of the main Israeli cities, beyond the Green Line. The two largest of these settlements are Beitar Illit, located less than four miles south of Jerusalem, and Modi'in Illit, which lies near the city of Modi'in. The driving time from Modi'in Illit to Bnei Brak and Jerusalem, the two most significant ultra-Orthodox population centers inside sovereign Israel, is approximately forty minutes.

The Elusive Judaization of East Jerusalem—The Middle Circle

Twenty-eight Palestinian villages lie within the outskirts of Jerusalem that constitute the middle circle. Already in 1967, a short while after the war, the Israeli government deemed this circle to be an integral part of the city. By January 1968, when the memory of the severance of Mount Scopus from West Jerusalem during the 1948 war was still a fresh wound for the country's leaders, the government expropriated land in the northern part of East Jerusalem in order to build the "Bolt Neighborhoods."[6] The new boundaries tripled the city's original size and were established by a committee headed by Rehavam Zeevi, assistant chief of operations of the General Staff at the time. The actual annexation took place in four major stages. The first stage included expropriation of lands north to Jerusalem as well as in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City. The goal of the Israeli government and the Jerusalem city council was to expand the municipal area of Jerusalem as much as possible while annexing a minimum number of Palestinians.

The second phase of annexation began in 1970 and was intended to lay the ground for the establishment of the "Ring Neighborhoods" that grew to surround Jerusalem on all sides. Ten years later Israel annexed more lands north to Jerusalem and thus created a 4.3-mile strip of Jewish settlement between Mount Scopus and Neveh Yaakov, the northernmost neighborhood in Greater Jerusalem at the time, constituting the third phase of annexation. The settlements in this strip, most notably Pisgat Zeev (established in 1982), were almost attached to the Palestinian communities of Shuafat and Beit Hanina. A decade later, a similar plan was implemented in southern Jerusalem. As the fourth phase, in 1991 Jabal Abu Ghneim—later renamed the Har Homa neighborhood—was appropriated. By doing so Israel created a buffer zone on the southern end of the city separating it from Bethlehem.[7]

The main thrust of settlement activity in the two outer circles was initiated by the governments of Israel. Most of the Jewish neighborhoods, during Prime Minister Levi Eshkol's tenure, were built away from villages and from other Palestinian residential areas as a means by which to avoid international crises. These efforts weren't always successful, and tension between the two peoples persisted and increased even more during Prime Minister Golda Meir's term. During this time, plans were also put forth for construction in the innermost circle of the city. This area includes the Dome of the Rock, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the Western Wall, holy sites of all three monotheistic religions. For this reason, activity in this part of the city attracted heightened attention from onlookers worldwide.

The Holy Basin—The Inner Circle

As mentioned earlier, in 1967 Israel claimed sovereignty over the Western Wall that was part of the external wall of the Temple Mount as well as the Jewish Quarter. However, the administration adopted cautious policies toward the Temple Mount itself. The government refrained from becoming directly involved in the administration of the holy site and instead left the job in the hands of the Jerusalem Islamic Waqf (Islamic Trust). The state took great care while enforcing its laws within this sensitive complex. With respect to security, Israel took particular precautions, using Israeli security forces to surround the compound and inspect those wishing to pass through its gates. At the same time, soldiers and police were issued clear instructions to avoid entering the complex's main area unless under exceptional security circumstances.

The efforts made by the state to minimize political friction would be tested to the utmost when the radical right-wing association Elad entered this explosive realm.[8] Ostensibly, Ateret Cohanim and Elad were autonomous groups with no connection to one another and presumably without connections to the settlers' network. However, these associations actually had strong ties to the powerful network. Though they did not receive instructions from its leaders, in practice they served as its Jerusalem offshoot. Like their counterparts in the West Bank they held close political ties with Ariel Sharon and systematically, throughout the years, they acquired control of a number of relevant state institutions.[9] The heads of these associations, Mattityahu Dan and David Beeri, were located at the Jerusalem network's center and regulated its activities. Both men generally avoided the media.[10]

The Enabler

The person most responsible for the success of these groups was Dr. Irving Moskowitz. Even though the doctor holds responsibility for changing the appearance of Jerusalem beyond recognition, his name remains unknown to most Israelis up to the present time. Moskowitz was born in New York in 1928, grew up in Milwaukee, and completed his medical studies at the University of Wisconsin. After working for several years as a doctor in Long Beach, California, he turned to the business world where fortune smiled upon him. Initially, he made his money by operating retirement homes. By the age of forty he had already become a rich man who could afford the establishment of a philanthropic fund to promote those causes dear to his heart.[11]

The Moskowitz Foundation carried out many education and welfare projects in the United

States and elsewhere around the world. However, more than any other cause, the multimillionaire had a strong desire to leave his mark on Israel. Moskowitz developed an extensive network of contacts with right-wing politicians in the United States and in Israel, and channeled financial support to settlers in the West Bank, to religious Zionist yeshivas, and to Bar Ilan University.[12] But the issue of utmost importance to Moskowitz was the settlement of Jews in all parts of Greater Jerusalem. In 1977 when the minister of agriculture, Ariel Sharon, was chosen to head the Ministerial Committee for Settlement, the doctor recognized the opportunity to implement his vision.[13] As Moskowitz's riches grew (a great deal from the retirement homes and gambling club franchises he owned), so did his involvement in the Judaization of East Jerusalem. Over the years, the Moskowitz Foundation allocated tens of millions of dollars toward buying houses and lands in the Muslim and Christian Quarters of the Old City, and in the Arab villages of Abu Dis, Sheikh Jarrah, Ras al-Amud, and Silwan.

The Absentee Property Law provided the main legal framework for these operations. In the early days of the state, the law was used to confiscate assets of Palestinians who fled or were expelled to enemy countries and to facilitate the reallocation of these assets for the settlement of Jewish immigrants. In December 1977, Sharon and Shmuel Tamir, the justice minister, expanded the reach of the Absentee Property Law further, a mechanism that quickly became the main instrument used by Moskowitz and his proxies. The new procedure obliged Palestinian West Bank residents who owned property in East Jerusalem to contact the Custodian of Absentee Property, an arm of the Ministry of Finance, and prove that they were entitled to the asset. Such proof was required in order for residents to continue as the rightful owners of the property in question.[14] Members of the Jerusalem settlers' network searched frequently and diligently for properties whose legal owners were not aware of the new procedure or, for various other reasons, could not meet its requirements.

Ateret Cohanim

Ateret Cohanim was first among the groups generously financed by Moskowitz. The association engaged in the systematic renewal of Jewish settlement in the Muslim Quarter. From the earliest days of its operations, a clear division could be seen between its spiritual leaders[15] and its more active members, most notably Mattityahu Dan.[16] The association's official publications focused on its educational activities, primarily the Ateret Yerushalayim Yeshiva that was established in 1983. The Ateret Yeshiva is located in the building that until the outbreak of the Arab Revolt of 1936 was home to the Torat Chaim Yeshiva. The house was deserted shortly after the outbreak of the revolt. Rabbi Shlomo Aviner, the director of the renewed yeshiva, was a prominent student of Rabbi Kook, who had studied at the Torat Chaim Yeshiva. Over the years, Aviner studied and taught in various yeshivas that had been established and led by Rabbi Kook's followers, including the one in the Keshet settlement in the Golan Heights, and in Beit El. However, it appears that the Ateret Yerushalayim Yeshiva and the settlement of Jews in the Muslim Quarter (or the renewed Jewish Quarter, as it is called in the Yeshiva's publications) are the crowning achievements of his work.[17]

Besides running the yeshiva, the heads of the association sought to consolidate a Jewish hold on the Muslim Quarter. In 1985, the Custodian of Absentee Property already possessed twenty-six assets in the Muslim Quarter, the majority of which were handed over to the association to be leased or rented. This didn't seem to be enough for the activists of Ateret Cohanim who wanted

to expand their control of the region further, and the best way to do this was by purchasing Arab-owned property directly from its owners. In this venture, the association worked like a well-oiled intelligence organization. In addition to identifying absentee properties, they managed a network of informants who provided information about assets in the Muslim Quarter that were up for sale. The main challenge they faced was the Palestinians' reluctance to sell their property to Jews. In response, the group recruited Palestinians who were willing to serve as straw men. For a generous fee, these Palestinians presented sellers with sizable financial bids for houses and apartments. As many of these structures were in precarious condition, the offers often exceeded the property value and were therefore difficult to turn down.[18]

Meanwhile, Moskowitz opened his checkbook for almost any entrepreneur that proposed ideas for cementing the Jewish presence in East Jerusalem. Two of the main figures in the settler's network of the West Bank, Benny Elon and Hanan Porat, won his enthusiastic support when they asked for his assistance in establishing the Beit Orot Hesder Yeshiva (The Hesder Yeshiva program joins advanced religious studies with service in the IDF). For this project, Moskowitz earmarked a lot in Jerusalem between the Mount of Olives and Mount Scopus, which already belonged to him. The yeshiva was inaugurated in 1990 in an official ceremony attended by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who expressed his admiration both for the entrepreneurs who facilitated the establishment of the Yeshiva and for the rabbis who led it.[19]

Elad

The group with the closest ties to Moskowitz is Elad, which started to take shape during the years of the First Intifada. The founder and man most associated with Elad, David Beeri, a former student in both Merkaz HaRav and Ateret Cohanim yeshivas, served as deputy commander of the Duvdevan elite IDF unit, known for its clandestine operations in the West Bank.[20] One of the fronts where he operated during his military service was Silwan, a Palestinian village located south of and very close to the Temple Mount (less than half a mile south of Al-Aqsa Mosque). At the outskirts of this village sits an archaeological site known for its findings from the Chalcolithic period and the Early Bronze Age. According to some historians of the Jewish people, between the eighth and sixth centuries BCE, this was the location of the City of David, which was the governing center of the later Kingdom of Judah. During the course of the hundreds of years of Byzantine and Arabic rule, Silwan was sparsely populated. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the first Jewish family, whose last name was Meyuhas, settled there. A decade later, Jews of Yemenite decent established a neighborhood called Kfar Hashiloach. In the early twentieth century, Baron Edmond de Rothschild purchased land in this village through the PJCA (Palestine Jewish Colonization Association) in order to carry out archaeological excavations.[21] The tension between Jews and Palestinians reached one of its first climaxes in the events of 1929 and led to a reduction in the Jewish presence in the area. During the Arab Revolt of 1936, there were no longer Jewish residents in the region and, when the fighting died down in 1948, Silwan and its sparse remaining populace found itself under Jordanian control. Ironically, after the conquest of the area by Israel in 1967, the village burgeoned into a large Palestinian neighborhood.[22]

Beeri had reservations about then-mayor Teddy Kollek's cautious approach to the settlement of Jews in Palestinian neighborhoods. At a later stage, Beeri said that he highly resented the fact that in order to visit the ancient historical site of the Kingdom of David, he had to hide his Jewish

identity. He decided to take action. Beeri retired from the IDF and devoted all his time to finding lands in Silwan that were legally purchased by Jews in the nineteenth century and were transferred back and forth during the numerous upheavals of the twentieth century. Most of these lands belonged to PJCA. To simplify and expedite the process, Beeri approached KKL (the Jewish National Fund), which had assumed the responsibilities for most of the lands in the area. He volunteered to take on the original role of "Locator of Jewish Property." Since the KKL had been infiltrated by the settlers' network years earlier, Beeri's offer was accepted. The many changes in the village's terrain during Jordanian and Israeli rule made it difficult to track down the location and delineations of exact lots. Nevertheless, Beeri did not allow these difficulties to discourage him. He conducted meticulous research on any property he deemed to be previously owned by Jews. He crafted together pieces of information into a legal-historical mosaic. When the resultant picture came clear and Beeri presumed he had enough information to convince the authorities, he systematically petitioned the appropriate institutions, demanding that Palestinian residents be displaced from their homes.[23] Beeri's main assignment was associated with the Custodian of Absentee Property and the Jewish National Fund. These two institutions, an official state agency and a semi-state body respectively, found ample time to work with the energetic entrepreneur who sought neither pecuniary reward nor personal benefit.

In 1987, one Palestinian family was woken by a loud noise. Earlier that year Beeri set out to take control of the Abbasi House and pressured the Custodian of Absentee Property to declare the owners of the property absentee. The officials heeded his request. The governmental Amidar Housing Company, pursuant to Minister Sharon's policies, received ownership of the property and immediately rented it to Beeri and his people. Since the house was still inhabited by a Palestinian family who refused to leave, members of Elad took it over in the dead of night while the occupants were asleep. It was later discovered that the Abbasi House was declared absentee property on the basis of a false affidavit filed by Elad.[24] Rumors circulated with increasing frequency claiming that the transfer of assets in Silwan was conducted by dishonest means. This led the Labor government, headed by Yitzhak Rabin—who already had his reservations about the populating of Arab neighborhoods by Jews—to establish a commission to investigate the matter. Haim Klugman, director general of the Justice Ministry, was appointed to head the commission. Klugman's report was devastating. It unveiled the branched structure of the network and confirmed that close connections existed between the ideological associations, the Ministry of Housing, the Custodian of Absentee Property, the Jewish National Fund, and the contractors that were put in charge of the construction in East Jerusalem.[25] According to the report, this complex network of agencies, groups, and individuals, operated in an extremely smooth and efficient manner. Representatives from the associations were tasked with locating absentee properties and then reporting their findings to the state. Despite the apparent conflict of interest, the associations' lawyers supervised the collection of evidence and obtained signatures on statements declaring that the legal owners of the assets could not be found. The Custodian of Absentee Property did not check the authenticity of these statements and blindly endorsed the affidavits provided by the associations. After completing the formal procedure of declaring a house an absentee property, the custodian would then ratify the status of the asset and assign it to the Israel Land Administration without remuneration. Then, a joint committee of the Ministry of Housing and the Amidar Housing Company would convene and determine to whom the houses would be leased or rented. The Ministry of Housing granted committee members the authority to allocate funds for the renovation of the houses and to provide for their security. Given the degree of infiltration of the network to the bureaucracy, it was not a surprise that some of the committee

members were members of Elad and other settlers' groups. Thus, committee decisions regarding the allocation of absentee properties were predictable: most of the assets in the Muslim Quarter were transferred to Ateret Cohanim, and those that came from Silwan were allocated to Elad.[26]

It took much less effort to carry out activities in which Elad cooperated with KKL and Hemanuta, its subsidiary in charge of settlement matters. In fact, the latter served as a branch of the network. In each case that Beeri was able to prove to KKL representatives that a particular asset was once owned by Jews, Hemanuta mobilized their resources in order to evacuate its Palestinian residents. First, residents were offered payment for the property. In many cases this sum was paid by Elad, which, as noted, was primarily financed by Moskowitz.[27] If the Palestinians refused the offer, KKL would take the matter to court. This was the case with the first property that Beeri located in Silwan, the Gozlan house. According to his testimony, he mortgaged all his personal savings and legally purchased it from its owner.[28] However, the Gozlan family rejected this claim and fought Beeri and KKL in various courts until a final ruling was issued, which forced them out of the house.[29] The collaboration among the Ministry of Housing—a formal organ of the state, KKL—a semi-formal branch of the state, and Elad—an independent association, reached such a point that in 1991 KKL signed an agreement ceding its assets in Silwan to Elad for a symbolic fee. In this way Elad essentially became a semi-official arm of the state.

In an attempt to understand the convoluted way in which the network operated, I combed through reports and documents again and again. Even then, my head continued to spin. The network of settlers in Jerusalem evolved into one of the most sophisticated political entities that had ever operated in Israel. It was comprised of a close-knit group of political activists imbued with a deep sense of ideological commitment; they meticulously forged alliances with politicians and public officials who shared their worldview or had other, more materialistic, reasons to cooperate with them. Together, these partners made up a sophisticated and multilayered apparatus. The network refrained from recording many of its actions, thereby making it difficult for outside individuals and institutions to understand or threaten its operations.

Moskowitz, the financier behind the Judaization project of Arab Jerusalem, also wielded sharp political instincts. In order to ensure that his economic investments were not wasted and that they continued to bear fruit, he cultivated the support of promising right-wing politicians. One of these rising stars was Netanyahu, who received a generous donation from the Moskowitz Foundation when he ran in the primaries for the leadership of the Likud in 1993. Netanyahu paid his dues three years later in a move that brought the fragile peace process with the Palestinians to the brink of crisis.

New World Order

The early 1990s witnessed three developments that had significant consequences for the trajectory of the radical Right: (1) the large wave of immigration from the former Soviet bloc, (2) the introduction of foreign workers to Israel's labor market, and (3) the signing of the Oslo Accords. Ultimately, these events expanded the radical Right's base and reshaped its agenda.

Like most countries around the world, Israel was taken by surprise when the Berlin Wall fell on November 9, 1989. The subsequent collapse of the Soviet bloc had far-reaching implications for Israel. For decades, Israelis had prayed for the Iron Curtain to be lifted. While the region remained under Soviet control, many East European Jews were jailed for their Zionist activities

and were known as Prisoners of Zion. In Israel, they were portrayed as heroes. Suddenly, with the crumbling of the Soviet Union, their persecution had ended and they could come "home." Many countries around the world, including Germany, Ireland, Greece, Poland, and South Korea, follow some version of the *jus sanguinis* principle and thus give preferential treatment to "natives" who live in the Diaspora and want to return to their "homeland."[30] No country, however, goes as far as Israel does in its attempt to encourage Jews to immigrate to the country.

Since its formation, Jews from every country in the world have been enticed to visit Israel and even explicitly encouraged to make Aliyah. The Jewish Agency cast a wide network of representatives all over the world whose primary job was to reach out to Jewish communities and persuade them to immigrate to Israel. In those countries with no diplomatic ties to Israel, the state's potent intelligence community served as an immigration office. The Mossad formed a special division designated for the protection of Jews around the world and to facilitate their immigration. This branch was involved in several clandestine operations aimed at facilitating the immigration of Jews from Muslim and African countries. Further, as early as 1952, David Ben-Gurion decided to form a special branch, later known as the Path-Liason Bureau, or Nativ (Lishkat Hakesher), the aim of which was to support Jewish communities in the Soviet bloc. Nativ mobilized governments and organizations around the world, asking them to apply pressure to the Soviet leadership and its allies, and to encourage them to give Jews permission to emigrate from their countries.[31] Meir Kahane's JDL followers argued that their activities against Soviet interests in the United States coerced the Supreme Soviet into showing some leniency toward the Jews. They claimed that this was the reason that the Iron Curtain was cracked open to allow the emigration of 163,000 Jews in the early 1970s.[32] In fact, this was due mostly to the work of Nativ, which in effect took advantage of the détente between the United States and the Soviet Union.[33]

The "Russians"

One of Israel's longtime concerns was that many Jews with no particular ties to Zionism would prefer to immigrate to the United States. This fear was realized in the 1970s during the détente era. When the Soviet Union collapsed, the Israeli government even pressured the White House to impose restrictions on the immigration of Jews to the United States.[34] At the same time, it appealed to Congress to provide the State of Israel with guarantees for loans in order to build new apartments for the large number of immigrants scheduled to arrive in such a short period of time. The initial request stood at $400 million. When the flood of immigrants increased, the amount surged to $10 billion. Despite these preparations and manipulations, the bitter lessons from the past went unlearned and, once again, the absorption of immigrants was marked by administrative havoc.[35]

Due to decades of repressive Communist rule and to their growing assimilation into non-Jewish societies, many new immigrants had very weak ties to Judaism. It is estimated that 26 percent of this wave of immigrants (about 240,000 individuals), were Jewish only by ethnicity. This indicates that one of their grandparents was a Jew and thus, according to the Jewish Ancestry Amendment (1970), they were eligible to immigrate to Israel under the Law of Return.[36] Many such ethnic Jews fled the newly formed Commonwealth of Independent States due to the growing fear over increased anti-Semitism as well as the hope for a better and more prosperous future in the West. Most of the immigrants that arrived in Israel gravitated toward the

country's metropolitan areas, where some of them had relatives or friends. In addition, the major cities offered employment opportunities, especially for the large group of academics among the immigrants.[37] As a result, the large cities suffered from a severe shortage in apartments and a sharp spike in monthly rents. It was up to the government to address the problem. But previous experience failed to teach Israeli leaders how to respond effectively. Despite enduring social and economic problems, which were direct outcomes of the "population dispersion" policy of the 1950s, similar policies were applied once again.[38]

The circumstances this time, however, were different. First, relatively cohesive communities of Mizrahi immigrants from previous decades already populated the periphery. Second, the beginning of the immigration wave coincided with Yitzhak Shamir's short tenure as the leader of a narrow, right-wing, coalition government in which Sharon served as housing and construction minister (1990–92). Sharon was ready for the challenge. He employed his vast knowledge of evading formal regulations and procedures, and instructed contractors to initiate and expedite building projects. During these years, Israel's efforts to settle Jews beyond the Green Line reached a new peak. The government constructed more than 7,600 houses and apartments in the occupied territories. Many of these residential units were erected in municipalities located close to the Israeli heartland. The combination of comfortable housing, state subsidies, and proximity to both Tel Aviv and Jerusalem—cities that offered employment opportunities—served as appealing attributes to the newcomers.

When the demand exceeded supply, Sharon launched a contingency plan. Similar to the immigrants of the 1950s, more and more newcomers were referred to temporary housing, which this time took the form of trailer sites. Since the planning was hasty, many of the immigrants who aspired to start new and better lives found themselves living in rickety trailers in peripheral parts of the country. Furthermore, this wave of immigration from the former Soviet Union overlapped with "Operation Solomon." In less than two days, 14,400 Ethiopian Jews were flown to Israel in a clandestine and highly coordinated operation of the Joint (short for the JDC or American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee), the Mossad, and the IDF. The influx of such a high number of African Jews to the temporary housing sites found these two very different populations living together in a virtual pressure cooker.

Other immigrants from the former Soviet Union who were referred to development towns encountered Jews of North African descent for the first time in their lives. These towns were still suffering from economic and educational marginalization. The new immigrants (or as they were generically labeled, "the Russians"), who arrived at the periphery in large numbers, knew nothing about the veteran residents of these communities and the perpetual sense of deprivation and alienation that they felt.

Furthermore, despite the fact that many of "the Russians" originated from Islamic Republics that for decades were under Soviet rule, they were generally perceived as Ashkenazim by the residents of the communities to which they were injected. In a very short period of time, the Russian language proliferated to every street corner and became a thorn in the flesh of the veteran residents. Growing tensions between the communities were unavoidable. The locals in these impoverished communities feared that "the Russians," who received immigration bonuses and other financial incentives from the state, such as tax breaks and attractive mortgage rates, would compete with them over the scarce resources available to the periphery. Yet, this was only one side of the coin. The Russian immigrants wanted the new and unknown environment to feel a little more like home. They did this by opening specialty markets. In addition to selling books and records, they introduced small ethnic grocery stores and butcher shops.

These shops, which catered specifically to the immigrants, offered a large variety of products from home, including pork. The public display of pork in the small towns, whose veteran residents often had a strong attachment to Orthodox Judaism, was considered an abomination.[39] The cultural gaps between the communities that were forced to live together generated animosity and stereotypes. Quite often the immigrants were accused of being non-Jews who forged documents in order to take advantage of the Law of Return. "Russian" women were tagged as prostitutes, and the whole community was blamed for an alleged increase in crime, which was attributed to an elusive Russian Mafia.[40] Thus, this wave of immigration presented a unique challenge to the Jews in Israel. On one hand, the Jewish society and state were still very much committed to the idea that Israel was the only homeland for the Jewish people, and thus strongly supported activities aimed at bringing in more immigrants. On the other hand, the volume of the "Russian" immigration and the fact that many were determined to preserve their lifestyle rather than to assimilate into Israeli society generated strong exclusionary sentiments toward them.[41]

The veteran Israelis were not the only ones who were perplexed by the rapid changes. In a very short period of time, the new immigrants from the former Soviet bloc changed the face of the Israeli society and became a formidable constituency. In less than two years (1990–92), 452,673 men, women, and children arrived in Israel. By the time of the 1992 elections, they already constituted 8.7 percent of the country's population. Initially, it was hard to identify a particular political inclination among the newcomers. Their voting patterns were erratic. In 1992, for example, it was believed that most of the immigrants voted for the Rabin-led Labor Party.[42] But by 1996, their support had shifted away from Labor toward a party that promised to represent the distinctive interests of the immigrants. Yisrael BaAliyah (Israel Ascends), a centrist right-wing party formed by the famous refusenik Natan (Anatoly) Sharansky, raked in 174,944 votes, which translated into seven seats in the Knesset. Yet, the gradual shift of the immigrants toward the Right did not stop there.[43]

Foreign (not Migrant) Workers

The second significant transformation that marked the beginning of the 1990s was the gradual and imposed disengagement of the Palestinian labor force from the Israeli economy.[44] The First Intifada alerted the Israeli leadership to the fact that the integration of the Israeli and Palestinian workforces, which greatly benefited the Israeli economy, led to some problematic consequences. Innocent Palestinian day laborers, who at the time constituted 9 percent of the labor force in the country, were accompanied from time to time by individuals who exploited the easy access to the Israeli heartland for perpetrating terrorist attacks.

The cabinet instructed the security forces to step up the inspection of Palestinian workers, particularly young males. This new policy created an immediate shortage of workers, especially in construction sites and on agricultural farms, which relied to a large degree on strong, unskilled, Palestinian male workers. In order to cope with the concerns of the employers and the growing pressure they placed on members of the cabinet, Ariel Sharon, decided to open the country's gates to workers from other countries. Initially, in an unprecedented step, he issued 3,000 work permits for construction workers.[45] Apprehensive of any threat to its Jewish nature, Israel never planned on opening its gates to alien citizens who were not eligible to immigrate under the provisions of the Law of Return.[46]

My personal experience is indicative of this. Growing up in the 1970s and 1980s, I do not remember meeting a single foreigner, except for a few hippies from Scandinavian countries who volunteered to work for short periods of time on the kibbutzim, when Israel was still popular among young Europeans. By the early 1990s, the overall number of foreign citizens who resided and worked in Israel was estimated at 16,000.[47] The decision to allow non-Jews into Israel was an improvisation that aimed to appease the strong lobbies of contractors and agriculturists. The potential long-term consequences of this rash and perfunctory decision were not discussed thoroughly. There was a large degree of naiveté in the belief that upon the expiration of contracts between employers and laborers, the latter would immediately head back to their countries of origin without exception.[48]

Indeed, by 1996 the population of foreign workers in Israel soared and was estimated at 100,000.[49] Forty-five percent remained in the country after their visas expired, thus becoming unregistered and, for all intents and purposes, illegal.[50] The workers' various communities differed from one another in significant ways. Workers from Romania, who were hired to work in construction, as well as laborers from Thailand, who worked in agriculture, were predominantly males who left their families behind and therefore had little incentive beyond the financial one to extend their stay in Israel. Other private enterprises in Israel, most prominently caregiving providers for the elderly, saw the economic potential in importing cheap workers and took advantage of the expanding trend. The skills required of caregivers were significantly different from those in other fields. This led to the importation of both females and males, mostly from the Philippines, and was significant since it allowed men and women of disparate origin to meet, marry, and start families in Israel. Families formed in this way exhibited a much stronger desire to stay in the country. This trend later proliferated to other communities, mostly workers from Africa. By the mid-1990s, these expanding communities began to form enclaves in the peripheral neighborhoods of Tel Aviv, where rent was more affordable.[51]

At this point, I was working on my dissertation. Haifa had a much smaller community of aliens than Tel Aviv, and hence I was unaware of the magnitude of the phenomenon until I started hearing politicians referring to the emerging threat that foreign workers posed to the Jewish character of the state. The first politician to tackle the issue head-on was Eliyahu (Eli) Yishai, a thirty-four-year-old member of Knesset from Shas, who was appointed as minister of labor and social welfare in Binyamin Netanyahu's first cabinet. Yishai vowed to reduce the number of foreign workers in Israel and thus initiated a deportation policy.[52]

The escalating statements and new policy regarding the foreign workers sparked my interest. They reminded me of a Kach Party newspaper advertisement from the early 1980s. In the ad, the party called for the immediate deportation of all Portuguese foreign workers from Israel, which I found extremely odd. At the time, the community of foreign workers in Israel was so small that most Israelis were not even aware it existed. But by the 1990s things had clearly changed. Many Jews in Israel had adopted the spirit of Kahane's demand. They could not tolerate the growing communities of visible minorities in Israel's impoverished neighborhoods. The level of animosity expressed toward foreign workers was second only to the sentiments manifested toward Arab citizens of the state.[53] Many Israelis hated foreign workers for building churches in the heart of the Jewish state, blamed them for "stealing" jobs from Jews, and just wanted to see them gone. Despite Yishai's efforts, this did not happen. The communities of foreign workers in Israel continued to expand, a fact that, in hindsight, significantly served the interests of Eli Yishai in particular and the radical Right in general.

5
Israel's Path to Peace?

The Labor Party building in Haifa lived up to all the criteria expected of a socialist party's headquarters in a "workers' city." The shabby building was located in the lower part of Hadar HaCarmel, on the unmarked border that separated the impoverished Jewish neighborhood from the Arab residential houses of Wadi Nisnas. If asked to describe the building in one word, I would choose "gray." But on that afternoon in July 1992, nothing looked gray. Although I was not a member of the Labor Party, I used my connections with the party's student wing at the University of Haifa and secured an invitation to a meeting that was set to celebrate the results of the 1992 Knesset elections campaign. The charismatic young Knesset member, Avraham (Avrum) Burg, was the keynote speaker.

Several weeks earlier, Yitzhak Rabin, the Labor Party chairman, was invited by President Chaim Herzog to form a coalition government. After spending fifteen years in the opposition or serving in national unity cabinets with the Likud, the Labor Party and its agenda had received an impressive go-ahead from the Israeli voter—or so we thought. Avraham Burg's speech doused an ice-cold bath on the excitement of the young party activists. His words that day amazed me, and it was not until a few years later that I realized their true meaning. The argument he presented was simple and concise. He claimed that the electoral victory of the Left did not reflect the true preferences of the Jewish public in Israel. The main reason for Labor's achievement was the collapse of the right-wing bloc due to the fragmentation of several parties—most of them from the radical Right—a short time before the elections. The ballots of 38,516 voters, which constituted 1.8 percent of the total votes, were essentially squandered because three parties led by the Tehiya failed to pass the minimum threshold that promises parliamentary representation. A careful analysis of the election results led Burg to the conclusion that the Left's victory was in effect an "historical accident" resulting from a combination of one-time circumstances. His words apparently reflected the position of Prime Minister-Elect Yitzhak Rabin, and other party leaders. They realized that they had come across what could have been a unique opportunity to change Israel's future and launch a process that would ultimately lead to comprehensive peace agreements with the Palestinians and the Arab world.

The Settlers' Political Savvy

However, one fact was lost on the Labor Party leaders. Not only did Israeli society continue to adhere to the right-wing side of the political spectrum, but the state itself had also undergone the exact same process.[1] This may sound like a strange argument; in democracies, the state is supposed to be an institutional framework for the implementation of the policy enacted by the elected leadership. The apparatus of a state, however, is more than a mere aggregation of institutions—it also consists of individuals. As noted earlier, the Labor Party was first knocked out of office in 1977. The change of government naturally led to a turnover of personnel in Israel's top political echelons.[2] Indeed, within a few years the profile of the political and

bureaucratic elites in the country had taken on a new shape. This process seemed to go unnoticed by many members of the right-wing, who still maintained in the following decades that the political elite in Israel was controlled by the Left and in effect perpetuated its values.[3]

Long before the 1992 elections, the settlers' elite realized that the state's institutions were not empty vessels and that public officials had considerable influence on the formation and implementation of policy. As election day approached, they became increasingly concerned over the possibility that the right-wing bloc would perform poorly at the ballots. They were convinced that were such a change to occur, the Israeli Left would not pass up the opportunity to launch a meaningful peace process with the Palestinians and consequently undermine their own interests. On the evening of June 23, 1992, as soon as the exit polls announced the victory of the left-wing bloc, the outgoing housing minister Ariel Sharon held an urgent meeting with his close advisor, Yaakov (Katzeleh) Katz. That same night they contacted the leader of the Lithuanian Haredi faction, Rabbi Shach, and asked him to instruct five hundred ultra-Orthodox families to promptly occupy the apartments they had already purchased in Modiin Illit, which were still not connected to the electricity and water grids.

At the same time, the minister and his aide ordered twenty-seven family members of the Religious Zionist Oriah enclave to immediately erect the settlement Nofei Prat in the Binyamin district.[4] These lightning-fast operations did not take place in a vacuum. They were the result of a strategy based on the ties between Ariel Sharon and the settlers' leadership that had grown stronger during the two years prior to the change of government. Sharon's appointment as housing minister in Yitzhak Shamir's right-wing cabinet was the key to this strategy. Sharon completely obscured the already ambiguous boundaries between the executive branch of the state and the settlers' network. Upon his arrival at the Ministry of Housing, Sharon appointed his longtime friend from their days in the IDF, Yaakov Katz, who also happened to be one of the founders of Gush Emunim, to the position of consultant to the minister on settlement affairs. Katz served as a highly effective connecting link between Amana and the minister. The energetic duo, who received the blessings of the prime minister, breached the few remaining barriers that had prevented the inundation of construction in the settlements.[5]

The Façade of Madrid

Shamir, Sharon, and other members of the Likud administration who were avid supporters of the settlements were faced with one main challenge—the heavy pressure that the United States applied on Israel following the completion of Operation Desert Storm in 1991. During the preparations for the operation, the United States forged a broad coalition that included key Arab countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Egypt. President George H. W. Bush and Secretary of State James Baker did not want to let the historical opportunity slip through their fingers when everything seemed to be falling in place. They saw it as an opportunity to make sweeping changes in the political reality of the Middle East. Bush and Baker took advantage of the ties that they cultivated with the main leaders of the Arab world in order to persuade Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and consequently the Palestinians to engage in bilateral and multilateral negotiations with Israel. American pressure on Israel did the trick. The president and the secretary of state strong-armed Prime Minister Shamir, who was firmly committed to the Greater Israel ideology. It was made clear to Shamir that if he refused to sit at the negotiation table, Israel would lose the American financial guarantees that were granted to help absorb the wave of immigrants from the

former Soviet Union. Thus, on October 30, 1991, an Israeli delegation headed by the disgruntled Yitzhak Shamir was dragged to the Madrid Peace Conference. Shamir later recalled the great consternation he experienced at the pressure applied by the Americans there and admitted that he had no intentions whatsoever to strive for a peace accord with the Arab world. His plan was to drag his feet as much as possible and thus avoid a situation in which Israel would be forced to relinquish land.[6]

The American determination to advance the peace process spurred Sharon and Katz on to be equally persistent and increase their efforts.[7] They knew that carrying out a massive building effort of settlements would function as a roadblock to Bush and Baker's "peace wagon." Thus, the network acted quickly. Amana received a signal from the minister and vigorously engaged the group's own construction company, Binyanei Bar Amana, which they had already established in 1987. In this fashion, a direct channel of communication between the Ministry of Housing and every single contractor in the field was constantly open. Many of the bureaucratic and practical barriers that previously hindered construction operations were now removed.[8]

These developments could not be hidden from the Bush administration, and the president grew impatient with Israel's cat-and-mouse games. As the White House intensified its demands to stop the construction of new settlements, the settlers and their patron in the Housing Ministry increased their creative efforts. As usual, Sharon was not afraid to make waves. While Secretary of State Baker made his rounds to the Middle East capitals, Sharon instructed his people on how to present new obstacles to the peace process. Prior to every visit to the region, Baker was notified that bulldozers were preparing large areas in the West Bank for new building projects. Baker was beside himself with anger and frustration.[9]

The Collapse of the Tehiya

When Sharon and Katz engaged the settlers' network, they breathed new life into the decision made six years earlier to expand existing settlements. The decision was made by the Ministerial Committee for Settlement Affairs, which was headed at the time by Yuval Neeman, leader of the Tehiya Party. Neeman made a deliberate distinction between erecting new settlements and expanding existing ones. While the establishment of a new settlement called for a relatively long process of planning and obtaining permits from civilian and military authorities, the committee's decision to expand existing settlements allowed them to pursue a much shorter bureaucratic course.[10]

The initial decision of the committee was aimed at meeting the increasing demand for new housing units and community centers that resulted from the natural growth of the settlements.[11] Sharon and his people, however, gave the decision a noticeably more liberal interpretation. As they saw it, even building far outside of settlements' boundaries was legitimate as long as construction was categorized as expanding an existing settlement rather than constructing a new one. This interpretation allowed the branch of the settlers' network, which operated from within the Ministry of Housing, to bypass bureaucratic hurdles and roadblocks. Assessing the full extent of Sharon and Katz's achievements was possible only after Shamir's government dissolved and a coalition headed by Rabin was established.

Ironically, it was the leaders of the radical right-wing parties who failed to notice the full extent of the achievements made by Shamir, Sharon, and their colleagues. Their strong

opposition to the faltering Madrid Process led the Tehiya and Moledet parties to establish a common parliamentary front and to withdraw in protest from Shamir's coalition in 1992. The third member in the settlements' parliamentary lobby—Tzomet (Movement for Renewed Zionism), preceded them and pulled out when the prime minister defaulted on his promise to the leader of the party Rafael (Raful) Eitan to lead a reform of Israel's electoral system. These three radical right-wing parties that adhered closely to the idea of a Greater Israel submitted a no-confidence motion against the very cabinet of which they were members. In doing so, they undermined the foundations of the administration that was, at the time, the most right-wing Israeli government to date.

The party leaders would most likely have shuddered had they known that their parties' withdrawal from the cabinet would create a domino effect, which would eventually lead to a change of governments and pave the road to the Oslo Accords.[12] The ability of the parties to unite for the purpose of dismantling the coalition was short lived. As election day approached, unflattering public opinion polls made them increasingly anxious over the possibility of defeat. In order to preserve their parliamentary power, they were advised to form an alignment and compete in the elections as a united front. Negotiations quickly ran aground. Each party leader saw him or herself as the most qualified politician to lead the alignment, and all of them adamantly refused to surrender the role of leader.

These personal struggles were not the only cause of failure. The three parties shared ideological roots, which were deeply embedded in secular perceptions of a Greater Israel. It is true that the Tehiya Party had indeed been established with Rabbi Kook's blessing, and with the encouragement of some of the leaders of Gush Emunim; Moledet as well consisted of a fair number of religious members since its early days.[13] However, until the early 1990s, the party leaders and their main ideologues were secular. Most of them, such as Yuval Neeman and Moshe Shamir from the Tehiya, Rafael Eitan from Tzomet, and Rehavam Zeevi from Moledet, were all educated in the labor movement's activist school of thought. Only a minority, such as Geula Cohen from the Tehiya, were raised in the revisionist movement.

The three parties shared the common belief that the history of the Jewish people gave them the right to the occupied territories and that control over this land provided a protective buffer zone for population centers inside Israel. The parties rejected outright the very existence of a Palestinian people and subsequent Palestinian demands for self-determination and independence. With the aid of these historically rooted national arguments, the parties were able to mobilize voters outside the narrow circle of the settlers and their supporters. Until the early 1990s, their main ideological dispute was concerned with the question of how to annex the occupied territories without granting their Palestinian inhabitants Israeli citizenship. While members of the Tehiya believed that it was possible to grant Palestinians the status of residents while denying them the right to vote in parliamentary elections, Moledet proposed to incentivize the Palestinians to emigrate to other Arab countries in what was known as the "Transfer Plan."[14]

In the early 1990s, each of the parties had headed in slightly different directions. Unfortunately for the Tehiya Party, in the period prior to the elections, representatives of the settlers' network took over the party's institutions and significantly reduced the scope of its political platform. The Tehiya was not the only party that pinned its hopes on the limited settlers' constituency. As Avraham Burg had implied in his talk, one of the main causes for the left-wing's victory at the polls was the desperate struggle among the parties of the radical Right over the settlers' votes. Tehiya's downfall in 1992 was particularly ironic. The party was one of the dominant forces engaged in a maneuver to raise the parliamentary representation threshold from

1 to 1.5 percent. The goal of the plan was to reduce the number of small parliamentary factions, which in many cases enjoyed a significant degree of political clout as they became the deciding factor that could have given its support to either one of the main political blocs. Although Tehiya was still able to mobilize an impressive number of voters—approximately 32,000—they nevertheless amounted to only 1.2 percent of the total valid votes. The party remained 7,000 votes away from gaining two seats in the Knesset.

Other new groups emerged on the far right-wing end of the political map. The first one, Geulat Israel (Redemption of Israel), catered to national elements within the ultra-Orthodox community—most notably Chabad; the second, HaTorah VeHa'aretz (Torah and Land) led by Moshe Levinger, targeted the most extreme settlers. It secured 0.6 percent of the total valid votes, many of them coming from ex-Tehiya supporters. In all, the radical right-wing parties that campaigned for the strengthening of Israel's hold over the occupied territories lost nearly 50,000 votes as a result of petty rivalries and of being politically myopic. Considering the fact that the settlers' population in the West Bank at that time amounted to a little over 100,000 people, this result was dramatic.

Another contributing cause for the electoral calamity of Tehiya was the significant transformation of the Mafdal, the original "home" of the religious Zionist voters. During the 1970s and 1980 the old and dovish leaders of the Mafdal were replaced by network activists. The change was already felt during the 1988 election campaign when the party embraced most of the network's positions. The transformation was completed in 1992 with the party's effective, hawkish election campaign under the slogan, "The Mafdal on Your Right." The makeover paid off. The party increased its representation by one seat, winning six seats altogether. Moledet's power was also bolstered. Prior to the elections, Zeevi engineered a significant turnaround. He shook off his faction colleague, Professor Yair Sprinzak, who like Zeevi grew up in the secular habitat of the labor movement. In his place, he introduced new and very different candidates: Professor Shaul Gutman and Rabbi Yosef Ba-Gad, both members of the religious Zionist camp. Although Zeevi knew them only superficially before he added them to the list, he estimated that they would function as magnets for voters from the religious constituencies. Indeed, the party increased its strength by 0.5 percent in comparison to the previous elections. At the polls in the West Bank and Gaza, the increase was even more significant with more than 3 percent.[15]

The Curious Case of Tzomet

The eye-opener of the elections was Tzomet in which the network enjoyed the lowest level of influence. In anticipation of the elections, it relegated its position on Greater Israel to a relatively marginal place on its agenda. Party strategists led a straightforward campaign that presented its leader, Rafael Eitan, as the embodiment of reliability, directness, and integrity. Central to the party's election campaign were demands to weaken the role of religion in the state apparatus, to require ultra-Orthodox yeshiva students to perform mandatory military service, and to bring about reform in Israel's regime structure. Control of the occupied territories was presented as an Israeli security interest, and the party's support for the settlers was muted. When the polls closed, it turned out that Tzomet quadrupled its parliamentary representation and became an eight-member Knesset faction, which made it the fourth largest party in parliament.[16] An analysis of the characteristics of Tzomet's supporters showed that in terms of their socioeconomic status and place of residence, they were the mirror image of the supporters of other right-wing parties such

as Shas and Likud.[17] In other words, Rafael Eitan's voters were mostly secular, affluent, and held high school and academic diplomas.[18]

   Tzomet's impressive victory was not repeated and, in the preparations for the 1996 elections, the party had no other alternative than to assimilate into Likud. The reasons for Tzomet's rapid decline are diverse. Among others, it received unflattering headlines due to the constant fights between its charismatic leader and the new and ambitious members of parliament, who were trying to shrug off his influence, a fact that eventually led to a factional split in the Knesset. But this was a surmountable obstacle. The more serious problem was the fact that Tzomet had in fact become a "stepchild" in the radical right-wing camp of the early 1990s. It was a radical right-wing party of the old type that still adhered to the notion of the secular Israeli culture and rejected the "Jewish" code that had become one of the mainstays of the new radical Right. Tzomet's version of territorial nativism relied on security-based, historical claims and recalled the type of nativism espoused by Ahdut HaAvoda Poalei Zion. The party's other messages were antithetical to those of the other radical right-wing parties. Eitan outraged many of his partners from the Right when he presented the party as a secular opposition that launched a campaign against the religious establishment and the privileges that were provided by the state to the ultra-Orthodox sector. At that time the overwhelming majority of the Haredim had already become a heavyweight force integral to the radical right-wing camp. In sum, the decline of the Tehiya Party in 1992 and Tzomet several years later are part of a greater story. With the fall of these two parties, the changing of the guard between the "old" radical Right and the "new" had now come one step closer to its completion.

Settling in the Heart of the State

The leaders of the settlers' network were blessed with sharper political instincts than their counterparts in parliament.[19] They were aware of the gap between their rigid ideological core and the fluid opinions of the Jewish public in the rest of Israel. The former group demonstrated passion and willingness to sacrifice for their cause, while the latter generally exhibited indifference toward the settlements. Many Israelis never visited a settlement and had only a vague idea with regard to their location and characteristics. In 1992, shortly before the elections, Yoel Bin-Nun published an incisive article that made significant waves among the settlers and their supporters. Bin-Nun summarized the network's longtime strategy by arguing that Gush Emunim and its successors had concentrated too much on the settlement enterprise and that this strategy had exacted a high toll. In his opinion, the settlers had failed in the second part of the mission they had undertaken: the "settlement" in the hearts of the Israelis and the creation of an alternative leadership to the declining elites. The growing gap between most of the secular Jewish public on the western side of the Green Line and the settlers left the latter in the position of leaders without followers.[20]

   This article was a sobering wake-up call for the settlers. The settlement campaign in the occupied territories was less than twenty-five years old, and the settlers were numbered at a little over 100,000. Leaders of the settlers' network vividly remembered the evacuation of Sinai and lived in constant fear of additional forced evictions. They remembered Likud's betrayal during the removal of the Sinai settlements and feared a repetition of this scenario. Bin-Nun's reminder that they did not succeed in instilling their ideas in the larger Jewish society made them realize that they reached a major crossroads.

The solution to the looming problem was found in the writings of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, who continued to develop the doctrine put forth by his father, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook. Rabbi Zvi Yehuda, as his followers referred to him, added a great deal of flexibility to his father's theology, but like him, he also saw the formation of the State of Israel as a step in the redemption of the Jewish People. However, the younger Kook determined that holiness attributed to the state would be contingent upon the course it took.[21] According to his activist philosophy, were the state to deviate from the redemptive path, his followers would be required to take the initiative and return it to the right track. By connecting the two objectives, he forged a path directly from the Jewish theology of redemption to a clear political strategy.[22]

The "settlement" in the heart of Israeli society that Bin-Nun wrote about was an arduous process and, to a large degree, quite frustrating. Most Israelis were completely unaware of the theology of redemption, and they had not the least intention of sacrificing their personal ambitions in exchange for settlement on the rocky hills of the West Bank. To his dismay, Bin-Nun's essay had the opposite effect of what he had intended: to bring the movement back to the theology of Rabbi Kook the father, who emphasized the importance of the unity between the various elements of the people of Israel. His colleagues at the leadership of the settlers' network leaned toward the ideas of Rabbi Kook the son, who prioritized the integrity of the land of Israel over the unity among its people.

The leaders of the network were well aware of the rapid demographic transformation that Israel underwent at the time. Thus, instead of investing effort in Israeli society at large, they appealed to the growing communities of those they perceived as the natural partners for advancing their goal. These included the various ultra-Orthodox communities as well as new immigrants, residents of development towns, and even the followers of their despised enemy from the past, Rabbi Meir Kahane. At the same time, they increased their efforts to "settle" in the heart of the Israeli bureaucracy. This was a modus operandi that had proved effective in the past and had great potential to ensure results that accorded with the group's interests.[23] Whether they relied on historical precedents or arrived at the idea themselves, the past provided models from which the leadership of the settlers' movement could learn.[24] In the 1960s, French settlers in Algeria and their supporters operated from within the ranks of the security establishment in an effort to thwart President de Gaulle's plan for withdrawal. During the next decade, radical right-wing networks were also active in Italy and penetrated all branches of the Italian government and public administration in order to cast a veto against decisions that went against their interests.[25]

The network's strategy proved to be highly effective immediately after the formation of the Labor-led, left-wing coalition. For many years Yitzhak Rabin, the newly elected prime minister, was considered a hawk. During his tenure as minister of defense in the national unity cabinets of the 1980s, and especially following the outbreak of the First Intifada, he shored up this image. Rabin instructed the IDF to employ a heavy-handed approach toward the Palestinian rioters in an attempt to repress the uprising, but to no avail.[26] Despite his public image as a hardliner, the leaders of the Yesha Council did not trust him; in fact, they disliked him. During his first tenure as prime minister (1974–77), Rabin was determined to prevent their continuous attempts to settle in the heart of the West Bank. Unlike other leaders of the Labor Party—most notably his perennial antagonist, Shimon Peres—Rabin was not charmed by the settlers and did not hesitate to express his unfavorable opinion of them.[27] Thus, his image as a foe solidified fifteen years before he reassumed the premiership.[28]

During the summer of 1993, a year after the elections, everything seemed unchanged. While

Rabin seemed to be defaulting on his campaign promises to advance the peace process,[29] a fact that disappointed his supporters from the Left, the animosity between the prime minister and the settlers never died out. Network activists, who under the premiership of Shamir and with the facilitation of Sharon held official positions in ministries that governed the formation of and allocation of resources to settlements, were fired overnight. Others, who did not work for the state but previously enjoyed unlimited access to those ministers, were suddenly required to schedule appointments, which in most cases were repeatedly deferred but, when finally held, did not yield the desired outcomes.[30] To add insult to injury, Rabin himself avoided holding personal meetings with the settlers as much as he could. Instead, he appointed his ailing deputy minister of defense, Mordechai "Motta" Gur, to serve as his liaison to the settlers.

A New Generation of Settlers

The history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict changed forever in the afternoon hours of August 29, 1993. On that day it became known that secret negotiations had been held between an Israeli official delegation headed by the deputy foreign affairs minister, Yossi Beilin, and formal representatives of the PLO. The talks, which were initiated in January of that year, began as an academic dialogue in London. As soon as they gained momentum, the teams moved to Oslo, far away from the turbulence of the Middle East, as well as the scrutiny of the media and the opposition parties. Although Prime Minister Rabin initially dismissed the talks as yet another futile hypothetical exchange, the level of commitment exhibited by both parties gradually led him to change his mind. What began initially as feelers quite rapidly graduated and led to the signing of an unprecedented document, which should have set Israel and the Palestinians on the road to peace.

On September 13, in a ceremony that took place on the lawn of the White House, Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, Yasser Arafat, and Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) signed the "Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements" (DOP), in which Israel recognized the PLO as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. For its part, the PLO acknowledged the right of Israel to exist in peace and security, and pledged to abandon the armed struggle against it. By May 1994, following the signing of the consequent "Cairo Agreements," control over Gaza and Jericho was transferred to the newly established Palestinian National Authority (PNA) led by Yasser Arafat. The settlers' nightmare had come true: Rabin had turned into a peacemaker. They expressed their discontent immediately in a smear campaign aimed directly at the prime minister. Rabin, who was known for being hot-blooded, did not hesitate to lash back, and the old rivalry between the two parties became far more aggressive.[31]

The settlers grew immensely frustrated at their exclusion from policy-making circles and the sense of uncertainty regarding the future.[32] The Yesha Council, which at the time represented the interests of 137 settlements, was in upheaval. On the one hand, it desperately needed access to the prime minister's office as well as to other ministries and state agencies in order to secure the allocation of resources to the municipalities it represented. On the other hand, as the ideological successor and institutionalized version of Gush Emunim, it was expected to lead a political struggle against the Oslo Process. The composition of the council's leadership did not make things simpler. In addition to the heads of the municipalities, the governing body included major ideologues and activists who held no official positions. These council members did not have to worry about maintaining reasonable working relations with the administration. Thus, they did not

hesitate to use strong language when they expressed their fierce objection to the path that Rabin took. Eventually, the leaders of the council—who feared a further deterioration in relations with the prime minister and who had already issued a moratorium on the establishment of new settlements—chose to engage in relatively low-key protest activities.[33]

Fortunately for the leaders of the settlers, their legacy of decentralization and quick adaptation to changing circumstances was embraced by their children, students, and followers. Grassroots activists, who had no formal ties to the Yesha Council, did not have to strike such a delicate balance. Initially, it was a group calling itself Mateh Ma'amatz (Effort Headquarters), led by disciples of Rabbi Moshe Levinger, that set the tone for the more belligerent protest activities.[34] Shortly afterwards, a much more sophisticated group emerged. Moshe Feiglin, a thirty-one-year-old, soft-spoken entrepreneur from the settlement of Karnei Shomron, decided to put his business ventures aside temporarily and dedicate his time and skills to finding a way to slow down the progress of the peace process. He started by mobilizing a group of settlers who looked nothing like their predecessors from the 1970s. Many of Feiglin's recruits were immigrants from English-speaking countries, including a high number of Americans who grew up in the legacy of the civil rights movement. Feiglin replaced the untamed spirit of the first generation of settlers with meticulous and sophisticated protest strategies.[35] This was not the only difference between the new group and its predecessors. Feiglin despised the Zionist ideology. His worldview was much closer to Kahane's than to Rabbi Kook senior. As he stated: "The era of Zionism has come to an end. Now it is time for Judaism to take the lead."[36]

Feiglin's appearance in the Israeli political landscape manifested the most significant turning point of the Israeli radical Right. In the months following the signing of the Oslo Accords, the old radical Right faded out; the new one, which Feiglin was one of its heralds, quickly filled the void. This shift of tectonic plates was inevitable. Rabin's handshake with Arafat redefined the division between the Left and the Right or—as the two political factions referred to themselves —between the peace and national camps. The political debate no longer revolved around the significance of the occupied territories for Israel's national security. By that time, Israel enjoyed fifteen years of a stable, albeit cold, peace with Egypt and formalized its almost thirty years of peaceful relations with Jordan. Furthermore, the Gulf War of 1991 taught the Israeli public a valuable lesson—control over territories does not necessarily guarantee security. Iraq does not share a border with Israel, yet Iraq managed to wage war against it by launching tactical ballistic missiles into the Israeli heartland. Meanwhile, the occupied territories themselves, which were supposed to serve as a buffer between Israel and its formerly hostile neighbors, turned into a major source of security concerns. Left-wing hawks had to reassess their worldview. The new geostrategic reality in the Middle East rendered longtime philosophies, most notably the Allon plan, obsolete. Indeed, the majority of the ideological factions within the Left realigned and provided Rabin with the support that he needed for the pursuit of his new path.

The same reality had an even more significant impact on the right. By signing the Peace Accords with Egypt, the Herut party abandoned the Greater Israel philosophy, which had served as its main ideological pillar for decades. Furthermore, Menachem Begin was the first Israeli prime minister who officially accepted the idea of a Palestinian autonomous rule in the West Bank. Following the implementation of the Oslo Accords, the old radical Right was no more than an empty vessel. It vocally criticized the steps that the Rabin administration took but offered no alternative. The new radical Right had much more to offer.

The first plan that Feiglin initiated, shortly after the signing of the Oslo Accords, was Operation Double (Mivtza Machpil). Feiglin and his comrades approached Uri Ariel, the head of

the Yesha Council, and offered to establish satellite settlements next to existing ones in an expeditious operation. As soon as they received Ariel's hesitant blessing, they threw themselves into a flurry of work. Feiglin quickly deployed his own network of committed activists in the 130 settlements to which he planned to add extensions. Within a few weeks, he was ready to move forward with the plan.[37] The leaders of the Yesha Council were taken by surprise. They did not expect such an efficient mobilization and were concerned that a large-scale operation of that sort would provoke a harsh response from the government. They were also reluctant to allow a group, which seemed to have emerged out of nowhere, to set the tone of the struggle against the Oslo Process. Eventually, to Feiglin's dismay, they decided to renege on their initial support, and the entrepreneur's grandiose operation was replaced by a much smaller one.[38]

Despite their disappointment Feiglin and his colleagues, who started referring to themselves as the This is Our Land movement (Zu Artzenu), did not give up. They gradually intensified their protest activities. Soon enough Zu Artzenu became the hub in a complex political network which consisted of members from every right-wing political party, large parts of the Yesha Council, and various local and national groups, including some of the remnants of Kach, Mateh Ma'amatz, Women in Green (Nashim Beyarok), and Cities' Headquarters (Matot He'arim).[39] The network's rapid expansion indicated the increasingly blurry lines between the religious Zionist and formerly anti-Zionist ultra-Orthodox camps.

The first to jump on the protest wagon was Chabad, the Hasidic movement from New York led by Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (also known as the Lubavitcher or the Rebbe[40]), who passed away shortly after the implementation of the Cairo Agreement. Although it was anti-Zionist in principle, shortly after the 1967 War, Chabad developed a strong sense of commitment to the Greater Israel ideology. The Rebbe believed that any territorial compromise would weaken the Jewish people and instructed his devout followers in Israel to advance his agenda. The struggle against the Oslo Process provided Chabad with the perfect opportunity to do so.[41] Ultra-Orthodox yeshiva students from other parishes, who traditionally refrained from taking sides and were instructed by their rabbis not to participate in political struggles that were not related directly to the interests of their communities, could no longer sit on the fence. They had a strong affinity for the protesters, which was fueled by their hatred of the Israeli Left and the Arabs.[42] This rapidly growing network of protesters shook Israeli society with an escalating wave of strident, and in many cases venomous, demonstrations against the prime minister and members of his cabinet. One of its most memorable acts took place in early August 1995. Under the careful planning and decisive leadership of the Zu Artzenu movement, activists blocked Israel's main highways and crossroads. Within a matter of hours, this operation transformed the tiny nation of Israel into a giant traffic jam.[43]

The Hidden Side of the Protest

The manner in which the protest was organized and financed illustrates the deep infiltration of the settlers' network into the core of the state's apparatus and its exceptional ability to manipulate its policies.[44] While the leadership of the Yesha Council tried to maintain its image as a highly bureaucratic body whose main concern was to provide for the residents of its municipalities, not all of its members matched this portrayal. The decision of prominent council members to immerse themselves in the protest network led to a paradoxical situation. Each

locality represented by the council was expected by the organizers of the demonstrations to contribute a certain percentage of its annual budget to fund their activities. Consequently, funds allocated by the state to the municipalities were rechanneled in a way that served to fund activities against the state itself. Furthermore, since the protest network included members of parliament, funds that were appropriated to their parties by law were also redirected to the extra-parliamentary struggle.[45]

The protest was only one element (and not necessarily the most significant) of the settlers' network mobilization. Notwithstanding the initial shock from the Oslo Accords as well as their growing frustration with Prime Minister Rabin, who was increasingly at odds with their leaders, the Yesha Council regrouped. The veteran settler leaders relaunched their efforts to recruit new allies in the public administration and to strengthen the ties with the old ones. They succeeded. The Ministries of Defense, Interior, and Housing, as well as the civil administration and settlement division of the Jewish Agency, provided them with essential support.[46]

Unlike demonstrations and acts of civil disobedience, which were extremely dramatic and thus captured the attention of reporters and television crews from around the world, the operations within the state agencies did not provide such drama, to say the least. They were held in dull-looking offices, carried out by bureaucrats, and in most cases involved nothing but maps and documents. This, however, did not preclude them from having dramatic consequences. The outcomes speak for themselves. Throughout his tenure as prime minister and despite his commitment to the peace process and open rivalry with the settlers, Rabin did not succeed in slowing down their efficient machine. In fact, between 1992 and 1996, the period during which the peace process with the Palestinians was in its most promising phase, and despite the moratorium on the formation of new settlements, the number of Jewish settlers in the West Bank and Gaza grew from 105,400 to 146,900, an increase of almost 40 percent.[47]

Netanyahu's Debut

Shortly after the Likud's loss in the 1992 elections, the former Deputy Foreign Minister Binyamin (Bibi) Netanyahu set out to become the new leader of the party. The ambitious forty-two-year old politician had several obstacles to overcome before he could gain control of the party's leadership. The most significant hurdle was defeating the "heirs to the crown," a group of young Knesset members whose parents were veterans of the Etzel and the founders of Herut. The main figures in this group were Zeev Binyamin (Benny) Begin, Ehud Olmert, Dan Meridor, Roni Milo, and Limor Livnat. Netanyahu was not part of the group. Netanyahu's father, Benzion, was an opponent of Begin and never found a way to fit into the Herut party. He was also rejected by the Israeli academic system, despite his proven credentials as a scholar of the history of the Jews in Spain during the Inquisition. Thus, he spent many years in the United States, where he and his wife, Tzila, raised their three sons. Nonetheless, Benzion Netanyahu was a devout Zionist who encouraged his sons to spend time in Israel and to serve at the forefront of the IDF special forces. Bibi benefited from his diverse background. His own military experience as an officer in Israel's most elite unit, Sayeret Matkal, and even more so, the memory of his older brother, Yonatan (Yoni) Netanyahu, the commander of Sayeret Matkal, who was killed in Entebbe during Israel's most famous hostage rescue operation, served as respectable credentials for a young Israeli politician. Furthermore, the fluent and accent-free English that he acquired during his high school years in Philadelphia, his education at MIT and, above all, his profound understanding of

American politics and the media offered him a unique route to the top of the Israeli political system. During his tenure as the deputy chief of mission at the Israeli embassy in Washington (1982–84) and later as the Israeli ambassador to the UN (1984–88), Netanyahu utilized his highly polished media performances to cast a wide net of ties to affluent right-wing American Jews, who were impressed by the charismatic, young Israeli spokesperson.

These ties proved to be very important during his 1993 race for the leadership of Likud, at which time the party teetered on the brink of bankruptcy. Netanyahu, on the other hand, enjoyed a constant flow of contributions from his benefactors across the Atlantic. The list of wealthy contributors was long, but some names are especially worth mentioning: the financier and benefactor to the settlement project in Jerusalem, Irving Moskowitz; Sam Domb, another devout supporter of Ateret Cohanim; Reuben Mattus, the founder of the Häagen-Dazs ice cream empire who was known for his ties to Kach; Ronald Lauder, heir of the Estée Lauder business empire; and Jay Zises, the founder of a successful collection agency.[48] As soon as Netanyahu accomplished his mission and took over the party, he introduced new faces to the headquarters of Likud. Among them was the thirty-five-year-old Avigdor (Evet) Lieberman.

Lieberman immigrated to Israel from Moldova in 1978 and started his political career as a junior member of Kach. Soon enough he understood that the best vehicle for advancing his political ambitions was Likud.[49] Like his boss, Lieberman was an outsider in Likud. His loyalty to Netanyahu was unquestionable, and the two divided the work between them. Netanyahu was in charge of cultivating the ties with his rich supporters in the United States who opened their wallets, providing the funds to prove the financial viability of the Likud party to its concerned creditors. Meanwhile, Lieberman enacted a recovery plan that included deep cuts to Likud's operating costs. Since he had no familiarity with, or sentimentality for, the old guard of Likud's bureaucrats, Lieberman managed to reorganize the party into a lean and efficient organization whose workers were both grateful and loyal to the new regime.[50] At the same time, Netanyahu and his longtime media consultant, Eyal Arad, decided to separate. The experienced Arad was replaced by Shai Bazak, who was only twenty-five at the time. Yet, the appointment of Bazak was far from being a wild bet. The young advisor had already proven his skillful handling of the media during his previous positions as the spokesperson of the Yesha Council and the Moledet party. Bazak was grateful for the opportunity and like Lieberman, he was totally devoted to the boss.[51]

In line with his American approach, the new leader of Likud put together informal think tanks.[52] Although most members of these teams had no previous ties to Likud, they were enthused by the ideas, dynamism, and political style that Netanyahu introduced to the party. Netanyahu's informal teams discussed many issues, and assisted him in devising his domestic and foreign policy agendas. Interestingly, one of the issues addressed by the groups was the need to change the face of Israel's elite. According to the journalist Ronit Vardi, who wrote a biography of Netanyahu, "their objective was to replace 'the cosmopolitan-secular-left-wing resident of Tel Aviv' with a 'proud, generous, merciless, decent,' and observant Jew from Jerusalem who loves the land of Israel."[53] Three years later, many of these advisors were asked by Netanyahu to join him when he was sworn in as Israel's prime minister. Meanwhile, Netanyahu and large parts of his reinvigorated party assumed a pivotal role within the formidable anti-Oslo network.

The Paradox of the Golan Residents Committee

The story of the Golan residents, another lesser-known settler movement that also mobilized at that time, further illuminates the factors that facilitated the success of the West Bank settlers' network. During his election campaign, Yitzhak Rabin made a pledge that would haunt him for years; he stated that the very idea of an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights was inconceivable.[54] However, Rabin never promised *not* to negotiate with the Syrians. Shortly after he formed his cabinet, Rabin's representatives relaunched the peace talks with the Syrians that had dissolved several months earlier at the twilight of Prime Minister Shamir's term. The Golan Residents Committee, which monitored the talks closely, made sure to remind Rabin of his campaign promise. Beginning in 1993, it was impossible to go to the movies in Israel and avoid the committee's campaign video that featured a clip from Rabin's speech in which he said: "it is unthinkable to leave the Golan Heights. Whoever raises the idea of leaving the Golan Heights would compromise Israel's security."[55]

Despite his long-lasting enmity toward their West Bank counterparts, Rabin genuinely liked the settlers of the Golan. At the time, more than half of the thirty-two Jewish settlements in the Golan Heights were affiliated with settling organizations of the Labor Party.[56] The remaining settlements were associated with Gush Emunim or with other right-wing factions, most prominently Herut. Accordingly, the Golan Residents Committee included members of various political groups, though it was initially dominated by Labor activists. Among these were Yehuda Harel and Shimon Sheves, who chaired the committee in its formative days. Some twenty years later, Rabin appointed Sheves, who became one of his closest confidants, as director general of the prime minister's office.

The differences between Jews living in the Golan and Jews living in Gaza and the West Bank are significant, and even the terms that Israelis use to refer to the two groups reveal the variations in their images. The title "mitnahalim" ("settlers") was rarely used to describe Jews who chose to live in the Golan. Until the 1970s, the term was considered benign. It originated from the Bible and derives from the Hebrew word "nachala," which means an estate or piece of land.[57] Initially, the Zionist religious settlers themselves used this term. Moshe Levinger first introduced it in its contemporary context during his 1968 attempt to renew the Jewish presence in Hebron. Yet, as a result of the proliferation of Jewish settlements in the West Bank, the word gradually assumed a much more contentious meaning. "Settlers" were stereotyped by many Israelis as fanatic Orthodox Jews from the West Bank who had a distinct appearance, recognizable by a beard, a large knitted kippah (yarmulke) on their head, a doobon coat (a military-style, padded coat), and sandals. They carried automatic weapons and had a reputation of behaving aggressively toward both Palestinians and Israeli soldiers.[58] As a result, the West Bank and Gaza Strip settlers gradually resisted being identified as "settlers" and have made attempts to shift toward the less loaded term "residents" ("mityashvim").[59] Today many people still use the term "mitnahalim" in reference to Jews who have settled in the West Bank and Gaza. The Golan Heights settlers never went through such a process. They have always been referred to as "residents," and the little media coverage they received was mostly positive.

A major factor that facilitated the positive framing of the Jewish settlements in the Golan was the absence of conflict with the local population. By the end of the 1967 battles, the overwhelming majority of the Syrian inhabitants of Golan (around 120,000) had become refugees, and their villages had been ruined. Only 7,000 Syrian citizens, mostly Druze, stayed behind in Golan, and most of these resided in a very small, northeastern corner of the large (463-sq.-m.) area of the Golan Heights. Although they refused to accept Israeli citizenship, following the formal annexation of the Golan Heights in late 1981, the Druze of the Golan did not pose a

significant security challenge for Israel. Thus, the Golan settlers never felt threatened and had no reason to assume a militant posture and engage in conflicts. They were free to pursue their own agricultural and other economic endeavors. Indeed, on more than one occasion, the typical Jewish resident of the Golan has been portrayed as a peaceful Israeli cowboy who rides his horse in the wide-open spaces of the frontier. The lack of conflict in the region, the largely secular nature of the settlers, and the positive media coverage served the Golan residents very well. The majority of Jews in Israel displayed a strong affinity toward them and embraced their cause.[60]

But by the summer of 1993, relations between Rabin and his former allies had soured. While Foreign Minister Shimon Peres conducted secret negotiations with the Palestinians, Rabin focused on the Syrian channel with the assistance of his envoy ambassador, Itamar Rabinovich. In the eyes of the Golan residents, Rabin had become a traitor. They did not shy away from expressing their discontent and generated a wave of protest, which was backed by the Yesha Council. True to his temperamental nature, Rabin said that regardless of their actions, the Golan residents would not be able to divert him from his efforts to reach a peace agreement with the Syrians.[61] Clearly, this statement did not increase his popularity with the local leaders in the Golan, and they lashed back at him.

The increasing animosity between the Golan settlers and the prime minister, which coincided with the onset of the anti-Oslo protest, manifested the very different image of the two settlers' movements in the eyes of the Israelis. Notwithstanding the relentless efforts of West Bank settlers to mobilize support by delegitimizing the Rabin administration and the Oslo Accords, a majority (54.5 percent) of the Israelis supported the agreement, according to the first comprehensive survey of Tel Aviv University's Peace Index Project. Meanwhile, despite the much lesser effort of the Golan Residents Committee, support for the talks with Syria was favored by only 37.4 percent.[62] Rabin's Labor Party was itself a source of trouble. Two Labor Knesset members, Avigdor Kahalani and Emanuel Zisman, led the Golan lobby in the Knesset. Later they broke away from Labor and formed a new party, the Third Way (Haderekh Hashlishit), which opposed the idea of an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights and tried, with very limited success, to reintroduce the Allon Plan as the only viable solution to the conflict with the Palestinians. Finally, although Shimon Sheves had grown apart from the Golan Residents Committee, his social ties to its leaders granted them much better access to Rabin and his cabinet members, especially in comparison to the Yesha Council.[63]

Despite the favorable conditions, the Golan leaders' success was limited. Rabin and his successor Peres never backed down from their determination to move forward toward a peace treaty with Syria.[64] Further, while the West Bank settlements were absorbing tens of thousands of new residents under the Rabin and Peres administrations (1992–96), only 1,800 Israelis joined the small community of Jewish settlers in the Golan Heights, bringing it to a total of 13,800 residents. The reason for this seemingly paradoxical outcome is simple. Unlike the cases of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, Israel's other attempts to expand its settlements were focused on remote geographical peripheries. In spite of their passion and ideological zeal, the settlers needed sources of income, a sense of community, and, more generally, the advantages that living next to the major metropolitan parts of Israel (most notably Tel Aviv and Jerusalem) had to offer. These features were absent from the frontier areas of the Sinai Peninsula, the Jordan Valley, and the Golan Heights.

To conclude, the late 1980s and early 1990s saw the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the Israeli radical Right. This political camp, which seemed to have been declining in the Knesset, in effect evolved into a complex political network. Initially, it was hard to connect the

dots between small, nonprofit associations such as Ateret Cohanim and Elad in Jerusalem and the powerful Yesha Council, Zu Artzenu, Chabad, and Shas. Gradually, however, it became clear that these groups had a lot in common. They believed that it was time to discard the modern artificial notion of "Israeliness" associated with the Labor Party and the secular Left and to replace the core of the state apparatus with the rich tradition of "Jewish values." The fact that the Israeli Left returned to power and was leading a reconciliation process with the Arab world brought the different "Jewish" groups together and led to what later guided them to a decisive triumph.

6
A Time for Hate

On the evening of October 5, 1995, the area surrounding Kikar Zion (the Zion Square) in Jerusalem was crowded with settlers, ultra-Orthodox yeshiva students, and members of every right-wing party and movement, all clogging the streets leading into the square. A week earlier the Israeli government had taken another significant step in the reconciliation process with the Palestinians by signing the Taba Accords (also known as Oslo B). The radical Right was outraged by the agreement and immediately mobilized, orchestrating its largest protest since Rabin took office.[1] The event was designed as a demonstration of power for Binyamin Netanyahu. During the two-and-a-half years since they inherited a defeated party buried in debt, Netanyahu and Lieberman had not only managed to resurrect the party but also turned it into the leading force in the struggle against the Rabin administration and the Oslo Accords.

Exogenous events aided the resurgence of the Right. The growing frequency of suicide attacks, which Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad launched against Israel's main cities, frightened the Israelis, and many became increasingly skeptical of the prospects for reconciliation with the Palestinians. The campaign of terror provided Netanyahu, who had devoted many years to studying the challenge of terrorism, with an excellent opportunity to denounce the peace process using his counterterrorism credentials. It became a routine. Shortly after a terrorist attack, before the dust settled, Netanyahu would appear on the scene surrounded by frustrated and angered protesters. In his many media interviews, Likud's eloquent leader expressed his concerns over the deteriorating security in the homeland and placed the blame on the Oslo process and its architects.[2] Rabin and his cabinet members did not take Netanyahu seriously; they referred to him by his nickname, Bibi, which has a childish ring to it and was used quite often to belittle him. The cabinet members, captivated by the prospect of peace in the Middle East, were certain that the Israeli public could envision the future benefits of peace and thus shared their enthusiasm; they therefore put little effort into marketing the Oslo Process domestically. They were wrong. Most Israelis were consumed by the immediate fear of falling victim to a terror attack on their way to work and cared little about the potential fruits of the peace process that might or might not surface in the remote future. The absence of a reassuring message from the cabinet left a void, which Netanyahu was happy to fill. He offered an authoritative and uncompromising viewpoint. He referred to the architects of the Oslo process as reckless and denounced their credentials to be in charge of the security of the people of Israel. In a message that resonated with a growing number of Israelis, Netanyahu demanded that the Palestinian leadership be held accountable for the wave of violence. The settlers who followed his increasing sway came to embrace Netanyahu and crowned him the champion of their cause.[3]

On the evening of that October demonstration in 1995, Netanyahu stood on an elevated balcony, surrounded by right-wing leaders and Knesset members and appearing very pleased with the situation. A few hours earlier he had delivered a well-polished and fiery speech at the Knesset in which he accused Rabin of being completely detached from reality. Netanyahu insisted that the prime minister was not only ignorant of the deteriorating security in the streets of Israel but that he was apathetic to thousands of years of Jewish history and willing to hand out

Judaism's holiest places to its archenemy: "they are giving the city of the patriarchs (Hebron) to Arafat's terrorists … we will fight against this government until it collapses."[4] His speech in the square went even farther. "This government has a non-Zionist Majority," Netanyahu explained, "It is supported by five Arab Knesset Members who identify with the PLO … they provide him (Rabin) with his flimsy (parliamentary) majority."[5] The protesters hung on every word. The crowd was galvanized by the speaker's rhetoric and few who attended would have guessed that the fiery leader who denounced the agreement so emphatically would be responsible for implementing that very policy a mere sixteen months later.

The demonstration was scheduled to end at 10 p.m., but the thousands of protesters with skyrocketing adrenaline levels, refused to disperse. They marched toward the Knesset, where the Israeli legislature was about to vote for (and approve) the Taba Accords. On the way they left a trail of destruction. When they identified the car of Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, the minister of housing and construction, approaching the gates of the Knesset, they tried and nearly succeeded at assaulting the minister. Even Rabin was forced to contend with the protesters en route to the vote.[6]

By the time Netanyahu had returned to the building and as the news about the escalating violence reached him, it became clear that he was walking a very fine political line. On the one hand, he did not wish to antagonize the masses of radical right-wing activists who had crowned him as their leader. On the other hand, he was concerned that this time the protesters had spiraled out of control. Netanyahu asked the Speaker of the Knesset to make a special announcement to the plenum. In his message, Netanyahu insisted that he did not hear the mob shouting "he (Rabin) is a traitor" and "death to Rabin" or see the photos that circulated through the ecstatic crowd featuring Rabin wearing Arafat's kafiya (a traditional Arab head scarf) and one in which the prime minister was dressed as an SS officer.[7] Netanyahu, however, was not apologetic. He demanded that the thousands of concerned citizens who turned out for the protest would not be blamed for the night's events. Rather, he attributed the poisonous tone of the demonstration to a handful of Kach followers. In doing so, he released himself and tens of thousands of protesters from any responsibility.[8] This was a clever maneuver. The Kach protesters had always served as the ideal scapegoat, but by that time they were inconsequential. Despite Netanyahu's assertions, Kahane's ideas and style had already proliferated to every node of the radical right-wing network and shaped the character of the protest movement.[9] The man who would assassinate Rabin thirty days later never belonged to Kach, but Kahane's ideology had permeated his worldview.

The assassination took place at the end of another mass rally. For the first time since the initiation of the peace process, the Israeli peace camp had been disillusioned of the idea that the investment in peace would speak for itself. Rabin's friends and supporters had witnessed the pain that he endured as a result of the continuous venomous attacks against him and organized a rally in hopes of lifting his spirits. They were confident that many Israelis were just waiting for an opportunity to demonstrate their love and support for the prime minister. The chosen location was Kings of Israel Square (Kikar Malkhey Yisrael), Tel Aviv's main and largest square. Rabin was hesitant, fearing that the masses would not show up. He was wrong; the square was packed long before the rally began, and Rabin's last hours were joyful. The happiness was short lived though. At 9:42 p.m., en route to the prime minister's car, Yigal Amir, a law student at Bar-Ilan University and an activist against the "Oslo Process," stepped out of the crowd and fired on Rabin, killing the Israeli leader.[10]

Netanyahu's Path to Power

The geographical distance between Zion Square in Jerusalem and Kings of Israel Square (now known as the Rabin Square) in Tel Aviv is less than thirty-five miles, a mere one-hour drive. But by the mid-1990s, these two squares had been ideologically and theologically light-years away from one another.[11] Much like in the first half the first millennium BCE, Jerusalem served as the capital of the religiously zealous Kingdom of Judah, while the coastal line where Tel Aviv was built belonged to the more tolerant Kingdom of Israel. Seven months after the assassination of Rabin by a religious zealot, Israel itself had given in to the power of Judah.

Three weeks after the assassination, Shimon Peres, Rabin's deputy and foreign minister, was sworn in as Israel's new prime minister. Just a few months later on February 3, 1996, Peres called for a new election. His advisors did not want to lose the tide of sympathy and support that the Labor Party and its new leader enjoyed in the wake of the assassination. They assumed that the grief-stricken Israeli public would give Rabin's successor a mandate to complete the peace mission.[12]

Peres's reputation suffered many setbacks over the years. His longtime rivalry with Rabin within the Labor Party and with Begin, and later with Shamir on the national scene, eroded his public image. For many Israelis, Peres embodied the detachment of the Labor Party from the people. No other politician in Israel's history was subject to the degree of smear that was aimed at Peres. Even during his service under Rabin, he was thought of as the dove that eagerly pushed Rabin to make more and more concessions to the Palestinians. On January 5, just a few weeks before Peres called for the new election, the Israeli general security service, Shabak, assassinated Yahya Ayyash, who was considered to be the mastermind behind Hamas's campaign of suicide attacks. The highly sophisticated, clandestine operation was not initiated by Peres but did receive his blessing.[13] Peres had hoped that the assassination would prove to the public that he was not naïve and that he was capable of showing a hawkish side when needed.

Elections were set for May 29. Commentators from both ends of the political spectrum agreed that Netanyahu's prospects of becoming Israel's next prime minister did not seem promising. Netanyahu himself knew they were wrong; in the four months between the Peres announcement and the day of the elections, the political landscape had shifted, and everything fell into place for Netanyahu. By the end of May, the assassination of Rabin seemed like a distant memory. The fallout of the Ayyash assassination, which was intended to deliver a blow to Hamas, had a much more profound impact on the agenda. To the dismay of the Israeli leadership and security forces, Hamas recovered very quickly and proved that although Ayyash personified the new strategy of suicide terrorism, he had capable successors. Four suicide attacks took place in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Ashkelon between February 25 and March 3. The number of fatalities stood at sixty-eight. Fear and anger returned to the Israeli consciousness. Netanyahu, who for months had engaged in damage control, trying to erase his involvement in the campaign against Rabin from the public's collective memory, was quick to seize the political opportunity afforded by the situation. His campaign slogan—"Netanyahu, pursuing safe peace!"—reflected his new path. It positioned him as a centrist leader committed to the continuation of the peace talks but unwilling to conduct such negotiations at the expense of the safety of the Israeli people.

The 1996 elections were marked by another significant event: electoral reform. For the first time in the history of the state's national elections, Israelis were instructed to split their vote between their favorite party and their preferred candidate for premiership.[14] As a result, both

Peres and Netanyahu worked to rally large political groups and constituents in their favor. Netanyahu's first step was to eliminate other right-wing contenders from the race. It was not difficult to convince Raphael "Raful" Eitan, the leader of Tzomet, to pull out; he knew that he stood no chance of being elected. Public opinion polls indicated that his party, which since its surprising success four years earlier, had suffered some highly publicized scandals and splits, stood very little chance of holding on to its voters from the previous elections. The negotiation came down to a question of price, and Netanyahu made Eitan a very generous offer. In return for Raful's support, the Likud promised to reserve several spots in the Likud's list of Knesset candidates for members of Tzomet. Netanyahu also offered Eitan a senior role in his future cabinet.

Another opponent existed in David Levy, Netanyahu's bitter rival. Toxic relations between the two had come to an unprecedented peak three years earlier at the height of the struggle over the leadership of the Likud. In January 1993, Netanyahu made a dramatic appearance on the evening news, confessed to having an extramarital affair, and implied that Levy and his cohort of "criminals" had tried to make him drop out of the Likud race upon threat of disclosing his indiscretions. By 1996 Netanyahu was not willing to let the issue stand between him and the prime minister's office. Levy, who had recently left Likud and established a new party, Social and National Movement, or Gesher (Tenua Hevratit Leumit), was approached by his old friend Ariel Sharon and asked to drop out of the race. In return he was offered a deal similar to the one handed to Raful and the Tzomet party. Like Raful, Levy experienced severe difficulties in launching his new party and was happy to embrace Netanyahu's offer.[15]

Netanyahu's final obstacle lay in winning over the Israeli voter. A diligent student of American presidential campaigns, Netanyahu understood that the new electoral system offered a unique opportunity for putting the candidate rather than the party at the center of the campaign. He hired the services of Arthur Finkelstein, a conservative American campaign strategist who elevated the art of campaigning to a level that was unprecedented in Israel at that time. Finkelstein helped Netanyahu portray himself as a trustworthy and mature candidate. Likud's first television ad featured Netanyahu as its only star. He spoke directly to the camera from an office that looked like a crossbreeding of the prime minister's office in Jerusalem and the oval office. The young candidate—just forty-six at the time—was heavily made-up and his hair was slightly silvered, both of which made him look older than he was. His message was crystal clear: he appealed to the public's most primal fears, reminding the Israelis that the Labor-led peace process brought neither peace nor security. He vowed to take a different route. Unlike his contender, Netanyahu promised to put the security of the average Israeli first.[16] Soon after the ad aired, the campaign took a sharp twist. Finkelstein proved loyal to his reputation for repeating short messages over and over again, and ran a negative campaign titled "Peres will divide Jerusalem." Netanyahu, who needed to maintain a clean image, was absent from this portion of the campaign, but Finkelstein featured other Likud leaders. Among them was Ehud Olmert, the mayor of Jerusalem at the time. The message targeted right-wing voters, regardless of their partisan affiliation. It did not draw from facts but rather emphasized the old animosity toward the secular Left, which in the eyes of many Jews in Israel was indifferent to Jerusalem's fate. In their minds, the secular Left under the leadership of Peres was willing to give Jerusalem—the theological and historical heart of the Jewish people—to the Arabs in exchange for the mere illusion of peace.[17]

The Power in Numbers

In retrospect, it seems that the impact of Finkelstein's campaign, which at the time was considered to be highly effective, was somewhat inflated. The American campaign advisor was not the only foreigner who threw himself into the ring for the Likud's premiership candidate. Netanyahu had cultivated a relationship with Chabad as early as the mid-1980s when he served as Israel's ambassador to the UN. The Lubavitcher was impressed by Netanyahu's personality, and the latter reciprocated. On several occasions Netanyahu referred to the old rebbe's advice "to stand firmly against the pressures of the gentiles and not to give up parts of the holy land" as a revelation that had a significant impact on his worldview.[18] On Sunday, May 26, three days prior to the elections, large banners that seemed to have emerged out of nowhere hung in many of Israel's main intersections. Their messages were firm. One read "Netanyahu. He is good for the Jews" and another "With the Lord's help. Netanyahu." This last-minute campaign was the work of Chabad and was aimed at rallying those who were concerned about the "Jewish" future of Israel in support of Netanyahu.[19] The mastermind behind the plan was Ariel Sharon who, despite his very secular lifestyle, understood the growing leaning of the ultra-Orthodox sector toward the right-wing camp and thus maintained strong ties to Chabad, which led this tide. Sharon became concerned when the pre-election polls reflected a neck-and-neck race. He sought a decisive way to break the tie, and Sharon, known for his creativity, made it happen by mobilizing the Chabad Hassidim.

Israel represents an interesting challenge for those theories of rational voting, which emphasize individual preferences. Two large groups of voters in Israel—Arabs in mostly rural areas and ultra-Orthodox Jews—deviate from the notion that voters cast their ballots based on personal decisions. Both groups live in close-knit communities where elderly or spiritual leaders make political decisions for their followers. Thus, Israeli politicians always try to cut deals with leaders of these communities. Such deals guarantee hundreds and sometimes thousands of votes. Further, when instructed to go to the ballots, members of these communities usually exhibit much higher turnout numbers than other voters.

In the period leading up to the 1996 election, it was clear that most prominent ultra-Orthodox rabbis had already instructed their communities to vote for Netanyahu. Hence, Sharon decided to try and use the structure of Chabad's network in a new way, which would secure even more votes for his candidate. Chabad had more than two hundred chapters scattered all over Israel, and devotees could mobilize on very short notice. Sharon approached the leaders of Chabad with a plea to employ their infrastructure for Netanyahu. His argument was simple: only a victory of Netanyahu would prevent further territorial concessions and thus assure that the legacy of the late rebbe would go on. The Chabad leadership was skeptical, though. The rabbis had doubts about Netanyahu's character and asked to talk to him in person. Netanyahu put everything aside, went to see the Chabad leaders, and was happy to abide by their requests to provide them with both oral and written assurances. This paved the way for setting the operation in motion.[20] The last-minute campaign was financed by Australian tycoon Rabbi Joseph Gutnick (a pivotal actor in Chabad who arrived in Israel just prior to the elections in order to help Netanyahu's campaign among immigrants from the former USSR), and the pious followers carried it out.[21] It is hard to assess the actual impact of Chabad's mobilization. However, at the very least, it served as yet another indicator for the growing overlap between the ultra-Orthodox society and the Israeli Right.

As mentioned earlier, Chabad was not the only denomination that mobilized in support of Netanyahu's campaign. Rabbi Shach, Chabad's longtime archrival, instructed his followers to support Netanyahu as well. This was quite remarkable. The old rabbi was considered to be the most dovish leader in the ultra-Orthodox community, and Netanyahu's self-indulgent lifestyle embodied the complete opposite of the values to which Shach adhered. Further, Netanyahu was on his third marriage and had at one time been married to a non-Jew. He admitted to having extramarital relationships. Nonetheless, Rabbi Shach preferred him over Shimon Peres for one important reason: unlike the Labor Party that, from Shach's perspective, was advancing the secularization of Israel, the Likud had far more respect for religion and was more likely to support the interests of the ultra-Orthodox communities as well as the expansion of religious legislation.[22]

Another influential religious figure who offered his last-minute support for the Netanyahu campaign was Rabbi Yitzchak Kaduri, who could be considered as the polar opposite of Rabbi Shach. The only thing that these two spiritual leaders had in common was their age—both rabbis were allegedly born in 1898. Shach was born in Lithuania and spent most of his adult life as the head of the prestigious Ponevezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak; Kaduri was born in Iraq and spent most of his life in Jerusalem where he earned his living as a bookbinder. Over the years Kaduri emerged as Israel's most respected Kabbalist (a rabbi who practices that secretive and mystical discipline of Judaism known as the Kabbalah), was known as a miracle maker, and subsequently became a highly influential figure among Mizrahi Jews. The leaders of Shas were the first to recognize the potential political clout that stemmed from Kaduri's status and asked for his support as early as 1988. Thus, there was nothing unexpected in the fact that during the 1996 campaign Kaduri expressed his support for Shas and allowed the party to distribute amulets with his blessing for their prospective voters.[23] The surprise came a day prior to the election in a highly publicized event, where Kaduri welcomed Netanyahu into his home and made him a promise, saying "tomorrow you will become prime minister." For many of his followers, it served as an indication that the esteemed Kabbalist gave his support to Netanyahu.[24]

At the end of the day, then, the election was not about Netanyahu. The rallying of the various religious elements around this leader was symptomatic of a broader and highly significant phenomenon: the emergence of Chardal (National Ultra-Orthodox community) that served to convey the increasing overlap between large segments of the Zionist Religious camp, which had aligned itself with the radical Right years earlier, and the ultra-Orthodox subculture.[25] The Chardal consisted of two elements. On the one hand, many Zionist religious yeshiva students became fascinated by the strict observance of the ultra-Orthodox and grew closer to their theological perspective. On the other hand, many of the formerly anti-Zionist ultra-Orthodox communities underwent a rapid process during which they adopted the most nativistic version of Zionism and became increasingly comfortable with expressing their populistic worldview. The common denominator of these elements was their ability to identify common enemies. They shared a deep hostility toward the Arabs, the secular left, and what they perceived as the liberal judiciary.[26] Ehud Sprinzak, in his analysis of this development, used the term "Kahanization."[27] Kahane persistently tried to market his ideas as a bridge between the Zionist religious and the ultra-Orthodox philosophies. Yet, despite his deep conviction in the merit of this approach, he was ahead of his time. The "Kahanization" process to which Sprinzak referred did not gain momentum until three years after Kahane's death. The tipping point came when the Labor-led coalition demonstrated its willingness to put the holiest sites of Israel on the negotiating table and maybe even to hand them over to the Palestinians. Many in this newly formed religious

subculture of the Chardal considered the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular as the modern-day incarnation of the Amalekites, the archenemies of the Jews.[28] According to a commonly cited passage in Deuteronomy (25:19), it was the Jews' religious duty to "blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven."

Israelis: 0, Jews: 1

At 10 p.m. on May 29, 1996, the eager pundits who occupied the various TV studios were frustrated. The exit polls could not project a winner. Peres led the race, but the tiny gap between him and Netanyahu was within the margins of statistical error. Even so, the pollsters were pressured by journalists to name a winner and, while doing their best to remain cautious, gave the victory to Peres. This cued celebrations at the Labor Party's headquarters. The festivities were short lived. Two hours later, when many of the actual ballots had been counted, the trend had begun to shift. In the late hours of the night it became clear that Netanyahu had in fact won the election. Experts offered various explanations for the discrepancy between the exit polls and the actual results. One of these was especially intriguing. They found that many ultra-Orthodox voters lied to the pollsters and said that they had voted for Peres, despite having actually voted for Netanyahu. This was a deliberate and sarcastic move. They were hoping to tease the hated Peres and eventually leave him deeply disappointed. Yet, Peres was not a political novice. Despite his reputation as a hopeless optimist, he did not expect to carry the ultra-Orthodox constituency; the real blow came from other groups.

The 1996 elections were held at the height of the immigration wave from the former Soviet bloc and, as a result, 400,000 newcomers were eligible to vote, 50 percent of whom were first time voters.[29] The influx created a significant transformation in a country with only three million citizens who were eligible to vote. Even so, prior to the election, few analysts paid attention to the possible impact of such a demographic shift on the outcomes of the race. Labor leaders assumed that the secular nature of the immigrants and their voting patterns in 1992 were good predictors for their political behavior in 1996.[30] Shimon Peres even took a private Russian tutor, Sofa Landver, whom he later introduced into the Israeli political system. But the Labor Party's optimism was premature. The numbers were staggering. Among recent immigrants, Netanyahu defeated Peres by a forty-point margin.[31] This surprising result was explained by four main factors, the first of which was their acquired nativism. Unlike Jews who emigrated to the United States or Western Europe, those who came to Israel under the provisions of the Law of Return were embraced by the state's institutions. They were repeatedly told that they had not immigrated but rather returned to their ancient homeland. Thus, regardless of their degree of religiosity, they developed a strong sense of animosity toward the Arabs, the perpetual "others" in Israel who were perceived as the challengers to the state's ethno-Jewish character. The second factor influencing their voting behavior was also related to nativism. The immigrants came from a massive country and were raised on a patriotic political culture that glorified conquests as well as the wide-open spaces of the motherland. They were stunned by Israel's willingness to give up parts of its tiny land to the Arabs. Many of the immigrants lacked a clear historical context with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They did not perceive the Palestinians as a separate group but rather as part of the large Arab nation, which controlled most of the Middle East.[32] Third, the immigrants reacted against the forceful Soviet political indoctrination they had experienced in the USSR. Many of these expatriates despised parties and ideologies that

reminded them of the Communist Party. In Israel, this resulted in animosity toward the Labor and Meretz parties.[33] Finally, in 1996 the newcomers had a particularly strong incentive to go to the ballots. Natan (Anatoly) Sharansky, who had spent eleven years in Soviet jails for his Zionist activity and was a hero for both newcomers and veteran Israelis, formed a new party, Yisrael BaAliyah (Israel Ascends, also refers to immigration to Israel). The party's goal was to represent the particular interests of the immigrants. The new electoral system that allowed Israelis to split their vote between their preferred prime ministerial candidate and favorite party, presented the immigrants, as well as other groups, with an opportunity to advance their particular interests by giving their votes to a sectarian party while expressing their preferences with regard to broader national issues through the premiership ballot.

However, the most bitter disappointment for Peres came from the Arab sector, a constituency in which he expected to have a landslide victory. The Arab voters were overwhelmingly supportive of the Oslo Process. As anticipated, Peres swept away 94.7 percent of the votes in the non-Jewish municipalities. The surprise was that many Arab voters chose a third option: casting one vote for their preferred party and an empty ballot for the prime minister. A staggering 7.2 percent of the premiership ballots in the Arab municipalities were blank.[34] This translated to 19,016 blank votes, 4,287 more than Peres needed to secure a victory. This was a direct outcome of a Peres policy that was aimed at proving to the Jewish voters that despite his dovish reputation he could be as tough as his challenger when it came to matters of security.

Operation Grapes of Wrath (Mivtza Invei Zaam; also known as the April War) in Lebanon was initiated by Peres's cabinet as a result of Hezbollah's constant provocations, mostly sporadic rocket launches into Israel's territory. During the operation, an Israeli artillery battery shelled the area of the Qana village in southern Lebanon and hit a UN position that gave shelter to Lebanese refugees. The tragic incident left 102 individuals dead. Many Israeli Arabs held Shimon Peres personally accountable for the tragedy and decided to express their anger by abstaining from casting their votes in the premiership race.[35] When asked by a journalist to reflect on the outcome of the elections, Peres, a veteran politician, supposedly said, "the Jews won and the Israelis lost."

Netanyahu's narrow margin victory could have given the false impression that the Israeli electorate was split down the middle between the Left and the Right. The new electoral system offered analysts a window to gain a much better understanding of the actual magnitude of the political shift that had taken place in Israel. The newly elected parliament reflected a fragmented society along ideological, religious, ethnic, and economic dimensions. It ushered in an era of "identity voting" in Israel.[36] Yet, the cleavages were not crosscutting, a fact that would have contributed to stability.[37] Shevah Weiss, the former speaker of the Knesset, a political science professor, and one of Rabin's closest allies, was assigned by the Labor Party to the painful task of analyzing the results of the elections, identifying what went wrong, and providing recommendations for the future. Despite his attempt to convey a tone of optimism, Weiss's conclusions were sobering. The voting patterns among the Jewish constituents revealed a growing rift between the "Israeli" and "Jewish" tribes. The old social divisions between doves and hawks, secular and religious, poor and affluent, Ashkenazi and Mizrahi were now overlapping and generating two adversarial camps. The worst news for the Labor Party was that the "Jewish'" tribe grew stronger from one election campaign to the next.[38] The parties that explicitly instructed their supporters to vote for Netanyahu, as well as those that made no such recommendation but merely opposed the Labor-led peace process, swept 57.5 percent of the total vote. This represented a 7 percent increase in the power of the right-wing parties since the 1992

elections. Thus, even if he won the battle against Netanyahu, Peres stood very little chance of forming an ideologically cohesive coalition that would have given him the support that he desperately needed to push the peace process forward.

The Labor Party was not the only one in trouble. Netanyahu, who was one of the most enthusiastic supporters of the electoral reform, did not know that he actually had very few reasons to celebrate even though he emerged as the winner. He envisioned an Israeli prime minister who, very much like the American president, would be elected to office based on his persona. Ideally, a directly elected prime minister should not be subjected to crippling pressures from party delegates and coalition members but should instead have the power to form a meritocratic cabinet. In actuality, though, this experiment in electoral engineering left the prime minister extraordinarily weak. The voters who were happy to split their vote created a highly fragmented parliament in which the two formerly large parties, Likud and Labor, together secured only 52 percent of the vote. In comparison, four years earlier they gained slightly less than 60 percent and in 1988 more than 61 percent. Thus, without a strong pivotal party behind him, Netanyahu's coalition formation process became much more complicated. He was under enormous pressure to allocate important ministerial portfolios to his main coalition partners: Shas, Mafdal, and Yisrael BaAliyah. With so many different people to please, Netanyahu's dream of a meritocratic cabinet faded away.
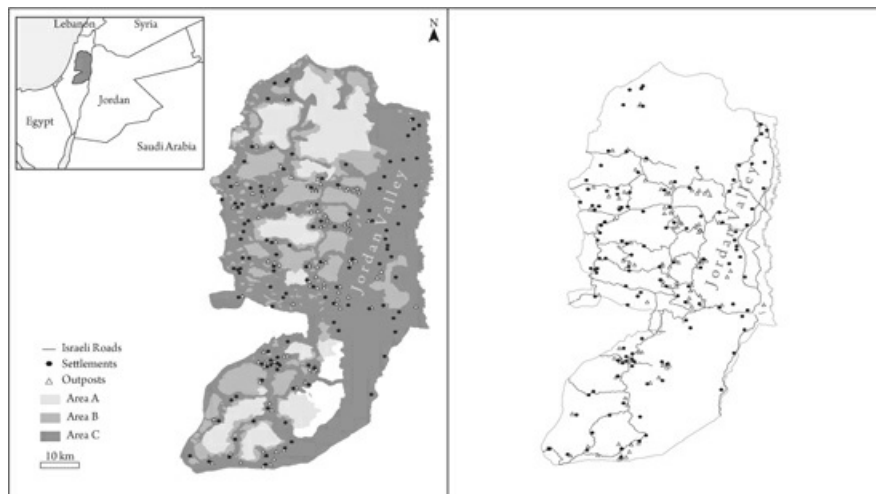
Figure 6.1 A Horizontal and Vertical Look at the Spread of Settlements, Outposts, and Israeli Roads Following the Oslo Accords, 2006. The West Bank is divided into areas according to the degree of control that the Palestinian National Authority can exercise. Area A (full control); Area B (civilian control); and Area C (limited autonomy over domains such as healthcare and education).
Source: Settlement and outpost names and their dates of establishment were collected from www.peacenow.org/il on December 2, 2010.

From Jerusalem to Hebron

Netanyahu could at least take comfort in the fact that he was able to bring his trusted aides with

him to the prime minister's office. The most dominant members of the new team were Avigdor Lieberman and Shai Bazak—both of whom happened to be affiliated with the settlers' network. Lieberman was appointed as the director general of the prime minister's office and Bazak as the prime minister's media consultant. They brought in other functionaries, many of whom were central members of the network.[39] Yet, an even more influential clique in Netanyahu's political network turned out to be his own family. The most prominent figures in this group were his father, third wife Sara, and her brother, Hagai Ben-Artzi. All of them shared a radical right-wing ideology and held unlimited access to the young and easily influenced prime minister. The quality of Netanyahu's ties to the various actors and cliques of his network varied, but they all exercised a significant degree of sway on him.

Shortly after he assumed office, Netanyahu met with the leaders of the settlers. Pinchas Wallerstein, the head of Mateh Binyamin Regional Council and one of the most prominent figures in the Yesha Council, presented the council's vision. He saw Netanyahu's election as an opportunity for a complete reversal in Israel's policy toward the settlements. The goal was to boost both governmental and private building initiatives and to bring another 100,000 Israelis to the West Bank and Gaza, thus reaching the quarter-of-a-million settlers mark. Understanding that a limited number of Zionist religious devotees were willing to settle in the occupied territories, he asked the prime minister to give incentives to other target populations, most notably middle-class Israelis, who were sold on the "American dream" of a spacious, suburban house with a nice backyard but could not afford it within the boundaries of sovereign Israel. As indicated earlier, another group with an even stronger incentive to relocate to the West Bank was that of lower-class ultra-Orthodox Jews, who desperately needed larger apartments for their rapidly growing families.[40] When the meeting ended, the settlers' spirit was uplifted. They felt that after almost four tough years they finally had a prime minister who shared their worldview.[41] The boost of optimism was not limited to the Yesha Council. Ehud Olmert, then the hawkish mayor of Jerusalem, was hoping to see a rapid expansion of Jewish building projects all over the city's vicinity. Yet, before getting to new construction projects, he pushed Netanyahu to make a decision regarding a much older structure, and this brought the peace process to the brinks of collapse.[42]

Olmert's background was almost the complete opposite of Netanyahu's. He was raised in a well-respected, revisionist family. His father, Mordechai, served as a Herut Knesset member in the late 1950s. In 1966, when he was only twenty-one, young Ehud Olmert captured the headlines when he took the stand at the Herut eighth national convention and openly challenged the undisputed leader of the party, Menachem Begin. Olmert demanded that Begin take personal responsibility for Herut's consecutive electoral failures, step down, and clear the way for a new leader. While Begin's supporters were outraged, Begin himself, who decades earlier challenged Jabotinsky in a similar manner, applauded the young activist for his candor, passion, and courage. In 1973 Olmert was first elected to the Knesset on the Likud's ticket. However, he was no longer a member of the dominant Herut faction. Rather, he represented a much smaller faction, the Free Center (HaMerkaz HaHofshi), which was led by Begin's longtime critic, Shmuel Tamir. A year later, Olmert, who felt that Tamir was gravitating toward the center of the political spectrum, joined forces with Eliezer Shostak, a revisionist and a devout believer in the notion of Greater Israel. Together they established the more hawkish Independent Center Party (HaMerkaz HaAtzmai). In 1976 they joined forces with other small hawkish factions,[43] and formed LaAm, (which means For the Nation) which became the third largest faction in Likud until the mid 1980s.[44] Despite his departure from Herut, Olmert enjoyed the status of a prince

because he was a second generation to the founders of Herut, or the "Fighting Family," as the party's elders liked to refer to themselves in reference to their joint history in the Etzel.

Olmert never shied away from the public eye. Like Netanyahu, he was highly aware of the power of the media and made sure to befriend prominent reporters. As a young Knesset member, he found a niche that provided him with a lot of attention. Olmert became a crusader who was committed to a relentless battle against corruption and organized crime in Israel. He enjoyed the image of an honest and pragmatic politician who did not hesitate to reach across the aisle in order to advance the goal of rooting out corrupt elements from the Israeli public sphere.[45] Toward the end of the 1980s, Netanyahu's and Olmert's paths converged. Both aligned with the faction of Prime Minister Shamir and Moshe Arens in the Likud, and assisted in the struggle against David Levy and Ariel Sharon. Their bet was successful.

When Shamir formed his cabinet in 1990, he appointed Olmert as health minister. Netanyahu had to agree to hold more junior positions, first as a deputy foreign minister under David Levy. Later, as a result of the adversarial relations with the minister and with the blessing of Shamir, Netanyahu transferred to the prime minister's office as a deputy minister with an unspecified role. Eventually, Likud's defeat in 1992 launched the two young and ambitious politicians on different paths. Netanyahu decided to fight over Shamir's vacant spot as Likud's leader. Olmert, on the other hand, decided to challenge Teddy Kollek, member of the Labor Party and veteran mayor of Jerusalem, who had held that position in the capital city for twenty-eight years. Despite Kollek's legendary image, Olmert's decision to enter the mayoral race was based on careful analysis of demographic trends. He knew that the ultra-Orthodox community in Jerusalem was constantly growing, while the young and secular natives of the capital city were emigrating to Tel Aviv in large numbers. Thus, once he secured the support of the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox communities, the road to the mayor's office was cleared.

Olmert's pressure on Netanyahu led to an international crisis that broke out on the night of September 23, 1996, a few hours after the Yom Kippur fast ended. Workers of the Tourism Ministry and the Jerusalem municipality broke a thin wall that separated the north exit of the Western Wall Tunnel from the section of the Via Dolorosa, which is located in the Muslim Quarter.[46] Israel's official position regarding this step, which no cabinet in the past had dared to take, was that it would increase tourism to Jerusalem and benefit the Arab merchants of the Old City. The explanation was weak. Despite the fact that he had been prime minister for less than three months, Netanyahu must have known that any unilateral action in the small Holy Basin in Jerusalem would be perceived as an Israeli (Jewish) attempt to provoke not only the Palestinians but the whole Muslim world.[47] It was obvious that beyond his religious and historical mission to touch "the foundation-rock of our [the Jews] existence," as he put it, Netanyahu wanted to send a signal to the Israelis, the Palestinians, and the whole world that he was living up to his campaign promise of eternalizing Israel's status as the only sovereign entity in Jerusalem.[48] It quickly became clear that he succeeded beyond his wildest expectations. The next morning was marked by the most severe Palestinian riots in Jerusalem since the signing of the Oslo Accords, as well as clashes between IDF soldiers and Palestinian forces in the West Bank and Gaza. The Arab League issued a harsh statement asserting that Israel's true intention was to bring down the Al-Aqsa Mosque and to build the third Jewish Temple on its ruins.[49] After three days of fighting, the death toll numbered fifteen Israeli soldiers and forty Palestinians. Hundreds more were injured. President Bill Clinton called for an immediate summit in Washington, the aim of which was to salvage what was left of the Oslo Accords. Netanyahu was shaken by the outcomes of one of his first decisions as prime minister and was eager to appease the United States and the rest of

the international community. Under heavy international pressure, he agreed to sign the Protocol Concerning the Redeployment in Hebron (also known as the Hebron Agreement). This was a direct continuation of the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Oslo B) that the Rabin administration had made with the Palestinians a year earlier.

How Temporary Are the Temporary Centers?

The Hebron Agreement served as another milestone in souring the relations between the new cabinet and the settlers. The short-lived honeymoon ended earlier with the appointment of Yitzhak Mordechai as defense minister. The Yesha Council was frustrated by the fact that the new minister, whom they did not consider one of their own, was not eager to fill the position of the minister's aide on settlement affairs with a person who was part of their network. Mordechai seemed comfortable with Rabin's appointee Noah Kinarti. The network quickly mobilized their supporters within the Likud to have the secretary general of the council, Uri Ariel, appointed as the director of the settling division in the Defense Ministry. Shortly afterwards, Eli Cohen, a member of the Likud and the former head of the settling department in the Jewish agency, replaced Kinarti,[50] teaching Mordechai a valuable lesson regarding the real power of the settlers' network.

However, the sweet taste of victory did not last long for the settlers. The Hebron Agreement caught them by surprise and forced them to launch a contingency plan. They reintroduced the strategies that they applied during the Rabin era. The wave of protests that captivated the attention of the media and the public served as a perfect facade for a much more significant operation: the quiet expansion of existing settlements and especially the recruitment of new settlers.[51] According to Pinchas Wallerstein, the veteran head of the Mateh Binyamin Regional Council and one of the main figures in the Yesha Council, this was one facet of a broader strategy, the aim of which was to prevent the formation of a viable Palestinian State.[52] The grand plan was sophisticated. Geographically, the goal was to divide the West Bank into vertical and horizontal continuums of Jewish settlements and to create roads that would connect them to one another as well as to the Green Line in the west and the Jordan Valley in the east. These very settlements and roads served another significant objective—preventing Palestinian population centers from expanding and therefore eliminating the possibility for Palestinians to attain territorial continuity.[53] This strategy was a crossbreed of two older plans. The first was Ariel Sharon's Cantons Plan,[54] the objective of which was to downgrade the future Palestinian self-governing bodies from a unified national entity to scattered municipal bodies.[55] By dividing the Palestinian territories in the West Bank, the unofficial plan was to prevent Palestinian territorial continuity and undermine the prospects for formation of an independent Palestinian State. The second was Moshe Feiglin's 1993 initiative to build satellite outposts next to each settlement and, in so doing, double the number of Jewish settlements in the West Bank. The adoption of the new plan by the Yesha Council marked the dawn of the so-called Outposts Era.

While Netanyahu instructed the IDF to redeploy in Hebron and seemed to succumb to international pressure not to renew Shamir's policy of a formal, state-backed expansion of the settlements, the settlers' network had already shifted into high gear and applied its alternative plan. This time, the process was much easier than in the 1970s. The Yesha Council had devised a blueprint based on decades of acquired experience. Its inception can be traced back to the 1930s, the era of Tower and Stockade in Palestine when all the Jewish settling movements were

committed to establishing Jewish presence in peripheral areas. Tower and Stockade was a settling policy practiced by the Yishuv during the years of the Great Arab Revolt. According to British law, removing an existing settlement was much more complicated than simply refusing to authorize its establishment. According to the law, the mandate authorities could not dismantle a community that had a tower and a stockade. Thus, these settlements were erected overnight, establishing facts on the ground that prohibited their legal removal. The initial structures served as placeholders, which allowed the community to expand. By using this approach of "setting facts on the ground" they managed to embarrass the British authorities and throw them into a legal limbo.[56] Shortly after the formation of the State of Israel, the Ministry of Defense worked through the IDF's Nahal—Fighting Pioneer Youth—framework to assign members of Zionist youth movements with the task of establishing new settlements. Based on official instructions from the Ministry of Defense, enclaves of IDF soldiers who enlisted as a group, erected settlements in strategic areas designated to lay the foundations for a civilian community. Known as Nahal Settlements, many of them were established in peripheral areas, which after the Six-Day War included the occupied territories. The IDF soldiers/settlers were instructed to rapidly build several structures and to lay the foundations for an agricultural community. These young soldiers served as placeholders. They facilitated the expansion and development of the settlements, which in many cases grew into civilian Kibbutzim and Moshavim.[57]. While most of the fifty-six Nahal outposts were structured in accordance with the Allon Plan map (e.g., the Jordan Valley, the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip, and the Sinai Peninsula), the settlers' network focus was the heart of the West Bank.

"Run to the Hills"

When Netanyahu initially formed his cabinet, he made several rookie mistakes. The most significant one was not to offer Ariel Sharon, who had been highly instrumental in his election, a significant role in the new administration. Under an ultimatum from David Levy, who refused to join the cabinet unless his friend Sharon received a role that reflected his status, Netanyahu was forced to establish a new governmental ministry, the National Infrastructure Ministry. The new bureau turned into an empire that controlled the most vital resources of the state: water, energy, and land.[58] Sharon liked nothing more than creating something out of nothing, and the new portfolio suited him perfectly. And as he assumed his new role, helping his longtime allies from the Yesha Council was high on his agenda.

During a visit to the settlements in the Talmonim-Dolev cluster, Sharon identified a strategically located hill to the north of Talmonim.[59] He turned to the representatives of Mekorot, Israel's national water company, and asked them to build a water tower on the incline. When they responded by telling him that the hill was too high and that water pressure was likely to become a problem, he answered, "I trust you. You will solve the problem." Then he turned to the settlers that accompanied him, grinning and saying:

> The water tower will require protection. The guard would feel lonely and ask to start a family. His kids have to enjoy the company of other children, so more families will be required to join. The whole community would need a synagogue and the women must have a Mikvá [public bath]. The kids are entitled to be educated in a proper kindergarten and should have open spaces to play. This is the way to turn this hill into

a new community.

And so they did. A few years later Sharon's vision was realized, and the Harasha settlement was a faits accompli.[60]

The "Sason Report," the most comprehensive account regarding the "Outposts Initiative," which was written almost a decade later, illustrates in vivid colors the overwhelming success of this endeavor.[61] By the time the report was released, the overall number of outposts stood at one hundred. Of these, forty were erected during Netanyahu's first tenure as prime minister with Sharon as his national infrastructure minister. The settlers met their objectives. Existing settlements were "thickened" by the addition of what they referred to as "new neighborhoods." However, many of the alleged neighborhoods were located miles away from the mother settlement and for all intents and purposes should have been considered as independent settlements. Referring to them as mere extensions or new neighborhoods allowed the de facto formation of new settlements minus the formalities. Such framing made the lives of settlers and their supporters in the cabinet far less complicated. It involved less red tape and subjected Israel to a lesser amount of international condemnation than the formation of new settlements.

Another significant achievement of the initiative was the creation of a long stretch of Jewish territorial continuums. The outposts connected large Jewish settlements to one another through a chain of strongholds and roads.[62] The location of each outpost was carefully chosen. Many of them were located in close proximity to large Palestinian population centers, thus preventing cities and villages from expanding. The horizontal and vertical approach to distributing the outposts was another great success. A look at figure 6.1 demonstrates that horizontally, the outposts helped to complete intangible Jewish barriers of settlements and roads, especially between Nablus and Ramallah. The Jewish continuums begin in the west, close to the Green Line, and end in the Jordan Valley. Vertically, the outposts serve as a buffer between the "Drainage Divide" (the eastern slopes of the Samaria peaks) and the Jordan Valley.

In the early summer of 2005, I witnessed one of the most successful operations of the initiative—the creation of the Greater Itamar continuum. Itamar was established by Amana in 1984. It is located within the governing area of the Shomron Regional Council, at the very heart of the West Bank, 3.3 miles southeast of Nablus. Before I arrived in Itamar, I was under the assumption that its six satellite outposts were located in close proximity to the settlement; the settlers' rhetoric of "extending" their settlements had given me this impression. But I was wrong. After entering the gates of the Itamar, I took the road leading to the outposts. The drive to the most remote outpost in the chain was not particularly long—a little over four miles—yet it was eye opening. The highly elevated road stretched eastward. At one point it was several hundred feet higher than Itamar. It ended, or at least I had to stop, at the slope of the mountain. From this highpoint I looked down and saw the Jordan Valley settlements. The Itamar area is part of the northern West Bank settlements and outposts cluster. The northernmost point of this cluster is Kdumim, located 3.5 miles southwest of Nablus. The seven-mile road that stretches from Kdumim to the southeast connects it to Yitzhar. Further to the southeast is Shilo, located ten miles north to Ramallah and part of the Mateh Binyamin Regional Council. In May 2010, I arrived in Shilo as a visitor of the council. Once again I was flabbergasted at the distance covered by the settlement and its satellites. The settlement itself, which was established in 1979 by Gush Emunim with the active encouragement of Ariel Sharon, spreads across three hundred acres and is divided into three main neighborhoods. The layout of the settlement embodies the ideas of the temporary center and the thickened settlement, both of which enabled it to expand over the years.

Yet, this was just one part of the picture. Shilo is strategically located on a hill, and it serves as a pivotal point for a horizontal continuum of settlements, roads, and outposts. It begins in Maale Levona and stretches about 8.5 miles east through Shvut Rachel, all the way to road number 458 (also known as Allon Road). According to the Allon Plan, this road should have marked the border between the Jordan Valley and the West Bank.[63] The next cluster is a chain of settlements and outposts to the east toward Ramallah and Jerusalem. Though it is fragmented, this cluster spreads from Ofra in the north to Maale Adumim in the south and creates another buffer between the West Bank and the Jordan Valley. This cluster is especially contentious due to its proximity to Jerusalem. The last cluster is located on Mount Hebron. It surrounds the city of Hebron and separates it from the Jordan Valley in the east and the Green Line in the south.

The Hilltop Youth: The New Vanguard or Naive Puppets?

Sason's report unveiled the fascinating network of the puppeteers that orchestrated the outpost operation. These were the same governmental and semi-governmental agencies that were co-opted by the settlers' network in the past and which provided them with invaluable support throughout the years.[64] Although he was not mentioned by name, it was clear that the grand strategist of this operation was none other than the person who solicited the Sason report—Ariel Sharon.[65]

The report refuted a myth that was cultivated by the Yesha Council and its state affiliates. In order to deflect international condemnation, they chose to play ignorant, contending that the outposts were the works of an elusive group of wild youngsters known as "the Hilltop Youth." But no one had a better grasp of the West Bank and its administrative chaos than the leaders of the settlers' network. They knew all the legal loopholes, had a clear understanding of the vague division of labor between the different ministries and agencies, and most importantly had installed their own people in critical administrative positions.[66] The networks' ability to defeat the state was also reflected in the significant information gaps in the report. Even though Talya Sason was appointed directly by the prime minister to conduct the investigation, governmental ministries refused to provide the investigator with the information she required. Thus, she had no other alternative but to conclude that she could not offer a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon due to the systematic lack of cooperation of the relevant bureaus.[67]

The Hilltop Youth deserve a closer look because they represent a generational shift in the Zionist religious subculture.[68] The most comprehensive study of this subculture was conducted by Shlomo Kaniel.[69] He concluded that the group is highly heterogeneous. However, its members do share some common traits. Contrary to the old guard of the settlers and most notably the Gush Emunim subculture, the new settlers were explicitly and outspokenly committed to settling in the land. They did not even give pretense to becoming the new vanguard of the Israeli society in the way that their predecessors did. Many of them were married with young children. They lived in small trailers, had no running water, and generators provided their electricity. Maintaining a claim to the land was a daily struggle that required a great deal of resolve.[70] The reasons for their determination varied. Some were fascinated by the idea of living a simple life that mimicked biblical times. They were more interested in being close to nature than in advancing a political agenda, and the open spaces of the West Bank provided them with the opportunity to do so.[71] Others, who captured the attention of the media, perceived relations

between Jews and Arabs as an inherent state of a zero-sum war. Thus, they adopted a Kahanistic worldview and adhered to a heavy-handed policy that favored deportation, revenge, and annihilation of Gentiles that posed a threat to the people of Israel. This violent philosophy led to many clashes between the settlers and their Palestinian neighbors throughout the years.[72]

During my 2005 visit to Itamar, I had the opportunity to observe a group of Hilltop Youths from the most radical nucleus of this subculture. The Giv'ot Olam outpost was an organic farm established in the mid 1990s by Avri Ran, a highly charismatic figure known as the "father of the outposts." Ran, who was born to a secular family, embraced Orthodox Judaism and, shortly after moving with his family to the Itamar area he started recruiting youths. Many of his recruits had dropped out of high school and had seen their share of conflicts with the authorities. They considered him a role model; he offered them guidance, a place to stay, and interacted with the authorities on their behalf. However, Ran himself never shied away from controversies and was accused of initiating conflicts with Palestinians.

Giv'ot Olam is located on a hill three miles southeast of Itamar. It constitutes a link in the chain of outposts that connect the center of the West Bank to the Jordan Valley. On the day of my visit, it was not easy to get into the compound. We were greeted with suspicion by a group of young men who wanted to know the exact purpose of the visit. Only after we reassured them that we were not journalists, they let us in but insisted that their representatives accompany us at all times. The outpost's inhabitants lived in wooden cabins, which reminded me of a ski resort. Three young women were assigned with the task of showing us around. Our tour guides, who also served as security guards, made sure that we did not enter restricted areas. They were not particularly friendly or talkative. They were, however, willing to share some biographical details. They were all in their late teens and recent graduates of religious schools. They came to the farm for short periods of time and considered it a service to their community. These young volunteers constituted the farm's main labor force and were in charge of the chicken coops, the pens, and the production of dairy products. They were passionate about their political convictions, which were a mix of the duty of the Jewish people to settle the land of Israel combined with a deep animosity toward the Palestinians. They seemed to know little about the history of Giv'ot Olam in particular or the settlements in general. It was clear that they served as nothing more than foot soldiers in the settlers' network battle over the hills.

After we concluded our tour of the farm, they offered to show us the surrounding area. We drove a short distance to the Three Seas Outlook, the most elevated point of Gideons' Peak (2,800 ft.), which serves as an exceptional vantage point. Under good visibility conditions, one can see not only large parts of the West Bank but also the Mediterranean, the Sea of Galilee, and the Dead Sea. This part of the tour served as the most convincing visualization of the settlers' strategy. The most striking view from this post was that of the outskirts of Nablus, the second largest Palestinian city in the West Bank, which spread out beneath us and was constrained by two hills. On the southern peak, the IDF positioned a Nahal stronghold that in 1983 was handed over to Amana and served as the foundation for the Bracha settlement. The Israeli control of the peaks pressed several Palestinians neighborhoods together and forced them to expand in an odd pattern. The settlements southeast of the city ranged from Elon Moreh in the north to Itamar in the south and were connected by road number 557, which like many other West Bank roads was used for connecting one settlement to the other and thus was forbidden to Palestinians. These settlements and road 557 prevented any further expansion in other directions and consolidated this oddly shaped part of the city of Nablus.

By the end of the tour, I had no doubt that the outposts operation was a stage in a

sophisticated, multifaceted plan and could not be attributed solely to the Hilltop Youth but must also include the settlers' network. Despite their devotion and relentless energy, the young men and women who occupied the outposts lacked comprehension of the bigger picture, a strategic vision, and, more importantly, the resources to execute such an elaborate plan.

The Rise of Populism

In the summer of 1998, Binyamin Netanyahu was crumbling under heavy crosscutting pressures. The Clinton administration expected him to make significant progress in the peace process with the Palestinians. Meanwhile, his coalition partners were holding him back by sending clear signals that they would not hesitate to join the opposition parties in an attempt to bring down his administration.[73] The settlers' parties were known for being highly unpredictable. Netanyahu still remembered the central role that they played in the collapse of Shamir's coalition, even though they knew that this held the potential for political suicide. The resignation of Benny Begin, the science minister, immediately after the signing of the Hebron Agreement made things even worse: it indicated that the prime minister could not even rely on the support of his own party. Begin continued to signal that any further concessions to the Palestinians would push him and his supporters out of Likud and incite them to establish a new, hawkish party that would represent the "true" values of Likud. On top of these troubles, the young and inexperienced prime minister managed to alienate senior members of Likud for various, and in many cases petty, reasons. The most significant departures from his cabinet included the finance minister, Dan Meridor, and the foreign minister, David Levy. By that point, his relations with Yitzhak Mordechai, the highly popular defense minister, had become increasingly contentious. This was a source of satisfaction for the settlers, who grew to dislike Mordechai even more.

The main beneficiary of the mayhem in Netanyahu's cabinet was Ariel Sharon who, only two years earlier, was almost left out of the cabinet. The resignation of David Levy, Sharon's longtime ally who forced Netanyahu to invite Sharon into the cabinet, presented a great opportunity to the unsentimental Sharon. His new goal was to be appointed as foreign minister. By late summer of 1998, Sharon had grown closer to Netanyahu and on October 13, he attained that goal and was named foreign minister.

It took the members of the Yesha Council years to regain their trust in Sharon, who in 1982 oversaw the removal of the Sinai settlements. However, his vocal opposition to both the Oslo Accords and later, the surrender of land to the Palestinians, and more importantly, the generous support that he provided to the settlers from the various ministerial positions that he held, helped their relations blossom again. The settlers should have known better. Their initial happiness with his appointment was short lived. Shortly after his appointment, Sharon joined the prime minister at the Aspen Institute Wye River Conference Center, where President Clinton hosted a peace summit. To the settlers' dismay, the 1978 Camp David scenario in which Sharon, the most hawkish member of Begin's cabinet, gave the prime minister his blessing to withdraw from the Sinai Peninsula, repeated itself. Sharon's support for Netanyahu paved the way for the signing of the Wye Memorandum, which ratified the Oslo and Hebron agreements and was supposed to lead to a significant leap in the peace process.[74] Upon his return to Israel, Netanyahu appointed a ministerial committee in charge of drafting the withdrawal maps. Not surprisingly, the ministers left the task to their aides. At that point, however, the settlers' network had grown so extensive that every single aide was a settler.[75] The agreement's implementation was spasmodic, a fact that

disappointed the White House. Yet, the settlers' leadership remained skeptical. Their parliamentary lobby, known as the Land of Israel Front (Hazit Eretz Yisrael), threatened to bring the coalition down if there was any change in the status quo. Though many of the radical Right Knesset members were the same individuals that brought about Shamir's downfall, they did not learn from their experience and thus stood firmly against their own prime minister. Netanyahu was caught between a rock and a hard place. The only way out, as he saw it, was to dissolve the Knesset and call for new elections. The date was set for May 17, 1999. Once again, the settlers who were so caught up in their own struggles failed to realize that the rest of the Israeli society was consumed by different matters.

The decline in terrorist attacks during the Netanyahu era and the facade of tranquility pushed the conflict with the Palestinians into the back of the minds of most Israelis. The void was quickly filled by other agendas. Indeed, the 1999 campaign provides a peek into the problems that await Israel if the conflict with the Arab world and the Palestinians is ever resolved.

The Netanyahu of the 1999 campaign was nothing like the Netanyahu of 1996. The charming, young, polished candidate of the past had turned into a suspicious, bitter, grumpy prime minister. The Israeli media showed him no mercy during his short tenure as prime minister, and his behavior did not help the situation. In 1997, for example, he was recorded whispering into old Rabbi Kaduri's ear, "They [the Left] forgot the true meaning of being Jewish." This embarrassing statement by a presiding prime minister fed the media's animosity toward Netanyahu and resounded for a long time. Shortly afterwards, the prime mister became the subject of an investigation for alleged misconduct in his 1997 decision to appoint Roni Bar-On as attorney general.

The debacle to which the media referred as the Bar-On Hebron Affair had begun shortly prior to the signing of the Hebron Accords. Aryeh Deri, the young leader of Shas and a rising political star, was in the midst of a legal battle after being charged with fraud and receiving bribes. Deri conditioned Shas's support for the Hebron agreement upon the appointment of Roni Bar-On, then a relatively unknown private attorney who had strong ties to Likud. Deri had a reason to believe that upon assuming the role of attorney general, Bar-On would take a more lenient line toward him than his predecessor, Michael Ben-Yair. Shas supported the agreement, and so did Netanyahu. But three days after Bar-On's appointment, Israel's *Channel One News* broke the story and brought his very short tenure as attorney general to an abrupt end. Deri was the main casualty of the affair. He was suspected of and investigated for attempting to sway the outcome of his trial. Netanyahu and Avigdor Lieberman were also tainted by the affair. This news was especially bad for Lieberman, who resigned from his position as director general of the prime minister's office and, with Netanyahu's blessing, formed his new party Yisrael Beiteinu (Israel is Our Home).

By that time, Lieberman had already been familiar with the interrogation rooms of the Investigation and Intelligence Department of the Israeli police, where he had been questioned in several different affairs. One investigation focused on the suspicion that he forged documents for Israel's Broadcast Authority. In another case, he was suspected of embezzlement.[76]

All three individuals—Netanyahu, Deri, and Lieberman—saw the 1999 elections as a crucial moment in their careers and a battle for their lives. They felt that they were unjustifiably persecuted by the maliciously motivated left-wing elite and did not hesitate to voice their frustration. Netanyahu, the most prominent of the three, had more at stake, at least with regards to his political future. In 1999 Israeli voters still had the option to split their votes. Netanyahu was fighting a three-headed premiership race against his former defense minister, Yitzhak

Mordechai, now leader of the new Center Party (Mifleget HaMerkaz), and Ehud Barak, the leader of the Labor Party. Lieberman and Deri did not take part in the premiership race. Lieberman led his new party in the elections to the Knesset while Deri, who had to step aside due to his ongoing criminal trial, served as the mastermind behind the scenes of the Shas campaign. This trio managed to turn the 1999 campaign into yet another round in the long struggle between Israel's peripheries and the old elite.

Netanyahu was in trouble. Especially damaging for him was the appearance of the Center Party, in which his own senior former ministers of finance and defense, Dan Meridor and Yitzhak Mordechai, took leadership positions. The two had left the Likud as a direct result of their disillusionment with Netanyahu's leadership. They were joined by other prominent figures from the Likud such as former minister and mayor of Tel Aviv, Roni Milo, who like Netanyahu was a protégé of former prime minister Shamir and had emerged as one of the most promising young leaders of the Likud. Another important member in the new party was David Magen, a close ally of David Levy, who had served as the minister of economic strategy under Yitzhak Shamir. One of the dramatic moments of the campaign took place on April 13. It was an improvised election debate between Netanyahu and Mordechai, whom Netanyahu had fired from the cabinet only three months earlier. Mordechai was on the offense and managed to present Netanyahu as reckless, inexperienced, and unreliable. His strategy proved effective. For the first time, Netanyahu's image as a media wizard was cracked, and his campaign turned into an uphill battle. For a short while it seemed that Mordechai, a former general of Mizrahi origin who was adored on Israel's peripheries, had a good chance of defeating the incumbent prime minister. He enjoyed favorable media coverage and was embraced by Israelis from all walks of life. Netanyahu was frustrated but could do little to turn the situation around. Another blatant attack on the elite could have morphed into a double-edged sword, which would have provided further affirmation of his image as an immature and divisive person. Thus, his advisors chose to run a positive campaign that focused on three messages: his success in enhancing security in the streets of Israel; his firm approach during the negotiations with the Palestinians; and, once again, his commitment not to give up Israel's sovereignty over East Jerusalem. References to his alleged persecution by the elite became rare. However, during one public event, surrounded by his supporters, Netanyahu became increasingly emotional and finally failed to contain his frustration. He energized his already riled-up listeners by chanting "they are afraid" in reference to the elite, who were allegedly petrified by the prospect of Netanyahu winning a second term in office.[77] Yet, Netanyahu's message was overpowered by the unequivocal populist campaigns of both Yisrael Beiteinu (Lieberman's party) and Shas.

Lieberman was outspoken from the onset of his new career as a leader of a party. In his seminal speech as the leader of Yisrael Beiteinu, Lieberman sent a clear message, "Newcomers, residents of development town, settlers, Chabad Hassidim, and the ultra-Orthodox: we are the majority and we will change the division (of power) between the religious and the irreligious…. I pose a threat to the oligarchy, the tiny strata, that holds on to the centers of power and wealth, and they understand it very well."[78] According to Lieberman, the country was ruled by an "administrative dictatorship" that consisted of the Supreme Court, the attorney general's office, the police, and the bureaucrats of the Finance Ministry. Not surprisingly, he used his personal encounters with these institutions, mostly the criminal justice system, as a point of reference for his political agenda. He offered a political reform, which would serve as a swift and comprehensive remedy for the dictatorship of the self-appointed and self-serving bureaucrats. Lieberman's plan would transfer the power to a strong leader, who would be elected directly by

the people and would be committed only to them.[79]

Shas went even farther than Lieberman. The populist tone of the party's campaign was unprecedented in Israel's history, with the exception of the ones that Kahane had led. Most of the campaign was centered on the battle surrounding Aryeh Deri's trial. The timing of the elections could not have been better for Shas. Three months earlier, on February 14, 1999, the tension between the Supreme Court and the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel reached a new climax. More than 350,000 ultra-Orthodox men from various denominations marched toward the Supreme Court building and began a violent demonstration in front of it. They protested the judicial activism of Chief Justice Aharon Barak that argued that on issues of state and religion, the judiciary can criticize and even amend decisions made by the legislative and executive branches if they subvert constitutional principles.[80] There was a consensus within the ultra-Orthodox camp that the Barak-led Supreme Court was trying to change the status quo arrangement. The justices were described by Ovadia Yossef, the spiritual leader of Shas, as "completely ignorant, unskilled and … slaves who turned into rulers."[81]

A month later, Deri, Yossef's beloved protégé, was convicted by the Jerusalem district court. He was sentenced to four years in prison and made to pay a fine. Initially, the party was in turmoil. Many of its leaders, including Yossef, felt that the verdict was disproportionate to the charges. They saw it as a vindictive act by a decaying elite, who felt threatened by the "Jewish revolution" that Shas led and by the party's success in empowering underprivileged Jews of Mizrahi origin.

According to Shas, the elite conspired against Deri because he was ultra-Orthodox and a Mizrahi leader, adored by the simple, hardworking, and religious people. Deri was indeed a gifted politician. He maintained close ties with both sides of the political spectrum and was highly regarded by each of the prime ministers he served.[82] He was also an exception to the rule that ultra-Orthodox politicians do not fare well in the secular media. The overwhelming majority of ultra-Orthodox leaders come from reclusive communities and are forbidden to watch TV or to expose themselves to other secular media outlets. They speak archaic Hebrew (which is often flavored by a Yiddish accent), and follow a conservative dress code. Thus, their appearances in the electronic media tend to be disastrous. But Deri was different. His natural charisma, his command of modern Hebrew flavored by up-to-date secular slang, and his good understanding of secular society made him a sought-after guest in Israel's most popular talk shows. Thus, Deri became the most effective spokesperson of the party who could easily reach out to the general public.[83] According to Deri's supporters, his growing popularity posed a direct threat to the fragile dominance of the secular Ashkenazi elite, who in return decided to force him out of the political game.

Deri was known for his ability to turn lemons into lemonade. He centered Shas's campaign around his conviction. Following in the footsteps of Chabad, which mobilized its followers during the last days of the 1996 campaign, Shas rapidly produced a provocative videotape and, by rallying its own supporters (mostly students from its independent education system Ma'ayan HaChinuch HaTorani, literally The Fountain of Religious Education), managed to disseminate 200,000 copies of the videotape within a matter of few days. The party targeted specific constituencies: residents of development towns and underprivileged neighborhoods. And it was not easy to obtain a copy of the tape at any other place. Its title, "J'accuse," (I accuse) was borrowed from the famous letter of the French writer Émile Zola to the Parisian newspaper paper *L'Aurore*, which was published on January 13, 1898. The gist of Zola's argument was that the treason charges levied by the French government against Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish artillery

officer, were motivated by anti-Semitism.[84] Shas's adaptation of the letter was highly emotional. It portrayed Deri as a virtuous person whose only concern was to help the needy and the oppressed. His charitable work provided much needed help and empowered Israel's Mizrahi population, which had been subjected to decades of wrongdoing at the hands of the secular elite. The video made it clear that Deri aimed to pose a serious threat to the existing order, and thus the elite decided to put a target on his back.[85]

Interestingly, this wave of radical right-wing populism in Israel coincided with similar events in Western Europe. In 1999, for example, the Freedom Party of Austria, under the charismatic leadership of Jörg Haider, won 27 percent of the votes in the national elections and emerged as the second largest party in the country. Three years later, Jean-Marie Le Pen, the leader of the French National Front, defeated Lionel Jospin, the leader of the Socialist Party, in the first round of the presidential elections and moved to the run-off elections where he was beaten by the incumbent President Jacques Chirac. Like Netanyahu, Lieberman, and Deri, these European radical right-wing leaders led a populist campaign, which included a promise to represent the "general will" of the ethnically pure people and to weaken the oppressive and corrupt elite.[86] Unlike the liberal democracies in Europe, where each surge in the power of the populist radical Right is met with strong opposition that blocks its continuous ascendance to power, the Israeli ethnic democracy offers much weaker barriers. And so the rise of right-wing populism in Israel never halted.

Hatred on Israel's Periphery

The explicit populist message was not the only innovation in the Shas campaign that marked a new era for the party that had reintroduced "Kahanism" in a slightly subtler version to the Israeli polity. Alongside its blunt populism, Shas also offered a blend of ethnic nativism and theocratic authoritarianism. Ironically, Deri's conviction that had disqualified him from leading the party's list to the Knesset actually assisted Shas in reshaping itself as the true successor of Kach.

After his conviction, Deri was asked to assist in identifying an interim successor who would hold the position until Deri's legal battle was over. He recommended Eliyahu Yishai, who had served as his loyal assistant when Deri was minister of the interior. During most of the 1990s, when Deri was leading Shas on the national level, Yishai operated outside of the public eye. He first served as the party's secretary general and later became the CEO of Shas's education network. In these capacities he had the opportunity to grow closer to Rabbi Yossef's son and daughter-in-law (Moshe and Yehudith) who lived with the elderly leader and had a significant degree of influence on his decisions.[87] These ties, combined with Deri's support, paved Yishai's way for the party's leadership. In 1996, at the age of thirty-four, he was first elected to the Knesset and immediately appointed as minister of labor and social welfare.[88] Despite the grayish image of the ministry, Yishai managed to bring it to the headlines and, at the same time, unveiled his radical right-wing inclinations. Shortly after taking office, Yishai initiated a deportation policy for illegal foreign workers. The policy was supported by the minister of the interior, Eliyahu Suissa, also from Shas. Both ministers used harsh language to describe what they called the "foreign workers problem." They justified the policy by arguing that the foreigners "steal jobs from Israelis"—the same argument that Kahane had used years earlier.[89] The fact that the policy failed and that the actual number of unlicensed workers grew from 74,000 to 123,000 during Yishai's tenure was never mentioned by Shas.[90] It was not the first time that Shas led a

campaign against non-Jews, and that their rhetoric shared striking similarities with Kahane's messages. Prior to the 1996 elections, the party produced a television ad, which described its efforts to rescue Jewish women who were lured to Arab villages and, according to the party, were held there against their will.[91]

The decision to focus on the "foreign workers problem" posed several challenges to the Shas campaign. First, the foreign workers in Israel constituted a relatively small community at the time. Second, most of them lived in segregated areas, and their encounters with the majority of longtime Israelis were infrequent or completely absent. This was not the case with the Russian immigrants. Many of the newcomers initially resided in peripheral neighborhoods and development towns, a fact that led to intense social interaction and sometimes clashes with the longtime residents of those areas. Shas leaders understood that many of their constituents not only felt threatened by them but consequently developed animosity toward the ambitious and mostly Ashkenazi immigrants who settled in their towns in large numbers. The party leaders themselves felt genuine enmity toward these aliens. The problem of Shas was that Aliyah of Jews from all over the world was a pivotal element of Israel's political culture. Thus, while stirring emotions against the Russians might have served as an effective tool for political mobilization, the attempt might also have backfired. The party found a brilliant solution to the challenge that reduced the risk of fallout. At the time, it was estimated that about one-quarter of the immigrants were "ethnic" rather than "real" Jews. Put simply, "ethnic" Jews had at least one grandparent or a spouse who met the stipulations of the Law of Return and made Aliyah as a result. However, according to the *Halakha* and the Israeli religious establishment, such immigrants were not regarded as real Jews if they lacked a Jewish mother.[92] A negligible minority of immigrants had no ties to Judaism whatsoever: they were merely eager to leave their country of origin. Since Israel, like Germany, offered attractive benefits packages to individuals who could prove ethnic ties to the nation, these immigrants were willing to forge the documents that paved their way to immigration.

Eliyahu Suissa, as minister of the interior, held a significant degree of power in terms of shaping the everyday lives of immigrants. Suissa was committed to preserving the Jewish character of the state in its purest religious form. Thus, he applied a heavy-handed policy toward the community of "ethnic" Jews. In his eyes, this whole community consisted of forgers and cheaters, and the minister instructed his office to scrutinize each and every one of them. Many immigrants were forced to provide more and more documents, were summoned to investigations and humiliating hearings, and in many cases were even subjected to DNA tests. If they failed to meet Suissa's high bar, they were added to a "soon-to-be-deported" list. For many, this was motivation enough: they exited the country voluntarily, leaving their families behind.[93]

By 1999, the newcomers from Eastern Europe already constituted more than 12 percent of the Israeli population. One out of every six registered voters in Israel was an immigrant who had arrived within a decade prior to the elections. The Russian voter was not yet fully aligned with the right-wing bloc, though the stage was set for this relationship to develop. Yisrael BaAliyah, the main Russian party at the time, had strong ties to Likud, and Yisrael Beiteinu, the new party on the scene, was actively supported by Netanyahu. While Lieberman's new party generally ignored the immigrants' dissatisfaction over the Interior Ministry's policies, Yisrael BaAliyah turned the issue into a focal element in its elections campaign. The party's campaign was remembered by its Russian slogan "The Ministry of the Interior to Shas' Control? No. The Ministry of the Interior to our Control."[94] The pledge to take the Ministry of the Interior from Shas carried a promise for an end to the discrimination against the immigrants.[95] Shas's response

to Yisrael BaAliyah's campaign was swift and harsh. Suissa argued that Yisrael BaAliyah wanted to take control of the ministry in order to obliterate the Jewish character of the state. According to him, they wanted to open Israel's gates to forgers, prostitutes, and even to the Russian Mafia. Shas, he promised, would prevent the proliferation of Russian Orthodox churches, shut down grocery stores that sold pork, and would not grant Israeli citizenship to criminals.[96] Few veteran Israelis seemed concerned with the vitriolic attack on the foreign workers and the Russians, but the decision generally paid off. The party was successful in strengthening its hold over the peripheries.[97]

The only shortcoming in Shas's campaign was its attempt to advance a theocratic agenda. To the surprise of the architects of the party's campaign, they were met by a formidable opposition, which seemed to have appeared out of nowhere. The Change (Shinui) Party was an odd entity. It was formed shortly after the Yom Kippur War and, for many years, focused its energy on advocating for economic reform, which would lead Israel toward a free market economy and for a transparent and accountable government. These two were combined with a moderately dovish worldview regarding the conflict with the Palestinians. Its messages were too dry and vague for the Israeli voter, though. From 1981 to 1992, Shinui hardly managed to gain parliamentary representation. In its peak it was represented by just three Knesset members. Prior to the 1992 elections, Shinui aligned with the left-wing civil rights party, Ratz, and the veteran Socialist Mapam Party. The three parties formed a joint list to the Knesset under the name Meretz (Vigor). The parties had a lot in common: they were united in their support for the peace process, advocated the removal of religion from the political arena, and adhered to liberal democratic principles. Yet, they never managed to reconcile their differences with regards to economic issues.

The 1999 elections, which brought domestic issues to the forefront of the agenda, amplified the ideological fissure in this alignment. While some members of Shinui decided to merge with the two other parties, others, led by Avraham Poraz, decided to leave the alignment. The problem was that Poraz lacked the charisma that the party needed in order to resonate with the voters. As a pragmatic politician, he knew when to set his ego aside. Along with other party leaders, he approached the journalist Yosef (Tommy) Lapid and asked him to head the party. Lapid, a former supporter of the liberal wing in the Likud, was a hawk and a devout believer in a free market economy. After the Likud came to power in 1977, he was appointed chairman of Israel's Broadcasting Authority, a position he had held for five years. However, the major breakthrough that gained him celebrity status came in 1993 when he was cast as the "right-wing" panelist on Israel's favorite political talk show at the time, *Popolitika*. Lapid's flamboyant style and decisive views made him the star of the show. He was especially notable for his "take no prisoners" approach toward religion and the religious parties. Lapid emerged as the champion of the secular, middle-class Ashkenazi elite, who resented the attempts by the ultra-Orthodox parties to further expand their hold over the Israeli public sphere. He also vocalized a critique against these parties' relentless struggle to secure state budgets, which were then used for supporting yeshiva students who evaded mandatory military service and refrained from joining the labor market. Lapid's appointment as leader of the Shinui Party was an overnight success. Shinui positioned itself as an opposition to Shas and employed an aggressive campaign to unite a constituency whose social makeup was the mirror image of Shas's voters. For the first time in its history, Shinui had a sharp message and a clear constituency. It rallied the middle-class, liberal, Ashkenazi center against the mobilization of the peripheries.

The "Dawn of a New Day"?

In the early morning hours of Tuesday, May 18, 1999, Ehud Barak was excited. Exit polls predicted a decisive victory over Netanyahu. This time around, the race was not even close. When the last ballots were counted, the numbers surprised almost every pundit. The leader of the Labor Party, who only a few months earlier was deemed a disaster who would lead his party to another painful defeat, swept 56.1 percent of the votes. Meanwhile, the incumbent prime minister managed to secure only 43.9 percent. Barak, who is not known for wearing his emotions on his sleeve, could not help himself: he stood before thousands of his supporters who gathered symbolically at the Rabin Square in Tel Aviv and promised them that this was the "dawn of a new day."[98] However, it was not.

Netanyahu's victory three years earlier was supported by a solid majority of right-wing parties in the Knesset, a fact that enabled him to form an ideologically cohesive coalition. But Barak faced a much bigger challenge.[99] Later that morning it became clear that, in the parliamentary race, the left-wing parties had been beaten. They managed to secure only 29.9 percent of the vote. The parties that positioned themselves at the center of the political spectrum managed to mobilize 12.6 percent of the voters. The Arab parties, which had been excluded from any coalition in Israel since the establishment, were likely to provide Barak a safety net and secured 8.1 percent.[100] Thus, simple arithmetic showed that Labor ("Yisrael Ahat"—"One Israel," a short-lived coalition of Labor, Gesher and Meimad) and Barak's natural coalition partners could have provided him the support of forty-eight Knesset members. Even the support of the ten Knesset members from the Arab parties would not have elevated him over the minimal bar of sixty-one parliament members required to form the narrowest coalition. In the Israeli parliamentary system, such circumstances are very conducive for small and especially sectarian parties, which in return for joining the coalition can extract many benefits for their constituents as well as prevent the prime minister from shaping policies not to their liking.

Meanwhile, though Netanyahu was defeated and Likud had shrunk dramatically, the right-wing bloc had prevailed. Parties of the camp held exactly half of the power in parliament (sixty seats) and could have prevented Barak from forming a coalition. The division of power within this bloc was unprecedented in Israel's history (see Table A1). The radical parties overpowered the more moderate ones. Shas gained seventeen seats, only two fewer than Likud. Yahadut Hatora expanded its power to five seats. Even the settlers' parties enjoyed prosperity. The Mafdal gained five seats. The National Unity (HaIhud HaLeumi), an alignment of Moledet and two new factions—Resurrection (Tkuma), led by two prominent settler leaders Hanan Porat and Zvi Hendel, and the new Herut, which was formed by Benny Begin—secured four. The Russian constituency was realigning as well. The conservative, right-wing Yisrael BaAliyah lost influence to Lieberman's radical Yisrael Beiteinu. In short, while in 1992 Rabin could have held onto a minority, left-wing coalition with the support of the Arab parties, Barak did not enjoy the same privilege. Under the unfavorable share of power in the Knesset, he decided to form a broad coalition, which included every segment of Israel's highly polarized parliament.[101]

This coalition was doomed from the day of its inception. Barak seemed to have been under the incorrect impression that his coalition partners were first and foremost committed to securing the parochial, mostly materialistic interests of their constituents. Thus, he assumed that he could buy their support, and if worse came to worst and one party departed from the coalition, he would still have enough room for maneuvering. His major failure was in identifying the

fundamental rift between the constituents of his coalition partners and everything that the Labor Party represented and believed in. Shortly after the formation of the cabinet, Barak suffered the consequences of this oversight. Yahadut Hatora, which beyond the protection of the parochial interests of its ultra-Orthodox constituents is also committed to the expansion and enforcement of religious legislation in Israel's public sphere, departed from the cabinet after finding out that Israel's electric company desecrated the Shabbat and violated the Hours of Work and Rest Laws (1951) by transporting large turbines during the weekend. Less than a year later, another time bomb went off. Barak, who during his military career developed the reputation of an extraordinarily creative person, thought that his resourcefulness would serve him in the political arena. One of his most surprising decisions upon the formation of the coalition was the appointment of Yossi Sarid, the leader of Meretz, as education minister and of Meshulam Nahari (from Shas) as his deputy. If this team had proven successful, Barak would have been granted the title of alchemist: Meretz and Shas were the ultimate opposites. Shortly after settling in their offices, clashes between Sarid and Nahari ensued. Soon afterwards Meretz presented Barak with an ultimatum: he had to make a choice between his natural allies from the Left and Shas.

By that time Barak was invested in an attempt to revive the peace process. Loyal to his strategic approach, he preferred to let Meretz leave the coalition. Barak was correct to assume that Sarid and his party would support his peace initiative, even though they had been kicked out of the cabinet. However, he underestimated the sophistication and determination of the settlers' network. The fact that the settlers had brought down a right-wing cabinet for the second time in a decade shook the Yesha Council and led to the emergence of a new group of leaders.[102] This time the Yesha Council had much more leverage than during the Rabin administration. Barak's coalition depended on the support of his allies—Mafdal, Yisrael BaAliyah, and Shas—for survival. All three parties wanted to hold to on their hawkish constituents, and thus they made a nightmare of the prime minister's every attempt to take significant steps toward peace. The settlers themselves engaged in a war of attrition. Although Barak, by his own admission, was very generous in providing building permits to the settlements, the network fought any attempt he made to remove even the smallest illegal outposts in the West Bank.[103] By the summer of 2000, after a failed attempt to expedite the talks with Syria, Barak was determined to shift his attention to the Palestinian issue and to push forward with full force.

When the Camp David peace summit that brought Israel and the Palestinians back to the negotiations table failed later that summer, Israeli, Palestinian, and American experts set forth their thoughts about its collapse and found enough blame to go around.[104] I still remember the ways in which Barak's coalition was crumbling even as he made the final preparations to attend the summit. By the time he arrived in Camp David, Barak was leading a minority government. This was a major gamble for the prime minister. Coming back to Israel with an agreement that put an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would probably have reshuffled the political cards; Barak could have initiated a referendum or called for immediate elections. If marketed well, the agreement stood a fair chance to be ratified. But Barak was adamant about protecting the interests of the settlers; the peace talks failed, bringing his brief tenure to a painful end and marking another pivotal moment in the radical Right's path to victory.

7
The Demise of the Peace Process

Aryeh Deri's trial and consequent conviction generated a wave of protest that persisted long after the 1999 elections were over. The summer of 2000 was especially tense. Deri was scheduled to start serving his prison sentence in September of that year. His many followers were determined to prevent that from happening, but to no avail. On an early September morning, Deri arrived at the gates of the Ayalon Prison, where new inmates are processed and later assigned to the prison in which they would serve their sentence. Deri was accompanied by hundreds of followers, to whom he spoke just minutes before entering the gates of the complex. He made a moving speech, thanking his supporters and telling them that he knew they would never desert him. Soon afterwards, Deri was processed and assigned to the minimum security Maasyahu Prison, close to the city of Ramla. When he arrived at the jail, Shas activists had already set up a stronghold outside the prison. They promised to turn the place into a yeshiva named Sha'agat Aryeh —"Aryeh's (Lion's) roar" and not to leave the premises until the beloved leader was released. On Friday morning, September 29—the eve of Rosh HaShana, (the Jewish New Year)—I was scheduled to give a talk at a campus located not far from the prison. Just out of curiosity, I drove by the new yeshiva to take a peek. The compound was a collection of tents, trailers, and other temporary structures. It looked wretched, but it was swarming with action. Deri's devotees were planning to spend the holiday next to their leader, and the preparations were in full swing.

Two hours later, as I was driving back to Haifa, I turned the radio on. The Shas protest that had captured the headlines over the preceding months had suddenly been pushed down the ladder and mentioned only incidentally. A new, major story was unfolding. The previous day, Ariel Sharon paid a visit to the Temple Mount, by far the most sensitive site of friction between Jews and Muslims. Fifteen months earlier, shortly after Netanyahu's loss in the elections and subsequent resignation, Sharon was elected as the head of Likud. Initially it seemed that this was a temporary appointment of one of the tribes' elders who was called to rebuild the bruised party and then pass the torch to a younger leader. As always, though, Sharon had other plans. His decision to visit the holy site shortly after the collapse of the Camp David talks worried the Palestinian leaders. In the eyes of the Palestinians Sharon was the ultimate Israeli provocateur. They never forgot his involvement in the events that led to the massacre in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Lebanon in 1982 while he served as the minister of defense. Palestinian officials who sensed a significant degree of unrest during the days that led to the visit conveyed their concerns to their Israeli counterparts. The latter approached Sharon several times and asked him to reconsider, but he was adamant. As expected, the event turned into a media circus and Sharon seemed to enjoy the commotion. The same cannot be said about the Shabak security agency and the police who were responsible for Sharon's safety. In light of the information they received regarding the Palestinians' growing anger, the commanders on the ground decided to cut the visit short. Despite some violent clashes between Palestinians and the police immediately after the swift visit, the security forces on both sides released a sigh of relief. It would have been difficult to imagine what lay awaiting them only a few hours later.[1]

Sharon's visit released the last safety valve over a volcano. The failure of the Camp David

summit just two months earlier had put Israel and the Palestinians on a collision course. Despite desperate attempts to keep the momentum of the negotiations going, both the Palestinian and the Israeli leaders were disillusioned and conveyed their frustrations to their people. On the day after the visit, as soon as the Friday prayers in the Al-Aqsa Mosque ended, a protest broke out in Jerusalem's Old City. Hundreds of Palestinian worshipers clashed with Israeli security forces and threw stones at Jews who were praying next to the Wailing Wall, located less than one hundred yards from the mosque. Despite the heightened level of alert, the extraordinary intensity of the protest caught the police forces by surprise, and their response was harsh. When the first wave of the riots subsided, it was clear that the relations between the Israelis and the Palestinians had reached a turning point. When news about the deadly clashes in Jerusalem reached other Palestinian cities, all hell broke loose. The events of the next day, Saturday, September 30, became engraved in the Palestinian collective memory as the symbol of the unfolding uprising.

On that morning, Jamal al-Durrah and his twelve-year-old son Muhammad left their home in the Bureij refugee camp and traveled to Gaza to look at cars. On their way home, they were caught in heavy crossfire between Israeli and Palestinian forces near the settlement of Netzarim. A French news crew that arrived on the scene found Jamal shielding his son's body with his own while begging the shooters to cease their fire, but the shooting only intensified. The cameraman, who was looking for cover himself, diverted his lens from the dreadful scene for a brief moment. When he refocused, Muhammad was lying dead on the ground while his badly wounded father was leaning helplessly against a wall. The horrific footage made evening news headlines all over the world. Muhammad al-Durrah became the symbol of the second Palestinian uprising, now more commonly known as the Al-Aqsa Intifada.

Frustration and Aggression

The tragedy in Gaza fueled the violence. This time, however, the riots were not confined to the Palestinian territories. The Palestinian citizens of Israel, who usually refrained from joining the waves of protest that erupted on the other side of the Green Line, were infuriated.[2] After watching the grim pictures of Muhammad al-Durrah's death, thousands of protesters stormed the streets of their villages and towns, mostly in Galilee. These events did not come out of the blue. The Palestinian citizens of Israel had felt an acute sense of deprivation and injustice for decades. Their initial desire to show support for their Palestinian brothers on the other side of the border turned into a channel for conveying their own frustrations.[3] The local police forces were flabbergasted, having never experienced riots of such magnitude; they were underprepared and outnumbered. They used tear gas and rubber bullets in an attempt to contain the riots, but the protesters only grew angrier. Several police officers, who felt that there their lives were threatened, used live ammunition, leaving two demonstrators dead and dozens injured. At that point, the violence spiraled out of control and clashes erupted throughout the country. Seven more demonstrators were killed on the following day. The Palestinian authority expressed its support for the demonstrators, while Prime Minister Barak and his cabinet members desperately looked for ways to put the genie back in the bottle.[4]

On October 1, the situation in the West Bank took yet another turn for the worse. A large group of Palestinian rioters and militiamen besieged a compound known as Joseph's Tomb in the outskirts of Nablus. The attack surprised the small group of Israeli border police officers, who were on a routine assignment of protecting the compound. One of the servicemen, Corporal

Madhat Yusuf, was shot in the neck by a Palestinian sniper and began bleeding profusely; he needed to be evacuated to a hospital to stop the bleeding. Representatives of the IDF preferred to avoid further bloodshed and tried to coordinate a rescue operation with the Palestinian police, but to no avail. It took the rescuers four hours to enter the compound. By the time they attended to Yusuf's wounds, he had already died.[5] The fragile collaboration between the Israeli and the Palestinian security forces that had developed slowly following the formation of the Palestinian National Authority was now shattered.

A week later, on Saturday, October 7, Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shia Islamic Group, made its own contribution to the escalating conflict by attacking an IDF convoy on the Israeli side of the Israel-Lebanon border. The Lebanese militia kidnapped three soldiers who were patrolling the road. While most Israelis' attention was diverted to the northern border, the violence inside Israel reached a dangerous peak. At 10:30 p.m., Jan Bechor and his brother headed south on the Haifa-Tel Aviv highway. As they traveled under an overpass near the Arab village of Jisr az-Zarqa, rocks were thrown at the car as it rushed by. One of the stones shattered the car's front windshield, and Bechor suffered a direct blow to the chest killing him instantly. He was the only Jew who died in a clash between Arab and Jewish citizens of Israel during the initial phase of the conflict. The death toll on the other side, however, was significantly higher: twelve Palestinian citizens of Israel were killed.[6]

While Palestinians rallied behind Muhammad al-Durrah's death, an event of similar importance for the Israelis occurred on October 12. For most Israelis, that day's events came to symbolize their complete disillusionment with the idea of a peaceful solution to the conflict with the Palestinians. Two Israeli reserve soldiers, Vadim Nurzhitz and Yossi Avrahami, drove a civilian car to their unit's gathering point near the settlement of Beit-El. Both men served as drivers and thus had limited military training. They also lacked knowledge of the roads in the West Bank and paid little attention to the Israeli checkpoint in Beitunia, which was located two miles west of the city of Ramallah. They passed through the checkpoint straight into Ramallah. The two were immediately identified by the locals as Israeli servicemen, were detained by Palestinian police officers, and led to a nearby police station. Rumors of the arrest of Israeli "commandos" spread rapidly throughout the city, and within a few minutes the stunned soldiers were surrounded by an angry mob. The arresting officers handed the two over to the cheering crowd. They were subsequently lynched inside the police compound. Once again, a European news crew, which had been sent to cover the uprising in the West Bank, happened to be on the scene and caught the events on tape. The Israeli public was shocked by the gruesome footage. Two images in particular were engraved in the minds of most Israelis. The first depicted the dead body of one of the soldiers as it was thrown out of the second floor of the police compound into the riled-up crowd. The second picture was of a young Palestinian whose hands were covered in blood. He stood by the same window from which the body was thrown and, to the delight of the crowd below, raised his bloody hands in the air.[7]

Jewish-Arab relations had been strained from the time the first large wave of Jewish immigrants arrived in Palestine in the last decades of the nineteenth century. These communities were divided along national, ethnic, religious, and cultural lines. Further, they fought over very scarce resources, land, and sovereignty. The divisions and animosity between the groups undermined any prospect for integration of the communities. This was clearly portrayed in an almost complete voluntary residential segregation.[8] While the separation prevented interactions that could have built trust between the communities, it also reduced the potential for friction and therefore the outbreak of violence.

However, Israel's massive expropriations of Arab lands in the late 1940s and 1950s posed serious obstacles for the Palestinian citizens of the state and generated a deep sense of injustice. The Jewish Agency and the KKL enacted uneven land allocation policies that complicated the situation even more. While Jews were encouraged to establish new settlements near Arab population centers in the Galilee and the Negev, requests from Arabs who wanted to build houses within their own villages or to purchase lands for both residential and agricultural purposes were often turned down. Frustrated Arabs who found it harder and harder to build a home near their own villages and towns looked for alternatives.[9] Adal Qadan, a resident of Baqa al-Gharbiyye, was one of them. He worked as a nurse in the Hillel Yaffe medical center of Hadera and interacted with Jews on a daily basis. In 1995 he decided to move his young family to a different town where they could enjoy a higher standard of living. He chose the newly established, tranquil community of Katzir, located just six miles from Baqa al-Gharbiyye. At the time Katzir was looking for young, middle-class families, and Qadan believed that his family fit the profile perfectly. There was one hurdle to cross, though: like many other small communities in Israel, Katzir installed an admissions committee that was responsible for conducting background checks and interviewing candidates interested in purchasing property and joining the community. To Qadan's surprise, the committee denied his application on the grounds of "social incompatibility," which of course was a facade. Katzir's admissions committee wanted to preserve the community's Jewish homogeneity. Thus, regardless of the Qadans' educational background and socio-economic status, they were deemed unfit to live in Katzir. Due to Adal Qadan's deep sense of injustice and determination, this incident became a constitutional milestone in Israel. The Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) took Qadan's case to Israel's High Court of Justice, where the justices found themselves caught between a rock and a hard place. The case was a direct challenge of Israel's attempt to reconcile its Jewish ethnic characteristics with its aspiration to adhere to liberal principles. The question at hand was whether Israel's Land Administration could legally charter national resources to a governmental body (in this case the Jewish Agency), which would then ban non-Jewish citizens of the state from enjoying that resource.[10] In March 2000, after several failed attempts to reach a compromise, the court ruled that such discrimination was illegal. The riots that broke out seven months after the court's ruling distracted the attention of the public and authorities from the case of the Qadans and raised serious questions regarding the possibility that Jews and Arabs could ever live together peacefully.

During the first week of the riots, Arab demonstrators blocked roads that led to Jewish communities in the northern part of the country. In several instances, angry protesters approached Jewish houses in the area in a manner that made their residents feel trapped and threatened. The sudden rise of their neighbors, with whom they had commercial and mostly cordial relations, generated a sense panic. Frequent comparisons were made to the massacre of the Hebron Jews by their neighbors in 1929 as well as to the long history of pogroms in Europe and the Middle East. The fact that the riots took place in the heart of sovereign Israel only exacerbated the fear shared by many Israeli Jews that the Arab citizens of the state were in fact a "fifth column" and that, despite their Israeli citizenship, they were committed to the Palestinian cause and were just waiting for the opportunity to reclaim their state back from the Jews.

As a result, the time following the October riots was marked by expressions of fear, betrayal, and alienation on both sides of the conflict. In media interviews, politicians from the Right suggested that if the Arabs were unsatisfied with the Israeli democracy, they should consider relocating to the Palestinian territories or to one of the authoritarian Arab countries in the Middle

East. In the meantime, the latent fear and anger of the Jews swiftly translated into action, and many decided to cut whatever ties they had with their Arab neighbors. The outcomes were mostly felt in the economic arena; Arab-owned businesses such as restaurants, bakeries, and mechanic shops, which relied mostly on Jewish clientele, suffered from economic setbacks that brought many of them to the brink of bankruptcy. There was no guiding hand behind the Jews' decision to minimize their contact with the Arabs. It was a grassroots, emotional response that reflected both the mounting collective fears and the desire to punish their "ungrateful" neighbors. The Jewish society, which only weeks earlier had been torn by its internal political and religious cleavages, rallied to protect itself against the perceived mounting Palestinian threat.[11]

The first few weeks of the Intifada were marked by continuous exchanges of fire between Palestinian and Israeli forces. The escalating violence and the failed attempts to revive the peace process left Barak, who by that time was leading a minority government, with no option but to call for new elections. The date of the elections was set for February 6, 2001. Barak was concerned about his predecessor, Netanyahu, who seemed determined to reclaim the leadership of the Likud and thus become a serious contender for the role of prime minister. In an attempt to prevent Netanyahu from making a comeback, Barak took advantage of a loophole in the new electoral law, which stipulated that only an acting member of the Knesset is eligible for competing in premiership elections. Barak offered his personal resignation, a step that led to an unprecedented situation in which the Israeli public was called to vote for a new prime minister while the Knesset remained intact. The maneuver was successful. Netanyahu, who was not a member of the Knesset at the time, was automatically disqualified from presenting his candidacy.[12] However, Barak, who has gained a reputation for possessing outstanding analytical skills, suffered from a lack of understanding of human emotions. He was oblivious to the changes that the Israeli society had undergone since his election a year and a half earlier, and many voters considered him a disappointment. Jewish constituents were especially disillusioned by his clumsy attempts to bring the conflict with the Palestinians to an end and were traumatized by the consequent eruption of violence. Furthermore, the Palestinian citizens of Israel held Barak accountable for the violent actions taken by the police in response to the October riots.

With Netanyahu eliminated from the race, Barak was relieved. He assumed that the seventy-two-year-old Ariel Sharon, the incumbent leader of Likud and a longtime pariah for many Israelis, would not be a serious contender. Sharon, on the other hand, knew that this was most likely his last chance to lead Likud to victory and to become Israel's prime minister. The timing could not have been better for him. Following two consecutive tenures of young prime ministers, Netanyahu and Barak, who began their tenures with high hopes and left office with less than impressive records, most Israelis were yearning for an elder leader who would restore a sense of sanity in a situation that had rapidly spiraled out of control.

After years of condemnation and portrayal as a rogue politician, Sharon was vindicated. His advisors ran a campaign designed to soothe the public's fears. Sharon was portrayed as a level-headed, grandfatherly figure who was the only one capable of stopping the escalating conflict.[13] Sharon's victory was decisive. He carried 62.4 percent of the vote, while Barak secured only 37.6 percent. Furthermore, since these were special elections in which the public was asked to cast a ballot for only the prime minister, the division of power in the Knesset did not change. Unlike Barak, who was faced with major challenges when he was trying to form his coalition in 1999, Sharon had no such problem. The powerful right-wing bloc in the legislature offered him various alternatives for coalition formation. Loyal to his moderate campaign, Sharon formed an oversized National Unity cabinet comprised of both the Labor and the right-wing factions, which

allowed him substantial political maneuverability.[14] Yet, Sharon's promise to calm down the situation was hardly an attainable goal. By early 2001, shortly after he assumed power, the conflict escalated even more. Suicide bombers attacked every major Israeli city, initiating a reign of terror unprecedented in the country's history. The first three months following the elections saw nine suicide attacks. However, the tenth attack at the gate of the Dolphi Disco in Tel Aviv, began a new and somber chapter for many Israelis.

"Kahane Was Right"

Meanwhile, Kach, which over the years had faded away from the public eye, received a sad, yet important boost of energy. On December 31, 2000, a few weeks after the tenth anniversary of his father's assassination, Binyamin Zeev Kahane, the younger son of Rabbi Meir Kahane, was driving from Jerusalem back to his home in the settlement of Tapuach accompanied by his wife and their six children. Near the settlement of Ofra, they were ambushed by Palestinian gunmen. Both parents died shortly after the attack, leaving behind six young orphans. The death of young Kahane expedited the merger of his splinter faction Kahane Chai (Kahane Lives) with Kach, which his father's disciples still held together. The tragedy brought some of the color back into the cheeks of these two marginalized movements as they looked for the right opportunity to pave their way to the center of the political arena.[15]

The attack at Dolphi Disco was carried out on Friday, June 1, 2001, at 11:30 p.m. where dozens of young people lined up near the front of the nightclub on the southern end of Tel Aviv's beach boardwalk. The crowd was unique in one sense: the nightclub was a popular gathering place for young immigrants from the former Soviet Union. The suicide bomber who found his way into the crowd carried a heavy explosive belt loaded with shrapnel. His dispatchers from Hamas (the Sunni Muslim group), had instructed him to cause the most devastating impact possible. They succeeded in more ways than one. Twenty-one young men and women were killed and more than 150 were injured. In the course of the evening, any trace of animosity toward the Russian newcomers was erased. The Dolphi Disco attack served as their informal initiation into Israel's culture of bereavement, and they were embraced by the overwhelming majority of the longtime Jewish citizens. The hours following the attack brought more violence. Less than 150 yards separated the Dolphi Disco from the Hassan Bek Mosque, which serves the Muslim worshipers from the adjacent city of Jaffa. In the early hours the following Saturday morning, an inflamed Jewish mob surrounded the mosque.[16] They shouted, "Kahane was right" and "Arabs out." For the first time in years, demonstrators appeared in the heart of Tel Aviv wearing the yellow T-shirts of Kach. This demonstration of power was far from trivial. According to Israel's Prevention of Terror Ordinance, any individual that showed support to a group such as Kach, which was designated as terrorist entity, could face up to three years in jail. Even so, the police forces at the scene were not particularly interested in the Kach's provocateurs. The events of October of the previous year were still fresh in their minds, and their efforts focused on containing a demonstration that threatened to escalate into a bloodbath. The incensed demonstrators slowly closed in on the mosque, throwing large stones at the compound and trying to set it on fire. The besieged worshipers responded by throwing heavy objects at the mob, but this time the police were better prepared. By carefully executing riot control tactics, they succeeded in diffusing the situation.

From the perspective of Kach's followers, this event was a significant milestone. The group

that was for many years condemned, marginalized, and on the brinks of disintegration had begun a speedy process toward redemption.[17] Within the next several months, signs and stickers with the slogan "Kahane was right" appeared all over Israel. This time, neither the Knesset nor the law enforcement agencies seemed to have any interest in cracking down on the proliferating phenomenon. Two years later, in the 2003 national elections, the Kahanist ideology received the ultimate seal of approval. The former Likud Knesset member Michael Kleiner took the lead of the new Herut faction. By then Benny Begin, the symbol of the small party, had already abandoned it. Shortly after he became the chairman of the party, Kleiner invited Baruch Marzel, Kahane's former right hand, to join him as his number two. Together they positioned Herut on the far right-wing edge of the political spectrum. They managed to secure 36,202 votes but fell short from meeting the 1.5 percent representation threshold and securing two parliamentary seats.[18] For the time being, Kach was denied parliamentary representation. However, and more importantly, "Kahanism" was re-legitimized and deepened its roots in the public sphere.

The New Conservatives

The escalating violence generated a paradoxical situation. While the Jews in Israel were terrorized and felt victimized, citizens of many countries around the world perceived Israel as the aggressor. This simplistic perspective of the conflict was loudly articulated in September 2001. Ten days prior to the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., much of the international media attention focused on the World Conference against Racism (also known as the Durban 1 Summit), which was orchestrated by the UN. A large and well-organized group of Islamic countries were determined to use the event as a platform to condemn Israel for violating the human rights of the Palestinians. The delegates of these countries were supported by activists of international civil rights organizations, which were also in attendance at the summit. South Africa, which was still healing from the scars inflicted by five decades of apartheid, served as the perfect location for the summit. The premise that Zionist ideology as a whole was based on racist principles, that Israel followed in the footsteps of apartheid, and that the State of Israel was in fact executing a carefully devised ethnic cleansing policy against the Palestinians were received at the summit with open arms.

The attention that the conference generated was cut short by the events of September 11. In the long run, however, it had a significant impact for Israel, a lesson I learned less than a year later. In the summer of 2002, I was engaged in a preliminary research on suicide bombers and happily accepted an invitation to participate in an academic panel organized by the UN office in Geneva on the recruitment of youth by terrorist groups. A week after the organizers first contacted me I received a second phone call. The woman on the other end of the line was apologetic but firm: she told me that, due to political sensitivities, the conference organizers had decided to remove my institutional affiliation, which at the time was the University of Haifa, from the program. I was surprised and asked her for the reason for the decision. She explained that despite their best efforts, the organizers had failed to find a Palestinian speaker for the panel and thus they could not allow the participation of an Israeli representative with no Palestinian counterpart. My attempts to explain that my presentation was purely academic and in fact had no direct reference to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, fell on deaf ears. Eventually, I decided to withdraw from the conference. This occurrence gave me a glimpse into Israel's deteriorating international reputation.

The denunciation of Israel came from a wide variety of individuals and institutions, including post-Zionist Israeli academics, left-wing European activists, and various Islamic movements around the world. Some focused on Israel's policies and were motivated by concerns for human rights. Others saw it as an opportunity to portray Israel as the source for all the troubles in the Middle East, and there were those who simply jumped on the bandwagon that legitimized the expression of old anti-Semitic sentiments by covering them in anti-Israeli rhetoric.[19] The mounting hostility toward Israel reignited the primordial collective fears of the Jews in Israel. In retrospect, it is safe to say that the events of that period restructured the Israeli ideological landscape, a fact that had considerable consequences for both the moderate and the radical Right.[20]

The beginnings of this process were humble. Several Zionist academics and public intellectuals articulated the widespread sense of frustration that consumed large parts of the Jewish society in Israel. It is important to note that these intellectuals never formed a movement and would probably object to the idea that they belonged to a single ideological thread. Many of them were never associated with a political party, and those who had partisan affiliations were generally linked to parties that were positioned left of center, at least in terms of their outlook on the conflict with the Palestinians. Despite their nuanced backgrounds, they gradually converged around a New Conservative worldview, which seemed to be rooted to a large degree in Yigal Allon's perspective. First, they were dubious about the idea that a comprehensive peace agreement with the Palestinians, at least in the foreseeable future, was feasible. They argued that the Palestinians were not ready to cross the Rubicon, as it were, and to accept Israel's right to self-determination as the homeland of and the safe haven for the Jewish people. Second, though they usually refrained from using the word "occupation," they feared that the continuous expansion of the settlements would eventually obliterate the already blurred border between Israel and Palestine. This, they said, would put the Israelis and the Palestinians on a deterministic path that would eventually lead to the formation of a single, binational state to the west of the Jordan River, one in which Jews were destined to become a minority. Third, based on these premises, they asserted that it was imperative that Israel become proactive and take decisive steps toward maintaining the demographic ratio of 80 percent Jews to 20 percent Arabs in sovereign Israel.[21] When articulated in terms of policy, the new ideological circle advocated two main agendas—separation and unilateralism.[22] Eventually, these two pillars were embraced by Sharon and shaped the most significant political maneuvers during his tenure as prime minister: the erection of the West Bank barrier and the disengagement from Gaza.[23]

The Network Infiltrates the Likud

This turbulent period should be remembered for another significant development: the formation of the Jewish Leadership movement (Manhigut Yehudit) by Moshe Feiglin and his former associates from Zu Artzenu and, more importantly, their decision to pave a new path to power. Feiglin, who gained a reputation for his political savvy and creative ideas, learned from the experiences of many ephemeral political groups, which had operated in Israel's right-wing scene throughout the years. It was clear to him that if he and his comrades were to continue as an extra-parliamentary movement or even form another right-wing party, they would probably fall victim to the curse that led their predecessors to oblivion. Thus, Feiglin decided to try a novel approach. His group joined Likud as a well-organized faction. This was a highly sophisticated move. For

many years, the most powerful organ of Likud was the party's convention. Every four years registered Likud members are invited to elect 3,000 delegates who are then entrusted with the task of shaping the party's policies. Among other things the convention is responsible for selection of Likud's list of candidates to the Knesset.[24] Feiglin, who had already proven himself to be an organizational wizard during the protest against the Oslo Accords, adopted the concept of "hostile takeover" from the corporate world and adapted it so it could be utilized in the less formal environment of the Likud party. He concluded that, by instructing his loyal supporters to join Likud and take part in the elections to the party's convention, he could become a pivotal actor in its apparatus and consequently have a significant impact on its official positions and a great degree of political clout during the formation process of the party's list of Knesset candidates. Soon after "Jewish Leadership" officially joined the Likud, Feiglin took another surprising step. He openly challenged both Sharon and Netanyahu by presenting his own candidacy for leader of Likud. Even though Feiglin did not expect to win the race, he managed to draw the attention of party leaders and activists to his large and cohesive group, which only recently had joined the party. While Feiglin's attempts to place his own people in Likud's list were not fruitful, Jewish Leadership's indirect impact was noteworthy. Likud activists who aspired to get elected to the Knesset were willing to adopt more radical views in order to receive his seal of approval and the votes of his loyalists.

Though most commonly associated with the settlers' network, "Jewish Leadership" actually encompassed all of the ideological elements of the new radical Right. As mentioned earlier, Feiglin's worldview overlapped with Kahanism much more than it did with Gush Emunim's. In their own writings as well as in media interviews, the leaders of this faction referred to the territorial issue as secondary to the battle between Israelis and Jews over the desired trajectory of the state.[25] For instance, while campaigning for the immediate annexation of all the occupied territories, the movement also called for the official realization of Jewish sovereignty over the Temple Mount. Further, "Jewish Leadership" advocated for reforming the Israeli constitutional framework by expanding the role of Jewish Orthodox laws in the state's legal apparatus. The group also aimed at restructuring the Knesset into a bicameral legislature. According to their vision, the Knesset would serve as the lower house and continue to represent the citizens of Israel. Meanwhile, the new upper house would represent the whole Jewish people, regardless of whether they were citizens of the state. In accordance with the view that only Jews should make critical decisions with regard to the future of the Jewish state, only the upper house would have the right to vote on issues that fell into this category.[26]

The Union of the Old and New Radical Right

Farther to the right of Likud, things were not much calmer. In early 2000, elements from the old and new radical Right converged. HaIhud HaLeumi and Yisrael Beiteinu decided to form a parliamentary alignment, which turned them into a faction of eight Knesset members. They joined Sharon's coalition immediately following the 2001 elections. Rehavam Zeevi, the leader of Moledet (which became the leading faction of the HaIhud HaLeumi), was appointed as minister of tourism. Avigdor Lieberman was named minister of national infrastructure, a position tailored specifically for Sharon only five years earlier. However, the partnership between the faction and Sharon was short lived. The prime minister's decision to change the IDF's deployment in Hebron and to invite the Palestinian security forces to enter the areas that the IDF

vacated was the end of the line for Zeevi, Lieberman, and their associates. On October 16, 2001, HaIhud HaLeumi–Yisrael Beiteinu officially withdrew from the cabinet.

The following day marked another significant milestone in the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. Like many Israeli politicians who were not residents of Israel's capital city, Rehavam Zeevi spent several nights a week in a Jerusalem hotel. His preferred hotel was the Hyatt Regency, which was located on Mount Scopus, close to the Hebrew University campus. Despite the Shabak's pleas, Zeevi, a former counterterrorism advisor to the prime minister, refused to be protected by a security detail. He was complacent and confident in his abilities to defend himself. Despite his vast experience and self-assurance, Zeevi made a critical error. He seldom changed his routine. He repeatedly stayed in a suite on the eighth floor of the hotel, ate breakfast at the hotel's restaurant every morning between 6:00 and 7:00 a.m., and returned to his room once more before leaving for his office or the Knesset.

On the morning of October 17, when he was approaching his room after breakfast, Zeevi was ambushed and shot three times. Two bullets hit him in the skull and one in the torso. Zeevi was rushed to the nearby Hadassah Hospital but the doctors were helpless; his wounds were deadly. Three hours later, the hospital's spokesperson told journalists that the seventy-five-year-old Zeevi had died. It was later revealed that the assassins were a random group of untrained Palestinian men who were recruited by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. The operation constituted the organization's response to the assassination of its leader, Abu Ali Mustafa, who had died less than two months earlier when IDF Apache helicopters launched rockets at his office in Ramallah.[27] The Israeli political system was shocked, as were Zeevi's colleagues. As a result of the assassination, Lieberman and Binyamin "Benny" Elon, Zeevi's successor as the head of Moledet, decided to postpone their departure from the cabinet; but in March 2002 they submitted their final resignation. They resented what they described as Sharon's policy of restraint in the face of the escalating violence.

During those volatile months, by pure coincidence, I observed another development, which was still in its embryonic stage but later contributed significantly to the consolidation of the new radical Right. Brigadier General Efraim "Effi" (Fine) Eitam, who was a few months away from retiring after a thirty-year service in the IDF, decided to enroll at the University of Haifa and complete his master's degree in political science. This provided me with the opportunity to become acquainted with one of Israel's most controversial officers. Eitam was born in 1952 in Ein Gev, a secular kibbutz on the eastern bank of the Sea of Galilee. During the Yom Kippur War, Eitam, a young infantry officer at the time, fought in the Golan Heights not far from his kibbutz and was decorated with the Medal of Distinguished Service. Shortly after the war he immersed himself in Orthodox Judaism and during the process attended Rabbi Kook's Merkaz Harav Yeshiva. At the same time, Eitam developed an impressive career in the military and in many ways was a pioneer. Eitam was Israel's first highly ranked officer from the Zionist religious camp and spent most of his career commanding special forces and infantry units. As such he became a role model for many young soldiers from this segment of society, who exhibited increasing interest in volunteering for the IDF's spearhead units. In the late 1980s, following the outbreak of the First Intifada, Eitam's race to the top was cut short. At the time, he was the commander of Givati, Israel's southern infantry brigade. He was faced with allegations that on various occasions, he had encouraged his soldiers to use a heavy hand toward Palestinian demonstrators and allegedly was himself involved in violent repression.[28]

When I met Eitam, he was still considering his future in the political arena. His ideas were relatively undeveloped but were intriguing nonetheless. Eitam envisioned a synthesis of the old

and new elements of Israel's right-wing ideology. His worldview, which was laid out a year later, was rooted in a combination of religious and militaristic perspectives. He seemed to share many ideas with Feiglin's Manhigut Yehudit, had clear affinity to Zeevi's ideology, and even presented elements of Kahanism.[29] In a nutshell, Eitam perceived the conflict with the Arab world as a zero-sum game, a titanic clash of civilizations and religions. He denounced the Oslo Accords and desired to dismantle the Palestinian authority. Furthermore, he advocated the annexation of the West Bank to Israel and suggested that the solution to the Palestinian problem could be found only in neighboring Arab countries—a tortuous way to advocate Zeevi's idea of "transfer." Eitam did not hesitate to say that he perceived the Palestinian citizens of Israel as a fifth column in the heart of the Jewish state, but he refrained from explicitly committing to any concrete solution for the challenge that they posed.[30] I was very impressed by Eitam's understanding of the practical side of politics and especially by his understanding of the potential power of "political networks." He did not use this term, but much like Feiglin, he aimed at tearing down the political walls between the religious and secular Right and to break down old parties that divided the power of the right-wing camp. Eitam aspired to join Likud and to fight over the leadership of the Israeli Right. But his initial ambitions were restrained by Israel's political reality, and prior to the 2003 elections he was called to lead the Mafdal, which was suffering from a leadership crisis.

"A People That Shall Dwell Alone, and Shall Not Be Reckoned Among the Nations" (Num. 23:9)

The reshuffling of the ideological landscape in Israel prior to the 2003 elections was nothing short of an earthquake. Most Israeli Jews realized that the old divide between the Left, which adhered to the idea of achieving peace through territorial concessions, and the Right, which vowed to maintain the integrity of Greater Israel, was out of date.[31] On the one hand, it became clear that perpetuating Israeli control over the occupied territories was unsustainable. On the other hand, the "New Middle East" vision, in which Israelis and Arabs lived in peace and led the region to an era of prosperity, seemed equally unrealistic. The majority of the Jews adhered to the pessimistic outlook of the new conservative stream, which was best summarized by Ehud Barak when he claimed that Israel was fated to be a villa in the jungle that was the Middle East. This somber conclusion left Israel with few viable policy alternatives. One idea was repeated over and over again by speakers from most Zionist parties: for the sake of preserving Israel's very existence as a Jewish state, they had to find a path to separate from the Palestinians—and the sooner, the better.

This perspective stood in sharp contrast to the settlers' vision. Suicide attacks in heavily populated areas, the most terrifying tactic that the Palestinians applied during the years of the Al-Aqsa Intifada, failed to generate the devastating psychological impact on the settlers that it exercised over those living in sovereign Israel. Paradoxically, while the settlers were at a higher risk of being ambushed by Palestinian gunmen on the roads of the West Bank, their exposure to suicide attacks was relatively limited.[32] Thus, they were shocked to learn that although they saw themselves as risking their lives in the frontier shielding the Israeli heartland with their bodies, a growing number of Israelis were wondering what kind of protection, if any, the settlers actually provided. Further, the IDF's resources seemed to be progressively diverted toward protecting remote outposts and isolated roads in the West Bank, while the security in the nation's interior

was routinely breached. Consequently, many Israelis became disillusioned. The number of those who perceived the settlers as the genuine successors of the first Zionist pioneers dwindled while the perception of the settlers as a detached group, which was completely devoted to an unrealistic dogma, gained traction. According to this notion, not only did the settlers ignore the fact that their ideological zeal put the lives of many Israelis at risk, but their long-term goal of formally annexing the West Bank to Israel posed a threat to the very existence of the Jewish State, since it would leave the Jews in Israel as an ethnic minority in their own homeland.[33] This increasing discontent over their worldview could not have come at a worse time for the settlers. Not only had they lost their persuasion skills that had successfully charmed large parts of the Israeli society for so many years, but there were signs of increased ideological divergences even within their own ranks.[34] Some critiques argued that the network had become an effective settling machine that had gotten caught up in a state of perpetual motion. This tunnel-vision viewpoint detached the settlers from the larger Israeli society. Thus, they were caught by surprise when, as a result of the horrific violence of the Intifada, the Israeli public turned its back on them and became increasingly susceptible to the ideas of withdrawal from the territories and complete disengagement from the Palestinians. The network's leaders were unable to offer a convincing alternative vision.[35] Ariel Sharon, on the other hand, was fully aware that the average Israeli was no longer willing to pay the increasing price tag attached to control over the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

Shortly after he was elected as prime minister, Sharon began a slow and cautious process of individual political transformation, which eventually led him to abandon the so-called Greater Israel Ideology and commit to a smaller but sustainable Jewish State. In practice, the process meant another break from his alliance with the settlers' network. During the first few months of his tenure, Sharon stuck by the settlers and responded favorably to their every demand.[36] Hence, when he first signaled that he was considering erecting a security barrier between Israel and the West Bank, the Yesha Council was caught off guard.[37] The idea of a barrier was not new.[38] As early as 1994, shortly after the signing of the Oslo Accords, Prime Minister Rabin instructed the IDF to build a fence that would separate Israel from the Gaza Strip. In the years following the fence's construction, both security personnel and politicians noted that suicide attackers almost never came from Gaza. As a result, they concluded that a physical barrier between Israel and the West Bank was vital for the security of the Israeli heartland. Even prior to the outbreak of the Intifada, Ehud Barak and members of his administration expressed their support for the barrier idea. However, they preferred to parcel it with other mechanisms that would hopefully end in a comprehensive peace agreement with the Palestinians.[39] Sharon's path to embracing the idea of the barrier was very different. It was grounded in and became one of the first concrete manifestations of the new conservative agenda. Sharon's plan was based solely on what he perceived as the Israeli interest and showed little regard for the Palestinian needs and grievances. His approach was assertive and unilateral. The plan's objective was to de facto annex as much land with as few Palestinians as possible. Since many of the settlements were constructed in close proximity to Palestinian residential areas, the maps that Sharon's team drew were very complex. In essence, they aimed at attaching to Israel as many settlements and settlers as feasible. The maps featuring suggested paths for the barrier illustrated this intention. Up to 17 percent of the territories of the West Bank were supposed to be attached to Israel.[40]

The settlers perceived Sharon's initiative as nothing short of a betrayal even though he had their best interests in mind. Based on their own extensive experience with setting facts on the ground, the settlers understood that the erection of what was then portrayed as a temporary

obstacle for security purposes would most likely have long-term consequences. They also knew Sharon very well and collective memory sent them clear warning signs. The removal of the Sinai settlements that had taken place less than two decades earlier had taught them a valuable lesson: Sharon never developed a deep ideological commitment to the settlements; at the end of the day, he was not really one of them. Rather, he had a razor-sharp understanding of politics, was highly attentive to the changing disposition of the Israeli public, and was determined to satisfy the increasing calls for more security.

In an attempt to regain the support of the Israeli public, the settlers' network launched a struggle against the very idea of the barrier. The campaign failed. The Yesha Council realized that this time, their lifework was faced with an unprecedented challenge. Sharon was locked on his new course and the fact that he was backed by the majority of the Israeli public made things easier for him. The settlers had no alternative other than to rapidly alter their strategy. Rather than fighting Sharon, they decided to join him. The network mobilized rapidly. They took advantage of their unlimited access to the prime minister's closest circle of aides as well as to the security establishment's highest echelons. In essence, they injected themselves into the planning process of the barrier.[41] And this tactic proved to be highly effective.

It is true that from the settlers' standpoint, any barrier that tore the territory of Greater Israel apart was undesired. However, by becoming part of the process, the settlers' network could make sure that its most vital interests were not compromised. Members of the network also received clear messages from Sharon that he genuinely perceived the barrier as a temporary security measure. He backed his promises to the settlers by taking two significant steps. First, he readopted the tactic that he had applied when he was in charge of removing the Israeli settlements in the Sinai Peninsula. While most of the public attention was focused on the drama surrounding the construction of the barrier, Sharon provided the Yesha Council with his blessing to intensify their expansion efforts in the West Bank's areas that were designated to be attached to Israel.[42] Sharon's second step was a military one. The Oslo Accords had divided the West Bank into three areas: (A) one in which Palestinian civilian and security forces exercised full autonomy, (B) one where the Palestinians enjoyed only civilian control, and (C), one that was under full Israeli control. Sharon instructed the IDF to carry out invasive raids on towns in Area A. In March 2002, following a chain of devastating suicide attacks, large IDF forces carried out Operation Defensive Shield, in which Israel re-occupied the main Palestinian population centers and therefore undermined the budding Palestinian sovereignty. During the operation, Sharon closed in on the leader of the Palestinian National Authority, Yasser Arafat, whom he had loathed for decades. Despite conflicting reports regarding Arafat's true impact on the escalation of the Intifada, Sharon portrayed him as the main figure behind the violent uprising. The IDF's engineering corps surrounded and destroyed Arafat's office complex in Ramallah, known as the Mukataa. For the next two years, almost until the day of his death, Arafat was confined to a small office that remained intact within the Mukataa's besieged walls.[43]

Although the idea of the barrier angered the settlers, they made sure that their interests were not seriously harmed through their intense involvement in the planning of its route. The same cannot be said about the Palestinians. Sharon's determination to annex as much territory and as few Palestinians as possible, was one of the main guiding principles behind the route of the barrier.[44] Consequently, in many cases Israel placed the barrier between uninhabited lands, mostly agricultural fields, and the Palestinian villagers who worked them. The farmers encountered increasing difficulties in accessing their lots and thus were deprived of their main source of income.[45] In Jerusalem, the barrier took the shape of a tall brick wall, which divided

Palestinian neighborhoods into two. It led to surreal situations: workers and pupils, who used to cross the street and reach their workplaces or schools in a matter of minutes, were now forced to walk for miles and cross several checkpoints, only to reach a destination located on the other side of the wall, a mere few yards away from their homes.[46] Eventually, when the barrier was a faits accompli, most of the settlers' initial concerns were alleviated. Beyond their significant impact on the planning of its route, the network's leadership understood that any barrier that effectively annexed so much land to Israel could never be accepted by the Palestinians as the baseline for a viable peace agreement.

Unintended Consequences

Not surprisingly, the barrier quickly became a symbol of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, and subjected Sharon and the IDF to increasing criticism, both domestically and on the international scene.[47] Even so, from a security standpoint, it was a success story. By 2004 Israel's unilateral policy paid off, and the number of suicide attacks decreased dramatically. A renewed sense of security spread among the residents of Israel's metropolitan areas. The effectiveness of the barrier led many Israelis to the conclusion that turning the barrier into a permanent border would not only guarantee their security but would also ensure Israel's long-term survival as a Jewish state. The success of the barrier led to unintended consequences that gave a significant boost to radical right-wing notions, which were not necessarily in line with the settlers' interests. Many Israelis that had never seen themselves as supporters of the radical Right became increasingly convinced of the idea to unilaterally separate from the Palestinians. One derivation of the separation agenda was the notion of territorial exchanges or land swaps. The plan was initially presented by Efraim Sneh and Ehud Barak from the Labor Party, and later adopted and amended by Avigdor Lieberman, who turned it into a major item on Yisrael Beiteinu's platform.

The basic premise behind the initial plan of territorial exchanges was this: given the levels of hostility between the Israelis and the Palestinians, the division of the land between the two people was inevitable. However, the presence of Jewish settlers in the future Palestinian state was likely to exacerbate the existing tensions. The alternative—the removal of hundreds of thousands of settlers—did not seem like a feasible option either; such an attempt by the Israeli government could have led Israel to a civil war as well as to an economic meltdown. Hence, both Israeli and Palestinian officials agreed to the principle of proportional land swaps. Essentially, in return for the legal annexation of large Jewish settlements, Israel was willing to offer the Palestinians lands west of the Green Line.[48]

One question remained unanswered: what would be the fate of the Palestinian citizens of Israel following the formation of an independent Palestinian state? This was a serious matter. After the deadly outcomes of the October 2000 riots, many Arab citizens felt even more alienated from the state. They suffered a shock that opened up old scars. Arab intellectuals and politicians called for a detachment from their fragile alliance with the State of Israel and openly identified with the aspirations for independence expressed by their brothers on the other side of the Green Line.[49] Key Arab public figures employed an escalating rhetoric, which enflamed their constituents and had a ripple effect on Jews. The defiant approach of the Arab leadership amplified the existential fears shared by large groups of the Jewish population. They feared that the formation of an independent Palestinian state would not put an end to the Palestinian

grievances. Rather, they came to see this as another step of the PLO's Phased Plan in which the ultimate goal was the complete liberation of Palestine. Nonetheless, it paved the way to attain the goal in several steps rather than in one big move. The Israelis' main concern was that after the formation of their independent state, the Palestinian leaders would encourage the Arab citizens of Israel to challenge the Israeli government by increasing their demands for autonomous rule in the parts of sovereign Israel in which they constituted a majority. Eventually, many Israelis feared that these autonomous enclaves would merge with Palestine and swallow the Jewish State.

A related and by no means secondary fear was that, once an independent Palestinian state had been established, the PLO would pursue the Palestinian Right of Return, demanding that Palestinian refugees and their descendants be allowed to return to their places of origin in sovereign Israel as well as the West Bank and reclaim their properties. This concern was not far-fetched. Descendants of Palestinian refugees, many of whom fled or were deported during the 1948 War, never gave up on the dream of returning to their homes. Evidence of this yearning could be found in the refugees' house keys, which they saved and cherished even decades after their houses had been destroyed.[50] Palestinian negotiators never gave up on the demand that Israel would accept the Right of Return principle even symbolically. The Palestinians' determination not to let go of this issue eventually backfired. Jews of Middle Eastern and North African descent, who were similarly forced out of their homelands and had left their property behind during the 1940s and 1950s, considered the Palestinian agenda to be an offensive provocation and started calling for their own Right of Return. For other Jews, it served as proof that the Palestinian people never relinquished their commitment to the eventual annihilation of the State of Israel and to the establishment of their own independent state on its ruins.[51] A new notion of transfer emerged as a practical solution to these concerns. Rather than transferring populations, which was Kahane's longtime plan, Sneh and later Lieberman advanced the idea of the transfer of sovereignty.

The gist of the plan was that the new border between Palestine and Israel would be drawn to the west of several population centers of Israeli Arabs, thus making them part of the new Palestinian state. This would have allowed Israel to rid itself of 10 percent of its Arab citizens.[52] From a human rights perspective, this plan was much more challenging than the versions of "transfer" that Kahane and Zeevi had advocated. In the virtual transfer, notions that involved the uprooting and relocation of individuals were absent. The plan also posed a serious intellectual challenge to the Israeli Arab politicians who confessed an outspoken identification with Palestinian nationalism and expressed a desire to unite with their compatriots. Many of their constituents were not eager to replace the close to $30,000 GDP in Israel with the $3,000 in Palestine. While liberal pundits argued that targeting an ethnic group and stripping it of its citizenship subverted the very moral foundations of democratic philosophy, many Israeli Jews supported the plan, in which they saw two main virtues.[53] First, by revoking the citizenship of 10 percent of its Arab inhabitants, Israel could temporarily alleviate the looming demographic threat. The concern that due to the high birthrates among Palestinians the demographic advantage of the Jews in Israel would be eroded, troubled the Israeli leadership and public for decades. This was one of the main arguments against the annexation of the West Bank to Israel. Second, and even more importantly, the plan offered many Jews a sense of retribution and catharsis. It was not uncommon to hear the sarcastic suggestion according to which "if the Arabs were so dissatisfied with the Israeli democracy and felt such a strong connection to the future Palestinian state, we should allow them to enjoy the Arab version of democracy."
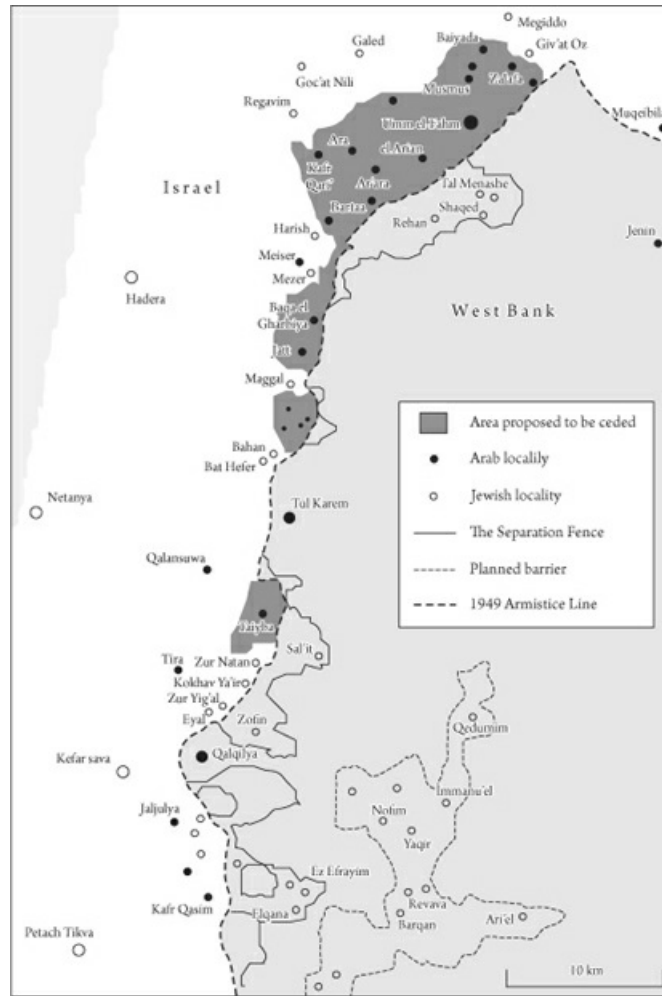
Figure 7.1 PROPOSED IDEA FOR TERRITORIAL EXCHANGES—THE LIEBERMAN PLAN
Source: Adapted from the Floersheimer Institute for Policy Studies by M. Anwar Sounny-Slitine

The Non-Virtual Transfer

While Israelis were consumed by the fears generated by the Intifada and focused on the budding debate over virtual transfer, a different, much more concrete transfer was set in motion. On August 18, 2002, Sharon's cabinet signed off on decision no. 2469, "The Expulsion of Illegal Foreign Workers in an Attempt to Increase Employment Rates among Israelis." It is important to note that many of the workers who were designated as illegal had actually entered the country with valid work visas. However, Israel applied a "binding policy," according to which each foreign worker was attached to a single employer. Termination of employment, for any reason, resulted in an immediate change of the worker's status to illegal. This arrangement provided the employers with complete control over their workers' fate, a fact that quite often led to abuse.[54]

The new policy was enacted as a direct result of the continuous pressure imposed on the cabinet by Shlomo Benizri, the minister of labor and social welfare from Shas. Throughout his long political career, Benizri never shied away from controversy. He emerged as one of Shas's

most outspoken advocates for the adoption of harsh policies against minority communities, including the Palestinian citizens of Israel, foreign workers, and especially homosexuals. Since his ministerial appointment, Benizri argued that removing foreign workers would solve the increasing rates of unemployment among Israelis. At the time, 250,000 men and women in Israel were classified as foreign workers, while 237,000 Israeli citizens were unemployed. He did not hesitate to use strong language to make his point. In one instance he said, "I can't understand why the waiter who serves the food in my restaurant has to have slanted eyes."[55]

The police, according to the cabinet's decision, were assigned with the task of deporting 50,000 foreign workers in a period of sixteen months.[56] Despite the fact that experts could have easily refuted Benizri's simplistic arithmetic linking the presence of foreign workers to the increasing levels of unemployment among veteran Israelis, their opinion was not solicited. The state referred to the operation as a top national priority and conveyed a clear message to the public, according to which a strict deportation policy was vital to Israel's attempt to emerge from the recession.[57] The cabinet provided the police, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Labor and Social Welfare Ministry with the resources and the authority to carry out the new policy. In order to facilitate the process, these bodies were coordinated by the newly established immigration administration.

In the midst of the Intifada, when police forces were desperately needed for the task of securing the streets of Israel,[58] more than four hundred officers were mobilized for the deportation effort, which the police chief referred to as a "military operation." The Israeli Prison Service was provided with funding to expand its jailing capacity and accommodate up to 1,300 detainees at once.[59] Indeed, the operation was carried out with military precision. Yaakov Ganot, a major general who formerly commanded Israel's border police, was chosen to lead the endeavor. Ganot applied his vast background as a border police officer and trained his troops to carry out intelligence operations and raids. Under the threat of arrest and forced deportation, terrified foreign workers chose to leave the country or turn themselves in. Others were hunted down, imprisoned, and consequently deported.[60]

The heavy-handed policy toward the foreign workers, by far the weakest group in Israeli society, went almost unnoticed. The Jewish public, which was consumed with fear, rallied around its exclusivist collective ethnic identity and developed an increasing hatred toward any out group. Unlike the Russian immigrants, who were perceived by most Israelis as members of the Jewish ethnicity and were thus embraced during the crisis, the men and women from China, Romania, India, and Ghana remained outsiders.[61] Even three consecutive suicide attacks in Tel Aviv's old bus station area, the city's hub for the foreign worker community, did not lessen the animosity toward them. Shas had effortlessly turned Kahane's legacy into an official state policy.

8
The Radical Right at a Crossroads

As the 2003 elections drew near, Ehud Olmert decided to test the waters in the national political arena. Olmert was a close ally of Likud's leader, Ariel Sharon, and hoped to find a way into the leadership of the party based on his own hawkish credentials. To his dismay, the members of Likud's convention had other ideas. They had not forgotten Olmert's disloyalty during the 1999 election campaign when, as mayor of Jerusalem, he defied Netanyahu, the bruised leader of his own party, and openly supported Ehud Barak's candidacy in the premiership race. The party's delegates sent a clear message to the rogue mayor. Olmert, who for many years was considered a major figure in the young leadership of Likud, was pushed to thirty-second place in the party's list of candidates to the Knesset. This blow increased Olmert's dependence on Sharon's support. More puzzling was the fact that Sharon, one of the shrewdest and least sentimental politicians in Israel's history, was willing to go out of his way to soothe Olmert. He promised him the role of deputy prime minister as well as a major ministerial position in his cabinet. Less than a year after the elections, Olmert repaid his benefactor.

Sharon Drops a Bomb

On Monday, December 1, 2003, Ariel Sharon was scheduled to represent the cabinet in the annual memorial service for David Ben-Gurion; but instead he sent a note apologizing that he would be absent. According to his aides, he caught a cold, which prompted his doctors to confine him to his residence. Olmert was chosen to deliver a speech on behalf of the prime minister. None of the attendants expected it to be more than a formal and uninspiring tribute. Sharon and Olmert, however, had other plans. Olmert stunned his listeners with a monologue that stood in sharp contrast to everything he and his party stood for:

> In the near future, the leaders of our nation will have to gather all their strength and courage…. They are challenged with the task of shaping our future. They will have to do it by relying on a combination of idealism and realism. They will carry with them the prayers of generations of Jews and at the same time look courageously at today's political constraints. They will have to find a way to reach a painful compromise that would set Israel on the path for peace, and sustain the Zionist vision.[1]

Less than three weeks later, Olmert's remarks, which at first seemed surreal, took on a completely different meaning. The organizers of the Herzliya Conference, Israel's most prestigious forum for discussing national policy issues, invited the prime minister to deliver the concluding remarks, as they did every year. On his way to the podium, Sharon glanced at Dan Schueftan, author of *Disengagement: Israel and the Palestinian Entity*. He smiled and whispered, "you bastard."[2] The first part of Sharon's speech did not offer breaking news; the prime-minister reiterated Israel's commitment to President George W. Bush's "road map," which

the Israeli cabinet had adopted with some reservations seven months earlier. Sharon also expressed his frustration with what he described as the Palestinian failure to meet their end of the deal. Then the politician, whose name became synonymous with the Israeli settlement project, dropped a bomb on his listeners. He stated that unless the Palestinians took the initiative and engaged in a serious attempt to end the conflict, Israel would have to take unilateral steps in order to provide its people with the sense of security that they deserved. The initiative, which he referred to as the "disengagement plan," suggested steps such as the redeployment of the IDF in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and a change in the dispersal of Jewish settlements in those areas.[3] Like Olmert, Sharon did not offer many details. Yet his speech, which was the incarnation of the new conservative vision, sent shock waves throughout Israel and around the world. For the first time in his long political career, Sharon officially and openly turned his back on his life's work, which was perpetuating Israel's hold over all of the occupied territories.[4]

In an interview with Yoel Marcus from the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz*, Sharon laid out the details of his plan. It included the removal of all Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip as well as several settlements in the north part of the West Bank.[5] Unlike almost everyone else in Israel, the leaders of the settlers' network were not totally shocked by Sharon's plan. His past betrayals served as constant nagging reminder that he was not really one of them and thus he should never be fully trusted. As soon as he adopted the principles of the "road map," they understood that things were not going to go their way.[6]

Sharon's plan was initially met with suspicion from every corner of the political spectrum. His political opponents from the Left saw it as a tactical maneuver. One prevalent assumption at the time was that he had identified a unique window of opportunity. For a brief moment in history, following the election of the hawkish president George W. Bush, the 9/11 events, and the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the interests of the United States and Israel in the Middle East seemed to fully overlap. According to this account, Sharon wanted to seize this opportunity and secure his life's work. Thus, he was willing to sacrifice the Gaza settlements and several remote outposts in exchange for American support, at least an implicit one, for the de facto annexation of Israel's largest population centers in the West Bank, including Ariel, Gush Etzion, and Maale Adumim.[7]

As time passed Sharon proved the skeptics wrong. In a meeting with Knesset members from Likud, the prime minister managed to shake many of his allies to their core. His comments seemed to have been adopted from the publications of Peace Now (Shalom Achshav) Israel's veteran, dovish NGO.[8] He used terms such as "occupation" rather than "liberation" and explained that it was time for Israel to bring its control over the lives of 3.5 million Palestinians to an end.[9] Sharon's choice of words and his seeming resolve to implement the "disengagement plan" gave rise to a new theory regarding the motivations underlying his new agenda—personal survival. The disengagement plan was introduced at a time when Sharon and his two sons, Omri and Gilad, were facing allegations of personal corruption and thus were subject to investigations by the police and the state attorney's office. According to the network's leaders, Sharon hoped to find favor by signaling to the judicial elite—which they considered a stronghold of the liberal Left—that he was more than willing to advance their longtime political agenda and to turn his back on the settlers.[10] Though it cannot be totally dismissed, this argument suffers from at least one significant shortcoming. Many Likud delegates and constituents perceived the state attorney's investigation of Sharon as a witch hunt led by the decaying left-wing elite. As a result, the prime minister enjoyed a spike in his popularity within his party and among his supporters,

and thus enjoyed more political clout than ever.[11]

Though less conspiratorial, the argument put forward by Sharon's biographers that he was pushed over the top by an accumulation of circumstances seems more credible. Sharon's years in power were among the worst in Israel's history. The violent conflict with the Palestinians reached new heights. The economy suffered major setbacks, and the public grew impatient with Sharon's promises for tough leadership capable of pulling Israel out of its metaphorical hole. The fact that he was constantly challenged by the growing hawkish wing in Likud, which was led by Netanyahu, did not help either. Thus, Sharon was pushed to explore new paths that had the potential to break the stalemate.[12] According to Dov Weissglass, Sharon's office bureau chief and longtime confidant, the prime minister and his closest advisers came to the conclusion that from the Israeli standpoint, neither the status quo nor the continuation of negotiations with the Palestinians could have led to positive outcomes. In order to protect the state's most vital interests, it had to stop being reactive and regain control over the situation by introducing unilateral steps.[13] The fact that the new political initiative carried the potential to redirect the public attention from his personal affairs was an added bonus.[14]

The Settlers' Concerns

Six months prior to the announcement of the disengagement plan, the highly attentive settlers had already felt that things were going in the wrong direction. Shortly after he committed to the principles of the "road map," Sharon decided to start removing outposts in the West Bank. Paradoxically, many of these outposts had been established with his own implicit and sometimes explicit blessing. More than any other prime minister that preceded him, Sharon was highly aware of the settler network's abilities to mobilize quickly and subvert such plans. After all, for many years he had served as a major hub of the network, and so he made sure to keep his colleagues from Yesha in the dark. Both the prime minster and his aides turned down the requests for meetings that were made by representatives of the settlers.[15] When a meeting eventually took place, the atmosphere in the room was tense. The leaders of the Yesha Council were eager to gain a better understanding of Sharon's concrete plans. Which outposts was he planning to remove? How deep was this operation supposed to go? And what was the endgame? Sharon was visibly uncomfortable and provided only vague responses. The settlers' leaders did not intend to make it any easier for him. They reminded the prime minister of their long journey together, appealed to his sentiments, alerted him that his public image would suffer a significant blow, and finally even resorted to threats. The secretary general of Amana, Zeev Hever (aka Zambish), Sharon's confidant and former advisor, warned him that despite their concerns and frustrations, the leaders of the network were far from feeling defeated. He reminded him that they still knew how to put up a fight and were not even considering the alternative of giving up.[16]

Indeed, they did not. In the following months, while the details of disengagement were put together in the prime minister's office, the network's mobilization was in full swing. Sharon threw his popular minister of defense, the former chief of general staff, Shaul Mofaz, to the forefront of the struggle with the settlers. The battle over each outpost designated for removal was fierce. The settlers' leadership used every weapon in its arsenal; they mobilized their delegates within Likud and instructed them to assert continuous pressure on the minister, who was still a political novice. They launched a media blitz. They even challenged many of the

cabinet's attempts to remove outposts by appealing to the High Court of Justice, where they hoped the cabinet's actions would be deemed illegal.[17] The struggle over the outposts was a blessing in disguise for the Yesha Council as it provided the settlers' network with a highly needed energy boost. Shortly after Sharon's speech at the Herzliya Conference and prior to the presentation of the actual details of the plan, the Yesha Council brought 120,000 supporters to Rabin Square in Tel Aviv for a demonstration titled "Arik, Don't Cave In."[18] By the time that Sharon unveiled his disengagement plan, the network was already mobilized and ready for the battle.[19]

First Round

In this struggle against Sharon, the settlers confronted the very person who for decades masterminded their own struggles against his predecessors.[20] Surprisingly, during the first phase of his campaign to mobilize public support for the disengagement, Sharon made a rookie mistake, which gave the settlers an opportunity to claim victory. Sharon knew that while it was not a constitutional requirement, a referendum on the plan had the potential to legitimize it and to crush the opposition. Public opinion polls that were conducted on a regular basis indicated that the Israeli public rallied around the prime minister and was highly supportive of his plan.[21] However, introducing the notion of a plebiscite to the Israeli polity would have required a constitutional amendment. The alternative was to seek approval within the prime minister's own party, but Sharon knew that the settlers' network hold was increasing through Feiglin's grip on Likud's formal institutions.

Thus, on March 30, 2004, Sharon adopted an idea that was brought up by the minister of agriculture, Yisrael Katz. Rather than seeking the approval of the whole Israeli public on the one hand or the delegates of Likud's convention on the other hand, Sharon decided to bring the plan to the approval of every registered member of his party. The date for this unprecedented referendum was set for May 2. Based on his high approval ratings, Sharon was confident that the majority of Likud members would vote in favor of his plan. In order to avoid any surprises, he took preemptive steps by courting such prominent hawkish party leaders as Binyamin Netanyahu, Silvan Shalom, and Limor Livnat, who initially objected to the plan. He indicated to the doubtful ministers that President Bush's explicit support for the plan would make the administration much more sympathetic toward the Israeli side in future negotiations with the Palestinians.[22]

Further, Sharon assumed that setting a very tight time frame for the ballot would prevent the network's members within Likud from mobilizing. In deed, the public opinion polls that were conducted among samples of Likud members two weeks prior to the vote indicated that the prime-minister was leading by twenty-two points.[23] For a brief moment it seemed that Sharon had forgotten the settler network's exceptional mobilization capabilities.[24] The Yesha Council along with "The Action Committee of Gush Katif," a grassroot movement, which formed shortly after Sharon presented his initiative, decided to change the momentum by physically visiting the homes of every one of the 190,000 Likud members who were eligible to vote, convincing them to object to the plan. The success of the operation took even the most optimistic activists by surprise. When the ballots of the referendum closed, it became clear that Sharon had been beaten at his own game. His plan was rejected by close to 60 percent of the voters. Yet, the settlers were

highly aware that Sharon was politically savvy and unlikely to accept his defeat and shelve his plan.[25]

Second Round

Indeed, within a matter of days Sharon introduced a slightly revised version of the initial disengagement plan, which he now referred to as the "separation plan." In essence, the two plans were almost identical. In this round, Netanyahu, who believed that Sharon was weakened by his defeat at the polls, led the struggle against him within Likud. The settlers were familiar with Sharon's determination and tried to preempt his next steps by delivering another strike. They utilized the momentum gained at Likud's ballots and placed enormous pressure on the party's Knesset members and ministers. The climax of this maneuver was a petition, signed by over two-thirds of the 2,900 delegates of Likud's convention, which called for bringing the plan to a halt.[26] They failed to deter Sharon. He was locked on one objective: approving the plan at any cost. The prime minister decided to stick to the formal procedure that required him to bring the revised plan only to the approval of the cabinet. However, the rising tide against the disengagement/separation plan within Likud generated a serious problem. Senior members of the cabinet, including Netanyahu, Shalom, and Livnat, moved to the opposing side and presented a long list of reservations. Once again Sharon resorted to a highly unorthodox tactic for solving the problem. In order for his plan to be approved, he needed to secure a majority of the votes of his cabinet members. The numbers did not add up, so he decided to create an artificial majority in the cabinet by exercising a Machiavellian maneuver. Sharon sent dismissal letters to ministers, Benny Elon and Avigdor Lieberman, from National Unity, who strongly opposed his plan. By doing this Sharon reduced the size of his cabinet and shifted the balance of power in his favor. This trick pulled the rug out from under Netanyahu and the other Likud ministers who objected to the disengagement. The revised plan was approved by the cabinet, and as a result minister Effi Eitam and deputy minister Yitzhak Levy from the Mafdal departed from the coalition.[27]

At that point things were still unclear, but the process of pushing the disengagement plan forward was a significant step in the tectonic shift that was about to reshape the Israeli political landscape. At the time, Sharon drew a clear line between the expanding camp of the new conservative Right and the radical Right. The next phase of the battle was scheduled to take place in the Knesset when the plenum was to discuss the plan. As the day approached, the settlers shifted the pressure into an even higher gear and managed to secure the important support of Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, the leader of Shas who instructed his followers to vote against it.[28] This was by no means a surprise. Rabbi Yosef's dovish image was merely an illusion that the Israeli Left cultivated even though his actions over the years showed a clear hawkish leaning.[29] Shas, which had gradually grown to become Israel's most radical right-wing force in terms of its authoritarian and populist agendas, finally solidified its position as a formidable nativisitic power as well. Despite all the hurdles, Sharon managed to secure the parliamentary majority that he needed. From this point on, the battle was taken back to the streets.

Third Round

In the summer of 2005, it seemed that Jerusalem had been taken over by activists protesting the

disengagement plan, and the tone of the protest was intimidating. Posters covering the streets stated that Ariel Sharon had no right to give up parts of the land of Israel, which was promised to the Jewish people by the Lord. In each major intersection, men, women, and especially youths handed out orange ribbons to drivers. Even in Tel Aviv and Haifa, cities in which there was a solid majority in support of the disengagement, it was hard to avoid these colorful activists. Orange, the color of Gush Katif's regional council flag, became the symbol of the struggle and was embraced by the settlers' network in the years that followed. At first glance it seemed that the settlers' struggle was meticulously organized by the Yesha Council.[30] Once again, though, the anti-disengagement movement followed a dynamic network structure rather than a rigid organizational one.[31]

The Yesha Council took charge of leading the effort against the removal of the four settlements in the northern West Bank that were included in the plan. Ganim and Kadim were small settlements initially formed by the IDF's Nahal branch and, in the mid-1980s, were transferred to the hands of Herut's settling movement, the National Laborer (HaOved HaLeumi). Both settlements were built close to the Green Line, but unlike the majority of the West Bank settlements, they were located on the northeastern corner of the West Bank, far away from Israel's main metropolitan areas. Furthermore, the settlements were positioned southeast of the Palestinian city of Jenin, which became a stronghold for militant activists as early as the First Intifada. Thus, they failed to attract new settlers and remained very small communities. The secular nature of both settlements and the fact that some families had already left them during the first stages of the Al-Aqsa Intifada forced the heads of the Yesha Council to the conclusion that their fate was sealed. Thus, they concentrated their efforts on saving the two other settlements that were designated for removal—SaNur and Chomesh.

These two settlements were located much deeper into the West Bank and were by no means more successful than Ganim and Kadim. Both settlements had gone through major crises, which led to rapid turnover of their inhabitants. However, by the summer of 2005, they were populated by strong cores of highly motivated Zionist religious activists. Many of the activists were second-generation settlers who decided to follow in the footsteps of their parents. They left the relative comfort of the settlements in which they were born and raised, and made a commitment to inhabit the frontier. Amana and the Samaria Regional Council (Moatza Azorit Shomron) focused on fortifying these two strongholds by mobilizing new residents and providing them with resources.[32]

Meanwhile, the settlers in the Gaza Strip were devising their own strategy. They were faced with dilemmas similar to those of their predecessors who fought against the withdrawal from Sinai in the early 1980s and against the implementation of the Oslo Accords a decade later. The leaders of the Gaza settlers were determined to engage in a decisive battle against the cabinet's decision. However, they could not afford to alienate the state that provided their communities with resources and services. Based on their own inclinations as well as on the advice they received from the West Bank settlers and the Golan Residents Committee, they expanded their local action committee, and for the sake of appearance separated it from the local regional council.[33]

Unlike the struggle against the Oslo Accords that gave birth to a wide variety of identifiable movements, this opposition network's focus was narrower. Its main hubs were located in Gush Katif and in the offices of the Yesha Council in Jerusalem. The movement was faced with two significant challenges. First, the cabinet set a tight timetable for the completion of the disengagement plan; less than eighteen months would separate the initial presentation of the plan

from its implementation. Second, there were points of disagreement between the Yesha Council and the Action Committee of the Gaza settlers—mostly regarding the choice of protest tactics—and thus each body reserved a large degree of autonomy with respect to the type of the activities that it initiated.[34] In retrospect, it seems that these constrains did not harm the struggle. Instead, the narrow timetable generated a sense of urgency which allowed for a speedy mass mobilization of sympathizers. The fact that the struggle was not unified allowed religious leaders, Knesset Members, and individual volunteers from every corner of the country to join and leave at various stages and to enjoy a relatively large degree of independence to shape their own activities.[35]

The Final Act

As the date of the plan's implementation approached, the media helped to convey the sense of desperation felt by the protesters, who were unable to stop Sharon. The desperation could have led to two different, though not mutually exclusive, threatening scenarios. The first was a wave of political violence. Rogue elements within the radical Right had already proven in the past that when a danger was looming over their most sacred values, political assassinations and other acts of terrorism were not out of the question.[36] The second—and by no means less intimidating— threat was a crisis within the ranks of the IDF. The execution of the disengagement plan was a large-scale operation, which required a much larger force than the Israeli police could have provided. Thus, an extensive mobilization of IDF units was necessary. In democratic countries, involving military forces in the implementation of controversial domestic policies is always challenging. The issue becomes even more sensitive when the military follows the model of conscription and when the society is highly divided, in this particular case, along religious and ideological lines. One of the main concerns among policymakers in the months prior to the implementation of the plan was that soldiers who belonged to the Zionist religious camp would be torn between the commands of their superior officers on the one hand and the dictates of their spiritual leaders on the other.[37] The threat became even more imminent when several prominent rabbinical figures declared that the cabinet's decision to remove the settlements was illegitimate and called for mass insubordination.[38] This was not the first time that soldiers from the Zionist religious camp were met with such a conflict of conscience. The removal of the Sinai settlements almost twenty-five years earlier generated a similar phenomenon, though on a much smaller scale.[39]

This time, officials took the potential for massive insubordination especially seriously given the rise in the number of religious Zionist soldiers who volunteer to serve as fighters and officers in Israel's elite combat units. This trend was first identified in the late 1980s, and a decade was accompanied by the appearance of the Mechinot, or pre-military preparatory frameworks. These educational frameworks initially appealed to Zionist religious youth. They offer a year of pre-military training along with academic and religious studies. Recent high school graduates joined the Mechinot for the purpose of immersing themselves in religious and historical studies and at the same time participating in physical and mental training. They did this in order to have an advantage for entering the IDF's most selective units.[40] The motivated graduates of the Mechinot joined the large group of Zionist religious conscripts who had already been represented in high numbers at the IDF's combat forces through the framework of the Arrangement Yeshivas (Yeshivot Hesder).[41] Ultimately, despite dismal assessments, insubordination was relatively

marginal, and only 163 individual documented cases were reported.[42] This outcome could be explained by two main factors. First, the IDF generally avoided involving units with a high number of religious soldiers in sensitive tasks during the most intense part of the operation, such as the actual removal of settlers from their homes.[43] Second, the most radical fringes within the settlers' network, namely the Hilltop Youth, who had gradually developed a sense of alienation from the state, evaded military service altogether. The IDF, for its part, did not press them to enlist.[44]

The doomsday scenarios served the interests of both Sharon and the network. The prime minister amplified the sense of imminent crisis for the purpose of conveying a clear message to the Palestinians and to the international community. He wanted the world to be aware that his bold move had put the Israeli society under severe strain. The alarming message served as a clear signal that further withdrawals could lead to a civil war, and thus indicated that the international community's expectation that Israel would engage in mass removal of settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem was unrealistic. As for the settlers, many of them dreaded the possibility that additional withdrawals were looming. Their leaders felt that they had not only failed to accomplish their theological mission but were actually coming close to losing their homes.[45] Militant settlers who during the implementation of the disengagement pushed for a direct confrontation with the security forces—a strategy that was rejected by the leaders of the network—now conveyed a loud and clear message to Sharon, his cabinet, and the Israeli society as a whole: they would not let it happen again.[46]

Meanwhile in Jerusalem

While the preparations for disengagement were in full swing, another policy was implemented—the completion of the separation barrier within the city of Jerusalem. Referred to by the official Israeli spokesman as "Jerusalem's Hugger" (Otef Yerushalayim), the partition in Jerusalem became the icon of the separation between the Israelis and the Palestinians. The towering, concrete barricade sliced through the urban parts of a sixty-five-square-mile area in the eastern part of the city. At various moments throughout history, images of walls have served as strong visualizations of dark times. For many people, the gravity of the Cold War was encapsulated in the Berlin Wall. For others the conflict in Northern Ireland was made manifest by the so-called peace walls in Belfast. To a large extent, the Jerusalem wall also represents the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a nutshell.

For illustrative purposes, looking at the separation plan in Jerusalem through the prism of the three circles described in chapter 4 (see fig. 4.1) may be the most useful way to analyze the plan's implementation. The separation in the external circle was devised by the Ministry of Defense and enforced by the border police. In this circle, the barrier's route was dictated by the logic of the new conservative movement. The gist of the plan was to redefine the boundaries of the Jerusalem municipal area in a way that allowed Israel to annex as much land and as few Palestinians as possible.[47] A secondary objective was to create territorial continuities between large Jewish settlements in the West Bank to the north, east, and south of Jerusalem. By doing so, Israel hoped to prevent any possibility for a future division of Jerusalem and at the same time to legitimize the settlements that surrounded the city by turning them into an integral part of the larger Jerusalem municipality.

The story of the E-1 (short for East 1) area highlights the struggle over these objectives. The

E-1 area is composed of 2,965 acres located between the city limits of Arab (or East) Jerusalem in the west and the settlement of Maale Adumim in the east.[48] Prior to his departure from Sharon's cabinet, Effi Eitam, who served as the housing and construction minister, initiated a plan to build 3,500 housing units in the area with the intention of settling 15,000 Jews. The new neighborhood would have brought East Jerusalem closer to Maale Adumim, thus connecting the large settlement to the capital city.[49] Eitam's plan was put on hold due to the immense pressure placed on Israel by the international community. Over the next few years, the Maale Adumim municipality, the Yesha Council, and Knesset members from most right-wing parties, never stopped lobbying for its implementation.[50] One of the network's few significant achievements in this area was the relocation of the Israeli police command center in the West Bank in E-1.[51]

The implementation of the plan on the external circle depended to a large degree on the successful Judaization of areas in the second, intermediate circle and on the creation of territorial continuities of Jewish neighborhoods that would slice through Palestinian population centers. These neighborhoods were designated to serve as connecting corridors between the array of settlements on the outskirts of Jerusalem and the Old City. The second circle is an entangled and challenging maze, both geographically and politically. It includes Palestinian villages that prior to the 1967 Six-Day War were small and remote from the city but over the years expanded and became neighborhoods of Jerusalem. The network of settlers in Jerusalem made it their objective to ensure that these neighborhoods did not remain exclusively Palestinian. Thus, they constantly improved their methods for taking over Palestinian properties and establishing Jewish strongholds within these villages. The most prominent figures in this part of the broader network were Irving Moskowitz, the financier, and Aryeh King, his right hand in Israel. King resides in the Palestinian neighborhood of Ras al-Amud, southeast of the Old City. He has a long history of struggling for the Judaization of Jerusalem and personifies the elusive nature of the settlers' network in city. Since the late 1990s, he has been active in a group whose goal is to return properties in East Jerusalem to Jews who owned them prior to the 1948 War. Later, he became a leading figure in Elad and an active member of the National Unity party. In 2008 King founded the Israel Land Fund (Kalil-HaKeren LeAdmot Yisrael). The purpose of this fund is to serve as a counterforce to the old Jewish National Fund, which, according to King, neglected its original goal of salvaging lands in Israel on behalf of the Jewish people.[52]
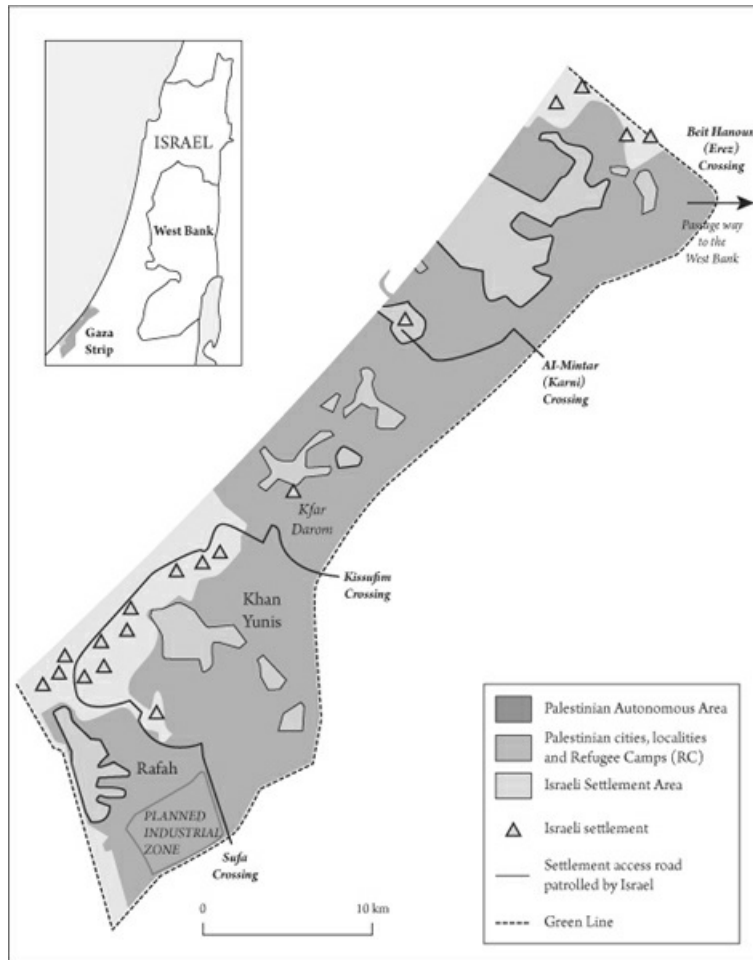
Figure 8.1 Israeli Settlements in Gaza Evacuated Under Israel's Unilateral Disengagement Plan, 2005 *Source:* Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs and Jan de Jong. Adapted by M. Anwar Sounny-Slitine. Note: The map shows Israeli settlements in Gaza in the year 2000.

Figure 8.2 THE JUDAIZATION OF EAST JERUSALEM *Source:* Foundation for Middle East Peace and Jan de Jong. Adapted by M. Anwar Sounny-Slitine. Note: The map shows Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem in August 2006.

Despite the harsh findings of the Klugman report of 1992 in which the state's extensive support of the settlers was unveiled, the Israeli bureaucracy never turned its back on the Jewish settling network in Jerusalem. It simply could not do so. By the time the Klugman report was released, Elad and Ateret Cohanim had already become inseparable organs of the state.[53] King quickly adopted the modus operandi of his predecessors and improved upon it. His main assets were Moskowitz's financial backing and the excellent ties that he developed with politicians throughout the Right side of the political spectrum.

King's story illuminates the intangible, clandestine, and all-encompassing nature of the settlers' network. Over the years, King developed strong ties to Natan Sharansky, who served as a minister without portfolio, yet with responsibility for both Jerusalem and Jewish Diaspora affairs in Sharon's second cabinet (2003–2005). Sharansky, who gained worldwide recognition as a refusnik, had a less-than-stellar career in Israeli politics. By 2003 his party, Yisrael BaAliyah, lost most of the power it had gained in the mid-1990s to Lieberman's Yisrael Beiteinu and to other parties, and consequently merged with Likud. By the time of his appointment,

Sharansky, who shared Binyamin Netanyahu's worldview and was a known source of inspiration for him (as well as for President George W. Bush), was already an avid supporter of the settlers' network, thanks to a man who supported him for many years.[54]

Avi Maoz, a graduate of Merkaz HaRav, a settler, and a central figure in Elad since the time of its formation, was also a key activist in the campaign for Sharansky's release from the Soviet prison. When Sharansky launched his political career in Israel, Maoz was by his side.[55] Beyond his activities in Elad, Maoz was a vital activist for Ateret Cohanim and a major campaigner for the Golan Residents Committee during Rabin's tenure as prime minister. When Sharansky was appointed as minister of housing and construction in Sharon's first cabinet (2001–2003), Maoz was appointed as director general of the ministry, where, for all intents and purposes, he served as the representative of the Yesha Council and facilitated the proliferation of the outposts.[56] For this reason, when Effi Eitam replaced Sharansky in the minister's office, he asked Maoz to stay. The change of personnel did not undermine the close ties between Maoz and Sharansky.

Another publicly unknown, yet important figure in the settlers' network was Yechiel Leiter, an American-born settler. Throughout his career Leiter embodied the true meaning of the network's ideology. Among his many positions he served as the general manager of the Jewish settlement in the city of Hebron; later he became a spokesperson for the Yesha Council, then an aide to Ariel Sharon, and finally Netanyahu's chief of staff at the Ministry of Finance. When Netanyahu resigned from Sharon's cabinet in protest of the disengagement, Leiter, who over the years had also developed strong ties to Sharansky, stepped up his struggle over East Jerusalem through an association called One Jerusalem.[57] In 2005 Sharansky's ministry was invested in a struggle against the attorney general's decision to stop using the Absentee Property Law in order to seize Palestinian assets in Jerusalem.[58] At the same time, Leiter launched a campaign that aimed to boost the Judaization of East Jerusalem through other means, most notably by the legal purchase of Arab-owned properties. The operation required significant amounts of money, and Leiter utilized his American background to appeal to right-wing Jewish activists in the United States. One of the main supporters of the effort was Dov Hikind, a New York legislator who represents a state assembly district in Brooklyn. Hikind is also known for his history as an activist in Meir Kahane's JDL. King set up the headquarters of the operation in the offices of the Moledet party in East Jerusalem and took charge of identifying properties that were put on the market.[59]

As noted earlier, King's network was the third and youngest vertex in the Jerusalem settlers' triangle. While he and his friends were expanding the reach of Kalil to almost every Palestinian neighborhood in East Jerusalem,[60] Ateret Cohanim and Elad maintained their focus on the inner circle—the Muslim Quarter of the Old City and Silwan. Over the years the different associations operated in complete synchronization with one another and adapted their strategies to meet evolving scenarios. In some instances, the stories surrounding Ateret Cohanim and Elad seemed to have been ripped directly from historical mystery novels. A noteworthy example is the story of Irenaios, the patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church in Israel, which happens to be the largest owner of private lands in the country. Along with other lands, the church owns the lots on which both the Knesset and Israel's presidential residence were built. In 2005 the church was in disarray. The patriarch, who for years was considered a close ally of the Palestinians, was accused of selling two properties of the church in the Old City to Ateret Cohanim. Both properties were hotels—the Petra and the Imperial—and were located in close proximity to the Jaffa Gate.[61] Despite the fact that an investigation committee appointed by the church exonerated Irenaios and instead blamed the church's financial advisor, Irenaios was dismissed from his post

and, for undisclosed reasons, remains confined in an apartment owned by the church.[62]

However, most of the transactions for which Ateret Cohanim and Elad were responsible were of a far less exotic nature. When the representatives of the associations understood that the attorney general was leaning toward a more moderate use of the Absentee Property Law in Jerusalem, they boosted their attempts to purchase assets directly from their Palestinian owners. The heads of the associations were aware of the fact that the local Palestinian communities in Jerusalem as well as the Palestinian National Authority imposed sanctions against Arabs who sold land and properties to Jews. Thus, once again they showed their resourcefulness by hiring Palestinian middlemen who pretended to be the actual buyers. The associations were extremely careful and meticulous. They registered straw companies in the British Virgin Islands and the Bailiwick of Guernsey, through which they channeled funds and registered assets.[63] However, the associations' most successful endeavor was the final blurring of the remaining boundaries between themselves and the state.

Back in the late 1980s when Ariel Sharon held the housewarming for his new home in the Muslim quarter, he demanded that the state provide him with protection. While Sharon rarely occupied the apartment, his next door neighbors in the Ateret Cohanim compound benefited from the enhanced security. Later, when he became the housing and construction minister (1990–1992), Sharon formalized this model. The state, through the Housing and Construction Ministry, was assigned with the task of providing Jewish settlers in the Arab neighborhoods of Jerusalem with security arrangements. Since the ministry did not have its own security branch, private security companies were commissioned to carry out the duty. Over the years, this practice became a routine: contractors were hired by the ministry for the purpose of protecting compounds that were purchased by the settling associations or handed over to them.[64]

Unlike Ateret Cohanim and Kalil, which usually operate out of sight and are generally referred to as radical right-wing associations, Elad systematically secured its place not only in the state's apparatus but also in the core of the Israeli Jewish consensus. By using its members' strong social ties to officials in Israel's Nature and Parks Authority as well as to the Jerusalem municipality, Elad was put in charge of the state-funded archeological excavation of the City of David. When the Ministry of Defense, and several years later the Ministry of Education, decided to launch an educational program for conscripts and students, Elad was close by to reap the benefits. The goal of the generously funded programs was to bring young Israelis to Jerusalem's main Jewish historical sites for the purpose of enhancing their understanding of the historical linkage between the early Israelites portrayed in the Bible and those living in modern Israel. One of the program's main attractions is a visit to the City of David in Silwan. Since Elad received an exclusive permit from the state to operate the City of David visitors' center and to provide guided tours in the area, it became a direct beneficiary of the budgets allocated by the two ministries for the programs.[65]

The Big Bang

Outside the boundaries of Jerusalem, the settlers' situation in light of the disengagement plan was far from auspicious. But the crisis served as a wake-up call, which reinvigorated the network.[66] The same cannot be said about Israel's leading right-wing party. By the late fall of 2005, the Likud Party had broken into two opposing factions that could no longer coexist.

Meanwhile, the public showed clear signs of dissatisfaction with both main parties. While the

Labor Party still adhered to the vision of a new and peaceful Middle East, and Likud, which had already been highly influenced by its new, radical right-wing factions, could not let go of its hope for a Greater Israel, Ariel Sharon, the eternal realist, offered a third way. He adopted the new conservatives' ideas to their fullest extent and replaced his old commitment to the Greater Israel ideology with a new vision: a smaller and safer Jewish state.[67] Encouraged by his unprecedented degree of popularity among the Israeli public, the prime minister decided that it was time for the "big bang"—a realignment of the Israeli party system along new ideological lines.[68] His new party, initially known as Achrayut Leumit (National Responsibility) and later changed to Kadima (Forward), was introduced to the public on November 21, 2005. While Sharon was hoping to gather prominent politicians from both the Likud and Labor parties, most members of the new party came from Likud. Actually, only three prominent Labor leaders, Shimon Peres, Dalia Itzik, and Haim Ramon—the driving force behind the "big bang" idea—joined Sharon.

Students of Israeli politics had doubts regarding the future prospects of the party. In the past every party that tried to position itself at the center of the political map between Likud and Labor, including Sharon's Shlomtzion in 1977, disappeared shortly after its formation.[69] Kadima, however, proved to be more resilient.[70] On December 18, less than a month after the dramatic announcement of its formation, Kadima was still trying to get off the ground and simultaneously run an election campaign when Sharon suffered a mild stroke. His doctors recommended that he rest and come back for cardiac catheterization three weeks later. On January 4, 2006, Sharon had a second stroke. The intracranial hemorrhage was severe, and the prime minister fell into a coma from which he never awoke. The date for the elections was set for March 28, and Kadima had very little time to recover from the devastating setback.

When it became clear that Sharon's stroke was incapacitating and that he had no prospects for recovery, his confidant and acting prime minister, Ehud Olmert, filled the void. Unlike Sharon, who left Kadima's campaign agenda vague, Olmert introduced the "Convergence Plan," which was designed to be the second and more comprehensive phase of disengagement. Like his predecessor, Olmert expressed a preference for reaching a negotiated peace agreement. However, based on the precedent set by his predecessor during the planning phase of the disengagement, he also maintained that Israel should have a contingency plan based on the principle of unilateralism. The Convergence Plan followed the same principle of annexing maximum territories with minimum Palestinians and was loosely based on elements from both the Cantons and the Allon plans. The convergence involved several steps that could be implemented simultaneously.[71] Among other steps, the plan included the formal annexation of the Jordan Valley and of the largest settlements in the West Bank including Ariel, Maale Adumim, the greater Gush Etzion area, and even Kiryat Arba and the Jewish settlement in Hebron.[72]

Olmert's agenda was carefully customized to tap into the pool of independent voters on both sides of the political spectrum. It made a lot of sense to disillusioned Labor voters, who had given up on the prospect of a viable peace with the Palestinians. At the same time, the plan appealed to Likud voters who were no longer convinced that the settlements served as a security asset. Both intifadas had proven that Israel's continuous control over the West Bank and the allocation of large chunks of the security establishment's resources for the protection of the settlers had become an increasingly heavy burden in terms of national security. Further, the suicide bombers from the West Bank and East Jerusalem who terrorized the residents of every population center in Israel led many hawks to follow in the footsteps of Sharon. They became increasingly concerned that adherence to the Greater Israel dream came at the cost of

undermining Israel's primary objective of serving as a safe haven for the Jewish people. Public opinion polls indicated that Kadima's worldview was steadily putting down roots.[73]

Amona

In order to establish his leadership and convey his commitment to the Convergence agenda, Olmert took a step that haunted him in the years to come. Following the shock of their defeat in Gaza a few months earlier, the leaders of the settlers' network were heavily invested in tightening their hold over various parts of the West Bank. Among other mechanisms, they invested in the fortification of various outposts, one of which was Amona, located east of the Ofra settlement, twelve miles northeast of Jerusalem. Amona was the poster child for Sharon's early vision for the outposts. In mid-1995 the area of Amona was designated to host water tanks for Ofra. For the purpose of "protecting the tanks," several young settlers were sent to the outpost. In accordance with Sharon's vision, shortly afterwards their families joined them. Eleven years later, in the winter of 2006, Amona was a settlement and home to 37 families.[74] Amona became one of the most famous legal battlegrounds between Peace Now and the Yesha Council. In July 2005, representatives of Peace Now requested that the High Court of Justice instruct the state to destroy settlement structures that, according to the Sason Report, were erected on privately owned Palestinian lands. In their appeal of the judgment, the network's representatives argued that the land was legally purchased by Jews, but that as a result of technical problems the official transfer of ownership was delayed. The battle reached its boiling point in January 2006 when the court cleared the way for the destruction of nine structures.[75]

This time the settlers decided not to give up without a ferocious fight. The network mobilized rapidly. Hundreds of enraged settlers, including prominent leaders of the Yesha Council as well as Knesset members, waited for the police forces that were sent to carry out the court's order. The level of violence during the confrontation was unprecedented. Within a matter of hours, 86 police officers and 140 protesters, including Knesset members Effi Eitam and Aryeh Eldad, were injured. By the end of the day, the number of wounded individuals on both sides exceeded the overall number injured throughout the whole struggle over the disengagement plan.[76] The cliché "a picture is worth a thousand words" could not have been truer than on the morning after the clash in Amona. The *New York Times*, along with other major media outlets around the world, published dramatic pictures that seemed to depict a scene from a gladiator movie. Police officers from the Special Patrol Unit, wearing dark uniforms, protected by tactical helmets, and covered by shields, moved slowly toward the demonstrators. Some of the officers rode horses, and others progressed by foot in what resembled a phalanx formation. Despite the threatening image, the young settlers—both men and women—did not back down, and thus the clash provided the photographers with invaluable material. Both sides declared victory. Olmert successfully projected the image of a decisive leader fit to occupy the prime minister's office, but the Amona settlement suffered only a minor setback. Soon after the battle was over, the outpost was rebuilt and expanded.

Deceiving Elections

On April 17, 2006, three weeks after the elections were held, a new Knesset was sworn in. The

notion that Kadima's ideas became increasingly popular was seemingly reinforced. Ehud Olmert led the new party to victory and became Israel's twelfth prime minister. But was this the "Big Bang"—the realignment of the Israeli political map—that pundits had anticipated? Not quite. Kadima was first and foremost a splinter faction from the Likud and, beyond its Convergence Plan, did not stray far from the ideas of its mother party. For instance, it promised that Jerusalem would remain the eternal undivided capital of the State of Israel. It also vowed to complete the construction of the separation barrier on a route that fit Israel's security needs.[77] For years Israelis had been yearning for a party that in the words of the columnist Ari Shavit, would "combine the insight of the left, that the occupation is a disaster, with the insight of the right, that at this point peace is not a viable option…. A party that would pull out of the territories but would project preeminence to Israel's enemies…. A party that would represent the sensible, pragmatic, and anti-messianic Israelis and free them from the ruling of dreamers from the Left and zealots from the Right."[78] Thus, Kadima's agenda could be described as centrist if we consider only those ideas that demarcate the Jewish political spectrum.[79] But if we broaden the boundaries of the Israeli polity and include the Arab voters, it qualifies as a conservative or "soft-right party."[80]

Despite Kadima's conservative ideology and the fact that its main leaders were former Likud members, most political analysts chose to attach it to the left-wing bloc. From such a perspective, the Israeli Right was in dire straits (for election results by party, see Table A1) while the Left had every reason to rejoice; if we refer to Kadima as a center party and thus remove it from the left-wing column, the picture changes.[81] Indeed, the Likud lost a staggering twenty-six seats. Yet, this loss should be contextualized. Since Kadima splintered from Likud just prior to the elections, it forced its leader Binyamin Netanyahu to move farther to the right for the purpose of distinguishing its agenda. This led to a domino effect in which parties that were positioned to the right of Likud were pressured to further radicalize.[82] When two of the settlers' parties—HaIhud HaLeumi and Mafdal—decided to join forces, it did not yield the expected outcome and the group lost four seats.[83] Even so, the Zionist left-wing parties did not benefit from the collapse of their opponents.[84] Labor maintained the same number of parliamentary seats that it previously held, and Meretz, lost one seat. The main beneficiary of these changes was the new radical Right, led by Yisrael Beiteinu, which secured eight new seats.

Prior to the elections, Yisrael Beiteinu and its former allies from the National Union made an amicable decision to part ways in an effort to mobilize more votes for the entire right-wing camp. Still, there was also an underlying ideological reason for the split. Lieberman was in the process of shaping a new radical right-wing ideology in which the settlements would have a much smaller role than they had in the National Union Party.[85]

Lieberman embodies some of the strong leader traits that have been commonly associated with radical right-wing leaders around the world. He is charismatic, forceful, and unapologetic.[86] Despite the fact that over the years Sharon and Lieberman took different routes, they remained similar in their core outlook. Both perceived the conflict between Israel and its neighbors as a clash between the democratic, progressive West and the authoritarian, atavistic Arab world. Thus, like Kadima, Yisrael Beiteinu also advocated the idea of separation from the Palestinians, even at the cost of removing some settlements. The main difference between the parties was that Lieberman's notion of separation explicitly included the aforementioned "transfer of sovereignty" over areas that were heavily populated by Arab citizens of Israel. The "loyalty oath," another idea that was developing prior to the 2006 elections, matured to become the center

of the party's 2009 campaign.[87] The gist of the oath was that every Israeli citizen must adhere to the state's core characteristics as Jewish, Zionist, and democratic. According to Lieberman, groups and individuals whose words or actions qualified as an incitement against these characteristics of the state ought to be removed from the public sphere.[88] On top of this nativist agenda, Lieberman did not stray from his old populist line. As the day of the elections neared, he intensified his attacks against the left-wing elite and most notably against the judicial system. These attacks were paradoxical. Like many radical right-wing leaders in Europe, Yisrael Beiteinu vowed to fight crime and to restore law and order. Yet, Lieberman's animosity toward the criminal justice system reared its head from time to time. After spending years under its scrutiny, Lieberman became committed to weakening the existing judicial system through the introduction of a new superior judicial body—a constitutional court.

Shas's electoral achievement in 2006 did not match the one of Yisrael Beiteinu. Although Shas increased its parliamentary representation by merely one seat, it emerged as Israel's third-largest party along with Likud. Both parties held twelve seats. Considering the direction that the party took in the years and months leading to the elections, this achievement should be considered particularly impressive. As I indicated earlier, under the leadership of Eli Yishai, Shas gradually positioned itself as the most genuine successor of Kach. The slogan that the party chose for its 2006 campaign, "Let everyone who has zeal for the Torah and stands by the covenant follow me," appeared on banners next to a picture of Rabbi Ovadia Yosef and left no room for doubt. This was the declaration of Matithyahu Ben Yohanan HaKohen (Mattathias) when he launched his rebellion against the Seleucid Empire and the Hellenist Jews in 167 BCE. As discussed in chapter 3, the struggle against what Kahane perceived as the modern-day Hellenist Jews (i.e., the secular, left-wing elite), preoccupied Kach's founder for years. The apple did not fall far from the tree. Beyond its unequivocal commitment to enhance Orthodox Jewish values in every part of the state-run education system, Shas also committed to promoting discriminatory economic policies by offering financial incentives to peripheral populations, but only Jewish ones.[89] Further, blunt public remarks against the gay community, foreign workers, and Arabs, which in the past were attributed solely to the fringe of the radical Right, were increasingly legitimized by prominent figures in Shas, such as Shlomo Benizri and Eli Yishai. Shortly before the elections, Yishai stated that homosexuals were sick individuals.[90] Further indication of the Kahanization of the party could be found in its close alliance with Hand for Brothers (Yad LeAchim), an ultra-Orthodox group mostly known for its activities against Christian missionaries in Israel. Like Kach, the group was also active in attempts to prevent marriages between Jews and non-Jews (mostly Arabs). As it happens, Aryeh Deri's older brother, Yehuda, was a prominent figure in this organization.[91] Finally, in his early years as the party's front man, Yishai followed in the footsteps of his predecessor Deri and kept a certain degree of ambiguity regarding the party's positions toward the peace process with the Palestinians. As his confidence grew, he became closer to the settlers' network and turned into a devout supporter of its project.[92]

Yet Another Victory for the Settlers

Kadima's success at forming a coalition without the settlers' parties left the leaders of the Yesha Council concerned. They felt that once again they were losing their grip over decision-making centers in major governmental ministries. Furthermore, Olmert was determined to push his

convergence agenda forward, and the fear of a second disengagement was looming. Nonetheless, events in the spring and summer of 2006 shuffled the political cards in their favor.

The first warning sign appeared even prior to the elections in Israel. In January 2006, the Palestinian National Authority held its own elections for the first time in ten years. To the surprise of Israel as well as large parts of the international community, Hamas, the Islamist group that opposed reconciliation with Israel, defeated the ruling Fatah party. The only group in Israel that saw a glimmer of hope in this outcome was the settlers' network. This surprising outcome took much of the wind out of the sails of the convergence agenda. Removing settlements in the West Bank and leaving the area under the control of Hamas made little sense. The barrage of rockets that were continuously launched from the Gaza strip and hit Israel's southern towns did not help Olmert. All of a sudden, the decision to pull out of Gaza that had been so popular just a few months earlier seemed like a gamble that went wrong. This, however, was only a preview.

On June 25, 2006, Palestinian militants attacked an outpost on the southern tip of Israel's border with the Gaza Strip. Two soldiers were killed during the attack, and Corporal Gilad Shalit was taken hostage. Israel's subsequent attack on Gaza, known as Operation Summer Rains (Mivtza Gishmey Kayitz), failed to bring Shalit back. Two-and-a-half weeks later on July 12, a second attack took place. This time, a Hezbollah squad attacked a patrol of reserve soldiers on the Israeli side of the border with Lebanon, and five soldiers were killed. The assailants appropriated the bodies of two of the victims, Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev, but the fate of the soldiers was not disclosed by Hezbollah for two years. This attack led Olmert to open a second front that rapidly escalated into a war between Israel and Lebanon.

The Second Lebanon War in 2006 was perceived by many as a failure, a conclusion that was reinforced when the Winograd Commission published its report inquiring into the events of the war. The actions taken by the political leadership, most notably Olmert and his minister of defense, Amir Peretz, were found to be hasty and sloppy.[93] The IDF under the leadership of Dan Halutz, whose own behavior was deemed overconfident, was underprepared and ill-equipped for coping with the challenges posed by Hezbollah. Once again, Israel failed to attain the goal for which they had launched the attack: retrieving the kidnapped soldiers.[94] The war had another long-lasting consequence for the Israeli society as a whole. The boundaries between the periphery and the center were blurred. Despite Israel's extensive efforts, during the thirty-four days of war, Hezbollah managed to launch close to four thousand rockets at Israel's population centers in the north. The death toll stood at forty-four Israeli civilians.[95]

The vulnerability of the heartland, which was once again exposed, was morally devastating. An increasing number of Israelis, already skeptical about the wisdom of the disengagement from Gaza following the intensification of rockets launching from the vacated areas, started questioning the benefits of the unilateral withdrawal of the IDF troops from southern Lebanon, which many of them had applauded only six years earlier. It seemed that neither negotiations nor unilateral steps helped to improve the security of Israel's citizens. To add insult to injury, less than a year later Hamas violently took control of the Gaza Strip and intensified its rocket launching campaign even further.[96] Iran—Israel's longtime nemesis—used its proxies in Hezbollah and Hamas to establish its presence on Israel's borders. The Mullahs of Teheran, who were invested in acquiring nuclear capabilities and vocally committed to the destruction of Israel, should have been pleased. The primordial fears of annihilation that are so deeply engraved in the collective psyche of the Jews in Israel erupted with full force.

When Olmert first established his coalition, the convergence agenda seemed to be his top priority. However, eighteen months later, the prime minister had been consumed by problems

that turned the plan into a distant memory. On the personal front, he had to cope with an intensifying stream of allegations, some of a criminal nature, pertaining to his personal conduct over the years. On the political front, he was engaged in the Sisyphean task of responding to the rapidly unfolding events on Israel's borders as well as the looming Iranian threat. But for a brief moment in the fall of 2007, a breakthrough in the negotiations with the Palestinians seemed to be within grasp. Senior Israeli and Palestinian leaders gathered at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland for a summit, which was convened by the U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza Rice and endorsed by fifty countries from around the world. Both Olmert and Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas issued optimistic statements in which they reaffirmed their commitment to achieving peace based on President Bush's road map.[97]

Since the formation of Olmert's coalition the settlers' network was in a constant state of heightened alert. The network mobilized all of its agents in the public administration and made sure that each and every plan for settlement expansion in the West Bank was implemented. If the state showed even a slight intention to delay or change a construction plan, it was immediately challenged in court. The settlers' vigilance proved successful. Even so, the Annapolis Conference did not provide a real boost to the jammed peace process and thus failed to meet the high expectations of its participants and endorsers. Further, during the tenure of the Olmert administration, which the settlers considered as the most hostile Israeli administration toward their project, the number of settlers in the West Bank grew by 28,000, constituting an almost 10 percent rise in less than three years.

The Gaza War

As the summer of 2008 was nearing its end, it became clear that Ehud Olmert's days as prime minister were numbered. Olmert, who started his political career forty-two years earlier as a reformer and gained his reputation as a bold leader in the fight *against* political corruption, turned into a symbol of this very same corruption. On September 7, the police recommended that charges be pressed against the prime minister on counts of bribery, fraud, and breach of trust. Ten days later, Tzipi Livni, the foreign affairs minister who also served as Olmert's deputy, was elected as the new leader of the Kadima party. Four days later, Olmert officially resigned. According to the law, the resignation of a prime minister does not necessarily have to lead to new elections. The president may ask another member of the Knesset to form a coalition. Indeed, Shimon Peres assigned Livni with the task of forming a new cabinet, but when she was confronted with excessive budgetary demands from the ultra-Orthodox parties, she made a surprising decision not to cave in and returned the mandate to the president. Under such circumstances, a general election had to be held within ninety days. The date was set for February 10, 2009. Meanwhile, Olmert remained in power as the head of an interim government.[98]

Hamas, the new sovereign in the Gaza Strip, did not let the political upheaval in Israel interfere with its agenda. On December 18, 2008, the Hamas government announced that its six-month ceasefire with Israel had come to an end and that all the understandings it had reached with Israel in the past were no longer binding. Six days later, a barrage of sixty rockets paralyzed the Israeli south. Israel retaliated in a wide-scale military offensive on the Gaza Strip. An overwhelming majority of the Jewish public expressed support for Operation Cast Lead (Mivtsa Oferet Yetsuka), which was launched on December 27 while the Palestinian citizens of Israel and

their representatives in the Knesset denounced the campaign, referring to it as the Gaza Massacre. After little more than three weeks of war more than one thousand fatalities were counted on the Palestinian side, and the homes of tens of thousands of Gaza residents were reduced to rubble.[99] The operation was stopped unilaterally by Israel on January 17, 2009, twenty-one days prior to the day of the elections. Olmert's tenure, which began with a promise for peace, eventually turned into one of Israel's most belligerent eras and ended accordingly. The Gaza War banged out an echo that reverberated throughout the following campaign.

Conclusion

On February 10, 2009, at 10 p.m., the ballot boxes holding the votes cast during the day of the elections to the eighteenth Knesset had been sealed. A few minutes later, Binyamin Netanyahu addressed his supporters, who gathered in the Trade Fairs Convention Center in Tel Aviv. After a very long day during which he had little rest, the now fifty-nine-year-old leader of Likud seemed refreshed and energized. Netanyahu did not seem to be concerned by the fact that according to the exit polls Kadima, rather than Likud, had emerged as the winning party. The forecasts for the division of power between the parties in the Knesset left little room for doubt: the right-wing bloc carried the elections in a landslide victory. Likud, not Kadima, became the party with the most favorable prospects to form a coalition government. It was also a moment of personal redemption for Netanyahu. Less than three years earlier, he led Likud to the worst defeat in its history, and now he had paved his path back to the prime minister's office. It all took place at a very quick pace.

Blitz Campaign

Ehud Olmert's resignation and Tzipi Livni's failed attempt to form a coalition forced Israel into a blitz election campaign. Operation Cast Lead, the last chord of Olmert's tenure, ironically provided the Israeli Right with highly needed campaign agendas.[1] At the onset of the election campaign, the Yisrael Beiteinu Party lacked a clear message, and Lieberman's charisma seemed to be fading. The Arab Knesset members who were outraged at the punishing Israeli attacks on Gaza provided Lieberman's advisors with the ammunition they desperately needed. Yisrael Beiteinu's campaign was razor sharp. Using the slogan "No Loyalty, No Citizenship," the party attacked the leadership of the Palestinian citizens of Israel and condemned them for their disloyal behavior.[2] The Central Elections Committee disqualified two Arab lists of candidates from participating in the elections on the grounds that they refused to formally recognize the State of Israel as the State of the Jewish People.[3] This message reflected a widespread sentiment among the Jews in Israel. In a survey that Israel's Channel 2 conducted among a representative sample of the Israeli population, an overwhelming 67 percent of responders supported the committee's decision. However, the High Court of Justice once again reversed the decision in an attempt to protect the democratic principle of free speech.

Netanyahu, who after his departure from Sharon's cabinet in 2005 had regained his position as Israel's tough counterterrorism authority, could have capitalized on the escalating sense of personal insecurity. He had learned some important lessons from his first tenure as prime minister, which to some extent was cut short due to his bellicose behavior. To that end, he worked tirelessly in an attempt to convey that he was a uniter. He even succeeded in recruiting celebrities from various walks of life to Likud and convinced them to run in the party's primaries.[4] Despite his best efforts, however, the party primaries served as a sobering reminder that Likud had changed over the years. The persistent efforts of Moshe Feiglin, one of the most committed actors of the settlers' network who led the radical right-wing faction of the party,

were bearing fruit. Feiglin himself was ranked at the twentieth spot of Likud's list of candidates for the Knesset. Public opinion polls predicted that Likud would gain more than twenty seats and thus Feiglin's election as a Knesset member seemed guaranteed. Netanyahu feared that the party's opponents would further the notion that the radical Right had taken over Likud, and so he threw himself into a fight against Feiglin. Eventually, he had to resort to a desperate legal maneuver, which enabled him to push Feiglin to the thirty-sixth spot, way beyond the number of seats that Likud was expected to gain, even according to the most flattering polls. Nonetheless, the revised list of candidates was not short of representatives from the settlers' network.

Other radical right-wing parties failed to capitalize on the military escalation that occurred on the border with Gaza. Shas, for example, set the course of its campaign before the war with Hamas broke out and was reluctant to change its plans. The party's campaign relied on two pillars: economic chauvinism and religious authoritarianism. First, Shas vowed to introduce new laws and enforce policies that would protect underprivileged Jewish populations in the peripheries. Prominent in its economic platform was a commitment to dramatically reduce the number of foreign workers in the country. This was a safe bet. By the time of the elections the number of foreign workers in Israel reached a new peak and stood at 215,000, almost half of which were labeled "illegal." Furthermore, Israel had become a preferred destination for African asylum seekers, mostly from Sudan and Eritrea. Many of them settled in the peripheries of the large cities and neighbored Shas's main constituents. Second, loyal to its trademark of "restoring the crown to former glory," Shas promised to further enhance the role of Orthodox Jewish values in the public sphere, mostly in Israel's education system.

The situation in the Zionist religious parties' arena was even more confusing. Once again, the various elements of this chronically factionalized camp tried to form a united front and thus maximize the electoral potential of the Zionist religious voters. But despite frantic attempts to bring the various elements of this camp together, the religious Zionists ended up back at square one, as polarized as ever. The Jewish Home (HaBayit HaYehudi), the new group that was supposed to be the united front, eventually ran as a reincarnation of Mafdal and secured just three seats.

The National Union regrouped and once again presented an alliance of four small factions.[5] The least known element in this alignment, Our Land of Israel (Eretz Yisrael Shelanu) Party, deserves special attention. This new group was the result of a merger between two others: the Chabad-affiliated Global Headquarters for the Salvation of the People and the Land aka SOS Israel (HaMateh HaOlami LeHatsalat HaAm VeHaAretz), led by Rabbi Shalom Dov Wolpo, and Hazit Yehudit Leumit (Jewish National Front), which was established by Baruch Marzel, Meir Kahane's most famous disciple.[6] For the first time in twenty-five years, during which Kach as a group and Marzel as a candidate were consistently banned from gaining parliamentary representation and even designated as a terrorist organization, Michael Ben-Ari—Marzel's front person and a former student and aide to Rabbi Kahane—was offered the fourth slot in the National Union's list and was subsequently sworn in as a Knesset member. This was a very special moment for Kach: not only because the group was being invited back to the Knesset from which it was disgracefully expelled two decades earlier, but also because it became integrated into the party that was so tightly connected to the settlers' network, which for decades treated Kahane and his followers like pariahs.

Netanyahu's right-wing coalition was presented to the Knesset on March 31, 2009. It gained an unequivocal vote of confidence (sixty-nine to forty-five) from the new Knesset members.[7] Netanyahu had every reason to be content. He succeeded in bringing together his natural partners

Yisrael Beiteinu, Shas, United Torah Judaism, and the Jewish Home, a union that provided him with a parliamentary majority of sixty-one Knesset members. Furthermore, in an almost unprecedented maneuver, Netanyahu also managed to convince his longtime friend from their days in Sayeret Matkal and one-time political foe, Ehud Barak, who led the Labor Party to the most devastating defeat in its history (thirteen seats), to join the coalition. By doing so, Netanyahu formed an "open" or "disconnected" coalition.[8] This way, when he proudly introduced his new cabinet, Netanyahu could argue that he had kept his campaign promise and formed a national unity government, despite the exclusion of Kadima. Another significant achievement for Netanyahu was the exclusion of HaIhud HaLeumi, the most authentic representative of the settlers' network, from the coalition. Netanyahu vividly remembered the devastating role that the settlers' parties had played in the fate of Shamir's cabinet in 1992 and of his own cabinet in 1998. This time he was able to form a stable coalition without subjecting himself to the mercies of the settlers' network.[9]

A New Path to Peace?

On June 4, 2009, a little over two months after Netanyahu formed his cabinet, President Barack Obama delivered a speech titled "A New Beginning" at Cairo University. The speech was a direct appeal of the new administration in Washington to turn over a new leaf in the relations between the United States and the Arab world. One of the highlights was a commitment made by the president to advancing the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. Before he even had the opportunity to enjoy his political victory, Netanyahu found himself caught between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand, he had to find a way to avoid a direct confrontation with Obama. On the other hand, he did not want to cause cracks in his newly formed hawkish cabinet.

Ten days after President Obama's speech, the prime minister responded. In a thirty-minute, carefully worded speech delivered at Bar-Ilan University, Netanyahu proved the extent of his political skills. For the first time in his political career, he explicitly rescinded his commitment to the Greater Israel vision and replaced it with the Two-State Solution.[10] Shortly after his opening remarks, Netanyahu reminded his listeners that Israel was facing an unprecedented threat of annihilation, the direct result of the convergence between the rise of Islamic radicalism and Iran's nuclear aspirations. Then, after a short reference to the global economic crisis, he moved back to the main item. Netanyahu outlined his narrative for the root cause of the Arab-Israeli conflict, namely, persistent refusal by the Arab world, including the Palestinian leadership, to openly recognize the Jewish people's right to sovereignty over the land of Israel, their historical homeland. He went on to make the argument that any former Israeli attempt to reach an agreement with the Palestinians or to unilaterally withdraw from occupied territories had been routinely met with an outbreak of violence.

Hence, Netanyahu presented four pre-set conditions that would need to be met before he could adopt the "Two-State Solution": (1) an open and unequivocal recognition by the Palestinians that the land of Israel *is* the homeland of the Jewish people; (2) Palestinian consent that a solution for the refugee problem would be found beyond the borders of sovereign Israel. This solution should put an end for any demand to exercise the "Right of Return"; (3) a complete demilitarization of the future Palestinian State, including the yielding of any Palestinian demand for sovereignty over its airspace; (4) a provision that Jerusalem would never be divided again. After he introduced these caveats, the prime minister announced that Israel was willing to make

an immediate gesture by stopping the expropriation of lands in the West Bank to be used for building new settlements or expanding existing ones. He added a reservation to this commitment by saying that it did not limit the government's responsibility to provide settlers with the right to live normal lives.[11]

Most pundits who listened to the speech clung to the dramatic transformation in the prime minister's worldview, which was manifested by his adoption of the term "Palestinian State." What they failed to understand was that the speech was less about peace and more about fear. Further, this response to President Obama's plea was not aimed at the White House or the Arab capitals of the world but rather at the domestic political arena. Netanyahu had found the silver bullet to bridge the gap between the disillusioned Israeli majority, which had given up on the hope for peace in return for security, and the new radical Right, whose main concern was to solidify the exclusionary Jewish character of the state, even at the price of removing some settlements. It took the settlers some time to understand that their own prime minister had sacrificed some of their interests, and thus their initial reaction to the speech was relatively mild. They were mostly concerned by the fact that he had crossed the Rubicon, as it were, and expressed his consent to the establishment of a semi sovereign Palestinian State.

Five months later, Netanyahu's words were translated into action. On November 25, 2009, following consistent pressures from the Obama administration, he announced a ten-month moratorium on the launching of new building projects in the settlements, with the exclusion of East Jerusalem. The goal, according to Netanyahu, was to set the peace talks with the Palestinians in motion. The settlers' fears that another prime minister from the Right would turn his back on them seemed to have been realized. The settlers protested, filed lawsuits, and put tremendous pressure on Netanyahu through his party members as well as his coalition partners. Their most effective response, though, was going back to the network's basic strategy, namely, mobilizing its people within the public administration, and de facto ignoring the cabinet's decision. With the support of their representatives in the various agencies of the state's bureaucracy, the settlers continued to work on those building projects that were launched *prior* to the announcement of the moratorium and made infrastructure preparations for a future blitz of construction. As the period of the freeze neared its end, it was clear that Netanyahu became much more attentive to the pressures from the settlers' network than to those from the White House, which asked for an extension of the freeze. On the very night that the moratorium expired, the blitz began. Within a matter of weeks, the settlers made up for lost time by completing the construction of more than 1,700 housing units and expediting the approval plans for 13,000 more.[12] This served as another powerful reminder of the true power of the settlers' network. Since the late 1960s, this small yet highly motivated group of individuals forced its will on every Israeli administration and shaped the state's policies, not through the ballots but rather by a sophisticated manipulation of legal ambiguities and continuous infiltration into the weakening bureaucracy of an increasingly submissive state.[13] The story of the Jerusalem clique of the settlers' network is even more impressive in this regard.

Over the years, a handful of relatively anonymous individuals managed to become the hub of an operation which exemplifies the momentous impact that political networks can have. These individuals had a common goal: to prevent any future division of Jerusalem. They also agreed that the way to attain this objective was through the Judaization of East Jerusalem and its nearby Palestinian villages. Indeed, over the years they turned East Jerusalem into a geographical center that connects Israel's sovereign West Jerusalem to the settlements, that surround the city on all sides. Further, they consistently expanded the Jewish presence in the Old City and mostly near

the Holy Basin, one of the most politically and theologically volatile spots in the world. This group's success was manifested mainly by the fact that very few observers understood its strategy. The members of the Jerusalem settling network carefully studied the complex—and in most cases elusive—legal and administrative status of properties and lands in the city and its surrounding area. They mapped out the various local and national official branches that had anything to do with their objectives and subsequently either injected their representatives into these bodies or recruited sympathetic bureaucrats from within them. It is impossible to argue with the success of this network. Not only did they meet most of their goals but over the years they managed to turn the state into the main financier of their operations.

Since the signing of the Peace Accords with Egypt and even more profoundly following the outbreak of the First Intifada and the ratification of the Oslo Accords, the settlers have witnessed the gradual divorce of the Israeli public from their dream of eternalizing Israel's control over the occupied territories, or in their eyes, the Promised Land. They did not let disappointment at the polls and ballots break their spirit, though. They reviewed their strategies, improved them, and eventually through the adaptive configuration of their network, proved that even in parliamentary democracies success at the ballots is not essential for gaining dominance in the policy-making arena. The lessons drawn from the success of the settlers' political network can be extrapolated to other settings as well. The political networks perspective has the potential to contribute to the "Regulatory Capture Theory" by serving as a useful tool for explaining the success of small, and in many cases radical, groups in attaining disproportional influence over decision-making processes.[14] Democracies by their very nature are dynamic political environments; frequent turnovers of cabinets and elected officials are inherent to such regimes. This volatility poses a particularly significant challenge for political groups that promote special interests, which do not enjoy wide popular support. Thus, the ability to quickly adapt to changing political contexts is a key trait, which is required to guarantee the survival of such groups and the protection of their interests. Structurally, adaptability is manifested in the group's degree of elasticity and ability to cast a broad net of ties. Such networks must have a cohesive hub which consists of highly committed leaders. Such leaders are capable of adding and removing actors and cliques based on changing circumstances. Networks with a strong hub enjoy better prospects for success in comparison to others. The ability to form ties, even on an ad hoc basis, with other groups and individuals in the public sphere, the political system, and most importantly the bureaucracy, guarantees that regardless of changes in the political environment, the interests of the network will remain uncompromised. Strategically, highly adaptable groups are characterized by the presence of a fail-safe mechanism. By applying multiple strategies at any given point, they make sure that a failure of one strategy would not devastate them or their cause. Successful groups constantly look for opportunities to attach themselves to other sectors of the society based on common values or interests. The most important determinant of success is the ability of the group to fuse itself with the state's apparatus to the degree that the boundaries between the state and the group become indistinct, and that parts of bureaucracy gradually turn into an extension of the network.

A Glance into the Future

The radical Right in Israel is dynamic not only in its organizational and strategic features; this political camp is constantly mutating and evolving on the ideological level as well, and it is not

unique to Israel. Since the late 1980s scholars of the European radical Right have broken away from the tendency of treating the contemporary radical Right as an offspring of Fascism. While acknowledging the fact that a minority among the groups and parties that constitute the contemporary radical Right exhibit some similarities or show sympathy to Fascism, these scholars agreed that there was a need to reconceptualize the phenomenon. Such an approach should also be applied in order to understand the true magnitude of the radical Right in Israel today. While the ideological underpinning of both the old and the new radical Right can be traced to the pre-State era, the old radical Right ascended to a prominent position immediately after the Six-Day War. Although the adherents of this ideology enjoy tremendous success in shaping Israel's policies, the popular support for their agenda, which places its efforts almost exclusively on the settlements project, had begun to erode following the signing of the peace accords with Egypt. The decline of the old Right was expedited a decade later with the outbreak of the First Intifada and the realization of most Israelis that the occupation of the territories poses a tremendous burden for the state.

The beginning of the new radical Right—for which the Greater Israel ideology is secondary to fortifying sovereign Israel as the exclusive state of the Jewish nation—was humble. In the early 1970s, when Rabbi Meir Kahane arrived in Israel and began to formulate this ideology, he was dismissed by most political factions. Kahane's main problem was his style, rather than his ideas. Even though he was an immigrant he understood the undercurrents within the various elements of the Israeli society better than most politicians. In the middle of the 1990s, only a few years after Kahane's assassination, the ideological seeds that he carefully planted and cultivated for decades had begun to bud.

The new radical Right, which became the most significant ideological phenomenon in contemporary Israel, is united by the agenda that the democratic principles of the state should be secondary to the ethno-Jewish ones. The most common archenemy that brings the various elements of this camp together is the Arab minority in Israel. The outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada and the fallout of the October 2000 events served as tipping points in the relations between Jews and Arabs in the country, which expedited the consolidation of the new radical Right. The explicit support of Israeli Arab leaders for the Palestinian uprising during the wave of terror, and their own uprising in October 2000, reawakened the primal collective fears shared by the majority of the Jewish public in the country and consequently legitimized the agenda of the new radical Right. Since the early 2000s, representatives of this camp introduced new legislation and amendments to existing bills. The common denominator of these new policies was the deliberate subversion of rights that democracies are expected to provide to their minorities in the name of patriotism.[15] Ironically, the legislation introduced in the 1980s for the sake of protecting the Israeli democracy from the proliferation of Kahanism was the very first to be changed. Over the years, these laws were turned against the Arab parties and political leaders of the minority, while Kahane's ideas were vindicated and his successors were embraced by the public and by its representatives in the Knesset.[16]

One of the most crucial moments for the new radical Right came shortly after the 2009 elections. In democratic countries, most notably in Western Europe, once elected to parliament, the parties and individuals that mobilize support by means of a radical campaign learn that there is a wide gap between their campaign promises and their ability to live up to them. For many years, this was also the case in Israel. Following the 2009 campaign, though, the new radical Right parties and factions not only effortlessly turned their campaign promises into laws but succeeded in passing laws and enacting policies which exceeded their own expectations and

promises. In October 2010, Yisrael Beiteinu celebrated its first achievement when its "Loyalty Law" received the blessing of the cabinet. According to the law, a non-Jew who applies for Israeli citizenship would be required to take an oath of loyalty to the "Jewish and Democratic" State of Israel. Five months later, two other laws were adopted by the Knesset. The first was the "Nakba Law" that granted the minister of finance the authority to withhold funding from institutions which question the character of Israel as a Jewish State. The law is aimed at preventing the Palestinian citizens of Israel from commemorating their Nakba (collective tragedy) of 1948. The second piece of legislation, passed on the same day, was the "Admission Committees Law." This law grants residents of small communities and representatives of settling agencies—all of which are built on state land—the right to prevent individuals from buying property and building a home in the community's area of jurisdiction on the basis of "social incompatibility." Although the words of the legislation were carefully chosen in order to avoid the risk of being deemed unconstitutional by the High Court of Justice, it essentially gave Jewish communities full discretion in rejecting applicants without specifying a reason for their decision or being legally accountable for it. These legislative successes encouraged members of the Knesset to introduce more bills, including the "Affirmative Action Initiative" that gives individuals who served in the IDF an automatic advantage in any bid for a position in the Israeli public administration. This bill is intended to formalize the longtime silent practice of excluding Arabs (who are automatically exempt from military service by the state) from being considered for public service. The Knesset also passed an amendment to the "Citizenship Law" that gives the executive branch the authority to strip individuals of their Israeli citizenship upon conviction in offenses such as treason, support for terrorist entities, and even the elusive charge of undermining the sovereignty of the State of Israel.[17] Based on past experience, these laws are likely to be given a broad interpretation by the various branches of the state's bureaucracy.

Local politicians did not wait for the state legislature. In cities with large Arab populations such as Lod, Ramla, Jaffa, and Acre, they have been working tirelessly towards the Judaization of the public sphere by encouraging Jews to settle in Arab neighborhoods. They also tried to rewrite the history of their localities by means of renaming streets and replacing Arab symbols with Jewish ones. In other places, such as Nazareth Illit and Karmiel, the mayors and their deputies have taken various initiatives to deter Arabs from buying properties in Jewish neighborhoods. When the mayors were reluctant to take part in such efforts, other officials stepped in. In Safed, the city's chief rabbi, Shmuel Eliyahu, (the son of Mordechai Eliyahu, Israel's former Sephardic chief rabbi) took the initiative. In 2010, Eliyahu, who for years had been known to be one of Israel's most radical right-wing rabbis, issued a "Psak Halakha" (ruling of religious law) forbidding Jews from selling or renting their properties to Arabs.

Such steps are not limited to the local government level or to Jewish-Arab relations. Once he reassumed his role as minister of the interior in Netanyahu's cabinet, Eli Yishai, leader of Shas, went back to dealing with one of the issues that marked his political career and which was highlighted in Shas' campaign—foreign workers and asylum seekers. In 2010 the Israeli Governmental Advertising Agency—Lapam (Lishkat HaPirsum HaMemshaltit) launched a media blitz on behalf of the Ministry of the Interior. The gist of the campaign was that illegal workers take jobs from Israelis and thus hurt the economy. Employers were warned that hiring such workers was a criminal offense, which would be dealt with harshly. The economic reasoning of the campaign was merely a facade: the main concern of Yishai and his fellow cabinet members was that the growing number of foreigners, mostly Africans who find Israel an attractive destination for immigration, would eventually undermine the Jewish character of the

state. This time, beyond his commitment to drive foreigners with expired working permits out of the country, Yishai also vowed to put up a struggle against the flood of African asylum seekers who enter Israel illegally through its border with Egypt.

Balaam's prophecy *Am levad yishkon uvagoyim lo yitchashev* (a people that shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations), which refers to the relations between the Jewish people and the nations of the world, had often been used by Israeli politicians. The circumstances that led to the triumph of Israel's new radical Right, and which are likely to perpetuate the expansion of this camp, make it more relevant than ever. Israel is caught in a vicious circle. Since the collapse of the Oslo Accords, the leaders of the state looked for creative ways to disengage from the Palestinians even without the promise for peace. These attempts yielded poor results, partly due to the relentless actions of the settlers' network. However, militant Palestinian factions made their own meaningful contribution to this failure—a story that deserves a separate book. Essentially, these groups, most notably Hamas, refused to stop the use of violence, even following the completion of Israel's disengagement from Gaza. Hamas's takeover of the Gaza strip and the intensification of the rocket launchings at Israel's heartland led many Israelis to doubt the logic of unilateral withdrawals. The pulling out from southern Lebanon in 2000 that allowed Hezbollah to seize the areas across Israel's northern border and the subsequent devastating war of 2006 did not help to alleviate doubts. Both Hezbollah and Hamas enjoy the generous support of Iran, Israel's primary nemesis. The diligent efforts of the mullah's regime to acquire nuclear capabilities along with the anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic statements of Iran's president since 2005, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, turned the Islamic theocracy into the reincarnation of Nazi Germany for many Jews in Israel, including prime minister Netanyahu.

The fear of annihilation so deeply ingrained in the collective Israeli mind-set has reached new peaks over the last few years. For the most part, the conflict with Iran occurs in the shadows,[18] but the battle with its proxies is an overt one. The bombings of Gaza and Lebanon, where Hamas and Hezbollah fighters embed themselves in civilian population centers, generated one heartbreaking tragedy after another. Pictures and stories of the innocent casualties of Israeli bombardments quickly spread to every corner of the world and fueled anti-Israeli flames. Individuals, groups, and governments, which for years led harsh campaigns against Israel, and called to boycott its companies and academic institutions as long as the occupation of the territories continued, used Israel's struggles with Hamas and Hezbollah to strengthen their arguments. The condemnation of Israel reached new heights following the Gaza War.[19] The increasing animosity toward Israel intensified the fears and frustration within the country. Most Israelis feel besieged, misunderstood, and the subjects of a new wave of anti-Semitism, veiled by a façade of human rights arguments. The conclusion that Israelis draw under such circumstances, is that the only logical response would be to ignore the international community, which in the minds of many Israelis had already shown its indifference to the fate of the Jewish people in the 1930s and 1940s. The state has been swept by a surge of ultra-patriotism. The Ministry of Education initiated plans to enhance the role of Judaism and Zionism in the education of every Jewish pupil starting at the kindergarten level. At the high school level, the ministry formalized existing policies, which marginalize universal democratic elements in the civic education curriculum and emphasize patriotic principles. The problem is that these elements, unlike democratic ones, are already being delivered to students through other fields of study, most notably, history. In the public sphere, the wave of patriotism turned into an unprecedented upsurge of nativism and populism led by the Im Tirtzu (If you will it) movement. The leaders of the group, which refer to it as patriotic and centrist, are committed to the revival of Zionism.

Shortly after its establishment, the movement launched an ambitious campaign on various Israeli campuses. Activists of the movement approached students and encouraged them to indentify and report professors who convey unpatriotic messages in their lectures. Once the names were gathered, the movement posed an unequivocal demand to the presidents of these institutions, with special emphasis on Ben-Gurion University, to "straighten" or fire the unruly professors. In case the university failed to take the required disciplinary steps, the movement threatened to approach the main benefactors of the institution and provide them with information regarding the treacherous nature of the professors and thus discourage them from giving further donations until the university rids itself of this burden.[20] The movement had some significant achievements, especially in the Knesset. Yisrael Beiteinu, whose Knesset members were highly supportive of Im Tirtzu's various initiatives, decided to adopt one of the movement's flagship battles: the struggle against the most prominent civil rights organizations in Israel.[21] Party representatives initiated the formation of a formal parliamentary committee of inquiry that would investigate the funding of unpatriotic organizations. According to the initiative, there were solid reasons to believe that these groups were supported by hostile foreign entities committed to blemishing Israel's reputation around the world.[22] Eventually, the initiative failed to gain the required majority in the legislature, but this was just a minor bump in the road. A day earlier, a very similar law—the "Boycott Bill"—which was endorsed by Yisrael Beiteinu and the radical wing of Likud, received the Knesset's final seal of approval. According to the new law, a boycott of Israeli interests, institutions, or companies, including those of the settlers, or an instigation of such a boycott, would be regarded as a civil offense. This law was aimed at intimidating Israeli citizens from initiating boycotts against the settlers, as well as sending signals to Israeli and international companies that the practice of such a boycott would harm their interests.[23]

Nonetheless, Im Tirtzu's activities and the barrage of legislation against anyone who fell short of living up to the patriotic standards set by the radical Right should be regarded as nothing more than the beating of a dead horse. Over the last decade, in concurrence with the rapid ascendance of the new conservative stream and the proliferation of the new radical Right, the Israeli Zionist Left has weakened dramatically and seems now to be on the brink of dissipation. The post-Zionist movement, since its inception nothing more than an academic exercise, became a historical anecdote.[24] Still, riding the waves of nativism and populism, the network of the radical Right is determined to bring the long war between the patriotic "Jews" and the remainders of the cosmopolitan "Israelis" to a decisive end.

The third element of the radical Right—religious authoritarianism—has not enjoyed the same degree of success as the two other elements. As early as the 1970s, Meir Kahane realized that the overwhelming majority of Jews in Israel were not eager to turn the country into the full-fledged Jewish theocracy that he envisioned. Kahane drew on his political skill and chose to tone down this less popular aspect of his agenda. The new radical Right brings together ultra-Orthodox Jews, veteran Israelis who identify themselves as traditional (i.e., believers who do not necessarily follow the Orthodox lifestyle to the letter), and completely secular immigrants from the former Soviet Union. Thus, Kahane's successors followed in his footsteps. They did not give up on the longtime dream of transforming Israel from being a Jewish state in the ethnic sense of the word to becoming a Jewish theocracy. However, they had to be pragmatic and thus have taken smaller and more cautious steps. Though this journey is long, its leaders have good reasons to be content. The Chardal—ultra-national and ultra-Orthodox—fusion that Kahane initially embodied has become increasingly prevalent. The majority of ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel, who in the early days of the state rejected the very premise of Zionism, have become hyper-Zionists

and ultra-patriotic. This group enjoys the fastest rate of population growth within the Jewish sector. In 2008 the ultra-Orthodox constituted 9 percent of the Jews in Israel. By 2028 they are projected to reach over 20 percent.[25] The ultra-Orthodox are mobilized easily, exhibit the highest voter turnout, and are known for voting with accordance to the instructions of their leaders. Meanwhile, the formerly progressive Zionist religious bloc, which later grew to be the spearhead of the settlers' movement, had gradually succumbed to the religious zeal of the ultra-Orthodox Jewry and adopted many of its views and practices.[26] While most Israelis are not yet aware of the convergence process that takes place within the religious camp, it does not mean that this transformation will not have broader consequences in the future. The power struggle that is already taking place within the ranks of the IDF between the increasingly formidable military rabbinate and the weakening Education Corps should serve as an indication of the contentious debates awaiting Israeli society around the corner. The IDF, like other formal state institutions, had always adhered to the orthodox code of conduct. Although this code has not always been enforced, violations such as the desecration of the Shabbat by watching TV, or the consumption of non-kosher food in the limits of military bases, are offenses that can end up in a military trial. However, for the Orthodox soldiers and officers who have become the backbone of many IDF combat units, the enforcement of the code is not enough. They feel that the military authorities do not pay sufficient attention to their special needs. With the support of the military rabbinate, they require the IDF to enforce strict separation between male and female soldiers, which poses a challenge for female soldiers who over the years gained access to instruction as well as fighting roles in combat units. Preventing women from serving in units where Orthodox soldiers also serve would practically lead to their removal from most IDF units, and this would be a significant setback in the struggle over gender equality in Israel.[27]

The ways by which the Israeli radical Right managed to achieve so much in such little time prompt questions that should help in delineating and understanding political processes in other countries as well. First, does the scholarly focus on traditional units of analysis such as political parties, parliamentary caucuses, interest groups, social movements, and individuals as separate units of analysis really provide us with the full scope of the phenomenon? Maybe it is time to move forward, expand our perspective, and relate to these groups and individuals as pieces of a bigger puzzle, namely the political network. Such a transition in focus requires tremendous theoretical and methodological efforts. Political networks are elusive and dynamic, and studying them presents a long list of challenges. This task falls beyond the objective of this book and is likely outside my set of skills. I hope that the emerging group of talented political scientists who are interested in such networks will expand their scope of research to include the radical Right phenomenon. Second, it has already been established that the ideology of the radical Right cannot be reduced to a single issue. Yet, since most of the scholarship on the radical Right is still focused on Europe, the ideological overlap between right-wing radicalism and religious fundamentalism, which seems to be prevalent in other parts of the world, is yet to be explored. Third, after fifteen years of research of the Israeli radical Right using theoretical frameworks developed elsewhere, I became skeptical regarding the potential of broad theoretical frameworks to explain various aspects of the phenomenon across regions and historical periods. I believe that it should be replaced with less ambitious theories. Most importantly, we have to acknowledge the fact that *context* matters. Thus, we are faced with the challenge of incorporating elements, which many political scientists consider idiosyncratic. These include (1) the unique history of the country; (2) its social makeup, political culture, the pace in which its demography changes, and its impact on ethnic, religious, and materialistic divisions; (3) the challenges that the nation faces

at any given point in time; (4) the formal and informal division of power between the masses and the elite (as well as within these groups); and (5) even the personality traits of the men and women who make the decisions and implement them.

APPENDIX
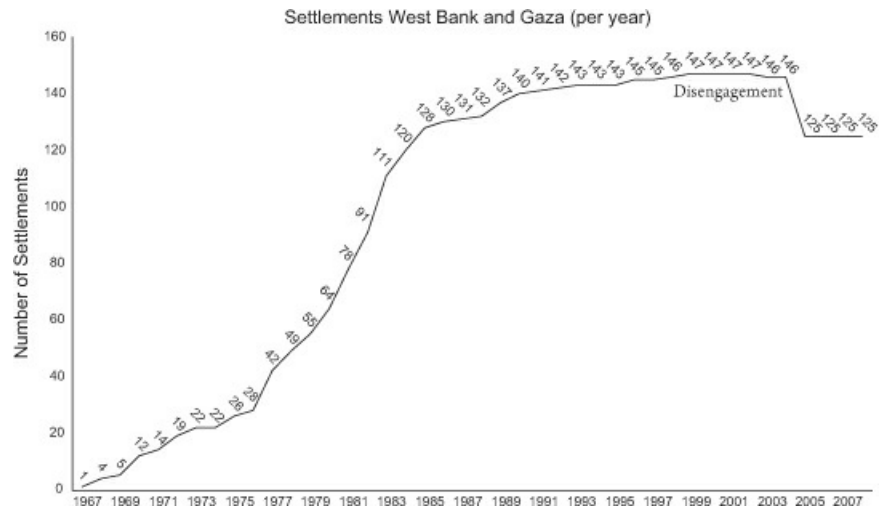
Figure A1 NUMBER OF SETTLEMENTS PER YEAR *Source:* www.shaularieli.com
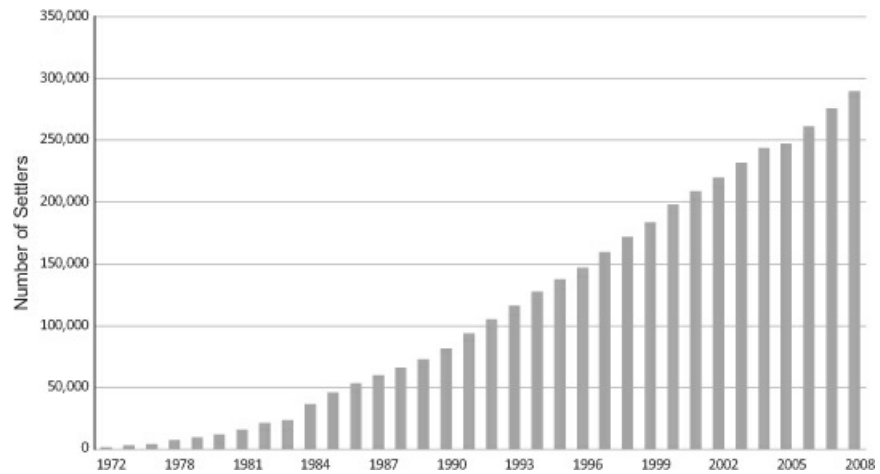
Figure A2 GROWTH OF THE ISRAELI SETTLER POPULATION IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, SELECTED YEARS, 1972–2008 *Source:* Foundation for Middle East Peace. *Note:* Settlements in Gaza were evacuated in 2005.
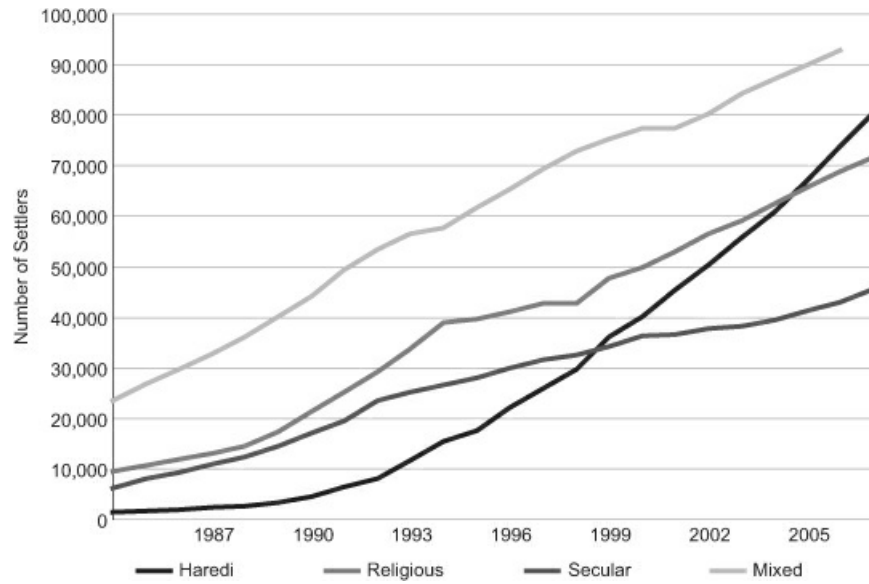
Figure A3 Settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Divided by the Settlements' Religious Characteristics (per Year) *Source:* PeaceNow.org
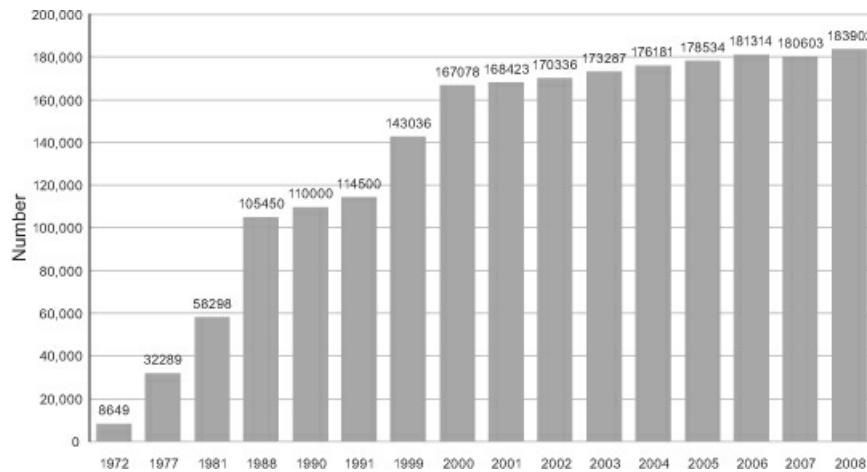
Figure A4 Jewish Residents in East Jerusalem per Year *Source:* eng.ir-amim.org.il
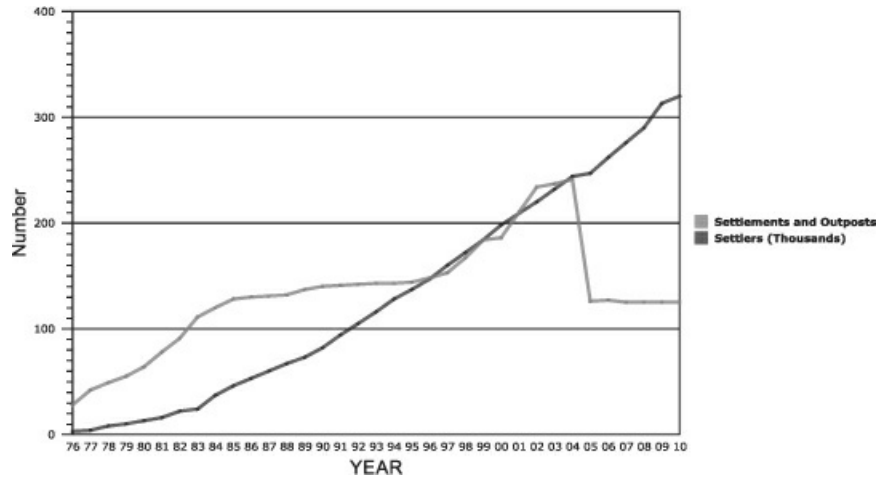
Figure A5 SETTLEMENTS, OUTPOSTS, AND SETTLERS *Source:* Peacenow.org
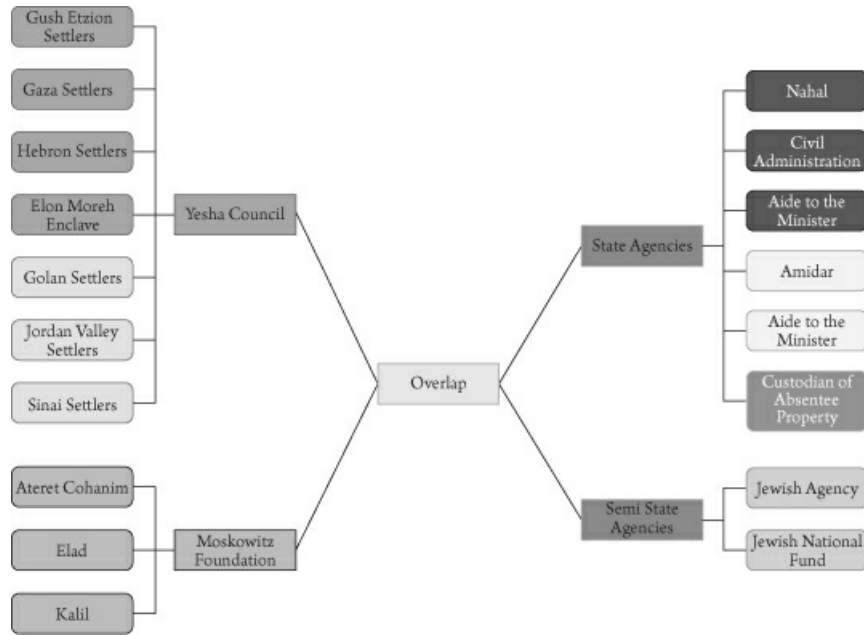
Figure A6 ILLUSTRATION OF THE SETTLERS' NETWORK

Table A1. **Electoral Results of the Israeli Right 1969–2009**

Party (Votes, Percents, Seats)	7th Knesset 1969	8th Knesset 1973	9th Knesset 1977	10th Knesset 1981	11th Knesset 1984	12th Knesset 1988	13th Knesset 1992	14th Knesset 1996	15th Knesset 1999	16th Knesset 2003	17th Knesset 2006	18th Knesset 2009
Likud		473,309	583,968	718,941	661,302	709,305	651,229	767,401	468,103	925,279	281,996	729,054
		30.2	33.4	37.1	31.9	31.1	24.9	25.8	14.1	29.4	9	21.6
		39	43	48	41	40	32	32	19	38	12	27
Shas					63,605	107,709	129,347	259,796	430,676	258,879	299,054	286,300
					3.1	4.7	4.9	8.7	13	8.2	9.5	8.5
					4	6	6	10	17	11	12	11
HaIchud HaLeumi									100,181	173,973	224,083	112,570
									3	5.5	7.1	3.3
									4	7	9	4
Mafdal	133,238	130,349	160,787	95,232	73,530	89,720	129,663	240,271	140,307	132,370	Merged with HaIchud HaLeumi	
	9.7	8.3	9.2	4.9	3.5	3.9	5	8.1	4.2	4.2		
	12	10	12	6	4	5	6	9	5	6		
Yahadut HaTorah HaMeukhedet							86,167	98,657	125,741	135,087	147,091	147,954
							3.3	3.3	3.7	4.3	4.7	4.4
							4	4	5	5	6	5
Herut										36,202	2,387	
										1.1	0.1	
										0	0	
Ahavat Yisrael										5,468		
										0.2		
										0		
Tzomet					Merged with Tehiya	45,489	166,366	Merged with Likud	4,128	2,023	1,342	1520
						2	6.4		0.1	0.1	0	0.1
						2	8		0	0	0	0
Hazit Leumit Yehudit											24,824	
											0.8	
											0	
Reshima Ieman Eretz Yisrael	7,591											
	0.60											
	0											
Kach		12,811	4,396	5,128	25,907							
		0.80	0.30	0.3	1.2							
		0	0	0	1							
Tehiya				44,700	83,037	70,730	31,957					
				2.3	4	3.1	1.2					
				3	5	3	0					
Morasha					33,287							
					1.6							
					2							
Moledet						44,174	62,269	72,002				
						1.9	2.4	2.4				

Party												
						2	3	2				
Ha'Torah Ve'HaAretz							3,708					
							0.1					
							0					
Geulat Yisrael							12,851					
							0.5					
							0					
Yamin Yisrael								2,845				
								0.1				
								0				
Gahal	296,294											
	21.7											
	26											
Shlomtzion			33,947									
			1.9									
			2									
Yisrael Beiteinu									86,153		281,880	394,577
									2.6		9	11.7
									4		11	15
Habayit Hayehudi												96,765
												2.9
												3
Total	437,123	616,469	783,098	864,001	940,668	1,067,127	1,273,557	1,440,972	1,355,289	1,669,281	1,262,657	1,768,740
	32	39.3	44.8	44.6	45.3	46.7	48.7	48.8	40.7	53	40.2	52.5
	38	49	57	57	57	58	59	57	54	67	50	65

Source: The Knesset www.knesset.gov.il/description/eng/eng_mimshal_res.htm

LIST OF INDIVIDUALS

Name		Affiliation and Most Significant Positions Held
Yehiel Admoni	b. 1926	Head of the settling arm of the Jewish agency.
Shmuel Yosef Agnon	1887–1970	Author. Nobel Prize winner who supported the movement for Greater Israel.
Abba Ahimeir	1897–1962	Revisionist. Brit HaBirionim.
Yigal Allon	1918–1980	Ahdut HaAvoda Poalei Zion. Labor. Minister of education, foreign minister, head of the ministerial committee for settlements, deputy prime minister. Knesset member.
Natan Alterman	1910–1970	Poet and author. Supported the movement for Greater Israel.
Plia Albeck	1937–2005	Head of the Civil Department in the state attorney's office. Provided the legal framework for the seizing of lands in the West Bank.
Haim Arlozoroff	1899–1933	Mapai. Head of the political arm of the Jewish agency.
Uri Ariel	b. 1952	Mafdal. National Union Party. Head of the Yesha Council and Amana, in charge of settling affairs in the ministry of defense, member of the Jewish National Fund board of directors. Knesset member.

Moshe Arens	b. 1925	Likud. Minister of defense, minister of foreign affairs. Knesset member.
Rabbi Shlomo Aviner	b. 1943	Religious Zionist. Rabbi. The movement to stop the withdrawal in Sinai. Head of the Ateret Cohanim Yeshiva.
Aharon Barak	b. 1936	Law Professor. Attorney general, president of the Supreme Court of Israel.
Ehud Barak	b. 1942	Labor. Atzmaut. Chief of general staff. Minister of the interior, foreign affairs, and defense. Israel's 10th prime minister. Knesset member.
Rabbi Yosef Ba-Gad	b. 1932	Moledet. Rabbi. Knesset member.
Roni Bar-On	b. 1948	Likud. Kadima. Short tenure as attorney general of Israel. Minister of the interior and finance. Knesset member.
David Ben-Gurion	1886–1973	Mapai. Rafi. Head of the Jewish Agency. Israel's 1st prime minister. Knesset member.
Peretz Bernstein	1890–1971	General Zionists. Liberal Party. Minister of rationing and supply. Knesset member.
Menachem Begin	1913–1992	Irgun. Herut. Likud. Israel's 6th prime minister. Knesset member.
David Beeri	b. 1953	Religious Zionist. Founder and head of Elad.
Yossi Beilin	b.1948	Labor. Meretz. Cabinet secretary. Justice minister. Economic strategy minister. Knesset member.
Zeev Binyamin (Benny) Begin	b. 1943	Likud, New Herut, National Union Party. Minister of science and technology. Knesset member. Son of Menachem Begin.
Binyamin Ben-Eliezer	b. 1936	Labor. Minister of defense, Minister of national infrastructure. Minister of housing and construction. Deputy prime minister. Knesset member.
Michael Ben-Yair	b. 1942	Attorney general of Israel.

Shlomo Benizri	b. 1961	Shas. Minister of labor, health minister. Knesset member.
Michael Ben-Ari	b. 1963	Kach. New Herut. National Union Party. Knesset member.
Yoel Bin-Nun	b. 1946	Religious Zionist. Rabbi. Gush Emunim. Yesha Council.
Avraham (Avrum) Burg	b. 1955	Labor. Speaker of the Knesset. Head of the Jewish Agency. Knesset member.
Zeev Chever "Zambish"	b. 1954	Religious Zionist. Yesha Council. Amana.
Geula Cohen	b. 1925	Lehi, Fighters' List, Herut, Banai, Tehiya. Journalist. Deputy minister of science and technology. Knesset member.
Eli Cohen	b. 1949	Likud. Head of the Settling Branch of the World Zionist Organization. Knesset member.
Moshe Dayan	1915–1981	Mapai. Rafi. Labor. Telem. Chief of general staff. Minister of agriculture, foreign affairs, and defense. Knesset member.
Shlomo Dayan	b. 1952	Shas. Deputy Speaker of the Knesset. Knesset member.
Mattityahu Dan	unknown	Founder and head of Ateret Cohanim.
Uzi Dayan	b. 1948	Tafnit. Likud. Head of the National Security Council. Nephew of Moshe Dayan.
Aryeh Deri	b. 1959	Shas. Minister of the Interior. Knesset Member.
Haim Druckman	b. 1932	Zionist Religious. Rabbi. Gush Emunim. Mafdal. Morasha. Deputy minister of religious services. Knesset member.
Matityahu Drobles	b. 1931	Likud. Head of the settling arm of the Jewish agency. Knesset member.
Rafael (Raful) Eitan	1929–2004	Tehiya. Tzomet. Likud. Chief of general Ssaff. Minister of agriculture, environment. Deputy prime minister. Knesset member.

Efraim "Effi" Eitam (Fine)	b. 1952	Mafdal. Ahi. Likud. Minister of national infrastructure, minister of housing and construction. Knesset member.
Israel Eldad (Scheib)	1910–1996	Beitar, Lehi, Fighters' List, Movement for Greater Israel, Moledet. Author and educator.
Aryeh Eldad	b. 1950	Moledet, National Union Party. Knesset member. Son of Israel Eldad (Scheib).
Uri Elitzur	b. 1946	Gush Emunim. Yesha Council. Mafdal. Editor of *Nekuda*. Journalist.
Binyamin "Benny" Elon	b. 1954	Moledet, National Union Party. Minister of tourism. Knesset member.
Mordechai Eliyahu	1929–2010	Ultra-Orthodox. Brit HaKanaim. Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel.
Shmuel Eliyahu	b.1956	Religious Zionism. Chief Rabbi of Safed. Son of Mordechai Eliyahu.
Levi Eshkol	1895–1969	Mapai. Head of the settling arm of the Jewish Agency. Minister of defense, finance, agriculture. Israel's 3rd prime minister. Knesset member.
Menachem Felix	b. 1946	Religious Zionist. Rabbi. Elon Moreh Enclave. Gush Emunim.
Noam Federman	b. 1969	Kach.
Moshe Feiglin	b. 1962	Religious Zionist. Likud. Founder and head of Zu Artzenu and Manhigut Yehudit.
Arthur Finkelstein	b. 1946	Campaign strategist for the Likud and Yisrael Beiteinu.
Israel Galili	1911–1986	Mapam. Ahdut HaAvoda Poalei Zion. Labor. Minister of information, head of the ministerial committee for settlements. Knesset member.
Shlomo Goren	1918–1994	Religious Zionist. Chief military Rabbi. Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel.

Dore Gold	b. 1953	Israel's ambassador to the United Nations. Advisor to Binyamin Netanyahu.
Uri Zvi Greenberg	1896–1981	Revisionist, Herut. Poet. Knesset member.
Haim Guri	b. 1923	Ahdut HaAvoda, Labor. Supported the Movement for Greater Israel. Author.
Shaul Gutman	b. 1945	Moledet. Yamin Yisrael. Knesset member.
Mordechai "Motta" Gur	1930–1995	Labor. Chief of general staff. Minister of health, deputy minister of defense. Knesset member.
Joseph Gutnick		Ultra-Orthodox, Chabad. Australian businessman and supporter of the Israeli right.
Israel Harel	b. 1938	Religious Zionist. Hebron Settlers, Gush Emunim, Yesha Council. Founder and editor of *Nekuda*.
Yoram Hazoni	b. 1964	Conservative. Political theorist. Founder of the Shalem Center.
Yehuda Harel	b. 1934	Golan Residents Committee. The Third Way. Knesset member.
Chaim Herzog	1918–1997	Labor. Israel's ambassador to the United Nations. Israel's 6th president. Knesset member.
Zvi Hendel	b. 1949	Yesha Council. Mafdal. National Union Party. Head of the Gaza Regional Council, deputy minister of education. Knesset member.
Shlomo Hillel	b. 1923	Mapai. Labor. Minister of the interior. Minister of police. Speaker of the Knesset. Knesset member.
Dalia Itzik	b. 1952	Labor. Kadima. Minister of industry, trade, and labor, the environment, communications. Speaker of the Knesset. Knesset member.
Zeev Jabotinsky	1880–1940	Betar. Etzel. Hatzohar. Founder of the Revisionist Zionist movement. Author.
Berl Katznelson	1887–1944	Ahdut HaAvoda. Socialist leader.

Meir Kahane	1932–1990	The Jewish Defense League. Kach. Knesset member.
Binyamin Zeev Kahane	1966–2000	Kach. Kahane is Alive. Son of Meir Kahane.
Benny Katzover	b. 1947	Religious Zionist. Hebron settlers. Gush Emunim. Yesha Council. Tehiya. National Union Party.
Yitzchak Kaduri	1898–2006	Ultra-Orthodox. Rabbi. Kabbalist.
Yaakov "Katzele" Katz	b. 1951	Religious Zionist. Gush Emunim. Yesha Council. Aide to Ariel Sharon at the Housing and Construction Ministry. National Union Party. Knesset member.
Yisrael Katz	b. 1955	Likud. Minster of transportation. Minister of agriculture. Knesset member.
Avigdor Kahalani	b. 1944	Labor. The Third Way. Minister of public security. Knesset member.
Noah Kinarti	1940–2010	Aide to the minister of defense for settling affairs.
Aryeh King	b. 1973	Elad. Founder and leader of Kalil—Israel Land Foundation.
Haim Klugman	b. 1935	Director general of the Justice Ministry.
Michael Kleiner	b. 1948	Likud. New Herut. National Union Party. Knesset member.
Abraham Isaac (Yitzhak Hacohen) Kook	1865–1935	Religious Zionist. First Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Palestine. Founder of Merkaz HaRav Yeshiva.
Zvi Yehuda Kook	1891–1982	Religious Zionist. Head of Merkaz HaRav Yeshiva. Son of Abraham Isaac (Yitzhak Hacohen) Kook.
Teddy Kollek	1911–2007	Rafi. Labor. Mayor of Jerusalem.
Sofa Landver	b. 1949	Labor. Yisrael Beiteinu. Minister of immigrant absorption. Knesset member.
Yosef (Tommy) Lapid	1931–2008	Shinui. Minister of justice. Deputy prime minister. Author. Journalist. Knesset member.

Moshe Levinger	b. 1935	Religious Zionist. Rabbi. Hebron Settlers. Gush Emunim. Yesha Council.
David Levy	b. 1937	Gahal, Likud, Gesher. Deputy prime minister. Minister of foreign affairs, housing and construction, immigrant absorption. Knesset member.
Limor Livnat	b. 1950	Likud. Minister of Education, Communication, Culture and Sport. Knesset member.
Avigdor (Evet) Lieberman	b. 1958	Likud. Founder and leader of Yisrael Beiteinu. Deputy prime minister. Minister of foreign affairs, strategic affairs, national infrastructure, transportation. Knesset member.
Tzipi Livni	b. 1958	Likud, Kadima. Deputy prime minister. Minister of foreign affairs, justice, immigrant absorption. Knesset member.
Baruch Marzel	b. 1960	Kach, New Herut, National Union Party.
David Monsonego Magen	b. 1945	Likud, Gesher, Center Party. Minister of economic strategy. Knesset member.
Golda Meir	1898–1978	Mapai. Labor. Minister of foreign affairs, labor. Israel's 4th prime minister. Knesset member.
Dan Meridor	b. 1947	Likud. Center Party. Deputy prime minister. Minister of finance, justice, intelligence services. Knesset member.
Roni Milo	b. 1949	Likud. Center Party. Minister of police, health, labor and welfare, Mayor of Tel-Aviv-Jaffa. Knesset member.
Irving Moskowitz	b. 1928	Founder of the Moskowitz Foundation that funds activities of Elad, Ateret Cohanim, Kalil, and the Yesha Council.
Yitzhak Mordechai	b. 1944	Likud. Center Party. Deputy prime minister. Minister of defense, transportation. Knesset member.

Shaul Mofaz	b. 1948	Likud. Kadima. Chief of general staff. Deputy prime minister. Minister of defense, transportation, and road safety. Knesset member.
Uzi Narkis	1925–1997	General. Commander of Israel's Central Command.
Meshulam Nahari	b. 1951	Shas. Minister without portfolio in the Ministry of Finance. Deputy minister of Education. Knesset member.
Yuval Neeman	1925–2006	Mapam. Leader of the Tehiya. Minister of Energy, Science. Physicist. President of Tel-Aviv University. Knesset Member.
Binyamin Netanyahu	b. 1949	Likud. Minister of foreign affairs, finance, Israel's ambassador to the United Nations. Israel's 9th prime minister. Knesset member.
Ehud Olmert	b. 1945	Likud. Kadima. Mayor of Jerusalem, Minister of finance, industry, trade and labor, communication, health, welfare and social services, deputy prime minister, acting prime minister. Israel's 12th prime minister. Knesset member.
Shimon Peres	b. 1923	Mapai. Rafi. Labor. Kadima. Minister of foreign affairs, finance, defense. Deputy prime minister, acting prime minister. Israel's 8th prime minister and 9th president. Knesset member.
Rabbi Yitzhak Peretz	b. 1938	Shas. Minister of the interior, immigrant absorption. Knesset member.
Hanan Porat	1943–2011	Gush Etzion Settlers, Gush Emunim, Tehiya, Mafdal, National Union Party. Knesset member.
Tiran Pollack	b. 1967	Kach.
Yitzhak Rabin	1922–1995	Labor. Chief of general staff. Israel's ambassador to the U.S. Minister of defense, labor. Israel's 5th prime minister. Knesset member.

Itamar Rabinovich	b. 1942	Israel's ambassador to the U.S. Historian of the Middle East. President of Tel Aviv University.
Avri Ran	b. 1955	Religious Zionist. The informal leader of the Hilltop Youth.
Haim Ramon	b. 1950	Labor, Kadima. Minister of the interior, justice, chairman of the Histadrut, deputy prime minister. Knesset member.
Talia Sason	b. 1951	Meretz. Lawyer, former head of the Department for Special Affairs at the state attorney's office. Known as the author of the *Opinion Concerning Unauthorized Outposts* (aka the Sason Report).
Yossi Sarid	b. 1940	Labor, Ratz, Meretz. Minister of education, environment. Knesset member.
Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson	1902–1994	Ultra-Orthodox. Chabad. "The Rebbe," the 7th leader of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement.
Moshe Sharett	1894–1965	Mapai. Head of the political arm of the Jewish Agency. Minister of foreign affairs. Israel's 2nd prime minister. Knesset member.
Moshe Shamir	1921–2004	Mapam. Movement for Greater Israel. Likud. Banai. Tehiya. Author. Knesset member.
Ariel Sharon	b. 1928	Likud, Shlomtzion, Kadima. IDF General. Minister of agriculture, national infrastructure, defense, foreign affairs. Head of the ministerial committee for settlements. Israel's 11th prime minister. Knesset member.
Yitzhak Shamir	b. 1915	Lehi. Herut. Likud. Minister of the interior, foreign affairs. Speaker of the Knesset. Israel's 7th prime minister. Knesset member.
Rabbi Elazar Shach	1898–2001	Ultra-Orthodox. The most significant leader of the Lithuanian Jews in Israel.

Meir Shamgar	b. 1925	Lawyer. Military Advocate General, Attorney General, President of the Supreme Court of Israel.
Natan (Anatoly) Sharansky	b. 1948	Yisrael BaAliyah. Likud. Minister of the interior, industry, trade and labor, housing and construction, Jerusalem affairs information and diaspora, deputy prime minister. Head of the Jewish Agency. Knesset member.
Shimon Sheves	unknown	Golan Residents Committee. Director general of the prime minister's office.
Eliezer Shostak	1911–2001	Herut, Gahal, Likud. Minister of health. Knesset member.
Silvan Shalom	b. 1958	Likud. Minister of foreign affairs, finance, regional development, development of the Negev and Galilee, science and technology, deputy prime minister. Knesset member.
Efraim Sneh	b. 1944	Labor. Yisrael Hazaka. Minister of health, transportation, deputy minister of defense. Knesset member.
Yair Sprinzak	1911–1999	Movement for Greater Israel. Tehiya. Moledet. Knesset member.
Avraham (Yair) Stern	1907–1942	Etzel. Founder and leader of the Lehi. Poet.
Eliyahu Suissa	b. 1956	Shas. Minister of the interior, national infrastructure, religion, Jerusalem affairs. Knesset member.
Yitzhak Tabenkin	1888–1971	Mapam. Ahdut HaAvoda Poalei Zion. Movement for Greater Israel. Knesset member.
Shmuel Tamir	1923–1987	Gahal. The Free Center. Likud. Dash. Minister of justice. Knesset member.
Eliezer Waldman	b. 1937	Religious Zionist. Rabbi. Hebron Settlers. Gush Emunim. Tehiya. Knesset member.
Pinchas Wallerstein	b. 1949	Religious Zionist. Gush Emunim. Amana. Yesha Council.

Ra'anan Weitz	1913–1988	Head of the settling arm of the Jewish agency.
Ezer Weizman	1924–2005	Likud. Yahad. Labor. IDF General. Minister of defense, transportation, science and technology. Israel's 7th president. Knesset member.
Shevah Weiss	b. 1935	Labor. Speaker of the Knesset. Knesset member.
Dov Weissglass	b. 1946	Lawyer. Chief of the prime minister's office.
Eliyahu Winograd	b. 1926	Lawyer. Judge. Head of the Commission of Inquiry into the Events of the Military Engagement in Lebanon 2006.
Shalom Dov Wolpo	b. 1948	Ultra-Orthodox. Chabad. Eretz Yisrael Shelanu. National Union Party.
Yigael Yadin	1917–1984	Dash. Chief of general staff. Archeologist. Deputy prime minister. Knesset member.
Moshe (Bogi) Yaalon	b. 1950	Likud. Chief of general staff. Minister for strategic affairs. Deputy prime minister. Knesset member.
Eliyahu (Eli) Yishai	b. 1962	Shas. Minister of the interior, labor, and welfare, industry, trade and labor, religion. Knesset member.
Rabbi Ovadia Yosef	b. 1920	Ultra-Ortodox. Shas. Sephardic chief rabbi of Israel.
Nissim Zeev	b. 1951	Shas. Deputy mayor of Jerusalem. Knesset member.
Rehavam "Gandhi" Zeevi	1926–2001	Moledet. National Union Party. IDF General. Minister of tourism. Assassinated by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestinian. Knesset member.
Emanuel Zisman	1935–2009	Ahdut HaAvoda Poalei Zion. Labor. The Third Way. Knesset member.

LIST OF POLITICAL PARTIES

Achrayut Leumit (National Responsibility) party later known as Kadima (Forward)
Agudat Yisrael (Union of Israel)
Ahdut HaAvoda Poalei Zion (Labor Unity/Zionist Workers)
Atzmaut
Brit Leumit Demokratit (National Democratic Assembly)
Brit Neemanei Eretz Yisrael: Banai (Hebrew acronym for Land of Israel Loyalists Alliance)
Degel Hatorah (Flag of the Torah)
Eretz Yisrael Shelanu (Our Land of Israel)
Gesher: Tenua Hevratit Leumit (Social and National Movement)
Geulat Israel (Redemption of Israel)
Gimlaey Yisrael LaKnesset (Pensioners of Israel to the Knesset)
HaTorah VeHa'aretz (The Torah and the Land)
HaBayit HaYehudi (The Jewish Home)
Haderekh Hashlishit (The Third Way)
HaIhud HaLeumi: Yisrael Betienu (The National Union Party/Israel is our Home) an alignment
    of the two parties that ran together in the 2003 elections.
HaMa'arakh (lit. the Alignment)
HaMerkaz HaAtzmai (The Independent Center)
HaMerkaz HaHofshi (The Free Center)
HaPanterim HaShhorim (The Black Panthers)
Hatikva (The Hope)
Hazit Yehudit Leumit (Jewish National Front)
Herut (Freedom)
Kach
Kahane Chai (Kahane Lives)
The Land of Israel Movement
The Liberal Party
The Likud Party
Mafdal: the National Religious Party
Maki: HaMiflaga HaKomunistit HaYisraelit (The Israeli Communist Party)
Mapai: Mifleget Poalei Eretz Yisrael (Workers' Party of the Land of Israel)
Mapam: Mifleget HaPoalim HaMeuhedet (United Workers Party)
Meimad: Medina Yehudit, Medina Demokratit (Jewish State, Democratic State)
Meretz (Vigor)
Mifleget HaAvoda HaYisraelit: Israeli Labor Party
Mifleget HaMerkaz (the Center Party)
Moledet (Homeland)
New Herut Party

Rafi: Reshimat Poalei Yisrael (Israel's Workers' List) also a Zionist Socialist Party
Ratz: HaTnuaa LeZkhuyot HaEzrah VeLeShalom (Movement for Civil Rights and Peace)
Reshima Aravit Meuhedet (United Arab List)
Shas: Sepharadim Shomrei Torah (Sephardic Torah Guardians)
Shinui (Change)
Shlomzion
Siaat HaAtzmaut (Independence Faction)
Socialist List (1964)
Tehiya (Revival)
Tkuma (Resurrection)
Tnua Aravit LeHithadshut (Arab Movement for Renewal)
Tnua Demokratit LeShinui (Democratic Movement for Change)
Tzomet (Crossroad)
Yisrael Ahat (One Israel)
Yisrael BaAliyah (Israel Ascends)
Yisrael Beitenu (Israel is our Home)

NOTES

Introduction

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4. It should be noted, however, that Sprinzak was aware of other ideological elements in the radical right-wing scene and encouraged his readers not to dismiss them. Ehud Sprinzak, "The Emergence of the Israeli Radical Right," *Comparative Politics* 21, no. 2 (1989); Ehud Sprinzak, *The Ascendance of Israel's Radical Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).
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1. Focusing on a single idea.

2. Mudde, *The Ideology of the Extreme Right*, 188.

3. Sprinzak, *Ascendance of Israel's Radical Right*, 26.

4. See Naor, *Erets Yisrael ha-shelemah: emunah u-mediniyut*.

5. See Moshe Shamir, *Yair, Avraham Shtern: hayav, milhamto, moto: roman biyografi* [Yair, Avraham Stern: His life, the war, his death: A biography] (Lod, Israel: Zemorah-Bitan, 2001).

6. See: Nathan Yellin-Mor, *Shanot be-terem* [The years before] (Tel Aviv: Kineret, 1990).

7. Ofer Grosbard, *Menahem Begin: deyokano shel manhig: biyografyah* [Menachem Begin: A Portrait of a Leader, Biography] (Tel Aviv: Resling, 2006).

8. Filc, *Political Right in Israel*.

9. Shilon, *Begin: 1913–1992*, 77–78.

0. Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger, *Jewish Terrorism in Israel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009). 24.

1. Pedahzur, *Israeli Response to Jewish Extremism and Violence: Defending Democracy*, 70–73.

2. Shilon, *Begin: 1913–1992*, 148.

3. Ibid.

4. See Yonathan Shapiro, *The Road to Power: Herut Party in Israel* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1991).

5. Isaac, *Israel Divided*; Naor, *Erets Yisrael ha-shelemah: emunah u-mediniyut*; Shelef, *Evolving Nationalism*.

6. Filc, *Political Right in Israel*.

7. Ehud Sprinzak, *Brother against Brother: Violence and Extremism in Israeli Politics from Altalena to the Rabin Assassination* (New York: Free Press, 1999), 85.

8. Shilon, *Begin: 1913–1992*, 173–77.

9. Ehud Sprinzak, *Political Violence in Israel* (Jerusalem: The Jerusalem Institute for the Study of Israel, 1995); Ehud Sprinzak,

43–47.

0. Baruch Kimmerling, *The Invention and Decline of Israeliness: State, Society, and the Military* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 40.

1. Segev, *1949, ha-Yisreelim ha-rishonim*: 43–49.

2. Asad Ghanem, *The Palestinian-Arab Minority in Israel, 1948–2000: A Political study* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2001).

3. See Hillel Cohen, *Good Arabs: The Israeli Security Agencies and the Israeli Arabs, 1948–1967* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

4. Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 112–15.

5. See Devorah Hakohen, *Immigrants in Turmoil: Mass Immigration to Israel and Its Repercussions in the 1950s and after* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003).

6. Peled, "Ethnic Exclusionism in the Periphery"; Yoav Peled, "Towards a Redefinition of Jewish Nationalism in Israel? The Enigma of Shas," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21, no. 4 (1998); Shapiro, *Road to Power*.

7. Dan Korn and Boaz Shapira, *Koalitsyot: Ha-politikah ha-Yisreelit, 50 shanim, 100 eruim* [Coalition politics in Israel] (Tel Aviv: Zemorah-Bitan, 1997).

8. Asher Arian, *ha-Republikah ha-Yisreelit ha-sheniyah: politikah u-mishtar likrat ha-meah ha-21* [Second republic: Politics in Israel] (Haifa; Tel Aviv: Zemorah-Bitan, 1997).

9. Sammy Smooha, "Ethnic Democracy: Israel as an Archetype," *Israel Studies* 2, no. 2 (1997).

0. Oren Yiftachel, *Ethnocracy: Land and Identity Politics in Israel/Palestine* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

1. Sammy Smooha, "The Regime of the State of Israel: Civil Democracy, Non-Democracy, or Ethnic Democracy?" *Sociologia Yisraelit* 2, no. 2 (2000).

2. Mudde, "The Populist Radical Right."

3. Hans-Georg Betz and Stefan Immerfall, *The New Politics of the Right: Neo-Populist Parties and Movements in Established Democracies* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998); Herbert Kitschelt, *The Radical Right in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1996); Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*.

4. Asher Cohen and Bernard Susser, *Israel and the Politics of Jewish Identity: The Secular-religious Impasse* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

5. Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977); Benyamin Neuberger, ed., *Democracy in Israel: Origins and Development*, 2nd ed. (Tel Aviv: The Open University, 1998).

6. Hirsch-Hoefler, Canetti, and Pedahzur, "Two of a Kind?"

7. Grinfild, *Hem mefahadim*; Menachem Friedman, *ha-Hevrah ha-haredit: mekorot, megamot ve-tahalikhim* [The Haredi (ultra-orthodox) society] (Jerusalem: The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 1991); Yair Sheleg, *ha-Datiyim ha-hadashim: mabat akhshavi al ha-hevrah ha-datit be-Yisrael* [The New Religious Jews] (Jerusalem: Keter, 2000); Yair Sheleg, "Not Halakhically Jewish: The Dilemma of Non-Jewish Immigrants in Israel," *Position Paper,* no. 51 (2004).

8. Aviezer Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism and Jewish Religious Radicalism* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved: Merkaz Yitzhak Rabin, 1993), 209.

9. Grinfild, *Hem mefahadim*, 189.

0. Sheleg, *ha-Datiyim ha-hadashim*, 283.

1. Ibid., 283–85.

2. See Shahar Ilan, *Haredim beeam: ha-taktsivim, ha-hishtamtut u-remisat ha-hok* [The Haredim Inc.: Public expenditures, draft dodging and trampling the law] (Jerusalem: Keter, 2000).

3. See Sprinzak, *Brother against Brother*.

4. Grinfild, *Hem mefahadim*, 189; Sheleg, *ha-Datiyim ha-hadashim*, 189.

5. Jews who prefer civil marriages or are disqualified for religious reasons to be married by an Orthodox rabbi must get the marriage certificate in a different country in order to be considered legally married by the State of Israel.

6. For more see Friedman, *ha-Hevrah ha-haredit*; Grinfild, *Hem mefahadim*; Ilan, *Haredim beeam*; Sheleg, *ha-Datiyim ha-hadashim*.

7. Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*; Mudde, "The Populist Radical Right: A Pathological Normalcy"; Norris, *Radical Right*.

Chapter 2

1. Naor, *Erets Yisrael ha-shelemah: emunah u-mediniyut*; Shelef, *Evolving Nationalism*.

2. The movement also attracted some of the best writers and poets of the time, including Uri Zvi Greenberg, Yisrael Eldad, Haim Guri, Natan Alterman, Moshe Shamir, and Shmuel Yosef Agnon, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1966.

3. Ruth Bondy, "Everyone Has His Own Greater Israel" *Davar*, September 15, 1967; Isaac, *Israel Divided*.

4. Abraham Isaac Kook, *Igrot ha-reiyah* [The rabbi's missive] (Jerusalem: Rabbi Kook Institute, 1962), 155.

5. Hagai Huberman, *Against all Odds: 40 Years of Settlement in Judea, Samaria, Benjamin and the Valley* (Ariel: Sifriyat Netsarim, 2008). See Gideon Aran, "From Religious Zionism to Zionist Religion: The Roots of Gush Emunim and its Culture" (The Hebrew University, 1987); Lustick, *For the Land and the Lord*; Michael Feige, *Settling in the Hearts: Jewish fundamentalism in the Occupied Territories* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2009).

6. Shelef, *Evolving Nationalism*.

7. Huberman, *Against all Odds*. See Yair Sheleg, *New Religious Jews*.

8. Reuven Pedatzur, *The Triumph of Embarrassment: Israel and the Territories after the Six-Day War* (Tel Aviv: Yad Tabenkin, 1996).

9. Arieli and Sefarad, *Homah u-mehdal*, 27.

0. Enlightened Occupation was a doctrine advanced by Moshe Dayan according to which Israel should establish strong economic ties with the Palestinians, which would lead to prosperity of both peoples. See S. Gazit, *Trapped* (Tel Aviv: Zemorah-Bitan, 1999).

1. See Pedatzur, *Triumph of Embarrassment*; Anita Shapira, *Yigal Allon, Native Son: A Biography* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

2. Arieli and Sefarad, *Homah u-mehdal*.

3. Yigal Allon, "Allon's Plan," http://www.bet-alon.co.il/museum/alon_03.php.

4. Bariah (Bolt) Neighborhoods were built following the Six-Day War for the purpose of creating Israeli territorial continuity between West Jerusalem and Mount Scopus. The neighborhoods consist of the French Hill, Ramat Eshkol, Givat Hamivtar, and Ma'alot Dafna.

5. Gershom Gorenberg, *The Accidental Empire: Israel and the Birth of Settlements, 1967–1977,* (New York: Times Books, 2006), 63–64.

6. The Hebrew name for the Temple Mount is Har haBáyith (in Arabic al-haram al-qudsī ash-sharīf), which translates as the "Noble Sanctuary." It is located in the eastern part of the Old City of Jerusalem. In the Jewish tradition both temples were located in this site. In the Muslim tradition this was the place from which the prophet Muhammad was taken to his night journey. Nadav Shragai, *Har ha-merivah: ha-maavak al Har-ha-Bayit: Yehudim u-Muslemim, dat u-politikah me-az 1967* [Temple of Dispute] (Jerusalem: Keter, 1995).

7. Tabaat (Ring) Neighborhoods were built for the purpose of surrounding the center of Jerusalem by Jewish neighborhoods and thus preventing any prospect for a continuity of Arab neighborhoods, which would stretch from the outskirts to the heart of the city. These Ring Neighborhoods include Ramat Alon, East Talpiot, Gilo, Atarot, Gai Ben Hinnom, and Ramat Rachel.

8. Mosheh Amirav, *Jerusalem Syndrome: The Palestinian-Israeli Battle for the Holy City* (Brighton, UK: Sussex Academic Press, 2009).

9. Huberman, *Against all Odds*, 61–68; Feige, *Settling in the Hearts*, 170–74.

0. Nurit Kliot, "Here and There: The Phenomenology of Settlement Removal from Northern Sinai," *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 23, no. 1 (1987).

1. Akiva Eldar and Idith Zertal, *Adone ha-arets: ha-mitnahalim u-medinat Yisrael, 1967–2004* [Lords of the land: The war over Israel's settlements in the occupied territories, 1967–2004] (Or Yehudah: Kineret, Zemorah-Bitan, Devir, 2004), 382.

2. Noam Arnon, "The Return to Hebron: Passover, 1968," (2006), http://www.hebron.com/english/article.php?id=225.

3. Tom Segev, *1967: veha-arets shintah et paneha* [1967: Israel, the war, and the year that transformed the Middle East] (Jerusalem: Keter, 2005).

4. Huberman, *Against all Odds*, 43–45.

5. Ibid., 44–45.

6. Ibid., 49.

7. Segev, *1967: veha-arets shintah et paneha*, 613–14.

8. Eldar and Zertal, *Adone ha-arets*, 373.

9. See Haklai, "Religious-nationalist Mobilization and State Penetration."

0. Segev, *1967: veha-arets shintah et paneha*.

1. Pedatzur, *Triumph of Embarrassment*.

2. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 64–71; Pedatzur, *Triumph of Embarrassment*.

3. Talya Sason, "Summary of the Opinion Concerning Unauthorized Outposts," Official report submitted to prime minister Ariel Sharon. Jerusalem: Prime Minister bureau. For more information, see http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Law/Legal+Issues+and+Rulings/Summary+of+Opinion+Concerning+Unauthorized++Talya+Sason+Adv.htm.(Jerusalem 2005).

4. Eldar and Zertal, *Adone ha-arets*, 377–82.

5. Daniel Ben-Simon, *Erets aheret: nitshon ha-shulayim: ekh karas ha-semol ve-alah ha-yamin?* [New Israel] (Tel Aviv: Aryeh Nir: Modan, 1997), 3–4.

6. Yossi Beilin, *Ahad Ha-Am pinat Hertsel: bikur hozer be-Erets Yisrael: be-ikvot maamaro shel Ahad Ha-Am "Emet me-Erets Yisrael"* [Truth from Eretz Yisrael revisited] (Tel Aviv: ha-Kibuts ha-meuhad, 2002).

7. Yonathan Shapiro, *Ilit le-lo mamshikhim: dorot manhigim ba-hevrah ha-Yisreelit* [An elite without successors] (Tel Aviv: Sifriyat poalim, 1984).

8. Segev, *1967: veha-arets shintah et paneha*.

9. Nir Hefez and Gadi Bloom, *Ariel Sharon: A Life* (New York: Random House, 2006).

0. Arian, *ha-Republikah ha-Yisreelit ha-sheniyah*; Shapiro, *Road to Power*.

1. Nir Hefez and Gadi Bloom, *ha-Roeh: sipur hayav shel Ariel Sharon* [Ariel Sharon: a Life] (Tel Aviv: Yediot Aharonot: Sifre Hemed, 2005).

2. For a few examples see Eldar and Zertal, *Adone ha-arets*; Lustick, *For the Land and the Lord*; David Newman, *The Impact of Gush Emunim: Politics and Settlement in the West Bank* (London: Croom Helm, 1985); Ehud Sprinzak, *Gush Emunim: The Politics of Zionist Fundamentalism in Israel* (New York: American Jewish Committee, Institute of Human Relations, 1986); Yael Yishai, *Land or Peace: Whither Israel?*, Hoover Press publication (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1987).

3. Huberman, *Against all Odds*, 73–74; Yair Sheleg, "From Sebastia to Migron," *Haaretz*, March 11, 2004.

4. Huberman, *Against all Odds*, 74–74; Sheleg, "From Sebastia to Migron."

5. Sheleg, "From Sebastia to Migron."

6. Anat Rot, *Sod ha-koah: Moetset Yesha u-maavakeha be-geder ha-hafradah uve-tokhnit ha-hitnatkut* [The secret of its strength: The Yesha Council and its campaign against the security fence and the disengagement plan] (Jerusalem: The Israeli Democracy Institute, 2005), 35–39.

7. Huberman, *Against all Odds*, 74.

8. Sheleg, "From Sebastia to Migron."

9. Ibid.

0. Ibid.

1. See Newman, *Impact of Gush Emunim*.

2. Huberman, *Against all Odds*, 82–86.

3. Hefez and Bloom, *ha-Roeh: sipur hayav shel Ariel Sharon*, 308.

4. Hefez and Bloom, *Ariel Sharon: A Life*.

5. Nomi Levitsky, *Kevodo: Aharon Barak: biyografyah* [Your honor] (Jerusalem: Keter, 2001), 199–200.

6. Huberman, *Against all Odds*, 176–80.

7. Eldar and Zertal, *Adone ha-arets*; Hefez and Bloom, *Ariel Sharon: A Life*.

8. Hefez and Bloom, *Ariel Sharon: A Life*.

9. Ehud Sprinzak, "Gush Emunim: The Tip of the Iceberg," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 21 (1981), Sprinzak, *Gush Emunim*; Sprinzak, *Ascendance of Israel's Radical Right*.

0. Ian Lustick, "Israel and the West Bank After Elon Moreh: The Mechanism of de facto Annexation," *Middle East Journal* 35, no. 4 (1981): 355–61; Zertal and Eldar, *Lords of the Land*.

1. Zertal and Eldar, *Lords of the Land*, 348–54.

2. Eldar and Zertal, *Lords of the Land*.

3. Ibid.

4. Aluf Ben, "The Settlements Have a Temporary Element, Settlers Do Not Have Ownership Rights," *Haaretz*, April 4, 2004.

5. Yael Yishai, *Land of Paradoxes: Interest Politics in Israel* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1991), 88.

6. Yehezkel Lein, "Land Grab: Israel's Settlement Policy in the West Bank," (B'tselem: The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, 2002).

7. Huberman, *Against all Odds*, 136, 52, 91; Lein, "Land Grab."

8. See Sason, "Summary of the Opinion Concerning Unauthorized Outposts."

9. Pedahzur, *Extreme Right-Wing Parties in Israel: Emergence and Decline?*, 16–18.

0. Hefez and Bloom, *ha-Roeh: sipur hayav shel Ariel Sharon*, 322.

1. Pedahzur, *Extreme Right-Wing Parties in Israel: Emergence and Decline?*, 30–36; Sprinzak, *Ascendance of Israel's Radical Right*, 73–80.

2. Giora Goldberg and Ephraim Ben Zadok, "Regionalism and Territorial Cleavage in Formation: Jewish Settlement in the Administered Territories," *Medina, Mimshal Veyahasim Beinleumiim* 21 (1983): 86–87; Pedahzur, *Extreme Right-Wing Parties in Israel: Emergence and Decline?*, 110–15.

3. Gideon Aran, *Erets Yisrael ben dat u-politikah: ha-tenuah la-atsirat ha-nesigah be-Sinai u-lekaheha* [Eretz Yisrael between politics and religion] (Jerusalem: The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 1985).

4. Gideon Aran and Michael Fiege, "The Movement to Stop the Withdrawal in Sinai: A Sociological Perspective," *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 23, no. 1 (1987); Aran, *Erets Yisrael ben dat u-politikah*; Haggai Segal, *Yamit, sof: ha-maavak la-atsirat ha-nesigah be-Sinai* [Yamit, End: The Struggle against the Withdrawal in Sinai] (Mizrah Binyamin: Sifriyat Bet El; Gush Katif: Midreshet ha-darom, 1999); Eldar and Zertal, *Lords of the Land*: 100–103; Feige, *Settling in the Hearts*.

5. Feige, *Settling in the Hearts*; Gadi Wolfsfeld, *The Politics of Provocation: Participation and Protest in Israel* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1988).

6. Zertal and Eldar, *Lords of the Land*, 304–5.

7. Ibid., 306–7.

8. Huberman, *Against all Odds*, 179–83; Sason, "Summary of the Opinion Concerning Unauthorized Outposts," 40.

9. See Rot, *Sod ha-koah*.

0. Ibid.

1. Yishai, *Land of Paradoxes*, 87–88.
2. Huberman, *Against all Odds*, 179.
3. Rot, *Sod ha-koah*, 57–59.
4. Editorial, "What is the Yesha Council?" *Walla News* (2005), http://news.walla.co.il/?w=/95/748187.
5. Rot, *Sod ha-koah*, 53.
6. Haklai, "Religious-Nationalist Mobilization and State Penetration"; Meir Har-Noi, *ha-Mitnahalim* [The Settlers] (Or Yehudah: Sifriyat Maariv, 1994).
7. See Haggai Segal, *Dear Brothers: The West Bank Jewish Underground* (Woodmere, NY: Beit Shamai Publications, 1988); Sprinzak, *Brother against Brother*.
8. Huberman, *Against all Odds*, 192–212.
9. Eldar and Zertal, *Adone ha-arets*; Huberman, *Against all Odds*, 212–21.
0. Haklai, "Religious-nationalist Mobilization and State Penetration."

Chapter 3

1. Second Israel (Yisrael HaShniya) is a term used to describe the socioeconomic peripheries of Israel that were associated with Jews of Mizrahi decent.
2. Aliyah (ascendance) is a term with a positive connotation that describes the immigration of Jews to Israel. State and semi-State organizations have been actively advocating Aliyah among Jewish communities around the world.
3. Peled, "Towards a Redefinition of Jewish Nationalism in Israel?."
4. Sprinzak, *Brother against Brother*.
5. Filc, *Political Right in Israel*.
6. Robert I. Friedman, *The False Prophet: Rabbi Meir Kahane: From FBI Informant to Knesset Member*, 1st ed. (Brooklyn, NY: Lawrence Hill, 1990).
7. Libby Kahane, *Rabbi Meir Kahane: His Life and Thought* (Jerusalem: Institute for the Publication of the Writings of Rabbi, Meir Kahane, 2008), 21–18.
8. Yair Kotler, *Heil Kahane* (New York: Adama, 1986).
9. Sprinzak, *Ascendance of Israel's Radical Right*, 188.
0. Kahane, *Rabbi Meir Kahane*, 184.
1. Ibid., 267.
2. Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*; Peled, "Ethnic Exclusionism in the Periphery"; Sprinzak, *Ascendance of Israel's Radical Right*.
3. Pedahzur, *Extreme Right-Wing Parties in Israel: Emergence and Decline?*, 52.
4. Ibid., 102–4. Amana was the settlement wing of Gush Emunim (see chap. 2).
5. Peled, "Ethnic Exclusionism in the Periphery."
6. Development towns emerged as peripheral residential areas erected in the 1950s mostly in the Negev and the Galilee. The objective was to settle the masses of immigrants that flooded Israel and to establish a Jewish presence in areas that were dominated by Arabs.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Robert I. Friedman, "The Sayings of Rabbi Kahane," *New York Review of Books* 33, no. 2 (1986).
0. Raphael Cohen-Almagor, "Vigilant Jewish Fundamentalism: From the JDL to Kach (or 'Shalom Jews, Shalom Dogs')," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 4, no. 1 (1992).
1. Friedman, "The Sayings of Rabbi Kahane," 15–20.
2. Pedahzur, "The Extreme Right-Wing Parties in Israel: Development and Change," 369; Sprinzak, *Ascendance of Israel's Radical Right*, 238.
3. Asher Arian and Michal Shamir, *The Elections in Israel, 1988* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1990).
4. Sprinzak, *Ascendance of Israel's Radical Right*, 238.
5. See for example Asher Arian and Michal Shamir, *The Elections in Israel, 1996* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1999).
6. Meir Kahane, *Our Challenge: The Chosen Land*, 1st ed. (Radnor, PA: Chilton Book Co., 1974); Meir Kahane, *Forty Years*, 2nd ed. (Brooklyn, NY: Institute of the Jewish Idea, 1989).
7. For a detailed analysis of Kahane's ideas, see Sprinzak, *Ascendance of Israel's Radical Right*, 215–33.
8. See Asher Arian and Michal Shamir, *The Elections in Israel, 1992*, SUNY Series in Israeli Studies (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1995).
9. Pedahzur, *Extreme Right-Wing Parties in Israel: Emergence and Decline?*, 69.
0. Peled, "Towards a Redefinition of Jewish Nationalism in Israel?."
1. Hashmonayim (Hasmoneans) were a dynasty that ruled over the area of present-day Israel during the Classical antiquity era

(ca. 140–37 BCE). The founder of the dynasty was Simon Thassi, son of Mattathias.

2. Kahane, *Forty Years*.

3. Meir Kahane, "Kahana speech at the Israeli Knesset 12/1984," 1984.

4. For a detailed list see Raphael Cohen-Almagor, *The Boundaries of Liberty and Tolerance: The Struggle against Kahanism in Israel* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1994).

5. Pedahzur, *Israeli Response to Jewish Extremism and Violence: Defending Democracy*.

6. Yehonatan Adiel, Boaz Okun, and Hannah. Ben-Ami, "Itamar Ben-Gvier Vs. Amnon Dankner," in *342/02*, ed. Jerusalem District Court–Appeals Court (Jerusalem: nevo.co.il, 2002); Kotler, *Heil Kahane*.

7. The terms "Sephardic" and "Mizrahi" refer to Jewish immigrants from Muslim countries while "Ashkenazi" refers to Jews of European descent.

8. Yoav Peled, *Shas: etgar ha-Yisreeliyut* [Shas: The challenge of Israeliness] (Tel Aviv: Yediot Aharonot; Sifre Hemed, 2001); Aviezer Ravitzky, *Shas: hebetim tarbutiyim ve-rayoniyim* [Shas: Cultural and ideological perspectives] (Tel Aviv: Am Oved; Merkaz Yitzhak Rabin, 2006); Ricky Tesler, *Be-shem ha-Shem: Shas veha-mahpekhah ha-datit* [In the name of God] (Jerusalem: Keter, 2003), 32–35.

9. A religious principle that subjects a Jew who lives under a foreign rule to the laws of the state as long as they do not stand in sharp contradiction to the Halakha.

0. The notion of a "Chosen People" refers to a belief that the Jewish people have a special covenant with the Lord.

1. Pam Coyle, "Shacharit: Translation Weekday Prayers," (Ka-ka-tuv, 2005).

2. "Moser" can be translated as "traitor," or literally, "informer" and describes a Jew who informs on a fellow Jew and thus puts his life or property in danger. The term was given different meanings and was recently referred to in the context of the prohibition of giving up parts of Eretz Yisrael to foreigners.

3. Arye Dayan, *ha-Mayan ha-mitgaber: sipurah shel tenuat Shas* [The Story of Shas] (Jerusalem: Keter, 1999), 151.

4. Ibid.

5. Cohen-Almagor, *Boundaries of Liberty and Tolerance*, 228.

6. Ibid., 229–37.

7. Ibid.; Pedahzur, *ha-Demokratyah ha-mitgonenet be-Yisrael*; Michal Shamir, "Political Intolerance among Masses and Elites in Israel: A Reevaluation of the Elitist Theory of Democracy," *Journal of Politics* 53, no. 4 (1991).

8. Pedahzur, *Israeli Response to Jewish Extremism and Violence: Defending Democracy*.

9. Ibid.

0. Sprinzak, *Ascendance of Israel's Radical Right*, 246; Zeev Sternhell, "As Legitimate as the Professor and the Museum Director," *Haaretz*, August 26, 1988.

1. Kach became the second party in Israel's history to be banned from taking part in parliamentary elections. In 1964, the "Socialist List" was disqualified by the Central Elections Committee and the Supreme Court.

2. Shamir, "Political Intolerance among Masses and Elites in Israel."

3. Peled, "Ethnic Exclusionism in the Periphery."; Sprinzak, *Ascendance of Israel's Radical Right*.

4. See Michael Shashar, *Sihot im Rehavam-Gandi-Zeevi* [Talks with Rehavam-Gandhi-Zeevi] (Tel Aviv: Yediot Aharonot; Sifre Hemed, 1992).

5. *Moledet Video* (1988).

6. Peled, "Ethnic Exclusionism in the Periphery."

7. "Levantines" derive from the Levant, which is a geographical area in the eastern part of the Mediterranean Basin. In Israel this was a derogatory term used to describe the "crude" behavior of individuals of Middle Eastern origin. Amir Oren, "The Second Strike of Halutz," *Haaretz*, March 17, 2006.

8. Peled, "Ethnic Exclusionism in the Periphery"; Peled, "Towards a Redefinition of Jewish Nationalism in Israel?."

9. The Agudat Yisrael representation grew from two to five seats, and Shas from four to six.

0. For exceptions see Asher Arian, *The Second Republic*, 132; Eliezer Don-Yehiya, "Religion, Social Cleavages, and Political Behavior: The Religious Parties in the Elections," in *Who's the Boss in Israel: Israel at the Polls, 1988–89*, ed. Daniel Elazar and Shmuel Sandler (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1992).

1. Yaron Svoray, "El Nosair Approached, Smiled, Took his Gun Out and Shot Kahane," *Hadashot*, 1990; Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11* (New York: Knopf, 2006).

2. Baruch Marzel, Noam Federman, and Tiran Pollack.

3. Pedahzur, "Supporting Conditions for the Survival of Extreme Right-Wing Parties in Israel," 184–89.

4. Pedahzur and Perliger, *Jewish Terrorism in Israel*: 71.

5. Ami Pedahzur and Daphna Canetti-Nisim, "Kahane is Dead but Kahanism is Alive: Explaining the Support for Extreme Right-Wing Attitudes in Israel," *Megamot* 44, no. 2 (2006); Peled, "Ethnic Exclusionism in the Periphery"; Sprinzak, *Ascendance of Israel's Radical Right*.

6. Pedahzur and Canetti-Nisim, "Support for Right-Wing Extremist Ideology."

7. Nahum Barnea, "Now the Sub Machine Gun will Talk," *Yediot Aharonot*, November 9, 1990.

8. Haklai, "Religious-nationalist Mobilization and State Penetration."

9. See Amos Oz, *In the Land of Israel* (New York: Vintage, 1984).

Chapter 4

1. Shragai, *Har ha-merivah*; Gershom Gorenberg, *The End of Days: Fundamentalism and the Struggle for the Temple Mount* (New York: Free Press, 2000).
2. Hefez and Bloom, *ha-Roeh: sipur hayav shel Ariel Sharon*, 417.
3. Bernard Wasserstein, *Divided Jerusalem: The Struggle for the Holy City*, 3rd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 357.
4. Daniela Yanai, "Winning the Battle, Losing the War: 40 Years of Israeli Rule in East Jerusalem" (an Ir Amim position paper, Jerusalem: Ir Amim, 2007).
5. Abraham Diskin, "The Israeli General Election of 1988," *Electoral Studies* 8, no. 1 (1989).
6. Yanai, "Winning the Battle."
7. Etan Felner, *Mediniyut shel aflayah: hafka`at karka`ot, tikhnun u-veniyah be-Mizrah Yerushalayim* [A Policy of Discrimination: Land Expropriation, Planning and Building in East Jerusalem] (Jerusalem: Betselem, 1995), 11–12.
8. Elad is an acronym of El Ir David (To the City of David). The City of David is located in the village of Silwan in East Jerusalem and considered the capital of the biblical Kingdom of David.
9. See Shragai, *Har ha-merivah: ha-maavak al Har-ha-Bayit: Yehudim u-Muslemim, dat u-politikah me-az 1967*; Motti Inbari, *Jewish Fundamentalism and the Temple Mount: Who Will Build the Third Temple?* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2009).
0. Gorenberg, *The End of Day*, 82, 182–83.
1. "Biography: Irving Moskowitz," author unknown, http://www.moskowitzfoundation.org/bio.html.
2. Yitzhak Benhorin, "From America to the Settlements" (Tel Aviv: Ynet [Yediot Aharonot], 2005).
3. Nadav Shragai, "Obama's Position? Chutzpah," *Israel Hayom*, May 21, 2010.
4. Meron Rapoport, "Shady Dealings in Silwan." (Jerusalem: Ir Amim, 2009).
5. Among these were Rabbi Simcha Hacohen Kook, Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, Rabbi Nachman Kahane, Rabbi Shlomo Aviner, and Rabbi Avigdor Nebenzahl.
6. Other main activists were Yisrael Feuchtwanger; Aharon Bir, a guide to and expert of the Old City and the history of Jerusalem; and Adv. Shabtai Zechariah, a history enthusiast who specialized in the history of the Jews in Jerusalem.
7. *Moledet Video*.
8. Shragai, *Har ha-merivah*, 199–207.
9. "A Recording of a Speech by Yitzhak Shamir at the Inauguration of Beit Orot Yeshiva," http://www.beitorot.org/content.asp?pageid=198.
0. For more see Aaron Cohen and Douglas Century, *Brotherhood of Warriors: Behind Enemy Lines with One of the World's most Elite Counterterrorism Commandos*, (New York: Ecco/HarperCollins, 2008).
1. Rapoport, "Shady Dealings in Silwan."
2. Ibid., 7–8.
3. Yael Alfasi-Shoarky, "David'le Insists: The Relations Between the Neighbors in Ir David are Terrific," *NRG-Maariv* 2008.
4. Rapoport, "Shady Dealings in Silwan," 12–13.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., 13–14.
7. Ibid., 13–17.
8. Alfasi-Shoarky, "David'le Insists."
9. Rapoport, "Shady Dealings in Silwan," 13–17.
0. According to the *jus sanguinis* principle, the citizenship of a person is determined according to the ethnic or national origins of his parents rather than his or her own place of birth.
1. State Comptroller of Israel, "Audit Report on Nativ," (Jerusalem1998), 5–6.
2. Kahane, *Rabbi Meir Kahane*, 453–57.
3. Ibid.; David Harris, "End a Cold War Relic," *New York Times*, July 15, 2010.
4. Majid Al-Haj, "Ethnic Mobilization in an Ethno-National State: The Case of Immigrants from the Former Soviet Union in Israel," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 25, no. 2 (2002): 241.
5. Hefez and Bloom, *ha-Roeh: sipur hayav shel Ariel Sharon*, 442, 47–49.
6. Sheleg, "Not Halakhically Jewish."
7. See Al-Haj, "Ethnic Mobilization in an Ethno-National State"; Ian Lustick, "Israel as a Non-Arab State: The Political Implications of Mass Immigration of Non-Jews," *Middle East Journal* 53, no. 3 (1999).
8. Sammy Smooha, "The Mass Immigrations to Israel: A Comparison of the Failure of the Mizrahi Immigrants of the 1950s with the Success of the Russian Immigrants of the 1990s," *Journal of Israeli History* 27, no. 1 (2008).
9. See Tal Rosner, "The High Court of Justice: Pork Can Be Sold in Towns where Most of the Residents Approve of It," *Ynetnews.com*, June 14, 2004.
0. Asher Arian, Michael Philippov, and Anna Knafelman, "Auditing Israeli Democracy 2009: Twenty years of Immigration from the Soviet Union." (Jerusalem: The Israel Democracy Institute, President's Conference, 2009), 77.

1. Canetti-Nisim and Pedahzur, "Contributory Factors to Political Xenophobia in a Multi-Cultural Society"; Arian, Philippov, and Knafelman, "Auditing Israeli Democracy 2009," 12, 79–81.
2. Etta Bick, "Sectarian Party Politics in Israel: The Case of Yisrael BaAliya, the Russian Immigrant Party," *Israel Affairs* 4, no. 1 (1997).
3. Arian, Philippov, and Knafelman, "Auditing Israeli Democracy 2009," 71.
4. Nivi Klein, "Foreign Workers in Israel–An Overview," (Jerusalem, The Knesset, 2001).
5. David Bartram, "Foreign Workers in Israel: History and Theory," *International Migration Review* 32, no. 2 (1998).
6. Gilad Natan, "Labor Migrants and Victims of Human Trafficking: The Government's Policy and the Action of the Immigration Authority" (Jerusalem: Knesset Research and Information Center, 2009), 4.
7. CBS, "At the End of 2006 in Israel: Some 102,000 Foreign Workers Entered with Work Permits, and 84,000 Entered as Tourists," Central Bureau of Statistics, press release (Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2007).
8. Klein, "Foreign Workers in Israel–An Overview."
9. Bartram, "Foreign Workers in Israel," 313.
0. CBS, "At the End of 2006 in Israel."
1. Adriana Kemp et al., "Contesting the Limits of Political Participation: Latinos and Black African Migrant Workers in Israel," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 23, no. 1 (2000).
2. Adriana Kemp and Rivka Raijman, "'Foreign Workers' in Israel," in *Information about Equality* (Tel Aviv: Adva Center, 2003), 18.
3. Canetti-Nisim and Pedahzur, "Contributory Factors to Political Xenophobia in a Multi-Cultural Society"; Ami Pedahzur and Yael Yishai, "Hatred by Hated People: Xenophobia in Israel," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 22, no. 1 (1999).

Chapter 5

1. Haklai, "Religious-nationalist Mobilization and State Penetration," 134.
2. Throughout most of the 1980s, national unity cabinets in which the Likud was dominant (with the exclusion of 1984–86 when Shimon Peres, the head of the Labor Party, served as prime minister in a national unity government with Yitzhak Shamir as his deputy and the foreign minister) were in power. During that period the Likud and its allies from the Right managed to populate senior governmental positions with their supporters.
3. See Ben-Simon, *Erets aheret: nitshon ha-shulayim*.
4. Huberman, *Against all Odds*.
5. Hefez and Bloom, *ha-Roeh: sipur hayav shel Ariel Sharon*, 449.
6. Akiva Eldar, "The End of Oslo," *Haaretz*, October 25, 2010.
7. Hefez and Bloom, *ha-Roeh: sipur hayav shel Ariel Sharon*, 448–49.
8. Huberman, *Against all Odds*, 230.
9. Ibid., 238–43.
0. Ibid., 234–38.
1. Avraham Shevut, *Ascent to the Mountains: Renewal of Jewish Settlement in Judea and Samaria* (Jerusalem: Sifriyat Bet El, 2002). 85.
2. Ami Pedahzur, *Miflegot ha-yamin ha-kitsoni be-Yisrael: mi-tsemihah li-deikhah?* [The Extreme Right-Wing Parties in Israel: Emergence and Decline?] (Tel Aviv: Hotsaat Ramot, Universitat Tel Aviv, 2000), 133–34.
3. Sprinzak, *Ascendance of Israel's Radical Right*, 73–80.
4. Pedahzur, *Miflegot ha-yamin ha-kitsoni be-Yisrael*.
5. Ibid., 48, 114–15, 75.
6. For a comprehensive account see Giora Goldberg, *The Israeli Voter, 1992* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1994).
7. As well as Kach in 1984.
8. Pedahzur, *Miflegot ha-yamin ha-kitsoni be-Yisrael*, 29–63.
9. Gadi Taub, *Settlers and the Struggle over the Meaning of Zionism* (Tel Aviv: Yediot Aharonot: Sifre Hemed, 2007), 103–5.
0. Yoel Bin-Nun, "We Did Not Succeed to Settle in the Hearts," *Nekuda*, April 1992.
1. Taub, *Settlers and the Struggle over the Meaning of Zionism*, 54.
2. Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, *Mizmor 19 li-medinat Yisrael* [Sermon 19: For the State of Israel] (Israel: Keren P.A.K.A., 1983).
3. Menachem Klein, "The Next Big Confrontation," *Haaretz*, March 8, 2010; Haklai, "Religious-nationalist Mobilization and State Penetration."
4. See Ian Lustick, *Unsettled States, Disputed Lands: Britain and Ireland, France and Algeria, Israel and the West Bank-Gaza* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993); Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*.
5. See Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2005).
6. Yosi Goldshtain, *Rabin: Biyografyah* (Tel Aviv: Shoken, 2006), 361–62.
7. See Yitzhak Rabin and Dov Goldstein, *Pinkas sherut* [A Service Notebook](Tel Aviv: Sifriat Maariv, 1979).

8. Goldshtain, *Rabin: Biyografyah*, 280–81.

9. Michael Karpin and Ina Friedman, *Murder in the Name of God: The Plot to Kill Yitzhak Rabin*, 1st ed. (New York: Metropolitan Books: H. Holt and Co., 1998), 86.

0. Huberman, *Against all Odds*, 254–56.

1. For an elaborated discussion, see Sprinzak, *Brother against Brother*; Yoram Peri, *Brothers at War: Rabin's Assassination and the Cultural War in Israel* (Tel Aviv: Bavel, 2005).

2. Huberman, *Against all Odds*, 252–56.

3. Ibid., 258–63.

4. Sprinzak, *Brother against Brother*, 231; Karpin and Friedman, *Murder in the Name of God*.

5. Eldar and Zertal, *Lords of the Land*, 195–96; Moshe Feiglin, *Where There Are No Men: The Struggle of the "Zo Artzeinu" Movement against the Post-Zionist Collapse* (Jerusalem: Metsudah, 1997).

6. Daniel Ben-Simon, *New Israel*, 76.

7. Eldar and Zertal, *Lords of the Land*, 195–96.

8. Ibid., 198.

9. For a comprehensive account see Karpin and Friedman, *Murder in the Name of God*.

0. Rebbe is the Yiddish word for the Hebrew Rabbi. Hassidic Jews use the word to refer to a leader or mentor.

1. See Samuel Heilman and Menachem Friedman, *The Rebbe: The Life and Afterlife of Menachem Mendel Schneerson* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

2. Sheleg, *ha-Datiyim ha-hadashim*, 159–65; Ben-Simon, *New Israel*, 201–10.

3. See: Feiglin, *Where There Are No Men*.

4. Haklai, "Religious-nationalist Mobilization and State Penetration."

5. Huberman, *Against all Odds*, 273–92.

6. See Sason, "Summary of the Opinion Concerning Unauthorized Outposts"; Huberman, *Against all Odds*

7. Meron Benbenisti, "The Transition of Israel to a Bi-National State," *Haaretz*, January 22, 2010.

8. Ben Kaspit, Ilan Kafir, and Danny Dor, *Netanyahu: ha-derekh el ha-koah* [Netanyahu: The Road to Power] (Tel-Aviv: Alfa, 1997), 183; Ronit Vardi, *Bibi: mi atah, adoni rosh ha-memshalah?* [Binyamin Netanyahu: Who are you, Mr. Prime Minister?] (Jerusalem: Keter, 1997), 267.

9. Lily Galili, "Testimonies: The Chair of Yisrael Beiteinu, Avigdor Lieberman, was a Member of Kach," *Haaretz*, January 1, 2009.

0. Kaspit, Kafir, and Dor, *Netanyahu*, 183; Vardi, *Bibi: mi atah*, 284–86.

1. Vardi, *Bibi: mi atah*, 289–90.

2. These teams included American academics such as Dore Gold, Yoram Hazoni, and David Bar-Ilan (who was born in Haifa but spent many years of his life in the United States).

3. Vardi, *Bibi: mi atah*, 290. This title was a paraphrase of a well-known line from Zeev Jabotinsky's Betar Song.

4. Pedahzur, "The Golan Residents Committee: From an Ally to a Foe," 118.

5. "It is Inconceivable To Leave the Golan Heights," The Golan Residents Committee, author unknown (Israel 1993).

6. Hatnuah Hakibbutzit HaMeuhedet (the United Kibbutz Movement or Takam), Tnuat Hamo-shavim (the Moshavim Movement) and Hamerkaz Hahaklai (the Agricultural Center).

7. See Aryeh Kaplan, *The Living Torah: The Five Books of Moses: A New Translation Based on Traditional Jewish Sources, with Notes, Introduction, Maps, Tables, Charts, Bibliography, and Index* (New York: Maznaim, 1981).

8. Zipora Luria, "The Empty Image," *Eretz Acheret* 10 (2002), http://acheret.co.il/?cmd=articles.171&act=read&id=901.

9. Pnina Shukrun-Nagar, "Media and Discourse Analysis: Disengagment Terminologies," *Studies in Israeli and Modern Jewish Society* 18 (2008): 348–50.

0. Yehuda Ben Meir, "Public Opinon Poll on Security Related Issues," *Mabat Al* 114, no. 14 (2009).

1. Pedahzur, "The Golan Residents Committee: From an Ally to a Foe," 125.

2. Ephraim Yaar and Tamar Hermann, "War and Peace Index (Peace Index)," The Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research http://www.spirit.tau.ac.il/xeddexcms008/manage.asp?siteID=5&lang=2&pageID=203&stateID=65.

3. Pedahzur, "The Golan Residents Committee: From an Ally to a Foe," 165.

4. Itamar Rabinovich, *The Brink of Peace: The Israeli-Syrian Negotiations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

Chapter 6

1. Among other topics dealt with in the Oslo B Accords of 1995, division of Palestinian areas consisted of: (1) full civilian and security Palestinian autonomy, (2) Palestinian civilian control, (3) full Israeli control. Ben-Simon, *Erets aheret*, 64–65.

2. Ronit Vardi, *Benjamin Netanyahu: Who Are You, Mr. Prime Minister?* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1997). 292–93.

3. Michael I. Karpin and Ina Friedman, *Murder in the Name of God*, 1st ed. (New York: Metropolitan Books: H. Holt and Co., 1998), 116.

4. Ben-Simon, *Erets aheret*, 62.

5. Ibid., 65–66.

6. Yoram Peri, *Yad ish be-ahiv: retsah Rabin u-milhemet ha-tarbut be-Yisrael* [Brothers at war: Rabin's assassination and the cultural war in Israel] (Tel Aviv: Bavel, 2005), 43; Amnon Kapeliouk, *Rabin, retsah politi be-`ezrat ha-Shem* [Rabin: A political assassination] (Tel Aviv: Sifriyat po`alim, 1996), 59–60.

7. Ben-Simon, *Erets ahere*, 64–66; Carmi Gillon, *Shabak ben ha-keraim* [Shin-Beth between the schisms] (Tel Aviv: Yediot Aharonot: Sifre Hemed, 2000).

8. Ben-Simon, *Erets aheret*, 71–72.

9. Karpin and Friedman, *Murder in the Name of God*.

0. Ibid.

1. Uri Ram, *The Globalization of Israel: McWorld in Tel Aviv, Jihad in Jerusalem* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

2. Asher Arian, "The Israeli Election for Prime Minister and the Knesset, 1996," *Electoral Studies* 15, no. 4 (1996).

3. Gillon, Shin-Beth between the schisms: 359; Daniel Byman, *A High Price: The Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

4. Gidon Rahat, *The Politics of Regime Structure Reform in Democracies: Israel in Comparative and Theoretical Perspective* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2008); Reuven Hazan and Gideon Rahat, "Representation, Electoral Reform, and Democracy: Theoretical and Empirical Lessons from the 1996 Elections in Israel," *Comparative Political Studies* 33, no. 10 (2000); Avraham Brichta, *Political Reform in Israel: The Quest for a Stable and Fffective Government* (Brighton, UK: Sussex Academic Press, 2001).

5. Hefez and Bloom, *ha-Roeh: sipur hayav shel Ariel Sharon*, 484–85.

6. Galit Marmor-Lavie and Gabriel Weimann, "Measuring Emotional Appeals in Israeli Election Campaigns," *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 18, no. 3 (2006).

7. Vardi, *Binyamin Netanyahu*.

8. Ibid., 203.

9. Kaspit, Kafir, and Dor, *Netanyahu*, 299–307.

0. Hefez and Bloom, *ha-Roeh: sipur hayav shel Ariel Sharon*, 487.

1. David Bernstein, *Diamonds and Demons: The Joseph Gutnick Story* (Port Melbourne, Australia: Lothian, 2000), 92–94; Grinfild, *Hem mefahadim*, 15.

2. Ephraim Shach, phone interview, December 1, 2010.

3. Grinfild, *Hem mefahadim*, 133–34; Sheleg, *New Religious Jews*, 204.

4. Mazal Mualem, "Netanyahu's Apology to the Left is a Weapon," *Haaretz*, August 31, 2009.

5. Sheleg, *ha-Datiyim ha-hadashim*, 34–36; Ehud Sprinzak, "The Politics of Paralysis I: Netanyahu's Safety Belt," *Foreign Affairs* 77, no. 4 (1998): 22.

6. Nahum Barnea, *Yeme Netanyahu: turim politiyim, September 1993–March 1999* (Tel Aviv: Zemorah-Bitan, 1999), 382–84; Ehud Sprinzak, "The Israeli Right and the Peace Process, 1992–1996," Davis Occasional papers no. 59 (Jerusalem: Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1998).

7. Sprinzak, *Israeli Right and the Peace Process, 1992–1996*, 23.

8. Among the peoples who occupied the Sinai and Negev areas during the tribal allotments of Israel, the Amalekites are considered the most evil and bitter enemies of the Jews. Over the years the term became generic and is used to describe Jewish foes. Baruch Kimmerling and Joel Migdal, *The Palestinian People: A History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

9. Tamar Horowitz, "Determining Factors of the Vote among Immigrants from the Former Soviet Union," in *The Elections in Israel, 1996*, ed. Asher Arian and Michal Shamir (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1999).

0. Baruch Kimmerling, *Kets shilton ha-Ahusalim: Ashkenazim, hilonim, vatikim, sotsyalistim u-leumiyim* [End of Ashkenazi Hegemony] (Jerusalem: Keter, 2001). 63.

1. Horowitz, "Determining Factors," 130.

2. Shafir and Peled, *Being Israeli*, 319.

3. Kimmerling, *Kets shilton ha-Ahusalim*, 66.

4. Hillel Frisch, "The Arab Vote in the 1996 General Elections: The Radicalization of Politicization?" *Israel Affairs* 4, no. 1 (1997); Ilana Kaufman and Rachel Israeli, "The Odd Group Out: The Arab-Palestinian Vote in the 1996 Elections," in Arian and Shamir, *Elections in Israel*.

5. Shevah Weiss, *14,729 Missing Votes* (Tel Aviv: ha-Kibuts ha-meuhad, 1997).

6. Baruch Kimmerling, "Elections as a Battleground over Collective Identity," in Arian and Shamir, *Elections in Israel*.

7. Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-national Perspectives*, International Yearbook of Political Behavior Research (New York: Free Press, 1967).

8. Weiss, *14,729 Missing Votes*.

9. Rivk Goldfinger, "Religious at the Top," Article, Channel 7 (2010), http://www.inn.co.il/Besheva/Article.aspx/9712. When Lieberman eventually stepped down in 1998, he was replaced by Uri Elitzur, the former secretary general of Amana, spokesperson of the Yesha Council, and the editor of the settlers' magazine *Nekuda*.

0. Eldar and Zertal, *Lords of the Land*, 216–17.

1. Huberman, *Against all Odds*, 320.
2. Dan Naveh, *Executive Secrets* (Tel Aviv: Yediot Aharonot: Sifre Hemed, 1999), 35.
3. HaMerkaz HaHofshi (The Free Center), HaMerkaz HaAtzmai (The Independent Center), and HaTenua Lemaan Eretz Yisrael HaSheleima (The Land of Israel Movement).
4. See Zvi Shiloah, *The Guilt of Jerusalem* (Tel Aviv: Karni, 1989).
5. Dan Margalit, *I Have Seen Them All* (Tel Aviv: Zemorah-Bitan, 1997), 275.
6. Shmuel Berkovits, *Battle for the Holy Places: The Struggle over Jerusalem and the Holy Sites in Israel, Judea, Semaria, and the Gaza Strip* (Or Yehudah, Israel: Hed Artsi, 2000). 77.
7. The Holy Basin in Jerusalem refers to a geographical area that includes the Old City of Jerusalem and its surroundings. Ron Hassner, *War on Sacred Grounds* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009).
8. Berkovits, *Battle for the Holy Places*, 77.
9. Ibid., 77–79. The Arab League formed in 1945 as an organization that united eighteen Arab states, three states with ties to the Arab world (Somalia, Djibouti, Comoros), and Palestine, represented by the PLO.
0. Huberman, *Against all Odds*, 321–23.
1. Avraham Shevut, "The 'Temporary Center' as an Element in the Evolution of Yesha Settlements," in Shevut, *Ascent to the Mountains*, 190–93.
2. Eldar and Zertal, *Lord of the Land*, 217.
3. Huberman, *Against all Odds*, 347.
4. Arieli and Sefarad, *Homah u-mehdal* (see map 16); Hefez and Bloom, *ha-Roeh: sipur hayav shel Ariel Sharon*, 499.
5. Eldar and Zertal, *Lords of the Land*, 555.
6. Shevut, "The 'Temporary Center.'"
7. Moshavim were cooperative agricultural communities. Unlike the Kibbutzim, they allowed individual ownership of property.
8. Hefez and Bloom, *ha-Roeh: sipur hayav shel Ariel Sharon*, 491.
9. The cluster is located seven miles east of the city of Modiin, which unlike Modiin Illit, was built on sovereign Israeli land between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.
0. Nadav Shragai, "One Outpost after the Other: The Creation of Jewish Settling Continuity," *Haaretz*, September 6, 2004.
1. Sason, "Summary of the Opinion Concerning Unauthorized Outposts."
2. Shragai, "One Outpost after the Other."
3. Yehiel Admoni, *Ef`al: Mekhon Yisrael Gelili le-heker koah ha-magen* [Decade of Discretion] (Tel Aviv: ha-Kibuts ha-meuhad, 1992).
4. Zertal and Eldar, *Lords of the Land*; Haklai, "Religious-nationalist Mobilization and State Penetration"; Sason, "Summary of the Opinion Concerning Unauthorized Outposts"; Huberman, *Against all Odds*. They included the Housing and Construction Ministry, the Ministry of Defense, the IDF (most notably the Central Command and the Civilian Administration), the Ministry of the Interior, and the Settling Division of the World Zionist Organization.
5. Huberman, *Against all Odds*, 351; Sason, "Summary of the Opinion Concerning Unauthorized Outposts."
6. Huberman, *Against all Odds*, 351.
7. Sason, "Summary of the Opinion Concerning Unauthorized Outposts," 3.
8. Sheleg, *New Religious Jews*.
9. Lawrence Susskind et al., "Religious and Ideological Dimensions of the Israeli Settlements Issue: Reframing the Narrative?" *Negotiation Journal* 21, no. 2 (2005).
0. Shlomo Kaniel, "The Settlers of the Hilltops in Yesha: Psychological Aspects," (Ariel, Israel: Center for Research and Development: Smaria and the Jordan Valley, 2003).
1. Ibid.
2. Susskind et al., "Religious and Ideological Dimensions."
3. Huberman, *Against all Odds*, 350.
4. Dennis Ross, *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace*, 1st pbk. ed. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), 460.
5. Huberman, *Against all Odds*, 351.
6. Lior Datal, "Lieberman's Way: The Fights, The Investigations and the Ties to Netanyahu," *Haaretz*, February 15, 2009.
7. Filc, *Political Right in Israel*, 68–74.
8. Datal, "Lieberman's Way."
9. Pedahzur, "The Transformation of the Israeli Extreme Right," 34–35.
0. Nomi Levitsky, *Your Honor* (Jerusalem: Keter, 2001).
1. Pedahzur, "The Transformation of the Israeli Extreme Right," 32.
2. Hanan Kristal et al., *The Sixth Commendation, 1999 Elections* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1999), 19.
3. Yoel Nir, *Arie Dery: The Rise, the Crisis, the Pain* (Tel Aviv: Yediot Aharonot: Sifre Hemed, 1999).
4. Leora Bilsky, "J'accuse: The Deri Trial, Political Trials, and Collective Memory," in *SHAS: The Challenge of Israelism*, ed. Yoav Peled (Tel Aviv: Yediot Aharonot: Sifre Hemed, 2001).
5. Grinfild, *Hem mefahadim*, 135; Pedahzur, "The Transformation of the Israeli Extreme Right," 34; Tesler, *Be-shem ha-Shem*,

259–61.

6. Cas Mudde, "The Populist Zeitgeist," *Government and Opposition* 39, no. 4 (2004): 562–63.
7. Rami Rozen, "I Explicitly Say: Yes to Oslo, Yes to the Hebron Agreement, Yes to Arafat," *Haaretz*, January 12, 2002.
8. Kimmerling, *Kets shilton ha-Ahusalim*, 58–62.
9. Pedahzur, "The Transformation of the Israeli Extreme Right," 37.
0. Kemp and Raijman, "'Foreign Workers' in Israel," 6.
1. Pedahzur, "Supporting Conditions for the Survival of Extreme Right-Wing Parties in Israel," 6.
2. See Lustick, "Israel as a Non-Arab State."
3. Asher Choen, "Shas and the Religious-Secular Cleavage," in *Shas*: *The Challenge of Israeliness*, ed. Yoav Peled (Tel Aviv: Yediot Aharonot: Sifre Hemed, 2001), 88.
4. In Russian "МВД под ШАС контроль? Нет! МВД под НАШ контроль."
5. Zvi Gitelman and Ken Goldstein, "The "Russian" Revolution in Israeli Politics," in Arian and Shamir, *Elections in Israel, 1999*, 213.
6. Pedahzur, "The Transformation of the Israeli Extreme Right," 38.
7. Peled, "Towards a Redefinition of Jewish Nationalism in Israel?."
8. Kristal et al., *Sixth Commendation*, 283.
9. Reuven Y. Hazan and Avraham Diskin, "The 1999 Knesset and Prime Ministerial Elections in Israel," *Electoral Studies* 19, no. 4 (2000).
0. For more see Arian and Korot, *Second Republic*, 134.
1. Don Peretz and Gideon Doron, "Sectarian Politics and the Peace Process: The 1999 Israel elections," *Middle East Journal* 54, no. 2 (2000).
2. Huberman, *Against all Odds*, 374–75.
3. Eldar and Zertal, *Lords of the Land*, 242–43; Yitzhak Ben-Horin, "Barak: During my Tenure We Built Four Times More" *Ynetnews.com*, December 10, 2010.
4. See Aaron David Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land: America's Elusive Search for Arab-Israeli Peace* (New York: Bantam, 2008).

Chapter 7

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9. Arian and Shamir, introduction to *Elections in Israel, 2009*, 23–24.

Conclusion

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2. Gideon Rahat and Reuven Y. Hazan, "One Winner, Two Winners, No Winners: The 2009 Elections in Israel," *Representation* 45, no. 4 (2009): 409–10; Lily Galili, "George Birenbum: The Man Behind Lieberman's Campaign," *Haaretz*, February 13, 2009.

3. These were Brit Leumit Demokratit (National Democratic Assembly) and the alliance between Reshima Aravit Meuhedet (United Arab List) and Tnua Aravit LeHithadshut (Arab Movement for Renewal).

4. Most notable among them were the IDF's former chief of staff Moshe (Bogi) Yaalon, the former police commissioner Assaf Hefetz, retired generals Yossi Peled and Uzi Dayan, and former ministers Dan Meridor and Benny Begin. Netanyahu even brought on a basketball star, Tal Brody, one of Israel's iconic athletes.

5. Including Moledet, Tkuma, and Hatikva (The Hope), led by Aryeh Eldad.

6. Asher Cohen, "The Parties of the Scattering Camp: The Zionist Religious Parties in the 2009 Elections," in Arian and Shamir,

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8. Ibid. This is a scenario in which the coalition excludes a party that is close to its own agenda, in this case Kadima, while including a party that seems to have opposite ideas (i.e., Labor). Soon after the elections, the beaten Labor Party began a process of disintegration, which revolved for the most part around Barak's determination to stick to the coalition. The process ended on January 17, 2011, when Ehud Barak and four of his cronies left the party and formed a new faction, Siaat HaAtzmaut (Independence), which remained a member of the coalition while the other Knesset members from the Labor Party joined the opposition.

9. See Cohen, "The Parties of the Scattering Camp: The Zionist Religious Parties in the 2009 Elections."

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3. Haklai, "Religious-nationalist Mobilization and State Penetration"; Zertal and Eldar, *Lords of the Land*.

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6. Avirama Golan, "Torn Kippa," *Haaretz*, July 6, 2011.

7. Amos Harel, "The Struggle within the IDF Over the Control of the Dome (also Yarmulka)," *Haaretz*, July 22, 2011.

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