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Between Politics and Politics of Identity: The Case of the Arab Jews

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In a conference held at Tel Aviv University in 2008 titled “The Iraqis,” the conferees discussed various aspects pertinent to Jews who had emigrated from Iraq to Israel. Most of the time, the conferees enjoyed the conference, but there was one issue that raised strong reaction: the term “Arab Jew.” “Anyone declaring himself an ‘Arab Jew’ today is doing so for reasons of fashion, and out of political motivation,” declared Professor Sasson Somekh, one of the conference’s organizers. Sociologist Sammy Smooha was even more adamant: “The term [Arab Jew] has no ground in reality. . . . A Jew cannot belong to the Arab nation.” The crowd applauded in response to this statement.¹ Reuven Snir claims categorically, “An Arab Jewish group does not exist. . . . Such a category never existed.”² But what, then, is the meaning of Shimon Ballas’s assertion: “I have never denied my Arab origins The Arab identity has always been a part of me. And I have said and I say: I am an Arab who has taken up an Israeli identity, but I’m no less an Arab than any other Arab”?³ And what is the meaning of the description of other Jews of Arab origin as Arab Jews, or of those who argue that the Arab Jew existed and exists?⁴

Proponents of the political Arab Jew seek to undermine Ashkenazi (Jews of European origin) hegemony;⁵ it is in this context that Mizrahi activists object to the definer, mainly when it comes from Ashkenazim.⁶ Advocates of the political Arab Jew seek to change the power relations between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim in Israel. Beyond the political social or class aspect of their struggle, which is aimed at changing this relationship and their place in Israeli society, the struggle is about the politics of identity: who they are, and related to this, the relations between ethnicity and nation.

Cover image:

A Jewish Yemenite Family: Muse Serri (centre) with his family, the women wearing the everyday gargūsh hoods, Sana'a, Yemen, 1930s

Photographer: Yihye Haybi, Israeli, born Yemen, 1911–1977

Muchawsky-Schnapper, Ester, *The Yemenites: Two Thousand Years of Jewish Culture*, The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, 2000

The vast majority of these proponents are social scientists and scholars of cultural studies. Very few, if any, historians take part in the debate, which means among other things that the discussion is political and conceptual. History is involved in the debate, but as will be shown below, the debate is more about politics than history: the discussion is not necessarily meant to uncover a historical phenomenon; rather, it is meant to deliver a political, contemporary message. That message, however, is not always unambiguous.

My intention here is to study and analyze the writing, presentations, and representations of the proponents of the political Arab Jew and to explore the nature and meaning of the idea. The article will argue that the proponents of the political Arab Jew seek to separate the ethnos from the nation.⁷ This is so, despite the fact that for many the ethnic and the national are the same, and both are applicable to Jews of Arab and Muslim, as well as of European origin—even if some, like Oren Yiftachel, emphasize the Ashkenazi ethnic domination. The proponents of the political Arab Jew seek to separate the ethnos from the nation. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, they question the right of the nation-state to define them, and they reject the nation-state's claim that they are part of it. They reject an ascribed identity based on an ethnic/national juxtaposition and suggest their own kind of identity, a self-ascribed identity that separates the two. They do so, I would argue, by creating an “imagined community”; they refer to an ambiguous past, while seeking to claim the present and the future. They have attracted followers and supporters, but the agenda of these followers and supporters seems only to demonstrate the difficulties the proponents of the political Arab Jew have in achieving their ultimate goal.

One of the first to introduce the idea of the political Arab Jew was Ella Shohat.⁸ The timing of Shohat's introduction of the idea had to do with two conceptual developments: first, the spread of the idea of postcolonialism, which challenged the power relations between center or hegemony and periphery or object and which became popular during the second half of the 1980s;⁹ and second, in the Israeli context it was part of what Daniel Gutwein dubbed “the privatization of the Israeli collective,” which had its roots in the 1970s.¹⁰ Shohat introduced the idea by attacking the common

descriptor “Sephardi” (or “Edot Hamizrah”), which later became “Mizrahi,” and its meaning.¹¹ Others joined her soon enough, changing the meaning of the term, which had been understood as a definer of origin, not of a social construct. It had served to distinguish between people of different geographical dispersion, while simultaneously conveying an ethnic—or as termed by Matthias Lemann, subethnic—divide between two groups of people, the Ashkenazim and the Mizrahim. The category of subethnicity is significant, as it indicates that “the two communities did have a general sense of mutual solidarity.”¹² That is, the subethnic division suggests that the common was greater than the divisive. It was exactly that commonality that Shohat and the proponents of the political Arab Jew attacked. They see the Zionist movement, which they identified with the Ashkenazim, as a typical product of nineteenth-century Europe during the age of nationalism, imperialism, and Orientalism. The Zionist movement absorbed these two latter conceptions, and thus, while seeking to resolve the Jewish predicament in Europe, the Zionists were also working under the influence of European superiority over non-European peoples.

Borrowing from Walter Benjamin, Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin assails the Zionists' perception of history, which according to him is positivist and based on the idea of progress, which in turn led to the development of an Orientalist approach toward the Arabs of the Middle East, both Jews and non-Jews. In other words, the European Zionists believed that the advance of “their” values and attitudes would lead to a better future and should therefore be applied and prevail. Being “a branch of the European historiography” and derived from the European Enlightenment, the Zionist movement introduced its own version of salvation, which was based on Western liberalism and which seemed to suppress any competitive narrative and cultural variety. The histories of various past Jewish communities with intrinsic features, desires, and aims that did not necessarily correspond with Zionist goals were buried and vanished.¹³ In short, the negation of “Exile” also meant the negation of the memories of Arab Jews and of Palestinians, as well as the whole line of Jewish communities throughout history. According to this view, that sense of superiority was at the root of the Zionists' plan to establish a European-style colony in Palestine, and such a colony had no place for Jews of Arab

origin. It was only the destruction of European Jewry in the Holocaust that forced the Zionists to turn to Jews from Asia and Africa. Fearing the threat of demographic inferiority in a region surrounded by Arabs, the Zionists had no choice but to turn to Jews from Arab countries as a replacement for the major demographic reservoir that was lost in Europe.¹⁴

The proponents of the political Arab Jew argue that the European Jews had to find a way to create common ground between themselves and Arab Jews. The Arab Jews defined themselves as Jews, but their Judaism was woven deeply into the Muslim-Judaic cultural fabric. They shared “strong cultural and historical links . . . with the Arab/Muslim world, stronger in many respects than those they shared with the Ashkenazim.” They were “an integral part of the topography, language, culture and history of the Middle East,” and hence they were much closer to the Arabs and the Muslims than to the Ashkenazim. The Zionists had to sever those deep connections and links, and they did so by appealing to their Jewishness and by offering the Arab Jews a narrative that would bring them much closer to the Zionists/Ashkenazim than to the Arabs. That narrative was the claim that the Jewish people were one ethnic group, and that the Zionist movement represented the national aspirations of that group.¹⁵ In the process the Ashkenazim not only caused the Arab Jews to leave their places of origin and move to Israel but also forced them to sever ties with their Arab heritage and past.¹⁶ Using the triangle of religion-ethnicity-nationalism, the Zionists artificially welded together two entities that did not belong to each other—the Mizrahim and the Ashkenazim—in order to create a Jewish/Zionist entity that would stand up against the Arabs. The Zionists forced Arab Jews to break their links with the Arab world, and the Mizrahim had to forget their past, the memory of their neighbors, their collaboration with the people of the Muslim and Arab world, and their cultural, social, and political ties with them. They had to become something else—new Israelis, molded along the Zionist/Ashkenazi lines.¹⁷

The Zionist/Ashkenazi treatment of Mizrahim was only one side of the equation. Acting under the same logic, the Zionists/Ashkenazim employed the same practices they used against the Mizrahim against the Arab people of

Palestine. The Zionists provoked “ruptures, dislocations, and fragmentation for Palestinian lives.”¹⁸ These “ruptures” were not only physical but also cultural and conceptual. Endorsing the language of Benedict Anderson, Shohat describes the invention of the Zionist nation-state, which was based on two injustices: the dispossession of the Arab Jews of their identity and ties with their place and source of origin, the Arab world, and the dispossession of the Palestinian Arabs of their land. The Zionist national discourse uprooted the people of the land—the Arab Palestinians—and uprooted the Arab Jews from their culture. The destruction of the Palestinian community was necessary for the successful establishment of a Jewish, Zionist state; it was also a means to cleanse the land of its Oriental elements, and to make it Occidental. For the same reason, the Zionists/Ashkenazim needed to strip the Arab Jews of their Arab identity. The Zionists de-Arabized the land, cleansing it of its Arab residents, and de-Arabized the Arab Jews.¹⁹

Proponents of the political Arab Jew argue that another method the Zionists used to distance Arab Jews from their environment was binarisms such as “savagery versus civilization, tradition versus modernity, East versus West, and Arab versus Jew.”²⁰ They seek to repudiate that binarism by, among other means, arguing that Zionism’s claim to modernity was false. They argued that first, the State of Israel was not the modern state the Ashkenazim argued it was, and second, the Arab world was not the backward world the Ashkenazim claimed it was. Following Shlomo Swirski, Ella Shohat claims that the Ashkenazi pretention of being the embodiment of “values of modernity, industry, science, and democracy” was false. The countries from which the Ashkenazim came were “on the periphery of the world capitalist system, countries which entered the process of industrialization and technological-scientific development roughly at the same time as the Sephardi [Mizrahi] countries of origin.” Modernity was not part of the Ashkenazi “historical legacy”; rather, they had adopted it and used it to create “a system of privileges” through the labor of Jewish immigrants who had arrived en masse from the Orient.²¹ With that, Swirski and Shohat shift the line of division between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim (or Arab Jews) from the cultural divide (modern versus nonmodern) to a class divide—that is, the “ethnic division of labor,” an approach typical of European colonialism.²²

Shohat claims that the Orient was no less modern than the Occident. We see this through her use of words, phrases, and quotation marks. Shohat writes, “European culture is seen as the norm,” and the Orient “is seen as a ‘problem’ to be ‘solved’” (quotation marks in the original). Similarly, Shohat’s Arab society is not primitive but “primitive”; it is not backward but “backward.” Her stylistic choices emphasize the assumptions that were built into these arguments. The alleged Arab backwardness is the result of a “misinformed Zionist account” that advanced the argument that Oriental Jews came “from rural societies lacking all contact with technological civilization, as if metropolises such as Alexandria, Casablanca, Baghdad, Istanbul, and Teheran were nothing but desolate backwaters without electricity or automobiles.”²³ This is of course untrue, argues Shohat. Those cities had electricity and automobiles. Her conclusion: those metropolises were technologically advanced, no less than the cities from which the Ashkenazi Jews came, or to which they aspired to belong, in Europe.

Within this argument came another argument that refuted the Ashkenazi claim that the Jews’ life among Arabs was a life of suffering and persecution. Proponents of the political Arab Jew argue that unlike the European Jews, who failed to assimilate within European society, Arab Jews were an integral part of Arab society, culture, and state. It is true that Jewish status was lower than and inferior to the status of Muslims, but still, Jews lived comfortably and in a spirit of cooperation “and mutual cultural and spiritual fertilization” among Muslims for generations. The harassment of Jews by their Muslim neighbors was a marginal matter, and it would be a mistake to treat those marginal incidents as European-style “pogroms,” “persecutions,” and “anti-Semitism.” The reason for the “deterioration of the relations [sic]” between Arabs and Jews was the rise of Zionism and the inevitable conflict between Zionism and the emerging Arab and Palestinian nationalism.²⁴

Scholars are divided over the conditions of the Jews under Islam. Most argue that Jews living among Muslims had harsh, difficult lives, although there might be disagreement over the level and latitude of the harshness and difficulties. Thus, the famous debate over this issue between Mark Cohen and Norman Stillman is not really about the condition of the Jews under

Islam. Both agree that their lives were not easy and were sometimes even difficult.²⁵ Scholars of Jewish life under Arab and Muslim rule usually agree that while not being subjected to the type of harassment and persecution European Jews suffered throughout history, Jews living among Arabs were still discriminated against, sometimes severely. The official law of *dhimmī*, which established the position of the Jew (and Christian) as subject to a special regime of subjugation, was patently discriminatory. Under the law, Jews were not allowed, under any circumstances, to hit Muslims. They were not allowed to carry arms or ride horses. They were not allowed to build new houses of worship or repair old ones. They were not allowed to hold religious processions, including funerals, in public, nor were they allowed to pray loudly. They had to wear special clothing that would distinguish them from Muslims, and in later times Jews had to wear special badges on their clothes. Jews were not allowed to build houses that stood taller than Muslim homes, adopt Arab names, study the Koran, or sell alcoholic beverages. They were not allowed to serve in the civil service, and they were completely excluded from Muslim civic life. Even at the best of times, during the Islamic High Middle Ages, when “the Muslim majority felt secure enough . . . not to be overly concerned with enforcing the humility of its *dhimmī* neighbors,” and the day-to-day contacts between Muslims and Jews “were on the whole amicable,” Jews were subjected to “the hatred of Jews qua Jews.” Moreover, “*dhimmīs* in all walks of life and at every level of society could suddenly and rudely be reminded of their true status.” Things were even worse for Jews during the “Long Twilight,” from early modern times to modernity.²⁶

It seems that most scholars of Jews under Islamic rule agree with Mark Cohen’s and Bernard Lewis’s observations about Jewish life under Islam. Cohen concludes that persecutions of Jews by Muslims did happen, but it was “less frequent and less brutal than anti-Jewish persecution in Christendom.” Lewis claims that “discrimination was always there, permanent,” but “persecution, that is to say, violent and active repression, was rare and atypical.”²⁷ Jews and Arabs contributed to each other’s cultures, but their “symbiosis” was confined to “the vital contributions made by the cultural elements inherent in one civilization to the autonomous spiritual life of the other”: there was an influx of ideas from one community to the other,

but each community kept its “autonomous spiritual life.” Jews did not mix with Muslim Arabs and thus did not lose their inherent cultural and societal structures.²⁸ Even during the interwar years, when Jews entered Iraqi politics and contributed to literary and cultural life, they acted within the framework of a country shaped by British colonialism, a Western-style liberalism, or within the Communist Party. They were not acting in the framework of Arab nationalism.²⁹ Similarly, Michel Abitbol explains that while Western modernization was accompanied by secularization, which allowed the integration of Jews into society, the Arabs adhered to religion while adopting modernization. Thus, the Jews could not integrate into the Arab/Muslim societies.³⁰ Naim Kattan solidifies that distinction when he describes how “invisible boundaries isolated each group [Jews and Muslims] within its neighborhood, streets and houses.” In the “world of work” the boundaries would disappear, and Jews and Muslims would work together, but “when the offices closed and each one returned to his own neighborhood and his own people, they became strangers again.”³¹

To what extent were the Jews integrated into Arab society, and would it be accurate to relate to the Jews living among Arabs as Arab Jews? Proponents of the political Arab Jew argue that Jews were part of Arab culture and society, and their contribution to it was significant. In the historiography of Arab-Jewish relations in the Muslim world, this line of argument is known as the Jewish “golden age” argument, according to which Jews took an active part in Arab philosophical, literary, and cultural fields, contributing to these fields in Arabic. For centuries, Jews used the “language of Ismail” to enrich Arab literature, philosophy, and literary culture, as well as those parts of the halacha (Jewish law) that had been written in the “language of Ismail.” Arabic “lived with the Jews and the Jews lived in it,” until those who revived the Hebrew language decided that the revival of Hebrew and Hebrew nationalism necessitated the death of Arabic. “Consequently, the Arab Jews exiled/were exiled” from the Arabic world.³²

On both issues—the level of integration of Jews in Arab society and whether those Jews could be referred to as Arab Jews—the historical evidence is more nuanced and complicated. Perhaps a good way to describe the kind of

integration or nonintegration of Jews among Arabs, rather than an inclusive/exclusive dichotomy, would be through an inclusiveness-exclusiveness continuum. The historical evidence suggests that along that continuum, the Jewish placement in terms of integration and language was closer to the exclusiveness end of the line than to the inclusiveness end. So even when, as Ross Brann suggests, from the mid-tenth to mid-eleventh centuries, Arabic was an integral part of Jewish culture, he makes a provision, arguing that the Andalusian Jews were not complete Arab Jews. They could be seen as “self-contained and segregated,” and they could be viewed as having a “symbiotic cultural duality.”³³ And indeed, Emily Gottreich suggests that religion was a major and substantial division between Jews and Muslims, amounting to what in later years would be attributed to ethnic and national divisions. Viewing it otherwise would be an anachronism, as it would mean transferring terminology and perceptions created in a secular world onto a world and life that were very religious.³⁴ Most of the Jews living in Arab countries did not see themselves as Arabs, and Sasson Somekh, who uses the definer “Arab-Jew” in his memoirs (*Baghdad, Yesterday: The Making of an Arab-Jew*), relates how the hyphenated “Arab-Jew” did not exist at all in the Iraq of his youth, and in Iraq he called himself and was called a Jew.³⁵ Similarly, though without meaning to convey this message, Shohat tells how her parents complained that “in Iraq we were Jews, and in Israel we are Arabs.”³⁶ In Iraq, they were Jews, not Arab Jews.

The same applies to the use of Arabic by Jews. Reuven Snir argues that during the pre-Zionist historical period, “Jews living among Arabs were, in one way or another, Arab.” That was true mainly in the field of culture, where Jews contributed to “the emergence of modern Arabic literary culture” through their use of Arabic.³⁷ Language is certainly a major signifier of identity, and indeed, proponents of the political Arab Jew argue, as noted, that the Jews of the “Arab-Islamic space” wrote for centuries in the “language of Ismail,” an indication of their life within the Arabic world.³⁸ However, it would be more accurate to say that Jews in the Arab world spoke not Arabic but their own dialect. Ella Shohat tells us that her Arab Jewish grandmother was fluent in the Arabic of a Jewish Baghdadi dialect, not the common Arabic dialect.³⁹ Naim Kattan explains what it meant to speak Jewish Baghdadi Arabic:

“We had only to open our mouths to reveal our identity. The emblem of our origins was inscribed in our speech.” Next he tells how that dialect was “an invitation for ridicule on the part of the prejudiced.”⁴⁰ On a broader level, Benjamin Hary explains that Judaeo-Arabic was a “religiolect,” namely, “an independent linguistic entity” with “its own history and development.”⁴¹ The Judaeo-Arabic dialect was a means of separation, not of integration, and the hyphenated “Arab-Jew” was a definer of separation and exclusion, whether self-imposed or enforced from the outside.⁴² Even speaking Arabic did not qualify Jews as part of Arab society and culture, argues Dov Goitein: “By adopting the Arab language the Jews did not become Arabs.”⁴³

Tunisian writer and intellectual Albert Memmi refutes the claim that it was Zionism that put a barrier between Jews and Arabs, destroying the existing harmony between Jews and Muslims, and that only Zionism gave rise to problems. “This is historically absurd,” wrote Memmi. “It is not Zionism that has caused Arab anti-Semitism, but the other way around, just as in Europe. Israel is a rejoinder to the oppression suffered by Jews the world over, including our own oppression as Arab Jews.”⁴⁴ Michel Abitbol provides the scholarly infrastructure that substantiates Memmi’s argument, claiming that the Jewish-Muslim tensions of the modern era result from the growing involvement of the great powers (mainly Russia, Britain, and France) in the Middle East since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Jews in Arab countries placed themselves under the patronage of Western benefactors, through the system of consular protection, and studied in Western schools that were established throughout the Middle East.⁴⁵

In essence, then, proponents of the political Arab Jew argue that the Zionists/Ashkenazim usurped the identity of the Arab Jews by forcing upon them an identity that was not theirs, and in doing so they disconnected them from their natural habitat and forced them to immigrate to Israel under the false claim that all Jews are Zionists and the place of the Zionists is in Israel. But how did the Zionists do that? How did they convince the Arab Jews? Why did the Arab Jews agree to follow the Ashkenazim, and why did they agree to abandon their heritage, culture, values, and association with Arab society? These questions seem to be even more relevant, considering the fact

that records of the voices of Mizrahim indicate that they did not and do not think that they were cut off from their natural habitat and were lured and deceived by the Zionists, who took them to Israel. It has been described in the introduction of this paper how most of the participants at the Tel Aviv University conference on Iraqi Jews, both audience and presenters, rejected the term “Arab Jew.” Ronit Matalon tells how her father, a political activist of Egyptian origin, published pamphlets carrying messages for Jews of Arab origin, but he published them in Hebrew and French, not in Arabic. When Matalon asked him about his choice of languages, he answered, “The Mizrahi audience would receive Arabic in a bad way.”⁴⁶ Similarly, Salim Fattal was born in Iraq and joined the Communist Party there. He was arrested, and after his release he escaped to Israel in 1950, when he was twenty years old. He kept his Iraqi name but vehemently rejects being branded as an Arab Jew. His Arabic name was, in Iraq, intended to hide his Jewish origin. In Israel, though he keeps his Arabic name, Fattal refuses any national affiliation other than Jewish: “Why do I need to be ashamed and apologize for being [a full] Jew, and to dilute it by mixing it with an identity that is not mine?” wonders Fattal, “I’m not a half-Jew and not a half-Arab. I’m just a Jew. Period.”⁴⁷ Baghdad-born Professor Shmuel Moreh concludes his review of Fattal’s book thus: “Fattal represents the voice of the silent majority among the Jews of Iraq and the Orient generally who are in this country and feel a partnership with the Jewish people.”⁴⁸ To these one could add Naim Kattan and “Philologos,” who also reject the relevance to themselves of the definer Arab Jew.⁴⁹ In a series of interviews conducted with Jews who came from various Arab countries, the vast majority of the interviewees explained their decision to immigrate to Israel as motivated by Zionism.⁵⁰

Some proponents of the Arab Jew color their answers to these questions with more than a little paternalism toward members of their own communities; they describe Jews from Arab countries as naive and unable to make clear judgments, having been lured, tempted, and manipulated by the European Zionists. Shohat argues that the Arab Jews moved to Israel “without a fully conscious or comprehensive understanding on their part of what was at stake and what was yet to come.” The Arab Jews “left their countries of origin with mingled excitement and terror, but most importantly buffeted by

manipulated confusion, misunderstandings, and projections provoked” by the Zionists.⁵¹ Yehouda Shenhav argues that many Arab Jews living in Israel (or elsewhere in the West) who refused to endorse the category of Arab Jew live in denial. “Denial is a key concept in psychoanalysis,” explains Shenhav, “but it has a sociological context as well,” which explains how a large community could deny and reject what the proponents of the political Arab Jew insisted was an alive and kicking concept. The counteractions, rejection, and denunciations of those who refused to accept the brand “Arab Jew” were clear proof that they were living in profound denial. Esperans Kohen Moreh argues that “despite the fact that I’m a bilingual author, writing both in Hebrew and Arabic,

. . . I don’t see myself as an Arab author.”⁵² For Shenhav and Hever, such statements may serve as an example of “the denied category of the Arab Jews.”⁵³

The disregard among proponents of the political Arab Jew for the wishes of Jews of Arab origin is further illustrated by the story Merav Arieli tells of her mother, who emigrated with her family from Lebanon and, once in Israel, spoke only Hebrew with her children, who were all born in Israel. When Arieli, “asked her if she is sorry that she lost her mother-tongue, Arabic,” her mother responds, “no,” adding that she “very quickly became Israeli ‘in blood.’” Arieli does not believe her mother. “I know,” she writes, “that the passion for the mother tongue we know does not disappear with the passing of the years, just because somebodies [sic] decided it was unworthy.” She also knows that “the loss of language leaves a violent residue of muteness.”⁵⁴ It does not really matter what the mother thinks and says; it is what the daughter thinks that decides the course of her mother’s thinking.

The definer “Arab Jew” is problematic not only as a historical and actual phenomenon but also on the theoretical level. Here too there is much ambiguity. The discussion about the Arab Jew shifts between the objective and subjective nature of the definer.⁵⁵ Lital Levy suggests the term “ascriptive identity,” which refers to “those aspects of identity that we don’t choose for ourselves but that place us within certain categories.”⁵⁶ That is, the Arab Jew is an objective category, imposed on individuals from the outside. The

second category suggested by Levy is a subjective category, which is the “self-ascriptive identity, which . . . denotes our own choices in affiliating with a larger collective or community.”⁵⁷ In other words, on one level the existence of the political Arab Jew depends mainly on the declaration by a proponent of the Arab Jew that the identity exists. Indeed, many of the proponents of the Arab Jew seem to endorse the self-ascriptive identity and do not necessarily need evidence of the existence of the historical Arab Jew. “If we are now ‘Arab Jews,’ it is not because we once *were* Arab Jews. Rather, we are ‘Arab Jews’ because of what is at stake in defining ourselves as such today.”⁵⁸ Yehouda Shenhav and Hanan Hever explain that the category is “neither natural and essential nor necessarily consistent and coherent.”⁵⁹ On another occasion Shenhav argues that the Arab Jew was “a counterfactual category.”⁶⁰ The existence of the Arab Jew is regarded as provisional, acting less as an intrinsic societal and identity definer than as a political statement. Thus, Shenhav presents the political Arab Jew as a self-ascriptive category. At the same time, however, he and proponents of the political Arab Jew seek to apply the category Arab Jew to all Jews of Middle Eastern and North African origin, regardless of the way those Jews see themselves. Reuven Snir explains the phenomenon by suggesting that “identity is a double-edged sword.” He argues: “At times, the edge of identity is turned against the collective pressure by individuals who resent conformity. At other times, it is a smaller group that turns identity’s edge against a larger group accused of wishing to destroy it.”⁶¹

While Arab Jew as a historical, actual, and theoretical category is somewhat ambiguous, the proponents of the political Arab Jew have a clearer idea as to what they want to achieve, and more than the past, what they want to achieve is about the present and the future. They do not seek for the Arab Jews a right of return to the countries they left. That, argues Shohat, can no longer happen. She claims that the Zionist/Ashkenazi state and entity has “corrupted” and “infected” the Mizrahim, although she is well aware that the State of Israel has become part of Mizrahi identity.⁶² They also do not seek to change, improve, or alleviate the position of Mizrahim within the Jewish/Zionist state. Instead, the advocates of the political Arab Jew seek to undermine the major power bastions of Ashkenazi/Zionist society,

epistemology, and politics. Using a postcolonialist perspective—a critical view of national elites, national histories, and national narratives—proponents of the Arab Jew attack the Zionist-influenced sources of knowledge and the Zionist nation-state. They aim to create a new, or to recall an old, “cultural memory,” one that is dissociated from the Zionist “cultural memory” and associated with the Arab cultural, political, and social space. Cultural memory is a vehicle of knowledge created across generations, and it contains elements whose accumulation serves as a source of identity for the community. Cultural memory is not static. It is capable of reconstructing, changing, and shifting.⁶³

I argue that proponents of the political Arab Jew wish to reclaim the true identity of people whose identity had been stolen. Intellectually, they seek to replace the Western historiography that dominated Israeli/Ashkenazi discourse and decided its ideological and political course with a noncentrist historiography that would make it possible for non-Ashkenazim and other marginalized groups in Israel to be heard. Instead of studying the Western-oriented, teleological history of Zionism, which was based on the Arab/Jew dichotomy, endorsement of the Arab Jew would mean the study of Jews among the Arabs, as well as the history of the Arabs. It is through such study that the history of the dispossessed and the oppressed—Arab Jews and non-Jews, the Palestinians—will come to light.⁶⁴ This would be achieved through the development of a new area of studies, Mizrahi studies, which would create a Mizrahi epistemology involving the spatial landscape of the Mizrahim, their geographic distribution of origin, and their cultural, linguistic, and social relations with their habitat. Thus it would be possible to study the Mizrahim not only in the context of Jewish history but also as part of the history of the Middle East, which would include, for example, the Arab Palestinians and their fate. This would also make it possible to study the relations of the Jews to the Muslim environment and culture within which they existed, as well as Mizrahi Jewish relations to and with Palestine before the arrival of the Zionists.⁶⁵

The call for the creation of a separate, Arab Jewish cultural memory also aims to politically dissociate Arab Jews from Zionism and, some would

argue, to join their cultural memory with the Palestinian Arab memory. At the same time, proponents of the political Arab Jew attack the Zionist perception of Jewish nationalism. With the emergence of Zionism, its founders argued that Judaism was not a religion but a form of nationalism and that the Jewish people were not members of a religious community but members of a nation, the Jewish nation. Moses Hess argued that Jewish nationalism has been conserved throughout history, from the days of Jewish independent existence in biblical times, through its religion. “Jews are a nation which . . . is destined to be resurrected with the rest of civilized nations,” wrote, and predicted, Hess.⁶⁶ The Zionist movement had adopted Hess’s interpretation of Judaism as the keeper and preserver of the long-lost Jewish sovereign existence. Proponents of the political Arab Jew, however, reject the identification of Judaism with nationalism—as well as the implied idea of progress that dominated Hess and his followers’ approach—claiming that Arab Jews’ nationality is their places of origin, or the least it is Arab. The Arabness of the Arab Jew was a stronger definer of identity than Jewishness.⁶⁷

Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin takes a somewhat different path in his rejection of Jewish/Zionist nationalism. He suggests that the Jews should return to an exilic, aterritorial Judaism and should decolonize the “Jewish-Israeli entity”: they should live in exile within Palestine and should abandon their claim to the land and their sense of ownership over territory. Their longing for the Land of Israel should be spiritual, and they would share the piece of land and the memories with the defeated Palestinians on equal terms. Defining the return of the Jews to Palestine as a return to “their home” robbed the Jews—from both the Orient and the Occident—of their past. Their true past was the Exile, not what the Zionists called “home,” that is, the Land of Israel. The spiritual decolonization and shift to “exile within the place” would “give power to the memory of the Jewish sacrifices” and “to the memory of the shelter-seeking refugees.”⁶⁸ Part of the decolonization process would be the abandonment of dichotomies: religious/secular, modern/nonmodern, West/East, Jew/Arab. It would also mean abandonment of the Western liberal values on which the Zionist Israeli historiography and society were and are based, and which the Ashkenazim/Zionists imposed on the Mizrahim.

Within this new structure Judaism would be treated as a religion, not as a definer of nationalism. It is only through the endorsement of religion as a definer that Mizrahi Jews can regain their true identity, an identity that would also diminish and eliminate the Jew/Arab dichotomy.⁶⁹ Shifting from territory to religion, the Jews would be able to accommodate themselves to their environment rather than dictate their values to the people under their control. The only viable path is the endorsement of a partnership based on complete mutual acceptance of the other's values. Politically, that of course means binationalism, which "is not only one of the components that shaped the development of a 'Jewish-Israeli identity'—it is actually the central component in its development."⁷⁰

Ironically, Raz-Krakotzkin discusses the option of binationalism at some length, while in fact his method of analysis and thinking goes against any solution based on nationalism. In this he follows the same course as other proponents of the Arab Jew.

Raz-Krakotzkin, Shohat, and Shenhav reject the idea of Jewish nationalism. They explain at length why Judaism-based Zionism is false, fabricated by the Ashkenazim, and how the Mizrahim are actually ethnically, culturally, and socially closer to the Arabs than to the Ashkenazim. Thus, when they call for life in Israel/Palestine to be defined along ethnic lines—Arabs, Ashkenazim—they are in fact calling for the creation of an anational state, a state of its citizens.

Shenhav accepts the Jews' right of self-determination as a historical necessity, but in his view the implementation of that right went awry because of the colonial methods employed by the Ashkenazim. Like Shohat and Raz-Krakotzkin before him, Shenhav divides the people of the territory between the sea and the river into two main groups: Ashkenazim and Arabs (which includes both Jews and non-Jews). Because of the colonial practices of the Zionist/Ashkenazi state, the two-state solution is no longer achievable. The Ashkenazim employed and are still employing these practices against Arab Palestinians in the territories, as well as against Arab Jews and Israeli Palestinian Arabs, thus in actuality obliterating the Green Line. Shenhav calls for the integration—or better yet, the reintegration—of Arab Jews

into what is their essence, the Middle East. It is necessary to redefine the grouping of the people living between the sea and the river, and rather than Jews versus Arabs, they should be grouped as Ashkenazim versus Arabs (which includes both Jews and Moslems). It is also necessary to redistribute the territorial resources between the sea and the river in a more just and equal manner. The people within it should share their political fate with each other, through the creation of an innovative political system that would represent the interests of the Ashkenazim and the Arabs.⁷¹ Shohat takes these ideas one step further when she calls for a change in the very nature of the State of Israel: instead of an Ashkenazi-dominated Jewish Westernized state, there should be a state dominated by those who are the actual majority in the Israeli-Palestinian territories; the Arabs—Jews and Palestinians. Shohat made a brief comment of approval regarding this option, and her writing indicates that she sees no problem with the total amalgamation of the State of Israel with the Arab world, whatever that might mean.⁷²

If however, paraphrasing Ernest Renan, identity definers are "a daily plebiscite," then the opponents of the Arab Jew definer have the upper hand because the definer's proponents are a very small, almost marginal, minority among Israeli Mizrahim. Still, what might be a failure on the part of the advocates of the political Arab Jew can be viewed as a glorious failure, since they certainly instigated and were part of a wider movement that did aim to change Ashkenazi-Mizrahi relations. The proponents of the political Arab Jew seemed to express a genuine sentiment, existing mainly among the children and grandchildren of immigrants from Arab countries. That sentiment is a deep and growing feeling of discrimination against and neglect of the Mizrahim in Israel on a (sub)ethnic basis. This sentiment is common both to the proponents of the political Arab Jew and to Mizrahi activists. The difference between those advocating the political Arab Jew and many Mizrahi activists, though, is the scope and breadth of their struggle and aim. As mentioned above, proponents of the definer aim to make changes that would redefine the ethnic boundaries between Jews and Arabs, in addition to making changes to the power relations between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim. The vast majority of Mizrahi activists share with them the wish to change Mizrahi-Ashkenazi power relations, but within the boundaries

of Jewish ethnicity/nationality, of which they see themselves as a part. The Arab world is not now theirs, if it ever was. “At every stage of our journey we were forced to acknowledge our ‘inauthentic’ status as Moroccans,” relates Andre Levy in describing his visit to his “conditional homeland,” Morocco.⁷³

In other words, Mizrahi activists seek to create change from within the Jewish/Zionist body. They do not seek to change the Zionist nature of Israel but to change the power relations between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim within it. Mizrahi Democratic Rainbow (MDR) activists fight against “the perceptions of the cultural elite in their attitude toward the Mizrahi culture, and against the Mizrahi.” While fighting for universal human rights in Israel and for the “achievement of political, cultural and social individual rights,” they see themselves, as a group, as part of the Jewish nation.⁷⁴ As the editors of a publication summarizing the history, activities, and achievements of the MDR mention, the MDR acts within “the boundaries of the ethno-national ethos.” When the MDR defended the appeal of Azmi Bishara against a ban prohibiting his party, BALAD, from participating in the national elections, it did so without agreeing to BALAD’s ideology, which called for the abolition of Israel as a Jewish state and its transformation into a state of its citizens.⁷⁵ An example of the attempt to change the power relations within Jewish nationalism can be seen in the struggle to change the ratio of the pages dedicated to Jewish history in the Arab world in the high-school textbook *Toldot Am Yisrael ba-dorot ha-ahronim* (History of the People of Israel in modern times). Instead of the mere nine out of four hundred pages currently dedicated to the history of the Mizrahim in their places of origin, there should be many more.⁷⁶ The Mizrahi activists work not to substitute Zionism with a new political (and identity) organ but to change features of Zionism. For example, the Movement for Equality and Social Justice (Hebrew acronym: TASHAH), comprising central members of the MDR, included in its platform an article reaffirming Israel’s position as “the Jewish nation-state.”⁷⁷

Like other Mizrahi activists, however, they have a political goal, which is the “re-presentation” of the Mizrahim in Israeli/Zionist society.⁷⁸ The main target of political Mizrahim is Ashkenazi Eurocentrism. They attack the melting pot, the homogeneity of Israeli/Zionist society, and the dire

experiences of their parents, but they aim to do so from the inside. Mizrahi activists act to increase the options for Israelis in general and Mizrahim in particular, through their exploration of Arabic culture, music, and literature. The Mizrahim were subjected to a regime of discrimination in the 1950s, and their culture and heritage were subjected to the dominant Ashkenazi values.⁷⁹ Now Mizrahi activists seek to reclaim their culture and heritage, and in this sense they share the goals of proponents of the political Arab Jew. Unlike the latter, though, they act from within the boundaries of the Jewish/Zionist ethnic/national camp and do not seek to deconstruct these boundaries in order to redraw them along new ethnic/national lines. In their endeavor to redraw those lines, I argue, proponents of the political Arab Jew seem to be failing.

Notes

- 1 Vered Lee, "Yisraeli-Iraqi, Yehudi-Aravi o Mizrahi," *Haaretz*, May 1, 2008. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from Hebrew to English are my own.
- 2 Reuven Snir, *Who Needs Arab-Jewish Identity? Interpellation, Exclusion, and Inessential Solidarities* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 222–223.
- 3 Quoted and translated by Ammiel Alcalay, *After Jews and Arabs: Remaking Levantine Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 244.
- 4 Ella Shohat was probably the first to introduce the political Arab Jew: *Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of Representation* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989); "Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Jewish Victims," *Social Text*, no. 19/20 (Autumn 1988): 1–35; "The Invention of the Mizrahim," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 29, no. 1 (1999): 5–20; "The Narrative of the Nation and the Discourse of Modernization: The Case of the Mizrahim," *Middle East Critique* 6, no. 10 (1997): 3–18; "Rupture and Return: Zionist Discourse and the Study of Arab Jews," *Social Text* 21, no. 2 (2003): 49–74. See also Ammiel Alcalay, *After Jews and Arabs*, 235; Shlomo Khatukha, "Epho nigmarim ha-Mizrahim u-mathilim ha-Aravim," *Haaretz*, March 20, 2014; Menachem Klein, "Arab Jew in Palestine," *Israel Studies* 19, no. 3 (2014): 134–153; Lital Levy, "Mihu Yehudi-Aravi? Iyun mashve be-toldot ha-she'ela, 1880-2010," *Teoria u-vikoret* 38/39 (Winter 2011): 121–122; Joseph Massad, "Zionism's Internal Others: Israel and the Oriental Jews," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 25, no. 4 (1996): 53; Galit Saada-Ophir, "Borderland Pop: Arab Jewish Musicians and the Politics of Performance," *Cultural Anthropology* 21, no. 2 (2006): 205–206; Yehouda Shenhav and Hannan Hever, "Ha-Yehudim ha-Aravim: Gilgulo shel musag," *Peamim* 125/126 (2009): 13.
- 5 For the purpose of this article, I distinguish between two kinds of proponents of the definer "Arab Jew": those who relate to the cultural aspects of the definer, and those who see it as a political issue. The former emphasize the Jewish attitude toward Arab culture; the latter aim to achieve political results through use of the definer. Though this article concentrates only on the latter, readers can turn to Reuven Snir, *Arviut, Yahadut, Tsionut: Ma'avak zehuyot bi-yetsiratam shel Yehudei Iraq* (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzhak Ben Zvi Press, 1985) and Snir, "'Ana min al-Yahud': The Demise of Arab-Jewish Culture in the Twentieth Century," *Archiv Orientali* 74 (2006): 387–424.

- 6 Yehouda Shenhav and Hannan Hever, "Arab Jews' after Structuralism: Zionist Discourse and the (De)formation of an Ethnic Identity," *Social Identities* 18, no. 1 (2012): 101–102. Jews of African and Asian origin are called Mizrahi (plural: Mizrahim)—from the Orient—Sephardi, or Bnei Edot Ha-Mizrah (members of the Oriental ethnic group). In this article I use the term Mizrahi.
- 7 Matthias B. Lehmann, "Rethinking Sephardi Identity: Jews and Other Jews in Ottoman Palestine," *Jewish Social Studies* 15, no. 1 (2008): 81–109; Doron Navot and Yoav Peled, "Ethnic Democracy Revisited: On the State of Democracy in the Jewish State," *Israel Studies Forum* 20, no. 1 (2005): 3–27; Jonathan Ray, "New Approaches to the Jewish Diaspora: The Sephardim as a Sub-Ethnic Group," *Jewish Social Studies* 15, no. 1 (2008): 10–31; Nadim N. Rouhana, "The Test of Equal Citizenship: Israel between Jewish Ethnocracy and Bi-national Democracy," *Harvard International Review* 20, no. 2 (1998): 74–78; Sammy Smooha, "Ethnic Democracy: Israel as an Archetype," *Israel Studies* 2, no. 2 (1997): 198–241; Oren Yiftachel, "Israeli Society and Jewish-Palestinian Reconciliation: 'Ethnocracy' and Its Territorial Contradictions," *Middle East Journal* 51, no. 4 (1997): 505–519.
- 8 Shohat, "Sephardim in Israel." Shohat does not talk about the *political* Arab Jew—this is my definition of what I understand to be Shohat's meaning of the term.
- 9 Ella Shohat, "Notes on the Post-Colonial," *Social Text*, no. 31/32 (Spring 1992): 99–113.
- 10 Daniel Gutwein, "Left and Right Post-Zionism and the Privatization of Israeli Collective Memory," *Journal of Israeli History* 20, no. 2 (2001): 9–42.
- 11 There are differences between the definers Sephardi and Mizrahi, but for the purpose of this article, I make no distinction between these definers or Arab-Jew. The differences, where they exist, are a matter for discussion that is irrelevant to this paper.
- 12 Lehmann, "Rethinking Sephardi Identity," 81–91. The quotation appears on p. 91.
- 13 Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, "Galut be-tokh ribonut: Le-bikoret 'Shlilat ha-Galut' ba-tarbut ha-Yisraelit," *Teoria u-vikoret* 4 (Autumn 1993): 1, 36–42. See also Yochai Oppenheimer, *Mirhov Ben Gurion le-Shar'a al-Rashid – Al siporet Mizrahit* (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 2014), 246.
- 14 Sami Shalom Shitrit, *The Mizrahi Struggle in Israel, 1948-2003* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2004), 50–51; Shohat, *Israeli Cinema*, 73. See also Joel Beinin, *The Dispersion of Egyptian Jewry: Culture, Politics, and the Formation of*

- a Modern Diaspora* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); see the section "Middle Eastern Jews (mizrahim) and the Zionist National Narrative" in the introduction; Zvi Ben Dor, "Likrat historia shel ha-Mizrahim ve-ha-Aravit," in *Hazut Mizrahit*, ed. Yigal Nizri (Tel Aviv: Babel, 2004), 33–34; Gabriel Piterberg, "Domestic Orientalism: The Representation of 'Oriental' Jews in Zionist/Israeli Historiography," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 23, no. 2 (1996): 131–132.
- 15 Shohat, "Sephardim in Israel," 24, 26. See also Yehouda Shenhav, *The Arab Jews: A Postcolonial Reading of Nationalism, Religion, and Ethnicity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 152–153.
- 16 Shohat, "The Invention of the Mizrahim," 13.
- 17 Shenhav, *The Arab Jews*, 16, 151; Shohat, "The Invention of the Mizrahim," 7–8; Shohat, "Rupture and Return," 50–52.
- 18 Shohat, "Rupture and Return," 50.
- 19 Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, "The Zionist Return to the West and the Mizrahi Jewish Perspective," in *Orientalism and the Jews*, ed. Ivan Kalmar and Derek Penslar (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2005), 169–173; Shenhav, *The Arab Jews*, 151.
- 20 Shohat, "Rupture and Return," 50.
- 21 Shohat, *Israeli Cinema*, 108–109, 154. Shohat relies on Shlomo Swirski, *Lo nehshalim ela menuhshalim: Mizrahim ve-Ashkenazim bi-Yisrael* (Haifa: Machberot Lemechkar Ulevikoret, 1981), 53–54. See also Shitrit, *The Mizrahi Struggle*, 46–47.
- 22 Shohat, *Israeli Cinema*, 154.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 52, 80–81, 153.
- 24 Shitrit, *The Mizrahi Struggle*, 50–51; Shohat, *Israeli Cinema*, 73. See also Ben Dor, "Likrat historia," 33–34.
- 25 Mark R. Cohen, "The Neo-Lachrymose Conception of Jewish-Arab History," *Tikkun* 6, no. 3 (1991): 58–60; Norman A. Stillman, "Myth, Countermyth, and Distortion," *Tikkun* 6, no. 3 (1991): 60–64.
- 26 Norman A. Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands* (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1979), 62–63. See also Michel Abitbol, "Jews of Muslim Lands in the Modern Period: History and Historiography," in *Sephardic Jewry and Mizrahi Jews*, ed. Peter Y. Medding (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 46; Dov Goitein, *Jews and Arabs: Their Contacts through the Ages* (New York: Schocken Books, 1955), 66–88, 127–130.

- 55 An illuminating example of that aspect of the literature on the Arab Jew is Reuven Snir, "Mi tsarikh zehut Aravit-Yehudit?," in *Ben avar le-Arav*, ed. Ali Hussein and Ayelet Ottinger (Haifa: Haifa University, 2014), 311–352.
- 56 Lital Levy, "Historicizing the Concept of Arab Jews in the Mashriq," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 98, no. 4 (2008): 458.
- 57 Levy, "Historicizing the Concept of Arab Jews in the Mashriq," 458. See also Mary Bernstein, "Identity Politics," *Annual Review of Sociology* 31 (2005): 47.
- 58 Levy, "Historicizing the Concept of Arab Jews in the Mashriq," 457 (emphasis in the original).
- 59 Shenhav and Hever, "Ha-Yehudim ha-Aravim," 102.
- 60 Shenhav, *The Arab Jews*, 9. See also Raz-Krakotzkin, "The Zionist Return to the West," 180.
- 61 Snir, *Who Needs Arab-Jewish Identity?*, 222. See also Oppenheimer, *Me-rehov Ben Gurion le-Shar'a al-Rashid*, 1.
- 62 Shohat, "The Invention of the Mizrahim," 18.
- 63 Jan Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique* 65 (Spring-Summer 1995): 129–130. A discussion of the meaning of "cultural memory" appears in Paul Mendes-Flohr, *Kidma ve-naftuleha* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2010), 80–81.
- 64 Raz-Krakotzkin, "The Zionist Return to the West," 180.
- 65 Shohat, "Rupture and Return," 70–71. Shohat ignores the role of the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute in advancing what can reasonably be called Mizrahi studies, which had begun in the late 1990s. Moshe Behar, "Mizrahim, Abstracted: Action, Reflection, and the Academization of the Mizrahi Cause," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 37, no. 2 (2008): 94–96.
- 66 Moses Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem* (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1918), 36, 49.
- 67 Shohat, "The Invention of the Mizrahim," 11.
- 68 Raz-Krakotzkin, "Galut be-tokh ribonut," 1, 42–51.
- 69 Raz-Krakotzkin, "The Zionist Return to the West," 177–178.
- 70 Raz-Krakotzkin, "Galut be-tokh ribonut," 1, 50. See also Yehouda Shenhav, *Ha-zman shel ha-Kav ha-Yarok* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2010), 37.

- 71 Interview with Yehouda Shenhav, in *Yisrael lean? 18 sihot im ha-ishim she-me'atvim et pnei Medinat Yisrael*, ed. Gadi Blum and Nir Hefetz (Tel Aviv: Yediot Aharonot, 2008).
- 72 Ella Habiba Shohat, "Reflections by an Arab Jew," *Bint Jbeil* (undated), accessed July 20, 2010, http://www.bintjbeil.com/E/occupation/arab_jew.html.
- 73 Andre Levy, "Conditional Homelands and Diasporas: Moroccan Jewish Perspectives," *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 22 (2007): 216.
- 74 The platform of the Mizrahi Democratic Rainbow, accessed September 29, 2015, <http://www.ha-keshet.org.il>.
- 75 Yossi Yona, Yonit Naaman, and David Machlev, eds., *Keshet shel de'ot* (Jerusalem: November Books, 2007), 22. There are many instances throughout this book in which the political Arab Jew is rejected. Yossi Dahan, for example, claims that the MDR did not "endorse the Arab-Israeli ideology." Yossi Dahan, "Hidato shel ha-shilush: 'Ha-Mizrahit,' 'ha-democratit' ve 'ha-keshet,'" in Yona, Naaman, and Machlev, *Keshet shel deot*, 40–41.
- 76 David Machlev, "Hirhurim al zehut," in Yona, Naaman, and Machlev, *Keshet shel deot*, 64.
- 77 Yona, Naaman, and Machlev, *Keshet shel deot*, 30–31.
- 78 Dahan, "Hidato shel ha-shilush," 42. See also the recently created Tor Hazahav (Golden Age) movement, which seeks to "represent and empower the Israeli periphery, traditional Judaism, and the Mizrahi-Zionist narrative," accessed April 10, 2016, <http://www.tor-hazahav.org>.
- 79 The literature on this subject is too vast to cite. Suffice it to mention 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): 1–27.

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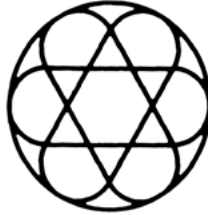
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