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*The Oriental Communities in Israel, 1948-2003*

*The Social & Cultural Creation  
of an Ethnic Political Group*

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Foreword by M.R. Djalili

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Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva







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*« The other Jews were looked down upon with a naive sense of superiority. One word invariably charged with contempt was that of Todesco, meaning German Jew or Ashkenazim. To marry a Todesco would have been unthinkable and I believe that there had been no exception to this rule among the many families I ever heard talked about at Roustchouk all those years. Even before I was six, my grandfather, already worried about the future, had warned me against such an ill-fated match....<sup>1</sup> »*

**Elias Canetti<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Author's own translation, « Les autres juifs, on les regardait de haut, avec un sentiment de naïve supériorité. Un mot invariablement chargé de mépris était le mot todesco désignant un juif allemand ou un ashkénaze...il eut été impensable d'épouser un todesco et je ne crois pas qu'aucune exception à cette règle, parmi les nombreuses familles dont j'ai entendu parler à Roustchouk, pendant toutes ces années. Je n'avais pas six ans que mon grand père, soucieux de l'avenir, me mettait déjà en garde contre une telle mésalliance... »

<sup>2</sup> Canetti, Elias, *La langue sauvée*, Paris: Ed Albin Michel, p. 14.



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## **FOREWORD**

The nature of Israeli society is clearly a fascinating and complex subject. Since its contested birth in 1948, Israel figures as one of the most interesting human experience regarding the melting pot model, far greater than its American counterpart. As shown in Mr. Allouche's study, this society is composed of a large variety of citizens, encompassing East Europeans, Russians, Ethiopians, Middle-eastern and even Asian immigrants. Nonetheless, despite this extreme variety, they all had a common feature, a common historical and to a lesser extent religious feature that made them automatically Israeli, they were all Jewish. Although this common identity feature may be at first thought as an integrating factor, this Jewishness constituted in fact more a problem. Indeed, the vision that East European leaders had of Israel was very much distant from this religious identity, what we commonly refer to political Zionism and its new ideals (cooperative society, kibbutz, etc.). For the vast majority of immigrants, and especially those coming from the Middle East, this new vision of Israeli society did not clearly reflect their expectations of what Israeli should be. In exploring the waves of immigration and the current difficulty in forging a new Israeli society, Mr. Allouche's study pinpoints to the origins of the current debate in Israeli society on the nature of the Israeli state and citizenship. Basically, the main question that is currently addressed in Israeli society nowadays could be resumed as should Israel just be a State of Jews or a Jewish State?

Mr. Allouche's study offers a new insight on Israeli society and politics, as well as additional factors in explaining the socio-psychological attitude of Israelis in their conflict with the Arabs. This study also brings into light the complexity of creating a melting pot model without a dominant ideology. Finally, this study offers a well-researched empirical reading of Israeli society from the early stages of the creation of the Israeli state and society to the last elections

in 2003 from the oriental Jews perspective. The main conclusion of this study clearly reveals the dividing nature of Israeli society that is usually stigmatised by the creation of two imagined groups (except in religious terms), the Ashkenazim against the Sephardim.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Sephardi-Ashkenazi dichotomy dates back to the beginnings of the Diaspora 2,000 years ago. All through the Diaspora, Sephardim and Ashkenazim lived in different regions separated by physical borders and by diverse cultures, the Sephardim being in Spain, the Balkans, the Middle East and North Africa while the Ashkenazim were in Europe and in North America. The coming together of the two communities has been made possible by the creation of the State of Israel and the Zionist ideology. Nevertheless, the coming together of both communities was not done with the same motivation. Indeed, Zionism has its root in Europe; the main figures Nathan Birnbaum, Leon Pinsker, Moshe Leib Lilienblum and Theodor Herzl are Ashkenazim; and the basis of Israeli society, and most importantly of the Israeli State, owes its conception to this ideology. This can be explained by the fact that the vast majority of the first *aloyah*<sup>3</sup> originated from these countries<sup>4</sup>. On the other hand, most of the Sephardim community arrived just after the creation of Israel. They did not live through the atrocities of the Holocaust. Their main motive for immigrating was religious rather than political, although it is true that some form of persecution did exist against the Sephardim Jews in their countries of origin after the War of Independence of 1948. By the mid-fifties, the Ashkenazim/Sephardim communities represented the two main distinctive groups in Israel and after such a long separation, tension and open conflict between the two communities in all spheres of Israeli life arose. The first cultural encounter opposing these two communities was understandable; however, the division between the two communities still appears nowadays as a stigma within Israeli society.

The main objective of our study is to show how these Oriental communities coming from North Africa and Asia perceived the creation of an Israeli State and how social discontent developed into ethnic identification. Most Oriental Jews felt that they were discriminated against. Social inequalities can be easily explained by the origin of each community. Nevertheless, what appeared is that this social gap between the Europeans

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<sup>3</sup> literally means « ascent to the land »

and the Orientals revealed another problem that underlay the very existence of the Israeli State. The State of Israel was created around a European ideology, a European background. Oriental culture and thinking was rejected and even evilized in Israel since it was associated with the enemy, the Arabs. And, as we will see all through this study, the negation and non-acceptance of the Oriental Jews' background had and has important consequences on Israeli society up to nowadays. This constitutes the other important issue of this study, which is the gradual appearance of an ethnic political creation. These different Oriental communities from North Africa and Asia had very few common characteristics; however, we can see the transformation of the *Mizrahi* (Orientals) into a Sephardi identification. These different Oriental communities gradually become one distinct group in Israel. The process of transformation started with social unrest as we will see through the events of Waddi Salib and the Black Panthers movement. Then, this social unrest and social malaise shifted from a social to a cultural problem. Cultural identification, revendication and legitimation can be traced from the seventies and early eighties following the effects of the Six Days War and the Yom Kippur War. During this period, we can see what we can call a recreation and a remaking of the past. In fact, it turned out as a remodelling of the past where these different communities coming from Morocco, Iraq or Yemen were creating a common culture based on a so-called common past. This process developed into a political one where the crystallisation of this new ethnic group operated. The turnout of the 1977 elections and its confirmation in 1981 and 1984 fuelled the persistent idea that the Orientals constituted one political community assimilated to the Likud. From 1984 on, the issue became even more complex bringing the religious sphere into the debate with the creation of the Shas (The Sephardim Guards of the Torah). Paradoxically, the religious distinction was already established between Sephardim and Ashkenazim but was not reflected in the religious circles, nor in the religious parties<sup>5</sup>. Nowadays, religion is becoming the main issue in Israeli society and in politics. The three last elections were seen by most specialists as a success or a failure for the peace process. The parliamentary elections of May 1999 were interpreted as a success for the peace process with an overall majority of the Labour Party and the nomination of Mr Ehud Barak as Prime Minister. The 2001 elections saw the

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<sup>4</sup> According to the *Israeli Statistical Abstract*, from 1919 to 1948, out of a total number of 482,857, 377,381 came from Europe.

<sup>5</sup> Apart from the nomination of one chief rabbi for each community.

victory of Ariel Sharon as Prime Minister. The last elections in January 2003 were also seen as a victory for the anti-peace activists. Nonetheless, these last three elections reveal in our view a much more structural trend that characterises Israeli society today. Indeed, we should not minimise the success of the party of Arie Deri, the Shas as the third biggest Israeli political party until the last elections. The emergence of the Shinoui in the last elections, whose electorate is mainly by Tel-avivian upper middle class Ashkenazi, and mainly anti-clerical, reveals the divide in Israeli society today. Therefore, the evolution of the Sephardim community in Israel nowadays brings up to light the transformation of Israeli society and the quest for a new Israeli identity.

From the outset, it should be stated that studies on the Oriental Jews have always been hampered by the same methodological problems that have plagued Israeli sociology since the 1950s, when Oriental immigrants arrived, en masse, in Israel. The problems encountered stem from the fact that the second generation, and even more the third generation, is grouped into one category as an underclass to differentiate them from the dominant Ashkenazim today. Today, with the second and third generations of Sephardim born in Israel, this category still persists, despite the fact that 40 or 60 % of the Sephardim belong to the Israeli middle class rather than to their traditional sociological category.

## FIRST PART: THE SEPHARDIM COMMUNITY

It is questionable whether nowadays we can still talk about Sephardic Jews, or about a Sephardim community. Historically, as we will see in the following paragraphs, the Sephardim community should be limited to the descendants of Jews from the Iberian continent. However, people in France or in Israel often refer to the Sephardic Jews as being the non-Ashkenazim Jews, although there is a considerable difference between the history of Moroccan Jews, Iraqi Jews or Yemenite Jews. Nevertheless, in this study, we will keep this over-extended definition for two principal reasons, firstly, in terms of religious worshipping, and secondly, in terms of their being a new ethnic group in Israel representing all the Oriental communities from North Africa and Asia.

### A Brief Historical Background: How to understand the Sephardim/Ashkenazim dichotomy

The origins of the word Sephardim can be found in the Bible. In the Bible, the word «sepharad» refers to the Iberian continent<sup>6</sup>. Later on, post-biblical literature identified this term with Spain. It is from the 14<sup>th</sup> century onwards that we started to designate the Jews living in Spain as Sephardic Jews, as opposed to the Ashkenazim community, exiled from Babylon and Palestine, and living in Eastern and Oriental Europe. Since the Middle Ages, the Ashkenazim<sup>7</sup> community has spoken German or

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<sup>6</sup> Sepharad, the site of a colony of exiles from Jerusalem, mentioned in Obadiah 20. It is predicted that the exiles in Sepharad would possess the cities of the south. Sepharad was connected fancifully or erroneously with Hispania, the Latin name for Spain (*Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Jerusalem : Keter Publishing House Ltd, 1973, p. 1164.).

<sup>7</sup> a people and a country bordering on Armenia and the upper Euphrates ; listed in Genesis 10 :3 and I Chronicles 1 :6 among the descendants of Gomer. The name Ashkenaz also occurs once in Jeremiah 51 : 27 in a passage calling upon the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz to rise and destroy Babylon. In medieval rabbinical literature, the name was used for Germany. (*Encyclopaedia Judaica*, *op.cit.*, p. 718.)

Yiddish while the Sephardic Jews expressed themselves first in Judeo-Spanish and later on in Judeo-Arabic<sup>8</sup>.

Nowadays, many people use the terms Sephardi, Oriental, *Frenk* or Mizrahi to refer to non-Ashkenazi groups whether of Spanish, Arabic or Persian speech<sup>9</sup>. Today, one may hear a second generation Kurdish Jew refer to himself as a *frenk*<sup>10</sup>, even though he did not ascertainably descend from the Jews of Spain.

Certain historians consider the generalisation of the word Sephardim for all the non-Ashkenazim to be unqualified and abusive<sup>11</sup>. They are perfectly correct when they refer us to the pre-existence of Jews living in the Middle East (Yemen, Kurdistan, Iran and Iraq) while the Jewish community was not yet established in Spain and therefore these communities cannot be defined as Sephardim according to the etymology of the word. Another example that they could give would be the presence of native people and Berbers who had been living in North Africa for more than two thousands years and who had converted to the Jewish religion for historical reasons. Shouldn't they indeed be considered as oriental rather than Sephardim<sup>12</sup>? However, the grouping of the Jews into the Sephardim or the Ashkenazim sphere can be explained by Jewish religious history. The Sephardim/Ashkenazim dichotomy dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century with the *Shulhan Arukh*. The *Shulhan Arukh*, religious masterpiece of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, has had a decisive influence on the lives of the Jewish populations throughout the world. This religious book wrote in 1555 sets out detailed codified rules for the practice of Jewish religion. The author, the rabbi Yossef Caro, defines the lifestyle and customs of Jews according to his

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<sup>8</sup> See Heschel, -Abraham, *Les Bâtisseurs du Temps*, Paris : Les Editions de Minuit, 1957, pp. 17-30. For the history of Sephardim Jews, see Leroy, -Béatrice, *L'Aventure sépharade : De la Péninsule Ibérique à la diaspora*, Paris : Editions Albin Michel, 1986, or Toledano, Joseph, *Les Sépharades*, Bruxelles : Editions Brepols, 1992.

<sup>9</sup> Zenner, -Walter, « Ambivalence and Self-Image among Oriental Jews in Israel », *Jewish Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 2, 1969, pp. 214-223, p. 216.

<sup>10</sup> *Frenk* is the common slang-term for Sephardi or Oriental with some pejorative connotation, equivalent to the term *Yekke* for German Jews or *Shiknozi* and *Vus-vus* for Ashkenazim. It is a word with a strange history. Originally, West Europeans in the eastern Mediterranean were called Franks. Thus, it came to be applied to the Spanish and Italian descent who were called *Signores Franco* or *Faranji*, the latter being the Arabic word for European. It became a term specifying Sepharadi Jews. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Ashkenazi Jews used the term first for the Sepharadim proper and then transferred it to a larger non-Ashkenazi group.

<sup>11</sup> See for example Encyclopaedia Judaica, *op.cit.*, p. 1164 ; Shapiro, -Raphael, Zionism and its Oriental subjects Part I : The Oriental Jews in zionism's dialectical contradictions, *Khamsin* 5 (1978), pp. 5-26, p. 7 ; Schnall, -David J, *Radical Dissent in Contemporary Israeli politics : Cracks in the Wall*, New York, London, Sydney, Toronto, 1979, p.156 bottom note.

Sephardim background. Reacting to these codes, Rabbi Moses b. Israel Isserles, the highest authority of the Polish Jews, argued that these rules were not valid for Ashkenazi Jews<sup>13</sup>. Consequently, he decided to establish a set of rules according to the different customs and traditions of Ashkenazim culture called the *Ha-Mappa* written in 1555. From this period on, each community around the world defined themselves according to these codes. Jews from North Africa, Egypt, Palestine, Turkey, and Yemen adopted the *Choulhane Arouk*, while those from Western and Eastern Europe followed the strictures of Rabbi Moses b. Israel Isserles<sup>14</sup>, whom they call *Moram*<sup>15</sup>.

The consequences of the Spanish 1492 Edict ordering the expulsion of the Jews from Spain are another factor to be taken into account when explaining the diffusion of Sephardi culture throughout North Africa and Asia<sup>16</sup>. The Edit declared, « *Any Jew who agrees to become baptised will have his property returned* ». Some of the Jewish elite chose to accept Christianity but about 250,000 Jews moved away to North Africa, Italy and especially Turkey where Sultan Bayazid II admitted them gladly<sup>17</sup>. As a result, we can find the presence and influence of Sephardi culture throughout the Mediterranean region. The Sephardim quickly became the pivots and animator of Jewish life in Provence, Bayonne, in the Jewish Italian ghettos, in the Balkans and in North Africa. Great spiritual centres were installed in Fez in Morocco, in Aleppo in Syria or in Amsterdam. They considerably influenced by their culture and the high idea they had of their own civilisation the autochthonous communities around the Mediterranean. This constitutes another reason why the word Sephardim was generalised for all the non-Ashkenazim.

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<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that for example in « Erez Israel » in the fifteenth and sixteenth century, the Sephardi, refugees from Spain were distinguished from the North Africans Jews known as the « Moghrabi », the « Mustarabs » or « Moriscos ». (*Encyclopaedia Judaica, op.cit.*, p. 1176.)

<sup>13</sup> The compilation by Rabbi Joseph Caro (*Maran*, « our master » for the Sephardim) represents a more liberal and permissive trend than that approved by the Ashkenazi authorities. For example, Sephardi authorities permit rice to be eaten on Passover and allow whole eggs found inside a slaughtered chicken or vegetables cooked in a pot previously used for meat to be eaten with milk products. Ashkenazi authorities forbid all such practices, and instances could be multiplied. (*Encyclopaedia Judaica, op.cit.*, p. 1170.)

<sup>14</sup> Malka, -Victor, *Les Juifs Sépharades*, Presses Universitaires de France, 1991, p. 4-5. According to the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, this division only appeared in 1917 during the British Mandate in Palestine with the establishment of a dual Ashkenazi-Sephardi chief rabbinate, causing « *all non Ashkenazi, « oriental » communities to affiliate with the Sephardi rabbinical authorities, thus creating the semantic confusion around the term « Sephardim » in both Erez Israel and the Diaspora.* » (*Encyclopaedia Judaica, op.cit.*, p. 1175.)

<sup>15</sup> which may mean equivocally « our teacher and master R. Moses » or « their teacher » (i.e., of the Ashkenazim), *Encyclopaedia Judaica, op.cit.*, p. 1170.

<sup>16</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>17</sup> *Encyclopaedia Judaica, op.cit.*, p 1167.



Paradoxically, the diffusion of Sephardim culture led to its decline. The consequences of the 1492 expulsion are decisive in Jewish history. Sephardim culture is finally dispersed throughout the world where religious observance now becomes based on an oral tradition. This period marks the shift of Sephardim culture and traditions from a European Christian religious and cultural background to the Muslim world. Their relations with the other local Jewish communities, whether the autochthonous Jews from North Africa, or with the local European Jewish communities are limited; the Sephardi Jews consider themselves as superior and view the ritual of the other Jewish communities with which they are living with as undeveloped or even worse as heretics<sup>18</sup>. By losing their initial roots and finding themselves atomised in diverse communities throughout the world, the Sephardim gradually lose their cultural and religious influence and from the 17<sup>th</sup> century on, it becomes what is commonly called the obscure period of their history<sup>19</sup>. Their diffused culture leads inevitably to their decline and we see Jewish religion, mysticism and rituals turning into an ashkenozentric approach, leading Roland Barthes to call the Sephardi Jews, « *the minority of the minorities* »<sup>20</sup>.

One may ask now whether given the breaking up of Sephardi Judaism throughout the world and the fact that having been expelled from the land of their origins, they have inevitably gradually lost their cultural heritage, the Sephardim still have a specific culture, can they claim a particular identity?

To question Sephardic identity nowadays appears a highly complex issue. As Victor Malka stressed, nothing indicates that Sephardi identity is in real contradiction with the identity of an Ashkenazim Jew<sup>21</sup>; and this is normal in a way since all the Jews around the world have developed the feeling of being a bound community, sharing a common past and a common fate. As we will see later on, it is these shared feelings that managed

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<sup>18</sup> Malka, -Victor, *op.cit.*, p 28.

<sup>19</sup> After the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, a reduction in the importance of the Sephardi element in relation to the rest of the Jewish world took place. During the Middle Ages, the Jews of Spain formed a most numerous and active element of the Jewish people, perhaps at least one half of the world Jewry. From the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, however, their relative importance dwindled. In modern times, the Ashkenazi proportion of the Jewish people has constituted approximately nine tenths of the whole. Before the Holocaust, of the approximately 16,500,000 Jews in the world, about 15,000,000 were Ashkenazim and only 1,500,000 Sephardim and other non-Ashkenazi communities. The numerical decline was inevitably accompanied by a contradiction in intellectual and cultural productivity, and the energetic Ashkenazi took the lead. (Encyclopaedia Judaica, *op.cit.*, p. 1171.)

<sup>20</sup> « *la minorité des minorités* » (author's own translation). Barthes, -Roland, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 18 janvier 1978.

<sup>21</sup> Malka, -Victor, *op.cit.*, p 67.

to create and consolidate an apparently bound Israeli society, while it is obvious that some diverging and conflicting interest within Israeli society can be found already at the time of its creation.

So, what are the religious and cultural differences between the two communities? It should be stressed firstly that the differences between Sephardi Jews and Ashkenazim Jews cannot be compared for example with the division between Shiites and Sunnites in the Muslim religion. In fact, their main difference is twofold<sup>22</sup>. The first one is in the religious field. While the Sephardim do not differ from the Ashkenazim in the basic tenets of Judaism, both groups viewing the Babylonian Talmud as their ultimate authority in belief and practice, there are great differences in matters of detail and outlook. We can find differences in religious law as seen before, but also variations in synagogue services, in the text of the prayers, as well as in the synagogue arrangements themselves<sup>23</sup>. Besides these religious differences, there is a cultural one. Indeed, one community was living in a Christian environment while the other one was living in a Muslim society. Consequently, we can distinguish certain personal traits in an Ashkenazim that will not be found in a Sephardim. This can be explained by the fact that the problems met by the two communities were of a different nature. In the European society, the problem Jews faced was that of their acceptance in a Christian society while in the Muslim society, the problems met were more of an economic nature. This has affected both communities. The Ashkenazim personality was moulded in the Christian civilisation while the Sephardi character was forged in the Muslim world. As Léon Askénazi said in his interview in *Aujourd'hui être juif*, « *It is a biblical pattern of importance: for Ismael, Israel is Isaac; for Esau its Jacob* <sup>24</sup> ». As Victor Malka stressed, this has led to the creation of some distinct sociological and anthropological differences. He concludes by saying that these two ways of being a Jew have however never brought an ethnic, racial and linguistic differentiation<sup>25</sup>. However, from my point of view, the current debate in Israeli society and politics is, on the contrary, forging and creating two different and distinctive ethnic communities. This may not be true for the rest of the Jewish communities around the

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<sup>22</sup> For more details, see Adler, -Alexandre & Cohen, -Bernard, *Juif & Juif : Ashkénazes et Sépharades Aujourd'hui*, Paris : Autrement, 1985, pp. 92-95.

<sup>23</sup> For more details, see Encyclopaedia Judaica, *op.cit.*, p. 1170.

<sup>24</sup> (authors own translation) « *C'est un schéma biblique qui a son importance : Israël chez Ismael c'est Isaac ; chez Esau, c'est Jacob* ». See the interview of Léon Askénazi in *Aujourd'hui être juif*, Edition du Cerf, 1984.

<sup>25</sup> Malka, -Victor, *op.cit.*, p 69.

world but this new phenomenon clearly appears in Israeli society. This brings us to understand how this separation of two distinctive Jewish identities has developed from the creation of the Israeli State.

## A Jewish State or a State of Jews

### 1.1.1. **Zionism**

#### 1.1.1.1. Zionism: an European ideology

The Zionist movement's European identity was asserted from the outset in its classic texts. In his programmatic book *The Jewish State*, Theodore Herzl declared that the Jewish State would serve as « *the portion of the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilisation as opposed to barbarism* »<sup>26</sup>. When discussing Jewish immigration, Herzl spoke only of the European Jews. As Sami Chetrit demonstrates, Herzl's analysis of « the Jewish question » is in fact an analysis of the European Jewish question without any mention of « Oriental » Jews<sup>27</sup>. Political Zionism appeared in the light of European anti-Semitism<sup>28</sup> with the Russians pogrom after the assassination of the Russian Czar Alexander II early in 1881 and the renewed anti-Semitism in the German-speaking world and the Dreyfus Affair. It was clearly a European movement, which contradicts the nature of a new Israeli State for all the Jews. As aptly put by Bernard Cohen,

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<sup>26</sup> Herzl, -Theodor, *The Jewish State: An attempt at a Modern Solution to the Jewish Question*, London: H. Polders, 1972, p 30.

<sup>27</sup> Sami Chetrit, *New State, Old Land, The East and The Easterners in the Jewish State of Theodor Herzl*, unpublished paper, Columbia University, 1992 quoted in Joseph Massad, « Zionism's Internal Others : Israel and the Oriental Jews », *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Volume 25, No 4, pp 53-68, p. 54.

<sup>28</sup> or Judophobia as defined in Leon Pinsker's *Autoemancipation*, explaining that there was a permanent psychopathological phenomenon in this anti-Semitism.

*Zionism will again add to the confusion: a typical nationalistic European movement, it gives to the Ashkenazim, so far away from Palestine, the important role in the movement on the return to the Promised Land, whereas the Sephardim, who had been always attached to Jerusalem, were allocated the villain's part in the new Jewish State.*<sup>29</sup>

The first non-European Jews encounter with the Zionist organisation was in 1880s when a few thousand Yemeni Jews arrived in Palestine motivated by « religious-messianic longings » rather than Zionism. The Zionist office decided to use them as seasonal agricultural labourers. In 1908, while the Thon report urged to convert Yemeni Jews into regular agricultural workers, the Palestine Office decided to take a more radical approach and import new immigrants from Yemen for that purpose<sup>30</sup>. However, the presence of Yemeni Jews was so disturbing to the Ashkenazi leadership that Ahad Ha'am worried that « Yemenite immigration affects the nature of the Zionist settlement by dint of their different culture and mentality »<sup>31</sup>. As Ella Shohat has shown, this radicalised view of Jews within Zionist discourse was so strong that it spanned all political currents irrespective of ideology<sup>32</sup>. The revisionist Zionist leader Vladimir Jabotinsky, for example, at the opposite end of the political spectrum from Ahad Ha'am, was also wary of any connection between European Jews and the Orient. In 1926, he stated that the « Jews, thank God, have nothing in common with the East. We must put an end to any trace of the Oriental spirit in the [native] Jews of Palestine »<sup>33</sup>. In an earlier article entitled « Jews of the East », he opposed mixed marriages with non-European Jews and the creation of a single Jewish people on the grounds that he did not know whether this would result in an « brilliant people or a dull race »<sup>34</sup>. He also insisted that the Ashkenazi Jews had to preserve their majority status in Jewish society in Palestine<sup>35</sup>. Rejecting the suggestion that, as a Semitic language, Hebrew should be

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<sup>29</sup> (authors own translation) « le sionisme va encore ajouter à la confusion: mouvement nationaliste typiquement européen, il donne aux ashkénazes, tellement éloignés de la Palestine, la prééminence dans le mouvement du retour en Terre Promise, et relègue les sépharades, qui étaient toujours restés attachés à Jérusalem, au rôle de mauvaise troupe du nouvel Etat juif. Adler, -Alexandre & Cohen, -Bernard, *op.cit.*, p. 96-97.

<sup>30</sup> For more details, See Shapiro, -Raphael, *op.cit.*, p. 10-12.

<sup>31</sup> Ahad Ha'am, *Kol Kitve Ahad Ha'am* (All the writings of Ahad Ha'am) (Tel Aviv: Dvir Publication House, 1947), p.426 [in Hebrew], quoted by G.N.Giladi, *Discord in Zion: Conflict between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews in Israel*, London: Scorpion Publishing Ltd., 1990, p 47.

<sup>32</sup> Ella Shohat, « Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of its Jewish victims », *Social Text*, Volume 19-20, fall 1988, pp. 1-35.

<sup>33</sup> Jabotinsky, -Vladimir, *The East*, published in 1926, quoted by Giladi, *op.cit.*, p. 209.

<sup>34</sup> Jabotinsky, -Vladimir, *Jews of the East* (1919), quoted in *Ha'aretz*, 22 July 1983.

<sup>35</sup> Jabotinsky, -Vladimir, *Jews of the East*, 1919, *ibid.*

pronounced closer to Arabic<sup>36</sup>, Jabotinsky insisted that « *We are European and our musical taste is European, the taste of Rubenstein, Mendelssohn, and Bizet* »<sup>37</sup>».

#### 1.1.1.2. A political creation as opposed to a religious creation

Not only was Zionism based on a eurocentric approach, there was also a considerable difference between the Ashkenazim and Sephardim community on the subject of how the Israeli State and society should be perceived. As Victor Malka has emphasised, when the creation of a Jewish State was announced to the exiled Sephardi ghettos, a wave of enthusiasm was manifested. This is not to say that the Ashkenazim did not live this event with the same enthusiasm, but for them, it meant the accomplishment of a political move accomplished through the fighting of the Hagana and the Irgoun against the British mandate, followed by a diplomatic fight within the United Nations. For the Sephardim, it was the achievement of God. It was the accomplishment of biblical promises, the return to the Promised Land, the land of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In the history of Judaism, it is not surprising that most of the messianic movements from Sabbatai Tzvi to Shlomo Molkho have been the exclusive and typical work of Sephardim. As Gérard Nahon declared, « *the only general Jewish messianic adventure of the diaspora was Sephardim* »<sup>38</sup>. Their view of Zionism is innermost and mystical. As clearly expressed by many authors, « *The Sephardim have the love of Zion in their skin* »<sup>39</sup>». For them, Zionism does not mean the construction of a State at all cost but first and foremost to return to their roots and the holy places of their history. The idea of a Jewish State in Uganda or in Argentina was inconceivable from their point of view, only Ashkenazi Jews like Herzl or Pinsker considered such a view<sup>40</sup>. For most of the Sephardim, the *aliyah* to Israel meant

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<sup>36</sup> For a analysis of the hebrew language, see Shohat, -Ella, *op.cit.*, pp. 53-56.

<sup>37</sup> Jabotinsky, - Vladimir, *The Hebrew Accent*, Tel Aviv: HaSefer, 1930, pp. 4-9, quoted by Shohat, - Ella, *Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of Representation* Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989, p. 55.

<sup>38</sup> (authors own translation) « *La seule aventure messianique juive générale de la diaspora fut sépharades* ». Nahon, -Gérard, « Le Second Israël », numéro spécial *Des Temps Modernes*, no 394, bis, 1979.

<sup>39</sup> (authors own translation) « *L'amour de Sion colle à la peau des Sépharades* ». Malka, -Victor, *op.cit.*, p. 76-77, See also Chouraqui, -André, Les Juifs d'Afrique du Nord entre l'Orient et l'Occident, *Etudes Maghrébines*, No 5, Paris : Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, Centre d'Etude des Relations Internationales, 1965, pp. 20-22 .

<sup>40</sup> For example, Pinsker said in the 1880s that the removal of the Jews from the places of their dwelling was not necessarily the land of the ancestors in Erez Israel, though Pinsker was aware that there were historic and emotional ties to the land, but rather the most readily available land that was suitable for settlement, preferably on the American continent.

the achievement and the accomplishment of the prophets' promises. Long-term relations existed between the Jewish communities in North Africa and those in Palestine<sup>41</sup>. The hope of returning to Jerusalem was still alive in many Sephardic Jews, although this hope had more of a religious character than a political one<sup>42</sup>. For example, in 1927, J.H. Levy gave a report to the World Zionist Organisation relating that « *Moroccan Jews have always been and still are inspired by a strong faith in the Messiah and they adore the Promised Land without having the slightest idea that the *gelouah* could happen* »<sup>43</sup>. Moreover, in most of the African-Asian countries, the engagement in Zionism was clearly weak up to the Second World War compared to the Ashkenazim communities in Eastern Europe<sup>44</sup>.

For the Ashkenazim, Zionism was more of a political expression and meant also their liberation from European anti-Semitism. For the Sephardim, it was different:

*Many Sephardim and some oriental Jews arrived in Israel inspired by secular Zionist ideals, but it was not the case with most of them. The urges were economic and political persecution, but they had maintained their allegiance to Jewish traditional ritual and observance, centred around the Synagogue and the religious schools. They came to Israel to be able to follow more fully and securely their own way of life and didn't envisage any drastic change.*<sup>45</sup>

For the North African masses, the creation of the Israeli State was received more as a messianic event than a political one<sup>46</sup>. We can therefore question whether it is the same Zionism. An Israeli press editorialist, H. Rozenblum, has recently tried to define the attitudes of each community towards the Jewish national movement in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Rozenblum considers that Ashkenazi Zionism has always been « *a Zionism surrounded by other barriers: it was never Zionism alone, it was always Zionism coupled with something else: Zionism and socialism, etc.* »<sup>47</sup>. Sephardic Jews, « *a lot less frustrated and with fewer complex* »<sup>48</sup>, have,

<sup>41</sup> See Chouraqui, -André, *op.cit.*, pp. 19-21.

<sup>42</sup> See Stillman, -Norman, *Sephardi Religious Responses to Modernity*, Luxembourg: Harwood, Academic Publishers, 1995.

<sup>43</sup> (authors own translation) « *Les Juifs du Maroc étaient de tout temps et le sont toujours inspirés d'une bonne foi au Messie et adorent la terre promise sans se faire idée que la *gelouah* puisse arriver* » Bensimon-Donath, -Doris, *Evolution du Judaïsme marocain sous le protectorat français 1912-1956*, Paris : Mouton et Cie, 1968, p. 151.

<sup>44</sup> although there has been some young groups in Morocco who have been trying to join albeit unsuccessfully the World Zionist Organisation as demonstrated in Mr. M. Soussan thesis, Soussan, -M, *L'éveil politique sépharade*, Thèse de Doctorat de 3<sup>ème</sup> cycle en Science Politique, Juin 1975, Université d'Aix-Marseille.

<sup>45</sup> Eisenstadt, -Shmuel Noah, *Israeli Society*, 1954, p. 95.

<sup>46</sup> Chouraqui, -André, *op.cit.*, p. 22.

<sup>47</sup> (authors own translation) « *un sionisme entouré de barrières* »: « *il ne s'agit pas seulement de sionisme mais d'un sionisme doublé de quelque chose : sionisme plus socialisme, etc* »

<sup>48</sup> (authors own translation) « *beaucoup moins frustrés et complexés* »

according to Rozenblum, a more direct and simple view of Zionism: « *Consequently, a sort of hidden apartheid towards the Sephardic Jews was created here* »<sup>49</sup>. It is worthwhile noting that actually most of the Sephardi Jews live in Israel while only a small proportion of Ashkenazi Jews decided to immigrate to Israel. The two visions were actually irreconcilable since as well shown by James Haroun, European Jews were remodelling and reconstructing their identity:

*Whereas the first European immigrants went to Palestine to build and to build themselves, to prove and to prove themselves, the majority of eastern Jews assumed their Judaism quite calmly (□).*

*Whether they had gone voluntarily or not, the intention of these new men was not to change what was Jewish in them, and even less to create a new form of Jewishness. Of course, there were attached to Israel (□) Of course, most of them would go there to start a new life, but not at all with the idea of some form of redemption or rebirth (□). Their leaving for Israel was seen as an old dream coming true, as the outcome of a long wait and as the simple and concrete accomplishment of what they were already: Jews, happy to be Jew and feeling no shame about it.*

*Which means that since Zionism can be portrayed as that will to become something different, most eastern Jews could not really identify themselves with this kind of Zionism.*

<sup>50</sup>

Indeed, the Zionist movement had set itself the aim not to express Jewish reality but totally and radically to reshape it.

*The vanguard of Zionism, especially before the compromise urged by Berl Katsnelson in the 1930s, wished to transform the nature of the Jewish community down to the last detail: absolute atheism, Hebrew in place of Yiddish, manual labour instead of trade and the liberal professions.*<sup>51</sup>

Let us then examine how Ashkenazi Jews modelled their vision of this new Israeli society.

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<sup>49</sup> (authors own translation) « *En conséquence, il s'est constitué ici une sorte d'apartheid camouflé envers les sépharades* » Rozenblum, -H, *Yedioth Aharonoth*, 8 Avril 1983, quoted in Malka, -Victor, *op.cit.*, pp. 77-78

<sup>50</sup> « (authors own translation) « *Contrairement aux premiers immigrants d'Europe qui allaient en Palestine pour construire et se construire, prouver et se prouver, la majorité des Juifs orientaux assumait sa judaïcité en toute quiétude (□).*

*Volontaire ou non, le projet de ces hommes n'était pas de changer le Juif en eux, encore moins d'en forger un nouveau. Certes, ils étaient attaché à Israël, (□) certes, ils iraient pour la plupart « là-bas » et pour y vivre une nouvelle vie ; mais pas du tout dans la perspective d'une quelconque rédemption ou renaissance (□). Le départ en Israël était vécu comme la réalisation d'un rêve ancien, comme l'aboutissement d'une vieille attente et l'accomplissement simple et concret de ce qu'ils étaient déjà : Juifs, content de l'être et n'en ressentant aucune honte*

*C'est dire, dans la mesure où le sionisme se caractérise surtout par cette volonté de devenir autre, que les Juifs orientaux dans la majorité ne s'identifiaient pas tellement à ce sionisme-là. »*

Haroun, -Jamous, *Israël et ses Juifs. Essais et sur les limites du volontarisme*, Paris : Maspéro, 1982, p. 30.

<sup>51</sup> Shapiro, Raphael, *op.cit.*, p. 6.

### 1.1.1.3. The definition of Israeli identity according to Zionism

Before the creation of Israel, a few Sephardim followed the Zionist movement and immigrated to Israel. The first contact between the Ashkenazim and Sephardim community was hardly encouraging. Two different worlds, two distinctive lifestyles, two different ways of conceiving Judaism were opposed. The first contact between the two communities was marked by many divergences. The Sephardim did not understand these Jews coming from Europe with their different customs, prayers and languages while the Ashkenazim looked with contempt at these Jews from another age still waiting for the realisation of the prophets' promises. The two communities started to organise themselves separately. In the religious field, two chief rabbis were nominated in Israel, one for the Ashkenazim community, the other for the Sephardim. Each community had its proper associations, their own newspapers, the language of one being Ladino<sup>52</sup> while the other being in Yiddish.<sup>53</sup>

With the creation of the Israeli State, official discourse changed the nature of this dual community system into a regrouping State. The creation of the State of Israel by European Jews was predicated upon reconfiguring Jewish identities. The type of Jewish culture that Zionism wanted to create had nothing to do with Diaspora culture, seen as a manifestation of oppressed Jewishness. Yiddish, stigmatised as a product of that culture, was and is actively discouraged in favour of Hebrew, while the Arabic of Arab Jews became the contemptible language of the enemy. All in all, Israel created a new Israeli identity and culture alien to Diaspora Jews<sup>54</sup>. As we will see later on, the integrationist policies rejected the cultural background of the new immigrants but the model from which Israeli society was taken was European. This shocked most of the Sephardi Jews when they arrived.

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<sup>52</sup> Ladino is the Spanish language as it was preserved by the Sephardim. It is also called Judezmo or Judeo-Spanish. Ladino is still spoken by Jews in Turkey, Greece, and adjacent countries, as well as by immigrants to Israel, the U.S., Latin America, and elsewhere. It seems probable, however that the dialect will be extinct within a short time. (See *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, *op.cit.*, p. 1168)

<sup>53</sup> Menahem, -Nahum, *Israel : Tensions et discriminations communautaires*, Paris : L'Harmattan, 1986.

<sup>54</sup> Massad , -Joseph, *op.cit.*, p. 53.



## 1.1.2. The arrival of Sephardi Jews in Israel

### 1.1.2.1. Origins of the Sephardim Community

As we can see in the following table, the origins of Oriental Jews were very diverse<sup>55</sup>. The biggest Jewish communities were based on the Magreb, Iraq and Egypt. Nowadays, the Jewish communities in these countries are quasi inexistant. Most of them have decided to emigrate, a majority went to Israel but in the case of the North African countries, more than half went to France rather than Israel.

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Jewish Communities in the Muslim Countries of the Middle East in 1950<sup>56</sup>

Countries	Jewish population	Total population (%)
Egypt	75 000	0,4
Iraq	120 000	2,4
Lebanon	6 700	0,8
Syria	6 000	0,3
Bahrein	400	0,4
Hadramouth	2 000	?
Yemen	8 000 (?)	2
Aden	1 200	2,5
Libya	14 000 (?)	2,5
Tunisia	100 000	2,9
Algeria	120 000	1,7
Morocco	225 000	2,6
Spanish Morocco	14 700 (1947)	2,1
Tangiers	7 000 (?)	2,8

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<sup>55</sup> But only a minority of the new non-Ashkenazi immigrants -those from Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, and some North Africans- are strictly speaking, Sephardim, i.e., descendants of Spanish and Portuguese Jews whose vernacular was Ladino. (*Encyclopaedia Judaica, op.cit.*, p. 1176)

In 1950, about 800,000 Jews lived in Arabic countries, representing 5 to 6% of the Jewish world population<sup>57</sup>. According to Schechtam, of the 460,000 Jews that entered Palestine between 1919 and 1948, only 42,000 came from Arabic and Islamic countries, representing 9% of the Jewish population in Israel<sup>58</sup>. However, with the creation of the new Israeli State and the new factors it engendered by its creation, communities from Arabic countries became the principal source of immigration. Indeed, immigrants coming from the Arabic and Middle Eastern countries represented in 1949, 47,35% of the total number of immigrants and in 1956, they represented up to 86,7% of the total number of immigrants<sup>59</sup>. As noted by André Chouraqui,

*In Asia and in Africa, the triumph of Muslim nationalism was everywhere accompanied by the total or partial liquidation of Jewish communities. The totality of Yemenite Jews, 98% of Iraqi Jews, all the Jews from Aden, all the Jordanian Jews, 90% of Syrian Jews, 90% of Egyptian Jews, 95% of Libyan Jews, most of the Afghan, Kurdish, Indian, Jews, most of the Iranian Jews, Turks, Lebanese, have left their countries of origin since the end of the Second World War.*□<sup>60</sup>

#### 1.1.2.2. The Olim

The reason why Jews from North Africa and Asia did not immigrate until the early fifties seems to be difficult to ascertain. Actually, there has been as yet no research explaining why this immigration took place in the fifties rather than the thirties or forties. The only author mentioning this time gap is Joseph Massad. He puts crudely that « *it was not until the slaughter of six million (mostly European) Jews during the Second World War that the Ashkenazi Zionist leadership decided to recruit Jews massively from Asia and Africa. This recruitment intensified when it became clear that Jews from the Eastern Bloc were no longer allowed to immigrate to Israel* <sup>61</sup>». One may also suggest that European Zionism was a failure and that the Jewish Agency widened its field and encouraged the Jewish communities throughout the world to emigrate. The Zionist movement, based on secular, nationalist European ideas, was not

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<sup>56</sup> Landhust, -J, *Jewish Communities in the Muslim Countries of the Middle East*, London: Routledge Ltd., 1950.

<sup>57</sup> estimated at around 16 to 17 millions. Statistics given in Abdou, -Ali Ibrahim & Kasmieh, -Krairieh, *Les Juifs des Pays Arabes*, L'Organisation de Libération de la Palestine, Centre de Recherches, Beyrouth, 1971, p. 15.

<sup>58</sup> Schechtam, -Joseph B., *On Wings of Eagles: The Plight, Exodus and Homecoming of Oriental Jewry*, New York and London: Thomas Yoseloff, 1961, p. 339.

<sup>59</sup> Abdou, -Ali Ibrahim & Kasmieh, -Krairieh, *op.cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>60</sup> (authors own translation) « *En Asie et en Afrique, le triomphe du nationalisme musulman s'est partout accompagné de la liquidation, totale ou partielle des communautés juives. La totalité des Juifs du Yemen, 98% des Juifs irakiens, tous les Juifs d'Aden, tous les Juifs de Jordanie, 90% des Juifs syriens, 90% des Juifs égyptiens, 95% des Juifs libyans, la plupart des Juifs afghans, kurdes, indiens, une grande partie des juifs iraniens, turcs, libanais, ont quitté leur pays natal depuis la fin de la deuxième guerre mondiale.* » Chouraqui, -André, *op.cit.*, p. 10.

particularly successful among secular European Jews. While most were ready to subscribe to its ideology, fewer were actually willing to live in Israel. In a sense, the Zionist movement generated a leadership but failed to attract its natural followers<sup>62</sup>. This certainly worried the Zionist leaders and the natural followers were to be found in North Africa and Asia.

Indeed, from 1948 to 1956, a total of 450,000 Jews arrived in Israel from Asia and Africa, compared to 360,000 Jews from Europe and America<sup>63</sup>. Ethnically speaking, 1951 was the turning point marking the first time since the Zionist waves of immigration at the end of the nineteenth century that Europeans formed a minority of the newcomers. Following a transition phase of one year when immigrants from Asia comprised the largest group, in the remaining years of the decade, immigrants from North Africa formed the largest group of newcomers<sup>64</sup>.

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<sup>61</sup> Massad, -Joseph, *op.cit.*, p. 55.

<sup>62</sup> Only 10% of the world's Ashkenazi Jews live in Israel compared with two-thirds of the Sephardim, Asher, -Arian, *Politics in Israel, The Second Generation*, Chatham House Publishers, Inc, 1989, p. 6.

<sup>63</sup> *Statistical Abstract of Israel 1978* (Jerusalem: Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 1979) cited in Swirsky, -Shlomo, « The Oriental Jews in Israel », *Dissent*, 30, winter 1984, p. 79.

<sup>64</sup> Horovitz, -Dan & Lissak, -Moshe, *Trouble in Utopia: The overburdened polity of Israel*, State University Press of New York, 1989, p. 72.

Immigrants by Country of Birth and Year of Immigration, 1948-1953 (percent)<sup>65</sup>

Country of Birth	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1948-1953
<i>All Countries</i>	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
<i>Asia</i>	5.3	30.5	34.4	59.5	28.7	27.8	35.3
Turkey	4.8	11.2	1.4	0.7	1.5	2.6	5.0
Iraq	0.0	0.7	19.3	51.3	4.1	4.1	17.8
Iran	0.1	0.8	6.3	5.4	17.9	10.6	3.9
Yemen & Aden	0.3	16.3	5.4	0.6	0.6	0.8	6.9
Other Countries	0.1	1.6	2.0	1.5	4.6	9.7	1.7
<i>Africa</i>	9.1	16.7	15.2	11.5	42.9	67.3	15.4
Tunisia, Algeria & Morocco	7.6	7.4	5.6	6.5	32.3	35.1	8.0
Libya	1.2	6.1	5.2	3.8	5.1	2.3	4.6
Other Countries	0.3	3.2	4.3	1.2	5.5	9.9	2.8
<i>Europe</i>	85.1	52.1	49.8	28.6	26.2	19.6	48.6
USSR	1.3	1.4	1.6	0.4	0.8	2.1	1.2
Poland	32.0	20.2	15.8	2.0	2.7	3.8	15.3
Romania	19.6	5.8	27.6	23.1	15.5	0.8	17.4
Bulgaria	16.8	8.6	0.6	0.7	1.9	3.3	5.4
Yugoslavia	4.6	1.1	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.1	1.1
Germany & Austria	2.0	3.0	0.8	0.4	1.1	1.8	1.6
Czechoslovakia	2.3	7.6	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.3	2.7
Hungary	3.9	2.0	1.6	0.7	2.5	5.2	1.8
<i>American &amp; Oceania</i>	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.4	2.2	5.3	0.7
USA	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.7	0.2
Other Countries	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.3	1.8	4.6	0.5

<sup>65</sup> Sicron, -Moshe, *Immigration to Israel*, Jerusalem: Falk Institute and Central Bureau of Statistics, 1989, Table A33.

Beside the reason behind their late arrival, the motivation for this mass immigration is also highly debatable. Eliezer Ben Raphael considers that:

*It was not the Zionist impetus by itself that motivated immigration for most of them, but rather the problems inherent to the situation of Moroccan Jews and their aspiration to annihilate all sense of insecurity and inferiority.* <sup>66</sup>

Ben Raphael's studies concentrate on Moroccan Jews. He explains that most of the middle class were motivated by a liberal society where they would not be defined as *dhimmis*<sup>67</sup>, a status in which they had to constantly bargain their rights with the French and the Sultans. Another important feature to consider in this mass immigration from Morocco, and to a larger extent North Africa (Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco) is that of the consequences of the war of independence in these countries. According to André Chouraqui, these wars had more of an impact on the Jewish Diaspora than the Jewish-Arabic conflict in the Middle East and brought them reluctantly to leave the country <sup>68</sup>. However, next to these isolated cases, we can distinguish two main reasons for the Jews from North Africa and Asia immigrating to Israel. The first one being that the creation of an Israeli State and its War of Independence led to growing antagonism between Israel and its neighbours; consequently, life in the Arab world became increasingly intolerable for Jews, especially so following Nasser's accession to power and the development of Arab nationalism <sup>69</sup>. This appears of course as the main reason for their immigration. Moreover, it appears that for most Sephardic Jews, religious motivation as underlined in the previous chapters is certainly one of the main other motives as shown in the following statistics. As stressed by David Schnall, «*for the more traditional and less sophisticated, however, the creation of the State of Israel and the antagonisms of the indigenous Muslim*

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<sup>66</sup> (authors own translation) «*Ce ne fut pas l'élan sioniste lui-même qui motiva l'immigration du plus grand nombre, mais plutôt les problèmes dépendant de la condition juive marocaine et l'aspiration à effacer tout sentiment d'insécurité et d'infériorité.*» Ben Raphael, - Eliezer, «*Réalité ethnique et conflit social : le cas israélien*», *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie*, Vol LXVIII, 1980, p. 135.

<sup>67</sup> The statute of *dhimmis* has been the statute of Jews living under Muslim rules since the expulsion from Spain. As put by Béatrice Leroy, «*Le Juif est le dhimmi par excellence, plus que le chrétien, présent en petite minorité d'Arméniens, Grecs, nestoriens ou catholiques romains. Le dhimmi juif du 20<sup>ème</sup> siècle, comme au 16<sup>ème</sup> ou 18<sup>ème</sup>, ne peut pas posséder sa terre, ni sa maison, ne peut aller à cheval, sa synagogue ne doit pas se faire remarquer dans le paysage urbain ; dans la rue, il doit porter un manteau rond masquant ses habits, il doit avoir la tête couverte. Il doit s'écarter devant le musulman, lui préparer la route si le maître est gêné. Il doit encore (en Algérie au 18<sup>ème</sup> siècle) marcher avec des babouches à semelle réduite ne protégeant pas le talon, pour que le pied traîne à demi dans la poussière*» (Leroy, -Béatrice, *op.cit.*, p. 177.)

<sup>68</sup> See Chouraqui, -André, *op.cit.*, Chapitre 1.

<sup>69</sup> See for example, *Encyclopaedia Judaica, op.cit.*, «*Sephardim : After World War II*», p. 1172.

population symbolized the coming of the messianic era. To emigrate to Israel represented the fulfilment of the ancient prophecy, the harbinger of « the end of days <sup>70</sup>».

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### Motives for emigration in Magreb and immigration in Israel <sup>71</sup>

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%	Why have you left North Africa?		Why are you living in Israel?	
	Adults	Students	Adults	Students
- zionist propaganda	6,8	-	10,6	2,5
- did like everybody else	8,9	1,2	11,5	1,3
- political events, fear of the Arabs	23,1	20,7	-	-
- meet up the family	5,8	3,7	7,8	-
- economic difficulties	7,1	18,3	6,3	17,7
- ideological motivation	33,2	30,5	56,7	60,8
- Other (Immigrates with the parents, refuse to reply or no reply)	15,1	25,6	7,1	17,7
<b>Total<sup>72</sup></b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

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Another interesting feature, which emerges from the above statistics, is that Zionist ideology played only a small role in the motivation of this mass immigration. As underlined by Eisenstadt, at this period, « *[among] Europeans and Orientals alike, who came to the State of Israel itself, there was a general weakening of the « revolutionary » or pioneering ideological Zionist orientations* <sup>73</sup>».

What appears as more controversial is the attitude of the pioneers towards this mass immigration from these Arabic countries. Some articles and evidences present a very polemical side by concluding, like Joseph Massad in his article, that « *in the absence of*

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<sup>70</sup> Schnall, -David J, *op.cit.*, p. 157.

<sup>71</sup> Bensimon-Donath, -Doris, *Immigrants d'Afrique du Nord en Israel : évolution et adaptation*, Paris : Edition Anthropos, 1980, p. 109.

<sup>72</sup> Les pourcentages ont été calculés sur la population interrogée.

<sup>73</sup> Eisenstadt, -Shmuel Noah, *The Transformation of Israeli Society: An Essay in Interpretation*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985, p. 298.

*European Jews, Jews from the Arab countries had to do*»<sup>74</sup>. Quoting from Tom Segev's book, *The First Israelis*, Ben Gurion compared the arrival of Sephardi Jews with the Africans who were brought as slaves to America<sup>75</sup>. Other Zionist leaders, like Yaakov Zrubavel, head of the Middle East department of the Jewish Agency, stated that « *perhaps these are not the Jews we would like to see coming here, but we can hardly tell them not to come...* »<sup>76</sup>. In Amos Oz's book, *Les Voix D'Israël*, one man from the town of Beth-Shemesh expresses his anger and disgust concluding that this mass immigration was organised so that new Jews could be used for low jobs or for the army:

*Can't you see our disgrace : We were given a roof, we were given a job, we were given a school, but was taken away from us our self esteem. Why did we make our parents come from Morocco? I will tell you, but you will not write it down of course, you will think it is sheer provocation. But I will tell you why. Wasn't it for the dirty jobs ? You didn't have the Arabs at that time, you needed our parents as road sweepers, as domestics and also as cops. You brought our parents here so that they could be Arabs for you.* <sup>77</sup>

What is clear however is that the first encounter between these Jews and the first pioneers was a shock.

*Some immigrants from Europe were shocked to realize that they had almost nothing in common with the Jews who came down from the Atlas mountains or who emerged from the Yemenite deserts. They did not understand neither their language, nor their customs, nor their reactions. Among certain classes of the population, the hostility was so strong that it led to racist reactions. And if we feel sadly obliged to mention this here, it is because this totally unexpected phenomenon in Israel, became intense enough in certain sectors to make things even worse among immigrants from the East and from the West ; it was not long before those from the East were nicknamed, the blacks.* <sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Massad, -Joseph, *op.cit.*, p. 56.

<sup>75</sup> Ben-Gurion, *Netsab Yelsrael*, p. 23, quoted in Segev, -Tom, 1949, *The First Israelis*, New York: The Free Press, 1986, p. 157.

<sup>76</sup> *Zionist Executive*, 5 June 1949, cited in Segev, 1949, *op.cit.*, p. 156.

<sup>77</sup> (authors own translation) « *Voyez quelle honte : On nous a donné un toit, on nous a donné du travail, on nous a donné une école, mais on nous a enlevé notre estime pour nous-mêmes. Pourquoi est ce qu'on a fait venir mes parents du Maroc ? je vais vous le dire, mais vous ne l'écrivez pas bien sur, vous penserez que c'est la provocation. Mais je vais vous dire pourquoi. Est ce que ce n'est pas pour les sales boulots ? Vous n'aviez pas encore les Arabes, vous aviez besoin de nos parents comme balayeurs, comme domestiques et aussi comme flics. Vous avez amené nos parents ici pour qu'ils soient vos Arabes.* » Amos Oz, *Les Voix D'Israël*, Paris : Calman Levy, 1986, p. 36.

<sup>78</sup> (authors own translation) « *Un certain nombre d'immigrants originaires d'Europe se rendirent compte, avec une certaine stupéfaction, qu'ils n'avaient à peu près rien de commun avec ces Juifs qui déferlaient des montagnes de l'Atlas ou surgissaient des déserts du Yémen. Ils n'en comprenaient ni la langue, ni les coutumes, ni les réactions. Dans certaines couches du peuple, l'hostilité fut si forte qu'elle donna naissance à des réactions de type raciste : si l'on se résigne à la noter ici, avec tristesse, c'est que le phénomène, absolument inattendu en Israël, revêtit assez d'ampleurs dans certains milieux pour aggraver encore les relations entre les groupes d'immigrants originaires d'Orient et d'Occident ; les premiers furent bientôt affublés d'un surnom, les noirs.* » Chouraqui, -André, *op.cit.*, pp. 27-28.

As Eisenstadt correctly remarked, Jews from one part of the Diaspora often still do not acknowledge even today the existence of other Jews and their Jewishness in other parts of the world<sup>79</sup>.

### 1.1.2.3. The negation of oriental culture and the « Levantine » threat

One of the biggest errors in the conception of Israeli society and in its integration process was in the cultural field. The effects of this policy were not immediate in creating communal tensions but have had a considerable impact on the radicalisation in Sephardi attitudes in politics, whether in the domestic field or in foreign policy.

In the years following the creation of the Israeli State, during the arrival of most Oriental Jews, what appears as striking is the refusal by the pioneers to accept the oriental culture and background of the North African and Asian communities. The most striking example was made in 1948 by Moshe Sharett, Israel's foreign minister, even before the arrival of most of these Oriental communities when speaking to the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vihinsky:

*There are countries -and I was referring to North Africa- from which not all the Jews need to emigrate. It is not a question of quantity as of quality...we are very anxious to bring the Jews of Morocco to build the country, because they have not been educated for this...for the purpose of building up our country, I would say that the Jews of Eastern Europe are the salt of the earth...*<sup>80</sup>

Their main fear was to have an Israeli society influenced by Levantine values seen as backward. Many authors and politicians write intentionally or unintentionally about the negative influence this type of culture would have. The best example is Ben Gurion himself when he declared:

*Those [Jews] from Morocco had no education. Their customs are those of Arabs...the culture of Morocco I would not like to have here. And I don't see what contribution present [Jewish] Persians have to make...we do not want Israelis to become Arabs. We are in duty bound to fight against the spirit of the Levant, which corrupts individuals and societies,*

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<sup>79</sup> The example of the Falayachas from Ethiopia is a striking one, but it also happened in the first years of the Israeli State where each community did not recognise the traditions and worshipping of each other, Eisenstadt, *The Transformation of Israeli Society*, p. 432. We have also seen a previous example where the Sephardim refused to recognise the Jewishness of autochthonous peoples of North Africa.

<sup>80</sup> *Sharett Report*, 12 December 1948, State Archives, Foreign Ministry, 130.11/2502/8, cited in Segev, *op.cit.*, p. 173.



*and preserve the authentic Jewish values as they crystallised in the [European] Diaspora*<sup>81</sup> ».

Another example can be surprisingly found in the good analysis of Saul Friedlander book on Israeli Society just after the 1967 war when he says:

*Among the most urgent problems Israel has to resolve so as not to regress to the level of a levantine society, two appear to me to be essential:*

- *the rhythm of integration of Jews originating from Africa or the East in a modern technological society ;*
- *the training of leading elites* <sup>82</sup>

Another interesting example is that of the writer Chimon Hazaz who declares in the newspaper *Maariv*:

*We have to bring to our communities an european culture. We cannot step back and adopt a yemenite, a morrocan or an iraqi culture.*<sup>83</sup>

Even worse is what the Ashkenazi journalist, Arye Gelblim, wrote in Israel's liberal newspaper *Ha'aretz* in 1949:

*We are dealing with people whose primitivism is at peak, whose level of knowledge is one of virtually absolute ignorance, and worse who have little talent for understanding anything intellectual. Generally, they are only slightly better than the general level of Arabs, Negroes and Berbers in the same regions. In any case, they are at an even lower level than what we knew with regard to the former Arabs of Eretz Israel... These Jews also lack roots in Judaism, as they are totally subordinated to the play of savage and primitive instincts...How to « absorb » them? And one day will come when we will add to them Jewish immigrants from the Arab countries! If this is not done gradually from within, it will be them that will « absorb » us and not us.* <sup>84</sup>

What can be seen from all these examples<sup>85</sup> is the fear of this « backward levantine culture »; the main point of these different authors and politicians is to « raise » the cultural levels of non-European Jews to European standards, without being « brought down » to their « primitive » levels.

The consequences of this policy can still be seen nowadays. Indeed, a recent study made by Lev Hakak on the images of Sephardi Jews in Israel shows how myths are still being used in literature. He concludes by saying that it is painful to see how Jews who have been protesting against stereotypes of whom they were the subject in English,

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<sup>81</sup> Smooha, -Sammy, *Israel, Pluralism and Conflict*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978, pp. 86-88.

<sup>82</sup> (authors own translation) « *Parmi les problèmes les plus urgent qu'Israël ait à résoudre afin de ne pas régresser au stade d'une société levantine, deux me paraissent essentiels :*

*-le rythme d'intégration des juifs d'origine africaine et orientale dans une société technologique moderne ;*  
*-la formation des élites dirigeantes. »*

Friedlander, -Saul, *Reflexions sur l'Avenir D'Israel*, Paris : Editions du Seuil, 1969, p. 126.

<sup>83</sup> « *Nous devons apporter à ces communautés la culture européenne. Nous ne pouvons pas faire marche arrière et adopter la culture du Yémen, du Maroc et de l'Irak.* » Hazaz, -Chimon, *Maariv*, 14 Septembre 1966.

<sup>84</sup> Smooha, -Sammy, *op.cit.*, p. 87.

French and American literature are now in their turn developing stereotypes against their Oriental brothers<sup>86</sup>. The Sephardi Jew has become a synonym of a lazy, backward and nearly illiterate person<sup>87</sup>. To conclude, many initiatives were taken at this period to ridicule or to destroy the Sephardic Jewish background and culture, initiatives to which they will strongly react as we will see later on in this study. The immigration of Oriental Jews coming from traditional and religious societies was seen as an obstacle to the process of modernisation and secularisation to which the State had committed itself. They were considered by their European counterparts as primitive and their assimilation into Israeli society was reduced to the negation of their past lives and traditions.

### 1.1.3. The « Absorption policies » and their negative impact on the different Oriental communities.

Many Israeli anthropologists and sociologists have shown that the integration policies followed in the fifties had a negative impact on the different Oriental communities<sup>88</sup>. Many studies prove that these policies have created a social gap between the Oriental communities and those of Europe. For example, as Alain Dieckhoff aptly puts it, « *The failure of this strategy of integration into a common mould is attributable to the authoritative methods used by the State and also to the resistance developed by the immigrants against the national integration project that was characterised by cultural dispossession and continuing social-economic discrimination against Sephardic Jews.* »<sup>89</sup>. According to these authors, the integration policies

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<sup>85</sup> Other examples can be found in Rejwan, -Nissim, *op.cit.*, p. 223.

<sup>86</sup> Hakak, -Lev, *Kiryat Sefer*, Jerusalem quoted in Malka, -Victor, *op.cit.*, p. 94.

<sup>87</sup> Sachar , -Abraham Léon, *Histoire des Juifs*, Paris :Edition Flammarion, 1973 (édition française), p. 505.

« ..Par une étrange ironie du sort, des renforts furent apportés par les Juifs qui fuyaient l'Algérie et le Maroc nouvellement indépendants. Ils formaient une population arriérée, presque illettrée, qui, pendant des années, avaient dépendu du soutien philanthropique et culturel de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle. »

<sup>88</sup> See Eisenstadt, -Shmuel Noah, *The Absorption of Immigrants*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954 ; Ben Raphael, -Eliezer & Sharot, Stephen, *Ethnicity, Religion and Class in Israeli Society*, Cambridge University Press, USA, 1991 ; Halper, -Jeff, *The Absorption of Ethiopian Immigrants : A Return to the Fifties, Ethiopian Jews and Israël*, Transaction Books, USA.

<sup>89</sup> (authors own translation) « *Cet échec de la stratégie de fusion dans un creuset commun est imputable à la fois aux méthodes directives employées par l'Etat et aux résistances développées par les immigrants face à un projet d'intégration nationale qui s'accompagnait d'une dépossession culturelle et d'une discrimination socio-économique persistante envers les Sépharades.* » Dieckhoff, -Alain, « Israel : Dualité politique et pluralisme communautaire », *Monde Arabe, Maghreb, Machrek*, No 159, Janvier-Mars 1998, pp. 39-47, p. 45.

have blocked social mobility and consequently the integration of the Oriental immigrants. Two policies characterise the failure of these policies: the first one being the concept of *Mizug Galouyot* and the other being the creation of *Maabarot* and Development Towns.

#### 1.1.3.1. Mizug Galouyot and the « ingathering of the exiles »

The creation of the Israeli State led inevitably to the question of how Israeli society should be defined. As just stated above, measures were taken to create a new Israeli identity and culture. The only common feature between all the *olim* was that they were Jews. The Law of the Return is the concrete expression of the prophetic vision of the « ingathering of the exiles ». The main question that was addressed was how to conceive a nation out of a constant wave of immigration characterised by cultural and linguistic heterogeneity?

The official ideology of Israeli governments was centred on the concept of « *olims* absorption ». This concept was closely linked to the Zionist ideology based on « ingathering of the exiles » (*Kibboutz Galouyot*). According to this ideology, it was presumed that those who left for the Land of Israel, would follow a process of integration leading to the melting of society (*Mizug Galouyot* literally meaning the merger of exiles). *Mizug Galouyot*'s ideology is close to the American melting pot model ; as explained by Abou, « *It implicates a sociocultural synthesis stemming from the contributions of diverse ethnic groups, a synthesis where none of the contributions is preferred and where all are equivalent, a synthesis to which each group admit it belongs and can recognise the others in total equality. The melting pot ideology sees unity in a future synthesis of foreign sociocultural contributions and of already acquired heritage, a synthesis where none of these elements is in principle privileged* <sup>90</sup> ». From the outset, it was supposed that the integration of Jewish immigrants to Israel was possible and this was based on their common faith in Judaism. The Absorption policy was aimed at creating a nation from immigrants whom had lived in Diaspora in different economic and socio-cultural contexts; it was in fact erasing two thousands years of exile and creating a new identity in

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<sup>90</sup> (authors own translation) « *elle implique une synthèse socioculturelle issue des contributions des divers groupes ethniques, synthèse ou aucune des contributions n'est privilégiée et ou toutes s'équivalent, synthèse dans laquelle chaque groupe se reconnaît et reconnaît les autres dans l'égalité. L'idéologie du melting pot projette l'unité dans une synthèse future des apports socioculturels étrangers et du patrimoine déjà acquis, synthèse ou aucun des éléments n'est*

a new nation-state. Zionism aimed at national unity and a homogeneous culture. Consequently, the return to the Land of Israel did not only account for a political act but also depended on the willingness to create a Nation and a new culture. *Mizug Galuyot*'s ideology, which was well integrated in this perspective, therefore excluded all maintenance of past identities. The immigrant's absorption policies (*kelita*) relied on the concept of assimilation and not on integration, nor adaptation. The creation of a nation implied the learning and sharing of a common language, the reconstruction of different elements of Jewish tradition and the emergence of a collective secular identity based on certain elements of religious traditions. The definition of Israeli identity appears then as a complex element of Israeli society. However, as Abou has demonstrated, «*there is no melting without a dominant*»<sup>91</sup>. Thus, the cultural reference model of absorption policy was that of Europe. Indeed, when the Israeli State was created, most of the population came from Europe and Russia ; it is here that was established the ideological basement of the State, as well as the most important institutions (Jewish Agency, Hisdratout, ...). Since Zionism was a western ideology and that 80% of the Jewish population was Ashkenazim, being Israeli meant being a westerner. This is what affirmed Nessim Rejwan saying that, «*In fact, the basic meaning of a sentence as widely used as [the integration of new immigrants in Israeli society and culture] is the remodelling of the newcomers from Asia and North Africa on the image that the old pioneers, former Europeans, have of themselves*»<sup>92</sup>. Furthermore, there was a subtle form of discrimination operative, unintentional as it may have been. Because Europeans shaped most of the State's emergent institutions, its ideological orientation and political culture were foreign to the Oriental newcomers. The very vision of what a Jewish State should be -in both religious and secular terms- was the product of East European Jewish life, as was much of its music, ritual, and literature. Indeed, Oriental culture was often looked at askance, as quaint and primitive at best and the culture of the enemy at worst. It is not surprising, therefore, that European immigrants adapted with comparative ease despite their harrowing experiences and the condition in which they arrived. Orientals were far

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*en principe privilégié* » Abou, -Selim, *L'identité culturelle : relations interethniques et problèmes d'acculturation*, Anthropos, Paris, 1987, pp. 179-182.

<sup>91</sup> (authors own translation) «*il n'y a pas de melting sans dominante* » Abou, -Selim, *ibid.*, p. 182.

<sup>92</sup> (authors own translation) «*en vérité, le sens le plus courant d'une phrase aussi largement employée que [L'intégration des nouveaux immigrants dans la société et la culture israéliennes], c'est le remodelage du nouveau venu d'Asie ou d'Afrique du Nord sur l'image que le vieux pionnier, ancien Européen, se fait de lui-même.* » Rejwan, -Nessim, «*La querelle des deux communautés, un point de vue oriental* », *Esprit*, septembre 1966, Volume 3, pp. 218-231, p. 222.

less successful. Consequently, many Oriental immigrants learned to be ashamed of their descent and imitated the Western mode. Strains on government services being severe, these immigrants were generally given a small apartment, some training, and then left to fend themselves in a strange and threatening environment.<sup>93</sup>

#### 1.1.3.2. The creation of Development Towns

The arrival of this mass immigration created a high need in accommodation and lodging. Most Israelis feared that they could not manage such a mass immigration and that there was a risk of a social gap between the past and the new immigrants. As Eisenstadt stressed, great progress was indeed achieved after the first difficult years. The initial picture, that of the early 1950s was of great hardships and difficulties, with a growing concern about the possibility of development of two nations. But from the mid-1950s, the worst aspects of the initial stage of absorption -the *Maabarot*<sup>94</sup> and the public works- started, at least partially, to disappear. More and more new immigrants were absorbed in the various productive sectors of the economy -even if, as the case has become more and more clear, parts at least of the so-called Oriental groups were on the whole absorbed in the lower levels of these sectors. Most of the immigrants -Western and Oriental alike- were absorbed in the cities which greatly expanded; but large parts were also absorbed in the Moshavim and the development towns.<sup>95</sup> However, despite this apparent progress, the creation of these development towns represents up to now the symbol of Sephardi discrimination. This feeling is well expressed by this man living in the development town of Beth-Shemesh:

*You brought here a million donkeys to mount and to put them in your stables. Far away from your houses. So that our smell did not reach your lounge. That's what you did. Of course, you gave us a roof and something to eat, as you do with donkeys, but far away from your children... ;*<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Schnall, - David,J, *op.cit.*, p. 158.

<sup>94</sup> On *Maabarot* (transit camp), see Appendix 1 of Giladi, -G.N, *op.cit.*, pp. 338-341.

<sup>95</sup> Eisenstadt, - S.N, *The Transformation of Israeli Society*, p. 306.

<sup>96</sup> (authors own translation) «Vous avez amené ici un million d'ânes pour leur monter sur le dos et les loger dans des écuries. Loin de vos maisons. Pour que notre odeur n'arrive pas jusque dans votre salon. Voilà ce que vous avez fait. Bien sûr, vous nous avez donné un toit et de quoi manger, comme on donne aux ânes, mais loin de vos enfants » Oz, -Amos, *op.cit.*, p. 44.

In one of the novel written by one of the greatest writers in Israel, M. Brenner brings one of his character to ask himself: « *Do we really form a people, the Sepharads and us?* »<sup>97</sup>.

It was in 1952 that the government decided to send Oriental immigrants, particularly Moroccans, to Development Towns (*Ayarot Pituah*). Upon arrival in Israel, they were taken to remote areas of the Negev and frontier areas like Kiryat Chmoneh, Maalot and Beth Shean in the North, Dimona, Arad et Beer Sheva in the South. The main motives of the government was political, they needed to populate all the territories under its military control. According to official sources, « *The development towns were set up and populated within the framework of the policy of population dispersal; this policy was designed on the one hand to prevent over-concentration of the population in the coastal region, and on the other hand to populate desolate areas.* »<sup>98</sup>.

The problem of Development Towns is twofold. Firstly, they have been the predictable targets of Arab military attacks due to their strategic locations. Secondly, most of these Development Towns depend on a single factory that is owned by the State, the Histadrut, or businessmen. Over 85% of the factory managers are Ashkenazi (who do not live in the towns)<sup>99</sup>. Wages in Development Towns are much lower than in the rest of the country, even within the same industry. In fact, these towns are highly « undeveloped » with high levels of unemployment and poor health and educational services. They are in fact economically unviable. For example, in 1963, the rate of unemployment in the development towns was 22% as compared to the national average of 4%. Moreover, while their population was only 6% of the country's total, they had as much as 32% of Israel's unemployed<sup>100</sup>.

These immigrants were meant to stay there for a few months according to the Jewish Agency Plans, forty years later, they are still living there. They have become the symbol of Sephardim discrimination in Israeli society. Their difficult conditions and their feeling of injustice has led them to social discontent as we will see now. It is important to see that it is from this feeling of injustice and the non-acceptance of Oriental Jews values

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<sup>97</sup> (authors own translation) « *Formons-nous vraiment un peuple, les sépharades et nous?* » Malka, -Victor, *op.cit.*, p. 86.

<sup>98</sup> *Bank of Israel Annual Report for 1963*, Jerusalem, 1964 [Hebrew] quoted in Shapiro, -Raphael, *op.cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>99</sup> Massad, -Joseph, *op.cit.*, p. 58.

<sup>100</sup> *Bank of Israel Annual Report for 1963*, Jerusalem, 1964 [Hebrew] quoted in Shapiro, -Raphael, *op.cit.*, p. 19.

and culture that has developed the gradual process of social disintegration and ethnic creation.

## From social discrimination to political engagement: the gradual process of social disintegration and ethnic creation

### 1.2.1. The Social Struggle

#### 1.2.1.1. The Waddi Salib Uprising

It was in the Waddi Salib slum of Haifa that the first social struggle erupted on a large scale in the summer of 1959. The granting of comfortable housing to immigrants from Poland exacerbated tensions within the Oriental communities<sup>101</sup>. However, the confrontation broke out after an incident in which a local resident was injured by policemen<sup>102</sup>. Consequently, 200 people gathered during the night on Waddi Salib square, which led to further confrontations with the police forces. During the gathering, Moroccan Jews claimed for more social justice and a greater attention from the government. A Tel Avivian newspaper, *Haaretz*, castigated the rioters by calling them *marokko-sakine* (the Moroccans with a knife)<sup>103</sup>. The next morning, *l'Union des Nord-africains*<sup>104</sup> led by David Ben Haroush, organised a large-scale procession walking towards the nice suburbs of Haifa creating little damages but a great fear within the population. This small incident was taken as an occasion to express the social malaise of the different Oriental communities in Israel and riots spread quickly to other parts of the country; mostly in towns with a high percentage of the population having North African origins like in Tiberias, in Beer-Sheva, in Migdal-Haemek.

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<sup>101</sup> Massad, -Joseph, *op.cit.*, p. 60.

<sup>102</sup> See for example Horowitz, -Dan & Lissak, -Moshe, *op.cit.*, p. 78 ; or Chouraqui, -André, *op.cit.*, p. 29.

<sup>103</sup> See Chouraqui, -André, *op.cit.*, p. 29 ; or Malka, -Victor, *op.cit.*, p. 87.

This social unrest had several consequences. Firstly, the government nominated on the 17<sup>th</sup> of July 1959, a commission of inquiry to understand why this event broke out<sup>105</sup>. Secondly, following the general riot, an attempt was made to establish a political party headed by Ben Haroush (who was still in prison) to run the upcoming elections. The party's platform called for an end to Ashkenazi discrimination and called on the Sephardi Jews to leave the Ashkenazi parties and their « Oriental lackeys » and turn to the new party which represented their « real interests ». The party was a failure even in Waddi Salib, where Mapai gained more votes than the neighbourhood list.<sup>106</sup> However, this can be explained by the fact that the Oriental communities did not want to establish a disintegrative society especially at a time when social cohesion was so important in a society imprisoned by the constant threat of war. This revolt was just an expression of the social malaise felt by the Oriental communities compared to the treatment and standard of living of their European Ashkenazi counterparts.

To understand this social unrest, we need to examine a few facts and figures. Describing the social and living conditions of Oriental Jews in urban areas, Victor Malka pointed out the creation of these two different worlds:

*There are districts, in the working class areas of big Israeli cities that are reserved for them. These are their shanty towns, kasbahs, favellas. Districts so poor that they invite all forms of criminality. It is Sckounat Hatikva □ the district of hope □ badly named, in the south of Tel Aviv. It is Musrara, an islet of poverty, a purulent wound on the outskirts of Jerusalem. It is Waddi Salib, a dilapidated hovell district, in Haifa.*<sup>107</sup>

Indeed, the social gap between the two communities has been increasing since the creation of the Israeli State<sup>108</sup>. It appears that the origin of the immigrants has had an impact on their social-economic status. Empirical studies reveal that in the sixties, the difference of wages between the two groups is evaluated at an average of thirty percent<sup>109</sup>. Besides this social discrimination, others figures show us the increasing cultural

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<sup>104</sup> The North-African Union

<sup>105</sup> Chouraqui, -André, *ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>106</sup> Massad, -Joseph, *op.cit.*, p. 60.

<sup>107</sup> (authors own translation) « Il y a des quartiers, dans les faubourgs des grandes villes d'Israël, qui leur sont réservés. Ce sont leurs bidonvilles, leurs kasbahs, leurs favellas. Quartiers de misère propres à développer toutes les formes de criminalité. C'est Sckounat Hatikva- le quartier de l'Espérance- le mal nommé, au sud de Tel-Aviv. C'est Musrara, îlot de pauvreté, plaie purulente, à la lisière de Jérusalem. C'est Waddi Salib, quartier de taudis délabrés, de maisons rapiécées, à Haifa.. » Malka, -Victor, *op.cit.*, pp. 86-87.

<sup>108</sup> To see the composition of the Israeli population, see Appendix 15.



distinctiveness and inacceptance of each community. Studies done by the Institute of Sociology of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem indicated that from 1950 to 1959, the prejudice against Oriental Jews (especially Moroccan) had increased considerably: in 1950, only 5% of the people questioned expressed a prejudice; in 1953, the proportion was of 19% and, in 1959, of 34%<sup>110</sup>. What was happening more and more was that the different Oriental and Western communities tended to regroup themselves into two distinctive groups. From these facts and figures, we can see that gradually a dual society was being created where each group had a pre-established idea of the other. One index revealing the low living conditions of Oriental Jews and their feeling of alienation and frustration is that index of juvenile delinquency. Out of 1000 individuals, the proportion of delinquent born in Israel in 1962 was of 6.4, those born in Europe of 6.7 while those coming from Asia and Africa was of 18.9<sup>111</sup>. The absorption policy was thus a failure. A malaise was created within the Oriental communities, not in the political field, but in the social and cultural field. Indeed, political unrest was not likely at a period when the Israeli State found itself isolated and where national unity was fuelled into all political discourse. One Oriental Jew, Nissim Rejwan, correctly expressed this discriminative attitude towards Oriental Jews forced to live in an internally divided society:

*One of the rules tailored by Margaret Mead says that the faiths and attitudes of peoples should be considered as having a functional utility in the sense that they bring to each individual continuity within his personality and enable him to feel a namable and identifiable person. The failure of the Israeli integration authorities to understand this point has usually led those that had their feelings of dignity all too often scorned to reinforce as a compensation their resistance and claims. Most of them have come to the point that they no longer believe in the possibility of learning and of sharing whatsoever — except bread — with those that have so denigrated the way of life they are so attached too.*<sup>112</sup>.

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<sup>109</sup> Amir, S, « Trends in earning gaps among Jewish men during the 1970s- By country of origin, discussion paper 86.07, Jerusalem: *Bank of Israël*; See also Matras, -Judah, *Social Change in Israel*, Chicago: Adline, 1965.

<sup>110</sup> Shuval, -Judith, « Emerging Patterns of Ethnic Strain in Israël », *Social Forces*, May 1962, quoted in Friedlander, -Saul, *op.cit.*, p. 138.

<sup>111</sup> Friedlander, -Saul, *op.cit.*, p. 139.

<sup>112</sup> (authors own translation) « Une...des règles mises au point par Margaret Mead dit que les croyances et les attitudes des peuples doivent être considérées comme ayant une utilité fonctionnelle dans la mesure où elles procurent à chaque individu une continuité de la personnalité et lui permettent de sentir qu'il est une personne nommable et identifiable. L'échec des autorités israéliennes d'intégration à saisir ce point a souvent conduit ceux dont les sentiments de dignité avaient été souvent bafoués à renforcer par compensation leur résistance et leur revendications. Beaucoup d'entre eux en sont arrivés à nier la possibilité d'apprendre ou de partager quoi que ce soit le pain excepté avec ceux qui ont tant dénigré la manière de vivre à laquelle ils sont tant attachés », Rejwan, -Nessim, *op.cit.*, *Esprit*, pp. 220-221.

### 1.2.1.2. The Black Panthers <sup>113</sup>

Waddi Salib was to be one of the many protest against the so-called discriminative system against the Oriental Jews. The few steps taken by the government as mentioned above after the Waddi Salib revolt was evidently not enough to limit the social gap. The renewal of this revolt seemed inevitable. The incident arose again from the different treatment that was accorded to the immigrants from Eastern Europe<sup>114</sup>. Indeed, tensions were exacerbated with the welcome extended to the Soviet immigrants during 1969-70, welcomed by Prime Minister Golda Meir herself, who greeted them with such statements as: « *You are the real Jews. We have been waiting for you for twenty-five years. You speak Yiddish... every loyal Jew must speak Yiddish, for he who does not Yiddish is not a Jew. You are a superior breed- you will provide us with heroes*<sup>115</sup> ». Resentments were fuelled by the attitudes of the new Soviet immigrants themselves, who sent petitions to the Tel Aviv Town Hall complaining about having to live next to « Black » Jews. The government responded by removing Oriental children from Ashkenazi schools and youth clubs and in some places kept them out of local swimming pools. There were incidents where Oriental slum residents stoned Russian immigrants<sup>116</sup>. It was against this background that the *Pantherim Sh̄borim*, or Black Panthers, were formed at the end of 1970. The Black Panthers, whose name was borrowed from the African-American organisation not only for its reference to an ethnically divided society but also to denote a parallel condition, began as a youth movement in the Jerusalem slum of Musrara. One of the Black Panther leaders, Reuven Abergil explained why they chose to call themselves Black Panthers, a title with strong negative connotations among Jews both in Israel and abroad:

*We were thinking: How can we arouse the public which has been indifferent and unconcerned and does not care about our kind of people, and which thinks we ourselves are to blame because we are backward. We said to ourselves: supposed we call ourselves « The Association of Israelis who are Wronged [...] no one would pay attention to us. We wanted a name that gets people angry and frightened\_ so we got the notion of adopting the name □Black Panthers□ We adopted only the name, not God forbid the ideology. We are good Jews and they hate Jews ».* <sup>117</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> For more details, see □Israel Black Panthers, Jews in Arab Lands□, *Middle East Report*, Issue No. 3, Oct. 1971.

<sup>114</sup> Kapeliouk, Amnon, □Le mouvement de contestation de répand dans la jeunesse□, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 1er Aout 1973, p. 5.

<sup>115</sup> G.N. Giladi, *Discord in Zion: Conflict between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews*, London: Scorpion Publishing ltd, 1990, p. 255.

<sup>116</sup> Massad, -Joseph, *op.cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>117</sup> Panther leader Reuven Abergil, cited in Judith Miller, « Israel's Black Panthers », *The Progressive* March 1972, p. 35.

The creation of such a movement was not the result of one incident but rather the outcome of deep feelings of deprivation experienced by the second generation of North African slum-dwellers. Their uprising was more of an organised movement as compared to the Waddi Salib incidents. The first massive demonstration led by the Black Panthers took place on 3 March 1971 in front of Jerusalem City Hall. They denounced what they call « *The segregation of which Sephardim are the victims in Israel*<sup>118</sup> ». It is from these events that we can witness the transformation of the Oriental communities into one community, the beginning of the process of transforming their *Mizrahi* identity into a common *Sephardi* identity. Initially, their revolt was social, nevertheless their riots soon took on the character of suburban revolts against the affluent society. Demonstrations continued through August 1971, sometimes drawing between five and ten thousand people while at the same time speeches by Golda Meir were interrupted by Panthers shouting « *Golda, teach us Yiddish*<sup>119</sup> ». Demonstrations, marked by clashes with the police, spread to other slum areas, especially in Hatikvah in Tel Aviv and continued into the spring of 1972.

The rules and goals of the Black Panthers were defined as follows:

1. *To struggle as a pressure group to change government policy so as to eliminate any discrimination of a racial or ethnic type among the Jewish People, that there be one Jewish nation in Israel*
2. *To guarantee every child free education from the age of four through university graduation*
3. *To struggle for the integration of Ashkenazic and Sefardic children in public schools*
4. *To demand grants of aid to large families, from public funds and governmental agencies*
5. *To set up youth clubs with leaders trained in psychology and education in poor sections*
6. *To build new schools in poor areas and see that they are staffed by trained and certified teachers....*<sup>120</sup>

The sums of these demands are to be found in three basic requirements, the Panthers argue. They believe every Israeli is entitled to three rights: a right to « normal housing, normal standard of living and normal education »<sup>121</sup>.

The Panthers attempted to counteract the declining support evinced by dwindling demonstrations by establishing themselves as a political party, the « Black Panthers-Israeli Democrats », through a merger with the Israeli Democrats led by the Sephardic Jew, MK

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<sup>118</sup> Malka, -Victor, *op.cit.*, p. 88.

<sup>119</sup> *The Jerusalem Post*, June 10, 1976 and March 13, 1974.

<sup>120</sup> Reuven Abergil, Raphael Marciano, and Eliezer Abergil, « Summary of Rules and Goals of the Black Panther Organization » Jerusalem, 1971, quoted and translated in Schnell, -David J., *op.cit.*, p. 165.

(Member of the Knesset) Shalom Cohen. Its successful showing in the 1974 elections for the Histadut prompted the government to make considerable increases in budgets for housing, education, and welfare, out of concern for the social and political repercussions that might result from the spread of militant ethnic protest<sup>122</sup>. But, just two months after the fighting of the Yom Kippur War, the Black Panthers political party failed to get a single candidate either in the Knesset or in any of the twenty-six local councils for which they ran. This failure can be explained by the fact that the consequences of the War overshadowed the rising ethnic tensions. Moreover, as we will see all along this study, separatist movements are always doomed to fail in Israel mainly because of the general trend of the « merger of exiles » fostered by the organised efforts of the State in the schools, the army, settlement projects to quote a few. The electoral failure led to internal disagreements - including over the issue of solidarity with Palestinians - which in turn led to the splintering of the movement and several of its leaders joined leftist anti-establishment parties. Since then, the movement has continued to surface from time to time, as in December 1982 when massive demonstrations were organised after a young Yemeni Jew was shot to death by police while resisting attempts to demolish an unlicensed addition to his home. The failure of the political movement can be explained through several factors; their fragile economic situation (students or impoverished communities), based in slum areas rather than in development towns; and the marginality and lack of education of the leadership. Most prominent among the factors beyond the Panthers' control is that of the hegemony of Zionist discourse in all aspects of Israeli life- through educational institutions, cultural production, the media, and official policy- which gives greater resonance to appeal to unity in state building and against external enemies and which facilitates the delegitimization of Jewish dissident groups<sup>123</sup>.

However, we should not underestimate the impact the Black Panthers had on Israeli society and more especially on Oriental Jews. The political movement was certainly a failure but the nature of Sephardi militancy changed from a social condition to cultural revendication. These Jews « without a culture », as shown in the study done by the Israeli sociologist, Yehoshua Rash, on the place Sephardi culture had in Israeli society<sup>124</sup>, did not initially fight for their culture since these communities had never used political

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<sup>121</sup> Schnall, -David, *ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>122</sup> Horowitz, -Dan & Lissak, -Moshe, *op.cit.*, p. 78.

<sup>123</sup> Massad, -Joseph, *op.cit.*, p. 63-64.

instruments before their arrival in Israel. This can stand as one explanation for the failure in this first attempt of the Oriental communities to accept their culture.

### 1.2.1.3. The status quo in Israeli society and the Horovitz Committee

Following these events, Golda Meir's government decided to set up in 1971 a commission of inquiry, the Horovitz Committee, to look into the «so-called discriminatory problems». The committee's conclusion differed from the official government position that «*the lower educational level of the Sephardim has caused them to be discriminated against*». To the contrary, it found that «*as the educational level of the Sephardim rose, they met more discrimination*». The Committee added that the Sephardi standard of living had actually declined between 1959 and 1969<sup>125</sup>.

The discrimination issue is a delicate problem. It is true that it is hard to find any official declaration indicating a clear discrimination against Sephardim. The complexity of the discrimination issue is heightened by the difficulty of distinguishing conscious and direct discrimination from the use of objective criteria, owing to the lack of certain qualifications by Oriental applicants for posts. One reporter finds that even high public officials of Sephardi origin give quite vague answers to questions on discrimination<sup>126</sup>. Ashkenazim, as well as many Sephardim, will deny that there is any conscious discrimination, but that in job placement, for instance, too few competent Oriental Jews are available. As for the areas of higher education and economic advantages, the Ashkenazim will say that they would like to see the Sephardi succeed in obtaining them. Indeed, in the area of stipends for secondary education, there is official discrimination in favour of those whose ancestors came from Islamic countries. One Sephardi publication refers to «*those edot discriminated against consciously and unconsciously*»<sup>127</sup>. However, in the academic circles, most agree that we cannot find any official discrimination<sup>128</sup>, although it is widely recognised that the integration policies of the fifties were unsuccessful, if not

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<sup>124</sup> Rash, -Yehoshua, « Israel demain », *Etudes*, Septembre 1981.

<sup>125</sup> Massad, -Joseph, *op.cit.*, p. 63.

<sup>126</sup> Rubenstein, - Aryeh, « Israel's Integration Problem », *Midstream*, 1962, Vol. 9: No 1, pp. 46-59.

<sup>127</sup> Zenner, -Walter P., « Ambivalence and Self-Image among Oriental Jews in Israel », *op.cit.*, p. 219.

<sup>128</sup> See for example M. Ishar Harari in Rejwan, -Nissim article, *op.cit.*, p. 224-225. However, a few authors like the Israeli sociologist Schlomo Swirsky, Nissim Rejwan, as well as Raphael Shapiro will still talk about official discrimination.

negative. Since then, however, the social widening has been explained for multiple reasons other than direct or indirect discrimination. The Israeli sociologist Eliezer Ben Raphael for example argues that there is no discrimination and that social differences can be explained by the number of years spent in the country arguing that until 1947, 80% of the Jews were European. Nevertheless, many Sephardim will still talk about a certain discrimination, whether official or not<sup>129</sup>. However, the point of our study is not to see if we can talk about discrimination but to understand how this social gap has transformed these different Oriental communities into one community. The importance of examining the following figures will show us how the social situation led to the creation of an « ethno-class »<sup>130</sup>.

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<sup>129</sup> See a study by Peres, -J., *Politics and Ethnicity in three suburbs* [Hebrew] quoted in Ben Raphael, - Eliezer, *op.cit.*, p. 129. ; See also Zenner, -Walter, *op.cit.*, p. 219.

<sup>130</sup> Term employed by Ben Raphael in the article mentioned above referring in his case just to the Moroccan community.

	First period		Second period	
	Oriental	Europeans	Oriental	Europeans
<b>Wages (adults, 1963-1964; 1968-1969)</b>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>
<b>High Rank</b>	5,4	31,3	8,0	32,1
<b>Following Rank</b>	14,2	24,1	14,3	24,4
<b>Others</b>	80,4	44,6	77,7	43,4
<b>Education (men, 1961 et 1969)</b>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>
<b>High Rank</b>	4,5	16,1	5,6	19,4
<b>Following Rank</b>	24,1	38,7	28,3	38,9
<b>Others</b>	71,4	45,5	66,1	41,7
<b>Political Representation (1959 et 1969)</b>				
			<b>Total</b>	
<b>High Rank</b>	4,0	96,0	<b>100,0</b>	14,0 86,0
<b>Following Rank</b>	11,0	89,0	<b>100,0</b>	17,0 83,0
<b>Others</b>	20,0	80,0	<b>100,0</b>	37,0 63,0

From the 1960s onwards, we still cannot see any positive evolution in the social and cultural status of Oriental Jews in Israeli society. In 1965, in the work, *Fin du Peuple Juif ?*, written by the French sociologist, Georges Friedman, the author asks himself after a long investigation: « *Are there really [two] Israel[s] today?* »<sup>132</sup>. Friedman was the first to notice the correlation between the social division and the ethnic background bringing him to use the well-used formula of a « second Israel »<sup>133</sup>. This statement seems to be confirmed with

<sup>131</sup> Smooha, -Sammy, *op.cit.*, p. 340.

<sup>132</sup> (authors own translation) « *Y a t-il aujourd'hui véritablement [deux] Israël ?* » Friedman, -Georges, *Fin du Peuple juif ?*, Editions Gallimard, 1965, p. 174.

<sup>133</sup> Friedman, -Georges, *op.cit.*, pp. 173-203.

the low increase of the rate of intercommunity marriages<sup>134</sup>. As Friedlander has also remarked, the real power in Israel is within the privileged small groups whose ethnic composition are clearly identifiable. The political and the economic elite is still composed majoratively of Russian and Polish Jews; the military elite is dominated by the Sabras<sup>135</sup>. Only the scientific elite includes at the same time Sabras and European and North American Jews. Concerning African and Asian Jews, they are hardly represented in any of these groups<sup>136</sup>.

The social gap speaks for itself with the following figures in these different sectors.

1.2.1.3.1. *The non representation of Oriental Jews in the administrative and political sector*

In 1971, out of two hundred and forty-four civil servants in Israel, only nine were of Oriental origins. The same striking figure appears in the medical field where only three out of the hundred doctors practising in the country were of Oriental origins. The secretary of the former Education minister, Zalman Aren, noted : « *The statistics show that there are immigrants from oriental countries among civil servants but consider what sort of position they have. You will find them among the waiters, the petty clerks and the canteen staff* <sup>137</sup> ». Quoting from *Israël : Pluralism and Conflict* of the Israeli sociologist Sammy Smooha, many facts and figures speak for themselves<sup>138</sup>. The most obvious figures are with the ruling organ of the biggest political parties. Thus, in 1973, in the Labour Party bureau, there was only 11.1% of Oriental Jews<sup>139</sup>. About the same percentage can be found on the executive committee of the Herut, 12,9% of them only were of Oriental background<sup>140</sup>. At the governmental level, the proportions are about the same; indeed, in 1955, there was one minister of Oriental origins (8,3%), in 1973, it increased to two (11,1%)<sup>141</sup>. What appears as the most paradoxical is that according to the Israeli Central Statistics the Jews coming from Africa and Asia constitute by far the biggest majority in the country.

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<sup>134</sup> See Appendix 19.

<sup>135</sup> Referring to the second or third generation people born in Israel.

<sup>136</sup> Friedlander, -Saul, *op.cit.*, p. 131.

<sup>137</sup> (authors own translation) □ *Les statistiques démontrent bien qu'il y a, parmi les fonctionnaires, des ressortissants des pays orientaux mais regardez bien quel postes ils occupent. Vous allez les trouver parmi les serveurs de café, les écrivains et la petite intendance* », Malka, -Victor, *op.cit.*, p. 89.

<sup>138</sup> See Appendix 8 & 9.

<sup>139</sup> Smooha, -Sammy, *op.cit.*, p. 322.

<sup>140</sup> Smooha, -Sammy, *op.cit.*, p. 329.

<sup>141</sup> Smooha, -Sammy, *op.cit.*, p. 310, the situation in 1983 was still in a status quo. See Appendix 8 for an overall representation in the most important institutions in 1983.



#### 1.2.1.3.2. *Inequalities in Educational opportunities*

Another indicator of importance is in the field of education. Although students share the same educational scheme, it appears that there is again a social differentiation. Indeed, as noted in Sammy Smooha's study of Israeli society, the percentage of Oriental students completing secondary school (twelve grade) represents 43,8% of the total of students at this level for the years 1975-76<sup>142</sup>. At the university level, the proportion is of 16,4% for those managing to get into a masters-degree and of 10.1% for those in a Ph.D. programme<sup>143</sup>. However, over the period considered, two factors seem to hinder the possibility of a rapid evolution in the field of education for Oriental Jews. Firstly, we can see that the gap between the Oriental and Western children had widened although Oriental children had already made considerable progress. This brought Nissim Rejwan to say:

*The "education melting pot system" has not even managed to form the children, it has contributed to create a gap in the education of the communities, a gap which is tending to widen.*<sup>144</sup>

Actually, we can observe the same phenomenon in the United States for example where the influence of the family and the social background is enough to cancel the advantages of a « normal » schooling. Moreover, it was observed also at this period that people from an African or Asian background is less inclined to do higher studies. As noted by Eisenstadt, « *for the same level of wages, Oriental Jews tend to invest less in the field of education and more in direct consumption* »<sup>145</sup>.

In 1969, the situation was indeed worsening. In the eyes of Saul Friedlander, what Levy Eshkol said a few days after his nomination as Prime Minister was still true at that period:

*Before, I believed that we would manage to change the face of Israeli society in ten or fifteen years after having shaped the young generation through the melting pot education system, kindergartens, primary and secondary schools. I have now come to consider that it will be a long enterprise, the work of several generations.*<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Smooha, -Sammy, *op.cit.*, p. 301.

<sup>143</sup> Klein, -Claude, *Le système politique d'Israël*, Presses Universitaires de France, pp. 131-139.

<sup>144</sup> (authors own translation) « *Le « creuset de l'éducation » n'a pas même réussi à modeler les enfants, il a contribué à créer un fossé dans l'éducation des communautés, fossé qui tend à s'élargir* » Rejwan, -Nissim, *op.cit.*, p. 220.

<sup>145</sup> Eisenstadt, - Shmuel Noah, *The Transformation of Israeli Society*, p. 330.

<sup>146</sup> (authors own translation) « *Dans le passé, je croyais que nous réussirions en dix ou quinze ans à changer la face de la société d'Israël après avoir façonné la jeune génération dans le creuset de l'éducation, jardins d'enfants, écoles primaires et*

1.2.1.3.3. *Another sign of social malaise : delinquency*

Delinquency is probably the most important indicator of this social gap and social malaise. Living in development towns or in the slum areas around the Israeli cities, young Oriental turn quickly to delinquency. One part of the responsibility is attributable to the integration programme of the Jewish Agency which did not make a distinction between the cultural background of Oriental and Eastern European Jews providing with the same size of apartment for an Oriental family with 6-7 children while 3 or 4 for the Ashkenazi families<sup>147</sup>. These children are left to wander in the streets, leaving school at a young age due to their living conditions and quickly becoming the main targets of street misery. They become either pimps or prostitutes and end up as social cases in Israeli prisons and remand homes. They are also the easiest targets of drug addiction. It has been estimated that 85% of Israeli delinquency is due to Oriental Jews. According to official statistics, 92% of the children between the age of 14 and 17 in prison in 1978 come from Arabic countries<sup>148</sup>.

A team of Israeli and French journalist decided in the early eighties to do a research on delinquency and Oriental immigrants and with special regard to the Ben Ito Commission of April 1977 on prostitution and criminality in Israel concluded:

*Israel is today a divided country where the Sepharads, who originate from Africa and Asia, and who are superior in number but a minority in every other field call down hell's fires upon the Ashkenazi coming from Eastern and Western Europe who bring with them a civilisation of technology and therefore are the first to benefit from these advantages, being educated and, moreover, inspired by the old condescension of the white man towards other races.* <sup>149</sup>

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secondaires. J'en suis pourtant arrivé à considérer que ce sera une longue entreprise, l'affaire de plusieurs générations. » Friedlander, -Saul, *op.cit.*, pp. 126-131.

<sup>147</sup> Rejwan, -Nissim, *op.cit.*, p. 227.

<sup>148</sup> Malka, -Victor, *op.cit.*, p. 91.

<sup>149</sup> (authors own translation) « Israël est aujourd'hui un pays éclaté ou les sépharades, originaires d'Afrique et d'Asie, majoritaires en nombre et cependant minoritaires en tout, vouent aux gémonies ces ashkénazes venues d'Europe orientale et occidentale et porteurs de la civilisation technologique et donc premiers bénéficiaires de ces avantages, éduqués et animés de surcroît de l'antique condescendance de « l'homme blanc » à l'égard des autres ethnies. » See Derogy, -J, *Israël Connection*, Edition Plon, 1986, pp. 196 & 223.

## 1.2.2. The first path to a political consciousness: The development of an ethno-cultural remaking and the legacy of the Six Days War

### 1.2.2.1. A return and a recreation of the past

*My parents came from North Africa, OK from Morocco. So what ? Didn't they have their dignity, their principles and their beliefs ? Myself, I am not religious, I drive my car on the Sabbath day. But why have they turned the religion of my parents into something ridiculous? Why were they sprayed with disinfectant when they arrived at Haifa harbour, why?* <sup>150</sup>

The different vision of Zionism and of Israeli society the Oriental communities had on their arrival to Israel and the ensuing social struggle as we have seen above laid the ground for the cultural affirmation of these different communities. Cultural discrimination as we saw in the 1950s was still prevailing in Israel. For example, as late as February 1984, a young high-school history teacher, Uriel Rechef, declared to his students that « *culture is from the West, so Ashkenazim* », the Sephardi just represent a folklore<sup>151</sup>. From the 1950s to the 1980s, Oriental Jews did not assume their past culture which was constantly criticised in the press and in school. We can find several stereotypes in manuals at school where they were told:

*The everyday life of Jews was influenced by the norms of retarded muslims ; it was forbidden to give to their children any sense of general culture. Their studies were limited to religion. Like muslims, the Jews married their daughters at the age of nineteen and their sons at thirteen* <sup>152</sup>.

It is in this background that some authors such as Emile Touati go as far as saying that « *The young sepharads must face a subtle attempt of cultural colonisation. All their traditions are qualified as levantine and everything that comes from Eastern Europe is on the contrary overvalued*<sup>153</sup> ».

Gabriel Ben Simhon, a dramatist of Moroccan origins, after describing all the difficulties the first generation went through in these remote desert towns, declared:

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<sup>150</sup> (authors own translation) □ *Mes parents sont venus d'Afrique du Nord, bon d'accord du Maroc. Et alors ? ils n'avaient pas leur dignité, leurs valeurs, leurs croyance ? moi, je ne suis pas religieux, je roule en voiture le Sabbat. Mais pourquoi a-t-on tourné en ridicule la religion de mes parents ? pourquoi est-ce qu'on les a aspergés de désinfectant à leur arrivée dans le port de Haifa, pourquoi ?* », Oz, -Amos, *op.cit.*, p. 34.

<sup>151</sup> Amado Levi & Valensi, -Eliane, « Les alibis de la culture », *Information juive*, Mars 1984.

<sup>152</sup> (authors own translation) □ *La vie quotidienne des juifs a été influencée par les normes des musulmans attardés ; il était interdit de donner à ses enfants une quelconque culture générale. Leurs études se limitaient à la religion. Comme les musulmans, les juifs mariaient leurs filles à l'âge de dix-neuf ans et leur garçon à treize ans* » Toldot Israël badorot haahronim, Chimchone Kirchenboim, p 162 quoted in Malka, -Victor, *op.cit.*, p. 98.

*The revolution of oriental jews, is us. We do not want to be assisted anymore. The State of Israel belongs to us too and this not thanks to those in power. Our parents came her to achieve their liberation. They have become old without getting it. They went to the desert, they built Sdérot, Dimona, Kiryat Gat ; they went to the North and and founded Kiryat Chmoné, Maalot and Beth Shean. They grew flowers out of the desert, developed agriculture, made the industry work. Today, their children born in Israel want to bring liberation to their fathers□ Poverty here has a colour, and it has a community, just like prostitution, criminality and prisons.* <sup>154</sup>

A poet, Yaakov Yaakov, living in Israel since the age of 6 says in his turn: « *they have stolen my sky, my ashes, they have killed my god* <sup>155</sup> ». Another poet, Erez Bitton, declared: « *In all sectors, this country has chosen Americanisation to excess. Culture here is imported. What we, the Sepharads, are proposing, is another culture based on a return to our Jewish sources. The ashkenaz are masters of everything here : of political life, of society, of the media, of education and of culture* <sup>156</sup>».

This increasing awareness brought Sephardi Jews to openly demand cultural rights. Among the organisations founded in the 1980s representing diverse Oriental Jews□ interests<sup>157</sup> are Ohalim, Oded, the Black Belt Movement, East for Peace, and Ma'arak (Struggle 85)<sup>158</sup>. As noted interestingly by Joseph Massad, it is when many Oriental Jews realised that extrasystemic movements like the Black Panthers were doomed to fail that there was increasing recourse to solutions within the system. But, while the majority of the Oriental Jews remained within the fold of Israeli society, at the same time, their cultural identity grew stronger. Political activism took more pragmatic forms. Groups focused on such issues such as educational discrimination against Sephardim (and the Palestinians) ; examples include HILA (the Israeli Committee on Education in Oriental Neighbourhoods and Development Towns) established in 1987 and Kedma, which set up

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<sup>153</sup> (authors own translation) « *les jeunes sépharades doivent affronter une tentative subtile de colonisation culturelle. Toutes leurs traditions sont qualifiées de levantines et tout ce qui vient de l'Europe de l'Est est en revanche surévalué* » Touati, -Emile, *Information juive*, December 1971.

<sup>154</sup> (authors own translation) « *La révolte des juifs orientaux, c'est nous. Nous ne voulons plus être des assistés. L'Etat d'Israel nous appartient à nous aussi et cela non pas par la grâce de ceux qui détiennent le pouvoir. Nos parents sont venus ici pour chercher la libération. Ils ont vieilli sans l'avoir trouvée. Ils sont descendu vers le désert ; ils ont construit Sdérot, Dimona, Kiryat Gat ; ils sont allés vers le nord et ont fondé Kiryat Chmoné, Maalot et Beth Shean. Ils ont fait fleurir des déserts, développé l'agriculture, fait marcher l'industrie. Aujourd'hui, leurs enfants nés en Israel veulent apporter la libération à leurs pères...La pauvreté, ici, a une couleur, elle a une communauté, comme ont une couleur la prostitution, la criminalité et les prisons* » Ben Simhon, -Gabriel, *L'Arche*, Novembre 1983.

<sup>155</sup> (authors own translation) « *on m'a volé mon ciel, mes cendres, on a tué mon dieu* », Malka, -Victor, *op.cit.*, p. 102.

<sup>156</sup> (authors own translation) « *Dans tous les domaines, ce pays a choisi l'américanisation à outrance. La culture ici, est importée. Ce que nous, sépharades, proposons, c'est une autre culture faite d'un retour à nos sources juives. Les ashkénazes sont maîtres de tout ici : de la vie politique, de la société, des médias, de l'éducation et de la culture* », Bitton, Erez, *Le livre de la menthe*, Editions Saint Germain-des-Près, 1981.

<sup>157</sup> Among which better housing, increased employment, enhanced cultural rights, political representation, and solidarity with the Palestinians.

<sup>158</sup> Massad, -Joseph, *op.cit.*, p. 64.

two alternative schools for Oriental children « *to shield them from Ashkenazi racism* <sup>159</sup>». Other more recent organisations include the Mizrahi Women Forum, founded in 1994, which held its first conference in May 1996 in Natanya. An interesting development of the 1980s was a growing trend toward solidarity with the Palestinians; Sephardim spanning the entire social spectrum linked discrimination practised against them with that used against the Palestinians. Moreover, Sephardim were prominent in the Committee for Israeli-Palestinian Dialogue formed in 1986, whose meetings with Palestinians prompted the government to issue, in August 1986, its « Counter-Terrorism Act » banning contact with the PLO. Former Black Panthers Kochavi Shemesh and Sa'adya Marciano, who had launched their Eastern Front in support of Palestinians in 1986, were in the forefront of Israeli groups protesting against Israeli repression during the Intifada. Other organisations include the World Organisation of Jews from Islamic Countries, a New York-based member of the UN Non-governmental Organisations on the Question of Palestine<sup>160</sup>.

Beside this political activism, we can see that after the first generation, the second generation of Oriental Jews was still maintaining their lifestyle and traditions. Indeed, as noted by Eisenstadt, although the maintaining of lives and traditions from their country of origins was a common characteristic for most communities, it seems that it is only within the different Oriental groups that these traditions persisted<sup>161</sup>. First of all, the stronghold of religious tradition was, at least among some of the groups, much more pervasive and continuous. The synagogue and traditional leadership often constituted important continuous foci of communal organisation, sometimes together with or even as a reaction against social disorganisation, very often giving rise to continuous recrystallization of religious tradition, days of remembrance, various cults of saints and of communal symbols, not necessarily in a political direction. Given the fact of sociological segregation and the increasing social gap, these activities were also perpetuated in the second generation and often with special emphasis on family and religious tradition- later on serving also as the background for more politically orientated networks. But the most crucial, relatively new aspect, especially in its intensity, was that of the recrystallization of the ethnic symbolism among many of the Oriental groups<sup>162</sup>. They reaffirmed their cultural background and symbolised their past culture. For example, there has been the

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<sup>159</sup> Massad, -Joseph, *op.cit.*, p. 64.

<sup>160</sup> Massad, -Joseph, *op.cit.*, p. 65.

<sup>161</sup> Eisenstadt, - Shmuel Noah, *The Transformation of Israeli Society*, p. 320.

symbolic role played by ethnic organisations such as the various national committees purporting to represent the Iraqi, Moroccan or Kurdish Jews. Although these organisations have little impact on the daily life of most members of these groups, these organisations represent an attempt to preserve and cultivate ethnic consciousness by publishing journals and books, encouraging research on a group's ethnic heritage and promoting ethnic folklore through social events and special festivities. The annual ethnic celebrations of the Mimouna for the Moroccans and the Saharana for Kurdish Jews serve as focal points of cultural mobilisation for Sephardi Jews. Other expressions of cultural mobilisation are performances by song and dance groups, which seek to cultivate the Afro-Asian artistic heritage. For example, from the 1970s, the performance of Sephardi folklore, such as the show *Bustan Sefaradi* by Yizhak Navon in 1971 and Sephardi *romanceros*, enjoy much popularity with the Israel public. This stress on an ethnic cultural heritage, its revival and preservation, reflects an attempt to compensate for feelings of deprivation or inferiority held by many Afro-Asian towards the dominant culture. These activities also represent attempts to convey the cultural heritage of an ethnic group to the public at large in order to attain recognition for the group as a legitimate component of Israeli culture. Interestingly, we can see that often, all these different kinds of attempts originate from one of the Oriental communities but are endorsed by all the Oriental Jews; the process of crystallisation of Mizrahi to Sephardi is again shown in the cultural expression of Oriental Jews.

#### 1.2.2.2. The consequences of the Six Days War

The Oriental communities' participation in the 1967 War, which legitimised their Israeli identity long doubted by the Ashkenazim who had fought the War of Independence, had an emboldening effect. It was the first time that both communities had fought together for the first ever time. As Saul Friedlander correctly remarked,

*Came the 1967 crisis and a lot of things changed. The reasons for this transformation are relatively easy to determine: European Israelis and Oriental Israelis understood as never before that they were above all and exclusively Jews and that in the case of an Arab victory, they would all have their throat cut, without any distinction in their origins. The common danger revealed itself once again as a factor for unification, but this time, its effect was decisive. There were other elements of fusion :*

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<sup>162</sup> Eisenstadt, - Shmuel Noah, *The Transformation of Israeli Society*, p. 320.

*the European Jews discovered that the [orientals] were not less courageous than they were, that they supported as well as them the long weeks and that they fought as valiantly as them. The Oriental jews, on their side, saw how the officers, most of them of European origin (or Sabras of European origin) knew how to lead their troops into battle and to sacrifice themselves without any hesitation for their men. It was in these moments that was born contempt or admiration. Finally, there was the exaltation of victory.*<sup>163</sup>.

However, paradoxically, it is also at this period that most of the Sephardi problems came to light. Beforehand, during the founding period with Ben Gurion as Prime Minister nearly without any interruption between 1948 to 1963, the Israeli State was totally engaged in national integration. This period was characterised by what has been called the *mamlakhtiout* (« a static society »), that is to say the consolidation of the State as the supreme authority, guarantor of the general interest and the driving force materialising the Zionist ideal of the « ingathering of exiles »<sup>164</sup>. The State had to maintain the collective cohesion and mobilisation of the society and create a high patriotic feeling among its « members ». Around this Zionist activism, an authentic national consensus brought together the ruling left and the opposition. The 1967 Six Days War, although it was an unprecedented unifying force, brought confidence and legitimacy to Oriental communities. It proved in a way that without their support, the Israeli State would have collapsed. Moreover, the 1970 cease-fire agreement with Egypt removed the external threat factor that had until then kept the lid on internal problems. As emphasised in 1969 by professor Friedlander, Israeli politics had at this period two contradictory objectives; in the long term, it aimed at the acknowledgement of a Jewish State by the Arabs and a search for peace, while on the short term, its immediate priority was security which consequently led them to adopt relatively rigid positions<sup>165</sup>. This issue has an outstanding importance since as correctly pointed out by Saul Friedlander, next to these elements blocking the peace, additional factors came into account in this conflictual situation <sup>166</sup>. For Israel, the continuing of the conflictual situation favours the social integration of

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<sup>163</sup> (authors own translation) « Survint la crise de 1967 et bien des choses changèrent. Les raisons de cette transformation sont relativement simple à déterminer : Israéliens européens et Israéliens orientaux comprirent comme jamais auparavant qu'ils étaient avant tout et uniquement juifs et qu'en cas de victoire arabe on les égorgerait, sans distinction « d'origine » aucune. Le danger commun se révélait à nouveau comme le facteur d'unification, mais cette fois, son effet était décisif. Il y eut d'autres éléments de fusion encore : les juifs européens découvrirent que les « orientaux » n'étaient pas moins courageux qu'eux, qu'ils supportaient aussi bien les semaines d'attente et combattaient aussi vaillamment. Les Juifs orientaux, quant à eux, virent comme les officiers, pour la plupart d'origine européenne (ou Sabras d'origine européenne), savaient mener leur troupes au combat et se sacrifier pour leurs hommes, sans hésitation. C'est en de tels moments que naissaient le mépris ou l'admiration. Enfin, il y eut l'exaltation de la victoire », Friedlander, -Saul, *op.cit.*, p. 139-140.

<sup>164</sup> Dieckhoff, -Alain, *op.cit.*, p. 41.

<sup>165</sup> Friedlander, -Saul, *op.cit.*, p. 33-34.

disparate groups in Israeli society. However, as mentioned above, the agreement with Egypt changed to a certain extent the configuration of the situation. Another factor affecting the changing nature of Israeli society is the reconfiguration of the political arena around the debate of the Occupied Territories<sup>167</sup> as we will see in the second part of our study.

The second generation Sephardim started to voice their discontent. They hold the government responsible for the stagnation of social hierarchy and their misrepresentation in the most important organs of the country<sup>168</sup>. Schlomo Svirsky, an Israeli sociologist, undertakes in 1981 one of the most serious studies on ethnic divisions. In this study, called *Orientalism and Ashkenazim in Israel*, he establishes undeniably that the deplorable conditions of the Oriental community are not the consequence of their past origins or their current education but the criteria, the standards and the pressures that are enforced on them. The first generation social gap was to a certain extent explainable but as one said:

*All my life, I was below and you above [ ] Think about this : when I was little, the kindergarten teacher was white and her assistant was black. At school, my master was Iraqi and my headmaster Polish. At work, I had a red-haired foreman. At the health center, my nurse is Egyptian and the doctor ashkenazi. In the army, the second class is us, the Moroccans, and the officers come from the kibboutz*<sup>169</sup> .

For a long time reduced to silence, Orientals started to outrage their discontent and their pain. Apart from politics, which we will examine in our second part, the bases of Sephardi claims were those of cultural recognition. Nahum Menahem's book, *Israel: Tensions et discriminations communautaires* created a strong reaction within the young Sephardi intellectuals and was used as a model to voice their discontent. Indeed, they started to criticise Israeli identity, defined according to them as an artificial identity fabricated by the media. They also denounced the educational system forged on a specific European model. As correctly analysed by Menahem, the vehicle of discontent is « *cultural refusal*<sup>170</sup>» and not the economic and social aspects. The different stereotypes impregnated in Israeli

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<sup>166</sup> Friedlander, -Saul, *ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>167</sup> Dieckhoff, -Alain, *op.cit.*, p. 41.

<sup>168</sup> See Appendix 8.

<sup>169</sup> (authors own translation) [ ] *Toute ma vie, je suis en dessous et vous au-dessus[...] Réfléchissez à cela : Quand j'étais petit, la jardinière d'enfants était blanche et son assistante était noire, apprentie. A l'école, le maître était irakien et le directeur polonais. Au travail, j'avais un contremaître rouquin. Au dispensaire, l'infirmière est égyptienne et le médecin ashkénaze. A l'armée, les deuxièmes classe, c'est nous, les Marocains, et les officiers viennent des kibboutz.* » Oz, -Amos, *op.cit.*, pp. 35-36.



society, the ludicrous speeches made by both political parties, all of these vehiculed by the Tel Avivian intellectuals and society and promoted in newspapers dualize and radicalise some sections of Israeli society. It is only in the eighties that national leaders are prepared to admit that Sephardi complaints were not always unfounded. This leads Shimon Peres to declare that there is:

*Perhaps there is a cultural Ashkenazim imperialism and school should teach both cultural heritages without favouring either. Moreover, it is true that oriental jews are underrepresented in the different hierarchies in the country : it is up to us to remedy this situation by offering equal chances to our children.*

*Finally, we must recognise in our country, and it is too often ignored, the work done by North-African Jews who have built in Israel thirty development towns from Kiryat Schmoné in the north to Eilat in the South, through Beersheva, Achdod, Dimona, etc. We can today say that Zionsim was the dream of Central European Jews and that it has been realised by North-African Jews.* <sup>171</sup>

Another recognition comes from the anti-Sephardi newspaper, Haaretz, saying that « *the communitarian tensions are a time bomb that can explode one day* <sup>172</sup> ». However, these efforts were vain<sup>173</sup> ; indeed, most of the Sephardi Jews realised that although the centre of the problem lay within their cultural recognition and acceptance, the only way they could get recognition was through politics and through a protest vote. The whole point of the second part of this study is to see whether this first protest vote did not create in its turn a political culture and tradition that has divided society even more into two different groups transforming this social and cultural reactionary movement into an ethnic political protest group.

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<sup>170</sup> (authors own translation) □ *le refus culturel* □ Menahem, -Nahum, *op.cit.*, pp. 39-91.

<sup>171</sup> (authors own translation) « *peut être un impérialisme culturel ashkénazes et qu'il faut que l'école enseigne les deux héritages culturels sans privilégier l'un aux dépens de l'autre. Par ailleurs, il est vrai que les juifs orientaux sont sous-représentés dans les différentes hiérarchies du pays : il nous appartient d'y remédier en offrant à leurs enfants des chances égales.*

*Enfin, il faut reconnaître dans le pays \_et est trop souvent ignoré\_ le travail accompli par ces juifs d'Afrique du Nord qui ont construits en Israël trente villes de développement de Kiryat Schmoné au nord jusqu'à Eilat au sud, en passant par Beersheva, Achdod, Dimona, etc. On peut dire aujourd'hui que le sionisme a été le rêve des juifs d'Europe centrale et qu'il a été réalisé par les Juifs d'Afrique du Nord* » Peres, -Shimon, *La Force de vaincre*, Paris : Le Centurion, 1981, p 242.

<sup>172</sup> (authors own translation) □ *les tensions communautaires sont une bombe à retardement qui peut éclater un jour* » Haaretz, 14 November 1979.

<sup>173</sup> Ironically, they are in fact just the result of the 1977 elections. They do not come as a recognition but as a consequence.

## SECOND PART: THE BIRTH OF A POLITICAL PROTEST, A « REFLEXION » ON THE SO-CALLED SEPHARDIM POLITICAL CULTURE.

The ethnic problem with its increased ideologization in the maintenance of ethnic life styles and traditions as mentioned above was very closely connected with the development of ethnic protest. Such protest took a long time to develop. There was of course a lot of resentment burning among many people, but, for the first thirty years of the State, it was latent. Yet some warning signs developed, each of them intensifying the contours of the problem and always leading to the development of new policies as seen with the Waddi Salib uprising and the Black Panthers movement. In 1973, Ronald Maclaurin, analysing the cultural division between the Ashkenazim and the Sephardim community, expressed the following:

*While the former [Ashkenazim] are best considered in terms of the other publics to which they belong, the Sephardim have acquired the status of being Israel's major minority group and have to begin to seek recognition and influence as such. With the possible exception of Israel's short lived Black Panther Party, this group has thus far failed to establish itself as an effective interest group in foreign policy making. While such vacuum of influence for this group exists at present, it is important to note the enormous potential for influence in the future.*<sup>174</sup>

And this prediction was true. However, the results of the 1977 elections appeared as a real surprise and came as a shock to Israeli society.

### First Period: 1977-1984

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<sup>174</sup> McLaurin, -Ronald. D ; Mughisuddin, -Mohammed ;Wagner, -Abraham R., *Foreign Policy Making in the Middle East: Domestic Influences on Policy in Egypt, Iraq, Israel, and Syria*, Praeger Publishers, New York, London, 1977, p. 175. See also Friendly, -Alfred, « Israel's Oriental Immigrants and Oriental Druzes », *Minority Rights Group Report*, No 12, London: 1972.

### 2.1.1. A nationalistic vote: a characteristic of an Oriental culture?

Until 1977, there had always been a victory in the legislative elections of left-wing parties in coalitions with religious parties. Likud's victory at the elections is seen an important landmark in Israeli political history<sup>175</sup>. It is what some Israelis have called a *mahapach*<sup>176</sup>.

Likud's victory can be interpreted in many ways<sup>177</sup>, but no authors reject the fact that the results of these elections were due to the « Sephardi vote »<sup>178</sup>. Before questioning this vote, we should see if there was really a significant shift in the Sephardi voting attitude. It seems clear that there has been in fact a gradual shift towards voting Herut, later the Likud, rather than this clear-cut image that we tend to present.

In the 1950s, the Afro-Asian immigrants voted in majority for the Mapai or the NRP (National Religious Party). It is worth noting that it is also at this period that the ethnic parties of the Sephardim and the Yemenites gradually disappeared from the political map<sup>179</sup>. Most authors have explained these votes as an expression of their identification with the Mapai as the ruling party or their instrumental dependence on the

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<sup>175</sup> See for example Schnall, -David .J, *op.cit.*, p. 192 ; Karsh, -Efraim & Mahler, -Gregory (Ed), *Israel at the Crossroads : The Challenge of Peace*, London, New York : British Academic Press, p. 125.

<sup>176</sup> Meaning an upheaval, an earthquake, a hurricane.

<sup>177</sup> See for example Schnall, -David, *op.cit.*, pp. 192-214 or Asher, -Arian, *op.cit.*, p. 161, explaining the results of the 1977 elections by the national scandals and misuse of public funds by Labour Party leading figures and the emergence of a new rival party, the Democratic Movement for Change (DMC) ; see also Eisenstadt, - Shmuel Noah, *The Transformation of Israeli Society : An Essay in Interpretation*, pp. 489-508 showing long term factors such as the disintegration of the Labour-Zionist ideology. Other explanations relate to the changes in fortunes of the two parties; the passing of leadership, the weakening of dependency relations as well as the demographic changes. Another interesting explanation in understanding the electoral behaviour in Israel is proposed by Professor Arian Asher on party images, see Appendix 7 for a detailed table.

<sup>178</sup> For statistical figures, see Appendix 5. For a more detailed analysis, see for example Peretz, - Don & Smootha, -Sammy, « Israel's tenth Knesset elections and ethnic upsurge and decline of ideology », *The Middle East Journal*, 1981, Vol. 35, No. 4, pp. 506-526; Peres, -Yochanan & Shemer, - Sara, « The ethnic factor in elections » in Caspi, -D *et al.* (eds), *The roots of Begin's success: The 1981 Israeli elections*, 1984, London: Croom Helm; Shamir, -Michal, « Realignment in the Israeli Party System » in Arian, -Asher & Shamir, -Michal (eds), *The elections in Israel-1984*, Tel Aviv : Raamot, 1986 ; Shapiro, -Yonathan, *Chosen to Command : the road to power of the Herut party- A Socio-Political Interpretation*, Tel Aviv : Am Oved [Hebrew].

<sup>179</sup> See Appendix 14.

« In the 1949 elections, these parties received five seats in the Knesset, in 1951, they received three, and in 1955 neither reached even one per cent of the vote, the threshold for Knesset representation » quoted in Horovitz, -Dan & Lissak, -Moshe, *op.cit.*, p. 102.

Mapai as the Party controlling public absorption services<sup>180</sup>. However, their dependence on the public services decreased for three reasons: their employment prospects improved, the public services became depolitized, and, the charisma of the Mapai leader, David Ben-Gurion, waned. As a result, new voting patterns emerged. The Oriental immigrants began to show a growing tendency to vote for Herut<sup>181</sup>. This tendency was especially pronounced among the offspring of these immigrants as they reached voting age in the 1960s and 1970s<sup>182</sup>. The slight drop in support for Mapai and its various electoral alignments, and the slight rise in support for Herut and the electoral blocs that it formed, apparently reflected the increasing share of Oriental voters in the electorate during that period. The dramatic intensification of the inclination of Orientals to vote Likud occurred only in 1977 when the massive defection of these « dependent » voters from the new Labour party to the Likud transformed the party map<sup>183</sup>. The relationship between voting and origin is not a new one in Israeli politics. Such a correlation was found in the 1950s and 1960s, but it has become more pronounced.

#### 2.1.1.1. The 1977, 1981 & 1984 elections: The confirmations of the Sephardi factor in Israeli politics.

Begin's personality played a crucial role in the results of these three elections. Although the Likud was mainly controlled by Ashkenazis, he managed by his charisma to attract the Sephardi voters and his victory came over as a Sephardi victory. Begin was identified with the Sephardim while the Mapai was seen as the Ashkenazim establishment party. As one Moroccan Jew emphasised:

*When you were in power, you (the labor party) would hide us in our holes, in our moshavim, in our developing towns, so that tourists wouldn't see us, so that we do not give a dirty image of Israel, so that people would believe that Israel is a white country. But that's all finished now.* <sup>184</sup>

<sup>180</sup> See for example, Asher, -Arian, *op.cit.*, pp. 151-154.

<sup>181</sup> See Appendix 4.

<sup>182</sup> See Appendix 3.

<sup>183</sup> Horowitz, -Dan & Lissak, -Moshe, *op.cit.*, p. 102.

<sup>184</sup> (authors own translation) *Quand vous étiez au pouvoir, vous [les travaillistes] nous cachiez dans nos trous, dans nos moshavim, dans nos villes en voie de développement, pour que les touristes ne nous voient pas, pour ne pas*

This account shows us first of all how obvious is the clear-cut vision between an Ashkenazim society and a Sephardi society. The cultural protest that we have seen in our first part was developing into a political reactionary vote. Indeed, for most authors, the « Sephardi vote » can be explained as a reactionary vote against the former government that had incarnated the State structure responsible for the discrimination formulated against the Sephardim since the very existence of Israel. As pointed out by Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak in their book, *Trouble in Utopia: The overburdened polity of Israel*:

*[the success of the Likud] is fed by the embittered feelings of many Sephardim Jews against the political establishment that was dominant in the 1950s and 1960s, which in their eyes shunted down into a peripheral social and political position.* <sup>185</sup>

Another professor and a Labour Party Knesset member, Shevah Weiss, also attributes the increase of seats for the Likud to the Sephardi vote, especially influenced by young Sephardi voters while adding that the ethnic vote by itself was not responsible for the downfall of Labour<sup>186</sup>. However, it seems that the ethnic vote was seen as the main explanation for this radical change. The relation between country of origin and voting has been explained in various ways. The first explanation makes a direct link between voting and feelings of deprivation rooted in the connection between ethnicity and social class, and relates this to the partial integration of the Afro-Asian immigrants of the 1950s and their offspring in Israeli society. According to this approach, the correlation between voting and ethnic origin is explained largely as a reaction against the establishment. As stressed by Professor Arian, the association between the vote and ethnicity was the continued identification of the Alignment as the party of the establishment despite the fact that it had been out of power since 1977. Sephardim, especially their Israeli-born children, tended to reject the Alignment because of the persistent inequalities these voters perceived<sup>187</sup>. The emergence of a correlation between low status and Afro-Asian origin is sometimes viewed as the result of the absorption policies adopted in the 1950s by Mapai and its political allies which are depicted as elitist, paternalistic, and predominantly Ashkenazi. There are several versions of this charge against the establishment. Some

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*donner d'Israël une image sale, pour qu'on croit que c'est un pays de Blancs. Mais ça, c'est fini maintenant.* » Oz, Amos, *op.cit.*, p. 40.

<sup>185</sup> Horowitz, -Dan & Lissak, -Moshe, *op.cit.*, p. 68.

<sup>186</sup> Weissbrod -Lilly, « Protest and Dissidence in Israel » in *Cross-Currents in Israeli Culture and Politics*, Myron J. Aronoff, Vol. IV, New Brunswick, NJ : Transaction Books, 1984, p. 103.

<sup>187</sup> Arian, -Asher, *op.cit.*, p. 158.

would go as far as to accuse the establishment then of taking deliberate steps to turn the Afro-Asian immigrants into « *hewers of wood and drawers of water*<sup>188</sup> ». Another less extreme version attributes the failure of the establishment's absorption policies to the fact that they imposed a cultural model over the newcomers without allowing for any legitimate expressions of their Middle Eastern heritage<sup>189</sup>. A third version acknowledges the difficulties created by the mass immigration as mentioned before but blames the establishment for misallocating resources in the 1950s<sup>190</sup>. Actually, all three versions of this explanation relate to the economic gap between the veterans and the newcomers following their arrival in the 1950s. The difference between them lies in the way they explain this lack of equality. The political implications of each explanation also differ. While the first two versions place the blame directly on the dominant elites of the 1950s, the Mapai and its allies, the third gives more weight to the conflicting interests of old-timers and newcomers present in any immigrant society, a situation which is not necessarily connected to the ruling elite. These three explanations certainly underlie the social and cultural problems that we have stressed all through the first part of our study. However, this ethnic vote should not only be limited to the failure of the establishment's integrationist policies in the 1950s. There is actually at this time a dual process. The first one, shown by most authors, is the reactionary vote against the establishment considered responsible of their social and cultural conditions. The other process is the gradual identification with the Likud. Indeed, the continuing support of most of the Sephardim community for the Likud even today cannot be explained just by this reactionary vote. What we can witness is the fact that this social and cultural discrimination felt by the Sephardim brought not really a political protest but rather the beginning of a political cultural identification. Nevertheless, these first three elections are characterised more by a reactionary pragmatic vote rather than by this slow transformation.

The 1981 elections and the 1984 elections can be seen therefore as the confirmation of the Sephardi factor in the Israeli elections. The Likud was kept in power. A team of researchers from Tel Aviv University has done research on the importance of the ethnic vote in the elections of July 1984. In his concluding remarks, Professor Asher

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<sup>188</sup> See, for example, Swirsky, -Shlomo, *Israel, the Oriental Majority*, London : Zed Books, 1989.

<sup>189</sup> See Smooha, -Sammy, *Pluralism and Conflict*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978, Ch. 9 ; Bernstein, D., « Immigrant Transit Camps : The Formation of Dependent Relations in Israeli Society », *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 4., No 1, January 1981, pp. 26-43.

Arian declares that the cleavage between Ashkenazim and Sephardim has never been so obvious, explaining that the Labour Party has not managed to eliminate their negative image within the Oriental communities. Other research led by the Institute of Social Research in Jerusalem concluded that the hope of eliminating the increasing gap between the two communities to move towards an egalitarian society had vanished<sup>191</sup>. The identification of Sephardim with Likud in 1977 was no longer interpreted as a chance phenomenon, but rather as a linkage between Sephardi culture and character on the one hand and Likud's foreign policy and defence postures on the other. Some authors have argued that certain cultural attributes inherent to growing up in an Islamic and Arab society produce an aggressive nationalistic and right wing voter. The Sephardi vote was no longer perceived as a protest against Labour's reign of 29 years but as more of a revolution taking place in Israel, and one that might affect the future of the country, indeed the region and the world peace<sup>192</sup>. Let us then examine whether we can talk about a Sephardi political culture.

#### 2.1.1.2. Sephardi culture: right wing biased?

##### 2.1.1.2.1. *The political cultural factor*

The radical change in the 1977 elections and the Sephardim Likud vote in the 1981 and in the 1984 elections is seen as the affirmation of a Sephardi political culture. It has been argued that the second-generation protest reflects the inherent political culture of Sephardis, which could not have developed in the first generation period due to their indebted position towards the Israeli State as we have seen before. This theory asserts that Sephardim are found to have « *a more rightist political orientation than Ashkenazim*<sup>193</sup> ». Their culture, seen from this perspective, exhibits « *a lack of tolerance towards democratic concepts, a strong national commitment, and a sharper sense of étatism*<sup>194</sup> ». Yet, as correctly emphasised by professor Maurice Roumani, to describe the Sephardim as lacking in

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<sup>190</sup> See Eisenstadt, -Shmuel.Noah, *The Absorption of Immigrants*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1954.

<sup>191</sup> Malka, -Victor, *op.cit.*, p. 95.

<sup>192</sup> Roumani, -Maurice, « The Sephardi factor in Israeli politics », *Middle East Journal*, 1988, Volume 42, No. 3, p. 424.

<sup>193</sup> Seliktar, -Ofira, *New Zionism and the Foreign Policy System of Israel*, Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986, p. 177.

<sup>194</sup> Seliktar, -Ofira, *ibid.*, p. 178.

tolerance toward democratic concepts and possessing « *a stronger sense of étatism* », ignores the fact that they are a by-product of the educational system and culture of post-1948 Israel. If they were found to be lacking in tolerance for democratic concepts, the responsibility should fall squarely on the Israeli educational system and State socialisation programs<sup>195</sup>.

Another cultural explanation suggests that the Sephardi vote can be linked to their oriental background. According to this theory<sup>196</sup>, because of their past history in Islamic culture, they are identified as charismatic voters, that is voters who pay less attention to the substance of a party's position, and are attracted more by symbols, slogans and declarations which are seen as granting legitimacy to group identity<sup>197</sup>. This theory, relating the differences in motivational basis of political participation and the differences in the cultural backgrounds of different groups, shows that these cultural emphases are connected to the messages and images transmitted by the Labour party and the Likud. The constructivist ideological tradition of the Labour party contains instrumental elements stressing delay of gratification; the party itself is bureaucratic, with a more institutionalised system of decision-making, and it has less of an emotional style than the Likud. The symbolic element projected by the Alignment would thus not be very appealing to those steeped in a traditional culture<sup>198</sup>. In contrast, a cultural outlook that stresses rational or instrumental considerations in the relation between means and ends, and which tends to accept delay of gratification in order to invest in future goals is compatible with rational voting. Traditional voting seems to involve both instrumental and expressive elements. Herut, on the other hand, would be more appealing, with its ideological tradition stressing the symbols of collective identity and values of national and collective honour together with the rhetorical and declarative trappings associated with them. Herut projects an image that is more diffuse, more emotional, and with a less institutionalised system of decision-making. One of the characteristics of expressive politics is a tendency to personify ideologies or parties and to identify with a charismatic

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<sup>195</sup> Roumani, -Maurice, *op.cit.*, p. 431.

<sup>196</sup> Yatziv, -G, *The Social Class Base of Political Party Affiliation*, Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, The Department of Sociology, 1979, pp. 29-38 (Hebrew) quoted in Horowitz, -Dan & Lissak, -Moshe, *Trouble in Utopia*, *op.cit.*, p. 185.

<sup>197</sup> As opposed to the traditional voter who regularly supports the party that represents his or her image of the proper social order; or the rational voter who examines party platforms in light of his or her own interests and in light of his or her view on current affairs.

<sup>198</sup> Which stresses values of personal, group, or national honour or that prefers immediate gratification to delayed gratification compatible with expressive or charismatic voting.



leader who embodies them. Begin was this type of charismatic figure that brought this enthusiasm among these « charismatic voters ».

Confirming these cultural explanations, the latest studies on tolerance in Israeli society<sup>199</sup> have discovered that when age, social status, and education were taken into consideration, the following results were obtained: A striking proportion of those who voted for Likud were from younger age groups. An inordinate number had low socio-economic status, possessed only an elementary certificate, and in even fewer instances a high school education. These characteristics apply in general to the Sephardim. From research findings over the last 20 years, it is clear that the Sephardim have cast between 3 to 12% more votes for Likud than their Ashkenazi brethren. These findings also show that the young in general, more than their elders, have voted for Likud, whereas young Sephardim have voted in greater numbers for Likud than have young Ashkenazim<sup>200</sup>. It is therefore clear from research finding that the Sephardi community is more inclined to a right-wing vote representing a nationalistic and a traditionalistic discourse. Nevertheless, this study shows us also that socio-economic background cannot be underestimated in explaining the vote. This dilemma constitutes the main question underlying the so-called Sephardi vote. Does their vote represent just a social reaction or the creation of a political culture?

#### 2.1.1.2.2. *Pragmatism versus Ideology.*

The complexity of finding out what factors can explain this repeated vote for Likud in the different elections since 1977 can be seen in the account of this Moroccan Jew:

*All the mapainiks did was to erase what was written on man, as if it was just rubbish. And after that, they wrote what they wanted instead, their ideology. Man's dust, that's what we were for them, Ben Gurion himself gave us this name. It is in the book Bar-Zohar wrote on him. Now that Begin*

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<sup>199</sup> Seligson, -Mitchell, A. & Caspi, -Dan, «Threat, Ethnic Origin and Education: Tolerance Towards Civil Rights of the Arab Minority in Israel», *Kivunim*, No. 15, May 1982, pp. 137-140 [Hebrew] quoted in Roumani, -Maurice, *op.cit.*, p. 426.

<sup>200</sup> Roumani, -Maurice, *op.cit.*, p. 424.

*has arrived, believe me, my parents straighten their shoulders with pride. I am not religious either, but my parents are traditionalists, and Begin recognises the value of their faith [...] before each elections, they come here from Tsora kibbutz and from others in the area to ask for our votes. Tell your friends: not until they do let us freely into Tsora, to swim in their swimming pool, to play on their tennis courts, to go out with the girls of the Kibbutz, not until they accept the children of Beth-Shemesh in their schools, or not until they bring their children to our schools instead of bussing them hundreds of kilometers to a "white" school, not until they stop considering themselves superior will they have any reasons for coming here ! We are for Begin.*<sup>201</sup>

This second generation Sephardim shows us in this account all the different reasons for a specific Sephardi vote. He relates to the feelings of discrimination examined all through this study. This account also shows us the importance of traditional values [in this case, those of his parents], as well as the importance of religion in the political discourse. Begin actually presented himself as the first Jewish Prime Minister. We can also notice that the second generation consider themselves as the spokesmen of the Sephardi community. They are the ones who will liberate their parents from Ashkenazim predominance and discrimination. Nevertheless, through all these elements, we cannot distinguish a clear ideological point explaining their votes. Authors like Alain Dieckhoff explain this fidelity vote factor by the fact that the nationalistic message of the Likud with its exaltation of military forces and the affirmation of historical rights on the *Eretz Israel*<sup>202</sup> corresponds to the Sephardi identity expectations more than other political groups programs would<sup>203</sup>. Nevertheless, as this Moroccan Jew claims at the end of this quotation, his vote for Begin is not ideological, he will vote for him until a certain equality is reached. And indeed, according to a study of Israeli political culture<sup>204</sup>, the political right did stand for social equality as understood by the lower socio-economic classes of Sephardim. In fact, the Sephardim community sought and voted for a party easy to join and ready to help them

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<sup>201</sup> (authors own translation). *« Les mapainiks ont tout simplement effacé ce que l'homme portait écrit sur lui, comme si ça avait été des bêtises. Et ensuite ils ont écrits à la place ce qu'ils ont voulu, leur idéologie. De la poussière d'hommes, voilà ce que nous étions pour eux, Ben Gurion lui même nous a nommés ainsi. C'est écrit dans le livre de Bar-Zohar sur lui. Maintenant que Begin est arrivé, croyez-moi, mes parents redressent les épaules avec fierté. Moi non plus je ne suis pas religieux, mais mes parents sont traditionalistes, et Begin reconnaît la valeur de leur croyance. [ ] Avant chaque élections, ils viennent ici du kibboutz Tsora et des autres de la région pour demander nos voix. Dites-leur à vos amis : Tant qu'ils ne nous laisseront pas entrer librement dans Tsora, nous baigner dans leur piscine, jouer sur le terrain de tennis, sortir avec les filles du kibboutz, tant qu'ils n'accepteront pas les enfants de Beth-Shemesh dans leurs écoles ou tant qu'ils n'amèneront pas les leurs dans nos écoles au lieu de leur faire des cents kilomètres en autobus pour les envoyer dans une école « blanche », tant qu'ils continueront à se croire, ils n'ont rien à chercher ici ! Nous, nous sommes pour Begin » Oz, Amos, *op.cit.*, p. 34-35.*

<sup>202</sup> Meaning the land of Israel, promised by God to the patriarchs and the Jewish people.

<sup>203</sup> Dieckhoff, -Alain, *op.cit.*, p. 42.

<sup>204</sup> Etzioni-Halevy, Eva & Shapiro, -Raphael, *Political Culture in Israel: Cleavage and Integration Among Israeli Jews*, New York : Praeger, 1977, p. 39.

improve their individual and collective status in Israeli society. This behaviour was confirmed by an earlier study indicating that, when it comes to party affiliation and voting on specific issues within the party, the Ashkenazim showed an ideological justification for their voting behaviour compared to the Sephardim, who were more pragmatic<sup>205</sup>. Authors like Horowitz and Lissak stress that these continuing voting expression were simply expressive acts:

*It should be noted that support for parties which base their appeals on feelings of ethnic deprivation does not necessarily represent an act of instrumental voting based on concrete expectation of social or economic advancement. It is usually an expressive act that conveys social protest or that seeks compensation for wounded ethnic pride by identifying with symbols of national unity, thus gaining symbolic access to the cultural and national center that was denied them by the establishment.* <sup>206</sup>

However, it seems that in the early eighties, these votes were more of a pragmatic nature. The concrete demands that were voiced in these elections by or on behalf of the Oriental groups constituted a continuation and intensification of ones that had been articulated earlier. One demand was for access to positions of authority, power and prestige. The second was for the recognition of the specific Oriental tradition or the symbols of that tradition within the framework of the common symbols of their identity, whether of styles of prayers, family life, attachment to tradition or styles of life. Finally, there were vocal demands for the closure in some ways of the occupational gap between the Oriental and the Ashkenazi groups<sup>207</sup>. And, as we can see in the table in Appendix 6 on the determining factor in the voting behaviour, pragmatism seems to be, in the period considered, a major factor as opposed to party identification.

#### 2.1.1.2.3. Nationalistic Integration

With the success of the Likud, we can see that this integrationist strategy indicates that most Sephardim do not seek political ethnic separatism. In this perspective, a nationalistic vote is another way of legitimising Sephardi's Israeli identity. And, as we have seen all through the first part of this study, the refusal to accept « Levantine » culture has created inevitably an identity crisis within the Sephardi community. And it is this factor

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<sup>205</sup> Roumani, -Maurice, *op.cit.*, p. 427.

<sup>206</sup> Horowitz, -Dan & Lissak, -Moshe, *op.cit.*, p. 68.

that has led the Sephardim to a nationalistic vote. It brings them an uncontested legitimacy. Moreover, by this affiliation, they create a clear separation between themselves and the Arabs. Indeed, their identity crisis is defined by their ambivalent position in the Israeli State. On the one hand, as Jews, they belong to the group inclined to sovereignty, while on the other hand, as originating from Islamic countries, they also share with the Arab Israeli citizens the same oriental background. This element is difficult to assume since arabism is the distinctive mark of the enemy. This reaction is aptly described by Alain Dieckhoff,

*Contiguity creates a movement of differentiation that implies a nationalistic overinvestment. For the Sephardards, intransigent nationalism plays the role of distancing from the Arabs and acts therefore as a factor of identity stabilisation.*<sup>208</sup>

To conclude, it is clear for us that it is the social determinants of the Oriental communities and their pragmatic protest vote constitute the main reasons which account for the Sephardi vote. The cultural factors emphasised above do not consider the diversity of these different Oriental communities<sup>209</sup> despite the gradual transformation of these different communities into one Sephardi community as is shown all through this study. Indeed, to speak of a political culture of these different oriental communities is wrong since first of all these communities all have a culturally different background. Although all these communities have been under Muslim rule, there is a distinctive culture between those coming from Morocco and those coming from Yemen for example. Secondly, as we have stressed above, although these growing cultural rights brought about a measure of solidarity between the different Oriental communities, each still insisted upon its specific background as exemplified in the Mimouna for the Moroccan Jews or the Saharana for the Kurdish Jews. Moreover, the situation of these different Oriental communities in Israel differed already when they arrived in Israel. For example, the Iraqi community arrived with a political, economic, and cultural leadership intact unlike the North African communities which emigrated without their leaders who had preferred to emigrate to France<sup>210</sup>. One of the consequences being that North

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<sup>207</sup> Eisenstadt, - Shmuel Noah, *The Transformation of Israeli Society*, p. 495.

<sup>208</sup> (authors own translation) *«La contiguïté suscite un mouvement de différenciation qui passe par le surinvestissement nationaliste. Pour les Sépharades, le nationalisme intransigeant a un rôle de distanciation par rapport aux Arabes et agit donc comme un facteur de « stabilisation identitaire », Dieckhoff, -Alain, op.cit., p. 42.*

<sup>209</sup> See Appendix 16.

<sup>210</sup> Asher, -Arian, *Politics in Israel, The second generation*, p. 157.

African Jews were disproportionately concentrated among the lower class and were the slowest to exert a notable degree of influence. To speak of a political culture at this period when political protest was just emerging appears questionable. Consequently, the three elections reflected more of a pragmatic vote, although we can see that according to several studies mentioned above, the gap between two distinctive communities, the Ashkenazim and the Sephardim, was widening as regards political positions. As Arian Asher puts it, « *the Likud and the Alignment were thus ethnic parties in the 1980s in one sense only: the social basis for voting for each of them was more than ever before related to ethnicity* <sup>211</sup>». This right wing vote can also be accounted for by the similar fate of the Oriental communities and the former Herut. This explanation emphasises that the Likud has always been a Sephardi Party in the sense that since the creation of Israel, they have consistently identified themselves with the « deprived ». Herut presented itself as the only alternative to the dominant party since the early years of the State. This was done by manipulating the voters' devotion to their communities and religious traditions and the symbols of these attachments. The Mapai establishment was blamed as the source of all their problems, while Herut successfully presented itself as the patron of the oppressed and as the only party that could fulfil their aspirations for full integration into Israeli society. A sense of common political fate thus emerged among the political outcasts and those who felt themselves to be social outcasts. It is worth noting that the ethnic protest against Mapai and the Afro-Asian support for Herut reached their peak only many years after the initial phase of absorption. This delayed reaction can be attributed to the cumulative impact of repeated disappointment at failing to break the link between low status and ethnic origin<sup>212</sup>. Consequently, from all the arguments which can account for the right wing Sephardi vote, pragmatism and social determinism are the most likely rather than cultural factors. However, as we will show later on in this study, the three successive Likud government under Begin has in fact brought about the emergence of a specific political culture within the Sephardi community.

The results of the 1977, 1981 and 1984 elections brought also the issue whether the Sephardi vote was not due to the specific policies and ideology in terms of foreign policy, and more especially towards the Occupied Territories, as well as towards the Arabs.

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<sup>211</sup> Arian, -Asher, *ibid*, p. 157.

### 2.1.2. The Occupied Territories and Israeli Politics: Another ethnic differentiation?

The 1967 Six-Day War followed by the 1973 War raised the issue of the Occupied Territories. The reconfiguration of the political arena around the debate of the Occupied Territories changed Israeli society in some way. Security became the main motto of the two biggest parties in Israel, the Likud and the Labour Party. It is in this context that the Likud victory in 1977 constitutes an important element.

#### 2.1.2.1. The hardening of Israeli politics and society

Israel's move to the right, however, did not begin with the Likud victory at the polls in 1977. Israeli society as a whole was moving increasingly in this direction after the 1967 War and more definitively so after the 1973 War. For example, a survey showed that anywhere from a half to a third of the Israeli population favoured a more aggressive policy towards the Arab States than that adopted by their government<sup>213</sup>. Moreover, hawkishness was not the monopoly of one camp or one political party. The difference in hawkishness between Labour and Likud was one of degree - after all, the policy of settlements in the newly Occupied Territories was initiated and expanded during Labour's term in office<sup>214</sup>.

Nevertheless, if this is partly true, the policy adopted under the Begin government was far more radical than that of the previous governments<sup>215</sup>. It culminated in the Lebanese War said by himself to be the only war undertaken by choice and not by necessity<sup>216</sup>. The differences with the former governments showed mainly in the area of security, military and foreign policies. In the area of security and foreign policy, the most notable aspect was the continuous extension of settlements in «Judea and Samaria» and Ramat Hagolan ; the change of legal status for the Golan Heights in December 1981 with

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<sup>212</sup> Lissak, -Moshe & Horowitz, -Dan, *op.cit.*, p. 105.

<sup>213</sup> See Appendix 12.

<sup>214</sup> Roumani, -Maurice, *op.cit.*, p. 424.

<sup>215</sup> See for example Peleg, -Ilan, *Begin's Foreign Policy, 1977-1983, Israel's Move to the Right*, Contributions in Political Science, No. 164, New York, Westport (Connecticut), London: Greenwood Press, 1987.

the Golan Law proclaiming the imposition of Israeli law on it<sup>217</sup>; the formal proclamation on 31 July 1980 of united Jerusalem as the capital of Israel<sup>218</sup>. It should be noted however that it was under the first Likud government that the peace treaty with Egypt was signed, followed by the later withdrawal of Israeli troops in the spring 1982, from Sinai. According to Eisenstadt, this move was not necessarily connected with the Revisionist vision or ideology, it could be -and was indeed- portrayed as attesting the basic correctness of this ideology as leading, after a show of strength, to possible peace with the Arabs<sup>219</sup>. It is difficult to say whether these actions reflected the unacknowledged feelings of the vast majority in these countries. The government's action brought about a reaction of the more politically engaged groups such as *Gush Emunim* or *Shalom Achshav* (Peace Now). For example, a few months before the elections of 1984 and after a very long surveillance, the internal security services arrested more than thirty members of the « Jewish underground » -mostly settlers in Judea and Samaria, many of them reserve officers and very close to *Gush Emunim*. Yet, the arrested members seemed to evoke a lot of sympathy from the general public -even when the latter did not agree with their concrete activities. Thus there were few but some very clear-cut mentions of them by public figures- be it the Prime Minister or the Minister of Interior whose declaration indicated some sympathy with them<sup>220</sup>. The 1984 elections also witnessed a considerable growth of different extremist groups. The most notable one being the *Kach*, Rabbi Meir Kahane party, voicing the most extreme Jewish nationalistic, racist, militant Arab stand<sup>221</sup>. Another extremist group that emerged in the 1984 elections was *Tebia* headed by professor Yuval Neeman and the former Chief of Staff, Rafal (Rafael Eitan), who, together with his supporters, joined the list. They represented the more radical elements of the right. The result was that they gained two seats in the Knesset, a result largely due to the votes of the younger people including soldiers in the army. The

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<sup>216</sup> Eisenstadt, - Shmuel Noah, *The Transformation of Israeli Society*, p. 513.

<sup>217</sup> But not its formal annexation to Israel.

<sup>218</sup> It should be noted however that the Golan Law, the Jerusalem Law and the beginning of the Lebanon War were voted by the Labour party. They claimed that these considerations were of general national interest and responsibility. (Eisenstadt, -Shmuel Noah, *The Transformation of Israeli Society*, p. 520.)

<sup>219</sup> Eisenstadt, -Shmuel Noah, *The Transformation of Israeli Society*, pp. 510-511.

<sup>220</sup> Eisenstadt, -Shmuel Noah, *The Transformation of Israeli Society*, p. 551.

<sup>221</sup> initially banned at the 1984 elections by the Electoral Commission but reversed by the Supreme Court, result of the 1984 elections, 1 Seat at the Knesset totalling 25,907 votes (1.2% of the votes); Source: *Government of Israel, Press Bureau*. See for the development of the Kahane Party in development towns, Peled, -Yoav, *Ethnic and Racial Studies, op.cit.*, pp. 345-367.

electoral background of these parties clearly indicates that their supporters come from low social backgrounds, among whom a high percentage of Sephardim origin. Consequently, although a radicalisation in Israeli society and politics in general appears undeniable, the significance and ideology of Likud's policies in the West Bank cannot be underestimated.

The settlement process in «Judea and Samaria» did indeed take on new direction after the Likud government came into power. The two main characteristics were magnitude and the location of the new settlements. While in the period between 1967 and 1977 about forty new settlements were established, in the period going from 1976 to 1983, the number of new settlements almost doubled. The increase of the Jewish population was even higher because of the predominantly urban nature of the latest new settlements, bringing the total Jewish population in the West Bank to about 30,000 people<sup>222</sup>. Secondly, the new settlements were located so as to maximise the Jewish presence in all parts of the West Bank; instead of refraining from settling in areas of dense Arab population, and even within the large urban concentrations such as Nablus, Ramalla and Hebron. The actual sites of the new settlements were determined by the identification of a particular site as a Biblical settlement (Shilo, Bet El) or by the possibility of acquiring land or expropriating the Arab settlers through the legal system. The geographical outcome of this new location policy was a pattern of dispersed new settlements, many of them of small size, achieving maximum Jewish presence in all parts of Judea and Samaria. The government's policy over the Occupied Territories and the renewal of the Sephardi vote for the Likud bloc in 1981 and in 1984 raised the question of whether the Sephardim could be said to have a specific stand as regards the Occupied Territories. As professor Arian Asher puts it, «Undeniably, many of these cleavages overlapped with strong differences in political opinion...the same groups that tended to support the Likud tended to have hawkish opinions on foreign and defense policy<sup>223</sup>».

#### 2.1.2.2. Sephardi Likud Vote: A Specific Attitude towards the Occupied Territories?

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<sup>222</sup> Eisenstadt, -Shmuel Noah, *The Transformation of Israeli Society*, p. 511.

<sup>223</sup> Asher, -Arian, *op.cit.*, p. 153.



In 1972, a study found that 56% of the total population were against giving up any of the West Bank; 92% were against returning the Golan Heights and Jerusalem. When these figures were broken down for each ethnic group, 49% of the Ashkenazim and 70% of the Sephardim were against returning the West Bank. For those who were against returning the Golan Heights and Jerusalem, the figures were 90% and 95% respectively<sup>224</sup>. In 1984, this trend persisted. 40% of the entire population supported a compromise on the territories and 53% supported Annexation. When broken down for each ethnic group, 60% of the Sephardim favoured Annexation, with the percentage higher among second and third generations; by contrast, only 53% among the Ashkenazim approved the Annexation<sup>225</sup>.

Before drawing conclusion from these figures, we must first consider the position of the new elite within the Sephardi community. Indeed, a 1986 study on the Sephardi elite found that out of 24 Sephardi Knesset members who were interviewed, 68% were against Annexation of the West Bank and 58% favoured the Camp David Accords<sup>226</sup>. This contrasts with Ashkenazi Israeli leaders such as Yitzhak Shamir, Moshe Arens, Moshe Shamir, and others who voted against the peace accords with Egypt. Another voice in the wilderness was that of David Levy, a Moroccan Jew, deputy prime minister and member of the Likud bloc, who voted both against the Israel Defence Forces' entrance into Beirut in 1982 and later for its withdrawal from Lebanon. He was quoted recently in another context as saying, « *Relating to all Arabs as PLO shows a lack of responsibility....Likud members who think that way should stop such demagoguery* »<sup>227</sup>. It was the same David Levy and Aharon Uzan, a Tunisian Jew, former minister of agriculture under Labour and later minister of social welfare and absorption in the Likud government, who demanded a judicial investigation into the Phalangist massacres at Sabra and Shatila. Among the Sephardi elite, Ovadia Yosef, former Sephardi chief rabbi and spiritual leader of the new religious party, the Sephardim Guards of the Torah (Shas) was reported as saying that the *Halachah*, the body of Jewish Law, does not consider territories to be

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<sup>224</sup> Jacob, -Abel, « Trends in Israeli Public Opinion on Issues Related to the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1967-1972 », *The Jewish Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 16, No. 2, December 1974, p. 196. For a more detailed view, see Appendix 11.

<sup>225</sup> Roumani, -Maurice, *op.cit.*, p. 425.

<sup>226</sup> Taft, -René, « Ethnic Divisions in Israel », in Bernard Reich and Gerschon R. Kieval (Eds), *Israel Faces the Future*, , New York : Praeger, 1986, pp. 85-86.

<sup>227</sup> « Levy Derides Fears over Land Transfer », *Jerusalem Post*, August 30, 1986, p. 10.

sacred, and therefore he does not object to returning them in exchange for peace<sup>228</sup>. Another exception is the emergence of several Sephardi NGOs. The most notable one being « East for Peace », established by Sephardi intellectuals. The group's platform calls for peace with the Arab countries, for social justice and equality in Israel, and for the integration of Sephardi culture in the Israeli system. *Ma'avak* 85 (Struggle 85) is another Sephardi group that combines social protests with peace. This group lobbies against new settlements in the West Bank and advocates reduction of the Israeli presence in Lebanon<sup>229</sup>. Nevertheless, besides these few initiatives within the elites, the Sephardim community has a more hawkish stand towards the Occupied Territories, as revealed by the above figures.

Several different reasons were put forward to account for the Sephardim's hawkish attitude but few explained this specific attitude towards the Occupied Territories. The main theory emphasising this special attitude towards the Occupied Territories is Ofira Seliktar's. He argues that the so-called traditionalism of Sephardim and their religiosity are characterised by a « *strong expressive territorial orientation* <sup>230</sup>». Yet, as noted in Maurice Roumani's research, Sephardim behaviour does not warrant this point of view since only 8% of settlers in the West Bank are Sephardim<sup>231</sup>. It appears that the previous study mentioning the trends towards the Occupied Territories among the various ethnic groups reflects a broader feeling in the case of the Sephardim. The nature of this feeling can be found in their specific attitude to the Arabs as we will show now.

### 2.1.2.3. Sephardi right-wing vote : A specific attitude towards the Arabs

The second-generation Sephardi support for the Herut or other right-wing radical nationalist parties has been increasingly accounted for by their purported hostility to the Arabs. And, indeed, again, several studies point out differences in the attitudes of the two groups toward Arabs. This is the case for example of Yohanan Peres's study in 1971 which found out that 91% of the Sephardim would refuse to rent a room to an Arab, as

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<sup>228</sup> Roumani, -Maurice, *op.cit.*, p. 434.

<sup>229</sup> Roumani, -Maurice, *ibid.*, p. 434.

<sup>230</sup> Seliktar, -Ofira, *New Zionism and the Foreign Policy System of Israel*, Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois Press, 1986, p. 170.

<sup>231</sup> Roumani, -Maurice, *op.cit.*, p. 431.

compared to 80% for the Ashkenazim. As to the question of whether every Arab hates Jews, 83% of the Sephardim answered in the affirmative, compared to 76% for the Ashkenazim<sup>232</sup>. Similar figures were obtained from a study in 1980 on the question of granting rights to Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. Of the total population, 16% answered in the affirmative. Among Ashkenazim, this figure was 21%. With regard to restricting the rights of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, 22% of the total population answered in the affirmative. The figure among Sephardim was 29%<sup>233</sup>.

Collecting views from a typical Sephardi village, Amoz Oz relates the point of view of one Moroccan Jew:

*Today, I am a foreman. Him, over there, an independent building entrepreneur, and him up there, has a small transport business, a very small business [ ] But be careful, if we gave them their territories, the Arabs will not come back here to work, and we will have to do all the dirty jobs as before. That's reason enough for not letting you give back the territories, not to mention the rights that the Torah and for security reasons. Look! My daughter is employed in a bank and every night an Arab comes to clean their offices. What you want is that she be fired her so that she can work on the assembly line or wash the floor instead of the Arab. Like my mother who used to do their cleaning at your house. As long as Begin stays in power, my daughter will feel happy at the bank. If you come back, you will straightaway put her down the ladder.*

*[ ] And the Arabs? Are there unhappy here? [ ] the Arabs want a State in Transjordan, that's what they are saying, aren't they? They really want to eat us whole, that's what they want [ ]*

*Heavens, you hate Eastern Jews as much as you like Arabs.* <sup>234</sup>

This attitude against the Arabs has been explained in many ways as we shall see in the following paragraphs.

<sup>232</sup> Peres, -Yohanan, « Ethnic Relations in Israel », *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 76, 1971, pp. 1021-1047. Another survey carried out between 1967 and 1972 showed when education was held constant, Oriental Jews tended to have more anti-Arab views than did either Sabras or Europeans (Israeli Institute of Applied Social Research Survey V, p. 63, quoted in Jacob, -Abel, *op.cit.*, p. 205).

<sup>233</sup> Unpublished Paper, « The Relationship Between Ethnicity and Foreign Policy Positions » presented by Peri, -Yoram at the American Association of Israeli Studies, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, June, 1986, p. 7 quoted in Roumani, -Maurice, *op.cit.*, p. 425.

<sup>234</sup> (authors own translation) « *Aujourd'hui, je suis contremaître. Lui, c'est un entrepreneur de bâtiments indépendant, et lui là-bas, il a une toute petite affaire de transports, une toute petite affaire [ ]. Mais attention, si l'on rend les territoires, les Arabes ne viendront plus travailler, si vous nous remettez aux sales boulots comme avant. Rien que pour ça on ne vous laissera pas rendre les territoires, sans parler des droits qui nous viennent de la Torah et des raisons de sécurité. Regardez! Ma fille est employée dans une banque et chaque soir un Arabe vient nettoyer les bureaux. Vous, tout ce que vous voulez, c'est qu'on la flanque à la porte pour la mettre à la chaîne ou à passer la serpillière à la place de l'Arabe. Comme ma mère qui faisait des ménages chez vous. Tant que Begin sera aux pouvoirs, ma fille sera tranquille à la banque. Si vous revenez, vous la ferez aussitôt redescendre*

*[...]; Et les Arabes? ils sont malheureux chez nous? [ ] les Arabes veulent un Etat en Cisjordanie, c'est ce qu'ils disent, non? Ils veulent plutôt nous croquer tout crus, voilà ce qu'ils veulent [...]*

*Par dieu, vous, autant vous détestez les Juifs d'Orient, autant vous aimez les Arabes » Oz, -Amos, *op.cit.*, pp. 42-43.*

### 2.1.2.3.1. *The minority-majority factor*

One common explanation attributes the hawkishness of the Afro-Asians to their collective experience of centuries of living under Muslim or Arab rule, which supposedly left the Jews with deep feelings of hostility and mistrust towards the Arabs. This perspective emphasises the past experience of Sephardim who lived as a minority in Arab countries prior to their immigration to Israel. Now that they have become part of a majority status, they revenge themselves for their past second-class status under Islam.

Another version of this argument does not relate to the actual experience of the Afro-Asians in Muslim or Arab countries, but to the image of this experience that has been conveyed to the second generation. This second version seems already more valid since most of the Jews who migrated from Arab countries to Israel voted Labour continuously for three decades whereas the second and third generation Sephardi *sabra* voted for the Likud. As pointed out by Maurice Roumani, these groups are however the product of the Israeli social and political system, rather than of their parents' native country, socialised in the Israeli school system and in youth movements and absorbed by the dominant groups in Israel<sup>235</sup>. It might also be noted that Israeli-born Oriental shifts to the right was done together with their entire age cohort, but the change was not as marked among young people of European-American origin<sup>236</sup>. Moreover, the minority-majority factor is based on the historical experience of the Sephardim. However, according to recent research<sup>237</sup>, the condition of Jews under the Arab and Islamic rule has not been as difficult as the authors of the minority-majority factor have suggested. For example, Giladi talks about the prevailing harmony and good-neighbourliness between Muslims and Jews ever since the Islamic conquest and shows how the Jewish population did not suffer from oppression<sup>238</sup>.

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<sup>235</sup> Roumani, -Maurice, *op.cit.*, p. 429.

<sup>236</sup> See Peretz & Smooha, *op.cit.*, 1981, p. 512 ; Shamir, -Michal, *op.cit.*, 1986 ; Katz, -Eliha, « The young are Running to the Right », *Yediot aharonot*, October 1988, No. 24 [Hebrew].

<sup>237</sup> See for example, Segev, -Tom, *1949: The first Israelis*, New York: The Free Press, 1986, pp. 160-166.

<sup>238</sup> Giladi, -G.N, *op.cit.*, pp. 10-34. The exacerbated tensions were in fact provoked by «zionist agents» after the War of Independence; See Shapiro, -Raphael, *op.cit.*, p. 16.

### 2.1.2.3.2. *Relative deprivation*

This approach considers that it is more of an economic reason that the Sephardim are more hostile against the Arabs. Their vote for the Likud is instrumental rather than expressive, and is linked to the Likud's stand on the future of the Occupied Territories. The entry of the Arabs from the territories into low status jobs in Israel following the Six Day War opened up opportunities for social mobility among the Sephardim population, who had filled these positions in the occupational structure prior to 1967. The hawkish Afro-Asian position is therefore viewed as a response to their fear that the return of the territories would rob them from their mobility achievements and force them back into the lower levels of the status system, fear expressed in the account made by the Moroccan Jew mentioned above.

According to this theory, the status of the Sephardim changed after 1967 when the Arabs from the Occupied Territories began to fill the unskilled positions in the economy, thus moving the Sephardim one step upward. Now the Sephardim had moved to the middle status of the economic and social ladder. For this change of status, they were indebted to the co-optation of Arab labour from the Occupied Territories and hence, it is argued, the Sephardim have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo, keeping the territories or annexing them altogether. In this context « *of generalised perception of relative deprivation, it would not be uncommon for [Sephardim] to displace or take out their feelings of frustration and aggression on the Arabs, who are members of a distinctive and hostile outgroup* <sup>239</sup>».

Yoav Peled in her article entitled « *Ethnic exclusionism in the periphery: the case of Oriental Jews in Israel's development towns* », shows firstly that the effects on the job market were not as positive in a social perspective for the Oriental Jews. It is true that the introduction of non-citizen Palestinians into the Israeli labour market in 1967 experienced upward social mobility for the Sephardim. However, as pointed out in the article mentioned above, this development was predicated on a full-employment situation. « *In periods of economic contraction, Oriental Jews, many of whom occupy the bottom sections of the occupational scale, find themselves increasingly in competition with cheaper Palestinian workers. This has led to the third effect that the employment of non-citizen Arab labour has had on Oriental workers; a lowering of the pay-scale in industries where the former are represented in significant numbers; for*

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<sup>239</sup> Seliktar, -Ofira, *op.cit.*, p. 181.

*example, construction, textile, agriculture and food services* <sup>240</sup>». Secondly, Peled shows that, according to the split labour market theory, the friction with Palestinian workers is due to the social determinants, whether of Sephardim or Ashkenazim origins.

#### 2.1.2.3.3. *Marking off factor*

Another third explanation based on the cultural background of the Afro-Asians holds that their hostility towards the Arabs is a reaction to their being stereotyped in Israel as similar to Arabs. Their hostile attitudes to the Arabs thus reflects an attempt to rid themselves of their « Arab-like » image, which is rooted in their physical appearance, patterns of behaviour, and cultural tastes as described by André Chouraqui, former adviser of Ben Gurion on Oriental Jews:

*And if, in the last century, the Jewish columnists, who came to Yafo, were surprised by the resemblance of Jews to Arabs, after 1948, many European Jews continued to make the same mistake. The collision caused by the meeting up of these two so prodigiously different worlds could not but have been painful.* <sup>241</sup>

One of the consequences was a nationalist identification as explained in the following extract:

*The Sepharads aspire above all to a full-Israeli status; and their membership and fidelity to the prevailing system of values are all the more fiercely demanded as they feel to a great extent excluded. (□ ) They are probably the most intransigent opponents of the Arabs. As if the contempt suffered could be occulted by the communion in the contempt for the other. A significant assessment, since recurrent : an unconscious imitation of the dominant and a narcissicism of small differences which together led to the inferiorisation of Eastern Jews operate in their turn within them. The same mechanisms that played against them, stigmatising them as primitives among Western upstarts, have been so to say reappropriated and reproduced in order to stigmatise and reject the Arab. By systematically adhering to the dominant positions, they believe they are giving the most reliable*

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<sup>240</sup> Peled, -Yoav, *op .cit.*, p. 350 ; For a detailed analysis, see Makhoul, -Najura, « Changes in the Employment Structure of Arabs in Israel », *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 1982, Vol. 11, No. 3, pp. 77-102 ; Semyonov, -Moshe & Lewin-Epstein, -Noah, *Hewers of Wood and Drivers of Water : Non-Citizen Arabs in the Israeli Labor Market*, Ithaca : Cornell University, IRL Press, 1987 ; Khalidi, -Reja, *The Arab Economy in Israel : The Dynamics of a region*. Development, London : Croom Helm, 1988 ; Portugali, -Juval, « Nomad Labour : Theory and Practice in the Israeli-Palestinian Case », *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, New Series, Vol. 14, 1989, pp. 207-220 ; Semyonov, -Moshe & Cohen, -Yinon, « Ethnic Discrimination and the Income of Majority-Group Workers », *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 55, No. 1, 1990, pp. 107-114.

<sup>241</sup> (authors own translation) « *Et si, au siècle dernier, les chroniqueurs juifs qui venaient à Yafo étaient frappés par la ressemblance des Juifs avec les Arabes, après 1948, de nombreux Juifs européens continuèrent à faire, plus ou moins volontairement, cette méprise. Le choc né de la rencontre de deux univers si prodigieusement différents ne pouvait manquer d'être douloureux.* » Chouraqui, -André, *op.cit.*, p. 27.

*tokens of belonging, and in doing so, hope to hold a position as far away as possible from those they might be confused with.* <sup>242</sup>

The assumption underlying this explanation is that the Afro-Asians desire to be fully integrated in the majority culture of Israeli society has led them to a demonstrative rejection of the Arabs. This argument is compatible with familiar patterns of behaviour among low-status ethnic groups in multi-ethnic societies. In such societies, low-status groups tend to project hostility towards groups with even lower status. Thus, in the U.S, blue collar populations of Polish, Italian, or Irish backgrounds tend to show hostility towards black people. The desire of lower-status groups to identify with higher status groups by distancing themselves from those at the bottom of the scale is reinforced in the case of both Israel and the U.S by the fact that members of the lowest groups rub shoulders at their places of work and compete with each other in the job market.

This perspective deals with the formation of an ethnic identity that resembles the dominant social group and therefore is marked off from other ethnic groups in that society. By emphasising the negative aspects of the marked off group, one achieves a more positive identity of self and also feels closer to the dominant group. Ofira Seliktar, of the University of Pennsylvania's Middle East Research Institute, points out that, « *the peripheral [Sephardim] use the Arabs as a marking-off group in order to bolster their Israeli identity* <sup>243</sup>». The Sephardim had been under tremendous pressure to discard their « Arab » identity or to « purge » it before they could legitimately be accepted by the larger society. In seeking acceptance, as fast as possible, by the dominant group, the Sephardi sabra embraced Western values and a form of patriotism that gave rise to anti-Arab feelings. These feelings however were not so much based on an enmity towards Arabs as on a negative view of Arabs by Israelis in society. Whatever these feelings may be, the Sephardi Jew was in fact echoing the ethnocentrism expressed by the Ashkenazim towards him and

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<sup>242</sup> (authors own translation) □ *Les Sépharades aspirent avant tout au statut israélien à part entière ; et leur appartenance et leur fidélité au système de valeurs dominant sont d'autant plus ardemment revendiquées qu'ils se sentent en grande partie exclus. (...) Ils constituent sans doute les adversaires les plus intransigeants des Arabes. Comme si le mépris subi pouvait être occulté par la communion dans le mépris de l'autre. Constat significatif, car récurrent : le mimétisme du dominant et ce narcissisme des petites différences qui, par leurs effets conjugués, ont abouti à l'infériorisation des Juifs orientaux opèrent à leur tour au sein de ces derniers. Ces mêmes mécanismes qui ont joué contre eux, les stigmatisant primitifs parmi les parvenus de l'Occident, sont comme réappropriés et reproduits pour stigmatiser et rejeter l'Arabe. Par une surenchère d'adhésions anticipées aux positions dominantes, ils croient fournir les plus sûrs gages d'appartenance et espèrent ainsi s'écarter le plus possible de ceux avec lesquels on pourrait les confondre.» Dieckhoff, -Alain, *op.cit.*, p. 43.*

<sup>243</sup> Seliktar, -Ofira, *op.cit.*, p. 177.

which he then learned to transfer towards the Arabs in order to distance himself. As emphasised by Alain Dieckhoff,

*Economic competition that often puts them side by side with the Arab workers in Israel, particularly in development towns where the declining industries are concentrated, keeps on top of this a silent rivalry that is translated on the electoral level by a disproportionate support for the right-wing parties, and especially the most extremist of them (the rabbin Kahane list, Moledet), those that ask for the expulsion of Arabs from Israel. The choice of a fighting nationalism appears all the more attractive as a way of affirming one's identity against the Other as the cultural and social proximity is great: the only difference which subsists, that of one's religious and ethnic group, is then overvalued.* <sup>244</sup>

This theory seems the most plausible, although the relative deprivation theory should not be underestimated. At least, as we have noted since the beginning of this study, the Sephardim have never so far followed a separationist policy. They seek to identify and « legitimise » their Israeli identity, which has not been well accepted in the past as stressed at the beginning of this study. What professor Friedlander noted in 1969 when stating that the free contact between Jews and Arabs in the Occupied Territories brought Oriental Jews to show in several ways that they were part of the « western » Jewish society and to distinguish themselves from the Arabs was still true at least until 1984<sup>245</sup>. We can also see that this marking-off factor has probably reinforced in some ways the tendency of all these Oriental communities to single themselves out as one special group.

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<sup>244</sup> (authors own translation) □ *La compétition économique qui les met souvent aux prises avec des ouvriers arabes en Israël, en particulier dans les villes de développement où sont concentrées des industries en déclin, entretient de plus une sourde rivalité qui se traduit électoralement par un soutien disproportionné pour les partis de droite, en particulier les plus extrémistes d'entre eux (liste du rabbin Kahane, Moledet), ceux-là même qui réclament l'expulsion des Arabes hors d'Israël. Le choix d'un nationalisme de combat apparaît d'autant plus attractif comme moyen d'affirmation identitaire contre l'Autre que la proximité culturelle et sociale est grande : l'unique différence qui subsiste, celle de l'appartenance ethno-religieuse, est alors survalorisée.* » Dieckhoff, -Alain, *op.cit.*, p. 42.

<sup>245</sup> Friedlander, -Saul, *op.cit.*, pp. 138-140.



## Second period: 1984-2003

### 2.2.1. The consequences of Begin's government on Israeli society

The Likud's six years of governance had important consequences on Israeli society and consequently on the Sephardim community. As Eisenstadt puts it,

*These developments had far reaching repercussions on the format of Israeli society in general and political life in particular, on the construction of the centre and its symbols, and on the possibility, degree and mode of the development of some new institutional mould. Ethnic and religious themes and symbols were incorporated in the centre. The crystallization of these themes developed in two different directions. On the one hand, there was a continuation and even intensification of their divisive aspects, often giving rise to rather ugly outbursts. (□) On the other hand, some of these themes continued to be incorporated into the centre, and accordingly there was also a growing tendency among Oriental leaders or intellectuals to stress their unifying and not divisive aspects. Thus, some at least of these divisive orientations changed. Some of the standard-bearers of the Oriental culture, who had presented it as an alternative to the Ashkenazi one, started to stress that this should not be true not only for the Orientals, but as a legitimate part of a common centre; others stressed the search for different ways of bringing Oriental and Western themes together; while still others tended openly to deny the validity of any such distinctive Oriental culture. The ethnic festivals and gatherings stressed more and more the theme of national unity and solidarity, of their being part of the whole nation. The revival of many ethnic traditions -as for instance of the North African cults of saints- was often seen as an affirmation of the sense of belonging to Israeli society.*<sup>246</sup>

However, within this integrative process, the different symbols represents in fact a dual society, one going towards a liberal « modernised » State while the other clings to a traditional Jewish society. As we will see later, religion constitutes the main dilemma of this society. In fact, there has been continued ethnic voting among the Israeli public since 1977: ethnicity discriminates or predicts the vote for both the Likud and the Alignment. In 1984, the preference ratio for the two parties among each ethnic group was about 3 to 1, with the Sephardim preferring the Likud, and the Ashkenazim the Alignment. In 1988, the preference ratio tended to decline, as smaller parties of the left and the right extremes respectively won more of the Ashkenazi and Sephardi<sup>247</sup>. What Eisenstadt was describing

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<sup>246</sup> Eisenstadt,- Shmuel Noah, *The Transformation of Israeli Society*, pp. 530-531.

<sup>247</sup> Asher, -Arian, *Israel, The Second Generation*, p. 155.

in fact was the new formation of a political culture identifying two distinctive communities regrouped around different symbols.

Another interesting feature of the Begin era is that it also establishes a new era in Israeli politics, which is still present nowadays, that we can characterise by the increased importance political analysis and journalists give to the ethnic groups in Israeli politics. The Sephardi vote was given much attention by the press and academics in the eighties, early nineties. One can find the same phenomenon today with the increasing literature that focuses on the role of Russian immigrants in Israeli politics<sup>248</sup>.

### **2.2.2. Israeli politics: the splintering of the religious-ethnic nature of Israeli society**

Israeli society rests on three main ideologies. The first one is the Socialist Zionist ideology, with its roots in the Second Aliyah, in the kibbutz movement, and in the labour unions, which had together formed the overreaching organisation of all the Israeli workers in Israel, known as the Histadrut. These forces strove for a socialist, economically egalitarian, secularist Jewish society. The second one, which is now gradually paradoxically replacing the first one<sup>249</sup>, is a westernised liberal ideology symbolised by high technological poles. The third ideology, which represents the complex side and dilemma of Israeli society and character, hinges around the place of religion in society, in the State, and in legal institutions. Before considering the Sephardim position towards religion, we should first see how the religious element has been defined in Israeli public life.

#### **2.2.2.1. The Dilemma of religion**

Since the creation of the Israeli State, religion and religious parties have always been regarded as a « normal partner » in State coalitions. Until recently, the religious parties

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<sup>248</sup> See Le Bars, Stéphanie, « La majorité des russophones d'Israël votera pour le Likoud », *Le Monde*, 18/01/03; Sharmilla, Deri « Immigrants from Russia join Israel's shift to the right », *Financial Times*, 21/01/03.

<sup>249</sup> To explain this change, see for example, Shapiro, -Raphael, *op.cit.*, p. 14.

received about 10% of the national vote, and were the consistent coalition partners of the Labour Party. They have always occupied a unique position and this was especially the case for the National Religious Party. As explained in David Newman's article, « *their concern with religious issues means that their constituencies are limited. The readiness of the leading parties to acquiesce to the issue-specific demands of the religious parties, such as religious legislation and the religious status quo often determines the readiness of the religious parties to prop up the coalition governments.* <sup>250</sup> ». So, how can we explain the special role these parties had in shaping Israeli politics?

This role can be explained by the special position religion occupies in the State's identity. Religion is a central issue in Israeli political life. It is crucial because of the broad consensus within the Jewish population that Israel should be a Jewish State. The conflict is over the degree to which legislation and civil life in Israel should reflect the norms and decisions of established orthodox religious authorities. This conflict over religion and its relationship to public life is becoming shaper and sharper within the Jewish State. The issue is made more complex because of the various meanings of Jewishness. Judaism may be thought of as a religion, a nationality, a culture, or all of these<sup>251</sup>. As Maxime Rodinson has pointed out in his book, *Peuple juif ou problème juif*, we can identify four different groups who define themselves as Jews. The first group can be defined as the worshippers belonging to a well-defined religion, Judaism. The second group are descendants of judaist worshippers but are not themselves religious. Yet, they still want to keep a link with the first group, considering that they form a single Jewish people. The third group have rejected their religious background as well as this special link. They consider themselves atheists, Christians and define their identity as French, English or Arabic. However, they are considered by the other groups on certain occasions and in certain contexts as Jewish. The last group are people who ignore their Jewish origins and could be commonly defined as « *Juifs inconnus* <sup>252</sup> » to quote Roger Peyrefitte. For orthodox Jews, religion and nationality are one and the same. Religious behaviour and belief, while desirable, are not essential criteria for membership in the community.

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<sup>250</sup> Newman, -David, « Voting Patterns and the Religious Parties in Israel », *Contemporary Jewry*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 1989, p. 66.

<sup>251</sup> Although there is an inherent contradiction in seeing Judaism as a religion as well as a nationality. See Rejwan, -Nissim, *op.cit.*, p. 218.

<sup>252</sup> Rodinson, - Maxime, *Peuple juif ou problème juif ?*, Paris : François Maspero, 1981, pp. 19-22.

Israelis are split over these matters, as is demonstrated in the following table. It is fascinating to note the degree of relative stability over time in the distribution of answers to questions regarding public life and personal religious behaviour. About half of the Israelis agree to having public life conducted in accordance with tradition; about half disagree. Between a quarter and a third observe none of the Jewish religious laws, about the same percentage observe all or most of them. More than forty percent are more or less observant of the laws. We are faced with a divided picture in terms of desired public behaviour and in terms of private observance. The issue is a major one and splits the population. The cause is promoted by a number of religious parties; most other parties are secularist or noncommittal, but no antireligious party has yet emerged. The issue of promoting religion is legitimate in the Israeli polity in a way that promoting anti-religion or ethnicity is not. Forces that champion anti-religion are as unpopular among the electorate as are forces that out rightly promote one ethnic group over others. The norm of the Israeli political system at least until recently has been to legitimise both the role of religion and the ethic of a single Jewish people regardless of ethnic background.

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PUBLIC LIFE AND JEWISH RELIGIOUS TRADITION.  
OBSERVANCE OF JEWISH RELIGIOUS LAW<sup>253</sup>

*Should the government see to it that public life is conducted in accordance with Jewish religious tradition?*

	1962	1969	1981
<b>Definitely</b>	23%	27%	27%
<b>Probably</b>	20%	16%	23%
<b>Probably not</b>	16%	14%	23%
<b>Definitely not</b>	37%	42%	26%
<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>1170</b>	<b>1240</b>	<b>1225</b>

*Do you observe Jewish religious law?*

	1962	1969	1973	1977	1981	1988
<b>To the letter</b>	15%	12%	14%	14%	9%	10%
<b>Quite a bit</b>	15%	14%	17%	12%	14%	17%
<b>Only somewhat</b>	46%	48%	43%	44%	43%	45%
<b>Not at all</b>	24%	26%	26%	29%	34%	28%
<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>1170</b>	<b>1241</b>	<b>1877</b>	<b>1366</b>	<b>1212</b>	<b>1180</b>

NOTE: Deviations from 100 are the result of « no response » answers and/or rounding.

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Besides the ethnic side of the religious problem with the emergence of ethnic religious parties like Israel ba-Aliyah for the Russians or the Shas for the Oriental Jews, as we will see later on in this study, Israeli society is divided about the religious nature of the State. The past elections of 1996 and the recent elections show how intricate the issue of religion and of traditions opposed to modernity and peace is. As Alain Dieckhoff aptly puts it,

*The vision of a "normalised" Israel, more and more similar to Western European States, integrated in the global economy, appeared to the majority of Israeli Jews "that gave up to 55% of their votes to Netanyahu" "not like an attractive utopia, but more like a frightening perspective. Basically, the price of peace could well be insufferably high*

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<sup>253</sup> Asher, -Arian, *op.cit.*, p. 237.

*questioning the Zionist nature of the State, that is to say the obliteration of its Jewish character.*<sup>254</sup>

A political culture is developing where the right is identified with low and middle class votes worried by the effects of modernisation and liberalism while the left is seen as the advocate of peace and modernity in a secularised Israel. The 1980s and 1990s have been characterised by this polarisation of Israeli society. The late seventies and early eighties have developed integrationist strategies both in religious and ethnic terms. From 1984 onwards, several trends indicate the transformation of this Sephardim political culture both in the ethnic and religious spheres according to the following lines.

#### 2.2.2.2. Ethnic Differentiation

Since the early eighties, ethnic problems have become largely exploited in the political sphere. There are however two distinctive groups. The first one includes political parties that use ethnic consciousness to rally political support. This is the case of the Likud, as we have seen above, presenting itself as the spokesman for the aspirations of the deprived Sephardi. The second group includes political organisations that are explicitly or implicitly ethnically based. The best example being Tami<sup>255</sup>. The case of Tami helps to understand the complexity of ethnic problems in Israel, especially in the case of the Sephardim community. Tami was created in 1981 by Aharon Abu-Hatzeira, former Minister of Religious Affairs. The list was set up after its leader withdrew from the NRP a short time before the deadline for submitting lists to the Central Elections Committee<sup>256</sup>. The motives of Abu-Hatzeira for creating this ethnic party were the following; firstly, he was annoyed by the lack of support he received from the NRP leadership during his trial when charged with misappropriation of public funds when he was Mayor of Ramleh<sup>257</sup>.

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<sup>254</sup> (authors own translation) □ *La vision d'un Israël « normalisé », de plus en plus semblable aux États d'Europe occidentale, intégré dans l'économie mondiale est apparue à la majorité des Juifs israéliens- qui ont apporté 55% de leur suffrages à Netanyahu-, non comme une utopie attrayante, mais comme une inquiétante perspective. En clair, la paix risquait d'être payée d'un prix insupportable : la remise en cause de la nature sioniste de l'État, c'est-à-dire l'oblitération de son caractère juif. » Dieckhoff, -Alain, op.cit., p. 44.*

<sup>255</sup> No research has been done in English or in French on ethnic parties in Israel.

<sup>256</sup> Asher, -Arian, op.cit., p. 105.

<sup>257</sup> Eisenstadt, -Shmuel Noah, *The Transformation of Israeli Society*, p. 496.

The second reason was that he also claimed that there was a lack of representation of Oriental Jews in the NRP. This party came into being during the 1981 elections in which extreme ethnic demands were voiced. The newspapers and media were filled with articles and letters which focused around this theme- some of them by people, usually intellectuals, who identified themselves as Orientals, and spoke of their sense of being discriminated against, their feeling of alienation. In this background, Tami claimed that the sad plight of the Orientals was the result of a conscious exploitation by the Ashkenazi and called for the establishment of a separate Oriental society and culture- a theme that became also widespread among some of the younger Orientals in the universities<sup>258</sup>.

The results of the 1981 elections were striking. Tami managed to gain three seats <sup>259</sup>. However, the success of this party was short-lived. In 1984, it lost heavily winning only one seat at the Knesseth, totalling 31,103 votes. By 1988, Abu-Hatzeira's Tami lists ran as part of the Likud list. The failure of this ethnic list shows how « illegitimate » in the Israeli polity the ethnic issue is<sup>260</sup>. As shown throughout this study, separatism is so much feared in Israeli society that these small separatist groups are bound to disappear. The historical sociological analysis of Hanna Herzog regarding the ethnic lists in Israel leads her to the conclusion that the ethnic political organisations are marginal in Israeli politics, but that « ethnicity » is a resource in politics<sup>261</sup>. However, one of the mistakes of Tami was to base the issue on ethnic grounds rather than religious ones. As already stressed, the issue of promoting religion is legitimate in the Israeli polity; the growing success of the Shas from 1984 right up to today testifies to the successful combination.

### 2.2.2.3. Both electoral platforms : the history of the success of a political party, the Shas

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<sup>258</sup> Eisenstadt, -Shmuel Noah, *The Transformation of Israeli Society*, p. 496.

<sup>259</sup> See Appendix 14.

<sup>260</sup> It seems that the same analysis can be done for the new Russian immigrants with the rapid decline of the Russian parties, Israel BeAlya and Israel Beitenou. Israel BeAlya has had only 2 seats in the last elections in 2003 compared to the last parliamentary elections in 1999 where it obtained 6 seats.

<sup>261</sup> Herzog, - Hanna, « The Ethnic List to the Delegates' Assembly and the Knesseth (1920-1977) \_Ethnic Political Identity? » Ph.D. dissertation, in Hebrew, Tel Aviv University, 1981, quoted in Asher, -Arian, *op.cit.*, p. 158.

The Sephardim Guards of the Torah (Shas) was created in 1983. This new political party emerged within the ultra-orthodox world, hitherto represented by Agudat Israel. A very strong opposition headed by Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, former Sephardi chief rabbi and with the support of the Sephardim community, arised during this period. This opposition group protested against the hitherto unchallenged monopoly of positions of leadership in the Knesset and in the budgetary allocations by the different Ashkenazi groups. Although before there was already a division before with one chief rabbi for each community, this split appears more and more revolutionary in Israeli religious and political circles, and to a larger extent to Israeli society. Since its success in the municipal elections in Jerusalem, when it won three seats out of thirty-one on the City Council<sup>262</sup>, the Shas since has run national elections and is now one of biggest political party in Israel behind the two leading parties, the Likud and the Labour party.

The success of Shas can be explained by the fact that it has a strong social network controlling and influencing broad sectors of the population. Through its political activity, Shas has managed to create an impressive network of educational and social welfare institutions accounting for more than one billion dollars <sup>263</sup>. In return for its political support, the Shas has received considerable public funding. Interestingly, these strategies of social networking<sup>264</sup> can be found also among Muslim religious groups in Arab countries such as the Muslim Brotherhood. As underlined by Alain Dieckhoff,

*The Shas has managed to set up a solid social base by developing a very strong presence by working in the field. Its network of kindergartens and primary schools takes in more than 20,000 children. Clubs have been created to accommodate, after school, children from disadvantaged districts to whom a whole set of activities (scholarly support, sports, games, Torah teaching, □ ) are proposed. By thus fullfilling a daily social function that the State does not cover, the Shas strives to reinforce its electoral basis, imposing itself as the spokesman of the Second Israel economically and culturally marginalised.*<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> Kopelowitz, Ezra & Diamond, -Matthiew, « Religion that strengthens democracy : An analysis of religious political strategies in Israel », *Theory and Society*, pp. 671-708, p. 689.

<sup>263</sup> Interview with Mr. Horowitz

<sup>264</sup> See for example the recent article in the newspaper *Le Monde*, Paris, Gilles, □Les bonnes oeuvres du Shass, parti des séfarades ultra-orthodoxes », *Le Monde*, 22.01.03.

<sup>265</sup> (authors own translation) □*le Shas est parvenu à se doter d'une base sociale solide en développant une présence très forte sur le terrain. Son réseau de jardins d'enfants et d'écoles primaires scolarise plus de 20,000 enfants. Des clubs ont été créés pour accueillir, après l'école, les enfants de quartiers défavorisés auxquels tout un ensemble d'activités (soutien scolaire, sport, jeux, cours de Torah...) est proposé. En remplissant ainsi une fonction sociale au quotidien que l'Etat ne remplit pas, le Shas renforce avec application sa base politique, s'imposant ainsi comme*



The effects of these policies are manifest in their electoral results: they won four seats totalling more than 3.1% of the votes in 1984<sup>266</sup>. In 1999, they represented 13% of the electorate, having acquired 17 seats at the Knesseth<sup>267</sup>. At the last elections in January 2003, the Shas obtained 11 seats at the Knesseth, which confirms its position as one of the most important political party in Israel. This social policy has led Shas to represent not only the Sephardi religious sector, but to have a mixed party platform. Its central support comes from the Sephardi haredi community and the non-Hasidic Ashkenazim<sup>268</sup>. Indeed, in the religious arena, the Shas, while predominantly Sephardi, was not exclusively so with the support of ultra-orthodox Ashkenazi rabbi like for example Uri Zohar, a former very popular comedian in his secular days<sup>269</sup> or the rabbi Eliezer Schach, an old and venerable rabbi from Bnei Brak, and an old time Aguda leader<sup>270</sup>. On the first periphery, we can find the « traditional » Sephardim labelled by Mr. Horowitz as the soft religious, believing in irrational mystical folklore and religion. The second periphery is constituted of the largest group, those protesting against the establishment. As explained by Joseph Algazy,

*The Shas essentially recruits among the poor Eastern strata, by exploiting their social discontent and their ethnic resentment towards the ashkenazim.*<sup>271</sup>

Interestingly, within this group, we can of course find Oriental Jews, but also Israeli Arabs. For example, in the 1992 elections, the main beneficiary of the Arab vote was the Shas, whose share in the Arab vote rose from 1 to 5%<sup>272</sup>. In the following years, the leader of the Shas, Interior Minister Rabbi Aryeh Deri, became so popular in the Arab sector that he was nicknamed « Sheikh Deri ». Again, motives behind the vote for Shas were pragmatic. Arab municipalities are dependent on the Ministry of the Interior for budgets, building licences and various authorisations. Israeli observers jokingly noted that Deri, who is of Sephardic origin, convinced the Arabs that they were in the same boat as

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*comme le porte-parole du second Israel économiquement et culturellement marginalisé.* » Dieckhoff, -Alain, *op.cit.*, p. 45.

<sup>266</sup> *Government of Israel, Press Bureau.*

<sup>267</sup> <http://elections.jerusalempost.com/final.html>.

<sup>268</sup> Newman, -David, *op.cit.*, pp. 67-69

<sup>269</sup> Asher, -Arian, *op.cit.*, p 98.

<sup>270</sup> He actually created his own political party in 1988, the Torah Flag Party, to appeal to his Ashkenazi supporters, but continued as a spiritual leader mostly for the SHAS.

<sup>271</sup> (authors own translation) « *Le Shas recrute essentiellement parmi les couches orientales pauvres, dont il exploite le mécontentement social et le ressentiment « ethnique à l'égard des ashkénazes* ». Algazy, -Joseph, « Qui est qui ? », *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Février 1998.

<sup>272</sup> Asher, -Arian, *op.cit.*, p. 133.

the Sephardim: both had been discriminated against the Ashkenazi Israeli Jews<sup>273</sup>. This support by Israeli Arabs is probably not so true today since the Shas has much more right-wing position, and especially so with regards to the Occupied Territories. Indeed, in a great electoral manoeuvres a week before the 2003 parliamentary elections, the spiritual leader, Ovadia Yosef, declared the Oslo Accords as null and void<sup>274</sup>.

The success of the Shas is not surprising. As we have seen all through this study, the protest votes against the Ashkenazi-dominated parties and the great veneration with which many traditionalist Sephardim treat their rabbis can explain this success. Indeed, as Gonen has noted, the Sephardi population is collectively more traditional in its religious observance<sup>275</sup>. As a result, a party, which appeals to both the ethnic and religious components of the voting decision, could be expected to receive a relatively high proportion of the votes. Moreover, in the short-term, this party has followed an integrative rather than a separatist ideology. Another important factor is that they have given an alternative definition of Israeli society that has attracted many Sephardim. As Gal Levy has suggested, the Shas « *offers a new definition of mizrahi collective identity that is attractive for mizrahim, as well as for the State. This identity is both Zionist and traditionally Jewish and is free of the modernizing and pioneering pressures of Labour Zionism. This makes it attractive for mizrahim, who had been marginalized by the Labour Zionist definition of Jewish Israeli identity*<sup>276</sup>. » However, many factors show that in fact the long-term goal of this party is towards a religious orthodox State and society that appears in contradiction with its larger electorate. There is indeed a great cultural and spiritual gulf dividing the Ashkenazi Sephardi religious elite from the Sephardi masses that they have been courting at the ballot box. As noted by Norman Stillman, « *Some of the Sephardi ultra-orthodox are contemptuous of traditional Sephardi religiosity*<sup>277</sup> ». For example, the anthropologist Shlomo Deshen witnessed a scene in which a young Moroccan rabbinical student studying at one of the prestigious Ashkenazi yeshivas in Israel got into an altercation with members in his family's synagogue while giving a public lesson on one of his rare visits home. In response

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<sup>273</sup> « Levy Pushes Himself Into Tight Corner », *Jerusalem Post International Edition*, 4 April 1992, p. 1.

<sup>274</sup> «Ovadia Yosef to settlers: Oslo Accords are null and void», *Haaretz*, 27/01/03.

<sup>275</sup> Gonen, -A, « A geographical analysis of the elections in Jewish urban communities ». in Caspi, *et al.*, *The Roots of Begin's Success*, pp. 59-87, pp. 81-82.

<sup>276</sup> Levy, -Gal, « And Thanks to the Ashkenazim... : « The Politics of Mizrahi Ethnicity in Israel, MA thesis, Department of Political Science», Tel Aviv University [Hebrew], quoted in Peled, Yoav, « Towards a redefinition of Jewish nationalism in Israel ?, The Enigma of Shas », *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 4, 1998, pp. 703-727, p. 705.

<sup>277</sup> Stillman, -Norman, *op.cit.*, p. 84.

to those who disagreed with the interpretations he was giving, he replied that even the least among the students in his yeshiva knew better how to study religious texts than the greatest of the rabbis in Morocco<sup>278</sup>. Moreover, a recent analysis of the moshavim according to their period of their foundation shows a similar pattern to that in towns, with those settlements founded after 1948, with a Sephardi population, lending greatest support to Tami and Shas. Among the older religious moshavim, the distribution of the votes between the religious parties is similar to the distribution of votes among the religious kibbutzim. One can therefore draw the conclusion that it is more the ethnic character of these new parties rather than any inherent religiosity that led to their success<sup>279</sup>. The inherent contradiction between the short term and long term goals of the Shas party are obvious. When we examine the Shas party's program, we can see that it shares with other religious parties the main concern for the enhancement of the role of Jewish religion in the public and private lives of the Jews in Israel. The concrete meaning of its slogan, « *le-bahazir atara le-yoshna* » (« restore the crown to its glorious past ») is synagogues, ritual baths, keeping the Sabbath, yeshivot, torah schools, and the Wellspring. The goals of *El-ha-maayan* are « *to promote the traditional and Jewish values of religious Jewry in Israel (...), to promote religious Jewish education in the educational system in Israel (...), to improve religious services (...), to help improve the quality of religious life (...), to supply the religious needs of haredi religious Jewry.* »<sup>280</sup>. Therefore, Shas is currently a complex movement representing several different interests but, in the long term, it will establish itself as the representative of the Sephardi haredi community. We can therefore observe the transformation of Mizrahi communities in the religious orthodox sector into a Sephardi identification.

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<sup>278</sup> Dshen, -Shlomo, « La religiosité des Orientaux en Israel » in Ben-Ami, -Issachar, *Recherches sur la culture des Juifs d'Afrique du Nord*, Jerusalem : Communauté Israélite Nord-Africaine, 1991, p. 360.

<sup>279</sup> Newman, *op.cit.*, p. 74.

<sup>280</sup> Peled, Yoav, *op.cit.*, 1998, p. 717.

## CONCLUSION

Throughout this study, we have become aware of the creation of an ethnic political group. The Sephardim community as it is now perceived in Israel is in fact a new creation and not a cultural and religious legacy of the past. It has gathered together different Jewish communities from the Middle East and North Africa into one common group that we can easily define as an ethnic group. Indeed, as defined by Eliezer Ben Raphael, « *an ethnic group is sociologically defined as a collective among which the members are characterised by common cultural traits dependant on elements producing identity □ such as religious observance, geographical origin, or historical experience \_ and by a consciousness of "being different" in certain regards from other participants within the same society* <sup>281</sup> »

The creation of this ethnic group was, as we have seen, gradual. At first, it was not their cultural oriental background that brought them together but the social conditions they met with in Israel. The correlation between the social divisions and the ethnic background generated ethnic consciousness. This process was characterised by a remaking and a recreation of a forgotten past. As underlined in the above definition, these different oriental groups became dependant on symbols and cultural attributes of the past. They started to share altogether their past national cultural traditions. Their main bond was that they came from Muslim Oriental countries. They represented the culture of the enemy and all these communities were marginalised in Israeli society. It is during this period, i.e. the early seventies, that the Mizrahi became the Sephardi. This historical transformation and appropriation aimed at counteracting Ashkenazi predominance in Israeli culture and society, although this division had already been accomplished in the religious sphere. However, until the late seventies, this ethnic resentment did not erupt into social revolt or political expression because of the external threat exerted on Israeli society.

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<sup>281</sup> (authors own translation) □ *un groupe ethnique est défini sociologiquement comme un collectif dont les membres se caractérisent par des traits culturels communs dépendant d'éléments producteurs d'identité \_ tels l'affiliation religieuse, l'origine géographique ou l'expérience historique \_ et par une conscience d'« être différents » à certains égards des autres participants à la même société.* » Ben Raphael, -Eliezer, *op.cit.*, p. 131.

From the eighties onward, this ethnic consciousness soon became the ground for the conversion of ethnicity into a political resource. It is difficult to ascertain whether the Likud used this ethnic consciousness as a political resource or whether this reactionary movement developed within the different oriental communities remains a difficult question to answer. Nevertheless, they shared the common fate of being excluded. Obviously, the emergence of this ethnic political group resulted in a dual society and the very nature of the Zionist ideal was challenged. This took place firstly in the political sphere where, in the early eighties, one could observe a hardening of Israeli society. Indeed, there was a reconfiguration of the political debate characterised by a strong nationalistic discourse, in which the future of the Occupied Territories played a central role. The problem became obvious over the simple question of a vote. The Sephardi right-wing votes were quickly seen as the expression of a nationalist trend, originating in their past culture. Their relation with the Arabs was seen in the light of their past history so that their conflicting and antagonistic relation appeared as a revenge for the past. They were also given the name of traditionalists. They supported the religious concept of Erez Israel, a greater Israel. However, although some of these characteristics are applicable to the Sephardim, the cultural explanations proposed in this study are contradictory. The vote for the Likud represented a more complex problem which had its very roots in the nature of the Israeli State and society. This ethnic political creation gave rise to two conflicting political cultures in Israel.

This period was marked by the problem of the Occupied Territories, but also by the emergence of a new era in Israeli public life. The Zionist ideology was coming to an end. The main dilemma in its search for a new Israeli identity was to know whether Israel was perceived by the majority of its citizen as a « normal » western State albeit with a majority by Jewish people, or whether it was a State characterised by what we can call traditional Judaism. By traditional Judaism, we are not referring to the possibility of a theocratic State, but rather to a society following the social, cultural and religious traditions of Judaism. What we are left with nowadays is a divided society composed of two distinct groups, one aspiring to a liberal western society while the other draws its identity from the past traditions and customs of Judaism. The last elections in 2003 clearly reflect this divide with the emergence of the Shinoui party as the third biggest party while the Shas still remains

a very important party in Israel. Israel find itself divided between two distinctive populations that overshadow the two great parties (Likud and Labour) with a growing anti-clericalism on the one hand and a population attached to its traditions on the other. The roots of the current debate were already to be found in the first years of the Israeli State, when most of the people who emigrated were not motivated by Zionist ideals but forced to do so due to the constant persecutions they had to suffer in their native countries. This was the case of most Europeans and of most Oriental Jews. The majority of the present Israeli population is composed of people who believed in a religious rather than in a political Zionism. However, the debate around the definition of an Israeli identity was never open to questioning. In our view, the political debate in Israel nowadays should address a rather more complex question, namely, whether Israel's interest is to be purely and simply a « normal » nation or whether orthodoxy remains the best guarantee for the survival of the Jewish people.

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## APPENDIX

### Appendix 1: The 1492 deportation edict (Spain) (in French)<sup>282</sup>

« Don Ferdinand et dona Isabelle, par la grâce de Dieu, roi et reine de Castille, de Léon, d'Aragon, de Sicile, de Grenade, etc., etc. Au prince Don Juan, notre très cher et très aimé fils et aux infants, prélats, ducs, marquis, comtes, maîtres des Ordres, etc., etc., salut et grâce !

« Sachez que nous avons été informés qu'il existe et qu'il existait dans nos royaumes de mauvais chrétiens qui judaïsaient de notre sainte foi catholique, et certes très préjudiciable pour les chrétiens que cette communication avec les juifs. Déjà dans les cortès que nous avons tenues l'année dernière à Tolède, nous avons ordonné d'accorder aux juifs des juiveries dans toutes les villes où ils pussent vivre dans leur péché. En outre, nous avons ordonné d'établir dans nos royaumes et seigneuries d'Inquisition, laquelle existe, comme vous savez, depuis douze ans, durant lesquelles elle a trouvé beaucoup de coupables, ainsi que nous avons été informés par les inquisiteurs et par d'autres personnes religieuses, qui par leur relations, leurs entretiens et leur communication avec les juifs, se sont laissés entraîner par ces derniers.

« Ceux-ci usent de plusieurs moyens et manières pour soustraire les fidèles à notre sainte foi catholique et les instruire dans leur dangereuse croyance et les cérémonies de leur loi (la loi juive), les invitant à des réunions où ils expliquent les fêtes juives qu'il est d'usage d'observer, essayant de les circoncrire eux et leurs enfants, leur donnant des livres de prières, les avertissant des jeûnes importants, leur enseignant à transcrire des copies de la Loi, leur annonçant les Pâques avant qu'elles arrivent, leur expliquant qu'il n'y a pas point d'autre loi, ni d'autre vérité que celle là ; ce qui porte préjudice, détriment et opprobre à notre sainte foi catholique.

« Pour obvier et remédier à cet état de choses, pour faire cesser cet opprobre et cette offense à la religion catholique, nous avons convoqué en conseil les prélats,

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<sup>282</sup> Malka, Victor, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-19.

les grands et les chevaliers de nos royaumes et autres personnes de science et de conscience.

« Après mûre délibération, nous ordonnons de renvoyer de nos royaumes tous les juifs, et que jamais ils n'y reviennent.

« C'est pourquoi, par le présent édit, nous ordonnons à tous les juifs et juives, quel que soit leur âge, qui vivent, demeurent et sont dans les royaumes et seigneuries susmentionnés d'en sortir au plus tard jusqu'à la fin de juillet prochain de l'année courante, eux, leurs fils et leurs filles, serviteurs, servantes et familiers juifs, petits et grands, quel que soit leur âge. Il ne leur sera pas permis de revenir dans nos Etats soit délibérément, soit de passage, soit de n'importe quelle manière. En cas de contravention au présent édit, si l'on trouve des juifs dans nos royaumes, au cas où ils y reviendraient d'une manière quelconque, ils encourront la peine de mort et la confiscation de tous leurs biens pour notre chambre de fisc.

« Nous mandons et ordonnons qu'aucun, ni personne dans nos royaumes sus mentionnés, quelles que soient sa condition et sa dignité, n'ait l'audace de recevoir, ni reçoive, ni accueille, ni défende publiquement ni secrètement juif et juive, passé la date de fin de juillet et au delà, à jamais, à perpétuité dans ses terres ni dans ses maisons ni sur aucun point des susdits royaumes et seigneuries. Toute contravention à cet ordre entraînera pour le coupable la perte de tout ses biens, vaisseaux, forteresses et autres héritages.

« Et que les dits juifs puissent prendre leurs mesures durant le délai qui leur est accordé jusqu'à la fin juillet, nous leur accordons dès à présent notre protection royale à eux et à leurs biens pour que, durant cet intervalle et jusqu'au jour fixé, ils puissent vaquer à leur affaires en toute sécurité, vendre, échanger et se défaire de tous leurs biens, meubles et immeubles et en disposer à leur volonté. Nous permettons donc et accordons pleine faculté auxdits juifs et juives pour qu'ils fassent sortir desdits royaumes et seigneuries leurs biens et trésors par mer et par terre, à l'exception de l'or, de l'argent et de toute espèce de monnaie monnayée ; et de toutes les choses défendues par les lois de nos royaumes ; sauf aussi les denrées dont l'exportation est prohibée. Nous faisons savoir à tous les conseils, tribunaux, régidors et chevaliers ainsi qu'aux hommes bons de nos dits royaumes et seigneuries et à nos vassaux de mettre en exécution notre mandement et son contenu et d'y prêter aide à l'assistance en cas de besoin. Tout contrevenant encourra la peine de



confiscation de ses biens par notre chambre de fisc. Et pour que nos ordres parviennent à la connaissance de tout le monde et pour que personne ne prétende les ignorer, nous mandons que la présente lettre soit annoncée publiquement dans les places, marchés et autre endroits par le crieur public et par-devant l'Écrivain public.

« Enfin, nous ordonnons à tous ceux dont on aura requis les services de le faire, sous peine d'être traduits devant notre cour dans les quinze premiers jours et d'encourir la peine susmentionnée. Tout écrivain public invité à témoigner en cas de contravention à nos ordres le fera sous son seing privé, de la sorte nous saurons comment nos ordres sont exécutés.

« Fait dans la ville de Grenade, la trente et unième jour du mois de mars, l'an mil quatre cent quatre-vingt-douze de N.-S. Jésus Christ. ».

Appendix 2: Knesset election results (120 seats) <sup>283</sup>

Election year	1949	1951	1955	1959	1961	196	1969	1973	1977	1981	1984	1988
<b>Mapai<sup>a</sup></b>	46	45	40	47	42							
<b>Ahdut Haavoda<sup>b</sup></b>	—	—	10	7	8	45						
<b>Rafi<sup>c</sup></b>	—	—	—	—	—	10	56	51	32	47	44	39
<b>Mapam<sup>d</sup></b>	19	15	9	9	9	8						3
<b>Liberals<sup>e</sup></b>	7	20	13	8	17							
<b>Herut<sup>f</sup></b>	14	8	15	17	17	26	26	39	43	48	41	40
<b>NRP</b>		10	11	12	12	11	12	10	12	6	4	5
<b>Aguda parties<sup>g</sup></b>	16	5	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	4	4 <sup>l</sup>	7 <sup>o</sup>
<b>Shas</b>											4	6
<b>Arab lists</b>	2	1	4	5	4	4	4	3	1	—	2 <sup>m</sup>	2 <sup>p</sup>
<b>DMC</b>	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	15	—	—	—
<b>Indépendant Liberals<sup>h</sup></b>	5	4	5	6	—	5	4	1	—	—	—	—
<b>Communist</b>	4	5	6	3	5	4	4	5	5	4	4	4
<b>Others</b>	7	7	1	—	—	1	8	3	6 <sup>j</sup>	11 <sup>k</sup>	17 <sup>n</sup>	14 <sup>q</sup>

a) Joined with Ahdut Haavoda in 1965 and the other labor parties in 1969

b) See note a)

c) Ben-Gurion's party, joined the Labor Alignment in 1969 minus the State List

d) Ahdut Haavoda included the Mapam in 1949 and 1951

e) Until 1959 known as General Zionists, joined the Herut to form Gahal in 1965, and part of the Likud in 1973

f) Jointly with the Liberals since 1965 and part of the Likud in 1973

g) Poalei Agudat Israel and Agudat Israel

h) Included in Liberal party in 1961 and independent again since 1965. In 1984, part of the Alignment

i) Includes the State List (4 members), the Free Center (2 members), and Haloam (2 members). The first two joined Herut and the Liberals in 1973

j) Includes Shlomzion (2 members), which joined the Likud after the elections, Shelli (2 members), the Citizens' Rights Movement (1 member), and Flatto Sharon (1 member)

k) Includes Tehiya (3 members), Tami (3 members), Telem (2 members), Shinui (2 members), and the Civil Rights Movement (1 member)

l) Including Aguda (2 members), and Morasha (partly Poalei Agudat Israel, 2 members)

m) Progressive List for Peace

n) Including Tehiya (5 members), Shinui (3 members), Civil Rights Movement (3 members), Yabad (3 members), Tami (1 member), Hurenvitz (1 member), and Kach (1 member)

o) Including Aguda (5 members), and Flag of Torah (2 members)

p) Including the Progressive List for Peace (1 member) and Daroushe's list (1 member)

q) Including Civil Rights Movement (5 members), Tehiya (3 members), Tzomet (2 members), Modelet (2 members), and Shinui (2 members).

<sup>283</sup> ICBS, *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, Jerusalem.

Appendix 3: Party Vote by Age, 1969, 1973, 1977, 1981 and 1988<sup>284</sup>

1969 (in percent)

Age	N	Alignment	Likud <sup>a</sup>	Religious <sup>b</sup>	Other
24 and less	210	40	36	15	9
25-39	414	54	30	9	7
40-49	272	61	25	10	4
50 and above	461	62	21	14	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1357</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>

1973 (in percent)

Age	N	Alignment	Likud	Religious <sup>b</sup>	Other
24 and less	154	39	44	6	11
25-39	277	37	44	7	12
40-49	135	48	35	7	10
50 and above	310	54	23	13	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>876</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>

1977 (in percent)

Age	N	Alignment	Likud <sup>c</sup>	Religious <sup>b</sup>	DMC	Other
24 and less	144	20	51	4	21	4
25-39	336	25	34	11	27	3
40-49	156	38	29	10	20	4
50 and above	314	53	23	8	15	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>950</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3</b>

<sup>284</sup> Asher, -Arian, *Politics in Israel, The Second Generation*, Chatam House Publishers, Inc., 1989.p. 152-153.

## 1981 (in percent)

Age	N	Alignment	Likud	Religious <sup>d</sup>	Other
24 and less	191	27	51	4	18
25-39	410	35	43	6	15
40-49	147	35	55	1	8
50 and above	277	50	37	7	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1025</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>

## 1988 (in percent)

Age	N	Left <sup>e</sup>	Labor	Likud	Religious	Right <sup>f</sup>
22 and less	133	13	33	34	5	15
23-40	431	12	29	39	11	9
40-49	141	13	40	33	10	4
50 and above	163	5	55	33	4	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>868</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>

a. Including Gahal, the Free Center, and the State List. They formed the Likud in 1973.

b. Including the National Religious party, Agudat Israel, and Poalei Agudat Israel.

c. Including Ariel Sharon's list.

d. Same as b; in 1981 including Tami.

e. Including Mapam, Civil Rights Movement, and Shinui.

f. Including Tehiya, Tzomet and Modelet.

Appendix 4: Alignment portion of two-party vote by continent of birth,  
1966-88 <sup>a</sup>

<b>Respondent born</b>	Israel	Israel	Israel	Asia or Africa	Europe or America			
<b>Farther born</b>	Israel	Asia or Africa	Europe or America	Asia or Africa	Europe or America	Total	Sample Size <sup>b</sup>	Total Sample size
<b>Date of poll</b>								
<b>Sept. 1969</b>	70	77	83	79	90	84	698	1315
<b>Oct.-Nov. 1969</b>	40	62	73	68	81	74	1026	1825
<b>May 1973</b>	60	51	57	66	79	70	1066	1939
<b>Sept. 1973</b>	57	22	42	62	75	63	287	548
<b>Dec. 1973</b>	41	24	41	43	77	52	274	530
<b>March 1977</b>	37	26	50	41	71	52	639	1372
<b>April 1977</b>	39	31	42	43	68	49	180	497
<b>May 1977</b>	53	32	38	35	61	49	198	485
<b>June 1977</b>	29	10	30	33	56	37	255	465
<b>March 1981</b>	46	47	68	48	71	57	765	1249
<b>April 1981</b>	46	31	68	33	71	51	585	1088
<b>June 1981</b>	43	27	55	35	64	46	797	1237
<b>July 1984</b>	58	31	80	28	86	54	763	1259
<b>Oct. 1988<sup>c</sup></b>	62	28	76	28	69	50	631	1166

a. Surveys were conducted by the Israel Institute of Applied Social Research, except for March and June 1981, July 1984, and October 1988, which were conducted by the Dahaf Research Institute. b. Respondents giving « Alignment » or « Likud » answer to question about intended vote are included here. c. Labor without Mapam.

Appendix 5 : The 1977 Israeli general elections: a sample of results <sup>285</sup>

Homogeneous Places	Total	Likud	Religious parties	Center (Dash)	Labour (Maarah)	Ind. left	Miscellaneous & Abstention
<b>Morrocan towns :</b>							
<b>Beit Shéan</b>	100	45	21	1	22		11
<b>Sdérot</b>	100	34	20	2	22		22
<b>Ofakim</b>	100	37	26	2	23		12
<b>Ruling class:</b>							
<b>Herzlyah pituah <sup>(1)</sup></b>	100	28	5	32	21	4	10
<b>Middle class:</b>							
<b>Ramat Gan <sup>(2)</sup></b>	100	37	8	17	23	2	13
<b>Lower class:</b>							
<b>Kyryat Shmona <sup>(3)</sup></b>	100	42	12	6	23	1	16

<sup>(1)</sup> Large majority of Euro-Americans.

<sup>(2)</sup> Population with a slight majority of Euro-Americans.

<sup>(3)</sup> Large majority of orientals.

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<sup>285</sup> Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, *Special Series : The elections for the 9<sup>th</sup> Knesset, 1977*, Jerusalem.

## Appendix 6: Determining factor in the vote<sup>286</sup>

« WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN INFLUENCING A PERSON TO VOTE  
FOR A PARTICULAR PARTY? »

%	1969	1977	1981	1984
Identification with the party	17	26	31	32
The party's candidate	21	15	18	10
The party's platform/ ideology	37	46	38	53
The party being in government or opposition	7	6	7	4
Other reason ; no answer	18	7	6	2
N=	100 (1314)	100 (1372)	100 (1237)	100 (1259)

<sup>286</sup> Asher, -Arian, *Politics in Israel, The Second Generation*, Chatam House Publishers, Inc., 1989.p. 150.

Appendix 7: Party images, 1973 and 1981<sup>287</sup>

1973, N=1939	Ideal	Alignment	Likud
Strong/weak	87/4	83/8	58/21
Right-wing/left-wing	54/15	37/32	76/9
Old fashioned/progressive	21/57	44/24	42/26
Middle class/working class	33/37	24/49	62/12
Inexperienced/experienced	6/86	10/85	22/61
Young/old	-	19/55	29/38
Sephardi/Ashkenazi	-	14/38	20/28
Honest/corrupt	-	50/27	61/12

1981, N=1088	Ideal	Alignment	Likud
Strong/weak	93/2	44/33	50/33
Right /left	55/13	28/40	77/7
Old-fashioned/progressive	15/61	48/26	42/31
Middle class/working class	28/32	27/42	55/14
Young/old	52/10	17/51	28/35
Sephardi/Ashkenazi	11/11	6/47	18/25
Worries about itself/ the citizens	3 /89	43/37	31/45
Inexperienced/experienced	4/86	4/79	45/38
Honest/corrupt	-	35/39	57/18
Cannot/can be believed	-	36/42	32/48

Appendix 8: Representation of Oriental Jews in the most important institutions in 1983<sup>288</sup>

<sup>287</sup> Based on a 7-point semantic differential battery. The numbers in the table are the sum of the percentage of the sample identifying the parties with a given characteristics, with the three categories left of the center point being summed and presented left of the slash and the three categories right of the center point summed and presented right of the slash. The size of the middle category is the difference between 100 and the sum of the two reported figures. For example, on the 7-point scale, 55% reported in the 1981 that their ideal party was either in the first, second, or third category toward the right end of the continuum, while another 13% were in the three categories on the left end and 32% (100-68) were in the fourth or middle category. Arian Asher, *Politics in Israel, The Second Generation*, Chatam House Publishers, Inc., 1989, p. 169.

<sup>288</sup> Ménachem, -Nachum « Metahim : Veaflaya Adatit BeIsrael », Tel Aviv : Achdout Youli, 1985, p. 405.



- Rate of participation of oriental jews in the Histadrout institutions, the most powerful israeli syndicate:
  - . Vaadat Merakezet (central comitee) : 10 out of 38
  - . Vaad Hapoel (executif comitee) : 34 out of 164
  - . Firm leaders of the Histadrout : 5 out of 139
  - . General secretary: 0 out of 42
  
- Within the Histadrout Hazionit and the Jewish agency:
  - . direction : 3 out of 30
  - . executive comitee (Vaad hapoel) : 10 out of 140
  - . the international organisation Macabi : 0 out of 10
  
- Within the direction of the industry association : 1 out of 19
  
- At the Knesset, 27 out of 122.

	Total	Ashkenazis	Sepharads	Minorities (Arabs ,...)
<b>Likud</b>	48	38	9	1
<b>Maarach</b>	47	34	11	2
<b>Mafdal</b>	6	5	1	0
<b>Agouda</b>	4	4	0	0
<b>Rakhach</b>	4	1	1	2
<b>Tami</b>	3	0	3	0
<b>Thiya</b>	3	2	1	0
<b>Shénoui</b>	2	2	0	0
<b>Telem</b>	2	1	1	0
<b>Ratz</b>	1	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>5</b>

Appendix 9: Representation of Oriental Jews in the government and at the Knesseth<sup>289</sup>

Knesset members

	1949	1951	1955	1959	1961	1965	1969	1973	1977	1981
<b>Total (Jewish Deputies)</b>	118	112	113	113	114	113	113	114	113	116
<b>Sepharads</b>	8	7	10	14	14	21	17	19	22	28

Member of government

1955 Gouvernement: 1 minister (8,3%)  
 1973 Gouvernement : 2 minister (11,1%)  
 1981 Gouvernement : 3 minister (16,6%)  
 1982 Gouvernement : 4 minister

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<sup>289</sup> *Problèmes politiques et sociaux*, No. 488, p. 31.

Appendix 10: Voting Potential of the Jewish Population in Israel, 1969  
and 1988<sup>290</sup>

	Percentage in population		Percentage under 18		Knesset seats <sup>1</sup>	
	1967	1986	1969	1986	1969	1988
<b>Israeli-born ; farther Israeli-born</b>	6.5	19.5	62.3	74.7	4	8
<b>Israeli-born ; father Asian- or -African-born</b>	18.7	25.7	81.6	47.6	5	22
<b>Israeli-born, farther European- or American-born</b>	16.4	16.2	49.1	37.1	13	16
<b>Asian- or African-born</b>	27.8	17.2	11.5	2.4	38	27
<b>European- or American-born</b>	30.6	21.4	3.6	5.8	46	33
<b>Total (number and percent)</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>31.6%</b>	<b>34.1%</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>106</b>

1. Assuming 80 percent participation; 12,000 votes per seat in 1969; 17,600 votes per seat in 1988.

<sup>290</sup> *Statistical Abstract*, 1969, 42-43; *Statistical Abstract*, 1987, 73-75.

Appendix 11: Willingness to return territories and country of origin<sup>291</sup>

Area		Eam* N=810	AsAf N=390	IAsAf N=110	II N=70	IEAm N=240
	Total %	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Sinai</b>						
1. Concede everything	10	10	13	14	8	9
2. Concede only part	58	65	44	51	54	64
3. Not concede anything	31	25	43	35	38	27
<b>West Bank</b>						
1. Concede everything	6	8	4	4	10	8
2. Concede only part	38	44	27	28	41	40
3. Not concede anything	56	49	70	67	48	52
<b>Gaza Strip</b>						
1. Concede everything	16	20	12	19	15	17
2. Concede only part	10	10	8	6	6	14
3. Not concede anything	70	70	81	75	79	69
<b>Sharm el Sheikh</b>						
1. Return to Egypt	2	1	2	1	4	2
2. Return to U.N	7	6	9	6	11	10
3. Not concede anything	91	93	88	93	86	89
<b>Golan Heights</b>						
1. Concede everything	1	1	1	1	-	1
2. Concede only part	7	9	5	8	6	8
3. Not concede anything	92	90	95	91	94	91
<b>East Jerusalem</b>						
1. Not to keep	1	1	1	1	-	1
2. To concede part of Jerusalem so that it will belong to Israel and Arabs	6	7	5	5	9	8
3. To keep	93	93	94	94	91	91

Appendix 12: Responses on Aggressive policy towards Arab States (in percent)<sup>292</sup>

<sup>291</sup> The following initials designate country of origins : born in Europe/America= Eam ; born in Asia/Africa=AsAf ; born in Israel of a father who came Asia/Africa= IAsAf ; born in Israel of Israeli-born father= II, born in Israel of a father who came from Europe/America= IEAm. *ILASR Survey III*, pp. 81-82.

<sup>292</sup> (a) *ILASR Survey III*, p. 79; (b) *ILASR Survey IV*, p. 67; (c) *ILASR Survey V*, p. 73; (d) *ILASR Survey VI*, p. 54.

« Given the present situation, in your opinion should the policy towards the Arab countries be more aggressive or more moderate than now ? »	March <sup>a</sup> April 1971 N= 1620	June <sup>b</sup> July 1971 N= 1770	October <sup>c</sup> December 1971 N= 1892	February <sup>d</sup> March 1972 N= 1859
1. A great deal more aggressive than now	21	22	18	14
2. Somewhat more aggressive than now	44	26	24	21
3. Same as now	10	41	48	50
4. Somewhat more moderate	23	11	9	13
5. A great deal more moderate	2	1	1	2

Appendix 13: Relationship between socio-economic conditions of Oriental Jews and their competition with the Arabs on the job market (in percent)<sup>293</sup>

	Development towns sample (n=832)	National sample
<b>Oriental Unemployed</b>	79.5	43.5
<b>Own economic situation will worsen in 1 year</b>	7.0	2.9
<b>Fear unemployment in 3 months</b>	59.1	44.3
<b>Economic burden unfairly divided</b>	28.3	19.0
<b>Arab workers cause unemployment</b>	86.0	na
<b>Citizen Palestinians take jobs away from Jews</b>	50.4	na
<b>Non-citizens Palestinians take jobs away from Jews</b>	64.0	na
<b>Citizen Palestinians lower Jewish wages</b>	70.0	na
<b>Non-citizen Palestinians lower Jewish wages</b>	75.0	na
<b>Oppose employment of citizen Palestinians</b>	80.0	na
<b>Oppose employment of non-citizen Palestinians</b>	43.0	na
<b>Support « transfer »</b>	65.0	na
	65.7	41.3

Appendix 14: Results of the sephardic or oriental parties at the Knesseth elections

	Sephardic Union	Yemenite Association
<b>January 25, 1949</b>	15.287 votes (3.5%) 4 seats	4.399 (1%) 1 seat
<b>July 30, 1951</b>	12.002 (1.8%) 2 seats	7.965 (1.2%) 1 seat

<sup>293</sup> Peled, -Yoav, « Ethnic exclusionism in the periphery: the case of Oriental Jews in Israel's development towns », *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Volume 13, Number 3, July 1990, p. 355.

	Tami	Shas
<b>June 30, 1981</b>	44.918 votes (2.3%) 3 seats	-
<b>July 23, 1984</b>	31.103 (1.5%) 1 seat	63.605 (3.1%) 4 seat
<b>November 1, 1988</b>	-	107.709 (4.7%) 6 seat
<b>June 23, 1992</b>	-	129.347 (4.9%) 6 seats
<b>May 29, 1996</b>	-	259.796 (8.7%) 10 seat

Appendix 15: Repartition of Israeli Jews according to their geographic origin (dichotomic), 1961-1996<sup>294</sup>

ORIGIN	1961	1972	1983	1988	1996
<b>Asia/Africa (Mizrahim)</b>	841	1347	1701	1889	2171
<b>Europe/America (Ashkenazim)</b>	1091	1340	1670	1770	2422
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1932</b>	<b>2687</b>	<b>3371</b>	<b>3659</b>	<b>4593</b>
<b>% of Mizrahim</b>	43,5	50,1	50,5	51,6	47,3

<sup>294</sup> De 1961 à 1988, U.O.Schmelz, S.Dellapergola, U.Avner, *Ethnic Differences among Israeli Jews: A New Look, Jewish Population Studies*, no. 22, Jerusalem, 1991. 1996, estimation de l'auteur à partir de Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel, 1997*, Jérusalem 1997 et de l'extrapolation de la proportion des juifs nés en Israël de pères nés en Israël, fournies par les auteurs précédents. Mizrahim : 1961 : 33%, 1972 : 33%, 1983 : 40%, 1988 : 44%. Courbage, -Youssef, « Redistribution des cartes démographiques au Proche Orient, l'avenir du peuplement de la région Israël-Palestine », *Revue d'études palestiniennes*, Hiver 1999, pp. 62-81, p. 73.

Appendix 16: Repartition of Israeli Jews according to their geographical origin (detailed) - 1996.<sup>295</sup>

ORIGIN	NUMBERS (thousands)	%
Morocco	700	15,2
Iraq	354	7,7
Yemen	223	4,9
Iran	185	4,0
Algeria/Tunisia	176	3,8
Turkey	116	2,5
Libya	104	2,3
Egypt	85	1,8
Other Asian countries	80	1,7
Ethiopia	70	1,5
India/Pakistan	58	1,3
Other African countries	21	0,5
<b>MIZRAHIM</b>	<b>2171</b>	<b>47,3</b>
<b>Ex-USSR</b>	<b>961</b>	<b>20,9</b>
Poland	379	8,2
Roumania	350	7,6
Other European countries	171	3,7
North America	129	2,8
Germany / Austria	125	2,7
Latin America	107	2,3
Bulgaria/Grece	86	1,9
Hungary	60	1,3
Czeck republic/Slovakia	54	1,2
<b>ASHKENAZIM</b>	<b>2422</b>	<b>52,7</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4593</b>	<b>100,0</b>

<sup>295</sup> De 1961 à 1988, U.O.Schmelz, S.Dellapergola, U.Avner, *Ethnic Differences among Israeli Jews: A New Look, Jewish Population Studies*, no. 22, Jerusalem, 1991. 1996, estimation de l'auteur à partir de Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel, 1997*, Jérusalem 1997 et de l'extrapolation de la proportion des juifs nés en Israël de pères nés en Israël, fournies par les auteurs précédents. Mizrahim : 1961 : 33%, 1972 : 33%, 1983 : 40%, 1988 : 44%. Courbage, -Youssef, « Redistribution des cartes démographiques au Proche Orient, l'avenir du peuplement de la région Israël-Palestine », *Revue d'études palestiniennes*, Hiver 1999, pp. 62-81, p. 73. Calculs d'après Central Bureau Statistics, *Statistical Abstract 1997, op.cit.* Répartition au prorata des 1 169 000 personnes de la 3<sup>ème</sup> génération (enfants nés en Israël d'un père lui-même né en Israël). Courbage, -Youssef, « Redistribution des cartes démographiques au Proche Orient, l'avenir du peuplement de la région Israël-Palestine », *Revue d'études palestiniennes*, Hiver 1999, pp. 62-81, p. 74.

Appendix 17: Perspectives for the Israeli Jewish population according to their origins, 1965-2025 (thousands)<sup>296</sup>

	1996	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>Asia/ Africa</b>	2171	2327	2475	2633	2790	2942	3080
<b>Europe/ America</b>	2422	2560	2675	2798	2919	3034	3130
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4593</b>	<b>4887</b>	<b>5150</b>	<b>5431</b>	<b>5709</b>	<b>5976</b>	<b>6210</b>
<b>% Mizrahim</b>	47,3	47,6	48,1	48,5	48,9	49,2	49,6

Appendix 18: Repartition of the Jewish electoral base population (%)  
Mizrahim et Ashkenazim<sup>297</sup>

	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016	2020
<b>Mizrahim</b>	44.6	45.1	46.0	47.0	48.1	49.1	50.0
<b>Ashkenazim</b>	55.4	54.9	54.0	53.0	51.9	50.9	50.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Appendix 19: People marrying, by bride's and groom's ethnic origin,  
1955-74<sup>298</sup>

	1955	1960	1965	1970	1974
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<sup>296</sup> Calculs d'après les tableaux 4 (hypothèse de fécondité en baisse), 7 et 9. La surfécondité mizrahim est constante au cours de la période 1996-2025 à son niveau de 1991-1996. Les mortalités de deux groupes de population sont supposées identiques. Courbage, -Youssef, « Redistribution des cartes démographiques au Proche Orient, l'avenir du peuplement de la région Israël-Palestine », *Revue d'études palestiniennes*, Hiver 1999, pp. 62-81, p. 77.

<sup>297</sup> Estimations par âge de la population et projections. Courbage, -Youssef, « Redistribution des cartes démographiques au Proche Orient, l'avenir du peuplement de la région Israël-Palestine », *Revue d'études palestiniennes*, Hiver 1999, pp. 62-81, p. 77.

<sup>298</sup> Before 1965 statistics refer to foreign-born only, for 1965 onwards they include Israeli-born classified according to continent of birth of father. CBS, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 1976*, 27: 69.



<b>Groom from Asia-Africa</b>					
<b>Bride from Asia-Africa</b>	39.8	42.4	45.2	39.6	43.7
<b>Bride from Europe-America</b>	4.3	5.0	7.0	9.3	8.7
<b>Groom from Europe-America</b>					
<b>Bride from Asia-Africa</b>	7.5	9.5	6.8	8.3	10.4
<b>Bride from Europe-America</b>	48.4	43.1	41.0	42.8	37.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Actual % of mixed marriages</b>	11.8	14.5	13.8	17.6	19.1
<b>Expected percentage of mixed marriages if choice is random<sup>299</sup></b>	49.7	50.1	49.9	50.0	49.4
<b>Ratio (%) of actual to expected</b>	23.7	28.9	27.7	35.2	38.7

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<sup>299</sup> Computed as follows

$$\frac{(a \times b) + (c \times d)}{(a + c) \quad (b+d)}$$

where a = number of Ashkenazi grooms; b = number of Oriental brides; c = number of Oriental grooms; d = number of Ashkenazi brides. This computation is suggested by Yochanan Peres and Ruth Shrift (1975).

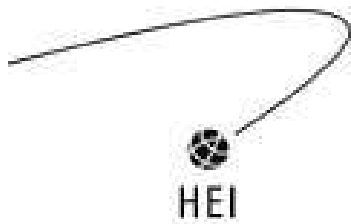


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Since its creation in 1948, Israel has been an important field of study in international relations. Most studies focus on the origin of the Israeli state and on the consequent Arab Israeli conflict. This study aims at bringing a new understanding and perception by exclusively focusing on Israeli society from 1948 to 2003.

The main findings of this work could be summarized as follows. The study firstly shows that from the start, the different Jewish communities around the world had divergent conceptions of an Israeli state and that these divisions still remain nowadays in Israeli society. Secondly, the study explains the impact of each Jewish community on domestic politics and on foreign policy choices. Lastly, the study provides an understanding of the social and cultural conflicts between the European and Oriental Jews.

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