

Compare and contrast palestinian and israeli claims to identity

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Introduction That fact that the State Israel will be defined by the independence Declaration as « the Jewish state in EretzYisrael» has transformed questions « whom to consider as the Jew» and « that the Jewish identity» in basic legislative problems represents. These questions became even more confused in view of the semantic and legal distinction which have arisen between concepts « the Jew as that» and « the Israeli Jew».

From the sociological point of view, communication between the relation of the Israeli Jew to a Judaism and its self-identification as citizens revealed. Moreover, some researchers insist that Jews-Israelis underline other components of the Jewish identification, rather than Jews of diaspora. Thus collective identification of the Israeli Jews is split into the various components reaching direct antagonism. Told basically concerns last decade which has replaced the long period of unlimited domination of dominating culture in which frameworks representation about collective identification of the Israeli society was formed how it would like to see the ruling elite. Since then this identification became the reason of never-ending debate and open contentions. The first line of disagreements in the Israeli society is connected with religion which divides models of the “ Jewish-Israeli” identification depending on the importance given in them to a Judaism and observance of its postulates.

The second line of disagreements concerns a question whether the Israeli identity gives immutable set of duties of Israelis – both Jews, and Arabs, – or these duties depend on additional internal factors, for example, from ethnic features. In this context the ethnic factor has a direct bearing on the second aspect of the presented model, concerning concepts of collective

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responsibility. Anyhow, discussion of an essence of national identification and collective duties of Israelis has got ideological character. In the discussions connected with definition of Israel as the Jewish national state, questions on value of communication between the Israeli Jews and Jews of the countries of diaspora are brought up. Thereby the third aspect of the presented model - collective self-determination in relation to "another" is mentioned.

It is important to underline that each of these three lines of disagreements concerns all sides of collective identification which, in turn, is subdivided into the separate subcultures characterized by language experts connected with them. Discussion of dominating culture and collective identification are formed in its frameworks, and also a question on their hegemony in the Israeli society demand consideration of alternative formulations of collective identification. Orthodox Sector From the first days the initiated Zionist ideology of the Jewish immigration to Palestine the orthodox population tore away "Zionists", keeping a Yiddish as a spoken language of the community, and rejecting secularization a Hebrew as blasphemy. Nevertheless leaders and this sector could not resist temptation to join achievements societies, without refusing thus the communal self-identification. For today the Hebrew has got practically into each house, and the orthodox youth, in the overwhelming majority - natives of Israel, uses this language more than a Yiddish. It is true and concerning women whom without studying in the higher religious educational institutions Ashkenazi conformists (in many of them the basic language of dialogue the Yiddish is), require knowledge of a Hebrew to work out of door.

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Even elderly men use a Hebrew which in most cases became language of dialogue of all members of a family more and more. As a result, the Hebrew has started to become the basic language of this community though the Yiddish is till now a symbol of cultural isolation of orthodox circles of the population. Conformists should recognize existence of the state and, to some extent, consider itself as its part. Such perception is promoted by that conformists became dependent on official bodies in maintenance of variety of the specific interests - from the guaranteed clearing of a compulsory military service before allocation of the state grants for their educational institutions. This dependence induces them actively to participate in a political life of the country. Thus, unlike the adherents in orthodox communities of the Western Europe and the North America, the Israeli conformists are involved in a political and public life of the state and even among themselves speak official language in a country in which they live.

The Israeli orthodox Jewry of Israel differs from other Jewish orthodox communities of the world. National-Religious Sector The concept describes « national-religious sector» as rather small but active group which has chosen modernization without refusing religious norms and values. For many years this group aspired, having kept religious making as an integral part of the identity, to become an integrated part of Zionist movement. On the other hand, despite long-term partnership with secular circles, this sector tried to create own system of the institutes connected with following to a religious way of life in public and home life and in an education sphere. At linguistic level the outlook of this group of the population finds the expression in absolute acceptance of a Hebrew as state language, and also in aspiration to

express the unique role in the Israeli society, improving the literary Hebrew enriched by use bible and Talmudic form of lexicon.

Besides, the national-religious sector aspires to introduction of uniform style of religious rituals for representatives of all ethnic groups. Thus, this group sees itself bringing the unique contribution to the Israeli culture. Including studying of bases of Judaism by sacred employment, representatives of tis group also recognize authority of orthodox rabbis. Unlike conformists, the national-religious sector has been inclined to support status quo concerning the religious questions, supposing possibility of compromises in those areas in which religious instructions are alternative to secular laws and a way of life. On the other hand, the ideology of this camp induced it to achieve influence on formation of cultural values of all Jewish society. The conflict which has arisen in national-religious circles between conformism and non-conformism concerning secular values and a way of life already in 1960 has led to that young active workers of national-religious camp have started to express resolute disagreement with protecting status quo a position of the management.

This disagreement is connected with another, not less problematic. In the attitude representatives of this sector see themselves the believers bearing Judaism, « the Jewish religion», to the colleagues. Therefore they can perceive the Zionist belief as derivative of the religiousness. This tendency which has especially extended among new generation of nonconformists, actually assumes that the union between Zionism and religiousness should

be described as « religious Zionism ». And it means audit of Zionism, that is, finally, formation of a policy of the State Israel according to religious criteria.

New Identification Space In the book « Last Israelis» David O'Hana specifies on extended in last years in the Israeli society aggression in relation to carriers of “ radical” dominating culture. This aggression broke in 1990 from everywhere: east Jews from outside observing tradition, Ashkenazi conformists, representatives of national-religious camp, immigrants from the former USSR and other groups. The fact of easing of influence of the dominating culture « building of the Israeli nation» was which leitmotif many long years, is represented obvious. Secular national identification which, on a plan of founding fathers, should unite the Jewish immigrants from all corners of globe was a core of this culture. However realization of these plans has encountered resistance of various groups of the Israeli society defending the alternative versions of collective identification about which there was a speech in given article.

The received picture does not mean that the collective identification generated by dominating culture already has stopped the existence but speaks about the termination of its hegemony. After the aforementioned groups which are the integral elements of the Israeli society, have started to declare themselves at the top of the voice, the former variant of collective identification, seemingly, suits today only those who sees itself secular Jews, whose cultural accessory can be described more likely in terms of the social and economic, educational and professional status, than by ethnic or religious criterion. Quite probably that the appreciable part of this group of

the population still sees itself « the main current» Israeli society but abundantly clear that it should be reconciled with existence of other versions of collective identification which also have achieved defined legitimation. It is represented that discussion about collective identification of the Israeli society mentions three levels. Identification Problem First, dispute goes about a place of religion in collective identification.

As it has been shown, dominating identification is based on secular interpretation of religious values according to which the diaspora is considered as a temporary phenomenon, and Israel – as the Earth Promised. On this background the dominating culture which has adopted the basic symbols of a traditional Jewish heritage, in dispute on a religion place in society priorities resists to conformists, and in dispute on communication of religion with the central aspects of a national policy – to national-religious circles. Differently, the root of disagreements between religious and secular circles in Israel is a role of religious norms and values in formation of the basic code of the Israeli political culture. Secondly, there are obligations of the person and various groups in relation to collective. As it was told above, dominating collective identification assumed full refusal of obligations in relation to any sectors of the Israeli society and the groups which are out of its limits. However from the very beginning similar requirements did not involve infringement in those civil rights to those who for some reasons refused to follow them.

Discrepancy between rigidity of requirements and tolerance concerning their non-observance partly it is possible to explain that fact that after many years

of formation on society boondocks, the ethnos – in this case, basically east Jews – could declare itself during the suitable political moment, having called into question dominating collective identification. That sociopolitical validity, which was created by ethnic “awakening” of the second generation of natives of the East countries, became subsequently convenient base for blossoming of other groups – in particular, natives of the former USSR who realized model of transnational diaspora in Israel. At the same time in the pluralistic reality which has developed in such conditions, the Israeli Arabs have received more space for maneuvers as a national minority. To this picture it is possible to add and such weak groups in the political relation as natives of Ethiopia or foreign workers living in Israel who in new conditions can create for itself socially-cultural space, less, than before, subject to the control of the political center. With the account also direct and mediated influence on the Israeli society of external factors, – such, for example, as the Israelis who have moved abroad or Jewry of diaspora, – it is possible to receive representation about set of types of collective responsibility existing today. In such form dominating identification can enter into a pluralistic phase of the life, having refused primary aspiration to the cultural unification, peculiar to it only until she presumed not to notice to herself the cultural and public variety which has already developed in the first years of existence of the state.

Thirdly, it's collective self-determination as that. This aspect also became a stumbling-block for the dominating collective identification which has faced ideologically radical approaches which see the main task in development of new definition of the Israeli identity, called to unite Jews and the Israeli Arabs

in uniform collective, having transformed Israel into « the state of all its citizens». Similar theories do not notice the general almost for all Jews who desire living in Israel to keep the Jewish national identification. The majority of the Jewish population of Israel aspires to keep the isolation from not Jewish minority, preferring to make common cause more likely with Jewry of diaspora, rather than with the Arabian fellow citizens. It is impossible to forget and that within several next decades Israelis become the biggest in the world the Jewish community.

All this can be considered as a victory of Zionist movement which, however, induces to the fresh wording of former ideological postulates. The Arabian-Israeli conflict includes two refugee problems: Jewish and Arabian. However, if in connection with negotiating process the Palestinian Arabs constantly are in the center of the international attention, and rather problematic question on their right to returning is constantly exaggerated, the question on the Jewish refugees is not put in general. The history of their oppression and exile from the Arabian countries before war of 1948 and after is forgotten, and it's never connected with actual political problems. The state Israel, the small country with the droughty climate, almost deprived of natural resources, absorbed about six hundreds of nine hundred thousand Jews to which had to leave places of the residing in the late forties - first half 1950th years. The others of three hundred thousand persons have found a shelter in France, Canada, Brazil, Italy, the USA and other countries.

These people have been compelled to throw the houses, schools, synagogues, hospitals, the enterprises, to break off business ties, without

having received indemnification, though a little comparable with these losses. However, now their social and economic status doesn't practically differ from the status of aboriginals. Concerning the Palestinian Arabs living in the Arabian countries and in areas, being under the Arabian control (including those who have settled on the Western Coast and in Gaza Strip, till 1967 were, accordingly, under the control of Jordan and Egypt), and the opposite picture is observed. It intentionally does not allow getting out of poverty, and now they have no citizenship. Refusal of the Arabian states to absorb them is a part of the general strategy: the Arabian politicians aspire to discredit Israel in the opinion of the world community - to weaken support of the Jewish state from the outside and, eventually, to destroy it.

« The forgotten outcome» Jews from the Arabian countries has a direct bearing on the Arabian-Israeli conflict. It proves that on the Arabian leaders' responsibility for the anti-Semitism spread in their countries both to, and after State Israel creation lies. Flight of Jews from the Arabian countries is in a direct communication with refusal of the Arabian states to recognize beyond Israel the right to existence. Comparison of destiny of the Jewish refugees with destiny of the Palestinian Arabs shows how much cynically Arabian states use tragic position of the last for realization of the strategy. The beginning of this policy was necessary more half a century back, and it remains invariable and to this day.

The question on refugees is a component of a constant political conflict between Israel and Palestinians. The appeal to realization « the rights to returning» reflects unwillingness of PLO (The Palestine Liberation

Organization) to find a real way of a peaceful settlement. The expert on international law professor Rut Lapidot wrote that formulations of the resolution ? 194 do not mean the right to return literally and even stipulate it only for those Palestinians who want peaceful co-existence with Israel. Last months in the American mass-media and in the Congress the direct question sounded: « That, as a matter of fact, the United Nations gain in camps of refugees on our money»? If to take into consideration that the annual budget of Management exceeds 300 million dollars, more a quarter from which arrives from the American tax bearers, it becomes clear that the fact of its statement involves the most serious economic and political consequences. Now United Nations Management on affairs of the Palestinian refugees should change parameters of the activity cardinally. Moving of refugees in the Arabian countries should precede political settlement.

Process of rehabilitation of refugees should be considered as one of the primary factors causing trust between the parties. Fundamental reorganization of Management of the United Nations and creation of the new mechanism for moving and rehabilitation of refugees should be a necessary condition of renewal of peace talks. Only these measures will serve as the proof of that process of creation of the Palestinian state does not become a prelude to full realization « the rights to returning» which will lead to the destruction of State Israel by a political way. Only basic changes in the approach to a refugee problem will mean that the Arabian party is not going to use any more it as means of military and political pressure.