Ideological Tyranny in the Guise of Democracy
Raia Epstein[1]

In Israeli society in the era of peace, a divided and estranged society, a clear division of labor exists between the left and the right, between those who presume to be enlightened liberals and the religious and ultra-religious. The "camp of progress" speaks in the name of pluralism and sees the purpose of its existence as defending democracy from the right-wing "fascists" and the religious "fundamentalists". The other side attempts, at best, to defend and explain itself, and at worst, internalizes the approach – accepting its characterization as blatantly non-democratic. While the liberals tie the right's lack of democracy to its connection to Judaism, the accused attempts to prove, here, too, at best, that there is no inherent contradiction between Judaism and democracy and at worst, accepts the mutual exclusivity of the two and is, therefore, forced to choose between his connection to Judaism at the expense of democracy and relinquishing his Judaism in order to attain a democratic "seal of approval" from the left. The inevitable result is the complete failure of the right, in other words, the religious Zionist and the ultra-orthodox communities, in its hopeless struggle against the perpetual aggression – rife with expressions of virulent anti-Semitism – of the keepers of the flame of democracy. The monumental failure of the right found expression in the victory of the Oslo process, which leads to the establishment of a terrorist state in Israel's heartland. But that is merely the beginning. The next failure, which is on the horizon and will necessarily transpire if present trends continue, will be the elimination of the Jewish, Zionist character of the State of Israel, in other words, its transformation into a "state of all its citizens". If Israel is not successful in halting this dynamic, the combination of these two failures, with all of their side effects, will bring Israel, inevitably, to the brink of existential oblivion.

The struggle, totalitarian in its essence, of the Israeli left against its political, ideological, cultural and ethical adversaries did not begin yesterday. Its beginnings lie long before the establishment of the State. It has persisted throughout the years of the existence of the State and has reached its apex at this time. It endured throughout the era in which the left made no attempt to conceal its political, ideological and spiritual ties with Soviet Bolshevism. But in the meantime, as Shimon Peres is wont to say, "The world changes", and as a result, an adaptation of the ideological cover of the struggle waged by the enlightened left against the children of darkness was necessary. From the Six Day War until the collapse of the communist regime in Russia, the Israeli left underwent a transformation which found expression in a virtual liberalization. It is, in fact, virtual, since all that changed was the nomenclature. Personality patterns, methods of thought and political culture remained as steadfast as in the past, though its external image changed beyond recognition.

The liberal cover coincided perfectly with the goal of attaining the same objectives in changing circumstances. The switch from Bolshevism, whose glory had dimmed in the interim, to "enlightened liberalism", transformed the left into a respectable and equal partner in the eyes of the democratic West. No more "Israeli Colonialists" with no distinctions. No more Zionism-racism as a fundamental trait common to all of the State of Israel. It is now a holy war of the children of light in the name of "peace" which was already conceived as the final solution to the Jewish question in Israel by the former Soviet Union, and now

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has been adopted by the UN and the rest of the adherents of Israeli democracy, in the West and the Arab countries, especially among the noted champions of equality and democracy from the Arafat-Hussein-Assad and Mubarak school.

The transition from licking the boots of Stalin and his gang of hangmen to the arms of virtual liberalism has shown itself to be especially effective in the oppression of the opponent, the right, which dared to entertain illusions of equality after the Likud, headed by Menachem Begin, assumed power. And this time, ironically, the oppression continues even during the term of a right-wing government, theoretically capable of neutralizing it and showing it to be the empty shell which it is. In this way, for all intents and purposes, the real boss continues to govern, with no consideration given to the election results. Therefore, we are dealing with the perversion of democracy, in the name of democracy.

Practical Democratic Theory

In Issue 22 of *Parliament* (published by the Israel Center for Democracy, December 1998), a report about a "roundtable" forum on the topic "Rabin's murder – three years later" was cited. The following is a quote from the beginning of the report:

> The roundtable forum, which gathered at the Israel Center for Democracy to mark the third anniversary of Rabin's assassination, focused on the assassination's ramifications on Israeli democracy and on the schism in Israeli society, and also on the attitude of the authorities to crimes of incitement. At the start of the deliberations, Dr. Arik Camon, President of the Center, expressed his concern regarding the threat posed by the intervention of rabbinic authority in the processes of democracy and politics. He pointed to the 'Yesha Syndrome' which found expression in the phenomenon that instead of trying **the criminals who created the delegitimization** [my emphasis R.E.]. Har-Shefi and Raviv are tried, and that is considered sufficient. In his opinion, only by subjecting the inciters to the full effect of the law, will catharsis be possible, and until then, no dialogue is possible.

The former head of the GSS, Mr. Carmi Gillon, the controller of agent Avishai Raviv and the person by dint of his position primarily responsible for the assassinated Prime Minister's life and security, participated in the discussion as well.

Gillon:

> Address three central questions: Were all legal avenues exhausted against the inciters? Have we reached the mandated conclusions? Has the traumatic event become part of the common national memory or has it deepened the political schism?

His response to the first question was negative. He referred to the narrow mandate which the Shamgar Commission assumed, in that it refrained from dealing with the motives for the murder and the pervasive atmosphere of incitement extant in order to avoid exacerbating the polarization. The problem had its roots in the incitement and in the rabbis who provided the validation. Goldstein and Amir are no different, in his view, from the Hamas suicide bombers, and they have in common the fact that they have religious rulings permitting their actions and rabbis supplying said rulings. Regarding the future, Gillon presented a pessimistic outlook. He sees the rubicon from which we must be concerned, the dismantling of settlements."

Surprising as it may seem, this author agrees with some of the above claims advanced by the forum participants. She holds, as does Carmi Gillon, that the steps against the inciters were not exhausted (and who is the primary inciter if not he who sent Avishai Raviv to incite for the murder of the Prime Minister and did so in the name of the State?). She also maintains, like Gillon, that the necessary lessons were not learned (and what is the primary operative conclusion that a proper country should have deduced in this situation if not the reorganization of the security services in order to prevent similar abuses in the future?). She also contends that the Shamgar Commission avoided dealing with the motives for the murder and the atmosphere of incitement (which was created by he who backed the nationalist public into a corner and then sent provocateurs to incite and instigate the opponents of the government's policies). This author also agrees with

the president of the Center of Israeli Democracy, Dr. Arik Carmon: The major problem of Israeli democracy in general and during the era of "peace" in particular is delegitimization.

Delegitimization in the Era of Peace

The expression "delegitimization" was used frequently by the right during the term of the Labor-Meretz government from 1992-1996. The reference was to the blatant, reckless incitement by that government and its minions, especially in the media enlisted in its favor, against those opposing its policies whose hard core was naturally the settlers in Judea, Samaria and Gaza ("enemies of peace", "Hamas collaborators", "two percent who don't deserve security from the State", and the like). The reference was also to the public atmosphere which was knowingly and intentionally created by the government and its minions, in which the opponents of the Oslo process were depicted, perceived and themselves felt, as lacking the political, moral and existential right to express their opinion and to act accordingly, in total contradistinction to that which is accepted and requisite in every democratic-liberal country. Their demonstrations and all other types of protest were portrayed as illegitimate. The police were heavy-handed in their treatment of the participants in protest activities in a totally disproportionate manner and with violence far greater than required. The trials of those accused of participating in "anti-government" protests were conducted over long periods, continuing even after the change in governments. The rabbis of Judea, Samaria and Gaza are presumed guilty even today, though police investigations of some of them which were conducted in the witch-hunt atmosphere in the wake of Rabin's assassination, revealed no violations of the law.

The settlers were portrayed as the "enemies of peace" simply by virtue of their residence in a certain geographic location and as a community which endangers Israeli democracy since "when the time will come to evacuate the settlements they will forcefully resist". All this took place without dealing with the questions whether any individual citizen in said community supported or opposed the Oslo process. Is an individual citizen in a "territorial collective" a "violator of the law of the land" or is he a law-abiding citizen of the first order? It made no difference, since the need was to delegitimize a group which had the audacity to interpret the good of the State and the good of the nation in a manner contrary to the ruling party. Who cares about citizens' rights and individual liberties (including the right to protest and freedom of expression) when the subject is one big gang of saboteurs of the peace process? What interest is there in ensuring the rights of minority groups (such as, for example, the basic natural right of a person to live in the place that he chooses, on land which he bought with his own money, in the house in which he raised his children), when we are discussing "two percent" – not of oppressed Arabs (Palestinians) but of Jews? Their transfer, dictated by the peace process is not a transfer at all, but rather a purely democratic action. Their resistance, in contrast to Arab terror, cannot be at all considered the justified and understandable result of "distress", "humiliation", "insult", "violation of rights", and the like, but rather an "anti-democratic", "messianic" and "religiously ordained" expression. In other words, a reaction consistent with their original sin of being "West Bank" Jews, not to mention religious Jews.

It is inconceivable that anyone will ascribe the same logic to the "sacred" revolt of the Palestinians called "intifada", and claim that their violence stems from the fact that they are Arab Muslims who believe in the Koran. He would immediately be accused of racism, anti-democracy, fascism and possibly worse. As that which is permissible to do and say about certain Jews (who a priori were labeled anti-democratic by dint of their not belonging to the legitimate camp in democratic Israel) is inconceivable in the case of the Palestinians, whether they happen to be true advocates of peace or past or present murderers or inciters to murder, waging a covert or overt war against the Jews.

It is significant to note that the atmosphere of incitement and delegitimization vis-a-vis the opponents of Oslo (real or potential) was created long before the tragic mass murder in the Cave of the Patriarchs, and many years before the assassination of Rabin. Furthermore, the well-orchestrated reactions of the secular "rabbis" of peace to these tragedies fell on fertile ground, which had been prepared previously. The political use made of the murder perpetrated by Baruch Goldstein and the assassination of Rabin, which according to

the official version was implemented by Yigal Amir, could not have been as successful and convincing had it not been for the backdrop of delegitimization which had been established beforehand and enabled the blaming of an entire community which had been previously marked for these two murders. These two tragedies were interpreted and inculcated into the collective national memory through the prism of this delegitimization. It, of course, preceded these tragedies, but they significantly reinforced it. The political use made of the murder of Arabs in Hebron and the assassination of Rabin, transformed it into total, unchallenged delegitimization in the official mythology of the State of Israel in the Oslo period.

Only on the basis of said total delegitimization could the Oslo Agreements have been foisted upon a public, the overwhelming majority of which unequivocally rejected them. There is a solid basis to the claim that if it were not for this blatantly anti-democratic process, the Israeli left would have been unsuccessful in the attempt, all this without referring to the additional breaches of democracy entailed in the illegal validation and the problematic implementation of these agreements, which endanger the very existence of the State of Israel.

As the legitimacy of protest against the actions of the government is among the most basic of principles in a democratic regime, and one of the clearest means of distinction between democratic and undemocratic regimes, the only possible conclusion is that the State of Israel in the Oslo period cannot be considered a state which is ruled by a proper democratic regime.

The results of the 1996 elections might have been interpreted as the reversal of this anti-democratic trend, as despite the delegitimization of the opponents of Oslo and the leaders of the opposition, despite the comprehensive, sophisticated indoctrination to peace, despite the persecution of the "enemies of peace" and the portrayal of entire communities as "murderers of the Prime Minister", and despite the intimidation and the moral terrorism, the significant majority of the Jewish population in the State of Israel voted in the elections against the "peace government", and elected the Likud and Netanyahu.

However, Binyamin Netanyahu, who was slandered in an unprecedented manner by the left, proceeded with the same political policy, which implemented the world view of his predecessors who were voted out of office by the people. But even this was unable to halt the delegitimization of the opposition to Oslo; on the contrary it confirmed and transformed it to that position which represents the entire State of Israel's in the eyes of the people and the world.

The stated reason for the Netanyahu government's continuation of the Oslo process was presented as a completely democratic one: We are a proper nation and not a banana republic, and, therefore, we must honor our international agreements. The fact that the implementation of these agreements was possible only on the basis of the anti-democratic management of the country during the term of the left-wing government went unmentioned by the Netanyahu government, which ascended to power in l996. The upshot of the matter is that the new right-wing government, which continued the Oslo process, perpetuated the violations of the principles of democracy as well, and was transformed into a partner of the left, despite the elections and change in governments. This is true notwithstanding the loud, uncivil struggle between the Likud and the left in the 1999 election campaign, since within the reality of but one political policy considered legitimate, which renders its opponents the "extreme right", marginal and irrelevant, what contribution can a loud struggle bring to a democracy which exists no longer? And what essential difference can it make?

Binyamin Netanyahu, who before the 1996 elections spoke in two tongues and in that way attracted – in addition to the traditional right-wing voters – the undecided voters and voters who supported the Oslo Agreements, changed his ways after the elections and betrayed the public which put him into office. Netanyahu followed the path which Yitzhak Rabin forged before him, a development clearly very bad for Israeli democracy whether it is "good for the Jews" or "bad for the Jews". Netanyahu's claim that he aspires to be "Prime Minister of the entire nation" (under the guise of this deception lay his enthusiastic implementation of the Oslo Agreements) means to say that "the entire nation" supports Oslo, and anyone who doesn't support Oslo is immediately out of the confines of "the entire nation". In this fashion, Netanyahu granted general-political validity to the totalitarian policy of his predecessors – a policy of total

non-consideration of the legitimate desire (albeit legitimate only in a democratic regime) of that part of the public which opposed the government policy.

Even if the sectors in the public continuing to oppose the Oslo Agreements today have diminished, it changes nothing. In a liberal democracy, as opposed to a national, totalitarian democracy, the dictatorship of the majority over the minority is essentially illegitimate. But transforming the opposition to Oslo from the concern of the Jewish majority to the concern of the minority is itself a direct product of the delegitimization, of the enlistment of the Netanyahu government to the political process and of the anti-democratic management of the State of Israel in the era of "peace".

The New National Consensus

The ascent of the Netanyahu government onto the chariot of the Oslo process granted the process the status of national consensus in the eyes of Israeli society and of the world. This situation influences policy, politics, ideologies and far-reaching existential values. We dealt with some of them in the previous chapter, from which one can conclude that the significance of this new consensus is the disappearance of the democratic opposition to Oslo (that which should have found expression in the policies of one of the two large parties which represent the two political camps which express, through the mutual struggle between them – the basic duality of the democratic-liberal regime), and the transformation of all its opponents to "extremists" and fringe elements who were expelled from the consensus.

The international effect of this situation and its socio-psychological, internal effect are understandable enough. On the international plane, it is clear that from this point, no one, not even among Israel's traditional friends and allies, has any serious interest or possibility to assist us in protecting ourselves from the destructive and dangerous process. On the internal front, this real or virtual consensus has the effect on many (including those who vigorously opposed and battled against Oslo during the period of the left-wing government) of indoctrinating them in favor of the process, and of creating a sense of despair and pessimism stemming from the awareness that nothing can be done to halt the process which is a national disaster. This is true whether the resulting attitude is in the spirit of "if even Netanyahu went along this path, then apparently nothing can be done", or if it is in the spirit of "it is impossible to remain in the minority and function against the will of the majority of the nation", or whether it is in the spirit of "the ideology of the Land of Israel is anachronistic and therefore we must be realistic and pragmatic".

Abandoning ideologies is perceived by the right-wing parties as a pragmatic step in the era of "the end of ideology" in Israel. However, this is only illusory and misleading. What seems upon an external, superficial glance to be the loss of ideology in both political camps, is actually the victory of the one and only ideology, that from here on is the only legitimate ideology – the ideology of Oslo. This ideocracy (the regime of one and only one ideology), which is totally inconsistent with any possible definition of a liberal-democratic regime, transforms the opponents of Oslo not only into "the extreme fringe" outside the consensus, but for all intents and purposes, into "enemies of the people", if not explicitly then at least in terms of the inner meaning of the events transpiring. With all the differences, large and small, between Netanyahu and his government and the center-left, they are all in competition, battling in an effort to control the "peace consensus", common, not only to Barak, Mordechai and Netanyahu but also (in terms of the desire to be perceived as part of it) to the NRP, Zomet, the Yesha Council and in certain respects even to Benny Begin's Herut (worshipping "the rule of law", which expresses the left's philosophy, and fear of the word "transfer" which "threatens our democracy"). Netanyahu, the right-winger God-forbid, wants to be Prime Minister of "the entire nation", Barak on the left declares that he will act "for everyone but not for the extremists" (who are identified in his ads as "settlers" and "yeshiva students").

The difference is that Netanyahu, as opposed to Barak, does not (yet) speak of "enemies of the people" in the hope that they, too, will vote for him. Even those whom the Oslo process endangers their lives, even those who the "peace" goes against their most essential beliefs, even those who know very well that Netanyahu

will continue the withdrawal almost certainly with greater vigor than will the left – if they vote for Netanyahu, it will be out of fear of leftist Bolshevism, a fear which is totally justified. However, the real problem is that "the entire nation" of Netanyahu, "everyone" of Barak, the "central path" of the Center Party and the "rule of law" which Benny Begin worships, are all a human mixture lacking any real disagreement. In the end, they all bow to the "new national consensus", in which there is no room for anyone who thinks otherwise.

The right will vote for Netanyahu because he, according to that right, is the "lesser of the evils" since they really "have no better alternative." That is, the vote of the various shades of right for Netanyahu will be nothing more than an expression of the lack of alternative and lack of free choice in a reality where the opponents of Oslo have no relevant political representation. In other words, the new consensus created in the wake of the enlistment of the Netanyahu government into the peace process means that from here on elections and the expressions of the will of the people no longer have any democratic significance in the sense of free citizens participating and choosing between different and opposing political alternatives.

It is not pragmatism and realism which causes right-wing parties, organizations and politicians, who just yesterday seemed faithful to their ideologies, to betray their principles and beliefs, but rather their understanding of the situation in which the fate of anyone who does not fall in line with the new political policy is sealed. It is not immorality, opportunism and conformity alone which guides them, but perhaps also a genuine, honest concern for the parliamentary representation of the sectors whose interests they must exemplify (the instance of the NRP is perhaps the most characteristic of this trend).

In this way, an internal dynamic of the process of expanding the new national consensus is created. As the number of people falling into line with this policy gradually increases, so, too, the chance of the "dissidents" who are unwilling to compromise to be elected to the next Knesset gradually decreases. And to the extent that yesterday's uncompromising idealists arrive at an understanding of the present situation, they are forced to abandon their former positions. However, even if there is "pragmatic" and "rational" justification for this erosion, it has no moral or existential justification. Do "pragmatic" rationales of this sort free those who raise them from their civic and Jewish obligations? Does understanding the situation really eliminate the moral issue? Is it really permissible to sacrifice the fate of the country and to underestimate the threat to Jewish lives stemming from the withdrawal, just to survive politically? And we have not yet raised the elements of belief in and loyalty to the Land of Israel, participation in the obliteration of Zionism and desecration of the memories of those who gave their lives while defending the land and the State. We have not yet raised the betrayal of the dream of the Jewish nation throughout history and its eternal connection to its homeland which is the ultimate purpose of Zionism. We have not yet raised the betrayal not only of the past but also of our future existence. We have not yet raised the fact that the Land of Israel does not belong solely to the "pragmatic politicians", God forbid, (to the extent that the term conceals defeatism, betrayal and opportunism for its own sake), and not only to the right and left in the Land of Israel, but to the entire Jewish nation both in its historic meaning and in its present-day meaning – the Jews of the Diaspora.

We are witnesses to the fact that anyone unwilling to be a partner in the betrayal of the Land of Israel finds himself outside the national consensus. They are the "extreme delusional fringe", they are "the enemies of the people" according to the immanent logic of said consensus. It is no coincidence that "the enemies of peace" are the sector most threatened by the real enemy. Not only Yossi Sarid and Ehud Barak branded the Jews of Hebron and Tel Rumeida, the Jews of Yitzhar and the Jews of additional "extremist" settlements as enemies of the people because they don't live in the right place. The new national consensus branded them so as well. The implication is that they are not only the "enemies of peace", but enemies of the national consensus, that is, the decisive majority of the Israeli public, left and right, secular and religious, lovers of the Land of Israel and those who despise it. Would it be a wild exaggeration to say that the Arabs, Israel's real enemy, declare daily that shedding the settlers' blood is permissible, precisely because of the national consensus, though it forbids them to say so?

These are the moral and existential ramifications arising from the principles of the new national consensus. Even the vociferous debate between the official, established right and the center-left cannot blur the fact that Netanyahu and his government are responsible for the formation of the consensus. The right's enlistment into the ranks of Oslo is therefore a clear product of the general atmosphere extant in the Jewish State. If a drastic change does not take place in the defeatist direction led by the Israeli left, then no right-wing politician, not even one from the religious camp, will be able to act any differently than did Binyamin Netanyahu. The "leadership" issue which concerns us so greatly is totally irrelevant in this situation – which according to the official version is called "Israeli democracy" but essentially is nothing but totalitarianism of the type unique to the Jewish State.

Ideocracy Versus Form of Government

During the term of the left-wing government which signed the Oslo Agreements with the Palestinians, frequent television and radio interviews were aired in which right-wing opponents of the peace process were interviewed. These interviews were perceived by this writer, who was then a brand new immigrant, as somewhat reminiscent of the interrogations of the enemies of the people by the KGB in Soviet Russia. The goal of the interviews – to elicit from the subjects of the interrogation some statement which expressed "hostility to democracy" and to force them to recognize their ideological "sin" – was blatant: the style of the interviewer was hostile; the atmosphere created by the interrogations representing democracy was intolerant and violent; and their intention to force upon the interviewees their "correct" views and to completely delegitimize their own opinions was obvious. Any attempt by an interviewee to claim that democracy is not only a value but a form of government, and not only a particular philosophy, but a tool in the hands of society and its citizens, was greeted with a reaction which bordered on the violent. The man and his arguments were portrayed as a resolute and dangerous enemy of democracy.

This trend was especially unsubtle in interviews with religious personalities and rabbis. The question "which takes precedence – Torah or democracy?" left them extremely perplexed. Indeed, what genuine man of faith is capable of stating that democracy takes precedence over Torah and Halacha? What rabbi is capable of admitting that under certain circumstances he would relinquish his religious philosophy and way of life?

I never heard, not even once, one of the interviewees ask the interviewer, how would a religious Jew in democratic America react if a journalist in that country posed a similar question to him? Perhaps liberal Americans would portray him as an enemy of democracy because he is unwilling to abandon his religion? Perhaps they would claim that religious Jews in America threaten the democratic regime by virtue of their being religious?

Indeed, we are not America and our democracy is totally different than that extant in America. Therefore, the questions posed to those interviewed were totally extraneous. Here, democracy is intended for one purpose only and anyone who is not a partner in the desire to achieve that purpose is an "enemy of democracy" by definition.

Israeli democracy is not only a value but a means of government and a powerful tool in the hands of very certain elite groups. Furthermore, Israeli democracy is the philosophy of those who define themselves as "democrats". This self-definition, and the depiction of their philosophy as democratic, enables them, as stated, to use the political regime for their own purposes and to transform it into a tool in their hands. However, beyond that, the above definitions allow the "democrats" to completely delegitimize (in the name of democracy, of course) their ideological and political adversaries, whole communities and individuals whose national, cultural and Jewish philosophies are not identical to those of our "democrats"- in other words: who endanger the hegemony of the left-wing elite.

It goes without saying that any similarity between this philosophy and the essential definition of democracy is coincidental. This elite, referred to by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court as "the enlightened community", enforces the "democracy" by using classic dictatorial methods. The "judicial dictatorship" of

his honor Judge Barak, about which so much has been said recently, is both an expression of the dictatorial philosophy and an infrastructure for its enforcement and implementation.

The definition of democracy as a form of government points to the existence of a political system capable of lending legitimacy to an ideological struggle between groups possessing different and opposing philosophies, allow their realization in practice, and enable and require a political struggle between these groups in order to achieve democratic government. The definition of democracy as an exclusive ideology (or philosophy) even if it is called (euphemistically) "liberal" by its proponents, automatically negates the existential right and the legitimacy of ideologies (or philosophies) different than the one identified with "democracy", and of the sectors which support these "undemocratic" ideologies. The essential, insoluble contradiction between these two definitions of the concept "democracy", is not presented before the public and is certainly not part of the public debate in Israel. It is no wonder, as the factors "responsible" for democracy and its purity, primary among them the media "the watchdog of democracy", are not at all interested in placing the issue on the public agenda.

It is hard to know whether neutralizing adversaries with "democracy" is an effective, sophisticated method, a sort of conscious Machiavellianism which the Israeli left intentionally employs in order to achieve its goals. Perhaps the left completely and wholeheartedly believes in the truth of its perception of democracy as a continuation of the tradition of the political culture of the Israel radicalism. In this culture, Marxist, socialist "ideological democracy" – especially as it was brought to bear in the land of the Soviets, "our second homeland" as the ideological forebearers of the "liberal" elite declared with unbridled enthusiasm – preceded liberal "ideological democracy",

While the left is united in its outlook (political divisions do not in any way influence the "conceptual unity" against the common enemy, according to the infamous National Kibbutz Movement school), the so-called "right" or "national camp", including the ultra-orthodox and the national religious communities, is totally oblivious to the word game and to the left's shameless distortion of the concept "democracy". This lack of awareness, and their capitulation to the deceit of "democracy", causes the philosophical dictatorship of the "enlightened" left to gradually evolve into a genuine dictatorship.

Even when the ultra-orthodox staged an unprecedented mass demonstration against the prejudicial policies of the Supreme Court, and their spokesman made reference to "judicial dictatorship", this was not the result of a clear, profound understanding of the essential distortion of democracy in the State of Israel, as they repeated again and again, in justifying the demonstration, that Judaism and the Torah supercede democracy; at the basis of this statement is the internalization of the left's ideocratic concept of democracy which places Judaism out of the pale of democracy.

"Theocracy in reverse" is the way in which the great philosopher Nicolai Berdayev characterized the former Communist Russian State. Israel, as a state, has not yet achieved that status, but the danger is real, not imagined. If Israel is threatened by primitive Khomeinism, it is liable to appear counter-intuitively from the "enlightened community". Whether the people on the left believe what they say or not, the members of the cult and the adherents of the religion of democracy are openly anti-democratic. The cultural war which they are waging against the Jewish religion and tradition is genuine religious coercion – actually totalitarian coercion in its essence. The counter-demonstration staged by the "lovers of democracy" on 14.2.99 and its portrayal in the Israeli media as contrasted to the portrayal of the ultra-orthodox prayer assembly, is the best evidence of the totalitarian character of the democratic theocracy conducted in the State of Israel by the left, with the submission and resignation of the absolute majority of the Jewish public. The submission of the Jewish public; because, ironically the left's ally, the Arab sector – whose affiliation with the left is clearly irredentist in nature – is well-known for its choice democratic legacy.

The legalization of "Arutz 7" on 23.2.99 in the Knesset caused an upheaval among the lovers of the theocratic democracy, even more than the ultra-orthodox prayer assembly did. "An anti-democratic law", "a hooligan law", "an anti-legal law", "a law which violates the rule of law in Israel" – this is a small sampling of the expressions which were aired in those days in the media. The journalist, Gideon Reicher, who hosted

the program, "There is Someone with Whom to Speak" on the Army Station (24.2.99), went to the trouble to explain to his primitive listeners who dared to defend "Arutz 7" that Montesquieu's principle of the separation of powers requires the judiciary (the High Court of Justice) to annul the decision of the legislative branch (the Knesset) concerning this pirate radio station, even if this decision represents the will of the majority. Elyakim Rubinstein, the Attorney General, who opposed the legalization of "Arutz 7", was depicted in the media as the living embodiment of the rule of law. The massive mobilization of the media in opposition to the Knesset decision was intended to exert extremely heavy pressure on the High Court of Justice in order to cause it to abrogate the decision of the sovereign Parliament.

Simple citizens find it difficult to grasp how it is that violating the law forbidding contacts with the PLO by leading left-wing politicians was not considered anti-legal, how it is that the activity of Abie Nathan's pirate radio did not disturb the lovers of democracy, how it is that the opening of stores on Shabbat in contravention of the law does not constitute contempt for the authority of the law, how it is that Azmi Bishara's list which ran for the Knesset in the recent campaign does not constitute a threat to the Israeli democracy, despite Bisharu's blatant subversiveness for which he would be immediately arrested and incarcerated in any state in which a real democracy existed and not a caricature thereof from the anarchist school of the Israeli left. This is Bishara, who openly demands the liquidation of the Jewish State by abolishing its Zionist and Jewish character, and who enjoys the open support of the heads of the terrorist organization characterized by Israeli law as enemies – Yasir Arafat and George Habash, or the Syrian tyrant, Hafez el-Assad. Amazingly, none of these endanger Israeli democracy, but "Arutz 7", which provides an instrument of expression and identity for broad sectors of the Israeli population, and was legalized in the Knesset, is the public enemy and the threat to democracy.

Let it be said clearly, the so-called "Israeli democracy" with all its holy, sacred institutions and foundations does not, and has not for a long while, manifest the destiny of the Jewish people to live in its sovereign state in its homeland. On the contrary, the goal of today's democratic theocracy stands in polar opposition to the authentic Jewish interests in a state which is still considered by the naive part of the population the Zionist State of the Jewish people.

Ideological Tyranny in the Guise of Democracy (B)

The best and the brightest of Israeli academia in all of its forms provide the theoretical basis and the intellectual rationale for the "democratic" ideocracy. Most importantly, the pioneers among them not only supply justification after the fact but prognosticate, in other words, delineate the borders and target the objective towards which Israeli democracy is supposed to progress.

Seemingly, their partisan activity is analogous to the activity of the sycophants in the former Soviet academia vis-a-vis the totalitarian government. However, among the academia in the communist state, as in every other aspect of its culture, there were not exclusively government lackeys but "dissidents" as well – both exposed and concealed. Being "different" in academia was no mean feat. But despite the persecution and the discrimination, it was admired by the Soviet Union intelligentsia, while a mark of moral disgrace was branded on the head of the partisan ideologue mobilized in the service of the government.

This is not the case in the Jewish state. Among the local intelligentsia in general, and the Israeli academia in particular, serving as a partisan ideologue in service of the left-wing theocracy is a great honor, while being "different", a heretic, an ideological dissident, carries with it a mark of disgrace, ostracization and suppression.

The Democratic Faith

In order to prove the assertion that a great affinity exists between the thought patterns and the world-views of Israeli liberals and the ideological and actual characteristics of Communist totalitarianism one needn't resort to the definitions of Nikolai Berdaiev. This is true even regarding that which is referred to as "the democratic viewpoint" in Israel which is nothing more than a militant, extreme, fundamentalist religion which is waging a holy war (or "jihad" in the spirit of the times) against Zionism and Judaism. Indeed, there is no particular need to expend any effort in these matters, since there are those among the Israeli "liberals" who do not conceal the religious nature of Israeli democracy and its existential purpose.

Dr. Oz Almog submits his system of beliefs, which in his opinion manifest the spirit of the "here and now" era extant in the entire Western world. There is some truth to this contention. However, in contrast to the one prevalent in Western Europe and America, in the State of Israel, the "democratic faith", to which Almog is referring, is designed to serve a defined and singular role, as we are in the throes, according to Almog, of an identity crisis and in search of a new identity. Judaism and Zionism are no longer relevant as "the united Israeli Tribe has fragmented", the accelerating peace process sharpens the questions surrounding Israeli identity, and "the luster of the worship of the nation and the homeland is dimming"[1], and, therefore, Israel, according to the writer, must urgently find a new, alternative identity.

The democratic religion, Almog claims, came into the world in the Sixties, but only reached its new, revolutionary stage in the wake of the fall of the Communist Bloc. As a substitute for the Marxist religion, it certainly cannot limit itself to being merely a system of government without penetrating the minds and souls of the newly religious. As an alternative to Judaism, the democratic religion cannot remain solely on the doctrinal-spiritual plane, but must constitute a way of life for its faithful.[2] Like the old Marxism, so, too, the new democratic religion is designed to eliminate the differences between particular groups and their cultures and to create a universal, humanistic reality. As in the philosophy of Karl Marx, so, too, in the philosophy of Oz Almog, two poles exist in the universal reality (in Marx, this reality was characterized as "the Communist society"). In Almog's language it is phrased in this way: "at the focus of the new, democratic cult, there are two complementary objects – the private individual (in Marx, free man, possessor of unlimited creative powers, R.E.), which is smaller than the nation, and the universe (in Marx, the universal, human union, R.E.) which is greater than the nation and supercedes it".[3] In other words, the new democracy, like the old Marxism and Communism, is nothing more than the extension of the universalism of a religion which preceded them both – Chrisianity, in which there is no place for a Roman or a Jew, nor for a nation or other

religions. In the view of the Christian religion, the view of the Communist religion and especially in the view of the new democratic religion, there is no place for a Jew. He must assimilate, recant his religion, convert to Christianity or Communism or Democracy, respectively.

Religious democracy or the Democratic religion must fill the lives of the people, their heart and soul, leaving nothing which is not under its control. Therefore, it is inconceivable that it be merely a form of government: "hence, more and more, democracy is transformed from a form of government to a total ethical framework, a sort of secular faith which constitutes an ethical glue supporting the social framework of the enlightened, modern world".[4] This is what he said! Oz, who does not notice the contradiction inherent in his language, does not ask why a "total ethical framework" is referred to as "democracy" and not "totalitarianism" and what constitutes the difference between the "enlightened, modern world", described above and the (former) Soviet Communist State which also was supported by a "secular faith" (military atheist), and in which that faith constituted a glue supporting the existing government.

Without a doubt, the writer emphasizes that the brave new world of religious democracy is not shared by everyone. It is the exclusive property of only one social stratum: "The cult of democracy is led and perfected by the upper middle class (in Marx it was the workers class, R.E.) especially secular, educated and liberal people between the ages of 30 and 50, who maintain a Western-bourgeois lifestyle.[5] Among this group, which the composer of the democratic philosophy characterizes as "Acamols", "democracy is perceived as a holy, metaphysical concept, and the proof of this is the fact that the word "democracy" has lately become one of the most common ethical and axiomatic terms, is the public dialogue which they control".[6] Regarding the new democratic policy towards those who don't belong to it, instead of the old and outdated "dictatorship of the proletariat", at the end of the twentieth century, no less effective state-of-the-art methods exist: "The campaign of purism and denunciation implemented by the Western media, one of the "Acamol" strongholds, against the "various heretics" who violated a democratic taboo of one sort or another…attest to the sacred conception of the democratic ethos".[7] Just as in a totalitarian state, the state and the state alone decides in matters of truth and morality, so, too, in the new democratic religion a "new ideology or moral-intellectual superstructure" is developing "of a new type which fills the lives of the liberal, enlightened class with a new content, and infuses it with a revolutionary passion which spreads to additional classes in the Israeli population, though the process is slow and replete with difficulties, obstacles and conflicts".[8]

Whether the transition is slow or not so slow, the point is that it is revolutionary and its objective is to expand and dominate the whole society. In order to accomplish the task, religious means are definitely required, including a "sophisticated media mission"[9] and different, variegated forms of worship. At the center of the primary form of worship stands the Supreme Court directed by judicial activism, "led by Judge Aharon Barak",[10] who plays the role of "Hassidic master"[11] in the secular democratic religion". "The decisions of the Supreme Court, perceived in the media as a sort of secular Sanhedrin, are notable for their democratic-liberal orientation".[12] Surrounding the master, rabbis and prophets of the democratic faith, singers of rhythmic music (primary among them, Aviv Gefen, who exemplifies the essence of the democratic faith in his songs), artists, writers and poets serve. "Artists, in their various disciplines, are perceived in a manner similar to prophets who achieved inspiration, which is the secular interpretation of divine grace, and as those who bring the believers closer to the unadulterated truth".[13]

The central worship in the democratic religion is the worship of peace and reconciliation.[14] It replaced the worship of war and security which was prominent in the old religion – Zionism. The exchange of war for peace is nothing more than the exchange of rituals. It does not stem from the surrounding reality, it is not engendered by existing circumstances and does not relate to the real dangers and the genuine threat to the State and the lives of its citizens. It is no wonder, as Almog lives in his world of democratic faith totally disconnected from the real world. Quite a bit of time has passed since Almog publicized his thoughts. In the meantime, elections were held in Israel and Almog's vision is gaining currency. The new democratic religion is functioning with unusual success. The existential struggle of the old-fashioned circles is no longer recognizable, as many of those who battled against the democratic religion 3-5 years ago have "moderated" and are quickly moving towards the inner sancta of the new religion. They all want to be perceived as loyal

believers. They all strive to join the democratic universe. They all live according to the instructions of the master. "Everyone, but not the extremists" who still prefer existence over democratic religion. Will the democratic religion relate to these heretics in the way that Christianity and the Communist religion treated their heretics? The secular religion portrayed by Almog as a major innovation of the entire Western world is a traditional phenomenon in Western culture whose roots can be already detected in the 18th century. Then, as now, it was a universal, humanistic outlook. Then, too, it attempted to battle against the authentic religions which believed in God. Now, as then, it presumed to pave a safe way to a new, enlightened, just world, using the instruments of murderous coercion.

It was none other than Jean-Jaques Rousseau who, "felt compelled to demand the death penalty for all who deny the civil religion". His intellectual, though much more tolerant colleague, Mabley, was willing to suffice with merely banning and deporting the heretics.[15] The Jacobins, headed by Robespierre, fulfilled the commandment of the secular, humanist religion in a very purposeful though somewhat deliberate manner, due to the technical limitations of the guillotine. In any case, it was more in the spirit of Rousseau than in the spirit of Mabley's recommendations. Then, too, special significance was attributed to the legislative authority and to the secular priests.[16] In that religious democracy, which preceded the democracy of Almog, there was also an essential, practical need to "shape the thoughts of the people" and to "supervise them" on the part of the indoctrinated.[17] Needless to say, all this was in the name of freedom and its sanctity.

> …This method does not negate the spirit of freedom and human rights, and apparently does not require victims and capitulation; but even more so, it leaves the mark of sanctity on freedom and on the private concern of the person and his rights. It is self-evident that it has no objective other than the realization of these. It is certain that the totalitarian nature of this method will become more and more obvious especially because it @*a priori*@@ guarantees all of the freedoms and approves all of the liberal assumptions. It claims that by its very definition its destiny is to take substantive actions to ensure that all of these demands are met and not merely pay lip service to the freedoms and observe them from a distance. And at the time that by its very definition the government is perceived as a facilitator of human rights and freedoms, the right of the citizens to make claims against that the same government is ostensibly abrogating their rights and freedom, is rescinded.

The first to demonstrate this thought process were the Jacobins.[18] The first but not the last.

Israeli Democracy as an Alternative to its Enemies

The perception of democracy in the era of peace must be simple and understood by all. The one who depicted it in the clearest possible manner was Shimon Peres in his speech on November 11, l997 at the ceremony marking the second anniversary of the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin. "Democracy and peace are Siamese twins," he said and continued: "Democracy must be on the defensive and battle the enemies of democracy." In those days in the same spirit and almost in the same language, Prof. Asa Kasher, "Socrates (res.)"[19], a leading philosopher in these parts, addressed the problem of democracy. In an appearance on Israeli television as a commentator of the events marking the anniversary of Rabin's assassination, the message of the composer of the IDF ethical code sounded something like this: Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu speaks of national unity, but unity of that sort has meaning only if a struggle is conducted against the enemies of democracy. Today, the enemies of democracy are the extremists of Hebron. Tomorrow, when we approach the question of the Golan and Jerusalem, additional enemies of democracy will emerge. The day after tomorrow, when the issue on the agenda will be the Palestinian state, the number of the enemies of peace will grow further. (Calculate the cry of the anti-democrats and the betrayers of peace which will be sounded when the issue on the agenda will be autonomy for Israeli Arabs which Asa Kasher has long supported). Therefore, if the Prime Minister wants national unity, he must fight the opponents of democracy. This is the true test before which he stands.

Peace and democracy are one and the same[20] and they both are opposed by the same enemies, which are at the same time enemies of national unity. The question, therefore, which might be asked in this context is: Which came first? Does "democracy-peace" precede its enemies or perhaps, do the enemies precede "peace-

democracy"? In other words, what is the goal and what are the means to achieving those goal? Does the definition of enemies result from the definition of democracy identified with peace, or perhaps, the definition of democracy which interests us results from the need to portray the opponents of the Oslo process who are not members of the "peace camp" (a Siamese twin and spiritual and physical descendant of the Stalinist "peace camp" which was designed, then as now, to perpetuate its rule through brainwashing using Orwellian code words like "democracy" and "peace") as enemies of peace, enemies of democracy and enemies of the nation?

An answer to this question can be found in Professor Shlomo Ben-Ami's book.[21] It is clear from his writings that the issue, in fact, is not peace per se, since "if eventually, Netanyahu is successful in achieving a dramatic step in the direction of peace whether with the Palestinians or with the Syrians and the Lebanese?"[22] In other words, what will we do in case Netanyahu steals the peace from the Israeli Left? Will we, heaven forbid, leave the government in the hands of the Right? We must understand that without the government being in our hands – the State of Israel has no right to exist, and in order that it have a right to exist, we must attract the votes of the right-wing electorate. Only in this way will we successfully perpetuate our rule, which means restoring our country to the path of democracy from which it digresses every time that the right ascends to power. We and democracy are one and the same. If not, Ben-Ami guarantees us civil war. His lunatic depiction of circumstances clearly portrays the essence of totalitarian democracy in its Israeli version: If we don't achieve our just desserts under the law of nature at the ballot box, our very foundations will quake.

> The imperative to break the deadlock with the right by co-opting its social-cultural territory, has far-reaching significance in terms of the future of Israeli society. I will phrase it pointedly: If the New Labor Party headed by Ehud Barak does not win the next elections, and it turns out that we were not successful in broadening the support base of the camp which he heads into the social-ethnic coalition of the other side, it will arouse deep despair in the Center-Left camp; despair which will lead to the deepening of the cultural war to the point where it will pose a genuine threat to our national unity. In that case, this camp will abandon the hope to build social and cultural bridges to the other side and will battle exclusively to strengthen its own social groups while conducting an ever-deteriorating confrontation with the other half of the nation…If the new leadership of the Left fails, just like the leaders of Mapai, the sense of doom will strengthen and the sense will intensify that the social-cultural division, which is also a political division, has no solution and no alternative remains other than that of confrontation. It could be that no solution exists other than one accomplished through severe internal trauma, resulting from a severe political, social and cultural confrontation over the nature of the State and society. I pray that we will succeed in capturing the support of broad strata, and we will not deteriorate into a situation in which the cultural and social camps will mobilize all of their might, sharpen their ideological and cultural weapons in order to bring about a traumatic decision…[23]

We will not pose the rhetorical question as to what would have happened if similar thoughts (even if they didn't have even one-eighth of the incitement which this paragon of local democracy allowed himself) had been expressed by a right-wing elected official during the term of the Rabin-Peres government. This, while referring to the "deep despair" in the right-wing camp caused by the Oslo process, perceived in that camp as a process which endangers the existence of the Jewish State. ("The Jewish State"…Just for using that clerical-nationalist phrase people will yet be sent to jail in this government of Leftist-Democratic religion).

There is no point in posing a question of that sort since that which is permissible to our totalitarian democrats is completely forbidden to the dark primitive "enemies of democracy", "fascists", "Judeo-Nazis" and "Khomeinists". They are that way merely due to the fact that they belong to the camp opposing the one which owns the monopoly on democracy, whether it is called for our purposes according to present-day vogue "the socialist camp", "the peace camp", or the Israeli "New Labor" camp.[24] And what is the solution to the existential need to attract votes from the fascist camp to the democratic camp? The answer, as always, is extremely democratic:

> The struggle between the alternatives requires the development of a **recruitment code** (my emphasis, R.E.)…My obsession is locating a recruitment code for the Israeli "New Labor". Without it, the Labor Party will have no future as it will turn to dust, die of lack of identity. Already today, it looks like a corpse. It was brought

to this situation by those who refused to renovate the Israeli Left and were content to rely exclusively on "peace" and "economic growth".[25]

Hence, Ben-Ami does not hesitate to place the sacred, holy "peace" into quotation marks, just as he does not hesitate to claim that Rabin's victory in 1992 was the result of an accident and the spirit in the land during the years of his government were the result of a momentary and conjunctural mutation".[26] Why so? Because it is clear that the Labor Party was unable to turn the tide and we returned to the rule of paralysis, fear, anxiety and frustration",[27] in other words, a non-Left government. Ben-Ami has other interesting suggestions. For example, he suggests to develop (for the purpose of drawing votes from the other camp to "our" camp) the same "sense of community"[28] which his ideological partners generally treat as fascism and Nazism, and the same nationalism which is immediately transformed into anti-democratic "ultra-nationalism"[29] when it relates to the wrong side of the political divide.[30] Once again, there is no point in posing rhetorical questions how is it that the same phenomena are fascist and Nazi when they are connected to the Right but perfectly democratic when they serve the purposes of the Left. But there is no problem here and everything is as clear as day: The "sense of community" is the only method remaining in which the Left can rob the Right and the religious community of its monopoly on "social warmth".[31] Yes, there is no mistake here. It is the same "warmth" to which Ben-Ami refers when he quotes Arthur Koestler's **Darkness at Noon**, in order to hint at the identity between the Israeli Right and Nazism[32]. However, "warmth" from the Left is a noble objective by its very nature as it serves the cause of democracy.

How could it be otherwise? How can one raise arguments and doubts? It is stated and alluded to daily: Democracy is us and we are democracy. Democracy and peace in the spirit of Shimon Peres and Asa Kasher are the order of the day and the one, exclusive truth. And if any heretic should consider the possibility that it is we, the Left, who are fascists because of that "sense of community", which we can best develop and implement; because of the lunatic threat of a civil war, because of the pathological hatred which we have developed towards the ultra-orthodox community…Furthermore, if he should consider the possibility to further claim that we, the Left, are Bolsheviks and Stalinists due to our identification of democracy with our camp and our depiction of anyone who disagrees with us as enemies of the people, well, if "anyone" like that exists, we will know how to trample him into the dirt using measures familiar to us from the "second homeland" period.

The Israeli Liberal Democracy in its War Against Jewish Fascists and Nazis

It is doubtful that the rich, original philosophy of Professor Ya'akov Talmon is known among "enlightened" circles in Israel. In any case, there is no doubt that it does not command the same attention (if at all) as do the well-articulated philosophies of Asa Kasher, Ze'ev Sternhal, Baruch Kimmerling or Moshe Zimmerman. And it is no wonder, as the latter all deal, directly or indirectly, but always through academic methodology, with the systematic, intensive denigration of what they call the "Israeli Right", in other words, religious and ultra-orthodox communities, settlers and other pariahs in the eyes of the Israeli-liberal. Their philosophies, ideologies and beliefs are always presented, at best, in a vitriolic, mocking light. Usually the comparison is with fascism and Nazism. Ya'akov Talmon, on the other hand, deals in his research with the problem of totalitarian democracy, the totalitarianism of the Left (which exists alongside the totalitarianism of the right but is based on the ideas of individualism and rationalism)[33], the Messianism of the secular religion (which is much more dangerous than authentic religious Messianism)[34], and the ideational absolutism of those "who view themselves as the most enlightened in society" and therefore as "entitled to and even obligated to impose on the recalcitrants" their absolute ideals.[35]

"Totalitarian democracy", according to Talmon, is the system according to which "there is one and only one truth in politics".[36] Clearly, that certain truth can be exchanged for another, but the "democracy" which yesterday believed in the first truth and today believes in the second, will remain totalitarian. This precisely happened in Israel when the liberal incarnation of the exclusive truth replaced, in time, its previous Socialist-Marxist incarnation.[37] Today, Israeli liberals identify with the neo-liberal approach. Whether they define it in

a relevant manner or not, the point is that in their rapid leap from socialism to post-modern liberalism, they skipped over classical liberalism. Reading their publications and listening to their speeches raises serious doubts as to whether they understand this. The classical-liberal school negates the requirement that there exists an exclusive truth in politics, but it does not rule out the essential existence of truth. The neo-liberal school rules out the existence of objective truth and replaces it with subjective ideals, with totally relative priorities and narratives. However, total relativism of that sort in the complex conditions extant in Israel, is only useful and effective in a limited sense. Therefore, there is an existential need to adjust and improve it, and only then will it be appropriate for use here.

Western liberals in the second half of the century are very careful about the danger inherent in the totalitarian democracy school, in other words, about conceptual absolutism in the definition of the term "democracy". In literature, it is repeatedly emphasized that the term has many definitions and that numerous contradicting meanings are attributed to it.[38] Therefore, it is certainly possible to arrive at a totally relativist conclusion, that democracy means that which everyone wants it to mean.[39] Liberals claim that not only democracy but also terms depicting its components are open to various interpretations.[40] And, in fact, numerous and contradictory meanings are ascribed to terms like "rule of the people", "rule of law", "majority decision", "minority rights", and so on. In the Soviet Union, "rule of people" according to the Soviet interpretation of the philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, means the rule of the "general will". The "rule of law" existed in that totalitarian country, as the rule of the Soviet law, which facilitated the rule of the exclusive ruling party, and guaranteed the official ideological preeminence of the Marxist -Leninist ideology.

Is this historical fact sufficient to negate democratic-liberal legitimacy from terms like "the rule of the people" and "the rule of law"? Do the instances in which the decision of the majority harms the rights of the minority prove that the ideal of "majority decision" is totally irrelevant to liberal democracy? The response of liberals to questions of that sort are indecisive but are clearly relativist. Those who achieve a parliamentary majority, they claim, will view their decisions which harm minority expectations as democracy which manifests itself in majority rule. Those who lose the parliamentary vote due to their minority status will view their loss as a blow to democracy, as its sacred principle is respect for the rights of the minority, and in the bottom line, those demands express the particular interests of these groups. Each group will be prepared to demand democracy until its interests are realized, but the demands of the groups which oppose those interests are liable to be interpreted by the former as contradictory to the spirit of democracy and to democracy itself.[41]

The Israeli scholar Zion Ben-Sura views this sort of relativism as a real danger:

> If, indeed,there is no one definition of real democracy, and the differing definitions are merely reflections of distinct ideologies held by different groups…we have before us the basis for severe polarization which will be unbridgeable. Each group is apparently entitled to claim that it exclusively represents the genuine principle of democracy. The depth of polarization is liable to lead the purveyors of one truth to the conclusion that in the name of the defense of democracy it is necessary to silence the purveyors of the other truth. If this will actually be undertaken, the silence will not be the result of a purer truth, but rather the result of the power of the believers of one truth prevailing over the power of the believers of the alternative truth.[42]

The solution which the Israeli liberals found for this difficult problem is actually quite simple. What eased the location and implementation of the solution is the fact that the Israeli Right in general and the religious and ultra-orthodox in particular, were educated in a political tradition which prevents them from claiming that they profess democratic principles. Therefore, they, themselves, provide one exclusive group in Israeli society (that referred to as the "enlightened community"), the exclusive, monopolistic right to depict itself as "democratic" and to repeatedly attempt to silence its opponents "in the name of protecting democracy".

This is not to say that relativist liberalism is totally irrelevant in Israeli democracy. The opposite is true. The creative talents of the Israeli liberals enabled them to conceive the most advanced effective method to achieve their objective. As a result of this (I must admit) ingenuous invention, it is clear that it is definitely possible to use democracy in a way that, in one case, it will function like a liberal democracy – open and

extremely tolerant – while in another case, it will immediately transform into totalitarian democracy which believes in one exclusive truth. In the first instance, not only inciters to murder, but murderers themselves, will be treated by Israeli democracy in a manner approximating love, while in the second instance, not only actions but every word and expression which contradicts the spirit of totalitarian democracy will be portrayed as an "ideological sin" and as an extremely serious crime, and he who pronounced it will possibly even stand trial. The unlimited tolerance of the enlightened Israeli democracy will apparently manifest itself towards the "Palestinians sighing under the boot of the Israeli occupation" and towards "Palestinians, third class Israeli citizens who lack all civil rights."[43] The totalitarian visage of the liberal democracy will be directed towards the Jewish enemy residing on the other side of the societal divide.

So writes the Israeli scholar Rafael Cohen Almog:

> Liberals claim that no one objective, "correct" ideological scale exists, a scale which contains an optimal assortment of ideals…Similarly, they claim that there exists no one way to resolve conflicts between ideals. Therefore, if there is no objective, "correct" ideological scale to guide us, all individuals should be allowed to arrive at their own ideological scale and to allow enough flexibility to design a concept of good. Tolerance ought to be adopted in order to allow that flexibility.[44]

Most definitely a tolerant approach, which is apparently so appropriate for the harsh, complex Israeli reality in which different groups with their opposing philosophies collide with the objective of finding "the one and only way to resolve conflicts" between their ideals. Does Israeli democracy really allow all individuals and all groups in society to maintain their ideals in an equal, symmetrical manner? Are all of the ideals extant in Israeli society legitimate from a democratic perspective?

In order to resolve the inherent contradiction between the liberal approach cited above and the Israeli reality (in which liberalism, if it were symmetrical to all sides, would harm enlightened democracy and lead to the victory of the right-wing religious fascism), Israeli liberals "improve" Western liberalism by not starting from the beginning but rather by starting from the end. The beginning is unequivocal tolerance and openness. The end is the limits of tolerance. In democratic Israel, the limits are principal, certainly as far as democracy related to Jews.

Now, I would like to broaden the scope of the discussion and consider an additional argument. Robert Nozick[45] holds that we, as individuals and collectively, can advance our understanding relating to the good and ethical by allowing individuals to live their lives according to their choice. This is true as long as the individuals debate and consider alternatives to their paths of experience through which they can reach their best possible lives. The primary assumption guiding Nozik is that there exists a common basis for dialogue which enables discussion, exchange of information and understanding of one another. However, a common basis for dialogue does not always exist. It could be argued that regarding certain cultural minorities the basis for conducting discussion does not exist. This is because the concept of good for those minorities, their political and cultural norms, the ethical codes which they hold, are so different from **the liberal perception** (my emphasis R.E.), that the gap does not enable dialogue and the exchange of ideas. We sometimes avoid discussing issues with our opponents because we don't believe that we can arrive at any understanding or compromise, the only possible result of a discussion of that sort is liable to be **the granting of legitimacy to the opponent** (my emphasis, R.E.) and that result conflicts with our interests".[46]

No, the reference is not to Azmi Bishara who demands the abrogation of the Zionist, Jewish character of the State of Israel, not to Ahmed Tibi, nor to Yassir Arafat who has not rescinded nor will he rescind the Palestinian Charter according to which the ultimate purpose of the struggle is the destruction of the State of Israel. The reference is not to George Habash whose hand, a proud Israeli president, shook. The direct and explicit reference in Dr. Cohen-Almagor's book is to the late Rav Kahana and his movement. Even after he was murdered under unclear circumstances, there is apparently a theoretical need to explain and justify, @*ex post facto*@@, the fact that his movement was banned. On the other hand, anyone who claims that there is no place in the Israeli Knesset for Dr. Bishara or any other Arab MK who collaborates with Israel's enemies and openly incites for the murder of Jews and Arabs (land dealers, for example) for nationalist reasons, that

claimant will be immediately depicted by Israeli liberals as a racist, fascist and Nazi, and legal measures might be taken against him.

Cohen-Almagor in his above-quoted book, explicitly deals with broader communities than just Kahanist groups. But the approach which forbids interaction with those whose perception of good differs from the liberal perception (in its Israeli interpretation), definitely enables its application beyond the Kahanist movement. It is no coincidence that the other Israeli liberals do just that and more.

For example, in this way:

> It is no coincidence that all of the participants in Israeli public life did a great injustice to Rav Kahana, his philosophy and his movement, by highlighting his hatred of Arabs and the ethnic cleansing element in his philosophy. The central message in Kahana's ideology was and remains the transformation of Israel into a theocratic state which will be governed based on the laws of halakha, while "transfer" was merely a by-product of this perception. The religious community understood his intention very well and, at least, a large number of them, were unable not to identify with his main ambitions, even if there were partial reservations regarding his commentaries on Judaism and his path. Most of orthodoxy held that his intentions were desirable but that the actions should be left in the hands of God. The "nationalist" religious could not deny the justness of his cause, but they believed that the people were not yet ready and the time was not yet ripe.[47]

Not only are they fascists, those who don't believe in that zealous liberal faith, which does not at all tolerate any idea which is not totally consistent with it, they are even worse, they are Nazis.

"When we assume power, we will settle our accounts with those who asserted force against us when they were in power." This statement was not made in Israel, but in Germany; not in the nineties but in the thirties; the person who said it, G., was not referring to Commander Aryeh Amit but to Bernard Weis, Commander of the Capital Police Force, who identified with the Left…The history of the Weimar Republic, the ultimate test case for the collapse of democracy in the twentieth century, seems uncommonly relevant. It is not only the magic number, 1932, but the whole phenomenon: How the enemies of democracy take advantage of its rules with the democratic regime powerless to defend itself properly… One of the problems with a liberal democracy is that it is a middle of the road government. The extremist forces which threaten in one of the two extremes, and they feed off of each other creating the need for each extreme to battle the other by destroying the center. In the days of Weimar the partnership between the extreme Right and the extreme Left was an important foundation in paving the way for the collapse of democracy. In Israel in the nineties, there is no powerful extreme Left but the extreme Right has a position on the other side of the system in the form of Hamas. This is a partnership dictated by the situation of occupation in which Israeli democracy finds itself.[48]

However, the question "who is a fascist in Israel" is not that simple, and the answer is not that unequivocal. Dr. Ran Breiman, a member of the Professors for Political and Political Strength, analyzed the behavior of those he classified as the extreme Left, based on the criteria of fascism established by Professor Binyamin Neuberger[49] and arrived at the conclusion that it is actually the Left which exhibits many of the characteristics of that phenomenon. "If totalitarianism exists in Israel, its source is in the Left, in the haughtiness of the "peace" camp which denounces anyone who dares to disagree with its opinion as war mongers."[50]

Anyone who relates to the expressions of the rabbis of the "liberal" Left regarding religious Jews, ultra-orthodox, simple religious or settlers in the West Bank and Gaza[51] will reach a conclusion even more severe than that of Dr. Breiman, and will find his own answer to an additional question: "Who is an Israeli Nazi?"

Israeli Democracy Distinguishes Between Enemy and Friend

This writer is not alone in her criticism of Israeli democracy. Criticism of this sort is not considered at all illegitimate, on one absolute condition, that it does not originate in inherently non-democratic and unenlightened circles and communities. The Israeli academic circles fulfill this condition without a shadow

of a doubt, and, therefore, the criticism of which we are speaking is very common and widespread among them. In this way, Professor Yonatan Shapira of Tel Aviv University reaches the conclusion, while researching the political reality and the political culture in Israel from the time of the Yishuv until our day, that "the status of the dominant ideology in the Yishuv was close to the status that the communist ideology enjoyed in the Soviet Union, even though there, the politicians were aided by the enforcement power of the State"[52]. In his treatment of this situation he uses terms like Mapai's "spiritual dominance", "the hegemony of the party", and the like, and claims that groups which did not accept the ideological (socialist) party line, which depicted itself as the party of the entire people, found themselves "outside the dominant political-spiritual system".[53] In this way, Mapai established its exclusive hegemony over the Zionist movement in the Hebrew Yishuv in the Land of Israel.

However, anyone who might suppose that Professor Shapira is referring in his above-quoted book to the political, ideological and spiritual-cultural delegitimization by the "party of the people", of its political, ideological and spiritual opponents, in other words, the Revisionists and the religious, is sorely mistaken. This is not his intention. The reference is to those characterized by him as "intelligentsia".[54] The reference is to "Land of Israel youth, who were influenced by the Zionism of negating the Diaspora and believed in the creation of a new Jew in the land of Israel," those who "called themselves Hebrews instead of Jews in order to underscore their new identity and who strove to "define the people of Israel as a secular-national society on a territorial basis".[55] The reference is to the "Canaanites."[56] Apparently, had that Land of Israel youth, for whom the word "Zionism" became a dirty word,[57] already then, in that period, ascended to key positions in society and politics, matters in our country would have developed in a much more positive fashion, and if rather than the politicians, the writers, journalists and lawyers were from the start and not only now, the primary ideologues, then our country would have been completely democratic from the start, in other words, would have corresponded to the demands of the "Canaanites". In any case, it is not the delegitimization of the religious Jews and of the non-religious Jews who value Jewish tradition which concerns Professor Yonatan Shapira, on the contrary, he views them and their philosophy as a great danger. The treatment of national-religious and ultra-orthodox communities as enemies of democracy could not possibly trouble the professor, as that is becoming prevalent in Israeli political culture, thanks in large part to the influence of the many writers, journalists and lawyers, since the original sin of our democracy, in his opinion, is the treatment of the Arab minority as an enemy.

This original sin stems, according to Yonatan Shapira, from nothing other than the emphasis placed on the security issue by hegemonic Mapai back in the Yishuv period, and this came to be not because of the real threat and the no less real attacks perpetrated by real enemies, but rather because the assumption of the management of the security-military issues by politicians "strengthened their influence in Jewish society in the Land of Israel"[58]. In substantiating this approach, Yonatan Shapira enlists the support of Karl Schmidt, a right-wing German political scientist who published his book, quoted by a Professor from Tel Aviv University, at the end of the Weimar era. Yonatan Shapira insists on commenting that:

> A claim exists among commentators that Schmidt, like many of his co-generationists, lived in the shadow of Bismarck, the iron chancellor. Bismarck was the man who established the German State and ruled over it. In Schmidt's eyes, and in the eyes of many others, his will was the manifestation of the will of the country. Therefore, Schmidt willfully accepted, researchers say, the leadership of another chancellor as well, Adolf Hitler, and justified the dictatorial power which he assumed, and many of his actions.[59]

Now that it is clear to us to whom and to what the learned Professor parallels the emphasis placed on issues of military security by politicians in the Yishuv period, let us cite his substantiation in which he enlisted the support of Karl Schmidt:

> Schmidt was involved in an effort to understand the essence of politics. Politics, according to Schmidt's definition, relates to one central question: the determination of who is an enemy and who is a friend of the state. The state decides this issue based on considerations stemming from the need to guarantee its existence in the face of its enemies, and that is its *raison d'etat*. When the state arrives at the awareness that its enemy endangers its peace and standing, Schmidt explained, it and its citizens must be prepared to go out and fight it as well.

> Since the determination who is a friend of the state and who is the enemy is the essence of politics (for Schmidt, politics and state are identical terms), all other problems of society – economic, social and ethical – are subservient to this basic determination."[60]

And then Yonatan Shapira summarizes the almost obvious parallel which he made between the political reality in the Yishuv period and Nazism and claims that:

> Politics at the last stage of the Yishuv period busied itself more and more with the distinction between foe and friend, and assumed that this decision of the Yishuv obligates all Jewish residents to be prepared to fight against **those who were declared enemies** (my emphasis, R.E.). In the Yishuv society, the parties took upon themselves the authority to determine who was an enemy and who was a friend, and when it was appropriate to battle against the enemy. The nation wanted a state and was prepared to go to war in order to get it. This nationalist society, controlled by the parties, achieved sovereignty in 1948.[61]

The mistake of establishing a colonialist (and apparently Nazi) state, according to Yonatan Shapira's presentation of the facts, stems, therefore, from the erroneous distinction between foe and friend. If only Ben-Gurion and his party had understood already then (as it is understood today by post-Zionist writers, journalists, lawyers and academicians) that the real enemies are the antiquated (religious and supporters of Judaism in Israeli society) Jews in contrast to the new Israelis ("the enlightened community" which is continuing the lifework of the "Canaanites") and the friends are the predecessors of Yassir Arafat and Naif Hawatme (whose hand was shaken by the President of the State of Israel, who by virtue of his position represents the entire nation during this period of Israeli liberalism)[62], then perhaps, Prof. Shapira would not have opposed Karl Schmidt's approach and would not have drawn a parallel between politics during the Yishuv period to Nazism, perhaps there would have been no need for quotes and parallels, even in academia and in post-Zionist circles within it, because then the State of Israel would not be in existence and Zionism would have been forgotten as if it never existed.

But in reality, things happened as they happened, and deteriorated even more after the Six Day War. "The military security policy which relied on the national-religious tradition, strengthened the status of religion in Israeli society, and accelerated the process of its **Judaization** [63] (my emphasis, R.E.). In the course of time, an effective weapon in the war against the Judaization of the State of Israel was developed. The weapon is democracy. To those in the know, the use of this weapon has a long tradition and a deep historical connection to the war against both Judaization and Jews. It is just that in former times, this sort of treatment of the Jewish problem was not really considered democracy, at least not in the eyes of the enlightened world. Azmi Bishara, one of those in the know, in a much more organized and open manner than Prof. Yonatan Shapira, explained the job of democracy in the State of Israel, in an interview which he granted to Aryeh Shavit.[64] He does not rule out, he said, a temporary solution of two states for two peoples. However, this solution can be only temporary, because democracy requires that the essential framework be bi-national.

And there can be a possibility of two political entities, each of them democratic (democratic according to Azmi Bishara means certainly not Zionist and not Jewish – R.E.)…In any case, for every Palestinian, the land must be like all of Palestine, and for every Israeli, it must be like all of the Land of Israel.

With one caveat, of course, that "no settler can remain in the territories. A Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza will be unable to tolerate even one settlement." And the full right of return for all Palestinian refugees, in other words, not only to the Palestinian state which will be established. And certainly to put an end to Zionism, "the strange story of Zionism", and to finish with all of the Jewish ultra-orthodox and ultra-nationalists since "the old Zionism…went bankrupt…but now, in its place, a new far-reaching process is transpiring, the Zionization of the ultra-orthodox and the trend towards religion of the right…the result will be the development of a new bloc…I call it Jewish fascism".[65]

Azmi Bishara is not alone in characterizing Jews in that way and not only he defines the term "democracy" as a total alternative to Judaism. Today that approach is mainstream in our country, and, therefore, the ultra-orthodox and the settlers are "extremists" (meaning anti-democratic fascists and Nazis), while Azmi Bishara's party ran for the Israeli Knesset in order to struggle for democracy from within.

> To the extent that you return to your Biblical roots and to faith in the land of your forefathers, you transform Israel into a crusader state, but I am not willing to wait hundreds of years for Saladin. I think that someone who wants to wait is someone who does not want to do anything for himself and expects history to work for him and solve his problems. Therefore, for me, Saladin is not an option. As far as I'm concerned, no such option exists".[66]

At the beginning of his above-quoted book, Prof. Shapira relates to the distinction which exists in literature between politics which relates to society as consisting of community interests and politics which relates to society as a moral community.

> A moral community is guided by ideals in which its leaders and members are supposed to believe and act accordingly. A society based on community interests, on the other hand, consists of interest groups with the role of politics being to guarantee that society (or the state) works in favor of those interests.

> In a democratic regime, the legitimacy of politics of community interests is the democratic-liberal idea. According to this idea, the state must work towards satisfying the desires and wishes of the groups and individuals among its citizenry. The objectives of the state are determined by the civilian society, and they dictate to the political system its goals… In a liberal democracy, when the parties and the political elite represent interest groups, the task of the politicians is to find a way to respond to the conflicting needs of as many groups as possible in order to gain their support.[67]

This is the relevant presentation of the liberal-democratic approach which Prof. Shapira used in order to prove that both in the Hebrew Yishuv in the Land of Israel and during most of the years of the existence of the State of Israel, politics was nothing other than undemocratic moral politics.

This writer might agree, to a certain extent, with this claim of Yonatan Shapira if it was referring to the politics of the left-wing parties vis-a-vis the right and the national-religious and ultra-orthodox communities. But as we have seen this is not the case, but rather the opposite is true. It is precisely the moral and ideological delegitimization of those groups which seems to him totally insufficient. These are the anti-democratic forces which cause the Judaization of the State of Israel and, therefore, have no right to exist in our so-called liberal democracy, which is the private domain of the "enlightened community", referred to by Justice Barak.

I don't know if the scholarly professor is aware that his philosophy totally contradicts the liberal-democratic approach which he himself presented at the beginning of his book. But I have no doubt that the Israeli Right, especially the national religious and the ultra-orthodox, have internalized the totalitarian-democratic outlook which the "enlightened community" developed and inculcated into their awareness, and are completely ignorant of the fact that liberal democracy actually served them and the entire Israeli nation residing in Zion.[68] It serves the moderate and radical Left as well, even Prof. Shapira and Yossi Sarid, because in totalitarian democracy which distinguishes between friend and foe – the friend being Azmi Bishara and Yassir Arafat, and the enemy being the Jew faithful to tradition and the Israeli people, to the Torah of Israel and the Land of Israel – we do not all have the right to exist.

Summary

In academic literature, the traditional claim is that democracy is an undefined concept which has numerous contradictory definitions. This is also true of "liberal democracy". Fania Oz-Sulzberger describes the situation in this way:

"Liberal democracy is often perceived as a combination which overcame its rivals and the limitations of its components. There are those who view it as **the** (with emphasis on the) victorious ideology of the modern era. There are those who see it as a comprehensive system which is above all ideologies, and the key to the organization and ordering of different and contradictory world-views."[69]

It is appropriate to point out that even those who prefer one ideological approach (of the two described above), they interpret it according to a neutral model and do not intend to delegitimize the competing

ideology (for example, the conservative or neo-conservative ideology in the United States). And even if those who disagree with this approach, claiming that neutrality among liberals is only a "masquerade" and it is actually an ideology like any other, precisely the need to use this costume speaks for itself. Its meaning is that it is impossible to profess liberal democracy while at the same time negating the legitimacy of other ideologies and philosophies.

This is the way in which the problem under discussion is presented in Western academic literature, and sometimes even in Israeli academic literature. However, wonder of wonders, when it comes to public discourse – that which takes place in the Israeli media – the tables are turned and it becomes apparent that the alleged liberal democracy is ideological tyranny which fundamentally rejects any thinking which does not fall into line with the power centers and the hegemony of the common Hebrew liberal from the school of the Left.

This, in the famous spirit of tolerance of familiar democracies and ideologies:

"Popular democracy" of the Eastern bloc and the Third World viewed itself as the fulfillment of an ideal, as it relied on economic equality, abrogation of the right of possession and social hierarchy. Its attack against "bourgeois", "capitalist" democracy was based on the Marxist critique of political liberalism.[70]

The Israeli experience shows that the above-cited example is just one specific example of fundamentally anti-democratic use of democratic concepts.

Prof. Eliezer Schweid, in his book **Post-Zionist Zionism**, wrote:

> In the wake of the Six Day War, a movement of return to Jewish roots awakened in Israeli society, and its various manifestations lingered longer than the exhibits of national enthusiasm which were aroused by the war – on the contrary, they increased after the Yom Kippur War…However, simultaneously, a reverse trend which gained momentum in the eighties began, and eventually succeeded in overcoming the longing for Jewish roots: The polarization in the confrontation over religious Zionism and "religious coercion", and the polarization of the controversy over the "whole Land of Israel" caused the elevation of liberal democracy and its system of principles to the status of a comprehensive philosophy which shapes the personal identity and way of life of the secular Left. **This was the alternative response in the battle against Jewish religious identity on the one hand and national identity on the other** (my emphasis, R.E.).

There is no doubt that this development led to the "discovery" that there apparently is a contradiction between Israel's Jewishness and its democracy…

> Liberal democracy was now portrayed not as an ethical structure and framework of a political regime, but rather as a comprehensive philosophy and way of life. The outlook of the secular Left came into focus as a demand that the neo-liberal principles…not only limit and create a framework for dialogue, but **subordinate the religious and national ideals to it** (my emphasis, R.E.). The intention is that democracy **dictate the social-cultural public way of life in the State of Israel**.[71] (my emphasis, R.E.)

In Western countries and the United States, circles with totalitarian ideologies who often speak in the name of democracy and liberalism exist. In general, these are the various Marxist and neo-Marxist circles which are unable to profess an ideology of that sort openly due to well-known historical circumstances of the end of this century. Nevertheless, in Europe and America, no real danger exists to democracy on the part of the radical Left circles as they are unimportant, esoteric fringe groups whose influence is limited to one department or another in one of the universities. Noam Chomsky and his circle of foolish adherents are an example of this. The strength of American democracy deeply rooted in the tradition of Anglo-Saxon liberalism is enough to neutralize the danger of the Left which attempts to conceal its totalitarian objectives with a transparent mask of alleged democracy.

In case of an increase in the potential external threat to the country, democracy, in times of emergency, knows how to stifle radical left-wing movements in their formative stages, by banning them. Not so in our case. The Arab MK Azmi Bishara openly preaches for the destruction of the State of Israel, declares his candidacy for Prime Minister and is rewarded with the overwhelming support of the radical Left. Another

extreme case is the addition of MK Hashem Mahmid to the Security and Foreign Affairs Committee of the Knesset. Bishara, who utilizes the tools made available to him by Israeli democracy in order to destroy Israel from within, was the one who blatantly incited the Arabs of Gaza to murder Jews during the *intifada* and thereafter. Therefore, that which is referred to as liberalism in Israel is nothing more than a method of granting full legitimacy to forces which threaten the existence of the State of Israel from without and within. Radical left circles which were once on the fringe here as well, gained control first of the general Left and subsequently of the so-called Right. In an extensive, fundamental process of brainwashing they succeeded in imposing upon the public a complete system of Orwellian semantics. The next stage is to shift from theory to practice. The perennial indoctrination bore fruit. A long line of political failures attests to this fact:

Camp David – Madrid – Oslo – Wye Plantation. As a result, democracy according to the fringe school of the totalitarian Left, that same evil spirit possessing the Jewish people throughout the twentieth century, has emerged from its hole, eroded the national existential purpose, and presented itself as the alternative to Zionism, nationality, Judaism.

This article would not be complete without a comment regarding the process of defeatism and of loss of substance which the Israeli Right has undergone – the process, which they euphemistically call "pragmatization" God forbid. This pragmatization led the Likud governments to implement in practice the political ideology of the Left. Consequently, behind the mask of right-wing Prime Ministers, in fact, the genuine rule of the Left is hiding. It is doubtful whether the leadership of the Right, which never was accepted by the country's elite (and it is questionable whether it was ever accepted by the general public), is aware of this.

The acquiescence of the Right was so complete that it even adopted the semantics of the Left and, therefore, failed in its attempt to create a reasonable public discourse. Furthermore, not only was it unsuccessful in "finding a place in the hearts", but it quickly became the subcontractor for the implementation of the policies of the radical Left on the national level. This resulted in its failure to maintain the Land of Israel and in its willingness to establish a Palestinian state – something which until recently was anathema and was tantamount to national destruction.

The Right failed without being aware of it, in the primary battlefield in the post-modern age: the battlefield of "the struggle over the creation and attribution of meanings and definitions to the words and concepts which mark the central phenomena of our lives."[72]

Is it really the Left alone which is responsible for the failure which on the bottom line is our common failure? Isn't the upshot of all this that we need a New Right? Both Jewish and democratic; religious and secular; committed to the Land of Israel on both the rational and emotional level; believing in the historic right of the people of Israel to Zion and unembarrassed by its faith, its patriotism and its belief in the Jewish heritage. A New Right, which speaks in concepts used in the Western world but does not relinquish the eternal, sacred concepts of its nation. A New Right, which when it comes into existence, will facilitate the return of the Left to its historic activism in building the State.

We must return to ourselves, Right and Left. To return, despite the differences between us, a difference which we must not allow to create a chasm of hostility. We must rip the mask of deceit from our lives, the lie of "democracy" of the artificial, totalitarian liberal school, which wreaks havoc on our existential purpose. We shall overcome and prevail. We will prevail, with God's help, on our own, with the help of a free and courageous spirit, freedom of thought and a rational analysis of the historic situation.

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[1] Oz Almog, "The Democratic Faith" **Panim**, vol. 2, May, 1997, p.10

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., p.11

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., p.10

[9] Ibid., p.11

[10]   Ibid., p.12

[11]   Ibid.

[12]   Ibid., pp.12-13

[13]   Ibid., p. 16

[14]   Ibid., p.19

[15]   Ya'akov Talmon, **The Beginning of Totalitarian Democracy**, Zemora -Bitan, Tel-Aviv,1987.

[16]   Ibid., p.20.

[17]   Ibid., p. 31.

[18]   Ibid., pp. 32-33.

[19]   Udi Lavel, "Socrates (res.)", **Yediot Aharonot**, "7Days", 31.10.97, This wide-ranging article was devoted to the personality and activities of Prof. Kasher.

[20]   Left-wing propagabdists who shatter Zionist and Jewish "myths", do this in order to make room for new myths instilled into the public consciousness and their own. Primary among them are the myth of "peace" and the myth of "democracy" and the relationship between them in terms of post-Zionist mythology. This trend is especially prevalent in the writings of Asa Kasher. See, for example: Asa Kasher "The Democratic Obligation to Strive for Peace", from **Peace: Legal and Other Aspects in Memory of Yitzhak Rabin**, Legal Research Projects, Bar-Ilan University, 1998 pp. 343-361.

[21]   Shlomo Ben-Ami, **A Place for All - Eli Bar-Navi Speaks with Shlomo Ben-Ami**, United Kibbutz Publishers, Tel-Aviv, 1998.

[22]   Ibid., p. 293.

[23]   Ibid., pp. 395-396.

[24]   Ibid., pp.233, 303.

[25]   Ibid., p.303, dissatisfaction from reliance on "peace" stems from the fact that Netanyahu "stole" the "peace" from the "peace" camp. In contrast to Asa Kasher, Prof. Ben-Ami's pragmatism is not affected by myths. He, therefore, outlines a new path which will guarantee eternal, not transient, victory for the Left. This avant-garde vision is that which guides him in his "social" platform as well.

[26]   Ibid., p. 292.

[27]   Ibid.

[28]   Ibid., pp. 301-329.

[29]   Ibid., pp. 233-299.

[30]   So, for example, regarding Russian immigrants. If they do not support the "right camo", they are characterized as "Russians", products of a totalitarian regime. So too Prof. Ben-Ami: "There is a conspicuous Zionist-nationalist faction there which is difficult to penetrate. It could be a result of life in a regime which educated one to have strong identities…but we must arrive at e dialogue… in any case we must insist and break through.

[31]   Ibid., p. 302.

[32]   Ibid.

[33]   Ya'akov Talmon, **The Beginning of Totalitarian Democracy,** p. 3.

[34]   Ibid., pp.8-10.

[35]   Ibid., pp.3,7, see also: Ya'akov Talmon, **Political Messianism, The Romantic Stage**, Am Oved and Dvir Publishers, Tel-Aviv, 5725.

[36]   Ya'akov Talmon, **The Beginning of Totalitarian Democracy**, p. 1.

[37]   Eliezer Livne writes as follows: "In the thirties and forties, the left-wing socialist, Zionists in Israel declared, that the Soviet Union is their 'second homeland'. They intended to identify ideologically which in no way compromised their day-to-day devotion to the Zionist effort." Later, Livne claims, the left exchanged their "second homeland" for Western culture: "Israelis view the liberal West as their spiritual homeland, and they impose its transient concepts and its assessments of actuality, though they do not characterize it as a second homeland, its influence upon them is much greater than the influence which the Soviet legends and lore had on the communist adherents of a generation

ago. Eliezer Livne, **Israel and the Crisis of Western Civilization**, Schocken Publishers, Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv, 5732, 1972, p. 89

[38] See, for example, Naess, 1956, p. 15. Naess discovered 422 definitions for the term "democracy", p. 30.

[39] Ibid., p. 21.

[40] See concerning this, for example, Naess, 1956, Holden, 1974, Schattschneider, 1960 and others.

[41] See: Finer, 1940, pp. 67-70.

[42] Zev Ben-Sira, **Zionism Versus Democracy**, Jerusalem: J.L. Magnes Publishers, Hebrew University, 5755, p. 16.

[43] "Hezbullah is a national liberation movement of the first order. Lebanon will be a graveyard for anyone who invades its land as an enemy," MK Hashem Mahmid on February 25, 1999 in a lecture before Arab students at the University of Haifa. In a meeting of the "United Arab students", additional Arab MK's participated along with Arafat's adviser, Ahmed Tibi, who called for the Arab parties to unite. Mahmid said that he hopes "that the whole Arab nation follow in the footsteps of the Hezbullah". He noted that 250 million Arabs in neighboring Aran countries are awaiting the outcome of the elections in Israel…He warned against Arab citizens giving their support to zionist parties "instead of to the Arab unity". **Hazofe**, Feb. 26, 1999.

[44] Rafael Cohen-Almagor, **The Limits of Tolerance and Freedom, Liberal Theory and the Struggle Against Kahanism**, Nevo Publishers, Jerusalem,1994, pp.70-71.

[45] See: Robert Nozick, pp. 505-506.

[46] Rafael Cohen-Almagor, Ibid., p. 93.

[47] Baruch Kimmerling, "This is Their Land", **Ha'aretz**, Sept. 6, 1995.

[48] Moshe Zimmerman, "The Weimar Writing on the Jerusalem Wall", **Ha'aretz**, Sept. 6, 1995.

[49] **Ha'aretz**, Dec. 23, 1993.

[50] Ron Breiman, "Who is a Fascist?", **Ha'aretz**, Jan. 25, 1999.

[51] See for example, Arie Stav: When I See the Ultra-Orthodox, I Understand the Nazis, Self-Hatred in Words and Drawings", **Nativ**, 1997, 1-2, pp. 45-49.

[52] Yonatan Shapira, **Society Held Hostage by Politicians**, Workers Library, 1996, Tel-Aviv, p. 20.

[53] Ibid.

[54] "…Politicians have become the ideologues of the new society. They, and not the intelligentsia, they and not the writers, the journalists or the lawyers. The ideology was an important source of their power, and therefore, they were reluctant to deposit it in the hands of others." p. 20.

[55] Ibid., p. 48.

[56] Ibid., p. 50.

[57] Ibid., p. 51.

[58] Ibid., p. 24.

[59] Ibid., p. 25.

[60] Ibid., p. 24.

[61] Ibid., p. 25.

[62] Weizman told Naif Hawatme that the extreme right in Israel is causing difficulties and torpedoing any chance for peace.

[63] Ibid., p.122.

[64] **Ha'aretz**, May 29, 1998.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Yonatan Shapira, Ibid., pp. 20-21.

[68] As a political system and a form of government, it serves the whole society and all of its component groups, and certainly the Right no less than the Left, and the religious no less than the secular. See: On the Jewish sources of

liberalism: Yoram Hazoni, "The Jewish Source for the Western Tradition of Civil Disobedience", **Techelet**, vol. 4, 1998, pp. 14-56.

[69] Fania Oz-Sulzberger, "Liberal Democracy: An Historic View of a Complicated Matter", from **Culture and Democracy**, vol. 1, Bar-Ilan University Publishers, Ramat Gan, 5759 (1999).

[70] Fania Oz-Sulzberger, Ibid., p. 125.

[71] Eliezer Schweid, **Post-Zionist Zionism**, World Zionist Library Publishers, Jerusalem, 5756 (1996), p. 52.

[*] Editor's note: So, for example, the American Peace Now which functioned primarily on the East Coast was disbanded with the outbreak of WWII. The movement was banned, its offices confiscated and its leaders imprisoned.

[*] Editor's note: Bishara proudly displayed a petition signed by 75 Israeli intellectuals who supported his candidacy and ideas.

[72] Gadi Yaziv, "Social Lexicon", **Discourse**, Sifriyat Hamenahel, 1998, p. 228.