

Teaching the history of Zionism in an Arab Context: Empirical and Ethical Imperatives

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Introduction: Know Your Enemy?

“AUC Arabs unanimous: Israel has no right to exist” headlined *The Caravan*, the main student newspaper at the American University in Cairo (AUC), on May 10, 2009. “Despite studying at The American University in Cairo, the majority of Arab students here support a hardline view denying Israel’s right to exist . . . Those polled unanimously opposed the existence of the Jewish state, while half said they did not separate Israel from America.”¹

The Arabic-language article on the same theme was even more provocative on account of its critique of the Egyptian government and the Arab states. A Palestinian student who was interviewed discounted the Arab world’s ability to influence the Palestinian cause, on account of its military and diplomatic weakness. As for Egypt’s position, he interpreted it structurally: “Egypt cannot stand with the Palestinians against Israel, or in other words against America,” because of American economic hegemony. Egypt’s relationship with Israel was particularly sensitive at that moment, since memories were still fresh of the calamitous and lopsided conflict between Hamas, the Palestinian Islamist faction dominating the Gaza Strip, and the Israel Defense Forces, fought in December 2008-January 2009. *The Caravan* noted that some Palestinians and Arabs—and certainly some Egyptians as well—saw the government of Hosni Mubarak as complicit in the massacre of civilians in Gaza, since Mubarak’s government made no secret of its aversion to Hamas’s rule over the tiny enclave.² On the other hand, a former Egyptian diplomat was also quoted, who asserted that Egypt had always upheld the right of the Palestinians to form a state.³ This was, to be sure, the establishment view. But the opinion of most politically engaged students was probably better epitomized by Professor Rashid Khalidi, a senior Palestinian-American historian, who, while visiting the AUC campus in the wake of the 2011 uprising, declared: “Mubarak was the pillar of the [Israeli] occupation.”⁴

It’s worth noting that the *Caravan’s* opinion poll took place *thirty years* after Egypt and Israel signed a peace treaty with one another. It has often been described as a “cold peace,” and the poll shows why. Three decades of diplomatic relations had done almost nothing to assuage anger at the injustice most Arabs perceive as integral, not only to the ongoing occupation of Arab lands seized in the 1967 war, but to the origins and continued existence of the Jewish state. Israel is not just a state with which Egypt shares a border; and most Egyptians’ rejection of Israel

1 *Caravan*, 10 May 2009, 1 (English).

2 Hamas had seized control of the Gaza Strip from the Fatah-dominated Palestinian National Authority, in June 2007.

3 *Caravan*, “al-Tullab al-`Arab bil-Jami`ah ghayr murtahin li-siyasat Misr tijah Isra’il,” [Arab students at the University uncomfortable with Egypt’s policy toward Israel], 10 May 2009, p. 1 (Arabic).

4 Rashid Khalidi, “The New Middle East after Tunis and Tahrir,” a lecture given at AUC, 13 March 2011. Mubarak had, it is true, been pleading for Washington to intervene to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since at least 1985. On the other hand, it can be argued that the prolongation of Israel’s occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip throughout the 1980s was enabled by the neutralization of Egypt as a military factor in the Arab-Israel conflict, and by President Mubarak’s unwillingness to offend the U.S. by forcefully confronting Israel. More specifically, as Dr. Khalidi indicated to me in an email dated 28 January 2024: “Egypt was central to Israel’s siege on and external control of the Gaza Strip through its acceptance of Israeli control of entry and exit of people and goods.” Prof. Khalidi sees Egypt’s extensive security cooperation with Israel as further evidence of complicity in the occupation. The result of the continuing occupation and lack of progress toward Palestinian self-determination was the First Intifada, which broke out in 1987. See also Ibrahim Ibrahim, “Egypt, Israel and the Palestinians,” in *The Political Economy of Contemporary Egypt* (Washington D.C.: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 1990), Ibrahim Oweiss, ed., 298-306, esp. 299-302.

would seem to be *categorical*.⁵ The fact that about half the persons polled made no distinction between Israel and America highlights another trope in what Hasan Barari calls “Israelism,” his way of referring to ideologically distorted Arab perceptions of Israel. According to Barari, “Israelism” views the state of Israel as basically a product and instrument of Western imperialism, a dependency of the U.S., possessing no indigenous sources of strength and no internal diversity worthy of investigation. Consequently, its culture is perceived to be of marginal interest and its polity as inherently predatory. Barari argues that these a priori assumptions have deformed Arab scholarship on the Zionist state, since the goal has not been understanding its social and historical dynamics, but simply exposing its illegitimacy.⁶

Hamas’s successful surprise attack on Israel, 7 October 2023, and Israel’s massive and ongoing military response—have, if anything, hardened pre-existing antipathies.⁷ Arab journalism covering these events characterizes the Israel Defense Forces as the aggressors, and frames Israeli actions as part of a long history of brutalities inflicted on an innocent Palestinian population, albeit describing it as vastly more destructive. AUC’s *Caravan* is a case in point. An article from the Arabic section of the newspaper titled “Defense of the Palestinian Cause on Social Media Channels,” begins: “Many AUC students belonging to a dedicated Facebook group urged the necessity of going out to protest against the aggression [*al-`udwan*] committed by the Israel army against the Palestinians in Gaza since 7 October, similar to the history of the brutalities and persecution [*`ala ghirar tarikh al-intihakat wa al-idtihad*] extending back for decades.” The article goes on to note that this was just the first of many such demonstrations at AUC, and compared the action of AUC students to demonstrations taking place elsewhere in and beyond the Arab world. The article also assesses the journalistic challenge of covering the war, emphasizing the essential role of social media emanating from within Gaza, in providing an “inside” perspective on the effects of Israeli military operations.⁸

One might assume, with these widespread prejudices and the type of media coverage given to the explosions of intercommunal violence in Israel/Palestine, that Egyptian/Arab students at AUC would be unreceptive to a course on the history of Zionism. After all, why devote academic study to what is perceived to be a fundamentally

5 This is in contrast to the assertion of Menna Abukhadra in her intriguing article, “How Resources Shape Pedagogy: Israel Studies at Cairo University,” *Teaching the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, Rachel S. Harris, ed. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2019), 227-242. While Professor Abukhadra’s statement (“The categorical rejection of Israel no longer exists. . .”, p. 231) pertains to attitudes at Cairo University, it is unlikely that attitudes at AUC are substantially different than those held by students at Cairo University in this regard. Nor does it seem to me likely that the difference in date of the two sources (the *Caravan* article appeared 2009; Abukhadra’s article appeared 2019) reflects a transformative evolution in attitudes during that decade, though a modicum of change cannot be ruled out. I taught this course when the so-called “Abraham Accords” were agreed in 2020 (agreements to normalize relations between the U.A.E. and Bahrain on one side, and Israel on the other), and students disagreed sharply over the question of their legitimacy. Some students viewed the normalization of relations as a betrayal of Arab solidarity with the Palestinians (a view I expected); other students however took a position based mostly on Realpolitik, arguing that normalization was long overdue, and proved that Anwar Sadat, in his diplomatic acceptance of Israel into the region, was ahead of his time.

6 Hassan A. Barari, *Israelism: Arab Scholarship on Israel, a critical assessment* (Reading, U.K.: Ithaca Press, 2009), 21, 25, 28. The logical consequence of the Arab position, as Barari suggests, is the expectation that Israel would collapse were it not for its external patrons, and especially the aid it receives from the U.S. To be sure, this perception is not without a factual basis, since U.S. aid to Israel was and is enormous: \$158 billion since 1948 (Congressional Research Service, “U.S. Foreign Assistance to the Middle East: Historical, Recent Trends, and the FY2024 Background Request,” 15 August 2023, p. 5).

7 There is much that remains obscure about the current conflict, but an attempt to confront ahistorical treatments of the 7 October events is found in Tareq Baconi, “An Inevitable Rupture: Al-Aqsa Flood and the End of Partition,” *Al-Shabaka: The Palestinian Policy Network*, 26 Nov. 2023, <https://al-shabaka.org/commentaries/an-inevitable-rupture-al-aqsa-flood-and-the-end-of-partition/> For a discussion of the Gaza conflict that foregrounds Israeli perspectives, one may consult the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/israel-hamas-war-frequently-asked-questions>. A recent mainstream journalistic evaluation from a third-party perspective is found in Jeremy Bowen’s work: “Israel-Gaza Briefing: obstacles to peace seem larger than ever after six months of war” *BBC World News*, 7 April, 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68735869>

8 *The Caravan*, 17 December 2023. The transliterated title of the article: *al-difa` `an al-qadiya al-filastiniyya `ala wasa'il al-tawassul al-ijtima`i*. Translations by the author.

illegitimate polity, a Trojan horse of American imperialism, a colonial oppressor, and, now, an alleged perpetrator of genocide? Except perhaps to understand better how to eliminate it—and a significant number of students, in response to a first-day-of-class questionnaire, have indicated that their reason for studying Zionism is to “know your enemy.”

In this regard, students at AUC and at Cairo University were, and probably remain, in full agreement. There, *unlike* at AUC, studies of modern Israel were at first philological in nature; instruction in modern Hebrew was the point of departure from which the curriculum expanded to include the history of Zionism, Israeli politics and society, and other Jewish studies courses. Nonetheless, a basic hostility has continued to inform attitudes toward the government and people of Israel, as Professor Abukhadra has observed.

The successive wars between Arabs and Israel significantly influenced the development of the teaching of Modern Hebrew language and the orientation of Israel studies at Cairo University. The 1948 Palestine War, the 1956 Suez War, the June 1967 Six-Day War, the 1969-70 War of Attrition, the October 1973 Yom Kippur War, the 1982 Lebanon War, and the 1991 Gulf War affected Israel studies in general and teaching about Zionism in particular, making it a program for “studying the enemy.”⁹

Yet, despite this seemingly static and unfavorable climate of opinion, the History Department at AUC launched a course on Zionism which is now in its twentieth year. This article is offered as a reflection on two decades of experience in teaching this course. The article will: (a) document the origins and reception of the course; (b) describe some of the challenges students and instructors faced at the outset, including in particular the identification of some key personalities and terms; (c) detail later modifications and enhancements to the curriculum; and (d) show how teaching a similar course at an American college threw light on differences and similarities between students in the U.S. and Egypt with respect to Zionism/Israel. The article is supplemented by appendices that include a list of documentary anthologies, the latest iteration of the syllabus, a set of heuristic questions for instructors, and guidelines for students preparing a primary-source research project.

My purpose in presenting this article is twofold. First, I wish to show that, with appropriate sources and structures, a “charged classroom” can foster rather than frustrate critical thinking. Second, and integrally related to the previous point, I hope to demonstrate how teaching the history of an identity-based conflict can serve a humanizing purpose, as variegated experiences and perspectives are explored, which undermine the stereotyping present in official and unofficial histories.¹⁰ In particular, the encounter with primary sources in this context fulfills an ethical imperative assumed in all history-teaching, by recovering voices that have been lost, or suppressed because of conflict, thereby encouraging empathy for the other.¹¹

9 Abukhadra, “Israel Studies at Cairo University,” 229. It is perhaps worth noting that Professor Abukhadra’s naming of these wars assumes, for the most part, the Israeli perspective on them, or mixes Israeli and Arab nomenclature (though she is certainly fully conscious of the designations indicated here). The 1948 Palestine War is Israel’s “War of Independence”; in Arabic it is universally recognized as *al-Nakba* [“the Disaster”]; here it is simply the 1948 Palestine War. The 1956 war in Egypt is more commonly and more descriptively designated as the *al-`Udwan al-Thulathi* [“the Tripartite Aggression”]; the 1967 war is generally called *al-Naksa* [“the Setback”]; the 1973 war is usually *Harb Uktubar* (“the October War”) or the Ramadan War. The 1982 invasion of Lebanon is perhaps harder to characterize in a single widely accepted phrase: the Israelis called it “Operation Peace for Galilee” since it aimed to destroy the Lebanese bases of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Whatever the names, this litany of wars highlights the enormously destructive interstate violence that has punctuated the Arab-Zionist conflict.

10 Sarah Warshauer Freedman et al, “Teaching History after Identity-Based Conflicts: The Rwanda Experience,” *Comparative Education Review*, 52.4 (2008), 663-690. The article refers first to “entrenched unofficial histories,” since there was a moratorium on history-teaching in Rwanda for more than a decade after the genocide of 1994; however, the article also offers a critique of the government-sponsored “official history” (675-676).

11 “Empathy” not “sympathy”: I owe an emphasis on the distinction to Yoav Alon of Tel Aviv University. “Sympathy” in this case would imply agreement with Zionist arguments: “empathy” implies an understanding of the Zionists’ situation and logic, without endorsing it. I recall Matthew Ellis of Sarah Lawrence College making a similar point at the Endeavor Dialogue on Teaching the Middle East, Sarah Lawrence College, 13-14 November 2014. A brief but useful discussion of this distinction is found at the Wiki funded by the European Commission, “The Embassy of Good Science,” under the heading, “Empathy in Historical Research and Education.” Available at: <https://embassy.science/wiki/Theme:Cba7ec29-d4b6-47c0-9b47-a587e972c971>

A “Jazzy” New Course?

Teaching the history of Zionism wasn't my idea; in fact, I was skeptical about the proposal. But my colleague, Mark Sedgwick, insisted that students would be attracted to this course, and we were being urged by our Dean—the late Nick Hopkins, a prolific scholar and a doughty defender of liberal education—to invent, as he put it, some “jazzy” new courses to increase enrollments in the humanities and social sciences. Mark proposed “What is Zionism?” It was approved, Mark started teaching it, and student demand for the course was consistently high. Does this demand for knowledge of Zionism cast doubt on the *Caravan's* assertion that AUC student opinion about Jews/Israel is monolithically negative? I think it does, as interviews with former students show, and as will be discussed below.

As the original title of the course suggests, Mark assumed—correctly—that most of our students had heard of Zionism, and “knew” it was something evil, but really didn't know what it was. The course therefore begins with references to foundational terms, personalities, and movements. I will digress here into some details about this part of the course.

I begin with “Zion,” since few students know this metonymy, Mount Zion being the location of the ancient Jewish temple, thus evoking Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Despite this and other biblical borrowings in Zionism's vocabulary, I define “Zionism” as a secular nationalist movement, since this was its formulation by its leading exponents, Leon Pinsker and Theodor Herzl, both secular Jews. There continues to be considerable confusion about how Judaism and Zionism are related to one another, which is not surprising. Without entirely resolving this confusion, I have sought to clarify by suggesting to students that one can be born a Jew, but one cannot be born a Zionist. Moreover, traditional Jewish eschatology is oriented toward God as the agent of a future and miraculous Jewish redemption, whereas Zionism is ideologically-driven Jewish self-emancipation in the present, and must be seen as contiguous with other nationalist movements of the nineteenth-century Europe. As Amos Elon noted, every important Zionist treatise before Herzl was inspired by a nationalist pulsation in central or eastern Europe.¹² However, unlike the other European peoples that established, or sought to establish, newly independent nation-states, the Jews lacked a common vernacular and were not concentrated in their ancestral land. As a result, a Hebrew cultural revival and Jewish colonization of Palestine, complemented and in fact preceded the drive for sovereignty and independence, which was effectively launched (or, more precisely, re-launched, after the faltering of *Hovevei Zion*) by Theodor Herzl, with his convening of the First Zionist Congress, in 1897.¹³

To return to our narrative of the course's development: some years later, after Mark Sedgwick had left AUC and I inherited his course, I interviewed him about his rationale for creating the course, reminding him of my erstwhile skepticism.¹⁴ I thought that, as a foreign national residing in Egypt, showing an avid interest in Zionism and explicating it to Egyptian and Arab students, might provoke suspicions that one was a Zionist agent—which might sound like paranoia, but isn't. AUC is a well-established institution in Egypt, now over a century old; but

It is not superfluous to add that, as of this writing, the current conflict, sparked by atrocities committed by Hamas on 7 October 2023, which included the killing of some 1200 Israelis—answered by an Israeli counterattack that has so far killed over 30,000 Palestinians, displaced most of the population of the Gaza Strip, and made large areas of the enclave uninhabitable—has made attainment of historically-grounded empathy more difficult, yet perhaps for precisely that reason also more imperative.

12 Amos Elon, *The Israelis: Founders and Sons* (New York: Penguin, 1983), X. Elon refers here to Yehuda Alkalai, Moses Hess, Zvi Kalisher, and Leon Pinsker, whose works drew inspiration from, respectively, the nationalist movements of Greeks, Italians, Poles, and Bulgarians.

13 On the 1897 Zionist Congress, see Michael J. Reimer, *The First Zionist Congress: An Annotated Translation of the Proceedings* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2019). The question of Zionism's relationship to European colonialism is addressed in Part III of *Colonialism and the Jews*, Ethan B. Katz, Lisa Moses Leff, and Maud S. Mandel, eds. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2017). For Herzl, there can be no doubt that he was proud of Zionism's colonial credentials. In his 1896 work, *Der Judenstaat*, he foresaw a Jewish state in Palestine that would form a rampart of European civilization against Asiatic barbarism, whose existence would also be guaranteed by Europe. See chapter 2, Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State* (New York: Dover Publications, 1988), online edition at https://www.gutenberg.org/files/25282/25282-h/25282-h.htm#II_The_Jewish_Question.

14 Interview with Mark Sedgwick, Professor of Arab and Islamic Studies, Aarhus University, 21 June 2011 (Cairo).

when I arrived in 1990, veteran colleagues cautioned me that Egypt's public intellectuals, both secularist and Islamist, had not forgotten AUC's alien missionary origins.¹⁵

I was also worried that the course would become a forum for bigoted polemics. After all, most of us already knew what the results of the *Caravan's* poll had confirmed, i.e., that nearly all Arabs were anti-Zionist, and that anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic canards were and are common currency all over the Arab world.¹⁶ The infamous forgery "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," originally a product of Russian anti-Semites and purporting to reveal the details of a Jewish conspiracy for world domination, has by now a long history of being cited as an authentic source for understanding Jews and Judaism.¹⁷ Denial of the reality of the Holocaust was a feature of Egypt's national history curriculum, though this is mitigated somewhat by considerable variation in the curricula of private schools, from which most AUC students come.¹⁸ Many students have informed me that the blue stripes on Israel's flag are the Nile and the Euphrates, and that the flag is standing evidence that the Israelis are determined to conquer all the lands between the two rivers.¹⁹ What would be accomplished by having this formidable mythology rehearsed

15 On which see Heather Sharkey, *American Evangelicals in Egypt: Missionary Encounters in an Age of Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), see esp. chs. 4-5.

16 It is important to emphasize that anti-Zionism in the Arab world has a long history, and was not born out of a prior anti-Semitism (although the two have certainly become intertwined). The King-Crane Commission, appointed by Woodrow Wilson to survey political opinions in Syria and Anatolia just after the end of World War I, noted a fierce anti-Zionism among Arabs all over the Levant. To quote that report *in extenso*:

"If . . . the wishes of Palestine's population are to be decisive as to what is to be done with Palestine, then it is to be remembered that the non-Jewish population of Palestine—nearly nine tenths of the whole—are emphatically against the entire Zionist program. The tables show that there was no one thing upon which the population of Palestine were more agreed than upon this. To subject a people so minded to unlimited Jewish immigration, and to steady financial and social pressure to surrender the land, would be a gross violation of the principle just quoted, and of the people's rights, though it kept within the forms of law.

It is to be noted also that the feeling against the Zionist program is not confined to Palestine, but shared very generally by the people throughout Syria as our conferences clearly showed. More than 72 per cent—1,350 in all-of all the petitions in the whole of Syria were directed against the Zionist program. . . The Peace Conference should not shut its eyes to the fact that the anti-Zionist feeling in Palestine and Syria is intense and not lightly to be flouted. No British officer, consulted by the Commissioners, believed that the Zionist program could be carried out except by force of arms."

For a digitized copy of the King-Crane Commission Report, see: https://ecf.org.il/media_items/951

17 Bernard Lewis, *Semites and Anti-Semites: An Inquiry into Conflict and Prejudice* (New York: Norton, 1986), 208-210. Lewis points out that some Arab intellectuals were and are aware of the dubious origins of the Protocols. But it is fair to say that they continue to represent a significant element in popular anti-Semitism. On this, see Eric T. Justin, "Protocols of the Elders of Crazy," *The Harvard Crimson*, 3 October 2011: <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2011/10/3/arab-world-antisemitism-jews>

18 As documented by Marisa Jones, "Holocaust education in Egyptian secondary schools," M.A. thesis in Middle East Studies, American University in Cairo, 2008. Statistics on the "feeder schools" for AUC may exist, but I've been unable to extract such data from the AUC administration. My guess, based on several decades of experience, is that most of our students come from private institutions, where the national curriculum, if used, is significantly modified. The "AUC Profile," compiled annually by the AUC's office of data collection (which has gone under various names, but is now called "Strategic Management and Institutional Effectiveness" or SMIE), shows that most students do not enter AUC on the basis of results attained on the standardized Egyptian school-leaving examination, the Thanawiya Amma. In fact, surveying the secondary-school certificates received by entering AUC students for the past decade (2013-2023), one finds that fewer than 20% of students have done the Thanawiya Amma throughout this period, and that this percentage has been declining. These numbers can also be considered a rough measure of the curriculum students have been exposed to in secondary school. Perhaps the most striking and relevant example in this context is Cairo's best-known German school (Deutsche Evangelische Oberschule), where a unit on the Holocaust is actually a required element of the curriculum. For the AUC profile, consult <https://www.aucegypt.edu/about/auc-profile-and-fact-book>

19 For a fuller account of this particular canard, see Daniel Pipes, "Imperial Israel: The Nile to Euphrates Calumny," *Middle East Quarterly*, March 1994, available online at <https://www.danielpipes.org/247/imperial-israel-the-nile-to-euphrates-calumny>. Pipes mentions that the flag's design recalls the Jewish prayer shawl, and notes the fact that the Israelis withdrew from the Sinai after conquering it—which would suggest that Israel does not aim to annex the lands between Palestine and the Nile. In my experience,

in a course? Would Arab students really be open to looking at Judaism and Zionism critically and historically—for example, by distinguishing between them?

Fortunately, Mark brushed aside my anxieties from the first. As he explained, he structured his syllabus to preempt rancorous discussions about assigning or apportioning *blame* for the Palestinian-Israeli/Arab-Israeli conflict. The idea was to approach Zionism phenomenologically, to understand its origins and development “from the inside.” Mark saw clearly from the beginning that Western and Arab cultures have such different points of departure in their treatment of Zionism, that reconciling their points of view would be difficult if not impossible. But that did not mean that Arabs could not or would not want to learn about the history of this ideological movement in a more objective way. Mark intuited an unmet demand for genuinely historical knowledge about Judaism and Zionism, in contrast to the misinformation transmitted by school curricula and public media.

Mark’s intuition was confirmed for me when I conducted my own informal poll of about a dozen students who had taken this course.²⁰ When asked why they enrolled in this course, many answered in terms that acknowledged the inadequacies of the perspective to which they had been exposed as Egyptians and Arabs. One student put it baldly:

Because we are born in the Arab countries, we are taught to hate Jews and Israelis without really knowing why. All we know is that they are the bad guys, they took the land that wasn’t theirs but we’re not really grasping the details of the whole issue—we don’t know that there’s a difference between a Jew and being an Israeli. If you’re a Jew, you’re basically the enemy.²¹

On the positive side, the course was viewed as an unusual, even unique, opportunity to learn in greater depth about a topic all my students had heard about for years, which also explains why so many students whose majors are unrelated to history or politics have enrolled. Thus, students said the course was “an excellent opportunity to learn about Zionism from a non-Egyptian perspective,” to get beyond stereotypes, to understand Zionism from an “academic point of view not just rumors”; “to understand the viewpoint of the Zionist narrative”; and, since students suggested they knew they were “not really getting the whole picture” from what they heard about “Zionism and Jews and Palestinians” the course “made it more rational—the whole Zionist project.” While emotions have sometime made the classroom atmosphere tense, I have been impressed by the maturity of students, their willingness to grapple with readings that contradict their assumptions about Zionism, and, in general, their emerging empathy with the history of Jewish suffering.

Reading, and Relating to Jews and Zionism

To be sure, there were tough challenges which both Mark and I, and the several other professors who have taught the course, encountered.

these arguments do not always shake the firmness of this belief, and the Pipes article cites Yasser Arafat and other Arab leaders who disseminated what Pipes calls a “calumny.” While Pipes performs a valuable service in this article by tracing the probable origins of this idea, he dismisses rather glibly the Jewish Bible as a potential source of territorial and legal claims, and also omits a crucial piece of evidence which he must have been aware of. LEHI, the militant organization founded by Avraham Stern, whose adherents included future Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, made explicit its ambition to extend the borders of the Jewish state from the Nile to the Euphrates. For the LEHI program, see <https://www.saveisrael.com/stern/saveisraelstern.htm>.

²⁰ I was not the only one to teach this course after Mark’s departure from AUC (in 2007). The others were Joel Beinin (Stanford) and Sherene Seikaly (UCSB), who both did stints at AUC. The survey (which included students who took the course with aforementioned colleagues as well as myself) was conducted by my research assistant, Nareman Amin, in 2010; I prepared the questions and she interviewed the students. I want to register my appreciation for her work (Nareman holds a Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Princeton and now teaches at Michigan State University). Our intention was to publish the results much earlier; but the Arab Spring intervened shortly as we were preparing to do so, and one delay led to another. However, as I review the comments of students in 2010, I find them to be consistent with attitudes expressed by students after 2010, up to the present, in 2024, since I have continued to ask students similar questions on my own. Indeed, the current conflict in Gaza has intensified the vocal anti-Zionism of the AUC student body, and, at the same time, spiked a surge of interest in the course.

²¹ Per above, 2010 questionnaire. I should add that the same student also said: “The thing is, there are some Jews who are advocating the Palestinian cause, and they’re actually working for it more than the Arabs are.”

The first and biggest challenge in teaching this course is the requirement that the students engage in what has been termed “deep reading,” i.e., “the array of sophisticated processes that compel comprehension and that include inferential and deductive reasoning, analogical skills, critical analysis, reflection, and thought.”²² And the issue is certainly not limited to this course, though the readings I assign sharpen its salience. Again and again I find that *students read yet don’t read*: i.e., they scan words and sentences but don’t take the message that is being conveyed, often even at the most basic level of comprehension, let alone at subtler intertextual levels. Some of this has to do with the relative age of our texts: every source-text I assign in the first month of this course is over a century old (of course, a good many are translated): Zangwill’s “Child of the Ghetto”; an 1882 article in *The Economist* about Russian Jews; Leon Pinsker’s *Autoemancipation*; Theodor Herzl’s *The Jewish State*; Max Nordau’s speech at the First Zionist Congress in 1897; letters of a woman whose family settled in Palestine in 1889; a couple of journalistic pieces by Ahad Ha’am; and Yitzhak Epstein’s landmark essay, “A Hidden Question,” about the impact of Zionist immigration and settlement on Palestine Arabs in the first few decades of the movement’s history. I have perhaps not sufficiently appreciated the extent to which terminology and writing styles have changed over the past century. The problem may also have to do with the struggle of reading complex texts in a second or third language; frequently, when I ask students to explain significant terms, they are unable to do so, which shows that they don’t stop to look up unfamiliar terms (they are under pressure from courses in their majors and so economize time for electives like this one). I have a suspicion that the foregoing problems are exacerbated by the fact that texts are now usually read in a virtual format, and that relatively few students take notes or otherwise interact with the text as they read. Finally, there are the inevitable distractions of social media, which can subvert the concentration of even the most disciplined readers.

In spite of the aforesaid difficulties, the confrontation with these source-texts has many advantages, and is indispensable to circumventing inherited prejudices. First, it allows Jews to speak for themselves. Recovering historical Jewish voices, as both agents and victims, de-objectifies “the enemy” and disrupts the totalizing narrative of anti-Semitism. While I guide the students to understand the texts, I don’t defend or refute the Zionist case; they ponder for themselves whether or not they find Zionist arguments convincing. Second, it allows the students to see that, from its very beginnings, Zionism was not monolithic: it had diverse strands and lacerating divisions within it, and that some of its severest critics were Jews. Many students have heard of Herzl, and imagine him to be an iconic Jewish leader (as he is). But very few know of Ahad Ha’am, so there is relish in the revelation that Herzl’s most brilliant critic was a Russian Jew, a Zionist as well, but with a very different understanding of Zionism’s past attainments and proper purpose. A third reason for my dependence on primary sources is that I want the students to get accustomed to reading and analyzing such texts, anticipating the research component of the course, which requires the students to locate, collate, and analyze a small set of primary sources on a set topic within Zionist history, entirely on their own (see supporting documents).

It is perhaps appropriate to note here that, in structuring my syllabus, I follow the scholarly consensus that the appropriate context for understanding the rise of Zionism is the experience of the Ashkenazic Jewish communities in nineteenth-century Europe. Thus, our texts establish, as suggested above, that Zionism did not arise organically from Judaism but as a radical ideological departure from traditional Jewish spirituality. Zionism was, rather, a humanistic response informed by the ideals of nationalism, to the perception that anti-Semitism in Europe, especially in the Russian Empire, was jeopardizing Jewish life, livelihood, and identity, and that salvation lay in the creation of a Jewish sovereignty. But even before we come to the crossroads represented by the secular Zionism of Pinsker and Herzl, I ease students into modern Jewish history by supplying them with some readings that are decidedly non-Zionist. The first is “A Child of the Ghetto,” a fictional piece by Israel Zangwill, an enchanting

22 M. Wolf and M. Barzillai, “The Importance of Deep Reading: What will it take for the next generation to read thoughtfully—both in print and online?,” *Educational Leadership*, 66.6, 1 March 2009. Available online at: <https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/the-importance-of-deep-reading>. For a view sympathetic to student resistance to heavy reading loads, see Maha Bali, “To Read, or Not to Read . . . But That’s Not the Question!,” *New Chalk Talk* [AUC Center for Learning and Teaching], 11.2, 20 September 2011. Available online at: https://documents.aucegypt.edu/docs/llt_clt_ChalkTalk/Volume%2011/Vol%2011%20Issue%202.pdf

and allegorical portrait of Jewish life before and after Emancipation.²³ I also have them read sections of an article about Reform Judaism, written by a Reform Jew at a time when Zionism was still an embryonic movement.²⁴ Its value consists in its delineation of a Jewish identity that contrasts with Orthodox Judaism and Zionism (and one almost totally alien and unknown to my students). Since Reform Jews broke with Orthodox conceptions of Jewish history and eschatology, and have generally regarded their Jewishness as a confessional rather than ethnonational identity, they were, at first, anathematized by the Orthodox, while they in turn anathematized the Zionists. To be sure, an enormous shift in the Reform Jewish assessments of Zionism/Israel took place, especially after 1967, since most Reform Jews are now staunch defenders of Israel; this shift is discussed later in the course.²⁵ Although the situation is admittedly not so simple, the students begin to see that there are three different ways of being and remaining Jewish in the modern era. Reform Judaism can be interpreted as a response and adaptation to modernity.²⁶ And since it preceded and opposed Zionism, its existence demonstrates the variety of ways by which Jews negotiated their place in modern society.

A second pedagogical challenge arises from the fact that the course attracted a larger and more varied clientele than anticipated. Many students who had had little or no experience with the academic study of history enrolled in the course. But this was and is an upper-division course with a substantial writing component; so, inevitably, some of these unseasoned students, while perhaps interested in the topic, had great difficulty with essay examinations and the research assignment. Moreover, the bulk of the readings were translations of the writings of Jews and Zionists, which meant that students were listening in on conversations which had, for them, almost no context. While this was and is a problem, I don't think it's insurmountable; providing context, or rather *contexts*, is a big part of what a history teacher does when students read any document in any course. But it does call for heightened attentiveness on the part of the students: a quick and casual encounter with the text generally produces much confusion (as demonstrated, unfortunately, on many student essays); and while my attempts to provide context can help, they are intended to encourage "the slower, more cognitively demanding comprehension processes that go into the formation of deep reading and deep thinking."²⁷ To nurture these processes, I find that the successful teaching of this course depends, perhaps more than most other courses, on my willingness to invest time in individual consultations with the students, especially as they prepare their research papers.

A third challenge, also related to the alienness of Zionism's origins, has to do with the experiential constraints of AUC students, who interact within a relatively homogeneous student body. To explicate this point, I refer to the work of Shanna Kirschner, who published an insightful article in *Political Science* about teaching Middle East politics at Allegheny College (and with whom I taught a "connected course" in 2013, discussed below). Her article, subtitled "Pedagogy in the Charged Classroom," reflects on her experience of teaching at Allegheny, but contains, in spite of the very different backgrounds from which our students hail, observations that are relevant to what happens in teaching about Zionism at AUC. In both cases, at Allegheny and at AUC, instructors are teaching about peoples, cultures, and conflicts, about which many students hold strong opinions based on ideologically colored

23 I. Zangwill, "A Child of the Ghetto" in *Dreamers of the Ghetto* (New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1923), 1-20. Available online at: <https://archive.org/details/dreamersofghetto0000unse/page/n7/mode/2up>

24 Kaufmann Kohler et al, "Reform Judaism from the Point of View of the Reform Jew," *Jewish Encyclopedia*, 1906, online edition.

25 American Jewish attitudes toward the state of Israel, including the attitudes of Reform Jews, were transformed by the events before, during, and after the Six Day War of 1967. This is a large subject in itself, but works that document and explicate the reality of that transformation include: Nathan Glazer, *American Judaism*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 169-176; and Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2004), 315-318. Glazer points out that American Jewish devotion to the state of Israel had been lukewarm prior to the 1967 crisis. Then, suddenly, even young Jewish radicals were "surprised and astonished by their own depth of feeling" toward what they perceived to be the Jewish state's existential peril, and its almost miraculous victory.

26 I have cribbed my description of Reform Judaism as a "response to modernity" from a standard work on the subject: Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995).

27 Wolf and Barzillai, "The Importance of Deep Reading."

data but generally formed in the absence of direct experience.²⁸ Just as Allegheny students crave knowledge of the Middle East that goes beyond stereotypes and media representations, so also my Egyptian and Arab students express a desire for a more objective and neutral view of Jews, Judaism, Zionism, and Israel, as I've indicated above. To put it succinctly, students in both places recognize much of what they have been fed is propaganda, and they acknowledge ignorance, positive intellectual moves that are foundational to critical thinking. So far so good. But militating against critical thinking in this regard is the absence of personal experience which would call into question simplistic generalizations to which they have been exposed. At Allegheny, most students aren't from the Middle East and haven't visited the region, so the "knowledge" they have is generally not triangulated with personal experience or relationships. Similarly for my students: very few have visited the state of Israel; and the Jewish community in Egypt is so small, it's unlikely they will ever encounter a Jewish person, let alone an Israeli, except perhaps when travelling in Europe or the U.S.²⁹ In such a situation, the influence of local Arabic media and the stereotyping perpetuated by family and community are magnified, sometimes producing questions—or assertions disguised as questions—that reflect a profound but unrecognized confusion and/or ignorance.³⁰

Kirschner argues persuasively that the best way to deal with beliefs based on ignorance and lack of experience is not to suppress them, but to get students to "simultaneously question and defend their beliefs." I think this summarizes brilliantly the *raison d'être* of the university as a whole. We are not, or should not be, in the business of deriding students' beliefs, whatever we think of them; but we are obliged to disturb their dogmatic slumbers, by confronting them with the reality that other persons, groups, nations, religions, cultures, etc., hold different views and think they have good reasons for holding them. Actually, I believe that the attempt to defend an indefensible assertion will generally have a far greater impact on the student, than being "put down" by a professor or fellow student. I was gratified that one student who took this course commented as follows: "It's okay to be critical of Israel. . . . But in order to be critical about Israel, you have to truly know the Zionist narrative; you can't go on criticizing Israel without having a rational, objective and informed opinion. What Israel is, what it has been, what it's based on, how it was established."³¹

28 For the following, cf. Shanna Kirschner, "Teaching the Middle East: Pedagogy in a Charged Classroom," *Political Science* (Oct. 2012), 753-758.

29 In this regard, students at Cairo University seem to have an advantage. Some students of modern Hebrew at CU obtain Hebrew language materials from the Israeli academic center in Cairo; some prefer to get their texts through other channels. According to Abukhadra, there has been an explosion of interest in "Oriental Languages" at CU, such that the resources available in Hebrew have proved insufficient to meet demand. See Abukhadra, "Israel Studies at Cairo University," 232-233. In addition, as Professor Abukhadra indicates, the internet has made access to resources for the study of Hebrew language and Israeli society vastly easier for her students (231).

It is appropriate to acknowledge here one of the major lacunae in my course at AUC, i.e., failure to give proper attention to the history of Jewish communities in the Middle East.

A few on-campus events have mitigated this failure, though only to a very limited extent. Ms. Magda Haroun, leader of the Egyptian Jewish community, has spoken at AUC several times; and the film "Jews of Egypt" (2012) has been shown on campus as well. The emphasis of these events has been on the loyalty to Egypt of Egyptian Jews, and their repudiation of Zionism (the latter being one reason why I've left them out of this course). But I'm painfully aware that the history of Middle Eastern Jewry is much larger and more complex, and deserves a course of its own.

30 Some examples: How can a person be Jewish and not believe in the Torah, or God? Weren't the Jews hated because they were greedy moneylenders? Was the discrimination against the Jews in Europe really so bad? How did the Jews get complete control over U.S. media? Why do the Jews hate the Muslims, since they were treated well by Islamic governments?

31 This is perhaps an appropriate place to insert a disclaimer concerning the course, which will appear in the current syllabus. The course deals with some aspects of the history of Israel after 1948. But it does not and cannot examine all aspects of Israeli politics and society, nor does it cover in detail the many wars fought between Israel and the Arab states, and the succession of conflicts between Israel and various Palestinian groups. However, it does seek to discern to what extent tendencies and tensions present in Zionism from before the formation of the state, continue to affect Israeli politics to the present day, and similarly with regard to Zionist views of and interactions with Palestinians and other Arabs.

One way in which AUC has sought to overcome the intellectual lethargy arising from the relative homogeneity of its student body, is by encouraging the enrollment of international students. In the first decade of the new century, AUC saw an uptick in “international students,” mostly students from the U.S. and Europe, taking a year or semester abroad. There were Jews as well as non-Jews among them; and a good number of these students took Zionist history. As my colleague Mark surmised, this was evidence that a course of this kind was not only a rarity in the Arab world, but that there seemed to be unmet demand for it in Western countries as well. Whatever our international students’ motivation for enrolling, the diversity of experience and opinion they brought was beneficial to class discussion. It simulated the ethnic and political pluralism which our students will have to deal throughout their lives, and it stimulated reasoned debate. This mixing of non-Egyptian/non-Arab students into our courses helped to raise the intellectual level of discussion, forcing our students to offer rational defenses of views that are simply taken for granted among Egyptians. Unfortunately, the flow of international students in AUC dried up over the last decade, and one student lamented the consequence: “There weren’t any strong discussions and, sadly so, because we only had one American in a class filled with Egyptians who more or less share similar views of Zionism. I think the class would be perfect if it enjoyed a mixture of Arabs and Americans, who then can discuss, challenge, criticize . . .”

Another way to overcome the lethargy induced by homogeneity, is to hold virtual discussions with classes in other countries. In 2013, Shanna Kirschner and I, with the support of the Global Liberal Arts Alliance, worked on setting up “connected courses,” although our curricula were so different we limited the “connectedness” to having our students talk to each other in a couple of videoconferences. They were assigned to read some common texts relating to Middle East politics, but the main benefit of the exercise was that it allowed the students to ask each other questions, and to see that there was diversity of opinion on both sides of the ocean. I recall the discussion of one question in particular, i.e., why the U.S. is so generous and unwavering in its support for the state of Israel—a topic of perennial interest and debate in the Arab Middle East. As one of my colleagues observed, when you have a couple of classes interacting in this way, they are usually very polite at first and the discussion boring; you have to wait for someone to say something outrageous for the discussion take off! In this case, one of the American students asserted that U.S. help to Israel grew out of a natural American sympathy for the “underdog.” That comment was enough to ignite a firestorm among my students, who were quick to point out that one can hardly characterize a state possessing the most powerful military in the region, and the only one with a nuclear arsenal, as an “underdog”—evidence of our students’ sensitivity to the asymmetry of power in the relationship between Israel and the Arabs, and in particular the Palestinians.

A fourth pedagogical challenge ties into Shanna Kirschner’s essay in another way, inasmuch as her article deals with the place of emotions in the “charged classroom.” I have gradually come to believe that the release of emotions in a classroom setting, while uncomfortable, is not necessarily to be avoided, though we cannot permit anger or hatred to be directed at individuals in the classroom. It’s certainly true that emotion can derail dialogue. But it can also remind us that our class discussions are not intellectual games. For many different reasons, discussion of the rise of Zionism and the consequent conflict between Arabs and Zionists/Israelis causes blood to boil on all sides.

I said above that few of my Egyptian and Arab students have had personal contact with Jews or Israelis, know very little about Judaism or Zionism, and almost no one has visited Israel. This is not the same as suggesting that Israel has had no impact on their lives or the lives of family members. Since I started teaching at AUC, I have had hundreds of students whose grandfathers or fathers, uncles, cousins, or other relations, fought in Egypt’s wars with Israel. I have also had a fair number of Palestinian students. Some are from families displaced in 1948; some experienced, and continue to experience, the Israeli occupation with its degradations both great and small; some have lived through aerial bombardment. For the latter groups in particular, Zionism and Israel are not remote historical abstractions, or objects of political calculation, but intrusive everyday realities.³² It would be unrealistic,

32 My former student, Yasmeen Elkhoudary, expresses eloquently how the history of Zionism haunts Palestinians: see her “The Balfour Declaration isn’t history, it’s an everyday reality for Palestinians,” *The Guardian (Opinion)*, 1 November 2017. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/nov/01/balfour-declaration-palestinian-arabs-palestine>

even inhuman, to exclude emotion from a classroom in the light of these experiences.

Modifications and Enhancements: Eschatology; Palestinian Voices; Balfour

Over the years of teaching the course, I've become increasingly aware that, in emphasizing the essentially secular nature of Zionism and of the conflict between Arabs and Israelis, I am guilty of minimizing narratives which for a great many people give Zionism and the Palestine issue a meaning that transcends politics. I refer here to the fact that the history of the Jews, and especially the creation and expansion of the state of Israel in 1948 and 1967, are integral to the eschatological doctrines of many believers in the three Abrahamic religions. The war of 1967 in particular, wherein Israel seized control of the whole of Jerusalem, figures prominently in all these narratives.

In Egypt, as elsewhere, many Muslims and Christians believe we are living in the “end times,” and for them Israel plays a key role in the unfolding of a divinely appointed end-of-history apocalypse. The phenomenon of “Christian Zionism” has gotten a lot of press in recent years, so the fact that Israel is viewed by many Christians as the fulfillment of biblical prophecy is no longer a surprise, though the ways in which theology and politics are intertwined in the U.S.-Israel nexus are not so well known, and I assign a reading to open up the discussion of this subject.³³ Eschatological dogmas influence views of Israel in the Islamic world as well. In Muslim apocalypticism, the Jews are partisans of the Antichrist, who descends to rule from Jerusalem; in the climactic struggle that ensues, Israel is destroyed and the Jews are either annihilated or converted.³⁴ It is hard to determine to what extent such beliefs are the cause or the consequence of anti-Semitism; anyway, when I discuss this topic in class, students acknowledge that they have heard such ideas from a variety of sources. Christian Zionism, or “Crusaderism,” is an ally of Israel against Islam in this drama, so it comes as no surprise to Muslim believers that America is a stronghold of Christian Zionism. Of course, this analysis, in spite of its anti-Semitic features, is not so very far-fetched: Christian Zionist groups do see themselves in alliance with Israel against Islam, and, e.g., seek to emphasize the connection between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Palestinian militants.³⁵

But since this is a course on Zionism and, secondarily, modern Judaism, I devote more time to the eschatological beliefs of Jews. I discovered a particularly useful text in this regard which was published in *Tradition: A Journal of Orthodox Jewish Thought*, in the aftermath of the 1967 war.³⁶ This symposium represents the views of Orthodox rabbis and intellectuals in Israel and the U.S. as they debate the purportedly revelatory aspects of this event. For several of the participants, the war was and is a fulfillment of prophecy and a sign that the messianic age has dawned. For others, awareness of the tragic recurrence of false messianism leads them to question the eschatological confidence of their fellow Jews.

33 Colin Shindler, “Likud and the Christian Dispensationalists: A Symbiotic Relationship,” *Israel Studies*, 5.1 (2000), 153-182.

34 For a fuller treatment, Jean-Pierre Filiu, *Apocalypse in Islam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011). Striking is Filiu's observation that “the extinction of the Jewish people following Jesus's reappearance on earth” is a point of agreement between Christian and Muslim millenarian sects. There is thus a “shared interest in the physical and spiritual annihilation of Judaism. . . It is for this reason that the hateful message of The Protocols of the Elders of Zion and other Western anti-Semitic pamphlets migrates from one paranoid universe to the other and back again” (197).

35 Steven Fink, “Fear under Construction: Islamophobia within American Christian Zionism,” *Islamophobia Studies Journal*, 2.1 (Spring 2014), 27-43. For example, “Christians United for Israel,” which claims ten million members, highlights news items linking Palestinians and the Islamic Republic. A search of “Islam” at CUFI's website (<https://cufi.org>) produced as its first result a *Times of Israel* article dated 16 June 2023 and titled “Iran's Khamenei hosts Palestinian Islamic Jihad's leaders in Tehran,” and subtitled: “Iranian leader says political unrest in Israel is sign of its nearing collapse, hails terror group's performance in conflict last month.”

36 “The Religious Meaning of the Six-Day War: A Symposium,” *Tradition*, 10.1 (Summer 1968), 5-20.

I've also modified the course in two ways in response to "discharges" from within the "charged classroom." One arose from recognition of the need to supply a reasoned Palestinian perspective on Zionism, the other from an argument over the meaning of the Balfour Declaration. In both cases, I learned something important from my students.

In an early iteration of the course, students became irascible as the semester wore on. They were willing to accept that the course, being about Zionism, gave Zionist texts precedence over others. But eventually some students rebelled against what they regarded as an utterly one-sided understanding of the conflict between Zionists/Israelis and the Palestinians. They felt as though, encased within a Zionist orientation toward Palestine, they were suffocating; not only because it was unfamiliar, but because it was unjust. A Palestinian student in that course counseled me that I could avert future rebellions by including one or two texts by respected Palestinians.³⁷ I followed her advice, and over the years I have assigned Edward Said's "Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Victims," and/or Yasser Arafat's speech at the U.N. in November 1974. I can see now that the incorporation of Palestinian voices, while positively useful in alleviating student discomfort—when students interpose Arab perspectives from the beginning, I am able to assure them that those perspectives will be represented by texts read later in the semester—is also empirically and ethically imperative. As I have argued elsewhere, concerning the European settler-colonial character of Zionism:

. . . [t]he situation in Palestine cannot be analyzed solely or even primarily on the basis of how the Zionists interpreted it (still less how they construe it today) but must reckon with the viewpoint of the land's indigenous population. . . . After World War I, the Arabs saw themselves as forced to accept the imposition of a European population by a European power on account of agreements made between European states, acting under the pressure of the European-based Zionist Organization.³⁸

This brings me to the second classroom "discharge" which concerned the Balfour Declaration, since the European power just mentioned was Great Britain, which became the imperial sponsor of Zionism by its issuance of Balfour's famous promise. In this case, I had one student who insisted that the Balfour Declaration explicitly promised that Palestine would become a Jewish state, replacing the Arab state that allegedly existed there. For many years while teaching the course, I had almost passed over the Balfour Declaration inasmuch as it was not authored by Zionists—which is actually misleading, since the Zionists in Britain had not only lobbied for such a declaration but had proposed the precise wording they wanted approved. When I referred to it, I tended to minimize its importance because of its ambiguity. But I realized that my objecting student had a point. To be sure, no independent Arab state existed in Palestine when Balfour issued his pronouncement; it remained Ottoman territory, though it was soon to be captured by British forces. And the phraseology of the declaration was extremely vague and arguably self-contradictory. What is the "Palestine" referred to and how much of it is claimed for the Jewish "national home"? And what is a "national home" anyway? Who are the "existing non-Jewish communities" and what exactly are their "civil and religious rights"? Yet, in spite of the vagueness and contradictions, it was nonetheless monumentally significant, and was immediately recognized as such by people at the time, whatever their attitude toward Zionism. The emergence of the state of Israel in 1948 is inconceivable apart from the British commitment to Zionism expressed by the Balfour Declaration and inscribed in the Palestine Mandate. So I now devote at least one class session to the Balfour Declaration, and I divide the students into teams, to debate the question of whether or not the Declaration stated or implied that Palestine was to become a Jewish state. The

³⁷ I owe the suggestion to Ms. Yasmeen Elkhoudary, a former student and now an independent researcher and journalist specializing in Palestinian history and culture; she has her M.A. in Cultural Heritage Studies from University College London. I have noted her article in *The Guardian* about the centenary of the Balfour Declaration above (note 32).

³⁸ Michael J. Reimer, *The First Zionist Congress: An Annotated Translation of the Proceedings* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2019), 28. This statement summarizes an argument elaborated by Elizabeth Thompson, "Moving Zionism to Asia: Texts and Tactics of Colonial Settlement, 1917-1921" in *Colonialism and the Jews*, ed. Ethan B. Katz et al (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 2017), 317-326.

debates are always lively and students become deeply engaged, so this is an excellent example of “productive conflict” in the classroom.³⁹

From Cairo to Colorado

Some years ago while on sabbatical leave, I had the privilege of teaching a modified version of this course at Colorado College, a small, elite, liberal-arts college in Colorado Springs. The experience was illuminating: both the differences and similarities surprised me.

The first surprise was that more than half my students (fourteen in all) self-identified as being Jewish or having some Jewish background (meaning, for instance, a parent or grandparent who was Jewish). But since Jewishness in the U.S. is fundamentally ethnic rather than religious, the students had extremely diverse religious and political orientations, and most weren’t well acquainted with either Jewish history or the history of Israel. I was nonetheless surprised at the proportion of students who self-identified as being in some sense Jewish; the topic of the course had obviously tilted the scale in terms of ethnicity. However, even before making this discovery, I made some changes to my syllabus, since I could not assume (as I did in Cairo) a general familiarity with modern Arab history. The trade-off for including readings about Ottoman Palestine and the evolution of Palestinian politics and identity, was that the course in the U.S. was focused somewhat less on issues of Jewish identity and more on the history of Arab-Zionist relations.⁴⁰

A second surprise was the feeling of existential insecurity expressed by many of these Jewish students. While I was teaching this course the worst violent anti-Semitic incident in U.S. history occurred, a mass shooting at a Pittsburgh synagogue, 27 October 2018—tragically, eleven people were killed and six injured. Since I’m not Jewish, I learned something important from the response to this atrocity. A student wrote in *The Catalyst*, a student newspaper, under the title “I Am Jewish and I Am Afraid”:

As a member of the Jewish community, this isn’t just another mass shooting for me. This was a targeted hate crime of a minority group that has never been welcomed in this country. As it has been throughout the history of discrimination against the Jewish people, I feel that we are never truly safe. Not even in the “Land of the Free” can Jews feel comfortable to go to a Shabbat service without worrying about their safety. . . Saturday confirmed that anti-Semitism is alive and well in this country and confirmed, for me, the necessity that is the Jewish state of Israel. While it is not a perfect country, it is a place where Jews can be generally safe. I am a Jew, and I am proud of my heritage and culture, but today I am afraid.⁴¹

The contrast between the emotional world of this fear-stricken American Jewish writer, and that of Arab students at AUC who don’t even distinguish between Israel and America, is obviously enormous. Yet this gulf between worldviews is something teaching in both places, in Egypt and America, must address. That contrast includes the consciousness of the Holocaust that informs not only Jewish, but American attitudes toward Israel, as opposed to the common doubt or denial about the Holocaust’s reality in Egypt and the Arab world. Americans in general believe that the state of Israel possesses an unassailable legitimacy, and its security is non-negotiable. Jewish Americans would go farther, insisting that Jews must renounce the political naivete that led them to disaster in the 1930s and 40s; and that a strong Israel is the best guarantee against the recurrence of disaster. Meanwhile, as we have seen above, many if not most Arabs question or deny even Israel’s right to exist. In such a situation,

39 Freedman et al, “Teaching History after Identity-Based Conflicts,” 665. Debating the proper meaning of the Balfour Declaration is an example of “examining historical evidence and promoting productive conflicts that are part of critical thought.”

40 The U.S. iteration of this course was titled “A history of Arab-Zionist relations, 1882-1977” and included the following texts, which I don’t use in Cairo: Gudrun Krämer, *A History of Palestine* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988); Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: the construction of modern national consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Philip Mattar, “The Mufti of Jerusalem and the Politics of Palestine,” *Middle East Journal*, 42.2 (Spring 1988), 227-240; Ted Swedenburg, “The Role of the Palestinian Peasantry in the Great Revolt (1936-1939),” in *Islam, Politics, and Social Movements*, Edmund Burke and Ira M. Lapidus, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 169-203.

41 Elias Asher, “I Am Jewish and I Am Afraid,” 2 November 2018, 14.

is dialogue really possible?⁴² Against the vastness of these differences, my hope is that this course *humanizes by historicizing* Jews/Zionists and Arabs/Palestinians, making their motivations accessible and nuancing their interactions with one another and others in their own communities, in such a way that *dehumanizing and ahistorical* narratives become, in the literal sense, incredible. This can supply the condition for the emergence of an alternative moral vision, which can perhaps best be described as “moral realism,” which is “realist” inasmuch as it eschews revolutionary overbidding, yet remains “moral” by its unyielding insistence on confronting historic injustices.⁴³

Evidence that students who have taken the course have moved in this direction may be briefly cited. First, in 2014, I was able, with generous funding from the Global Liberal Arts Alliance, to take three graduates of my AUC course to the Library of Congress, where we collaborated in a short but concentrated study of historical sources for the study of American Jewry. While in Washington D.C., we toured the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, attended a talk given by a Hungarian Holocaust survivor, and participated in an interfaith dialogue with a local rabbi. The students clearly gained an appreciation for the diversity of Jewry worldwide, and for the place of the Holocaust in world history and in the Jewish psyche, and for the role of American Jews in defending the state of Israel. One of these students went on to write her M.A. thesis on the Israel Lobby and its influence on U.S. foreign policy.⁴⁴ A second bit of evidence appeared in a response to some questions I posed to students in 2019, similar to the poll cited earlier. One of my most articulate and politically conscious students wrote several things worth quoting. While this student began the course with a reluctance to engage Zionist sources, she suggested that “the older the sources were, the more I could trust them, as they were less likely to match modern propagandistic discourse. I also began to accept more information when I found the sources expressing nuanced constructive criticism of the Zionist movement in its various branches and forms. That said, learning more about the European oppression of the Jews . . . encouraged me to think more openly about the reasons why more imperialist and urgent notions of Zionism (e.g., Pinsker, Herzl) would not only have been warranted, but also popular.” She concluded with the judgment that “in the application of the Zionist project in Palestine, the displacement of the Arab Palestinians should never have been an option. The Jewish immigrants and refugees should have been more aware of this than any other community, as they themselves had been displaced and oppressed in the past.”⁴⁵ It is perhaps not superfluous to point out that her comments about the inherently greater credibility of older documents, foregrounds the connection, emphasized above, between historicizing and humanizing the Other.

I close by observing one similarity that surprised me as I compared teaching this course in Cairo and Colorado. It’s the fact that my “audience” in these courses turned out to be not just the young people who enrolled, but family members as well. Jewish students in Colorado volunteered that, when they informed parents about the topic of the course, they avidly wanted to know more. My students gave me to understand that parents who previously had had little concern about instilling Jewish knowledge, now showed pride in their Jewish heritage and wanted to know how Israel was being portrayed in this class. When I returned to Cairo, I was interested to know if the same relational effect had been going on there, and I found that it was. One student shared that her family was interested, though anxious, about how this course might affect her political views, and that attempts to explain what she was learning led, unfortunately, to defensiveness and misunderstanding. Another mother told me, with obvious appreciation, that she felt like she was taking the course through her daughter. Anyway, it is encouraging, if also chastening, for historians to realize that we communicate to audiences that are hidden from view. The

42 According to some Jews—even some who have taken part in dialogue and advocated for Palestinian rights—the answer is No. See David Blumenthal, “Beware of your beliefs” in *Anguished Hope: Holocaust Scholars confront the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008), 50-62.

43 Jaroslav Pelikan, “On the social uses of solitude,” *Scene (Bulletin of Pacific Lutheran University Alumni Association)*, June 1977, 46-48.

44 Heba Bahnassy, “Understanding the evolution of the Israel Lobby’s influence on U.S. foreign policy,” *Capstone and Graduation Projects (Spring 2016)*, AUC Knowledge Fountain, <https://fount.aucegypt.edu/capstone/4/>


45 I wish to thank Laila R. for permission to quote from her comments in an email to me, dated 23 January 2020.

impact of our teaching—whether it tends toward deepening distrust and division, or, by dismantling stereotypes, promotes empathy, dialogue, and justice—is extended and multiplied, as it is interpreted by our students to their families and communities.

Author Note

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Appendix A

Published Primary Sources for the Study of the History of Zionism/Israel, Modern Judaism, and the Arab-Israeli Conflict

- Bunton, Martin, ed. *Land Legislation in Mandate Palestine* (9 vols.). Cambridge: Cambridge Archive Editions, 2009.
- Destani, Beitullah, ed. *The Zionist Movement and the Foundation of Israel, 1839-1972* (10 vols.). Farnham Common, U.K.: Archive Editions, 2004.
- Dowty, Alan, ed. *The Israel/Palestine Reader*. Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2019.
- Freeze, Chaeran Y. and Harris, Jay M., eds. *Everyday Jewish Life in Imperial Russia: select documents, 1772-1914*. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2013.
- Hertzberg, Arthur. *The Zionist Idea: a historical analysis and reader*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1997.
- Jarman, R.L., ed. *Israel: Political and Economic Reports, 1948-1953* (7 vols.). Cambridge: Cambridge Archive Editions, 2010.
- Kaplan, Eran and Penslar, Derek J., eds. *The Origins of Israel, 1882-1948*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011.
- Khalidi, Walid, ed. *From Haven to Conquest: Readings in Zionism and the Palestine Problem until 1948*. Washington D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1987.
- Laqueur, Walter and Schueftan, Dan, eds. *The Israel-Arab Reader: a documentary history of the Middle East conflict*. New York: Penguin, 2016.
- Reimer, Michael J. *The First Zionist Congress: An Annotated Translation of the Proceedings*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2019.
- Roberts, Priscilla. *Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Documentary and Reference Guide*. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2017.

Appendix B

SYLLABUS: HIST3208/CREL3209 - Zionism and Modern Judaism

Course objectives: to understand Zionism as one response formulated by Jews as they confronted the intellectual and social challenges, and existential threats, of the modern era. Our first task is to survey briefly the premodern conditions of Jewish life in Europe, then examine some non-Zionist responses to challenges and threats posed by the advent of modernity. However, our primary focus is Zionism. Our aim is to understand the historical origins of the Zionist movement and reasons for its growth. Our approach is to consider Zionism *phenomenologically*, i.e., grasping its meaning to those who embraced it. We will also examine Zionism *polemically*, i.e., controversies aroused by Zionism, among Jews and non-Jews, and among Palestinians/Arabs.

Disclaimer: the course will *not* examine all aspects of Israeli politics and society, nor will it cover in detail the many wars fought between Israel and the Arab states, and the succession of conflicts between Israel and various Palestinian groups. We will, however, seek to discern to what extent tendencies and tensions present in Zionism from before the formation of the state, continue to affect Israeli politics to the present day, and similarly with regard to Zionist views of and interactions with Palestinians and other Arabs.

Learning Outcomes: the readings, discussions, and assignments in this course enable you to:

- a. Gain general knowledge of Jewish history and culture, especially Jewish life and thought in 19th- century Europe
- b. Distinguish between “old” and “new” anti-Semitism in modern Europe
- c. Distinguish between “religion” and “ideology”, and see why nationalist movements like Zionism have arisen in many ethnic and religious communities
- d. Understand why divisions arose within Zionism, and how certain factions came to predominate
- e. Explain why nationalist movements enlist the aid of outside actors, and relate Zionism to the colonial expansion of Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries
- f. Explain the Palestinian perception of Zionist immigration and its impact on Palestinians
- g. Explain the success of the Zionists in establishing the state of Israel, and its consequences for the Palestinian people and for Jews in the Diaspora
- h. Locate, read, and analyze *primary sources* in order to investigate significant events and episodes in the history of Zionism/Israel and modern Judaism

Useful online reference works:

www.jewishencyclopedia.com (online encyclopedia of Judaica, originally published ca. 1906)Encyclopaedia Judaica (2007 ed.), found at Gale Virtual Reference Library (AUC Library Databases)
<https://yivoencyclopedia.org/> (YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe, print-edition published by Yale University Press, 2008)\

Course Requirements, Grades, and Policies:

Two Essay Exams, Midterm and Final; the Midterm Exam counts 30% of the course grade, and the Final Exam 30%. (Extensions only for documented emergency or illness, at discretion of instructor.) There is one primary-source research project which has three components: Document Location (10%), Summary (10%), and Analysis (15%). The full value of the research project is thus 35% of your course grade. The remaining 5% will be determined by the quality of your written responses to sets of questions concerning readings and/or films.

Summary of due dates for all examinations and submissions to Google Drive and Turnitin.com:

29 Sept - Midterm Essay Exam (30%)

24 Oct - Document Location Component of Research Assignment (10%)

7 Nov - Summary Component of Research Assignment (10%)

21 Nov - Analysis Component of Research Assignment (15%)

Week of Final Examinations - Final Essay Examination (30%)

A short answer assignment (response to an assigned film) will be added to this list during the semester.

Schedule of lecture/discussion topics and assigned texts (readings, films, etc.)

NB Some additional documents may be introduced in class; updates concerning these will appear on Bb. Please note that everything done in class is “on the record” and may feature in examinations.

Part I - Survey of Jewish history; Emancipation and Assimilation; modern anti-Semitism; the 19th-century formulation of the Zionist project; Theodor Herzl and Congress-Zionism; settlement in Palestine before the Balfour Declaration

FILMS HIGHLIGHTED*****

5 Sept – Defining Zionism; Big Questions in the historiography of Zionism; Survey of Jewish history; Jewish life before Emancipation. READ: Israel Zangwill, “Child of the Ghetto,” ch. 1 in his *Dreamers of the Ghetto* (1898). <https://archive.org/details/dreamersofghetto0000unse/mode/2up>

8 Sept - Emancipation and Assimilation; Resurgence of anti-Semitism in late 19th century Europe; Reform Judaism. READ: Max Nordau’s speech on Jewish history and society at the First Zionist Congress, 1897 (links/texts on Bb); READ: “Reform Judaism from the Point of View of the Reform Jew” in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, 1906 (read sections entitled “The Center Principle,” “Relation to Nationalism,” and “Its Negations”).

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/address-by-max-nordau-at-the-first-zionist-congress>

<https://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/12634-reform-judaism-from-the-point-of-view-of-the-reform-jew>

12 Sept – Pogroms in Russia, 1881. READ: “Persecution of the Jews,” *Economist*, 29 April 1882, 500-501 (AUC Library Databases); READ: Leo Pinsker’s *Autoemancipation* (links to 2 editions on Bb). <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/quot-auto-emancipation-quot-leon-pinsker>

*13 Sept – Pinsker’s leadership of Hovevei Zion; the First Aliya. READ: Alan Dowty, “Much Ado about Little: Ahad Ha’am’s ‘Truth from Eretz Yisrael,’ Zionism, and the Arabs,” *Israel Studies* (2000), 5:2, 154-181, esp. 160-179 (search Journals, AUC Library).

15 Sept - Herzlian Zionism; *Der Judenstaat [The Jewish State]*; the Zionist Congress and Organization. READ: *Jewish State* (Preface, chs. 1-2, 5-6). http://www.zionism-israel.com/js/Jewish_State_tc.html.

19 Sept – Herzl and the First Zionist Congress. *****WATCH: “Theodor Herzl: A Living Portrait,” Spielberg Jewish Film Archive (Youtube). Discuss Herzl’s life and work. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dWi3pV8_XQY

*20 Sept - First Aliya and Second Aliya; Role of Women in early Zionism. READ: Ran Aaronsohn, “Through the Eyes of a Settler’s Wife: Letters from the Moshava,” in *Pioneers and Homemakers: Jewish Women in Pre-State Israel*, Deborah S. Bernstein, ed.; and Rachel Katznelson-Shazar, ed. *The Plough Woman: Memoirs of the Pioneer Women of Palestine* (texts on Bb).

22 Sept - Ahad Ha’am’s criticisms of Herzl and alternative views; “cultural Zionism.” READ: “The Jewish State and the Jewish Problem” <http://jewishvirtuallibrary.org/js/source/Zionism/haam2.html>

26 Sept – Impact of early Zionist settlement on the Palestine Arabs. READ: Alan Dowty, “‘A Question That Outweighs All Others’: Yitzhak Epstein and Zionist Recognition of the Arab Issue,” *Israel Studies* (2001), 6.1, 34-54, esp. 39-53 (search Journals, AUC Library).

29 Sept - First Exam

Part II - Socialist and Religious Zionism; World War I and the Balfour Declaration; Evolution of the Yishuv under the Mandate; Zionism and the Palestinian Arabs; the Holocaust and the birth of Israel; Israeli politics and Zionism; the 1967 war; the post-1967 settler movement; the triumph of Revisionist Zionism

- 3 Oct – Socialist/Labor Zionism and Religious Zionism. READ: Nachman Syrkin, “The Jewish Problem and the Socialist Jewish State” (1898). READ: Mohilewer’s letter to the First Zionist Congress, 1897 (text on Bb). <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/quot-the-jewish-problem-and-the-socialist-jewish-state-quot-nachman-syrkin>.
- 6 Oct - ARMED FORCES DAY HOLIDAY.
- 10 Oct – Library research session. **Receive Research Assignment.**
- 13 Oct – Balfour Declaration and British Mandate: realities and illusions. READ: Text of the Balfour Declaration (See *The Times*, 9 Nov 1917); Maxime Rodinson, *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?*, 42-66 (on Anglo-Zionist relations, text on Bb).
- 17 Oct – History of the Palestine Mandate and Expansion of the Yishuv.
- 20 Oct – Foundations of Revisionist Zionism. READ: Vladimir Jabotinsky, “Thou Shalt Not Wear *Sha’atnez*”: available from www.infocenters.co.il/jabo, article subtitled “Thoughts on Betar Monism”; READ: Vladimir Jabotinsky, “The Iron Wall.” <http://www.saveisrael.com/jabo/jabowall.htm>
- 24 OCT - DOCUMENT LOCATION COMPONENT OF RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT DUE (10%, SUBMIT DOCUMENTS IN PDF FORMAT TO GOOGLE DRIVE).**
- 27 Oct - Judah Magnes and binationalism. READ: “Like All the Nations?” and “A Solution through Force?” (texts on Bb).
- 31 Oct - Labor Zionist thinking in the 1930s. READ: Chaim Arlosoroff, “The Future of Zionist policy,” (1932, text on Bb).
- 3 Nov - Debate over the Peel Commission recommendations: “partition” and “transfer”; the Great Rebellion, 1936-39; British White Paper of 1939. READ: David Ben-Gurion’s letter to his son, 1937. <http://www.palestineremembered.com/download/B-G%20LetterTranslation.pdf>
http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/brwh1939.asp
- 7 NOV - SUMMARY COMPONENT OF RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT DUE (10%, SUBMIT TO TURNITIN.COM).**
- 7 Nov - *****WATCH: “The Path to Nazi Genocide, 1942-1945” (US Holocaust Memorial Museum Production, available on Youtube); Discuss Holocaust. READ: Amos Elon, “An Open Wound” (ch. 8 of his book, *The Israelis*, text on Bb).
- 10 Nov - Interpreting the Holocaust. READ: *History in Dispute: The Holocaust*, “Was the Holocaust a decisive factor in the creation of the modern state of Israel?”, pp. 120-127, text on Bb.
- 14 Nov - Zionist extremism: Etzel and Lehi. READ: “The Ideology of the Lehi,” www.saveisrael.com; essays on Etzel from Etzel’s point of view, <http://www.etzel.org.il/english/index.html> (“The Establishment of Irgun,” “The Revolt is Proclaimed,” “The Bombing of the King David Hotel,” “Deir Yassin”).
- 17 Nov - the 1948 war: traditional vs. revisionist views. READ: Ben-Gurion speeches during the 1948 war (19 May & 3 June); Avi Shlaim, “Israel and the Arab Coalition in 1948” (texts on Bb).
<https://jcpa.org/publication/israel-at-war-primary-sources/#WOI>
- 21 NOV - ANALYSIS COMPONENT OF RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT DUE (15%, SUBMIT TO TURNITIN.COM).**
- 21 Nov - Palestinian responses to Zionism; the Question of Terrorism. READ: Yasser Arafat, speech to the U.N., November 1974. <https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/A238EC7A3E13EED18525624A007697EC>.
- 24 Nov - THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY.

28 Nov – Palestinian responses to Zionism (continued). READ: Edward Said, excerpts from “Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims” (1979).

<http://homes.chass.utoronto.ca/~ikalmar/illustex/said%20zionism.htm>

1 Dec – The Six-Day War, 1967; consequences for Israelis and Palestinians. READ: Levi Eshkol speech, 12 June 1967.

http://jcpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Israel_Wins_the_Six-Day_War.pdf; Israeli settlement in the Occupied Territories. READ: “The Religious Meaning of the Six-Day War: A Symposium,” *Tradition: A Journal of Orthodox Jewish Thought* 10.1 (Summer 1968), 5-20.

5 Dec - Likud victory, 1977; Likud and the Christian Zionists. READ: Colin Shindler, “Likud and the Christian Dispensationalists: A Symbiotic Relationship,” *Israel Studies*, 5:1 (2000), 153-182 (search AUC Library); *****WATCH: Netanyahu Speech to Christians United for Israel (2012, link on Bb to Youtube).

<https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=Youtube+Netanyahu+speech+to+CUFI#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:9fad2e65,vid:HqgDKbGUdT0>

8 Dec – Internal Critiques of Zionism and Israel: Liberal Zionism and Post-Zionism. READ: Laurence J. Silberstein, *The Postzionism Debates*, chs. 2 & 4 (text on Bb). MAPS: B’Tselem maps of Israeli settlement in the West Bank. *****WATCH: “The Settlers” (Shimon Dotan, 2016 - available on DVD in library)

12 Dec - Review for Final Exam

FINAL ESSAY EXAM (DURING FINAL EXAMINATION PERIOD)

Appendix C

Heuristic questions for exploring the historiography of Zionism.

These questions are formulated to explicate paradoxes and debates that recur in Zionist historiography. Some of these questions are, in my opinion, inadequately addressed in existing surveys of Zionism, and so are intended to stimulate further research.

1. Was Zionism primarily a response to anti-Semitism or to assimilation? Was it a program of rescue for Jews facing material deprivation and physical destruction, OR a program of saving Jewish identity by means of cultural renewal?
2. Why did the early Zionist movement grow and spread, considering that it was a movement led by secular and Western/Westernized Jews, at a time when most Jews had a traditional/religious orientation and resided in Eastern Europe?
3. Herzl's premature death in 1904 produced an immediate question of succession. But it also produced a profounder question of succession, since a claim to his legacy arose among the Zionist factions that developed in the decades following his death. Who was Herzl's rightful successor, in terms of political orientation and ideology?
4. How did the balance of power within the Zionist movement shift from the Zionist Organization based in Europe, to the Jewish Agency based in Palestine? When and why did this transition take place?
5. Zionism seems a hybrid of ethno-nationalism and settler-colonialism. How are these elements interrelated, and which aspect predominates?
6. Given the weakness of the Yishuv in the 1920s and its demographic inferiority at both the local and regional level throughout the Mandate period, how did it prevail against both the Palestinian Arabs and the Arab states, in military and political conflicts in the period 1947-1967? How did Israel attain unchallengeable military supremacy in the Middle East by the 1980s?
7. How and why did the success of Zionism/welfare of Israel become a major concern of Jews in the Diaspora, especially in the U.S.?

Appendix D

HIST 3208 – “Zionism and Modern Judaism” – Primary-source Research Paper

Approved research topics and sources:

1. Problems of Jews in Tsarist Russia before 1914
2. Causes/consequences of the 1881 pogroms in Russia
3. Press coverage of the first Zionist congress, 1897
4. Debate at the First Zionist Congress over the *Program*
5. Debate at First Zionist Congress over *Colonization*
6. East-West Tensions at the First Zionist Congress
7. Causes and Manifestations of Jewish suffering: reports at the First Zionist Congress
8. Language, literature, and Hebrew culture at the First Zionist Congress
9. Press coverage of *any* Zionist Congress before establishment of Israel (22 Congresses to 1948)
10. American Jewish attitudes toward Zionism *before* the Balfour Declaration (1917)
11. Jewish settlement and institution-building in Palestine in Second and/or Third Aliya (1904-1914 or 1919-1923)
12. Zionist activism during World War I (1914-1918)
13. Anglo-Zionist relations/the Balfour Declaration, origins OR reactions
14. Jewish and non-Jewish responses to the Balfour Declaration (from 1917) (may include Arab responses)
15. Zionism at the Paris Peace Conference, Paris 1919
16. Jerusalem Riots, April 1920/Palin Commission Report
17. Jaffa Riots, May 1921/Haycraft Commission Report
18. Growth of the new Yishuv in Palestine, 1920-1929: immigration, institutions, achievements, conflicts
19. Wailing Wall Riots (1929): causes/consequences
20. Immigration issues in Palestine during the Mandate (1920-1948)
21. Land transfers and land policies during the Mandate
22. Zionist reactions to the Royal (Peel) Commission, 1937
23. U.S. Jews’ reaction to Nazism, 1930s
24. Anti-Semitism in the U.S., 1939-1962
25. Jewish/Zionist reactions to the 1939 White Paper
26. Jewish/Zionist advocacy during World War II (Shoah/Holocaust)
27. The issue of DPs after World War II/Jewish demands for free immigration to Palestine/British and Arab responses
28. Zionist militancy in Palestine, 1945-1947
29. Arab relations with Jews in Palestine, 1946-1947
30. U.S. Jews and the campaign for “partition” (U.N. vote in Nov. 1947)
31. Education in Israel, 1948-1953
32. Immigration to Israel, 1949 and after: “absorption” of Sephardim and Mizrachim in the decade after 1948
33. External funding of Israel, 1948-1953, esp. German reparations
34. U.S. Jews’ relations with Israel, 1948-67
35. Status of Jerusalem after 1948: Israeli/Jewish views (can be compared with Arab views)
36. The Six Day War (1967): Israeli/Jewish Perspectives; Israel’s Foreign Relations before, during, and after the war, etc.
37. U.S. Jews’ support for Israel, October 1973
38. “Zionism is a form of racism”: UNGA Res. 3379 (1975): Israeli/Jewish responses to the proposed resolution and its passage

39. Likud Bloc victory in the 1977 elections
40. Settlers in the Occupied Territories after 1977
41. The Israeli response to the First Intifada, 1987-1993
42. Russian immigration to Israel in 1990s
43. The assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, 1995
44. Historical Context of Atrocities/Terrorist Attacks: Deir Yassin, April 1948/Hadassah Medical Convoy, April 1948/Qibya, October 1953/Kfar Qasim, October 1956/Munich Olympics, September 1972/Ma'alot, May 1974/Sabra and Shatila, September 1982/Cave of the Patriarchs, February 1994/Beit Lid, January 1995/Muhammad al-Durrah, September 2000/Netanya Passover, March 2002

N.B. In your preparation of your paper you may refer to class discussions including primary sources we discussed in class; **however, you may not use any reading assigned for the entire class as one of the primary sources analyzed in your paper.**

Not all of the topics given above are "equal": documentation exists for all of them, but the abundance and accessibility of the documentation varies.

The following are some online sources you may consult for these topics:

1. London Times (Times Digital Archive at AUC)
2. New York Times (AUC)
3. Washington Post (AUC)
4. The Economist (AUC)
5. The Palestine Post (NLI – with access to Historical Jewish Press)
6. American Jewish Committee Archives (AJC Archives)
7. Hansards Parliamentary Debates (Historic Hansards)
8. Arabic newspapers through the AUC library website: <http://libguides.aucegypt.edu/mesources/news>
9. The Maccabaeon: A Zionist Magazine (1902-1920):
<https://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbinserial?id=maccabaeon>
10. United Press International Archive
11. Yad Chaim Weizmann (archives of the Chaim Weizmann organization)

AND ONLINE HISTORICAL NEWSPAPERS IN DATABASES SUCH AS <http://www.theeuropeanlibrary.org/tel4/newspapers> AND OTHERS FOUND IN THE HISTORY LIBGUIDE OF THE AUC LIBRARY. SEE THE SUBJECT GUIDES OF THE AUC LIBRARY.

PRINTED PRIMARY SOURCES (some available as ebooks)

- B. Destani, ed. *The Zionist Movement and the Foundation of Israel, 1839-1972*. (10 vols.)
- R.L. Jarman, ed. *Israel: Political and Economic Reports, 1948-1953*. (7 vols.)
- Martin Bunton, ed. *Land Legislation in Mandate Palestine*.
- Chaeran Y. Freeze and Jay M. Harris, eds. *Everyday Jewish Life in Imperial Russia: select documents, 1772-1914*.
- Michael J. Reimer, *The First Zionist Congress: An Annotated Translation of the Proceedings*.
- Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*.
- Eran Kaplan and Derek J. Penslar, *The Origins of Israel, 1882-1948*.
- Alan Dowty, *The Israel/Palestine Reader*.
- Priscilla Roberts, *Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Documentary and Reference Guide*.

NB: EXCLUSIONS—SOME KINDS OF DOCUMENTS YOU MAY NOT USE

There are certain categories of documents that are *excluded* from consideration for this assignment. Any document that contains footnotes/endnotes is, almost by definition, NOT a primary source. Two categories of such documents I also exclude are: most articles in legal journals; MA theses and PhD dissertations. Another exclusion: book or film reviews. While I accept that all such documents can be very useful, they cannot be used to fulfill this assignment.

You should not use any source derived from other venues UNLESS you clear the source with me. If you use inappropriate sources, you will suffer loss of credit and may fail. You should not proceed with the second and third stages of the project UNTIL you have satisfied me that you have identified appropriate sources for your subject.

Instructions for doing the primary-source research paper (which is broken up into 3 segments with 3 different due dates - see syllabus for dates)

1. Selecting a topic

Your research involves only *primary sources*. These are documents which were contemporary, or nearly contemporary, with the personalities or events or conflicts or institutions which they describe. In some cases, they may be reports which are made some years after the event, if these record the experiences of participants. Bear in mind that primary documents are not necessarily accurate. However, they do reflect the attitudes, beliefs, values, anxieties, and assumptions of people “on the spot,” and they always offer insight into the moral and material realities of the situation they portray.

Access to online sources may also be interrupted (e.g., if there is a power cut). However, late papers will suffer loss of credit, regardless of the reason for the lateness.

Although you should work on one of the topics given above, you may find that you need to refine the period you’re covering or otherwise **narrow the scope of the investigation**. This is fine. But please consult with me as you get into your research. The most important thing is to find a coherent set of sources from around the same period of time that will lead you to a deeper understanding of your topic.

2. Three elements of the paper: document location; document summary; document analysis.

a. Locating your documents.

You need to find three to five *substantive* periodical articles and/or other kinds of documents that pertain to your topic. And you must have three different publications and/or “venues” represented by your sources, i.e., you must get your sources from different publications, preferably from different countries. If a source is particularly long and rich, it may count as 2 of your sources, but you must check with me before you submit it as such. You will collect the articles and **arrange them in chronological order**. You should write a very brief introduction to your subject, and also a very brief introduction to each article you submit, suggesting how it relates to your study. You will submit all articles you have collected to me; each article must be in a format I can access. PDF is the preferred format for these documents. I will grade you on the relevance and quality of the articles you located, their authenticity (did you find the article in its original form?), the diversity of the documents in terms of venue and perspective, and whether or not you have followed the directions I have just given. This element counts 10% of your course grade.

b. Summarizing your documents.

You will read your documents and summarize their content, document by document. **You must supply proper bibliographical data for each article at the beginning of each summary.** As for the summary itself: you cannot repeat everything said in the article, so you should read it through carefully and select those things which are most important for the understanding of the subject under investigation. You may quote the article, but be selective with your quotations and do not quote anything without explaining its meaning and significance. **Be sure to present your documents in chronological order.** This element counts 10% of your course grade.

c. Analyzing the articles.

Your last task is to analyze each article, and then compare them with one another in order to draw tentative conclusions about your subject. **As with the summaries, you should supply proper bibliographical data for each source at the beginning of each analysis, and they should be presented in chronological order.** Analysis should consider things like: the venue of the article; the author (if given in the article and/or easily analyzed); the title; structure of the article; quality of the reporting (give reasons why you think the reporting is accurate or inaccurate); objectivity; omissions; the presence or absence of historical context; etc. If the article contains an argument of some kind, you should restate the argument and evaluate its strengths and weaknesses (and don't call it "bias"). Indeed, I would advise you *not* to use the words "bias" or any synonyms. Articles will have a *point of view*, and you should state what the point of view is and supply evidence for your assertion. After you have written three analyses, turn to comparisons and conclusions. Comparison may include highlighting themes which run through the documents, and explaining how the data contribute (or fail to contribute) to an understanding of your subject. Suggest reasons for the similarities and differences in the documents, especially discrepancies between them, i.e., *make a critical comparison of your documents*. The conclusion should also suggest how your study helps us to understand the history of Zionism, Judaism, and Jewry as a whole. This element counts 15% of your course grade.

ADDENDUM TO BIBLIOGRAPHY

Jewish Chronicle now available!!!

The oldest continuously published Jewish journal, London's *Jewish Chronicle*, is now available to this class, including its entire archive, extending back to 1841. You are strongly encouraged to make use of it for your research projects.