

## **Transcending the borders and bringing back the Absents: challenging the Israeli society through performances.**

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*This paper discusses four performances led by Zochrot NGO. It shows how they challenge Israeli Jewish society by bringing into the public sphere the erased memory of the Nakba and altering the traditional divisions of a citizenship based on a powerful dichotomy between "theem" (the Absent/ Palestinians/ Minority) and "us" (those Present/ Jews/ Majority).*

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Forty percent of the population in the territories allocated to the Jewish State is not Jewish. This is not a solid basis for a Jewish State (...) Only a State which is at least 80% Jewish can be viable and stable<sup>i</sup>

In this statement by David Ben Gurion to Mapai<sup>ii</sup> leaders on December 3rd, 1947, he clearly expressed his vision of the future State of Israel as a Jewish State. This exclusive definition established a clear dichotomy between *them* (Arabs) and *us* (Jews), between the *other* and *oneself*, and defined differentiated citizenship categories in Israel. This definition became the reality through the displacement of the majority of the native Palestinian population in 1948, in an attempt to create a homogenous Jewish State. Though the State is characterized today as Jewish *and* democratic, what was initially “them” *and* “us” became “them” *versus* “us” and finally “them” *or* “us”.

The inherent contradiction between the Jewish and the democratic character of the State has fueled many debates in and about Israel<sup>iii</sup>. Citizenship in Israel has never been, and has even never pretended to be, equal and is not an autonomous sphere. The formally defined Jewish ethnicity is, in the words of Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, a necessary condition for membership in the national community<sup>iv</sup>. Since 1950 the Law of Return has openly formalised this ethno-nationalist distinction by stipulating that “(...) every Jew has the right to immigrate to Israel” and, once she “makes” *aliyah* (“ascent”, the term that describes immigration of the diaspora Jews to Israel) automatically grants her Israeli citizenship. Enshrined in the very definition of the State, the Jewish and Zionist nature of Israeli identity remained dominant. It clearly is in contradiction to the conception of the “State for all its citizens” whose implementation the majority of these “other” citizens are still awaiting.

The establishment of a Jewish state was achieved in a manner similar to that envisioned by the Zionists leaders: the displacement of most of the Palestinians in an event the latter characterized as a *Nakba*. This Arabic word means “catastrophe” (Zureik, 1950) and refers to the destruction, expulsion, looting, massacres and incidents of rape of the Palestinian inhabitants in 1948. It also prevents Palestinian refugees from returning to their homes. Between 700,000 to 800,000 Palestinians - out of 1,300,000 - were displaced by the end of 1948<sup>v</sup>. Most became refugees in the West Bank, Gaza, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan; a few reached other countries. More than 500 Palestinian villages and cities were emptied during the Nakba and approximately 20,000 Palestinians refugees remained within the

borders of Israel and became “internally displaced” there. The Nakba is not taught in Israeli schools and is rarely referred to in other cultural spheres - literature, films, and art<sup>vi</sup>. Even though many physical remains of destroyed localities are visible throughout the country, the explanatory signs about the history and geography of many sites fail to mention their Palestinian past<sup>vii</sup>. After the Knesset passed the “Nakba Law” in 2011, commemoration of by State-funded institutions or organizations during Israeli Independence Day celebrations has been illegal and subject to a penalty.

Zochrot NGO seeks to raise public awareness of the Palestinian Nakba, especially among Jews in Israel who have a special responsibility to remember and redress the legacy of 1948. The principal victims of the Nakba were the Palestinians, especially the refugees, who lost their entire world. But it is Zochrot's understanding that Jews in Israel also pay a price for their conquest of the land in 1948, living as they do in constant fear and without real hope for peace. *Zochrot* is Hebrew for “They (feminine form) remember”. In Hebrew, as in many other languages, the feminine form of the verb is the “non- standard” one: Israelis usually use the masculine form of the verb when the gender of the subject is not specified - in this case *Zochrim* rather than *Zochrot*. The feminine form was deliberately chosen by Zochrot's founders in order to imply that, just as the language is non-standard, so is the memory they are dealing with - the Nakba, not the War of Independence (as it usually referred to in Israel). Zochrot sees the recognition of the Nakba by Israeli Jews as an essential basis for reconciliation between Palestinian and Israelis. Zochrot believes that Jews must accept their responsibility for the Nakba by accepting the Palestinian refugees' right of return. A clear consensus exists among Israeli Jews against the Palestinian's right of return. Some even think that the return of the Palestinian refugees means *their* own extermination in a zero-sum game. Under such conditions, no one discusses return. Zochrot, which supports the right of return, aims to create spaces where it can be discussed. But instead of trying to convince people that such a right exists, Zochrot develops ideas for ways in which the return can be implemented. With that aim in mind, Zochrot has organized various activities and projects to imagine and plan for the return of Palestinian refugees. This article describes four of them.

### *The Nakba law, in German it sounds worse*

In March, 2011, the Israeli Parliament passed “The Nakba Law”. In fact, it is an amendment (n°40) to the Budget Foundations Law<sup>viii</sup>. According to the additional section, 3B.1(b).4, “*Commemorating Independence Day or the Day of the Establishment of the State as a day of mourning*” by a “*supported entity*” (i.e. funded by the State) is subjected to the reduction of “(...) *the sums earmarked to be transfered from the State budget to this entity*”. In other words, by this amendment, the State declares its clear opposition to commemorating the Nakba in conjunction with Israeli Independence Day. The most important commemorations of the Nakba by the Palestinians of Israel are traditionally held on this day. It is probably unprecedented in the history of democracies that a State imposes sanctions, in particular financial sanctions, on the legal commemoration of a catastrophe affecting a large minority of its citizens, clearly indicating to them that their history should not be addressed publicly during the national celebration. Zochrot decided in 2011 to organize a direct action protesting the law during Israeli Independence Eve in Rabin Square, the focus of celebrations in Tel

Aviv attracting thousands of Israelis. Some twenty activists, some of them wearing black Zochrot's t-shirts (on which "Remembering the Nakbah" was printed in Hebrew, Arabic and English), and a journalist filming them, left the organization's offices around 10 pm with the placard designed for that occasion. On one side of the sign was a portrait of an elderly Palestinian refugee holding the key to his home, from which he was expelled in 1948; on the other side was a German translation of an excerpt from the Nakba Law. The idea, inspired by a memory project in Berlin<sup>ix</sup>, was to refer to the anti-democratic laws enacted early in the Nazi regime in Germany which established the legal structure for the subsequent European horrors. While some activists posted the sign on Rabin Square, others distributed leaflets explaining the aim and context of the activity which lasted around 20 minutes. Less than one minute after it began, scores of people gathered, wondering what was happening. When the spectators understood they tore the sign and some passers-by reacted in quite a hostile manner, shouting and cursing the activists: "Go to Gaza!", "Sons of bitches, go to fuck Arabs", "I busted my ass off for you in Gaza", "Pieces of shit, aren't you ashamed?", A man, approximately 50 years old, began to lecture the activists:

I don't remember that Germans decided to kill Jews because Jews attacked the German army(...) After the partition in 1947 the Arab countries decided it was time to kill the Jews (...) It's not enough what the Nazis did, let's kill some poor Jews (...) We were a tiny weak minority but had, let's say, bigger balls than theirs (...) It was their decision to act against all the nations of the world... Their right, now they can cry all they want about the Nakba...

A passerby shouted at Zochrot's activists: "*Holocaust survivors came from the diaspora to build a home here! Are you against that? And your parents? You have the gall to stand here?*". While an activist was explaining they were protesting what they consider as an anti-democratic and racist law that endangers everyone, including Jews, a woman approached them:

Me... me, I lost three brothers in the Holocaust. I'm a racist and I don't want Arabs here, and I don't want you! It's sad that people like you are even alive, it embarrasses the country, people gave their lives for this country... You stand here without shame? (...) Without morality?

Recalling the Nakba, much less displaying visual representations to aid public understanding during Israeli Independence Day commemorations presents a great challenge to most Israelis. They feel accused, and honestly think such accusations are unfair: they believe that the Nakba is a Palestinian issue and most Israelis don't consider that they have any responsibility for it<sup>x</sup>. By referring to an Israeli law as antidemocratic (much less in German, the language of those perpetrated the horror suffered by many Israelis) we elicited Pavlovian reactions which recalled the memory of the Holocaust even though Zochrot's action wasn't intended to compare it to the Nakba. This activity confronted Israelis with a dual challenge: to acknowledge the Nakba and to recognize the antidemocratic character of the Nakba law. Comparing it to the early Nazi laws was indeed provocative in the Israeli context and probably prevented a true dialogue. Yet, the reactions showed that comparing one antidemocratic law to another, particularly a Nazi law, challenges the hegemonic Israeli

narrative and generates post-traumatic reactions to the memory of the Nakba. The next year, during the 2012 Israeli Independence celebrations, when Zochrot's activists were leaving its offices to commemorate the Nakba in the street, they were surprised to discover that dozens of policemen encircled the building and prevented them from conducting their activity. The police commander explained to the activists that their action was a “threat to the public order” even though he didn't know what their plan was.

*Why I will not tell? Because I did it...*

Amnon Neumann, a Palmach<sup>xi</sup> soldier, was invited to Zochrot to testify in a public forum about his experience during the 1948 war. Both the audience and Neuman were told the event would be filmed and available for public viewing. On June 17, 2010, some twenty people gathered to hear him, including a few Palestinians and some Jews who were attending a Zochrot activity for the first time. Neumann spoke about his participation as an ordinary soldier in combat and about evacuation of several Palestinian villages in the country's south in 1948, among them Burayr, Kawkaba, Barbara and Beit Jirja:

I served in the Second, Eighth, and Ninth Battalions of the Palmach from February 1948 until my discharge in October 1949. The most significant period for me in terms of the Nakba was April-May 1948, when the battles or clashes with the locals took place. At first we escorted convoys traveling on the road from 'Iraq Suwaydan, from Rehovot, [through] 'Iraq Suwaydan, Kawkaba and Burayr, to Nir-'Am where our company headquarters were located. Then an armed group of Arabs took up positions in Burayr and didn't let us through, so we took a different route, from near Ashdod where Isdud was located, through Majdal, Barbara, Bayt Jirja, to Yad Mordechai. The Egyptian army arrived when we had wiped out all Arab resistance, which wasn't that strong. It would be an exaggeration to say we fought against the Palestinians...

His testimony was interrupted several times by comments and questions from the audience. After he mentioned the attack on Burayr, an exchange took place between members of the audience and Neumann:

Eitan Bronstein: What happened in the village of Burayr?

Amnon Neumann: There was a battle, and there was a slaughter...

E.B: Can you say a little bit more about that?

A.N: I don't want to go into these things, leave me alone! It's ... it's not things we go into.

A woman (non identified): Why?

A.N: Because I did it. Is that a good reason? (*long silence*)

We learned nothing new from this testimony. The expulsion from those villages, including the massacre in Burayr, was already described both by researchers and Palestinian refugees from the village<sup>xiii</sup>. But it was important because, for the first time, a Palmach fighter told publicly recounted war crimes committed against Palestinians in 1948. He described in details not only the events themselves but also his own participation and responsibility for them. Neumann refused to describe the massacre itself but characterized it as “slaughter” and justified his

refusal to describe it by saying “I did it”. He testified before a relatively small audience, but the film of his account can be seen by many more people.

About two months later, transcripts of the event were uploaded to Zochrot's website<sup>xiii</sup> (in Hebrew and English) and didn't elicit any special reactions. The event with Neumann was filmed, and it was only when the edited and shortened version (13'50 min) was put online (in Hebrew with English subtitles), that it began receiving much attention, even in the right-wing Israeli camp<sup>xiv</sup>. In December 2012, more than 25,800 viewers - many more than the traditional circle of Zochrot activists and sympathizers - watched it. This video attracted many more viewers than all the other videos prepared by the organization.

This performance challenges the accepted discourse about the behavior of the Palmach fighters and how they are viewed by Israeli society. They are always construed and seen as heroes of the Independence War while Neumann's testimony shows that what he - they - did was not about heroism. Neumann explicitly criticizes that interpretation. By expressing guilt and regret about his own participation in a massacre and expulsions, he clearly contradicts the common Israeli narrative. Here's what two former Palmach commanders said to the Israeli nationalist newspaper *Makor Richon* which reported on the online testimony.

Israel Weisler declared:

I have no word of dirt to say about the Palmach. It was a hard war, they killed us and we killed them but our war was completely based on the purity of the weapons and dignity.

Rafi Eitan, who fought with the Palmach and became Minister of Pensioner Affairs in 2006:

If he (Neuman, *ed.*) committed war crimes, he belongs in jail. The Palmach was one of the most moral armies I know. Even when we suffered terrorist acts, we always looked for the guilty ones and not civilians, women or kids (...) We destroyed villages but it was always for security needs. (...) In order to protect ourselves from mines, in a few places we had to take over a village but we never killed. We would come, ask to see the Sheikh and give him 48 hours to evacuate the village to Gaza. (...) The Independence War was a war of life or death. It was either we or they and if they had won, we would not be here today

The reactions from the two Palmach commanders are typical reactions of Israelis when challenged by versions like Neumann's. To use Pierre Bourdieu's terms, they act as *gatekeepers* trying to obviate what they see as a threat to public order, to the hegemonic and national narrative. It is not just another important Palestinian testimony about the Nakba: this is the first public testimony by a “Nakba perpetrator”. Amnon Neuman, invited by an Israeli NGO, speaks about the Nakba in Hebrew, demonstrating that it is not only a Palestinian issue but also part of Israeli history.

*From the camps in Lebanon to the streets of Tel Aviv*

In 2009 the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) began organizing an annual Human Rights March in Tel Aviv to mark International Human Rights Day, observed on December 10, the date in 1948 on which the UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. On December 9, 2011, Zochrot participated in this march for the second time. Commemoration of Human Rights Day in Israel included reference to most human rights, but not the right of return, even though it is part of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country” (Article 13.2)<sup>xv</sup>.

Zochrot's participants in that march carried life-sized photos of Palestinian refugees taken by French photographer Thierry Bresillon in 2007 in 'Ayn al-Hilweh, the largest refugee camp in Lebanon. Zochrot's activity represents the Palestinian refugees to emphasize their right of return. Zochrot also made prior arrangements to connect with Palestinian refugees in different parts of the world so they could view the Tel Aviv event via *Skype*. The idea was for them to comment in writing on the site about what they saw on their screen.

A few thousand people and 135 organizations participated in the march. Some thirty activists from Zochrot carried five life-sized photos of Palestinian refugees and a banner five meters long that read: “Remembering the Nakba” in Hebrew, Arabic and English. Many demonstrators approached Zochrot's group asking them to explain the huge photos. Some of them even joined the activity. This activity, however, elicited no visible reactions from the crowd. Asked about this apparent indifference, one activist explained:

Most of the participants in the march are people who see themselves as democratic and pro-human rights (...) Even if they don't support the right of return of the Palestinian refugees, they tend to hide it because it's not seen as a democratic behavior.

The second stage of the activity was connecting via *Skype* on mobile phones to different places outside Israel where Palestinian refugees were also connecting from their computers so they could take part via the Internet in the Tel Aviv march.

A group of refugees, gathered at BADIL's (Resource Center for Palestinian Residency & Refugee) office in Bethlehem; the director of an important Palestinian refugees' NGO in Lebanon watched the march from Beirut; a Palestinian-American teacher at the University of Idaho participated from her home. They were joined by the daughter of a non-Palestinian Syrian refugee from the Golan Heights occupied by Israel since 1967. All of the e-participants saw and heard what was going on at the march; several Zochrot's activists spoke to them on mobile phones, wishing them a speedy return. The activists were excited to be seen by the Palestinians and exchange messages with them. One of them explained:

When I saw their face on the screen and I knew they could see me, I was moved and I really felt that it was not my issue or their issue, that it was our common struggle for the right of return and for our future life together in this country<sup>xvi</sup>.

Some Palestinian participants took screen captures showing what they could see from their side. Their excitement was later expressed in the written comments and reflections they sent to Zochrot:

Rula from US:

We all participate in the march for human rights in downtown Tel Aviv, me from my living room, they - well, some of them were in flesh and blood, others were there in memory and life-sized posters, but they were there together as a tangible presence on the ground. I do see the life-sized posters of Palestinian refugees coming home, they are present, they are there. (...)

Leila from Beirut:

I didn't expect to participate in a demonstration in Tel Aviv with other Palestinian refugees from Lebanon. Its almost a dream for me to participate together with Israelis and Palestinians to demand implementation of our human rights, especially our right to return. Although it was a symbolic participation it gave and brought me more hope that one day we will be there as a result of our common struggle for justice and the rights of refugees.

Ines from Paris:

My father was born in a place that does not exist anymore. But there is a place where his village, and all the others, still exists. If I close my eyes, I can see every single small stone of my father's village. I can see the kids playing outside; I can hear every voice and see the face of each inhabitant. Today, I am with all of them in the streets of Tel Aviv, showing that we don't forget our right to return.

Some refugees from Bethlehem:

As a refugee from Dayr Aban, a depopulated village in West Jerusalem, I belong there. Political sovereignty means nothing to me, the color of the flags means nothing to me, I only care about the place to which I belong to and to which I have the right to return.

I'm a refugee from the destroyed village of Ajjur in the West Jerusalem district (...) we are looking forward to see the refugees whose photos you are carrying actually return to their original locations.

I write to you as a refugee from Jerusalem whose father fled in 1948 and was never able to return (...) we salute our Jewish comrades in this struggle who stand arm in arm for a world without discrimination and for justice.

Zochrot's aim was to raise the issue of the right of return of the Palestinian refugees as a part of a mainstream event about which consensus exists in Israeli society. This activity brought the absent Palestinians into the streets of central Tel Aviv in two ways: first, their symbolic participation as life-sized photos placed their images in the Israeli visual landscape for the first time. These refugees were born in this country, expelled (or fled) in 1948 and are not

allowed to return nor even to visit. Zochrot allowed them to transcend - even though symbolically - the borders and to come to Tel Aviv, carried by Israeli Jewish activists. Second, the activity allowed Palestinians living in Bethlehem and Beirut, who are also not permitted to reach Tel Aviv, to join the march, even if only by watching, listening and writing. This activity challenges in several ways the traditional delineators of Israeli citizenship that are based on the Manichean dichotomy *they* vs. *we*. First, as suggested by the activist who was interviewed, this action clearly provided the Jewish Israelis participating in the march with a different self-perception: for few hours, they felt less as they were “perpetrators” and more as if they were “actors” of a reconciliation, actively involved in the legacy of damages. More pragmatically, this action also created a new reality: for few hours, Tel Aviv was no longer only a “white Ashkenazi” city where no refugees and Palestinians in general can't be seen. Palestinians, by being integrated into public space, thereby become part of society. Acting for integration instead of separation, thinking about “they” *and* “we” instead of “they” *or* “we” becomes the core of the fourth and last performance.

### *Fragmented dreams: sitting with Palestinian refugees on Rothschild Boulevard*

As we have said, Zochrot supports the right of return. But rather than trying to convince people that such a right exists, Zochrot develops ideas for the return itself and practices of return, and tries to create spaces to discuss it. Zochrot organized a group to study and plan the return of Palestinian refugees. Seven Israeli Jews gathered for four three-hours workshops at Zochrot's offices. Led by Zochrot staff, they began by learning about the right of return and then examined different projects developed by other groups and by architects to plan the return of the Palestinian refugees. In the final stage of the project, each one of the participants had to imagine his/her own life after the return of the refugees and write or draw it. One participant suggested that the group expand the circle of those exposed to their work and in that way create a very unusual opportunity for Israelis to discuss this subject in an open public space. A presentation of their work and a discussion was organized on Rothschild Boulevard, in the center of Tel Aviv, the same place where the Israeli social protest had begun a few months earlier.

On the evening of January 1, 2012, some twenty people - activists and their friends - gathered despite the cold weather. They posted their manifesto on a large sign, explaining: “*We tried to imagine that it wouldn't be a case of 'them or us'. An openly shared homeland, free to all, living together in dignity and happiness. Just imagine this new entity and the potential opportunities it holds for all of us*”. The group also displayed five posters representing ideas and plans about the return that were previously exhibited at Zochrot under the heading “Towards return of Palestinian refugees”<sup>xvii</sup>. Some passers-by passed this improvised exhibit and stopped to look, read and ask questions. Some of them became involved in intensive exchanges with the organizers; a few joined the presentation and discussion. People sat in a circle: each of the participants in the study group briefly described their project.

Moran, a 28-years-old freelance video artist, imagined the changes that will occur on the eve of the refugees' return, as a spiral. She envisioned a future that, while maintaining sight of the past, will be founded on development, sustainability, emotional feeling, compassion and

rehabilitation.

Magdalena, a 25-years-old student, proposed building a bi-language study center in every town so Hebrew and Arabic will be taught to everyone and all Palestinians and Israelis will be fluent in both languages.

Danny, a 30-years-old musician, envisioned a concert of Darwish's and Bialik's poetry, set to music by the students of the music academy of Miske<sup>xviii</sup>. The concert would be performed by the Philharmonic orchestra of Nablus in collaboration with the Arab and Israeli winners of "Kochav Nolad" (the local version of *American Idol*).

Isobel, a 45-years-old architect, learned how to stuff fig leaves from Sanaa's mother when visiting her friend. She believes that any long lasting bond, like the one needed for Palestinian repatriation, can develop when founded on personal relationships.

Linda, aged 28, who works at Tel Aviv University, foresees chaos during the initial stages of the return. Later, she believes that conditions will stabilize and form what she imagined as a lively "tree" with a strong trunk, branches and many leaves.

Danielle, 26 years old, a student, thought of redesigning Dizengoff Square in Tel Aviv as "The Square of Dreams", reconstructing the old movie theater and having local Arab and Jewish film directors show their films there.

Many of the listeners displayed interest in the presentations, commented on them and asked questions: "*It sounds very vague and non-practical*"; "*Is it realistic to think/ believe that after so many years of conflict there can be reconciliation?*"; "*I can't believe it's possible*"; "*It sounds fascinating, how could we mobilize more Israelis to take part in planning return of the Palestinian refugees?*".

One of the participants in the group expressed her fear, as a woman, of Arab men, in a situation in which there will be many more Arabs after Palestinian refugees return. This young woman's words reflect a pair of stereotypes and prejudices. The first is that male violence would be carried out exclusively by "Arab" men, even though it stems from the general patriarchal system. Second, her comment exposes a real challenge for Israelis who even though they may support the return, must overcome the fear of Arabs so deeply rooted in Israeli society.

The four performances organized by Zochrot challenge Israelis, "*Israeliness*" and citizenship in Israel.

The protest against the Nakba Law and Amnon Neumann's public testimony can be seen as examples of what Sigmund Freud characterized as the "Return of the Repressed"<sup>xix</sup>. These two responses expose Israelis to their own traumatic behaviors and history. The video of the protest against the "Nakba Law" demonstrates how challenging it was, how it succeeded in bringing racist reactions to light<sup>xx</sup>. Amnon Neuman's testimony reminded the public of what has been suppressed in Israel since 1948: the expulsions and massacres of the Palestinians. A few months later, the director of the Palmach archives in Tel Aviv was asked if publishing testimonies from the archives was permissible: "*(...) You should be very careful. No one wants a member of the Palmach or their relatives to discover that their father or mother, or someone else, did something wrong in 1948*".

The two other performances, which introduced to Israeli public space discussion of

Palestinian refugees and plans for their return, can be seen as the restoration of the missing. Both the refugees and plans to return are absent from the Israeli landscape. Zochrot's activities aim to bring the absent to the streets of Tel Aviv. Many Israelis see that as completely unrealistic, but also frightening: they believe that *their* return means *our* end.

Whether Israeli Jews are seduced or irritated by Zochrot's activities, these performances provided opportunities to confront a missing part of their history and their responsibility. Teaching the Nakbah (Amnon Neuman's testimony), bringing it into the public space (Nakbah Law, Human Right march) debating it (Rothschild) challenges Israeli-Jewish society in several ways. These performances invite people to redefine the relations between the familiar (feeling secure, reassured) and the unfamiliar (feeling frightened, unsafe, endangered) and blur the boundaries between the self and others. They aim to re-examine how “they” and “we” can live together and create the foundation for an equal citizenship.

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<sup>i</sup> David Ben Gurion cited in Ilan Pappé, 2006: 78.

<sup>ii</sup> Mapai is an acronym for *Mifletget Pooleti Eretz Yisrael* (“Worker's Party of the Land of Israel”) the leading Jewish political party at that time.

<sup>iii</sup> See for example Sammy Smooha (1997; 2000); As'ad Ghanem, Nadim Rouhana and Oren Yiftachel (1998), Amal Jamal (2002). On the failure of debates, see Uzi Benziman, 2006, *Shel mi HaHaretz Hazot?* (“Whose country is this?”), Jerusalem: The Israeli Institute for Democracy.

Debates about ethnocentric regimes are not unique to the state of Israel, many other states created citizenship laws based on ethnicity.

<sup>iv</sup> Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, 2002: 125.

<sup>v</sup> According to Benny Morris (1988) 369 villages were destroyed and 700,000 Palestinians were displaced, while according to Ilan Pappé (1988; 1992) 531 villages were destroyed and 800,000 Palestinians were displaced.

<sup>vi</sup> For Israeli literature, see for example these books mentioning the Nakba: Smylansky Yizhar (1949), *Khirbet Khizeh (Khizeh ruin)*, Tel Aviv: Sifriyat Po'alim; Eshkol Nevo (2004), *Arbaa Batim VeGaagua (Four houses and a longing)*, Tel Aviv: Zmora Bitan; Alon Hilu (2008), *Ahuzat Dajani (The House of Dajani)*, Tel Aviv: Yedi'ot Sfarim. For Israeli filmography, see for example *Kedma* by Amos Gitai (2002); *The Diaries of Yossef Nachmani* by Dalia Karpel (2005) or *Mechilot (Forgiveness)* by Udi Aloni (2006).

<sup>vii</sup> Noga Kadman 2008.

<sup>viii</sup> Book of the Laws 5745: 15; 5771: 195.

<sup>ix</sup> Inspired by Renata Stih & Frieder Schnock's project "Places of Remembrance" in Berlin: <http://www.stih-schnock.de/remembrance.html>

<sup>x</sup> On the construction of the Nakba as an exclusive Palestinian's issue, see Ariella Azoulay, 2011.

<sup>xi</sup> Palmach was the principal armed and trained Jewish militia until it was incorporated into the Israeli Defense Forces in 1948.

<sup>xii</sup> See for example Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*, p.128.

<sup>xiii</sup> <http://zochrot.org/en/testimony/amnon-neumann> (in English).

<sup>xiv</sup> Cf. Ishay Fridman, “Shovrim Shtika - Guirsat HaPalmach” (“Breaking the Silence - Palmach Version”), *Makor Rishon*, January 5, 2012.

<sup>xv</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Pages/Language.aspx?LangID=eng>

<sup>xvi</sup> Interview F.A, Tel Aviv, dec 9, 2011.

<sup>xvii</sup> For more details (in Hebrew and Arabic) about the exhibition, see

<http://zochrot.org/exhibition/פליטים-שיבת-לקראת>

<sup>xviii</sup> Miska is a Palestinian village destroyed in 1948, twenty kilometers southwest of Tulkarem.

<sup>xix</sup> Sigmund Freud, 1900, *Die Traumdeutung* (“The Interpretation of Dreams”).

<sup>xx</sup> The edited film by Lia Tarachansky: <http://zochrot.org/en/video/nakba-law-german-it-sounds-worse>

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