

NATIONAL IDENTITY - NATIONAL UNITY
THE INTEGRATIONAL ASPECT OF ADULT EDUCATION
IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODERN STATE OF ISRAEL
1948 - 1973

by

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A Thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education
University of Toronto

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ABSTRACT

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A qualitative, grounded theory methodology was used in this study to explore how selected adult educators in Israel, perceive and assess adult education as a strategy for the development of National Identity - National Unity (NI-NU) within the modern State of Israel: 1948 - 1973. The methodology is an inductive approach that relies heavily on the data from interviews and observation to build a theory 'grounded' in the data rather than to test a theory or merely describe empirical phenomena. The method required the use of theoretical sampling in data collection and analysis. The researcher collected data from thirty-one interviews with selected adult educators, who became the 'primary personnel' (ie policy makers); with some program implementers and participant evaluators included. The interviews (and related material from observations and publications) were recorded, transcribed, coded and categorized in related sections.

Fifteen primary factors were identified that connect modern Israeli Identity to traditional Jewish Identity. The study briefly describes the historical and philosophical background of adult education in Israel including a descriptive analysis of the contribution made to NI-NU by seven primary adult education agencies: 1) The Ministry of

Education and Culture (Department of Adult Education and Department of Torah Culture); 2) Ulpanim (Hebrew language studies); 3) Israel Defence Force (IDF); 4) Kibbutzim (collective farms); 5) Histadrut (Trades' Unions); 6) Community Centers and 7) Moshavim (Co-operative farms).

An assessment of cultural pluralism and minority groups as each relates to NI-NU is examined along with the contribution of religion in Israel to NI-NU.

On the basis of the interviews with selected adult educators, a substantive theory was inductively developed to explain the integrational aspect of adult education among the Jewish citizens of Israel. It states that the closer one moves towards an integration of Jewish Identity with Israeli Identity, the stronger ones sense of National Identity - National Unity will be with the State of Israel. The study shows that the goal and direction of adult education in Israel (1948 - 1973) was towards National Identity - National Unity.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research project required the assistance and support of specific people, without whom, the thesis would still be an 'idea'! Special thanks goes to: Dr. Eitan Israeli from the Faculty of Agriculture of the Hebrew University, Rehovot, Israel. Dr. Israeli provided the impetus for the project and served as personal advisor while we lived in Israel. He helped our family expand an academic experience into a life-altering 'Family Learning Project'.

Dr. Roby Kidd, my thesis chairman, for his knowledge of international cross-cultural studies in adult education that helped move the project to completion.

Dr. Bill Alexander, Dr. James Draper and Dr. Joseph Farrell for their personal contributions as members of the thesis committee.

The adult educators in Israel, who willingly participated in the interviews from which such valuable data and personal understandings emerged of the development of adult education in Israel.

The personal friends who shared in this project with encouragement, financial assistance and prayers.

To each of you I offer my warm thanks for what you have done, and become, to me as an adult learner.

DEDICATION

This thesis represents the formal culmination of a three year learning project. I dedicate it with love and appreciation to my wife Rita, and our two sons David and Michael, who shared in it all the way to Jerusalem, and in Judea and Samaria and....

INTRODUCTION

In January, 1979, I introduced a visiting lecturer from Haifa, to my wife Rita and our two sons, David and Michael. As we shared dinner together, we gained new insights into life in his homeland - Israel. At that time, I was mid way through my doctoral studies in adult education at O.I.S.E. (The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education) in Toronto. Living in the rural community of Beamsville, in the picturesque Niagara peninsula, we were a hundred kilometers by car from Toronto - and the nearest major Jewish community. I confessed to having an interest in Israel, as a practicing Christian, having completed a comparative education term paper about adult education in Israel. Our guest, after hearing of our interest, asked if we had ever considered going to Israel, to study what adult educators were doing in the development of their nation. Our guest was Dr. Eitan Israeli. On August 21, 1979 at 2:40 P.M. we landed in Israel.

Why Israel? That was the question I was asked whenever I introduced my research topic. With a non koshered name like Cunningham, they knew I was probably not Jewish. Why then did I bring my wife and children and invest a year of my life to study adult education in Israel? Apart from the standard answers relating to 'the exciting things happening in the land of Israel today', I found myself answering the question in a somewhat Jewish fashion - with another

question: "Does a woman ever wonder what it is like to be a man? Does 'coming from' as taught in Torah cause a woman to wonder 'what it would be like' as part of her own understanding of self-identity?" If the answer to my question was 'yes', I would then add, "Perhaps that is why I chose to come to Israel!"

The late professor of adult education, Dr. Coolie Verner, from the University of British Columbia, wrote in his letter of reference for my acceptance into the doctoral program at OISE, "...approaches his studies pragmatically and seeks practical and useful knowledge that he can apply immediately..." My goal was like that of the unknown philosopher who said he tried to 'keep his education from interfering with his learning'. How adult education in Israel is perceived as a strategy for national identity and national unity became part of my 'education'. The people, the sonic booms, the smells of the Old City, the haggling, the tensions and the warm hospitality, were part of my 'learning'. This paper is presented as a blending of both.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This paper will present how selected adult educators in Israel perceive and assess adult education as a strategy for the development of National Identity - National Unity, (NI-NU) in the modern State of Israel: 1948-1973.

Israel, as a modern developing nation, witnessed the influx of Jewish immigrants from literally 'the four corners of the earth'. They arrived from their 102 host countries, with widely divergent cultures and a linguistic variety of eighty-one mother tongues,¹ yet they had one point in common - they were Jewish. Some were well educated, articulate Jews from a western or European style 'Ashkenazi'² background. Others arrived with a limited formal education, yet possessed a rich heritage in the traditions of the North African 'Oriental' Jew.³ Some were devoutly orthodox in their religious observance, while others classified themselves unashamedly as atheistic, with little knowledge of or interest in Jewish religious teachings.⁴ Some arrived alone as destitute refugees of the Nazi Holocaust or Muslim persecutions in neighbouring Arab countries.⁵ Others came as financially independent family units from North American, European and South African Jewish communities. Some professed an open endorsement of the philosophy of Karl Marx and came to pioneer a model socialist society. Others believed in the spirit of free enterprise and saw in the building of Israel

an opportunity for entrepreneur initiative. Most came as committed Zionists,⁶ believing in the right of the Jewish people to have a homeland under their full control. A few believed that a formal nation should only be established under Messiah, but came to prepare for His arrival. Such was the portrait of Jewish immigrants arriving in Israel after the formation of the State on May 14, 1948. These new immigrants took up residence with the 600,000 Jewish citizens living in the land, to accept the common task of developing an acceptable expression of National Identity that would lead to a bonding form of National Unity.

Israel is a 'new' nation, although the history of a Jewish presence in Palestine,⁷ records a 'remnant' surviving in the land from the Destruction of 70 C.E. (Current Era) until the time of the First Aliyah (1882-1903).⁸ With the establishment of the Jewish state,⁹ came the responsibility for feeding, housing, governing and protecting themselves. These are established responsibilities for all societies, but for the Jewish people after nineteen hundred years of dispersion, they became a reality.

Israel is a 'pioneer' nation. The land is a rugged land. Mark Twain in 1854 referred to it as a "God forsaken land."¹⁰

The lowlands were covered with malarial breeding swamps. The highlands were rock strewn denuded hills - blistering hot in the summer, cold and wet in the winter. The Jewish poet Gouri described Palestine in the early 1920's as 'a deserted land conceived by disaster'.¹¹ This was to become the new Jewish homeland, the Zionist dream of Israel's vigorous pioneers. Sheer physical strength harnessed with increasing technological skills, transformed wastelands into productive farms. The 'kibbutz'¹² and 'moshav',¹³ developed the land with a lifestyle model that has made the words known beyond Israel's border.

Israel is a 'threatened' nation. Four major military confrontations have occurred during the first twenty-five years of nationhood: The War of Independence, 1948-49; the Sinai Campaign, 1956; The Six Day War, 1967; and the Yom Kippur War, 1973. The effects of these hostilities on the economic development of the nation and the individuals living within it are intense and deeply personal.

Israel is a 'zealous' nation. Study and learning are part of a Jewish tradition that dates back to the Patriarchs of the Jewish faith.¹⁴ It has found expression in the modern nation through a humanistic view of man that says:

We have faith in the ordinary citizen of our country whatever his origin...we believe it is possible to educate the adult human being, to bring out and strengthen the finest elements of his nature, to help him rise in stature and understanding, to equip him to contribute his gifts and capacities to the life of the community.(15)

To have such a zealous commitment to the individual human worth, within the overriding socialist framework of the modern state was Bezalel Shachar's mandate to adult educators.

Israel is a 'religious' nation. Apart from being the physical 'homeland' for the world's three major monotheistic religions - Judaism, Christianity and Islam - it is 'home' for members of the Druze,¹⁶ Samaritan,¹⁷ and Ba'hai¹⁸ religions. Whether 'Orthodox-observant' or 'secular-atheistic' on the spectrum of personal faith, each Jewish citizen of Israel relates in some manner with the common ancestry held by the Jewish people to 'Eretz Israel'.¹⁹

After interviewing ninety-six Israeli citizens, Epp noted: "all - young or old, socialistic or capitalistic, Ashkenazi or Sephardic,²⁰ European or Oriental, Russian or American, religious or non-religious, - all were Israelis."²¹ How does one encourage citizens of a country to identify with common goals and to unite with common concerns? This is a challenge facing many nations in the world today. It is one of the challenges that adult educators in Israel have related to since its formation as a State.

FOOTNOTES - BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1. Official statistics received from an interview with President Navon, May 1, 1980, (see Appendix C).
2. "The Ashkenazim consist of Jews of European origin and their descendants, including most of North and South American Jewry. Most Ashkenazi families spoke - or at least understood - Yiddish at some point in their history." (p.30 of Society. 'Israel Pocket Library' originally published in Encyclopedia Judaica, Jerusalem: Keter Books, 1974.)
3. "The Oriental Jews lived in almost all areas in the Middle East and North Africa after the destruction of the Second Commonwealth in 70 AD." (p.49 Smooha: 1978)

The term today means primarily Jews from Muslim countries - i.e. from Morocco to Pakistan and all of North Africa.

4. Smooha quotes Rosenak (1971) who identifies five public attitudes regarding state and religion in Israel:
 - (a) Jews who deny Israel's Jewish significance. Some ultra-Orthodox Jews, especially Jerusalem's N'ture Karta sect...hold the anti-Zionist idea that Israel is a manifestation of false Messianism. They see themselves as a Jewish community within a non-Jewish state.
 - (b) Jews who consider the state a development of Divine Providence. Orthodox Jews who believe Israel is the dawn of the redemption. They seek to strengthen the Jewish character of the state by religious legislation.
 - (c) Jews who seek new religious norms within a Jewish state. Semi-observant Jews, Conservative and Reform congregations, followers of Martin Buber, opposing both traditional Orthodoxy and secular nationalism. Israel is a new phase in Judaism.
 - (d) Jews who view Judaism as a secular national culture. Secular Zionists. Israel is the carrier of the revived Jewish culture (Hebrew language, etc.)

- (e) Jews who reject Judaism. Secularist non-Zionists who perceive Israel as the cradle of indigenous (Semetic' or 'Hebrew) culture.

The extreme two (a) and (e) are tiny fractions of the population. The two dominant groups are (b) and (d). (c) is still in a formative stage. (p. 78-79) (Smooha - 1978)

5. Roumani (1978) gives a detailed account in The Case of the Jews from Arab Countries: A Neglected Issue of the Displacement of Jews from Arab countries. p.2.

"In 1948, there were over 800,000 Jews living in the Arab countries of the Middle East and North Africa.

Estimated Jewish Populations in Arab Countries

	1948	1976
Morocco	265,000	17,000
Algeria	140,000	500
Tunisia	105,000	2,000
Libya	38,000	20
Egypt	75,000	100
Iraq	135,000	400
Syria	30,000	4,350
Lebanon	5,000	500
Yemen	55,000	1,000
Aden	8,000	0
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	856,000	25,870
	<hr/>	<hr/>

6. Zionism has many definitions. It is understood as the belief in the right of the Jewish people to return to Palestine and establish their own nation. Theodore Herzl writing in 1896 said:

"The Jews who want a State of their own shall have one. We are to live at last as free men on our own soil and die peacefully in our own home and the world will be freed by our freedom, enriched by our riches and made greater by our greatness."

Herzl: The Jewish State (1970) p.7.

Herzl's goal in the Jewish State was nothing less than the regeneration of the Jewish nation as a political entity. Zionism is the belief that this State is to be formed in Palestine.

7. Samuel Katz in "The Jewish Presence in Palestine" Chapter four of the book: Battleground - Fact and Fantasy in Palestine. (1973), states: "the popular conception has been that all Jews who survived the Destruction of 70 C.E. went into exile and that their descendants began coming back 1,800 years later. This is not a fact. One of the most astonishing elements in the history of the Jewish people - and of Palestine, is the continuity in the face of circumstances, of Jewish life in the country." p.7.
 8. 'Aliyah' means literally 'to come up', or to immigrate. The clusters of immigration to Israel were called 'waves' of aliyah and were grouped around key years. (prior to the formation of the State in 1948)
 - 1882-1903: First Aliyah - 25,000 Jews, mostly Russians.
 - 1904-1913: Second Aliyah - 40,000 Jews from Eastern Europe. They gave Jews in Palestine three ingredients vital for its future independence. The kibbutz, the 'Hashomer' (Watchman) a Jewish defence organization, and Tel Aviv (1909) as a separate Jewish quarter from Arab Jaffa.
 - 1919-1922: Third Aliyah - 35,000 Jews from Europe and the USA. In 1920 the Histadrut was formed. It agreed to share responsibility for the Jewish communities self-defence thus linking the socialist and military movements from the beginning.
 - 1923-1928: Fourth Aliyah - 60,000 mainly Polish. In 1928 emigration exceeded immigration due to depression and financial difficulties.
 - 1934-1939: Fifth Aliyah - 225,000 mainly Germans. Immigration was limited by Britain after 1939 to 10,000 Jews a year.
- from:
 Segre, V.D. A Society in Transition. (1971), pp.58-61 (see also: Facts About Israel. (1980), pp. 40-50. Immigration and Settlement. (1973), pp. 13-34.)

9. That Israel was to be a 'Jewish State' is clearly described in the 'Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel'. Excerpts state: (researcher's underlining)

"Eretz Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books."

"On the 29th November, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz Israel."

"The State of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration...."

"We appeal to the Jewish people throughout the diaspora to rally round the Jews of Eretz-Israel in the tasks of immigration and upbuilding and to stand by them in the great struggle for the realization of the age-old dream - the redemption of Israel."

10. Quotes taken from personal notes made at the 30th Anniversary of Ulpan, in Tel Aviv, December 18, 1979.
11. Same as above.
12. Kibbutz (pl. kibbutzim) see footnote 113, chapter IV; a settlement in Israel based mainly on agriculture, but engaging also in industry.
13. Moshav, smallholder's cooperative agricultural settlement in Israel.
14. See detailed account of the importance of study to the Jewish tradition in Lifelong Learning Among Jews. Goldman, (1975), p.1
 "Beginning in Biblical times, going back to the days of Moses, the commandment of God imposed the duty of constant study upon every adult Jew...every male adult is obligated to study Torah in order to teach his sons...this book of the day shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night." (Joshua 1:8)

15. Shachar, (1962) p.4.
16. The Druze of Israel numbered under 38,000 people in 1973 (less than 1% of the total population). They are followers of a secret, monotheistic religion which split from Islam in the 11th Century. Reincarnation, meditation and code words make their neo-Platonic faith most mysterious. They are loyal to the State of Israel and serve in the Israeli Army. (from: "Liberation, Druse-style: A Secretive Society" Jerusalem POST Magazine, Friday, January 4, 1980, p.5.)
17. A remnant of ancient Samaritans - Jews who intermarried with Assyrians and were subsequently rejected from Jewish worship services live in Israel. They developed their own form of sacrifice and traditions. Less than 500 live in Israel (1980) Mt. Gerizim (Nablus) is the site of their annual Samaritan Passover sacrifice. (Personal information obtained during visit to Annual Sacrifice, April 28, 1980).
18. The Ba'hai faith is an independent world religion founded by Baha'u'llah. He was exiled to Palestine in the late 1800's. The world headquarters is now located in Haifa, Israel.
19. 'Eretz-Israel' - Land of Israel: Palestine. (See Appendix E)
20. Sephardic Jews in the strict sense are those speaking Ladino (Judeo-Spanish) or their descendants. They have the longest continuous history in the land, dating back to the 15th century. Most today would identify Spanish, Bulgarian, Turkish or Greek immigrants as 'Sephardic'. (From: Society. p.33.)
21. Epp (1980) p. 173.