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GOVERNMENT 229: GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS OF ISRAEL

Israel was founded in 1948 in the midst of war and hardship, a period personified by the brave men and women driven by a sense of historic mission to risk everything to protect Jewish lives from assault and military attack. But the generation that fought for a Jewish state also had to structure a government, activities that demanded a different kind of boldness in a context tested not by fire power but rather by competing interests and goals. Israel has never failed to impress or to occupy a privileged place of consideration in the pantheon of new nations. Many social scientists consider its political development exceptional. Since its establishment, the country has constructed a technologically sophisticated economy, a powerful military and a vibrant democracy. Once a nation on the fringes of world trends and transactions, Israel has fully entered the global economy and benefited from its market forces. Rivers of ink have been spilled on the curious proposition that these changes were presumably driven by a remarkable consensus on norms and values and/or by an unusual set of organizational experiences. Some scholars depict a process of development so harmonious as to be an idealized version of the actual course of events. Still, others insist that Israel's progress as well as its continued hotly contested legitimacy is simply a reflection of the organization of international politics and the ongoing dominance of imperialist forces.

Although Israeli state institutions operate more effectively than those in many other countries that achieved their independence after World War II and do so in accordance with the logic of power politics, they are not simply artificial extensions of international relations. And even as the country and its citizens have faced intense dangers and lethal existential threats, Zionist and Israeli politics were and still are arenas of intense struggles over the allocation of resources. While those struggles did not prevent Palestine's Jews from creating a common political framework, they did produce social tensions and bitter conflicts that shaped the trajectory of the country's political choices for decades.

The syllabus for Government 229 covers one hundred years of Israel's history and draws on readings from across the disciplinary spectrum representing a wide variety of perspectives on Israel's successes and failures in nation-building and in forging an effective political system. The assigned material will form the background for class discussions and will address the questions central to the course: why and how the Zionist idea was formed; what were the choices confronting Jews in the late nineteenth century. How did Zionists take advantage of opportunities for pursuing their national goals and how did they compromise them? What role has the military played in structuring the policy options for Israel's various governments? What has been the impact of war and ongoing violence on Israeli society? How have shifting demographic factors affected Israel's national identity? How has population size influenced perceptions of the

adequacy of natural resources, geographic boundaries and the principles of a security doctrine? The peopling of Israel brought men and women of diverse backgrounds from radically different parts of the world together in the most unfamiliar of circumstances. How have Israeli leaders dealt with these differences and how has the idea of national belonging actually settled into people's minds and informed their capacity to imagine their options?

The course will be organized around a combination of lectures and discussions. Class participation is important and will depend on diligent preparation and ongoing contribution to the analyses of various topics. At every class session, students should be prepared to offer a one-minute oral response to the assigned reading. This means expressing a reaction or opinion, raising one question, criticism, or issue that related to the assignment. Students are expected to participate actively in every class discussion.

There will be five papers assigned [three to five pages] on various topics covered during the course. These papers will not require additional research or reading, but they will demand analysis of the assigned reading and comparisons of different texts and approaches. There will be no final or midterm examinations.

Week I: Introduction: *DEFINING ZION*

Alan Dowty, The Jewish State A Century Later, pp. 3-18

“Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel”

Songs by Naomi Shemer: “Jerusalem of Gold”

“Tomorrow”

“The Honey and the Thorn”

Song by Shlomo Artzi and Gidi Gov: “Fly Away Bird...”

Weeks II and III: *DEBATING ZION*

Alan Dowty, The Jewish State A Century Later, pp.19-50

Yigal Lossin, Pillar of Fire, Chapter One [on reserve]

Arthur Hertzberg, ed. The Zionist Idea, pp. 178-198

“Jewish France”

“Protocols of the Elders of Zion”

Judah Leib Gordon, “Awake My People!”

“A Jewish Program for Russification”

Judah Leib Gordon, “For Whom Do I Toil?”

O. Rabinowich, “Russian Must Be Our Mother Tongue”

Judah Leib Levin, “To America or to the Land of Israel”

“Decisions on the Nationality Question”

Yehuda Amichai, “The Times My Father Died”

Week IV: *IMAGINING ZION*

Arthur Hertzberg, ed. The Zionist Idea, pp. 201-226, 249-277, 362-388, 417-431, 556-570, 605-619

Eliezer Schweid, “Rejection of the Diaspora in Zionist Thought: Two Approaches”

“The Balfour Declaration”

“Zionist Manifesto”

Week V: *BUILDING ZION*

“MANDATE FOR PALESTINE”

Gideon Biger, “The Boundaries of Mandatory Palestine: How The Past Influences The Future”

Alan Dowty, The Jewish State A Century Later, pp. 51-60

Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, Being Israeli The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship, pp. 1-109.

Arthur Ruppin, “Memoirs” in Momentous Century, pp. 66-75 [on reserve]

“The Founding and Building of Tel Aviv” in Momentous Century, pp. 82-87 [on reserve]

Amos Oz, “The Hill of Evil Counsel”

Ze’ev Tzahor, “The Histadrut: From Marginal Organization to ‘State-in-the-Making’”

Dafna N. Izraeli, “The Women Workers’ Movement: First Wave Feminism in Pre-State Israel”

Week VI: *FOUNDING ZION*

Amos Elon, The Israelis: Founders and Sons pp. 106-147; 189-221; 256-289 [reserve]

Yehuda Bauer, From Diplomacy to Resistance pp. 3-15 [reserve]

Dina Porat, “Attitudes of the Young State of Israel Toward the Holocaust and Its Survivors: A Debate Over Identity and Values”

Gulie Ne’eman Arad, “The Shoah as Israel’s Political Trope”

Week VII: *DEFENDING ZION: DESTRUCTION AND REBIRTH*

Yigal Lossin, Pillar of Fire, chapters 10, 12, 16, 19 [on reserve]

S. Yizhar, Days of Ziklag [excerpts]

Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship, pp. 110-136

Anita Shapira, “Native Sons”

Nathan Alterman, “The Silver Platter”

Alan Dowty, The Jewish State A Century Later, chapters four, five and six

Uri Ben-Eliezer, “A Nation-in-Arms: State, Nation, and Militarism in Israel’s First Years”

Week VIII: *SOVEREIGNTY: NATION-BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT*

Orit Ben-David, “Tiyul [hike] As An Act of Consecration of Space”

Tsili Doleve-Gandelman, “The Symbolic Description of Zionist Ideology in the Space of Eretz-Israel: Why the Native Israeli is Called Tsabar”

Tom Segev, 1949: The First Israelis

Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship, pp. 137-155

Alan Dowty, The Jewish State A Century Later, chapters seven and eight

Eliezer Don-Yehiya, “Political Religion in a New State: Ben-Gurion’s Mamlachtiyut”

Nathan Yanai, “The Citizen as Pioneer: Ben-Gurion’s Concept of Citizenship”

Dov Khenin, "From `Eretz-Yisrael Haovedet to Yisrael Hashniah': The Social Discourse and Social Policy of Mapai in the 1950s"

Week IX: *BORDERS*

Dan Rabinowitz, "In and Out of Territory"

Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship, pp. 159-210

David Newman, "The Territorial Politics of Ex-Urbanization: Reflections on Twenty-Five Years of Jewish Settlement in the West Bank"

Yael Zerubavel, "New Beginning, Old Past: The Collective Memory of Pioneering in Israeli Culture"

Ehud Sprinzak, "The Politics, Institutions, and Culture of Gush Emunim"

Weeks X and XI: *CONTEMPORARY ISSUES*

Michael Shalev, "Liberalization and the Transformation of the Political Economy"

Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship, pp.213-348

Alan Dowty, The Jewish State A Century Later, chapters eight, nine and epilogue

Week XII: *CULTURE AND SOCIETY*

Emmanuel Sivan, "Private Pain and Public Remembrance in Israel"

Zelda, "Each Man Has A Name"

Gulie Ne'eman Arad, "The Shoah as Israel's Political Trope"

Menachem Brinker, "The End of Zionism? Thoughts on the Wages of Success"

Aharon Megged, "One-Way Trip on The Highway to Self-Destruction"

Eliezer Schweid, "The Goals of Zionism Today"

Oz Almog, "The End of the Sabra Myth and The Decline of Zionist Theology"