



The State and Israeli Collective Memory of the Israeli-Arab Conflict

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From the 1960s to 2003 the Israeli Information Center, the main Israeli institution for disseminating information to the Israeli public, put out publications which dealt with the Palestinian refugees of 1948 and the infiltrators of 1949-1956 and disseminated them to the Israeli public. Using content analysis of these publications (made up of books and booklets) and interviews with the Center's and Agency's directors from 1961 to 2003, this article explores for the first time the way this Center operated, the way those publications described those two issues over the years, and the processes and reasons that generated this description. By and large, the publications consistently adopted manner the Zionist narrative, including when contradictory scholarly findings were published towards the end of the last century. That is, the responsibility for the refugees' exodus was put exclusively on the Arabs/Palestinians and the infiltrators were almost always portrayed as motivated by political reasons (e.g., harming Israeli Jews or damaging their property). The findings have general implications for state activity in shaping the collective memory of its citizens, in addition to specific implications for Israel and the Israeli-Arab conflict.

Countries which are involved in intractable conflicts are interested in developing a collective memory of conflicts among their citizens that presents them in a positive manner and the rival party in a negative one. This comes out of a realization that such a collective memory is an important determinant in constructing the collective identity of the members of their societies in a manner that will enable them to cope properly with the enormous difficulties that such conflicts bring forward and contribute to the struggle.¹ The state, through its various organs, has a major role in developing such a collective memory.

Israel has been involved since its foundation, and even before, in the Israeli-Arab/Palestinian conflict. Israeli leaders and institutions were aware of the central importance of the collective memory among the Jews in Israel (hereafter "the Israelis"), and acted accordingly to develop an appropriate collective memory of the conflict among the Israelis.² One of the the main Israeli institutions that helped construct the collective memory of the

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1. See Rafi Nets-Zehngut and Daniel Bar-Tal, "The Intractable Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and Possible Pathways to Peace," in Judy Kuriansky, ed., *Psychotherapy in a Turmoil Region: Reconciliation between Palestinians and Israelis from a Psychological Perspective*, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007), pp. 4-6.

2. See Eli Podeh, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict in Israeli History Textbooks, 1948-2000* (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 2002), pp. 21-26.



conflict was the Information Center — the main official institute for disseminating information about the conflict and otherwise, to the Israeli public (hereafter “the Center”). In this collective memory two important issues are the Palestinian refugees of 1948 and the infiltrators of 1949-1956 (here after “the refugees” and the “infiltrators”).

The article explores the mode of operation of the Publications Agency (hereafter “the Agency”), which published all the publications of the Center from the early 1950s until 2003, including those from the 1960s regarding the refugee and the infiltrator issues. The findings have implications for the Israeli context of the conflict, the Center, the Agency, and the two case studies, as well as the general context of the mode of operation of state institutions in constructing a desired collective memory in general, and of conflicts in particular.

BACKGROUND

COLLECTIVE MEMORY

The topic of collective memory in general, and particularly of conflicts, has recently attracted much attention. Collective memory in general is defined as a collection of representations of the past that are collectively adopted.³ Collective memory is based mainly on major events which are of special importance to the collective. Its content is influenced by the present in two main ways:⁴ First, instrumentally, by using the past for the interests of the present; and second, culturally, as an inevitable phenomenon of interpreting the past through the eyes of the present.

There are three components in the system that shape the collective memory of a society.⁵ First are the cultural traditions that control all the representations of the past in the society. Second are the memory makers: the elite and influential people, groups, political parties, etc., of the society that choose the representations of the past that fit their interests and operate so that these representations will be incorporated into the collective memory of the next component. This third and final component is the memory consumers, the members of the society as a whole, or various groups in it, that adopt the representations of the past.

The memory makers can be, more specifically, various influential institutions in the collective, such as the free media, cultural channels, NGOs, and academia. A major role in the modern era, however, especially until recently, is reserved for the state.⁶ The state uses its various institutions (e.g., the Parliament, the Ministry of Education, the Censorship Office) in order to construct the past in a manner that fits its interests, using

3. See Wulf Kansteiner, “Finding Meaning in Memory: Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies,” *History and Theory*, Vol. 41 (2002), p. 181.

4. Patrick Devine-Wright, “A Theoretical Overview of Memory and Conflict,” in Ed Cairns and Michael Roe, eds., *The Role of Memory in Ethnic Conflict* (New York: Palgrave, MacMillan, 2003), pp. 10-15.

5. See Kansteiner, “Finding Meaning in Memory: Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies,” p. 180.

6. See Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan “Setting the Framework,” in Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, eds., *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 38-39.

various methods, such as the prevention of entry to state archives.⁷ amnesty policies in order to prevent the burgeoning of difficult memories that are hard to deal with, censorship procedures, or the dissemination of the desired information to the wide public.⁸ Additional examples of state activity in order to impact the collective memory include national celebrations,⁹ national anthems,¹⁰ sites and monuments,¹¹ curriculum and textbooks in the educational system,¹² and museums.¹³

The adoption by the memory consumers of specific representations of the past into their collective memory requires a preliminary phase of disseminating these representations. This is done by the “media of memory,” through its three main general modes:¹⁴ discursive — in writing (e.g., books, articles) or orally (e.g., speeches); visual — through pictures; and spatial — via monuments and buildings.

Relating specifically to the collective memory of conflicts, the adopted representations are the events of the conflict. The collective memory is constructed in a manner that supports the interests of the party that defines it. It is, thus, usually biased and dichotomous, portraying the party holding it in a positive manner and the rival one in a negative manner. Such a collective memory has a major role in shaping the collective identity of the members of society and their psychological approach towards themselves and the rival party. That is, it shapes their attitudes and emotions positively towards themselves and negatively towards the rival party. This has an impact on their behavior during the conflict. In addition, it constructs among them the sense of patriotism and motivation necessary to contribute to the struggle.¹⁵

In sum, as far as is known, the research regarding the activities of the state to construct a desired collective memory in general, and of conflicts in particular, deals with various institutions of the state, but not with information centers for the wider

7. See Jeffrey Olick and Joyce Robbins, “Social Memory Studies: From ‘Collective Memory’ to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices,” *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 24 (1998), p. 125.

8. Valerie Rosoux, “National Identity in France and Germany: From Mutual Exclusion to Negotiation,” *International Negotiation*, Vol. 6 (2001), pp. 184-185.

9. See Lyn Spillman, *Nation and Commemoration: Creating National Identities in the United States and Australia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

10. See Karen Cerulo, *Identity Designers: The Sights and Sounds of a Nation* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1995), pp. 35-54.

11. See Scott Sandage, “A Marble House Divided: The Lincoln Memorial, the Civil Rights Movement and the Politics of Memory, 1939-1963,” *Journal of American History*, Vol. 80 (1993), pp. 135-167.

12. See Ruth Firer and Sami Adwan, *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in History and Civics Textbooks of both Nations* (Hanover: Verlag Hahnsche, 2004), pp. 23-29. Rosoux, “National Identity in France and Germany: From Mutual Exclusion to Negotiation,” p. 183.

13. See Tony Bennet, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 109-162.

14. See Kansteiner, “Finding Meaning in Memory: Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies,” pp. 190-192.

15. See Daniel Bar-Tal and Gavriel Salomon, “Israeli-Jewish Narratives of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Evolvement, Contents, Functions and Consequences,” in Robert Rotberg, ed., *History’s Double Helix: The Intertwined Narratives of Israel and Palestine* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), pp. 23-25. Rafi Nets-Zehngut, “Shinooy Zikaron Kolectivy Shel Sichsuchim Bilti Nishlatim” [“Transformation of Collective Memory of Intractable Conflicts”], *Ruah Mizrahit*, Vol. 5 (2007), p. 76.

public.¹⁶ In addition, in many cases, while dealing with the mode of operation of state institutions, besides the descriptive aspect, the explanatory aspect (explaining why an institution acted in a certain manner) was based mainly on circumstantial evidence and ‘external’ analysis of the data. That is, there was no examination of the specific people who determined the mode of operation of the institutions that were diagnosed in order to validate more strongly the explanatory aspect.

This article aims to contribute to mentioned general aspects by examining the mode of operation of the Agency with regard to these two case studies of refugees and infiltrators — in the descriptive aspect as well as the explanatory one, by conducting interviews with the directors of the Center and the Agency. In any case, the mode of operation of the Center in general, and specifically with regard to these two case studies, has never been researched.

ISRAEL AND THE ISRAELI-ARAB/PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Israel, and the *Yishu*, the pre-state Jewish community in the region, has been involved since its foundation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (which is part of the wider Israeli-Arab conflict). The conflict became, mainly after 1947, a major factor in Jewish-Israeli existence, ideology, and identity.¹⁷ Among the leaders of Israel there was an awareness of the central role, for the above mentioned reasons, of the collective memory of the conflict.¹⁸ Thus, by and large until the 1990s, the state exclusively bestowed upon the Israelis, the Zionist narrative of the conflict. Generally, this narrative portrayed the Jews, and later the Israelis, in a manner typical of narratives of conflicts (i.e., the Israelis are good and the Arabs¹⁹ are bad). More specifically, the Jews, and later the Israelis, were portrayed as always willing to have peace with the Arabs, who conversely always wanted war with them. With regard to the two case studies, the refugees and the infiltrators, the entire responsibility for the refugee problem and for their exodus was put upon themselves and also the Arab states, in general, as they left voluntarily out of an unjustified fear and due to the calls of the leaders of the Arab countries to depart from their localities.²⁰ With regard to the infiltrators it was argued that they

16. Information centers are state institutions which are charged with disseminating information on behalf of the state to the citizens of the state

17. See Rafi Nets-Zehngut, “Passive Reconciliation in the Context of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict,” in Guy Ben-Porat, ed., *Implementing Peace Agreements: Israel-Palestine, South Africa and Northern Ireland* (New York: Palgrave-McMillan, 2008), pp. 182-183.

18. See Daniel Bar-Tal, *Lihyot Besichsooch: Nituah Pesichology-Hevrati shel Hahevra Hayeoodit Beisrael* [*Living in a Conflict: A Psychological-Societal Analysis of the Jewish Society in Israel*] (Jerusalem: Carmel, 2007), p. 57. Podeh, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict in Israeli History Textbooks, 1948-2000*, pp. 21-26.

19. The Arabs of Eretz Israel (in Hebrew: The land of Israel) will be referred to here as “Palestinians,” as they are referred to in most of the new literature, and as many of them have referred to themselves for some time. This is in contrast to Arabs in general that include the Palestinians (unless reference is made to the Arab countries). It should be noted that all the publications of the Agency refer to them as “Arabs.”

20. See Podeh, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict in Israeli History Textbooks, 1948-2000*, pp. 105-110. Bar-Tal, *Lihyot Bbesichsooch: Nituah Pesichology-Hevrati shel Hahevra Hayeoodit Beisrael*, pp. 62-63.

were sent by the Arab countries out of a political motivation to harm Israel.²¹ The activity of the state to disseminate the Zionist narrative in general was conducted, through the education system;²² the media — as the state controlled the newspapers strictly until the 1970s, and the television until the 1990s;²³ by keeping national archives closed to the public; and through the Center.²⁴ These institutions were substantially supported in Israel by most of the intellectual community, including the academics, artists, and writers that disseminated the Zionist narrative among the public.²⁵

An important development occurred in this regard in the second half of the 1980s. Since that time the results of new research by Israeli scholars (many of whom are commonly called the New Historians) has presented a new narrative of the conflict, most commonly referred to as “post-Zionist.”²⁶ Generally, the post-Zionist narrative criticizes the Zionist narrative, while portraying the Jewish/ Israelis in a less positive manner and the Arabs in a less negative one. Specifically, in terms of the two case studies it was argued, regarding the refugees, that there were various reasons for their departure, and that indeed some of them left voluntarily, but that some were expelled by the Jewish-Israeli security forces.²⁷ Regarding the infiltrators, it was argued that the vast majority of them infiltrated into Israel out of their own initiatives, for economic and social reasons (e.g., cultivating the land, theft, visiting their families, returning to their homes).²⁸ The New Historians raised a wide-ranging and stormy debate in Israeli academic, political, media, and social arenas between those that supported the Zionist narrative and those that supported the post-Zionist one.

21. See Bar-Tal, *Lihyot Bbesichsooch: Nituah Pesichology-Hevrati shel Hahevra Hayeoodit Beisrael*, pp. 63-64.

22. See Ruth Firer “*Sohnim shel Hahinooch Hazioni: Sifrei Limmod Basafa Haivrit Be’eretz-Israel Mereshit Hamea Haesrim Vead Yameynu*” [“Agents of the Zionist Education: Hebrew Textbooks in the Land of Israel since the Beginning of the Twentieth Century until Our Day”], in Yehezkel Rahamim and Daniel Bar-Tal, eds., *Rak Al Hasichsooch Ledaber Yadaty [Only on the Conflict Can I Talk]* (Tel Aviv: Walter Lebach Institute, 2006), pp. 66-69.

23. See Keren Sharvit and Danniel Bar-Tal, “*Etos Hasicsooch Batikshoret Haisraelit Betekoofat Haimoot Ha’alim*” [“The Ethos of Conflict in the Israeli Media During the Violent Part of the Conflict”] in Ya’acov Bar-Siman-Tov, ed., *Hasicsooch Haisraeli-Falestini: Mita’alich Shalom Leimoot Halim [The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: From a Peace Process to Violent Clashes]* (Jerusalem: The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 2005), p. 278.

24. *Minhal Ha’asbara Betashach [Information Ministry in 1960]* (Jerusalem: Ministry of Information), pp. 2-4. Interview by author with Ya’acov Shatz, Information Center, August 21, 2006.

25. See Uri Ram, “Postnationalist Pasts — The Case of Israel,” *Social Science History*, Vol. 22 (1998), pp. 514-515.

26. See Ram, “Postnationalist Pasts — The Case of Israel,” pp. 515-523. David Ohana and Robert Wistrich, “*Mavo: Nochechoot Mittosim Bayahadoot, Batsiyonoot Vebaisraelioot*” [“Introduction: The Presence of Myths in Judaism, Zionism and Israelism”], in David Ohana and Robert Wistrich, eds., David Ohana and Robert Wistrich *Mythos Vezikaron: Gilgooleya shel Hatodaha Haisraelit [Myth and Memory: Genealogy of the Israeli Consciousness]* (Jerusalem: H’akibbutz Hamehoohad and Van-Leer Institute, 1996), pp. 21-32.

27. See Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947- 1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

28. See Benny Morris, *Israel’s Border Wars, 1949-1956* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 28-68. David Tal, *Tfisat Habitahon Hashotef shel Israel [The Continuous Security Policy of Israel]* (Sde-Boker: Ben Gurion University Press, 1998), pp. 23-41.

THE PUBLICATIONS AGENCY IN THE INFORMATION CENTER

The Center was established in the early 1950s as part of the Prime Minister's Office. During the period of 1967-1978 it was transferred to various ministries, and since 1978 it has been part of the Ministry of Education. Beginning the early 1990s, the Center, including the Agency, started suffering from cutbacks in its budget due to savings measures implemented by the Ministry of Finance. In 2004, as part of a reorganization of the Ministry of Education, its name was changed to the Information Headquarters and its manpower was drastically reduced (from 80 employees to only six), as was its scope of activity. Today the Headquarters mainly deals with selling publications previously published by the Agency, special projects, and organizing national ceremonies.²⁹ This research pertains to the activity of the Agency until the end of 2003.

The main aims of the Center were to provide the public with information about the activities of the ministries, while nourishing the Jewish and democratic character of the state, and strengthening the attachment of the citizen to the state. In order to achieve those aims the Center operated through various units that dealt with organizing tours, producing films, establishing exhibitions and events, and producing various publications.³⁰ This article focuses on the Center's activities regarding the two case studies of the Publications Agency, which mainly published books, booklets, and flyers. This is because these publications dealt most commonly and clearly — in writing — with the two case studies and thus it is relatively easy to track and analyze these publications during those years.

The directors of the Center and the Agency during almost all of its operation and their periods of service are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Directors of the Center and the Agency

Directors of the Center	Period	Directors of the Agency	Period
Yehuda Ilan	1966-1978	Ya'acov Shatz	1961-1973
Ya'acov Shatz	1978-1996	Haiim Ofaz	1973-2000
Doron Shohet	1996-2003	Nurit Braverman	2000-2003

Some details are available regarding these directors, all of whom were interviewed, except for Yehuda Ilan who had passed away. At the Center, Ya'acov Shatz started working in the Center in 1958 as an editor in the Agency. In 1961 he was appointed the Agency's Director, as Vice-Director of the Center in 1973, and as its Director in 1978.³¹ Doron Shohet,

29. Interview by author with Nurit Braverman, Jerusalem, August 17, 2006. Interview by author with Ya'acov Shatz, Jerusalem, August 21, 2006. *Catalog Pirsoomim, 2004-2005* [Publications Catalog, 2004-2005] (Jerusalem: Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, Information Headquarters, 2005). Doron Shohet, "Haasbara Yotset Laderech" ["The Publicity Is on Its Way"] *Meet Leet*, Vol. 2 (1996), p. 1.

30. Interviews by author with Nurit Braverman, Jerusalem, August 17, 2006 and with Doron Shohet, Tel Aviv, December 11, 2006. *Minhal Ha'asbara Betashach*, pp. 2-4. *Shenaton Hamemshala 1997-1998* [Governmental Annual, 1997-1998] (Jerusalem: Ministry of Education and Culture, Information Center, Publications Agency, 1998), pp. 235-240. Shmuel Poat and Albert Ahdoot, "Tipooach Tarboot Ezrahit, Suvlanoot Vepluralism — Haani Maamin Shel Doron Shohet" ["Nourishment of Civic Culture, Tolerance and Pluralism — The Basic Beliefs of Dorn Shohet"], *Meet Leet*, Vol. 1 (1996), p. 1.

31. Interview by author with Ya'acov Shatz, Jerusalem, August 21, 2006.

before his appointment as the Center's Director, served in the Ministry of Education as *Mafmar* [National Inspector] of civics education, and the Director of the Unit for Education for Democracy and Co-Existence. In 1996, after quitting these two positions, he was appointed Director of the Center, a position in which he served until the end of 2003.³² At the Agency, Ya'acov Shatz, is discussed above. Haiim Ofaz started writing for the Agency as a freelancer in 1956, joined the Agency as an editor in 1961, later becoming the chief editor, and from 1973 until his retirement in 2000 served as the Director of the Agency.³³ Nurit Braverman started working at the Agency in 1970 as an editor, became the chief editor in the early 1990s and between 2000-2003 served as the Agency's director.³⁴

It is possible to divide the adherence of the Center, including the Agency, to the official line of the State of Israel, on various subjects, mainly politics, into two main periods. The first ran from the foundation of the Center in the early 1950s until 1996, when Ya'acov Shatz terminated his service as the Director of the Center — and can be called as the employees of the Center referred to it, "official." And the second, from 1996 to the end of 2003, can generally be called "un-official." In the first period it is possible to sum up the policy of the Center on adherence to the official line in the words of Ya'acov Shatz: "Usually we were very very loyal ... to the official line of publicity ... so it is true that we got a reputation of 'writing for' [them]. At first, we really wrote for them. Everybody that works in the Information Center works for them. There is nothing to do about this."³⁵ That is, the Center adopted the official line for the state. In the second period, the policy was partly changed due to the impact of the different attitude of Doron Shohet towards this issue. Shohet did not view positively the existence in a democratic state like Israel of an official, biased publicity. In his view, the information that the public gets from the state should come from as objective a source as possible, preferably an academic one, that is not affiliated with any political position. The interpretation of information should be something every citizen should do on his/her own.³⁶

In the official line that mainly was practiced by the Center in the first period, stress was placed on not publishing things that would harm the state and its image.³⁷ As Haiim Ofaz defined it, "We were aware that we are not allowed to attack the government, since we were serving it. We could not criticize the government's actions. It was our basis of operation."³⁸ There were two sources for the Agency's adherence to keeping a positive image of the state, mainly in the first period, and partly in the second, at least as far as they were expressed in interviews.³⁹ First, there existed the point of view that it is not nice to publicize things that can harm the state while it pays your salary. Second, there was the worry that there might be negative consequences in cases of deviating from the official line and criticizing the state.

32. Interview by author with Doron Shohet, Tel Aviv, December 11, 2006.

33. Interview by author with Haiim Ofaz, Jerusalem, December 12, 2006.

34. Interview by author with Nurit Braverman, Jerusalem, August 17, 2006.

35. Interview by author with Ya'acov Shatz, Jerusalem, August 21, 2006. Support for this description was given also in the interviews with Nurit Braverman and Haiim Ofaz.

36. Interview by author with Doron Shohet, Tel Aviv, December 11, 2006.

37. Interview by author with Nurit Braverman, Jerusalem, August 17, 2006.

38. Interview by author with Haiim Ofaz, Jerusalem, December 12, 2006.

39. Interviews by author with Nurit Braverman, Jerusalem, August 17, 2006; with Haiim Ofaz, Jerusalem, December 12, 2006; with Ya'acov Shatz, Jerusalem, August 21, 2006; and with Doron Shohet, Tel Aviv, December 11, 2006.

In general, the Center, as well as the Agency, operated independently and had no structural supervision of its work. Thus, for example, the topics of the publications were almost always determined by the Agency's employees. Nonetheless, while working on sensitive political publications, the Agency's employees many times submitted drafts to superiors in the government for inspection.⁴⁰ In addition, there was a kind of internal censorship by the employees themselves, as explained by Haiim Ofaz: "We had self-censorship with regard to what can and can not be written. We had self-censorship with regard to disputed issues."⁴¹

THE FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

METHODOLOGY

The sources of the findings of the research are the Agency's publications and interviews that were conducted with the above-noted four directors of the Center and the Agency. The publications, all in Hebrew, were collected from a few sources: the Headquarters' shop that sells the publications, the Israeli National Archive, the National Library in the Hebrew University, Tel Aviv University's library, and the private libraries of some of the interviewees. During the research it was found that it is not currently possible to find all the relevant publications from every year, since not all the Agency's publications were collected in a specific library. In addition, the publications that were collected in the Agency itself were mostly destroyed in the process of transforming the Center into the Headquarters. Nonetheless, during the research most of the relevant publications were collected in a manner that authentically represents the publications of the Agency regarding the two case studies. This conclusion was affirmed by the Agency's catalogs, the list of books in the various libraries and archives that were searched, as well as by the interviewees.

The interviews were conducted during the summer and autumn of 2006. The recordings were transcribed and analyzed. The period covered by all the interviews spans from 1956 (when Haiim Ofaz started working for the Agency) until the end of 2003 (when Nurit Braverman and Doron Shohet terminated their work at the Center). This covers, except for the first two or three years, the entire period of operation of the Center, including the Agency. We next report the findings, first regarding the refugees case study and then regarding the infiltrators case study. In both, first the descriptive aspect (based on the publications) will be described, and then the explanatory aspect (based on the interviews).

THE REFUGEES

The Publications: Descriptive Aspect

Nine publications that deal with the refugees were traced, and are assembled, with

40. Interview by author with Haiim Ofaz, Jerusalem, December 12, 2006.

41. Interview by author with Haiim Ofaz, Jerusalem, December 12, 2006. Support for this assertion was given also in the interviews by author with Ya'acov Shatz, Jerusalem, August 21, 2006 and with Doron Shohet, Tel Aviv, December 11, 2006.

major relevant details, according to the date of their publication in Table 2 below.⁴²

Table 2: The Agency's Publications Regarding the Refugees

No.	Titles	Author	Year	General or Specific Relation
1	<i>Milhemet Ha'atsmaoot [The War of Independence]</i> (a)		1968*	General
2	<i>Esrin Shnot Hatsmaoot Israel [Twenty Years of Independence for Israel]</i>	Ya'acov Shatz	1968	General
3	<i>Dapei Meida (13) [Notes of Information (13)]</i>	Yeoash Biver	1970	General
4	<i>Anachnoo Hem Ve'ereztz Israel [We, Them, and Eretz Israel]</i>	Rafael Rupin	1971**	General
5	<i>Al Israel Veartso — Vikuach im Professor Arnold Toynbee [On Israel and Its Land — A Dispute with Professor Arnold Toynbee]</i>	Ya'acov Hertsog	1975***	General
6	<i>Milhemet Ha'atsmaoot [The War of Independence]</i> (b)		1978****	General
7	<i>Haomnam Plitim Lanetsach — Temoonat Matsav Vehatsahot Lepitaron [Are Refugees Forever — The Current Situation and Suggestions for Resolution]</i>	Nadav Aner	1984	General
8	<i>Harel — Tashah [Harel — 1948]</i>	Uri Ben-Ari	1988	Specific
9	<i>Palmach — Iftach</i>	Amikam Gurevitch	1988	Specific

* Identical edition was reprinted in 1969

** Identical edition was reprinted in 1972

*** Identical edition was reprinted in 1976

**** Identical editions were reprinted in 1979-1981, 1984, 1986, and 1996

Note: Sometimes publications were reprinted a few times in the same year.

In the table, the titles of the publications are translated into English. The authors of the publications are mentioned only when such information was available in the publications. Unless mentioned otherwise, the author is of all the publication, except for publication 2 that was edited by Ya'acov Shatz, but the relevant chapter was written

42. The full details of the publications are provided, according to their order in the table, in the Appendix.

by Eliav Pinhas. The column under the heading of “General or Specific Relation” notes whether the publication deals with the refugees issue from a general perspective (all the refugees as a whole), or from a specific one (what happened in one or two Palestinian localities). The general relation is the more important one, as it deals with the issue as a whole.

Table 3 provides an outline regarding to what the above publications attributed the refugees’ exodus.

Table 3: The Causes Cited for the Exodus of the Palestinians

No.	The Causes for the Exodus	Number of Publication in Table 2									Total
		1	2^	3^	4	5	6^	7^	8*	9*	
1	The mere initiation of the war		+	+	+	+		+			5
2	Call of the Arab leadership to leave	+		+	+	+	+	+			6
3	Unjustified fear of the Jews/Israelis			+	+			+			3
4	Societal collapse			+			+	+			3
5	Harm done by the Arab Salvation Army			+							1
6	Unwillingness to live in Israel as a minority				+						1
7	Actually returning to their homeland							+			1
8	Provocative British policy							+			1
9	General: Voluntary flight								+	+	2

⁴³ *It is said in the publication that the Jews/Israelis⁴³ tried to convince the Palestinians not to leave, but failed.*

** In this publication a specific exodus is referred to. Publications without * discussed the exodus as a general one.*

Exploring the various causes described in Table 3 in greater detail, cause 1 may be viewed as a general cause, asserting that the mere initiation of the war and its existence led to the flight of the Palestinians, i.e., the Palestinians started war, and thus

43. Meaning, the Jews until the establishment of Israel on May 14, 1948, and later the (Jewish) Israelis.

they are responsible for all of its outcomes, whatever they are. Cause 2 argues that the leaders of the Arab countries and of the Palestinian people encouraged, and sometimes ordered, the Palestinians to leave their homes in order to avoid impeding the Arab armies or being inadvertently harmed by the fighting. Cause 3 asserts that the Arabs and Palestinians extensively and in an exaggerated manner demonized the Jewish/Israeli security forces in their reports to the Palestinian population, graphically describing evils allegedly conducted by the Jews/Israelis, such as the destruction of villages, massacres, and brutal captures and confinements. This created an unjustified fear of the Jews/Israelis among the Palestinians. Cause 4 asserts that since the eruption of the War of Independence Palestinian society gradually had collapsed, due to the abandonment of its leaders, its internal cleavages, and its lack of an organized army. Cause 5 asserts that the Arab Salvation Forces treated the local Palestinian society quite badly, imposing taxes and confiscating goods such as cars and weapons. Cause 6 asserts that the Palestinian exodus was the natural reaction of a group that did not want to live as a minority in a state controlled by others. According to Cause 7, because many of the Palestinians were originally from neighboring Arab countries, they actually did not flee, but simply returned to their homelands. Cause 8 contends that the British tried to separate the Jews and the Palestinians in the mixed cities, but succeeded only in causing the Palestinians to leave — as the Jews refused to do so. Cause 9 is a general one, relating to a voluntary exodus, without giving any more details.

A closer examination of Table 3 shows that the most commonly used causes are 2 (calls of the Arab leadership to leave) in six publications, 1 (mere initiation of the war) in five publications, and 3 (unjustified fear) and 4 (societal collapse) in three publications. Causes 5-8 were used very rarely, only once each. Cause 9 (voluntary exodus) was used twice, but only regarding specific localities. Hence, due to the rare use of causes 5-8 and the preponderance of general publications the focus here will be on causes 1-4. Among these four causes, cause 2 (call of the Arab leadership to leave) is especially salient, not only since it was used the most often (six times), but also since it gives real details about the causes of the exodus, in contrast to the second most used cause (1), which relates in a general manner to the mere initiation of the war.

Special attention should be paid to publication number 6, initially printed in 1978, as it has been the most widely distributed among the Israeli public, has been reprinted after the rise of the New Historians, and was distributed to the public until the end of the research period (and, actually, until at least 2006). This publication relates to causes 2 (call of the Arab leadership to leave) and 4 (societal collapse).

It should be added that four publications (3,4,6, and 7) assert that the Jews/Israelis tried to dissuade the Palestinians from leaving but did not succeed.

In sum, a preliminary conclusion from the above analysis suggests that the Agency has consistently presented the Zionist version of the refugees issue. That is, they did not attribute any responsibility to the Jewish/Israeli side (including the issue of expulsion) for the refugees issue, but instead cast sole responsibility upon the Palestinians and the Arab countries.

The Interviews — Explanatory Aspect

According to the interviews, emphasis of the Agency's publications to the refu-

gee issue started after the Six-Days War in 1967. In general, the publications, at least until the late 1980s, represented the knowledge that was prevalent regarding that issue in those times, and exclusively contained the Zionist version.⁴⁴ As Haiim Ofaz says, “the issue of expulsion was not mentioned ... until the publications [of the New Historians] were revealed the feeling was that they were not expelled. They left voluntarily or due to the pressure of the Supreme Arabic Committee. This was the public line. It was a taboo.”⁴⁵

Since the late 1980s, an awareness has developed in the Agency of the findings of the research conducted by the New Historians, including their work regarding the refugees.⁴⁶ It was obvious that there was a need for a new publication that would include these new findings.⁴⁷

Hence, in the first half of the 1990s, while Ya’acov Shatz was still the Director of the Center, the Agency approached Mottie Golany, an Israeli historian. Golany was perceived by the Agency as less critical towards the Zionist narrative, in contrast, for example, to Ilan Pappé, one of the New Historians. Golany was asked to write an updated book (approximately 120-150 pages) about the War of Independence that would also naturally relate to the refugee issue. A draft of the book was written and submitted to the Agency for inspection. It needed a lot of editing and it had problems of “wording” (it seems this was regarding its critical content). Due to budget problems and other priorities, the Agency decided not to proceed with this publication.

Later, and before Shohet was appointed Director of the Center in 1996, the Agency approached another scholar, Avraham Sela, and asked him to write a new book about the War of Independence.⁴⁸ Again, this scholar wrote most of the book and submitted a draft to the Agency. The Agency was not comfortable with its content “because of all kinds of interpretations ... we had a feeling that we, as far as I remember, that we as a governmental organ cannot print what he wrote ... you cannot, because you are a civil servant ... we did not want to go over mines ... in general I would say that the policy then was very tough and not so open as today.” In response to a question concerning whether the problem with that book was also due to the refugees issue, Haiim Ofaz replied that “it [the problem] was also related to the refugees.”⁴⁹ Thus, the Agency again decided not to publish an updated book about the War of Independence.

These two attempts to publish a new book about the War of Independence occurred during the first period of the operation of the Center — the official period. In 1996, after Doron Shohet began to serve as the Director of the Center, the un-official period began. Shohet also was aware of the new findings of the New Historians regarding the refugees. But, in his view, “I thought ... that it was finished, the period when the

44. Interviews by author with Nurit Braverman, Jerusalem, August 17, 2006; with Haiim Ofaz, Jerusalem, December 12, 2006; and with Ya’acov Shatz, Jerusalem, August 21, 2006.

45. Interview by author with Haiim Ofaz, Jerusalem, December 12, 2006. Support for this assertion was given also in the interview by author with Ya’acov Shatz, Jerusalem, August 21, 2006.

46. Interviews by author with Nurit Braverman, Jerusalem, August 17, 2006; with Haiim Ofaz, Jerusalem, December 12, 2006; with Ya’acov Shatz, Jerusalem, August 21, 2006; and with Doron Shohet, Tel Aviv, December 11, 2006

47. Interviews with Nurit Braverman, Jerusalem, August 17, 2006 and with Haiim Ofaz, Jerusalem, December 12, 2006.

48. Interview by author with Haiim Ofaz, Jerusalem, December 12, 2006.

49. Interview by author with Haiim Ofaz, Jerusalem, December 12, 2006.

state should disseminate its version as a tool of propaganda. That is why I said: what is already on the shelf, that was published before I came, and some pupil can use it, [and] I leave it. There is no need to throw it away. But to publish something new, of the same style — it is not appropriate. And take into consideration that every journalist, significant, critical, related very critically to all that the state is publishing, and this is why I decided not to get into this whirlpool ... to a child that reads it for the first time it does not make a difference whether they [the refugees] were expelled or ran away.”⁵⁰

Thus, in the end, for various reasons, no new publication of the Agency regarding the War of Independence (and, as a result, the refugee issue also) was published. In contrast, in 1996, as the supply of publication 6 (originally published in 1978) that dealt with that war was exhausted, more copies of that publication were printed and were distributed — at least until 2006.

THE INFILTRATORS

The Publications — Descriptive Aspect

Two publications that deal with the infiltrators were traced during the research, and they, and major details regarding them, are presented in Table 4 below.⁵¹

Table 4: The Agency’s Publications Regarding the Infiltrators

No.	Title of Publication	Author	Year
1	<i>Twenty Years of Independence for Israel</i>	Yehuda Valach	1968
2	<i>The Sinai Campaign — October 29 – November 5, 1956</i>	Amikam Betsalel	1978*

* Identical editions were reprinted in 1979 and 1988.

This table is identical in its structure to table 2, except for the column “General or Specific Relation,” as no specific relation to the infiltrators was found. Publication number 1 was edited by Ya’akov Shatz, but the relevant chapter was written by Yehuda Valach.

Table 5 below provides an outline for the way that these two publications relate to the causes for the infiltrators and the entities that sent them.

50. Interview by author with Doron Shohet, Tel Aviv, December 11, 2006.

51. The full details of the publications are provided in the Appendix.

Table 5: The Causes Cited for the Infiltration and the Sending Entities

No.	The Causes/Sending Entities	No. of Publication in Table 4		Total
		1	2	
	Causes			
1	Terror — Harming people	+	+	2
2	Damaging property	+	+	2
3	Theft/robbery	+		1
4	Intelligence-gathering	+		1
5	General — Harming Israel		+	1
	Sending Entities			
1	All sent by Arab countries		+	1
2	Mixed — Some sent by Arab countries and some on their own initiative	+		1
3	All on their own initiative			0

In the table, cause 1 deals with infiltration that is motivated by the intention to foment terror through the injury or killing of Israelis. Cause 2 relates to the damage and destruction of property. Cause 3 relates to theft or robbery; cause 4 to infiltration for conducting intelligence activities (collecting information about Israel); and cause 5 relates generally to harming Israel. Under the heading of sending entities, cause 1 relates to infiltrators sent by Arab countries; cause 2 to a mixed situation, whereby some infiltrators are sent by Arab countries while others infiltrate on their own initiative; and cause 3 relates to infiltration due only to the initiatives of the infiltrators, and not at all to Arab countries.

Analysis of the publications according to the numbers of publications does not seem of value with only two publications. What can be observed from the table is that of the seven causes mentioned in the two publications, six were purely political causes (all except the theft/robbery). In addition, there is no relation to other apolitical causes, such as cultivating the land or visiting families. Furthermore, regarding the sending entity, there is an emphasis on the idea of infiltrators as sent by Arab countries, as publication 2 relates only to such an infiltration and publication 1 relates to a mixed one.

Special attention should be paid to publication 2, as it is the one that was reprinted and had the widest distribution over the years — and actually was distributed to the public at least until 2006. This publication exclusively uses the Zionist narrative — that all infiltrators were sent by Arab countries only for political reasons.

In conclusion, the Agency's publications at least until 2006 have almost totally presented the Zionist narrative regarding the infiltrators. That is, the infiltrators were presented as nearly wholly politically motivated, and frequently as being sent by Arab countries.

The Interviews — Explanatory Aspect

According to the interviews, the Agency started describing the infiltration mainly

in the late 1960s.⁵² In general, the Agency's publications represented, at least about until the mid-1990s, the what was then the common knowledge about this issue, and they represented mainly, if not fully the Zionist narrative.⁵³ Thus, the acts of the infiltrators were described in the publications as acts of terror.

Later, an awareness arose in the Agency of the research of the New Historians regarding the infiltration.⁵⁴ In the end, it was decided by the Agency not to publish any new publication about this issue. "As was said by Ya'acov Shatz with regard to the way the New Historians dealt with the infiltrators, "all the New Historians, it was a problem how to deal with them"⁵⁵ Haiim Ofaz explains in more detail the rationale of the decision not to publish a new publication about the Sinai War, including the infiltration: "look, there was awareness [of the new findings in the 1990s regarding the infiltration], but we decided not to deal with it. ... We did not want to get into these things. We saw ourselves, also, [that] it is necessary to remember that we are indeed government clerks, but we talked about official publicity. When you talk about official publicity ... we did not deal with things that are, I would say, in dispute. This was our policy."⁵⁶

Doron Shohet also was aware of the new findings regarding the infiltrators. But, in accordance with his opinion and reasoning about not publishing a new book about the War of Independence, he did not think that a new book should be published about the Sinai War and the infiltration. Additionally, he mentioned that the high speed of reaction in the private sector, including the media, to the new findings of the New Historians made the activities of the Agency irrelevant. Finally he noted that it was hard with the limited staff that he had to put out new publications.⁵⁷

Thus, no new publication was produced, and, publication 2 was the one that was distributed among the Israeli public at least until 2006.

DISCUSSION

In this section we will analyze in an integrative manner the findings regarding the two case studies. As a major finding, it is possible to say that the Agency's publications that were published and distributed from the early 1950s until 2003 consistently presented in a the Zionist narratives regarding these two case studies. That is with regard to the refugees, the responsibility for their exodus was put exclusively on the Arabs/Palestinians. Generally, these publications say that the refugee problem occurred because the Arabs/Palestinians initiated the war against the Jews, and more specifically, that the Palestinians departed mainly because their leadership (and that of the Arab countries) encouraged them to do so, and also because of an unjustified fear of the Jews and the collapse of the Palestinian's society. The infiltrators are almost always portrayed as motivated by politi-

52. Interview by author with Ya'acov Shatz, Jerusalem, August 21, 2006.

53. Interviews by author with Nurit Braverman, Publications Agency, December 12, 2006; with Haiim Ofaz, Jerusalem, December 12, 2006; and with Ya'acov Shatz, Jerusalem, August 21, 2006.

54. Interviews by author with Nurit Braverman, Publications Agency, December 12, 2006; with Haiim Ofaz, Jerusalem, December 12, 2006, with Ya'acov Shatz, Jerusalem, August 21, 2006; and with Doron Shohet, Tel Aviv, December 11, 2006

55. Interview by author with Ya'acov Shatz, Jerusalem, August 21, 2006.

56. Interview by author with Haiim Ofaz, Jerusalem, December 12, 2006.

57. Interview by author with Doron Shohet, Tel Aviv, December 11, 2006.

cal reasons (wanting to harm Israelis/Jews, damage property, and conduct intelligence activities) with an inclination to present them as being sent by the Arab countries.

The consistent and exclusive use of the Zionist narrative in the Agency's publications is specifically salient with regard to the refugees, for two reasons. First, regarding the constituency in the portrayal, since the refugee issue is presented in a relatively high number of publications (nine) in contrast to the lesser amount of publications that deal with the infiltrators (two). Second, regarding the way of presenting the narratives until now, since the Agency reprinted publication 6 (*The War of Independence* (B)) in 1996 (when the new findings regarding the refugees were already known), which exclusively includes the Zionist narrative. The Agency still distributes it today. In contrast, publication 2 (*The Sinai Campaign*) which is also still distributed to the public was reprinted in 1988, when the new findings regarding the infiltrators were not yet known.

It seems that the reasons that led the Agency not to publish new publications that contained the post-Zionist narratives regarding the two case studies are complex. Preliminarily it should be stressed that, first, as mentioned above, there was an awareness in the Agency of the existence of the post-Zionist findings regarding the two case studies; and second, that none of the interviewees claim that these findings are erroneous, and thus that they should not have been published. So if this is the case, why were these findings not published?

It seems that the answer regarding the first, "official period," until 1996, is partly different from that regarding the second, "un-official" one. In the first period it was part of protecting the official line of the state by preserving its positive self-image (regarding the refugees, in that they were not expelled), and the negative one of the Arabs/Palestinians (regarding the infiltrators, in that they were sent by the Arab countries for political reasons). Such a *modus operandi* was apparently partly as an outcome of the point of view that it is not wise to publish information that damages the interests of the organization that pays your salary, but mainly due to the fear of negative reactions from the superior organs of the state. In the second period, when Doron Shohet joined the Center, the picture became more complex and heterogenic. The previous two factors from the first period remained intact, since some of the senior Agency staff remained in the Agency, and also because Shohet mentions his carefulness that arose from negative reactions to problematic publications. Still, it seems that regarding the second period additional factors should be taken into consideration, such as Shohet's attitude against the state producing publications with its official version of the two case studies, and, as a small factor, Shohet's evaluation that it would be hard to produce new publications with his reduced staff and resources due to financial cutbacks.

This being said, the actual efforts to produce new publications regarding the refugees, and the considerations of producing a new publication regarding the Sinai War (and the infiltrators) were conducted during the first period. This was also the period when the scope of resources and activities of the Agency were relatively large, in contrast to the second period (that suffered more from the financial cutbacks), and as such it would have been possible, if they had wanted to, to create new publications regarding the two case studies. Thus, based on all of the above, it seems that the explanations that pertain to the first period have the most significant weight in the overall explanation of not producing new publications, with the post-Zionist narratives, regarding the two case studies.

Salient as well is the fact that a relatively large number of publications (nine in total) dealt with the refugees, in contrast to only two publications that dealt with the

infiltrators. In addition, even the publications that dealt with the infiltrators did so in a narrower scope than most of the publications that dealt with the refugees (i.e., that some of them were dedicated wholly to the refugee issue and some in large part to it). It seems that these findings demonstrate what was said initially — that the issue of the refugees (as part of the War of Independence) was much more central in the Israeli sphere than the issue of the infiltrators (i.e., it existed as part of the background to the Sinai War).

Looking at the findings from the more general and theoretical point of view, it is interesting to examine two of the memory makers, the academy and the Agency (as part of the Center), and discuss their different impacts upon the collective memory of the memory consumers, the public. The academy serves as one of the “past researchers.” That is, its members, the scholars, conduct research that explores what happened in the past. Other past researchers can be, among others, former army soldiers or commanders, army researchers, or “normal” citizens conducting research. The Agency serves as one of the “past disseminators,” that is, it disseminates among the memory consumers, using discursive methods (its publications), the findings about the past that were explored by the researchers of the past. Other “past distributors” can be the media and cultural channels (e.g., popular books or films). But the Agency does not disseminate all the findings about the past that were explored by the research, but only those that it finds adequate for distribution among the public, and as such, useful for assimilation in its collective memory.

In general, a most important condition for the Agency in choosing research about the past that will be distributed is that these findings not damage the state. Such findings could criticize the state and damage its positive image. The corresponding approach to presenting the state positively is portraying the rival party in the conflict (in this case, the Arabs/Palestinians) in a negative manner. This not only emphasizes the positive aspects of the state, but supplies a rationale for its activities against its rival.

In our case, the Agency, as part of the Israeli establishment, served as a gate keeper of the national dissemination channel to the memory consumers. The findings determined to be adequate for dissemination regarding the refugees and the infiltrators were those of the Zionist narrative. These portrayed Israel in a positive manner (that refugees were not expelled) and the Arabs/Palestinians in a negative manner (that the infiltrators were sent by the Arab countries for political reasons). These two case studies, especially the refugees one, are major events in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and as such it was especially important that they be portrayed in the Agency’s publications in the manner that the state wished. When the academy presented new critical findings regarding the two case studies, the Agency prevented the dissemination of these findings in its distributory channel.

In this way, the past became an instrument for the needs of the present, to establish (or sustain) a collective memory of conflicts that would enable the memory consumers to cope with the conflict and contribute their part in the struggle.

There was no need for an explicit structural system of supervision for this operation of the Agency. In the framework of informal procedures between the employees of the Center (including the Agency) and their directors, or among themselves (including internally and each employee on his own), the Agency employees knew what was expected of them and acted accordingly. These mechanisms of operation (in general and specifically regarding the two case studies) operated throughout the years. Nonetheless, it seems that regarding the two case studies, these mechanisms were tested and were

meaningfully expressed after the initiation of the New Historians' era, as challenges to the Zionist narrative came out.

In conclusion, this research sheds light on the *modus operandi* of the Publications Agency in the Information Center in general and specifically regarding the refugees and the infiltrators. These findings have implications for the specific context of Israel and the Israeli-Arab conflict and in general provide a theoretical context for the study of the way in which state institutions operate to construct a desired collective memory, particularly a memory of conflicts.

APPENDIX A: THE AGENCY'S PUBLICATIONS THAT WERE ANALYZED (BY ORDER AS IN THE TABLES)

REGARDING THE REFUGEES

1. *Milhemet Ha'atsmaot* (a) [*The War of Independence*] (a) (Jerusalem: Information Center, Publications Agency, 1968).

2. Pinhas Eliav, "Yehasey Hahoots shel Israel (1948-1968)" ["Israel's Foreign Affairs (1948-1968)"] in Ya'acov Shatz, ed., *Esrin Shnot Hatsmaot Israel [Twenty Years of Independence for Israel]* (Jerusalem: Information Center, Publications Agency, 1968), Chapter 5.

3. Yeosh Biver, *Dapei Meida (13) [Notes of Information (13)]* (Jerusalem: Information Center, Publications Agency, 1970).

4. Rafael Rupin, *Anahnoo Hem Ve'erez Israel [We, Them, and the Land of Israel]* (Jerusalem: Information Center, Publications Agency, 1971).

5. Ya'acov Hertsog, *Al Israel Veartso — Vikuach im Professor Arnold Toynbee [On Israel and Its Land — A Dispute with Professor Arnold Toynbee]* (Jerusalem: Information Center, Publications Agency, 1975).

6. *Milhemet Ha'atsmaot* (b) [*The War of Independence*] (b) (Jerusalem: Information Center, Publications Agency, 1978).

7. Nadav Aner, *Haomnam Plitim Lanetsah — Hamatsav Hanohehi Vehatsaot Lepitaron [Are Refugees Forever — The Current Situation and Suggestions for Resolution]* (Jerusalem: Information Center, Publications Agency, 1984).

8. Uri Ben-Ari, *Harel — Tashah [Harel — Tashah]* (Jerusalem: Information Center, Publications Agency, 1988).

9. Amikam Gurevitch, *Palmach — Iftach [Palmach — Iftach]* (Jerusalem: Information Center, Publications Agency, 1988).

REGARDING THE INFILTRATORS

1. Yehuda Valach, "Esrin Shnot Bithon Israel" ["Twenty Years of Security for Israel"] in Ya'acov Shatz, ed., *Esrin Shnot Hatsmaot Israel [Twenty Years of Independence for Israel]* (Jerusalem: Information Center, Publications Agency, 1968), Chapter 4.

2. Amikam Betsalel, *Mivtsa Sinai — 29 October — 5 November 1956 [The Sinai Campaign — October 29 — November 5, 1956]* (Jerusalem: Information Center, Publications Agency, 1978).