**Nation Building through Memory Destruction**

**Building the Modern Jewish Nation on the Ruins of the Memory of the Jews from Arab Countries**

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This article deals with the erasure of the memory/culture/history/presence of Jewish emigres from Arab and Muslim countries from the collective memory of the State of Israel. The core of the article will examine the process of erasing the memory of this group from national ***sites of memory*** (*lieux de memoire*), the opposition to that process from ***environments of memory*** (*milieux de me'moire*), and the reaction that ensued in response to that opposition.[[2]](#footnote-4) To many, this identity finds expression in the figure of the sabra. However, for many others, the socially constructed image of the sabra does not include or represent Jews of Arab and Muslim countries (here and forth JAMC) across the generations.

In the State of Israel, the male Jewish Zionist elite[[3]](#footnote-5) had initiated a practice, whether formal or not, of actively expunging the memory of the Jewish emigrants from Arab countries, building a “national” memory that excludes it from the collective memory. I take my hint form Hannah Arendt’s concept “the banality of evil”[[4]](#footnote-6)— a string of small actions by petty state officials and politicians, and academics that produced a “sophisticated” erasure machine. This complex activity was constructed from small and apparently minor action by many collaborators and a docile and submissive academics from the early days of the state until today. These small actions solidified by such wo/men, common here even now, whether *goal-suffused* academics, writers, educators, artists, and technocrats who felt, and still feel, a sense of commitment to a Eurocentric-national cultural mission which they consider as the cultural core of the national ideology. This ideology was Ashkenazi and Zionist in its inception, and their actions ossified and deepened the erasure of the part played by JAMC in the Israeli collective memory.

The argument proposed here will be illustrated with a few examples - some visual and others based on an analysis of events and their erasure from history. It can also be illustrated by the construction of environments of memory and the all-out war these environments of memory encounter as they defy the hegemony. The examples I will utilize include:

* The part of the North African Jewry in the Holocaust – the erasure of the memory of the Jews of Arab countries from curriculum materials in the State of Israel.
* The kidnapping of children from Yemen, the Near East, and the Balkans, and the opposition set forth by the establishment and its collaborators, academics, news reporters and other members of the hegemony, against this environment of memory.
* The seminal work of Ella Shohat, *Forbidden Reminiscence*s: TowardMulticultural Thinking,” and the way in which she analyzes both the discourse and the texts that underlay the erasure of the environments of memory of Jews from Arab countries, as well as their removal from the Israeli sites of memory; and the visual work of Meir Gal, “Nine Out of Four Hundred: The West and the Rest,” which describes the erasure of the history of emigres from Arab countries from the school system.

Scholars who explore collective memory see it as a type of social knowledge that plays a significant role in people’s consciousness.[[5]](#footnote-7) History, according to Nora, belongs to all and none, and as such it is universalistic, while collective memory is the active past that constructs our identities in the present. Collective memory is a reconstruction of the past in light of present conceptions.[[6]](#footnote-8) Schwartz argues that a society recalls it’s past in accordance with its dominant values in the present.[[7]](#footnote-9) Memory as a social act is influenced by various forms and structures of power that precipitate a change in memories of the past in order to justify themselves in the present.[[8]](#footnote-10)

Underlying the discussion in this paper are Nora’s definitions. Nora, a French Jewish philosopher and historian whose writings constitute a cornerstone in the study of memory and the creation of national collective memory. Memory, according to Nora, is not history! History is a fluid concept that encompasses various deliberations and constructions; national memory, in contrast, is one of the foundations for the construction of the nation and the shaping of a people’s attitude toward its national past. Nora argued that there are two memory structures: *sites of memory*and *environments of memory*.*Sites of memory* are the established memory disseminated in a systematic, ordered fashion to the citizenry of a state or society by various governing institutions, among which Nora counts memorial days, museums, schools, textbooks, monuments, rituals, and more. *Sites of memory* are the dominant form of memory construction in Israel, based mostly on Ashkenazi Zionist Jewish memory, which is also male dominant. By contrast, at the level of structure and memory, the role of Jews from Arab countries is articulated largely in *environments of memory*—which, according to Nora, are structures that challenge establishment memory and try to constitute a radical alternative that draws other, more expansive limits to memory. It is a counterweight to that hegemony that established realms of memory in its own image and used them to erase additional memories and force them out of the realms of memory. The use of these concepts, based on Nora’s work, does not commit one to accept his entire conceptual range or terminology.

According to Nora, the transition to constructed memory or sites of memory stems from a change in people’s collective status. The example Nora uses to highlight this phenomenon is that of Jews in Europe, whom he describes as follows: “*We can think, for an example, of the Jews of the diaspora, bound in daily devotion to the rituals of tradition, who as ‘peoples of memory’ found little use for historians until their forced exposure to the modern world.*”[[9]](#footnote-11) According to Nora, this process occurred mainly in the European Jewish communities as a result of European emancipation and Enlightenment; in turn, sites of memory were produced for “the Jewish people,” or, more precisely, for the Central European part of the Jewish people. That practice, I wish to argue, was “imported” directly into Palestine and later the State of Israel in order to establish the Zionist sites of memory that are the basis of the male-Jewish-Zionist-Ashkenazi elite’s power. To round out the picture with the element of the radicalism of the environments of memory and their attempt to undermine the hegemonic sites of memory, I would like to add to this discussion Foucault’s conceptualization of “the discourse of war.” In Foucault’s view, a discourse of war exists among societies in which there are essential ethnic divides within the social reference group. That discourse is, he argues, a discourse of class-based racism which signifies “a war between races” who are, in fact, citizens of the same society.[[10]](#footnote-12) A narrative of war between different groups/classes within the same society over the collective sites of memory and the existence of alternative radical environments of memory constitute another interpretation of this conceptualization. In Israel, one can easily applies that conceptualization to the ethno-class struggle embodied in the struggle over the national collective memory, from which JAMC are excluded.

Given that, the core argument of this paper is: ***the construction of national sites of memory in Israel is a practice of erasing the memory of the Jews of Arab and Muslim countries, using exclusionary language to strengthen the interests which have a common, basic goal: the creation of a narrative of memory, sites of memory, that are based on a desire to continue the hegemony of Zionist Ashkenazi Jewish men in the State of Israel (hereinafter, the hegemony).*** It is important to note that the power of this construction of reality lies only in the violent act of erasing the memories of the “others” in society and substantiating the present site of memory as the only “alternative” to reality—the ultimate force, perhaps, of this construction of reality is in transforming the hegemonic site of memory into a “***natural reality***”and mobilizing that dominant conceptualization in the interests of the hegemonic group. Thus, any act of protest against it is perceived as opposition to the “natural” order and, as such, illegitimate. Nevertheless, and despite the power of the establishment and its ability to shape generations upon generations of citizens through establishment sites of memory, an opposition movement arose that based itself in various environments of memory that challenged the hegemony. The relationship between sites of memory and environments of memory is ***spiral-dialectical***, one that presents, time and time again, patterns of erasure and recalling between that hegemony and the suppressed groups—this is an “eternal” process, as is the nature of a spiral process that is organized by the power relations between the hegemonic sites of memory and the oppressed communities of memory. Processes of this type follow two alternative paths. On one hand, the continued existence of this dialectical spiral of oppression, e.g., oppression as cooptation that creates the disappearance of the memory of various communities, for example: the (active) erasure of the memory of the North African Jews from the Holocaust, and oppression as the folklorization and pathologization of Mizrahi mothers whom kids were kidnapped and the criminalization of the Mizrahi men who were demanded answers to the kidnapped families such as Rabbi Uzi Meshulam and his supporters. On the other hand, the breaking of this pattern of oppression and mobilizing radical change in the composition of the elite and the society’s sites of memory.

This is precisely how Nora portrays change and transition from constructed memory or sites of memory: as part of the change in people’s collective status, their conversion from individuals into a unit of memory. The constant fear of a reversal of hegemony over the sites of memory in the society in Israel, and the conversion of some of the environments of memory into an integral part of the sites of memory, makes this spiral process violent and unable to include those dissident environments of memory.

Now would offer to turn to the analysis of the three proposed cases: the part of the north African Jews in the holocaust, The kidnapping of children from Yemen, the Near East, and the Balkans and the analysis of the seminal works of Ella Shohat and Meir Gal.

**The ‘*Holocaust of North African Jewry*’**

The sites of memory in Israel have all been framed through a Eurocentric Jewish lens; at its center stand support structures that do not necessarily present an actual portrayal of social reality: 1. Ashkenazi Zionism, which is not identical with the “love of Zion” more commonly found among Jews from Arab countries; 2. The Ashkenazi Jewish male—the sabra, “salt of the earth,”[[11]](#footnote-13) the “Israelis”; 3. the total negation of Arab identity and its framing as inferior. Those sites are almost completely under state control, since they represent the guiding light of the Israeli elite.[[12]](#footnote-14) They also set the central tone of Israeli sites of memory—the school system, ceremonies, language, music, and more.

Examples abound. For instance, let us look at some basic terms that do not garner enough attention, constituting as they do one of the most important sites of memory in Israeli society - “*Aliyah!*” What is that shopworn terminology? The modern Zionist ideological value statement that underlies this term is that “a Jew qua Jew has not fulfilled his destiny in the world until he has come to the State of Israel.” That is, arriving in the State of Israel elevates him to the level in which he becomes the complete Jew. That concept has become a tool for controlling memory and a cornerstone for historically ‘non-accurate’ site of memory. First and foremost, the term is reserved only for immigrants from European countries, Ashkenazim[[13]](#footnote-15). The term *Aliyah* goes into the deep freeze after five waves of immigration and one more of Youth Aliyah; from 1950’s on, immigration waves to Israel are labeled “operations” instead.[[14]](#footnote-16) The concept is thawed out for reuse with the arrival of immigrants from the former Soviet Union in the 1970s, and partially re-frozen with the arrival of Ethiopian Jews in “Operation Moses” and “Operation Solomon.” In the 1990s the mass immigration of Jews from the FSU in those years does not receive the label “operation.” It is important to note that while *aliyah* is an active performance, “operation” hints to the passive nature of the participants. However, if we examine the reality of “active *aliyot*” after the establishment of the state, the most active “*aliyah*,” which took the most effort from the people who participated in it, is that of the Jews of Ethiopia[[15]](#footnote-17). It, however, did not go down as an active event in the sites of memory. To the contrary, the terminology employed referred to the rescue of those immigrants by the Zionist state military establishment, to people who were passively whisked away to civilization. In recent years, with the maturation of the third generation of Ethiopian Jews in Israel, that memory has been reformulated through collective environments of memory and the reframing of the story differently than in the sites of collective memory. Still, the widespread perception remains that at issue is an “operation” in which the Ethiopian Jews were passive bit players.[[16]](#footnote-18)

At this stage, after a brief discussion in the terminology of immigration, I would like to turn to one of the most significant values of the Israeli society, the Holocaust. Quite paradoxically, the Holocaust has become one of the central pillars of the sites of memory in Israeli society. Why paradoxically? Israel’s Zionist elite regarded Central and Eastern European Jews who did not immigrate to Israel but preferred to remain in Europe, and as a result experienced the Holocaust, as “human ash” or “human dust” and as “sheep led to the slaughter.” At the time of the establishment of the state, the attitude toward the victims, and especially the survivors, was shameful. That memory, though, soon underwent a transformation and became one of the basic values of Israeli society.[[17]](#footnote-19) The construction of that memory entailed a duality: on one hand, the Holocaust was cited as the number one moral justification for the State of Israel’s existence as the state of the Jewish people; on the other, beyond the moralistic concept, in practice the Holocaust was embedded as a central component of Israeli sites of memory through compensation agreements and reparations from Germany, funds that served the heads of the young state in part for constructing and shaping the power of the dominant group[[18]](#footnote-20).

Seemingly, this site of memory can serve as a broad basis for the entire population of Jews who experienced the sufferings of the Holocaust, North African as well as European. However, even a cursory look at the practices that have come to surround that memory leaves the observer in awe. At the institutional level, the State of Israel had a direct interest in acknowledging the fact that fascist Germany and Italy also committed atrocities in North Africa. It seems that this fact provides a powerful justification for demanding recognition for the existence of the State of Israel as the state of the Jews. However, that is not what transpired. The State of Israel first recognized Jews form North Africa as Holocaust survivors in 2010! The term ’the Holocaust of North African Jewry‘[[19]](#footnote-21) is derived from the hegemonic sites of memory and its primary function is not necessarily to describe the history of North African Jewry, but rather another attempt to co-opt the memory of North African Jewry and integrate it into the hegemonic bloc[[20]](#footnote-22), however, not as an integrated part of its core[[21]](#footnote-23). The Jews of North African descent have a different history, they are not a monolithic unit and their history exists as a memory not necessarily in relation to that of the Jews of Europe. Yet, some of the North African Jews experienced the Holocaust, they were sent to labor camps and concentration camps, etc., this, undoubtedly, happened because they are a part of the Jewish people. However, the attempt to use terminology such as ’the Holocaust of North African Jewry‘ or ‘the Holocaust of the Libyan Jewry’ is problematic[[22]](#footnote-24), on the one hand it represents an attempt to assimilate them as a monolithic block into the Israeli Holocaust sites of memory is an oppressive tactic of the hegemony, on the other it renders they were not part of the ‘***true***’ holocaust, if there is such a thing. This practice does not necessarily indicate recognition of the historical memory of this group and its place in the collective sites of memory. Even this problematic ‘recognition’ of their part in the Holocaust, which was oppressive in nature, was achieved only after the community’s legal struggle against the state for its deliberate disregard of that issue.[[23]](#footnote-25) The Yad Vashem museum, whose primary function is to present historical documentation of all facets of the Holocaust, first displayed the work of an artist from the community of emigres from the Arab world, Nava Barazani, in 2016.[[24]](#footnote-26) A book that presents a portrait of this community titled: ***the Jews of North Africa during the Holocaust***, rather than the ‘Holocaust of North African Jews’, was published by Yad Vashem under the title *The Jews of North Africa During the Holocaust Period*. The publication of this book occurred only in 2006, moreover, it became a reality only with the significant assistance of the Claims Conference and Mr. and Mrs. Edmond Asseraf and Mr. and Mrs. Emile Azoulay, two North African Jewish couples from France. It is evident that the term ‘Holocaust of North Africa’s Jews’ is still prevalent in Israeli society making the distinction between them and the European Jews.[[25]](#footnote-27) Even today, despite the establishment’s official recognition of the fact that the Jews of North Africa were indeed a part of the Holocaust, the part of the North African Jewry in the Holocaust site of memory is minor at best and secondary.

Yvonne Koslowsky Golan’s book (2017), ***Forgotten from the Frame: The Absence of the Holocaust Experiences of Mizrahim from the Visual Arts and Media in Israel***, presents shocking data about the establishment’s attitude toward the memory of the North African Jewry part in the Holocaust. The book reveals that the school system does not address the subject at all. She argues that since the establishment of the state the Holocaust has been constructed as a European-only experience. Here I would like to add the testimony of Yossi Sukary, a North African Jewish writer, who relates that, as a child, he was called a “liar” by a teacher in front of the entire class when he said that his Libyan grandmother was a Holocaust survivor. An investigation reveals that although testimonies of North African survivors were collected by Yad Vashem as far back as 1956, they were completely hidden until 2005, when a small memorial corner was set up at the museum. That exclusion stemmed from the conception that Yad Vashem is “a place that does not belong to them,” in Kozlowsky Golan’s words (p. 84).

In response to this dire situation and the establishment’s opposition to any attempt to include the North African Jews as an integral part of the Holocaust and Israel’s sites of memory, artists, writers, and intellectuals of later generations created their own environments of memory of that event. Kolowsky Golan mentions three artists in her book: Joseph Dadon, Itzik Badash, and Nava Barazani, all of whom addressed the Holocaust of North African Jews, creating an environment of memory. In his books, Yossi Sukary has always related to this issue, whether through examples or in descriptions of his family’s personal tragedy, his 2013 book, ***Benghazi Bergen-Belsen***, tells the story on the Holocaust of Libyan Jews through the prism of his grandmother. The Ben Zvi Institute, which has replaced Yad Vashem as the center for the study and documentation of the Holocaust of North African Jewry, continues with its work. This is despite the fact that it is Yad Vashem’s official task to study and document the Holocaust (of all the Jews)—it appears that Yad Vashem documents only the Holocaust of European Jewry and not that of North African Jewry. This distinction between Holocaust memorial institutions creates a hierarchy within the national Sites of memory – premier Yad Vashem and secondary Ben Zvi institute, the first deals with the ‘memory of the collective,’ i.e. Ashkenazi Jews, and the second deals with the memory of the peripheral collective, i.e. Mizrahi Jews.

This example is perhaps even more significant than those that will be discussed below. After all, at first glance there is no conflict here between the state’s institutions and its central narrative on one side and the memory proposed by North African Jewry on the other. The contrary, in fact, is true: the Holocaust testimonies of North African Jews strengthen the State of Israel’s claim of the necessity of its existence as the state of the Jewish people and assists in the war against Holocaust deniers of all types. To the surprise and dismay of many, however, this is not the case. A consideration of this phenomenon leads to the following “split” insight: either the State of Israel does not regard the Jews of Arab countries as an integral part of the collective and its sites of memory, so much so that it is prepared to erase the horrors that the North African Jews had to suffer during the Holocaust by adopting these practices, or the fear of undermining hegemony in the sites of memory prevents the introduction of the memories of Jews from Arab countries. The fear from hegemonic exchange that such inclusion might express is a manifestation of a ‘*discourse of war*’, according to Foucault, on the sites of memory of the immigrants from Europe, the preferred subjects of the hegemony that constructs the national sites of memory and the Jews of North Africa. The second insight coincides with this paper’s argument for a “*discourse of war*,” erasure from the collective memory is part of this discourse and the hegemony’s concern over the possible loss of control of the national sites of memory. In any case, this is a fascinating phenomenon: oppression goes hand in hand with attempts to co-opt the Jews of Arab countries into the state institutions. It also leads us to two additional examples that might provide a better explanation to the second insight mentioned above. The next example does not involve any attempt of cooptation; instead I find an adumbration of oppression as pathologization of women and criminalization of men from the community of emigres from Arab countries—another form of action undertaken by the mechanism of oppression operated by the people who control the national sites of memory.

***The Kidnapping of Children from Yemen, the Near East, and the Balkans***

Another example of the powers of the sites of memory and the exclusion of Jews from Arab countries from that memory is the case of the kidnapping of Yemenite, Near East, and the Balkan Jewish descendant children in Israel - known as “the Yemenite, Mizrachi and Balkan children affair”.[[26]](#footnote-30) This affair has plagued the State of Israel for many years. More than a thousand children, some estimate at more than two thousand, born to immigrants from Yemen, Arab countries, and the Balkans were kidnapped. The establishment, over the years, has treated this phenomenon with dismissal, covering up and silencing, despite mountains of testimony from parents and other family members whose children were taken from them.[[27]](#footnote-31) The involvement of Jewish NGOs such as WIZO and others[[28]](#footnote-32), has been airbrushed to the point of total erasure. However, history and testimony—the agents of the environments of memory have particular power— these testimonies about the kidnappings have not disappeared, and resurface again and again, to point that they interfere with the “proper,” “self-evident” management of life under Zionist-Ashkenazi hegemony.

The event that announced the breaking of the taboo—even if at an unbearable price to the Meshulam family and the creation of an environment of memory that has grown over the years —was Rabbi Uzi Meshulam[[29]](#footnote-33) and his followers’ sit-in in his home in Yehud, a small town in the eastern outskirts of Tel Aviv, demanding that the archives be opened and light be shed on one of the most unforgettable affairs in the history of the State of Israel. That request was not accepted, of course, and through police trickery and lies and massive, across-the-board support from the media, Rabbi Uzi Meshulam was denounced as a violent psychopath, then arrested and jailed—and remained under state surveillance until the day he died.[[30]](#footnote-34) This is a classic example of the violent practices employed by agents of the sites of memory, which are a direct product of their fear of having the hegemony overthrown.

Nonetheless, the missing children affair did not disappear from the agenda of families from Yemen, the Near East, and the Balkans. Over time, as Rabbi Meshulam had argued from the beginning, it became clear that there were instances of kidnapping from families of Iraqi, Bulgarian, and other backgrounds. Rabbi Meshulam’s activism came together, among other things, as a reaction to the establishment’s practice of ignoring appeals by the parents of kidnapped children as far back as the 1950s and 1960s. Because of the establishment’s stonewalling and its unwillingness to accept the demand for an investigation, in 1966 a “Public Committee for the Discovery of the Missing Yemenite Children” was established as a sort of environment of memory so that the children’s disappearance would not be deleted from the collective memory. In its wake, a government commission of inquiry was set up in 1967, “The Commission for Discovering the Yemenite Children,” known also as the Bahaloul–Minkowski Commission. That commission’s conclusions were submitted in 1968, and its overall conclusion was that most of the children had died, dismissing claims of children’s disappearance on “disorder…mass immigration… population migrations….”[[31]](#footnote-35) In the 1980s, as hundreds more testimonies about kidnapped children were gathered, the topic returned to the public agenda, and in 1988 a second commission of inquiry was established, known as “The State Commission of Inquiry into the Disappearance of Yemenite Children,” headed by Judge Dr. Moshe Shalgi. This commission too found, unsurprisingly, that the reasons adduced by the previous commission were still valid and that no information had been found that would “lead to a suspicion of criminal action.”[[32]](#footnote-36)

Resolving or answering the disappearance of thousands of children was never on the table for the commissions; instead, these are violent practices of silencing by the hegemony. The commissions of inquiry, which are the bedrock of the sites of memory, on the basis of which the actions, institutions, and symbols of the sites of memory are built upon, and at the same time also constitute a reaction to the environment of memory that seeks to challenge the hegemonic site of memory. Every time a protest erupts against the erasure of memory, the hegemony unleashes a reactionary response, in the form of new bases for memory and the erasure of the opposition. The latter vary from violent acts in form of mass arrests and the use of police force against a rabbi and his followers to an official commission of inquiry. At the end of the day, the violent practices, both physical and institutional, form the new underpinning for the sites of memory - to this day, the “operation” against Rabbi Uzi Meshulam and his followers is perceived by the public as “the events at Yehud,” and the rabbi and his followers are considered a cult. As I will try to show below, additional oppressive practices constructing such foundations for the sites of memory will come to light, underlining the insight that the radical spiral of erasure and suppression of the memory of Jews from Arab countries continues.

The state establishes commissions of inquiry and confirms foregone conclusions, yet mothers’ testimonies are not accepted as credible, just like the testimonies of North African Holocaust survivors; this stands in complete contrast to the testimonies of Holocaust survivors from Europe, who were given a place of honor in the State of Israel’s sites of memory. To the dismay of many, Israeli government documents that completely contradicted the commissions’ findings—such as draft notices for missing children, voter registration information that arrived in their name, requests for National Insurance Institute payments, and others—brought about no change in the state’s official position. The hegemony’s strength is also rooted in its ability to delegitimize the testimony of certain individuals, directed of course at only part of the testimonies, in this case, mothers of kidnapped children, as described above.

Following the events at Yehud and rising public agitation, the State of Israel decided to establish a third commission of inquiry, the “State Commission of Inquiry into the Disappearance of Children of New Immigrants from Yemen Between 1948 and 1954.” At the head of the commission sat Yehuda Cohen, who was later replace by Judge Yaakov Kedmi. That commission, just like its predecessors, did whatever it could to whitewash the affair, delay and of course deny any establishment involvement in the kidnappings. However, unlike the commissions that preceded it, which conducted their business behind closed doors, these proceedings were open and public.[[33]](#footnote-37) As Shifris writes in his book *Where Have All the Children Gone?*, “in the commission, over a thousand pieces of evidence were presented… The materials that were assembled over the course of the commission’s work, especially the testimonies themselves, revealed to the public for the first time—after decades of silence, silencing, and concealment by the state—a broad corpus of data, a gold mine of information, that finally makes it possible to uncover the truth.”[[34]](#footnote-38)

Here one must ask: considering these thousands of testimonies, where is the academic establishment? Where are the intellectuals? Where is the media? Why is the same value not accorded to the testimony given by the families of the kidnapped children from Yemen, the Near East, and the Balkans and, for example, to that of Holocaust survivors? This is a very controversial question—since the outcry will be that there is no comparison to be made—but that argument is no longer valid after the first example discussed in this paper. After all, the testimonies of Holocaust survivors from Arab countries have been denied and shoved under the rug until recent years, and the establishment’s recognition of them came only after a continuous media and legal struggle; despite that recognition, the part of North African Jews in the Holocaust is still not part of Israel’s sites of memory.

Thus, this question is relevant and important for understanding the rejection of the memory of Jews from Arab countries in the Israeli national sites of memory. It is important to point out that the violent exclusion of the memory of the Jews of North Africa preceded the denial of their part in the Holocaust; active steps were taken to diminish the history, culture, poetry, art, language, and other features of sites of memory connected to that community. Of course, this background provides a better explanation of the following stage in the denial of the North African Jews part in the Holocaust—and from there it is a short step to denying the kidnapping of children. All these fit in into Arendt’s claim on the banality of evil in a surprisingly clear fashion: the machine operates in small increments, but the larger picture is horrifying.[[35]](#footnote-39)

The question of the kidnapped children of Yemenite, Near East, and Balkan families is more explosive than the part of North African Jews in the Holocaust, and has the potential to damage the solidarity of Jewish society in Israel, the affair nevertheless remains in the public consciousness and has not faded over the course of more than seventy years. However, Nora’s claim regarding the few who seek a common site of memory gains additional strength. The elite still actively and oppressively prevents any change in the group’s status. Similarly, the argument of class racism[[36]](#footnote-41) is validated yet again. Concern about the possible loss of the imagined “solidarity” of Israeli society, combined with the hegemony’s fear of the breakdown and restructuring of the sites of memory by Jews from Arab countries and others prevents any recognition of the memory of Jews from Arab countries (the part of North African Jews in the Holocaust) or an admission of the crimes committed by the Ashkenazi hegemonic establishment (kidnapping children or irradiating children with ringworm[[37]](#footnote-42)). Moreover, it confronts the hegemony with its ultimate fear: the breakdown and reconstruction of the sites of memory, a process that almost certainly would end with the denial of the ideological basis on which the privileges of the hegemonic minority regnant in Israel relies and the beginning of a process in which new sites of memory would be built with new data bases, ultimately resulting in changes in the hegemonic structure.

Quite true to form, Israeli academics and public figures acted in this case just as they had vis-à-vis the erasure of the memory of the North African Jews in the Holocaust. Some lined up behind the establishment and became its mouthpiece, echoing its findings, erasure, and criminalization. Others, while facing the mountains of evidence and public hearings – did not make a meaningful attempt to investigate the issue. Unlike the North African Jews part in the Holocaust, which was not delegitimized but only erased, here there were claims of “invented tales,” “old wive’s tales,” “an overdeveloped imagination,” and the like[[38]](#footnote-43). It should be noted that such terminology did not surface regarding the testimonies of North African Jews of the Holocaust because such attitudes could provide ‘ammunition’ for Holocaust deniers around the world. After all, the facts were known and clear to all; great caution was in order. The case of the kidnapped children, however, unleased an outpouring of derision from the establishment and its collaborators, including academics, journalists, and others, since these were crimes allegedly committed by the Ashkenazi Zionist establishment against immigrants from Arab countries.

Nonetheless, there are agents of environments of memory who attempt to break through the wall. For example, Tamar Kaplansky, a reporter for the *Yedioth Aharonoth* daily, who decided not to give up and instead to search out first-hand evidence of kidnappings. In her article of October 3, 2018, she interviewed Shoshana Shaham, 85, who had been in a course for child care providers at the tent camp for new immigrants at Rosh Ha-‘ayin when she “saw that toddlers of Yemenite background were taken by people ‘in Western clothes and nice cars’ and disappeared.” Despite her age, which many people used as an argument to undermine her claims (note that Yehuda Cohen took on the chairmanship of the second government commission of inquiry at age 80) Ms. Shoham goes into detail describing the events and particular instances:

*“We saw that other people came before, dressed nicely, and took a baby boy or girl. They wrapped them up, took them, and went off with them in cars. Nice cars. We understood that something unseemly was going on here. But what could we do about it? We had no authority to intervene. We were only domestic workers.*

*“I asked the nurses: Why are they taking the babies? There are parents who say they are their parents. So they said: They’re taking them to improve their situation, to give them better conditions, a chance to stay alive. OK, that convinced us.*

*“I remember that they said they died. It seems to me that the parents didn’t really believe it. There were a few incidents of crying and shouting. Of course, we didn’t get involved in that.*

*“Afterward, when rumors started to spread around the country, I began to understand what was going on. Of course, it really confused me emotionally. I said to myself: I was party to something like that while there are parents here who are crying over children who disappeared and they have no chance of finding them.”*

Imagine the testimony of a person who saw the horrors of the Holocaust, and agrees to come to Israel and be interviewed and describe in great detail what he saw with his own eyes -- How would people relate to his testimony? Would anyone mention his age? Would they marvel at the clarity of his memory? Pay attention to what Shoshana Shaham says in her interview:

*Q. But their parents were…*

*“They didn’t know about it. They were not there.”*

*Q. But their parents were alive. Did they know they had parents?*

*“Yes. I said to myself, OK, if their situation will be better… OK. Something in me agreed with that. Something rebelled, along with that, because they were taking them away from their parents….”*

*Q. Did you know they were taking them from away from their parents?*

*“Yes!”*

*Q. There was no doubt about that?*

*“There was no doubt. It was completely clear. They also said: We are transferring them to a family where they’d have a chance to stay alive. We took that at face value. They said: They’re being taken to better homes, where they’ll get better treatment and they’ll stay alive. That satisfied me. I said, great. The truth is that one of my own dreams was they they would adopt me. Because I didn’t have a family. I thought to myself: a family like that, all set up, with a car and Western clothes—let them adopt me. That’s a child’s thinking. They were cute babies. I used to hug them and kiss them. Like a girl. Cute babies.*

*Q. You saw for yourselves that they were taking them?*

*“Yes. And then the biological parents came. They lied to them. That the children had died. We witnessed it. But there was no point in saying otherwise, because that’s what the managers of the place said, that the babies had died, and they’d buried them.*

*Q.: And you [plural] knew that that wasn’t true?*

*“We knew where the children were! That they took them away in nice cars and Western clothes.”[[39]](#footnote-44)*

Shoshana Shaham’s testimony continues to reveal more and more horrible details. As a result of the renewed public exposure of families of kidnapped children and new testimony, along with the derisive and dismissive attitude of the state toward that testimony, a group of young people decided to take on the task of gathering testimonies from families, parents, and relatives about the kidnapping of Yemenite, Near East, and Balkan children. The non-profit organization they established, known as *Amram*, was set up in response to the exclusion and the unconscionable erasure of this issue from Israeli society’s sites of memory. They established an environment of memory that is continually growing, working on the issue and preserving it for the future. Amram’s website collected more than a thousand testimonies of parents, brothers, relatives, and others who challenged the establishment arrangement of kidnapping and the conspiracy of silence that surrounded it.[[40]](#footnote-45) The organization went on to create a DNA data base allowing one to test for a match between the families of the kidnapped children and men and woman who had felt throughout their lives that they didn’t belong, and created an archive of articles and information about this unfortunate affair.

The agents of this environment of memory encountered bitter opposition from agents of the sites of memory, the Israeli establishment first and foremost, along with people who represent the hegemonic point of view and present themselves as experts on the matter. This is so despite the clear statements of senior political figures regarding this issue, such as government minister Tsahi Hanegbi, who was appointed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to investigate the kidnapping of Yemenite, Near East and Balkan children:

“*There was robbery of hundreds of children, by intent. Did the establishment know or did it not now, did it organize it or did it not organize it? We may never know. Over the last weeks and months, the public in Israel has begun to understand that this is not a fantasy.*”

To this were added the words of the Minister of Social Welfare at the time, Meir Cohen:

“*This is a [cancerous] growth on the Israeli public. I’m trying to think what would happen today if a mother were to go in to deliver a baby and they told her the next day that her son or daughter had died, and when she asks for evidence of that—nothing, not a thing…. To take children away from parents?! That’s a phenomenon that implies an awful lot of racism.*”

In conclusion, I will cite what was said by former Knesset member Nava Boker, who also testified that children were kidnapped from her own family: “*I never got to know my older brother and sister, and it’s reasonable to assume that they are among the kidnapped Yemenite children… My mother never saw the body, never got a death certificate, and that sister who they said had died was never brought to burial.*”[[41]](#footnote-46) After Hanegbi’s appointment, the torch was passed to MK Nava Koren, who also claimed that children were taken from her family. Surprisingly, though, under her watch as well the whitewashing, dismissiveness, and deliberate quashing of the issue continued. Agents and collaborators of the sites of memory banded together to make it impossible to get to the bottom of the matter and find answers. It seems that the establishment is intent upon not allowing that memory to be part of the national sites of memory. The spiral of oppression and resistance continues. It is important to note that in this instance, unlike the first example, the evil logic—but logic nonetheless—of making the matter disappear and papering it over is clear. Still, it is another link in the erasure of the memory of Jews from Arab countries by the State of Israel’s Ashkenazi Jewish establishment.

***Nine Out of Four Hundred* and *Forbidden Reminiscence*s**

The last example that will be considered in examining the shaping of the “Israeli” sites of memory that exclude the memory of Jews from Arab countries is perhaps the clearest. While the first two examples are overshadowed by investigations, government assessments, and so on, the examples to follow are so clear and unconscionable that even discussing them seems banal. However, amazingly, in the State of Israel there are still disagreements about what is entirely clear. It appears that such is the power of socialization and the years-long shaping of collective memory by the sites of memory from which the Jews of Arab countries are absent. The following analysis will center on two works: the monumental photograph “Nine Out of Four Hundred: The West and the Rest” by Meir (“Miro”) Gal[[42]](#footnote-47) and the seminal book by Ella Shohat, *Forbidden Reminiscences*, subtitled in Hebrew “TowardMulticultural Thinking.” On the surface, these are two very different works: one a photograph accompanied by a brief text by the photographer, the other a collection of profound philosophical articles about identity, society, and exclusion. Nonetheless, it is marvelous to see how similar and complementary the two are.

First: Meir, Miro, Gal. In this photograph, the artist is shown holding in his hand a sheaf of nine pages of an Israeli high school history textbook. Those are the only nine of the book’s four hundred pages that deal with the history of Jews from Arab and Muslim countries. With this photo, Gal arrives early at the insight of the erasure of the history of Jewish from Arab and Muslim states from young people’s textbooks by the Israeli establishment over roughly two decades. He writes, in English, in the year 1997 from New York in the United States, where he lives and works:

*The book shown in the photograph is the official textbook of the history of the Jewish people in recent generations that was used by high school students (including myself) in the 1970’s. The nine pages I’m holding are the only pages in the book that discuss non-European Jewish history.  Hence the title: “Nine Out of Four Hundred (The West and the Rest).” My intention is to put an end to the speculative character of the argument whether or not Mizrahim have been discriminated in Israel. Today the Ministry of Education continues to erase the history of its non-European Jews despite the fact that they comprise more than half of the Israeli population. This is only one example of how the State of Israel continues to minoritize its non-European majority.[[43]](#footnote-48)*

While Gal expresses the oppression in one picture and a short text, Ella Shohat does so in two different forms. First, the choice of a name with dual meanings for her book. The Hebrew title of her book is *Zikhronot Asurim*. This can accurately be translated as“Forbidden Reminiscences,” referring to their erasure and becoming an unfit subject of discussion, but it can also be understood as “incarcerated memories,” meaning memories that are tied up, imprisoned by force in the chains of social, cultural, and establishment oversight.[[44]](#footnote-49) This is a term that is essentially parallel to the term “environments of memory”—their absence, their erasure, and the oppression that the people of the environments of memory experience make them “forbidden/incarcerated memories.”

In her book, Shohat analyzes the forced absence of the Jews of Arab and Muslim countries and their memories from Eurocentric Zionist discourse and, parallel to that, suggests new and important conceptualizations that have become more common in the intellectual academic sphere in Israel—concepts such as *discourse*, *master narrative*, and *meta-narrative*—and carries on a post-colonial theoretical discussion of the question of “the marginalization of the Jewish past in the Muslim-Arab world.” Shohat does not stop there, but continues to present the attempts to write the history of the Arab world’s Jewry by those whom she calls “the Jewish victims of Zionism.”

Gal and Shohat recognize the continued injustice of the Israeli sites of memory. They do not try to be contentious or to justify their starting point, and, unlike the first examples, here the situation is clear: the erasure of the Jews of Arab and Muslim countries from Israel’s sites of memory is an established fact. Gal and Shohat, each in his or her own way, bring to the forefront the milestones of the erasure and the attempts to overcome them. The weak efforts of the state and its institutions to grapple with such distorted phenomena as the toothless Biton Committee[[45]](#footnote-50), the establishment of a memorial day for the deportation of Jews from Arab countries and Iran, and others like them did not create the desired change. To reach this end one would require a ‘slightly’ more significant and comprehensive revolution in Israel’s Ashkenazi Zionist sites of memory. For Shohat and Gal, making the practices of erasure present is the first step toward changing and repairing the present distorted situation.

At this point I should emphasize that, in the end, Gal and Shohat found themselves outside the State of Israel. Some think that their ability to criticize the establishment and the process of memory erasure in such a sharp, clear, and painful way comes from their having moved physically from Israel to the United States, where Ella Shohat is a senior professor at New York University and Meir Gal is a professor at the School of Visual Arts in New York and widely acclaimed creative artist. Some will argue that disengaging one’s work-life interface from the State of Israel gave them the space and the ability to express their criticism of the Israeli sites of memory.

**Concluding Remarks**

This article deals with the erasure of the memory of the Jews of Arab and Muslim countries from the State of Israel’s sites of memory. Even so, the picture that emerges from the examples in the article is that no small number of environments of memory have been established in the wake of that erasure. These are communities of opposition. To paraphrase the title of Ella Shohat’s book, forbidden memories will always make their way into the world, whether as sites or as environments of memory, they will not die or disappear as part of the Israeli Eurocentric-Jewish elite had hoped they would. Those communities incline to be preserved and not to disappear.

Concomitantly, though, the paper reveals a structure that should worry any sensible person, a structure in which the creation in response of any environment of memory is met with an immediate reaction from the sites of memory and their agents in another attempt at erasure, exclusion, or oppression. In this paper, this topic has been examined using the concept of the **dialectical spiral of oppression**. The suggested analysis reveals that the sites of memory and their agents and the environments of memory and their agents maintain a ‘discourse or a relationship of war’, in Foucauldian terms. In most instances, the reason can be found in the sites of memory’s inability to accommodate the arguments of the environments of memory—arguments that, if they were to achieve legitimacy, would remove the ideological and normative basis for the existence of the sites of memory and their agents.

A second important point is that, while the discussion offered in this paper is mainly philosophical and theoretical, there are very practical deliberations taking place regarding the memories and the construction of sites of Israeli memory in the 21st century. These include various subjects: textbooks, museums (see the founders’ museums set up by the Ministry of Culture and Sport between 2016 and 2019),[[46]](#footnote-51) new historiographical writing about Jews in Arab and Muslim countries by Jewish emigres from these countries or their descendants, changes in university programs such as a program in Arab-Jewish cultural studies,[[47]](#footnote-52) schools of Arabic music,[[48]](#footnote-53) alternative news sites, commissions of inquiry whose central purpose is to find a solution to such issues as the disappearance of thousands of children, alternative archives,[[49]](#footnote-54) and more. However, as long as these new initiatives do not make it to the core of Israeli society and culture, and, in Nora’s terms, do not become an integral part of the Israeli sites of memory, they will remain environments of memory that oppose the suppression, oppression, and exclusion of the memories and culture of Jews from Arab countries. It is hard to predict whether those environments of memory will someday become an integral part of Israel sites of memory, however, their existence is significant for many.

It is also important to note that the struggle of the sites of memory and their agents against the environments of memory and their agents is preventing a change in collective status of those who are excluded. Such a change would necessarily entail a change in the collective status of the hegemony, as well as a significant change to the social structure. That is the justification for the spiral concept of the proposed model, since the hegemony has no option but to continue its oppression in order to allow the hegemonic group to preserve its place at the top of the hierarchy. This is also the reasoning underlying the following citation: “*It seems, on the basis of reading the literature and poetry of the younger generation of families from Arab countries and their diaspora, that in recent years the taboo against the discourse of erasure has been broken. Isn’t that so?*”[[50]](#footnote-55) It is only a matter of time until the sites of memory and their agents attempt to erase that environment of memory as well. The only way to interrupt the action of the *dialectical suppression spiral* is by breaking the structure of the sites of memory and establishing an alternative that arises from the environments of memory and, by dint of that change, reconstruct an alternative *hegemonic bloc*. The pattern, then, is clear: every time there is a protest by an alternative environment of memory, a response of violent “erasure” is organized, whether on the basis of cooptation or on the basis of folklorization, pathologization, and/or criminalization: commissions of inquiry, or another ‘Biton’ Committee, and more; or an oppressive and violent response such as arrests, the use of police force against a community leader, a rabbi, and his followers; or erasure from textbooks and history books.

In conclusion, while this article emphasizes various attempts by the establishment to erase the memory of Jews from Arab and Muslim countries, we should note that, as the years go by, the voices of Jews from Arab and Muslim countries are heard louder and clearer in Israeli society. While they succeeded in suppressing the memory of the North African Jews part in the Holocaust, the testimonies of those Jews earned a minor place in the Israeli sites of memory. This process is underway even now with regard to the kidnapped children of Yemenite, Near East, and Balkan origins, even as the testimonies of the family members of those kidnapped and eyewitnesses who condemned the phenomenon are excluded from the Israeli sites of memory. The deniers merit a prominent stage for their claims. In addition, in recent years a new theme of suppression of environments of memory has arisen. This criticism focuses on the activity of those environments and the “militant” language they use. The core of the argument is this: the days of struggle over memory and the image of the collective are over, and we are now one people, one memory, one entity. That marks a return to the days of the worn and discredited melting pot theory. Those at the head of that camp and its members should read, in conclusion, the word of the actor Jesse Williams:

*If you have a critique for the resistance, for our resistance, then you better have an established record of critique of our oppression. If you have no interest, if you have no interest in equal rights for black people then do not make suggestions to those who do. Sit down.*[[51]](#footnote-56)

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2. This terminology follows Nora 1989. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
3. See the concept of *Aḥusalim* in Kimmerling 2001. “*Aḥusal*” is an acronym formed from the Hebrew words for Ashkenaziness (*ashkenaziyut*), secularism (*ḥiloniyut*), socialism (*sotsi’alizm*) and nationalism (*le’umiut*). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
4. Arendt 2000. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
5. Olick 1999. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
6. Halbwachs 1980. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
7. Schwartz 1991. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
8. Foucault 1980. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
9. Nora 1993, 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
10. Foucault 2003. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
11. It is surprising that, of all possible expressions, this one has been adopted by Israelis/Jews as referring to the Ashkenazi Zionist Jewish men who are the Israeli elite. Why? The origin of this expression can be found in the New Testament, in Jesus’s blessing of his disciples in the “*Sermon on the Mount”:**“You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled underfoot*” (Matthew 5:13, NRSV). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
12. See, e.g., Kimmerling 2001, Shapiro 1996. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
13. See Zeltzer-Zubida and Zubida 2012 for a full survey of the five waves of immigration to the pre-state Israel from Europe between 1881-1939. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
14. It should be pointed out that the story of the waves of *aliyah* contains a historical untruth, since the first immigrations to the land of Israel were of Jews from Arab states. The same is true of the myth of the founding of the first Hebrew city, Tel Aviv, which was established by emigrants from North Africa and Yemen in the two neighborhoods of Neve Tzedek and Kerem Ha-Temanim. But that history was erased by the Zionist Ashkenazi male hegemony and was forgotten, and only in recent years has there been a movement, primarily intellectual, attempting to revive that memory and rebel against the false commonplace. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
15. The Ethiopian Jews active journey to Israel is documented, among others, in the work of BenEzer, 2002. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
16. For an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon of a false institutional construction of immigration to Israel, see Zeltzer-Zubida and Zubida 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
17. Here it is important to note an event that became one of the foundations of that memory—the Eichmann trial. That event was broadcast live and in full on Israeli national radio. The testimony, the story of Eichmann’s capture, and the glorification of the trial as a historic event transformed the memory of the Holocaust into one of Israeli society’s cherished values to this day. According to Nora, this is one of the basic elements of the modern Israeli nation’s sites of memory. If so, it is important to note at the same time that this memory completely excluded the Jews of North Africa’s share in those atrocities. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
18. See Grodzinsky Yosef, 1998. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
19. One of the headlines in Israel premier newspapers Ynet was “After Years of Silence: Talking About the Holocaust of the North African Jews” (Farkash, 2018) [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
20. See Gramsci’s’ Definition in Sotiris, 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
21. For more on the term ‘the hegemonic block’ see Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, p.72. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
22. See the body of work of: Michel Abitbol and the novels of Yossi Sukary. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
23. Koslowski Golan, 2017: 103-104 [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
24. See: Koslowski Golan (2017, p:84). Also see: Elias 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
25. For example see: Farkash, 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
26. By the same token, one could examine the irradiation of Jewish children from Arab countries suffering from ingworm and the erasure of that event from the Israeli sites of memory — and the glorification of the racists who took part in those irradiations, such as the eugenicist Chaim Sheba and his colleagues. Thus, it is important to stress that this example is just one among many that could be discussed. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
27. See Shifris 2019; Gamliel and Shifris 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
28. See Madmoni-Gerber, 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
29. Rabbi Uzi Meshulam led a group of people who demanded from the state of Israel to open the archives and testimonies to attempt to unveil the faith of kidnapped children from Yemenite, Near East, and Balkan families. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
30. For further reference see ‘Meshulam (the movie)’ directors: Eyal Balchsan and Noam Shiesaf, 2015. Channel8 Production, Israel. <https://www.hamichlol.org.il/%D7%9E%D7%A9%D7%95%D7%9C%D7%9D_(%D7%A1%D7%A8%D7%98)> [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
31. See the **Bahlul-Minkowski Committee report, 1967. available at: https://www.archives.gov.il/archives/#/Archive/0b07170684ee7d96/File/0b07170680a19a9f**  [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
32. See the **Shalgi Committee report, 1994. available at:** [https://www.archives.gov.il/archives/#/Archive/0b071706800251ff/File/0b071706808d6167](https://www.archives.gov.il/archives/" \l "/Archive/0b071706800251ff/File/0b071706808d6167) [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
33. A critical analysis of what was produced by the commissions can be seen in Sangero 2001. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
34. Shifris 2019, 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
35. Arendt 2000. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
36. Foucault 2003. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
37. For more about this treatment and its ethnic and racial aspects see: Davidovitch and Margalit, 2008. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
38. For a compilation of these arguments please refer to the TV show Ha’Makor – season 17, episode 8 “the kidnapping of Yemenite children” <https://13tv.co.il/item/news/hamakor/season-17/episodes/ep07-1977243/>; in the Blog of Avshalom Ben Zvi: <https://observpost.wordpress.com/>; and in the words of Avshalom Ben Zvi: <https://www.wikiwand.com/he/%D7%A9%D7%99%D7%97%D7%94:%D7%A4%D7%A8%D7%A9%D7%AA_%D7%99%D7%9C%D7%93%D7%99_%D7%AA%D7%99%D7%9E%D7%9F/%D7%90%D7%A8%D7%9B%D7%99%D7%95%D7%9F_1>. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
39. Kaplansky 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
40. Amram website can be found at: <https://www.edut-amram.org/en/> [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
41. From Green 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
42. Gal 1997. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
43. For the full test see: <http://meirgal.squarespace.com/nine-out-of-four-hundred-the-w/> [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
44. Shohat 2001. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
45. The Biton Committee was commissioned by the Education Minister Naftali Bennett, its main goal was to: “enrich Mizrahi culture in education system”, the committee handed the ”Biton Report” to the Education, Culture, and Sports Committee August, 2016.

    On the committee: <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Biton-Committee-begins-work-to-enrich-Mizrahi-culture-in-education-system-446687>

    On the committee report: <https://m.knesset.gov.il/EN/News/PressReleases/pages/Pr12197_pg.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
46. For an example (in Hebrew), see <https://news.walla.co.il/item/3098021>. It should be noted that these museums emerge from Zionist and “pioneering” assumptions and are not intended to change the status quo, but it has nonetheless been claimed that they represent the beginning of a change. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
47. A link to the website of the program at Ben Gurion University: <https://in.bgu.ac.il/humsos/ajc/Pages/default.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
48. A link to the website of the school in Musrara Jerusalem: [https://www.musrara.co.il/newmusic](https://www.musrara.co.il/newmusic%20) [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
49. There are a number of examples of alternative archives. Among them are these two:

    The Arch-Parchi Archive, the civil archive of social struggles: <https://www.facebook.com/%D7%90%D7%A8%D7%9B%D7%99-%D7%A4%D7%A8%D7%97%D7%99-%D7%94%D7%90%D7%A8%D7%9B%D7%99%D7%95%D7%9F-%D7%94%D7%90%D7%96%D7%A8%D7%97%D7%99-%D7%9C%D7%9E%D7%90%D7%91%D7%A7%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%97%D7%91%D7%A8%D7%AA%D7%99%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%91%D7%99%D7%A9%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%9C-1138677502982593/>

    The Mizrahi information data base:

    <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1530080693896250/> [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
50. This quotation is taken from an email communication dealing with the erasure of the memory of Jews from the Arab world in the State of Israel, received on September 28, 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
51. Williams 2016. <https://time.com/4383516/jesse-williams-bet-speech-transcript/> [↑](#footnote-ref-56)