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## Democratic Values and Education for Democracy in the State of Israel

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# Democratic Values and Education for Democracy in the State of Israel

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Throughout the existence of the State of Israel, democracy has been perceived by both leaders and citizens as one of the fundamental values making up the moral foundation for the state's existence. Yet, repeated infringements against essential democratic values and foundations have made evident that Israeli democracy faces a momentous test. In addition, various studies of public attitudes toward democracy have found that in many cases, the basis of support for democracy in general, as well as for the fundamental values of democracy, are not at all stable.

The central argument of this article is that in examining attitudes of early leaders of the state toward democracy, we can identify the roots of the same problems and deficiencies evident in the culture of Israeli democracy today. Furthermore, in our view the attitudes of the state's founders, as well as the attitudes and conduct of the leaders after them, have substantially contributed to the lack of consistent emphasis on education for democracy by the Israeli education system. Consequently, over the years a significant gap has developed between Israelis' perceptions of their country as a democratic state and the actual un-democratic conduct of the state and its citizens.

In light of the above, the first part of this article reviews the state of education for democracy in Israel over the years, emphasizing the attitudes of leaders and decision-makers in these areas in different periods. The second part presents a review of the problems and deficiencies with which Israeli democracy struggles today. Following this is an examination of public attitudes toward democracy and democratic values, emphasizing the attitudes of Israeli youth in these areas. In conclusion, we find a relationship between the general long-term failure of education for democracy and the condition of Israeli democracy today. Likewise, we offer a number of suggestions and ideas for correction and improvement in this area of education for democracy in the State of Israel.

## INTRODUCTION

*"Democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried." (Winston Churchill)*

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Although at the declarative level most leaders of the *yishuv* (the pre-state Jewish community in Palestine) supported the establishment of democracy in the state that was to come, already in the 1920s, when the perception of democracy stood at odds with the stated aims regarding matters of the day, labor Zionist leader Berl Katzenelson said that “beyond the procedures of formal democracy, there are aims, goals, and values that, in order to be achieved, permit it to be comprised” (Shapira, 1977, p. 94). This statement also does well to describe the view of David Ben-Gurion in the democratic context. Some have described Israel’s first prime minister as “far removed in his basic views, and even more so in his political life and manner, from the mould of liberal democracy” (Negbi, 1978, p. 21). When Ben-Gurion was asked to define the objectives of education in the state to come, he emphasized the need for Hebrew education, for education to build the country, and education for an independent Jewish nation (Diary of Ben-Gurion, 14.9.1943). At another opportunity, Ben-Gurion said that “democratic statements need not stand in the way of what needs to be done” (Gorni, 1973, p. 179). To our estimation, the words of Ben-Gurion accurately reflect the meager importance attributed by many of the state’s leaders—from the years of its founding up through today—to the subject of democracy in general and of education for democracy<sup>1</sup> in particular. This is the state in spite of the fact that publicly the state’s leaders express commitment to democracy.

At the core of the present article is the assumption that there is an appreciable connection between the problems Israeli democracy copes with today, and the perceptions of state leaders over the years that democracy—and primarily education for democracy—is not of major importance. It is important to note that our intention is not to establish the causality that derives from this stated connection, but rather to offer another manner of thinking about the state of democratic education in Israel and its ramifications for democracy in Israel. This approach is based on literature and research carried out in different parts of the world that point to a connection between democratic education and the character and stature of democracy in particular societies (Dawson & Prewitt, 1969; Dewey, 1916; Greenstein, 1965; Ichilov, 1990). Accordingly, we will begin by chronicling the historical development of democratic education in Israel, followed by an assessment of the practical ramifications of the difficulty in incorporating democratic education for Israeli society and its democracy.<sup>2</sup>

When the State of Israel was founded, it was declared that besides being a Jewish state, it would also be a democratic state. Its Declaration of Independence states that Israel “will be based on the precepts of liberty, justice and peace taught by the Hebrew Prophets; [and] will uphold the full social and political equality of all its citizens.” Yet, the struggle over the character of Israeli democracy has continued since the signing of this declaration to

today. Decades after the founding of the State of Israel, there is still open public discussion on the essence of Israeli democracy, on the crucial importance of democracy to the State of Israel, and on non-democratic alternatives that may be more desirable, or less so, for Jewish society, such as a *Halachic* state (see for example: Gavison, 2000; Kasher, 2000; Liebman & Don-Yehiya, 1983; Ravitzky, 2004; Stern, 2004; Tessler, 2003). In addition to these anti-democratic ideas, which receive broad expression in the public discourse, throughout the history of the State of Israel we have witnessed deliberate actions taken by state institutions that are fundamentally anti-democratic, such as institutionalized discrimination against Arab citizens of Israel (Smootha, 1996), overly stringent government inspection of media channels (Caspi, 2005; Pedahzur, 2002), and even official transgression of the law, expressed by deliberately assisting or turning a blind eye to the illegal actions of raising outposts and settlements without permission (Eldar & Zertal, 2004; Sasson Report, 2005).

Before entering the heart of the discussion on the educational roots of the character of democratic rule in Israel, it is fitting that we define the lens through which we intend to assess Israeli democracy; or, in other words, to set out the definition of democracy that will be used as a starting point for our work.<sup>3</sup> First, similar to Peled and Navot (2005), we view democracy as something that entails normative values and not merely as a descriptive category. Moreover, we choose to assess Israeli democracy from the broadest possible democratic perspective, which sees liberalism and democracy as worldviews that must carry out an ongoing mutual relationship between them.<sup>4</sup> Adopting this assumption, we use as our basis Zakaria's (1997) normative conception, which argues that if essential-liberal principles are disconnected from democracy, then forms of government such as liberal autocracy will become preferable to that same democracy. Therefore our analysis of Israeli democracy and education for democracy in Israel will be carried out from the perspective of liberal democracy.

From this preliminary assumption, it is interesting to note that despite the understanding and the perceptions that the State of Israel is necessarily a democracy, most of the state's founding fathers, including David Ben-Gurion, did not see constructing a liberal democracy or dispensing democratic values to members of the society as a national task having high priority (Neuberger, 2004). Instead, they advanced other aims that they saw to be more important, such as assembling a new, unified people who would be disengaged from Diaspora culture and experiences, or coping with a hostile environment that did not accept the rebirth of the Jewish people in their ancient homeland (Ichilov, 1993, 1996; Elboim-Dror, 1999; Horowitz & Lissak, 1990). In practice, while the political leaders saw some importance in the procedural arrangements of democracy and even in the rights of the individual, these were morally subordinate to the collective

Zionist task and the situation of confrontation with the Arabs<sup>5</sup> (Peled, 1993).

It can be assumed that this set of priorities primarily derived from the perception of the heads of state that democracy was a pragmatic need—it served the aim to reach agreement between the different Jewish factions on the basic procedural rules in the “state to come” (Peres & Yuchtman-Yaar, 1998). The outcome of perceiving democracy in this way is a democracy without “roots” and minimal investment by the state in the development of a meaningful liberal-democratic culture (Ezrahi, 2003). To a large extent it can be claimed that the lack of willingness by the Israeli government to establish a formal constitution in the early years of the state, in contradiction to the wording of the Declaration of Independence, expressed more than anything else the “pragmatic” view of the leadership toward democracy (Gavison, 1998; Negbi, 1987). In retrospect, this position inflicted serious damage to important democratic strata, such as equality between individuals and groups or human and civil rights.<sup>6</sup>

In our estimation, the founding fathers of the state did not internalize in a deep way the fact that by not establishing rules and primary values and norms for democratic behavior, it would be impossible to ingather the exiles of Jewish groups having disparate traditions, customs, values, aims, and norms in a way that would materialize the vision of a unified national melting pot. An enormous effort is required in order for a society, in which most members lack the practice or knowledge about democracy that would enable them to function conversantly in a democratic regime, and in which schisms and disagreements exist regarding even the most basic goals, to operate in accordance with democratic values and rules. That is because among the ingathered exiles who took part in founding the state, only very few groups had democratic roots and cultures, but others were accustomed to an entirely different political culture (Eisenstadt, 2002; Neuberger, 2002). It has already been said, more than once, that democracy is primarily a political-social framework best for creating a shared life in a society that includes groups having disparate interests (Dahl, 1998; Kimmerling, 2004). The democratic idea regarding agreement between those who share sundry and opposing needs, desires, interests, values, and aims, requires the construction of a society where debate, disagreement, and conflict can be managed in accordance with democratic rules that are agreed upon and institutionalized (Eisenstadt, 2002; Holden, 1974; Keane, 1988; Kymlicka & Norman, 2000; Neuberger & Kaufman, 1998; Peres & Yaar-Yuchtman, 1998; Seligman, 1992).

When the State of Israel was founded, its leaders often extolled it as a democracy and took pride before the world on its being the only democracy in the Middle East (Peres & Yuchtman-Yaar, 1998). In addition, they continually reminded citizens that the state was a democracy and there-

from derived a large part of its might. In practice, the reality was somewhat different. Although democratic institutions were functioning, although there were free elections, and although there was a relative degree of freedom of assembly for the Jewish public, in practice some democratic values—equality, pluralism, absence of discrimination against the minority, freedom of expression, and tolerance—did not come to expression in the government of the State of Israel (Neuberger, 1997; Pedahzur, 2004; Smootha, 2000). A large gap developed between, on the one hand, the message of leaders that Israel was a democratic state and the belief of a large section of the citizenry that they were living under democratic rule, and the reality that the state functioned according to values that were not necessarily democratic (Ezrahi, 2003). In effect, because of this gap among leaders as well as among most of the public, it was unclear to both sides as to how a liberal democracy should operate, or alternatively, what about it must be changed or improved in order to make it such. To a great extent, it can be said that precisely in such a situation, in which a young democracy struggles to surmount significant difficulties, the role of democratic education is likely to be central in facilitating the adequate democratic functioning of the society. Accordingly, a short assessment of the development of democratic education in the State of Israel over the years may contribute to understanding the present situation.

## DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION IN THE STATE OF ISRAEL

### The Early Years of the State

At the core of the discussion on democratic education in Israel is the ongoing debate, since the founding of the state, over the relationship between the national and universal foundations of civic education (Ichilov, 1996). According to Ichilov “one of the goals of national rebirth was perceived as the annulment of this dichotomy, which would allow for the education of a Jewish person and a human being as one entity” (p. 38). However, the struggle of the independent Jewish state for survival enabled leaders to adhere to the traditional position that as long as the Zionist goal was not fully achieved, Zionist education would be secured a primary and fundamental priority in the State of Israel (Adar, 1953).

It appears that because the founding fathers of the state paid more in lip-service than in actual deeds to building a strong, functioning liberal democracy in the early years of the state (Barzilai, 1996; Diamond, 1993; Gal-Nur, 1985; Horowitz & Lissak, 1990; Kimmerling, 1989; Shafir & Peleg, 2002; Sprinzak & Diamond, 1993; Yaniv, 1993), they did not invest great educational effort in the first decades of the existence of the state to instill democratic values in to the younger generation (Elboim-Dror, 1999; Ichilov, 1993; Pedahzur,

2002). Although the national education law of 1953 makes (indirect) mention of the democratic aim,<sup>7</sup> in practice, the education system emphasized the inculcation of other values—primarily Zionist education, patriotic education, education for “*halutziut*” (values and practices of the Jewish pioneers), and Jewish education (Aden, 1976; Carmon, 1985; Dror, 1999; Hoffman & Schnell, 2002; Mathias, 2003; Rottblit, 1973). In accordance with the worldview of the founding fathers, as described above, democratic values received negligible attention and appeared after nationalistic emphases. A clear expression of the approach to citizenship education in the education system can be found in the words of the Minister of Education, Prof. Ben Zion Dinur, who wrote in 1952:

The political circumstances require us to be especially concerned with the civic education of pupils ... The child, the future citizen, must be reared toward complete spiritual identification with the state toward loyalty to her, concern for her security, wellbeing, and prosperity. To rear him so that he will see himself as the subject of the state, *since indeed the idea of democracy means that every citizen should and even must say, ‘The state, it is I,’ and uphold this responsibility daily.* (Dinur, 1991, p. 40; emphasis added)

Later, he wrote:

The second starting point for our discussion is, as stated: Our position as a nation, as a state, as a society. The significance of this is: Concern for the education of the younger generation as state-citizens, as members of the Jewish people, and as a person in Israeli society. As a state-citizen we must educate him to carry civic responsibility and to fulfill the citizen’s obligations fully and faithfully; as a member of the Jewish people, the school must educate him as to the task of his generation, to the same task put in our time to the Jewish nation and to each and every one of us; and as a human being of Israel, we must educate him to be worthy of the name of Israel and worthy and capable of being among the inheritors of the spiritual legacy of Israel, that he may be a son of Israeli society, who carries on the social-cultural and spiritual-moral legacy of Israel, and that he will be among the bearers of this legacy and its perpetuation. (p. 41)

These words, heard from the mouth of one who was appointed over civic and democratic education in Israel in the days of the founding of the state, reflect a very narrow view of democracy by the Ministry of Education; they also certainly match the republican perspective of civic education (Peled, 1993) as stated above. Civic education was limited to particularistic education, without regard for the universal heritage of values such as freedom, equality, criticism, tolerance, pluralism, or the sanctity of law. In an extensive study of education for values in Israeli schools, Adler and Adar (1965) found that the Israeli education system during its first two decades primarily emphasized education for nationalism and almost completely neglected education for liberal values. According to Ichilov (1993), this situation persisted for several decades. Ichilov

also notes that although the need to educate for democracy was noted in a number of the Ministry of Education documents, its standing was entirely limited until the 1980s.

## From the 1980s to the Present

Only toward the mid-1980s—when the public was shocked by the election of ultra-nationalist Rabbi Meir Kahane to the Knesset and when the Ministry of Education was alarmed to discover that about 30% of students in grades 9–12 supported his extremist ideas and 7% would vote for him in Knesset elections (Zemach & Tsin, 1984; Zidkiyahu, 1987)—did a number of initiatives arise to strengthen democratic education. Furthermore, the very definition of democratic education as such was accorded only during this period, when in practice, racism was institutionalized in the public and political discourse in of Israel (Mula, 2002).

Although these initiatives had already been raised at the end of Minister of Education Zevulun Hammer's term, only during the term of Minister Itzhak Navon was there a direct effort, made in a broad and methodical scope, to strengthen democracy in the education system. A memorandum of the Director-General dated September 1984 stated: "The education system is to be called into comprehensive, deep, and persistent action in order to fortify democracy in education." In 1984 it was comprehensively decided to implement education for Jewish-Arab co-existence (Hochman, 1986). A memorandum of the Director-General in 1985 unequivocally subordinated national-particularistic values to universal democratic values. In 1986 the Coexistence and Democracy unit was established in the Ministry of Education. The years 1986–87 were declared as the years of education for democracy and in this way, in practice, the emphasis moved from "civic education," which was shaped in the *yishuv* period, to "democratic education" (Ichilov, 1993). However, the return of Zevulun Hammer to the Ministry of Education in 1990 brought a decrease in the level of educational activity in the area of democracy and an attempt to create a renewed balance between democratic education and Zionist education, which would place a certain degree of emphasis on the latter. Prof. Amnon Rubinstein's entrance as Minister of Education in 1993, which occurred alongside a certain change in Israeli public opinion with the election of Itzhak Rabin, did not bring about a major revolution in activity, but it did plant the seed of a broad and comprehensive rationale to implement an arrangement for democratic education in the State of Israel in the form of an interim report by the Kremnitzer Commission, published as the handbook "Being Citizens" in February 1996.

The report revealed fundamental flaws in the civic functioning of Israeli society and recommended assigning to the education system the "most important task of prioritizing education for citizenship at all levels: The level of



policy, the level of planning, the level of execution, and the level of resource allocation” (Being Citizens, 1996, p. 11). Following this, it stated:

All students in the education system must be provided education for citizenship. Such education is a necessary condition for life in a democracy. To succeed in this task, education for citizenship must be expressed as an ongoing process, spanning all years of schooling, to be carried out comprehensively and in coordination with all learning subjects; this [should be done] in addition to the development of a civic climate in the schools. (p. 11)

A number of months after the interim report of the Kremnitzer Commission was submitted, Prime Minister Itzhak Rabin was assassinated. Presumably, the assassination of the Prime Minister could have led to a critical mass that would bring the political and administrative echelons of the Ministry of Education to try to shape a systematic change in all civics studies. However, during his term Prof. Amnon Rubinstein did not succeed in carrying out the educational overhaul recommended by the Kremnitzer Report. Only a few actions having a small scope were taken, and even these were hampered by the re-entry of Zevulun Hammer to the position of Minister of Education for the third time in 1996, following the victory of Binyamin Netanyahu in the elections. On his list of priorities, and on that of the next Minister, Itzhak Levy, democratic education was accorded a low level of importance. This period, again, strengthens the sense of a general view held by a large number of the Education Ministers in Israel—on both sides of the political map—of a “zero-sum game,” in which, in their conception, any addition of democratic education would come at the expense of Jewish or Zionist education.<sup>8</sup>

It is difficult to broaden the discussion in relation to Yossi Sarid’s term as Minister of Education, since his term was short (1999–2000) and thus did not allow for revolutionary changes in the area of democratic education. Although Minister Limor Livnat makes mention of a “Jewish and democratic” state, there is no doubt that the primary emphasis during her term has been on Jewish and Zionist identity. At most, education for democracy makes up only a small fraction of the educational material prescribed during her period (see Ichilov, Salomon, & Inbar, 2005). The stature of the basis of education for democracy can be discerned by reading the three-year program for the education system prepared under Ministry of Education Director-General Ronit Tirosh, which does not deal deeply with this important civic challenge (Tirosh, 2001). Another conspicuous expression of the lack of emphasis given by Minister Livnat to democratic education can be found in the study guide “100 Basic Concepts” (Rippel & Levin, 2003), which was distributed by the Ministry of Education to all Israeli residents and which is studied today in Israeli junior high schools. The chapter on democracy in this study guide is relatively limited and slim compared to the chapters on Jewish and Zionist

heritage, and some might dub it “the fig leaf intended to justify the project to secular people” (Kenegisser, 2003, p. 3).

A review of pedagogical activity reveals that an elementary school curriculum on the topic of homeland and society, which also deals with the topics of citizenship and democracy, was recently published. Likewise, standards for the culture and climate of schools have been set out, with the intention of providing the types of experiences that will encourage democratic participation. Additional democratic developments are expressed in the growing number of “democratic schools” in Israel, and in the Students’ Rights Law legislated in December 2000 and implemented in the school system in recent years. This comes in addition to civic education programs that have existed in the elementary schools for many years, and which are not mandatory. Thus, there can be no precise estimate of how many schools use the book “Journey to Israeli Democracy” (apparently 30–50%). A recent study conducted by Ricky Tessler found that only 8% of students in the education system study citizenship at any given time during a particular school year. This can be compared to the 60–80% who study the Old Testament or history (Khromchenko, 2004). Recently, the Dovrat Report was published, which suggested deep, comprehensive changes to various strata of the education system. However, a comprehensive review of the report reveals that it does not view democratic education as a central problem in the Israeli education system, and thus, except for a few declarative sections, does not provide practical recommendations for strengthening democratic education in Israel<sup>9</sup> (Dovrat Report: National Task Force for the Advancement of Education in Israel, 2005).

To summarize, the following can be learned from this brief survey:

1. Democratic education has not been a high priority for most ministers of education in the State of Israel.
2. Actions have been infrequent, except during the term of Minister Itzhak Navon, despite the good intentions of a number of other ministers.
3. Democratic education in the State of Israel is largely dependent on the ideological views of the government and of the education ministers, which also express changes in public views and public opinion. Education ministers, on their part, oftentimes view the relationship between democratic education and Zionist or Jewish education as a “zero-sum game.”
4. The Kremnitzer Report makes a most serious recommendation to overhaul the field of civic education.

It should be emphasized that no education minister has shelved the report by the Kremnitzer Commission, and its revolutionary spirit still lingers in the system. However, compared to the recommendations that appear in the

report, actions in practice have been solely symbolic. To a great extent, it seems that shelving the report might be construed as a political, anti-democratic act, whereas its full implementation is not in line with the aspirations of most education ministers who have served since its publication. Therefore, the report, as a mirror reflecting the general state of civic and democratic education since Israel's founding, is viewed in terms of values and by the public as a laudable goal, but most of the time, in practice, it has not been positioned at the top of the list of educational priorities (see also Ichilov, 1993; Pedahzur & Perliger, 2004).

### **Israeli Democracy**

We should preface by stating that despite a certain degree of criticism toward democratic education in Israel, which was presented in the previous section of the article, the fact that a democratic government was founded and exists in this geographical part of the world, under ongoing threat, is in no way at all a matter to be minimized. Additionally, in comparing the situation today to those of the 1950s and '60s, it is possible to point to a number of not-insignificant processes of democratization in Israeli society. Moreover, from a broad view it can be stated that, despite the difficulties, over many years Israeli democracy has come to be situated in a rather reasonable position relative to other Western democracies with respect to different measures; these measures primarily represent the formal aspects of democracy, such as political participation, representation, and limitations on executive authority (Arian et al., 2003; Arian et al., 2004). In addition, in examining changes over time, researchers have pointed to a positive ongoing process that began in the early 1970s by which different public sectors and groups that were excluded from public discourse have entered into the decision-making system of the state (Eisenstadt, 2002; Peled, 2001). Naturally, this change, which reflects a gradual process of democratization, also accompanies the increased sociological ("passive") representation of most groups in the framework of the political system in Israel (Brichta, 2001). Additionally, the passing of the three Basic Laws in 1992, and especially the two laws dealing with human and civil rights, should be viewed as an important and significant step forward for Israeli democracy toward a formal and sustainable constitution, despite the debate over the significance of these laws in terms of the legal system in Israel<sup>10</sup> (Barak, 2004A; Gavison, 1998). Besides this important step, a positive democratic trend can also be pointed to with respect to the extent of freedom of information and media openness (Caspi & Limor, 2002). Finally, it should also be remembered that Israeli civil society continues to undergo a process of change, reflected in the transition from a collectivistic, "conscripted" society to a society defined by Yael Yishai as "immeasurably more vital, dynamic, vibrant and diverse than in the past" (Yishai, 2003, p. 225).

However, precisely from the recognition of the positive changes that democratic society has undergone in Israel, we have chosen in this article to emphasize the “empty half” of the glass, which relates primarily to the liberal functioning of the society. Our choice to focus on this aspect of democracy in Israel derives from the concern and the desire to awaken public and academic discussion in the area of education for democracy in Israel. To our estimation, the problems we have set out in terms of education for democracy in Israel are likely to have an effect, in practice, primarily on these essential layers, in which to a considerable degree democracy is lacking. Thus, in order to broaden the perspective and clarify the general situation of Israeli democracy, we will note a number of conspicuous faults that are related to its fundamental essential-cultural aspects:

### *Institutional Discrimination against Arab Citizens of Israel*

One of the most significant problems in the attempt to conduct a true, egalitarian democracy in Israel is the fact that systematic and institutional discrimination against the Arab minority has existed in Israel since the founding of the state (Al-Haj & Rosenfeld, 1990; Ghanem, 1997; Lustick, 1980; Semyonov, 1988; Smootha, 1999; Yiftachel & Meir, 1998). According to some researchers, this discrimination has created, in reality, an ethnic democracy<sup>11</sup> and not a liberal democracy—a reality in which structural preference is accorded to the dominant Jewish majority (Smootha, 1990; 2002). Undoubtedly, this established state policy also bore considerable influence on the opinions of citizens toward Arab citizens of the state (Smootha, 2000). Updated surveys found that about 62% of the Jewish public opposed equal political rights for the Arab population (Arian, Ben-Nun, & Barnea, 2004). Other polls (Pedahzur & Canetti-Nissim, 2004) found that about 60% of Jews supported the statement that the government should encourage the Palestinian citizens of Israel to emigrate outside the borders of the state.<sup>12</sup>

### *Lack of Respect for the Law by Both Citizens and Authorities*

Another problem that the Israeli democracy has difficulty coping with is ongoing disregard for the rule of law by institutions, citizens, and authorities (Negbi, 1987, 2004; Zamir, 2001). A problematic evidence of the situation is described by jurist Moshe Negbi, who describes the process being undergone by Israeli political culture in recent years as “a slope leading from a government of laws to a banana republic” (Negbi, 2004, p. 28). A comparative look at other countries reveals a steady deterioration in the level of corruption in Israel, where in the last year Israel has fallen from 21st to 26th place in the “World Corruption Ranking”.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, disregard and lack of compliance with the spirit and letter of the law are evident in numerous actions by various public authorities (e.g. a “knowing wink” towards an illegal settlement activity.

See: Eldar & Zertal, 2004; Sasson Report, 2005). At the individual level, police reports from 2002 and 2003 point to a steady increase in the number of cases for heavy and organized crime (Police Report: Crime in Israel, 2002, 2003). Furthermore, a study that was recently carried out determined that Israel ranks 6th among developed countries around the globe in terms of the scope of its black market (Laks, 2003).

Accordingly, it can be said that one of the central problems is that breaking the law, and disregard for the rules of ethics and morality, are perceived as less and less as significant problems among the Israeli public (Anoch, 2003). It seems that public corruption and lack of respect for the law by citizens has an enormous impact on the society and the democratic regime. As Justice Zamir stated, "Because of the disregard for public ethics, a moral society of quality and of power may change into a society of corruption, and the path can be short and quick" (Zamir, 1989).

#### *Substandard Political Culture in Political Parties*

The problematic political culture that developed over the past decades among a large number of the parties in Israel also signifies the poor state of basic democratic values. It can be said that the intra-party election process of Knesset members is sometimes tainted today by a degree of corruption, maintains overly-close connections between the government and capital, and even in certain cases between the government and crime (Negbi, 2004). Second, the phenomenon of political appointments,<sup>14</sup> which has existed in Israel since the beginning of the state (Horowitz & Lissak, 1977), has re-grown in recent years and has even come to attain more than a bit of public legitimacy (Ben-Porat, 2003). Third, it appears that one might point in recent years to the penetration of criminal groups into party centers, a fact that grants them influence on the elections of public leaders in the State of Israel (Negbi, 2004).

#### *Strong and Influential Anti-Democratic Groups*

Another deficiency with which the Israeli democracy must cope is the growing political power and influence of anti-democratic groups (Sprinzak, 1991). Since the founding of the state the vast majority of anti-democratic forces have been connected with the Haredi camp or with the extreme right (Pedahzur, 2004). The Haredi parties reject democracy both as a value and as a method, and work to shape alternative lifestyles based on the Torah and on *Halacha* in the state (Neuberger, 1998; Tessler, 2003).

The second non-democratic stream is the one that established a "Greater Israel" as its first priority, and views the entirety of the land as a more significant value than democratic values (Pedahzur, 2003). According to this view, rulings pertaining to the land of Israel, like other rulings, are principally subordinate to the Rabbinic authority and not to the accepted rules of democracy

(Eldar & Zertal, 2004). Over these years and until today, the “Kach” movement and its followers are the most striking and significant anti-democratic expressions on the extreme right of the Israeli political system (Sprinzak, 1991, 1999).

### *Violations of Human Rights in Israel*

Ongoing violations of human rights in a number of central spheres also cast a shadow on the basis of democracy in Israel. Aharon Barak asserts that “a democracy without human rights is not a ‘bad democracy,’ it simply is not a democracy” (Barak, 2004B, p. 10). In Israel, three primary loci can be pointed to as infringing upon human rights. The first is the ongoing violations of the rights of Palestinians living beyond the 1967 borders, who live under Israeli rule (Smootha, 2002A; Neuberger, 2004). The second one includes basic infringements of the human rights of foreign workers in Israel (Kemp & Rajiman, 2003). The third locus of human rights violations derives from the exceptionally close relationship between religion and state in Israel (Ben-Aharon, 2000; Yiftachel, 2002). From a comparative view, the three loci that we have surveyed place Israel in a relatively inferior position (ranging in rank from 18th to 25th) in comparison with other Western democracies on measures of various human rights<sup>15</sup> (Arian et al., 2003).

### *Close Relationships between the Military and the Government and the Sizable Influence of the Military on the Government*

Another problem related to the ongoing conflict in which Israel is mired is the influence of the military in determining policy, decision-making, and the execution of actions (Al-Hajj & Ben-Eliezer, 2003; Ben-Meir, 1995; Bar-Tal, Jacobson & Klieman, 1998; Michael, 2005; Peri, 2002). A consequence of this influence is the almost complete faith that large segments of the public have in security institutions (National Security Studies Center, 2005). Compared to other democratic states, in Israel the army influences a broad range of decisions, starting with the policies of peace and war and up through policies dealing with the allocation of resources and with infrastructure (Peri, 2005). Comparative studies of the political and democratic echelons have shown that Israel ranks 36th and last on the measure of military involvement in political and social affairs (Arian et al., 2003). Clearly, the qualification should be added that the objective situation of Israel is significantly different from the situations of most democratic states to which it is compared on this measure, since the vast majority of other countries are not engaged in a situation of intractable, or at times existential, conflict. However, some of the researchers maintain that this ranking may also have a determining effect on the ability to carry out basic democratic processes such as criticism of the military branch by

the political branch, or inquiry into military operations or 'mishaps' by those who are not in uniform (Heichal, 1998; Tzur, 2000).

### *Deep Socioeconomic Gaps between the Rich and the Poor*

The persistent absence of socioeconomic equality and justice in the State of Israel also presents a significant problem to the existence of democracy, for which the value of equality serves as one of its central tiers (Golan-Agnon, 2004; Smootha, 1993; Swirsky, 1995). Over the past 20 years, gaps between the poor and the rich have continued to grow in Israel, where income inequality is rising and social disparities have grown to the extent that Israel is now ranked second in the Western world (after the U.S.) in terms of growing gaps between the rich and the poor (Mark, 2000; Pearl, 2003).

The widening gap between the rich and the poor during the 1990s also coincided with the significant narrowing of the middle class in Israel. According to a report by the Adva Center, the middle class has dwindled at a rate of 15–19% over the past decade. The authors of the report, Swirsky and Connor-Atias, claim that “the middle class has been perceived since the days of Aristotle as the pillar of democratic government” (2004, p. 1; see also Lipset, 1981; Sundhaussen, 1991). Under these conditions, the willingness of the middle class (or “refugees” of this class) to continue bearing the social-democratic burden is placed in doubt, and this may endanger the stability of democratic government (Eisenstadt, 1999; Mark, 2000; Moore, 1966).

### *Ongoing Breaches of Freedom of the Press and the Public's Right to Know*

Another significant problem in the emerging Israeli democratic framework is the insufficient reinforcement of the norms of the public's right to know and freedom of the press (Caspi, 2005; Caspi & Limor, 1992; Dor, 2000; Keren, 2000; Lahav, 1993; Sharvit & Bar-Tal, 2004). In Israeli law freedom of expression is a “supreme right,” and it is considered by judicial law as the *sine qua non* of democracy (Segal, 1996). However, from a broad comparative practice, Israel is ranked 28th out of 36 democratic countries on the measure of freedom of the press (Arian et al., 2003).

Media acquiescence to the proscriptions of the security establishment over the years has oftentimes been based on the assumption that safeguarding security requires cooperation between the political-security establishment and the media (Caspi & Limor, 1992; Nusak & Limor, 1994; Peri, 1998). The outcome of this approach is that in the name of collectivism and security, the public's basic rights to receive information about what is happening around it are often infringed (Segal, 2000).

In sum, it can be said of the problems presented in the above review of democracy in Israel that while each of these issues are serious problems in

and of themselves, their confluence in a single society may be even more problematic. However, as we noted, Israeli democracy has undergone a number of measurable positive developments over recent years. Likewise, it should be noted that the Israeli democracy is a young, even very young, democracy that is being shaped over the course of its lifespan in the face of major significant challenges, and has been relatively successful in coping with such challenges (Eisenstadt, 1999). The choice to present the “empty half” of the glass derives from the desire to shed light on the desperate need for structured democratic education in the face of numerous deficiencies that are continuing to develop in Israeli democracy over the years. It seems that the combined influence of the lack of democratic education and the deficiencies we noted on Israeli democratic culture, also receives significant expression in Israeli public opinion, as will now be presented.

## PUBLIC OPINION REGARDING DEMOCRACY IN ISRAELI SOCIETY

### Attitudes of Adults toward Democracy

As mentioned in the previous section, according to comprehensive studies by the Israel Democracy Institute from 2003 (Arian et al., 2003) and 2004 (Arian et al., 2003), Israeli democracy more or less follows the formal and institutionalized “rules of the game” of democracy, such as elections, transfer of power, and the existence of democratic institutions. However, in democratic culture, the existence of basic values and adherence to the spirit of the democracy are egregiously substandard<sup>16</sup> (human and civil rights, respect for the law, equality, and preserving basic freedoms).

Furthermore, a more meticulous review of attitudes of the Jewish public today regarding democracy reveals a number of important findings (see Arian et al., 2003): First, 16% of respondents think that democracy is undesirable or completely undesirable. Second, 22% do not think that democracy is the best form of government. In addition, it was found that 56% agree that strong leaders can benefit the state more than “all the debates and laws,” 50% prioritize security interests over the rule of law, 23% think that there is too much democracy in Israel, and 53% of Jewish respondents oppose full equal rights between Jews and Arabs. Even further, in terms of attitudes over time, support for the democratic system in Israel is now at a 20-year low (in the past it reached as high as 90%).

This emerging picture is even gloomier by international comparison. Surveys conducted over 1999–2001 in 32 countries on the subject of support for democracy rank Israel in last place, next to Poland and after Chile, South Korea, Estonia, Bulgaria, Argentina, and others. In addition, a survey conducted in 2003 revealed that when respondents were given the choice, only 43% of Jews in Israel preferred democracy, as opposed to 23% who preferred



*Halacha* and 34% who said “sometimes one and sometimes the other.” In other words, only a minority unequivocally preferred democracy over the other options. It should be noted that these findings do not highlight a new phenomenon, and that they are consistent with similar findings of a series of studies that were carried out by Peres and Yaar-Yuchtman during the late 1980s and early 1990s<sup>17</sup> (Peres & Yaar-Yuchtman, 1998). A certain degree of optimism can be drawn from the 2004 data (Arian et al., 2004) demonstrating that 55% of Israelis express dissatisfaction with the level of democracy in Israel. This finding, to our estimation, is a sign of hope, since the process of improvement and change depends first on recognition of the problem.

### **Attitudes of Youth toward Democracy**

The results of comprehensive surveys conducted over several decades on the attitudes of youth toward democracy and toward democratic values, consistently show that the younger generation, like the older generation, has not sufficiently acquired or internalized the need for such values and attitudes (Arian et al., 2004; Ben-Sira, 1990, 1995; Yaar, 2004; Zemach, 1987; Zemach & Tsin, 1984). Zemach & Tsin (1984) claimed already at the beginning of the 1980s that only a third of youth could be said to exhibit democratic attitudes on most topics, while a quarter of youth consistently exhibited anti-democratic attitudes.<sup>18</sup> In the study by Ben-Sira (1990), as well, the trend was similar, as no more than 24% of youth supported a range of attitudes reflecting democracy.<sup>19</sup> A comprehensive view of the attitudes of youth regarding democratic values depicts an even more dismal picture regarding Israeli youth. A 1996 study carried out in 27 (mostly European) countries, which assessed democratic, nationalistic, and racist attitudes, found that Israeli youth ranked among the lowest on a considerable number of parameters (Neuberger, 2004).<sup>20</sup> Likewise, it found that when it came to Israeli Jewish youth, this group ranked last in terms of its attitudes toward democracy (Neuberger, 2000).

Interestingly, Ben-Sira argues that while youth understand the liberal meaning of democracy, their support for democracy falls short of their ability to understand its meaning (Ben-Sira, 1991). Another view, expressed by Ichilov (1993), claims that although the term “democracy” is generally held in positive esteem by most pupils, a closer look reveals that most pupils have a narrow grasp of citizenship, maintain a passive point of view, have little knowledge, emphasize the structural aspects of democracy over democratic values, and most of all have difficulty implementing general democratic principles to solve concrete problems in Israeli society.

In light of this, it is not surprising that on one hand, when youth are asked in these surveys to state how important democracy is to them, the vast majority claims that it is very important to them or that it is fairly important that Israel be a democratic state (71% of youth responded this way in 1990, 92.4% of youth

in 1998, and 88.4% in 2004). On the other hand, like in other studies (Barzilai, Yaar-Yuchtman, & Segal, 1994; Peres & Yaar-Yuchtman, 1989), studies of democracy among youth have also found a significant disparity between the importance that youth ascribe to democracy as an abstract value or symbol and their support for norms and more specific situations that reflect democracy (Yaar-Yuchtman, 2004). The relative stability in the lack of democratic characteristics among youth over the years can be seen in Table 1: Many youth exhibit intolerance toward groups and attitudes different from their own, most youth exhibit discriminatory attitudes toward the Arab minority, and a substantial portion prefer a strong regime to the rule of law.

More specifically, it can be said that between a quarter and one-half of youth believe that at least some basic rights should not be granted to minority populations generally and to Palestinian citizens of Israel in particular. The second row of Table 1 shows that the lack of political tolerance by Jewish youth in Israel toward the Arab minority is much higher than the lack of tolerance toward Jewish groups having other attitudes, which are perceived as part of the Jewish collective (Pedahzur & Yishai, 1999). Within the conflict between democracy and security, it can be stated rather clearly that Israeli youth support restrictions on democracy for security purposes (Ben-Sira, 1990). Likewise, a growing trend in the desire of youth to see a strong leader in government, rather than democratic and partisan “hurdles,” is evident.

Although Table 1 exposes certain differences over the years that the studies were conducted, there is a shared point arising from all these studies, and that is related to the influence of the religiosity of youth on their democratic attitudes.<sup>21</sup> Zemach & Tsin (1984) speak of a linear relationship in which secular Jews lean most strongly toward democracy, followed by *masorti* (traditional) Jews, and finally by religious Jews. Ben-Sira (1990, 1995) claims that the degree of religiosity is one of four parameters that best explain who might support democracy in its liberal sense and accord priority to democracy over other vital social needs. More recent studies (Arian et al., 2003; Yaar-Yuchtman, 2004) have reached similar findings. These findings raise the question of whether indeed the relationship between democratic education and national education is one of a “zero-sum game,” or whether this erroneous perception, itself, is what causes religious educators to neglect democratic education to a certain degree.

To summarize this empirical survey, Arian et al. (2003) claim that “Israeli democracy, as reflected in these indices, is primarily a formal democracy that has not yet succeeded in adopting the qualities of an essential democracy, and it suffers from great instability compared to other democracies or other periods” (p. 240). They conclude with the statement that “Israeli democracy is uncongealed and requires great attention and cultivation” (p. 240).<sup>22</sup> To this can be added Eisenstadt’s claim that democracy in general is a fragile method and that in the Israel’s unique case it contents with exceedingly difficult challenges

**Table 1:** Comparative View of Support (+Democracy) and Objection (–Democracy) for Characteristics of Democracy among Israeli Jewish Youth.<sup>1</sup>

	1980	1990	1995/1998 <sup>2</sup>	2004
Rights (–Democracy)	42% in favor of limiting rights of non-Jewish citizens.	26% oppose securing full human rights for all regardless of nationality, religion, race, sex, and creed.	48% agree or strongly agree that Arab Israelis should be barred from being elected to the Knesset.	41% agree or strongly agree that Arab Israelis should be barred from being elected to the Knesset (Yaar, 2004).  43% think that a speaker should be barred from publicly expressing strong criticism against Israel (Arian et al., 2004).
Equality and pluralism toward groups (–Democracy)	60% don't think that Israeli Arabs are entitled to full equality.	67% are not in favor of tolerance toward Israeli Arabs.	14.9% think that citizens who oppose government policy should be forbidden to legally protest.	19.8% think it should be forbidden for citizens who oppose government policy to legally protest (Yaar, 2004).  62% oppose Arab parties joining the government (Arian et al., 2004).
Opposed to restrictions on democracy subsequent to threat (+Democracy)	52.4%	13% think that democracy is no less important than security.	35%	29.2%
Support a strong leader (–Democracy)	28.4% would support a leader regardless of the party he or she belonged to.	No relevant data found	58.1% support a strong leader or leaders	67% (Yaar, 2004), 60% (Arian et al., 2004) support a strong leader or leaders.
Believe that a democratic regime is more important than particularistic political positions (+Democracy)	No relevant data found.	71% support obedience to every law, even if doing so would contradict one's views or conscience.	62%	55.7%

*Note.*<sup>1</sup>There are significant differences in the definition of the questions between the four surveys presented here, and therefore we found it appropriate to detail some of the wording of the questions in the table. Likewise, for the same reason, it would not be correct to draw trends based on the percentages presented.

<sup>2</sup>Some of the data in the article by Yaar-Yuchtman (2004) are taken from a study carried out in 1995 and the remainder from data collected in 1998. We have treated these interchangeably.

(1999). Thus, it is appropriate to accord attention, thought, and action on the horizons that harbor the potential for strengthening this democratic system.

## DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY

Even if, as we have noted, it would be incorrect to assert that Israeli democracy stands on the brink of an abyss, the dangers lying in wait for the existence of democracy of the State of Israel require us to ask how a culture of democracy can be passed on to the general public of citizens in Israeli society. All theoreticians and practitioners, in addition to emphasizing social, political, and economic mechanisms, point (to a greater or lesser extent) to the education system as a social institution of supreme importance with respect to education for democracy (Almond & Verba, 1963; Dawson & Prewitt, 1969; Dewey, 1916; Greenstein, 1965; Ichilov, 1990; Langton, 1969; Pedahzur, 2002; Renshon, 1977). Even the theory, of democracy itself accords schools a central role in instilling democratic culture and values (Ichilov, 2003). In practice, despite the debate over the extent of practical influence that schools have in socializing democratic values, all researchers agree that schools are agents of knowledge about democracy, pass on democratic attitudes and values, and instill democratic norms of behavior (Callan, 1997; Coleman, 1961; Dreben, 1970; Entwistle, 1971; Gutmann, 1987; Hepburn, 1983; Hess, 1968; Hjrem, 1998, 2000; Ichilov, 1993; Maroshek-Klarman, 1991; Mendman, 1971; Myres & Williams, 1985; Niemi & Junn, 1998; Shifman, 1978; Zidkiyahu, 1988). Schools are important socializing agents that prepare young people for adult life in society and to function as citizens of the state. Schools influence the achievements and status of individuals in adult life and determine, together with other socializing agents, which norms and values will be passed on to them (Bricker, 1989; Goldenberg, 1998; Patrick, 1977). Schools embody a framework having similar characteristics at certain levels as the political system. It is a framework that offers young people relevant experience in the political area, and which young people attend during a period that is critical with respect to everything related to the formation of their adult personality, values, attitudes, and behavior patterns. The younger generation is exposed to information, materials, and interpretations regarding democracy, its structure and values. Young people are exposed to adults who act as figures of reference, whose behavior and values can be imitated. They interact with peer groups and with teachers—who teach the rules of behavior and the values that are also relevant to the world outside the school.

In order to assimilate democratic values, the school can begin by conveying information about the structure, importance, and deficiencies of democracy, as well as information regarding its function, and its advantages and disadvantages compared to other forms of government. However, transmitting

information is only the first step in democratic education. There is particular importance to passing on attitudes, values, and norms in such a way that young people will choose to internalize them. This educational process cannot succeed only via the presentation of topics; rather, its success also depends on hands-on experiences that will facilitate the internalization of these values. Likewise, there is great importance to discussing dilemmas, problems, and concrete topics that confront Israeli society and are at the center of public discourse. Such discussion must not be restricted to the general and amorphous level, nor should it suffice with bringing examples from other countries.

Schools must begin to think reflectively and critically about the reality in which pupils live. They must relate to events and figures from reality and assess them according to the criteria of democratic values. The education system must teach pupils to cope with conflicts and disagreements on a personal and collective level (Gutmann, 2000). Likewise, they must teach the critical and skeptical consumption of information that reaches pupils through the mass media, and critical and constructive thought regarding all types of information (Barnes, 1992). To a large extent, education for democratic values must be such that it causes pupils to internalize the fact that in the name of moral values, in certain cases it may be appropriate to oppose the government and the state in order to protect citizens and groups from them (Turner, 1997). The education system must emphasize, through every method and in every subject, recognition of the rights of human beings to liberty, equality, and justice. Likewise, it must aspire to pass on to pupils, and have them internalize, the principles of human and civil rights (Ichilov, 2003). In addition, the education system must set itself to the goal of providing active and participatory civic education, in which citizens take an active part in the political process and, at the same time, protect this process so that it will operate according to principal democratic values.

## SUMMARY

The above review shows that the political, social, and educational systems in the State of Israel have not adequately coped with the challenge of democratic education. They have not succeeded in passing on the solid foundations of democratic norms and values, which are particularly vital in this multi-cultural and divided society, to citizens in Israel. It appears that state leaders, from the founding generation and up through the current one, have not succeeded in finding the right balance between particularistic and universalistic education and therefore, have plainly preferred Jewish and Zionist values and in many instances have viewed democracy as an "obstacle" that might hinder the implantation of these values. To our estimation, state leaders over the years have not adequately appreciated the

destructive ramifications that this approach might have on Israeli society, which has struggled since the founding of the state with internal divisions, illegalism, inequality, limitation of freedoms and so on. The understanding that a society characterized by a liberal-democratic culture and a government of laws is a society that, over the long term, is better able to cope with external and internal challenges, was not part of the dominant worldview of Israel's leaders, nor of the bulk of the Jewish public in Israel.

Societies should be judged not only by infrequent actions such as holding elections or their formal structure, but primarily by the values that are assimilated among members of the society, and which are expressed in their political, social, and economic behavior (Greenberg, 1999). In the State of Israel there is an enormous gap between the importance that citizens attribute to democracy as a symbol or a designation, and the *de facto* upholding of democratic norms and values by citizens and leaders as one. Arising from the recognition of this gap, our approach is that, on one hand, youth must be more deeply taught the essence of democracy, and at the same time, that we must cast a broad spotlight on the growing ills befalling Israeli democracy.

In the operative field, education for democracy must be defined as a national task having first priority, and we must dismantle the equation that suggests that education for democracy must come at the expense of Zionist and national education. The aggregate of flaws in Israeli democracy presented in this article reflect an un-rosy picture of Israeli democratic culture. It will be difficult to amend this problematic picture without attending to the deepest roots of the problem in Israeli society. To our estimation, in order to begin this task, we must focus a spotlight on the area of democratic education. It is important to remember that the school is a "funnel" through which all youth pass on their way to mature and active citizenship in the state. Alexander Smith said that the flaws of democracy can be corrected by adding more democracy. We would like to assert that the flaws of democracy can be corrected first and foremost by the addition of education for democracy.

In our view, if education for democracy is not bolstered, citizens will not know what democracy is and it will ultimately wither. The education system must take part in this mission as its highest priority, since it does not appear that there is another social institution that can take up the reins for this task. It is the right of every government to anchor its policies and activities in rationalizations and explanations as it sees fit, in order to provide a basis for its actions and excuse them. It is the duty of the education system to teach every young person how to critically judge the societal actions as well as explanations and rationalizations presented to them by their government. In our view, in the area of education for democracy, this kind of critical judgment by youth may lead to the demand for a general, deep, and meaningful change in the civil and governmental culture in the State of Israel.

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## NOTES

1. In this paper, we use the terms “education for democracy” and “democratic education” interchangeably.
2. It should be emphasized that in order to establish the claim that we are proposing to present in this article, we found it appropriate to set out a survey and analysis of a relatively large and diverse range of fields of study: education for democracy, a historical survey of education for democracy in Israel, the state of Israeli democracy, and Israeli public attitudes regarding democracy. However, it is important to note that

due to the limitations of space these areas will not be surveyed to the deepest and broadest extent possible, but rather, to a more limited extent that will enable each to “contribute their part” in assembling the general picture that the present article attempts to put forward.

3. Kimmerling (1992) defines the decision on the basic definition of democracy as one of four “framework decisions” that each researcher must carry out before beginning to examine Israeli democracy (or indeed any other relevant field of social research).

4. In recent years the broad conception of ‘liberal democracy’ has drawn criticism from progressive views such as that of ‘multicultural democracy,’ which sees liberalism as concealing the significant oppression of minority groups. According to the central argument of this theory, democracy must also provide broad space for the collective rights of minorities and not only for the rights of minority group members as individuals (Kymlicka, 1995). Accordingly, the basic character of liberal democracy is nothing more than a catalyst for the assimilation of minority groups into the dominant majority. However, since in our view a thorough analysis of each of the innovative approaches that criticize liberal democracy is beyond the scope of this paper, we choose to relate to liberal democracy as the starting point for this article.

5. Peled (1993) defines the form of government in the years state’s founding as a “republican democracy.” The significance of this kind of democracy is that it “confers moral priority to the collective social good, over the rights of the individual” (p. 24). In the case of the State of Israel in the years of its founding, the “collective good” received suitable expression in Zionist aims and accordingly, those who did not adhere to these aims (Arabs), were naturally excluded by the civil and democratic mechanisms.

6. Former State Comptroller Miriam Ben-Porat even claimed that “if we turned some principles from the Declaration of Independence into something of a constitution, a lot of things in the state would look different” (Shibi, 1986).

7. Therein it is stated that “the goal of *mamlachti* (state religious) education is to found elementary education in the State of Israel on the values of Israeli culture and scientific achievement, on love of the homeland and loyalty to the state and to the Jewish people, on faith in agricultural and manual work, on pioneer training, and on the aspiration for a society built on liberty and equality, tolerance, mutual help, and love of health.

8. This perception stands completely opposed to the view presented by Moshe Negbi in his 1987 book, according to which the issue of democracy and rule of law must serve as one of the central goals that Zionism set out for itself (Negbi, 1987).

9. This may be qualified by stating that the goals set forth by the report of the education system also includes instilling 100 fundamental concepts in Zionism and democracy. However, as noted, most of these concepts primarily emphasize Jewish and Zionist heritage and not democracy.

10. Space here is too limited to include discussion of the practical significance of the Basic Laws of 1992. However, even those who do not accept the position of Aharon Barak regarding the “constitutional revolution” agree that 1992 was a significant landmark on the path to constitutional change (Gavison, 1998).

11. Yiftachel asserts that the “ethnic democracy” definition, established by Smooha, is “lenient” with Israeli democracy. To his view, the regime in Israel can be defined as an ethnocracy, which in practice means that under present conditions it is not a democracy at all (Yiftachel, 2002).

12. It should be emphasized that although the relations between the Israeli state and its Arab citizens are most complicated, negative and exclusionist attitudes towards Muslims in general and Muslim immigrants in particular are a very common



phenomena in western Europe, mainly in the last two decades (For a review of exclusionist attitudes towards immigrants (Muslims and others) in 22 European countries, see: Scheepers, Gilsberts & Coenders, 2002). Hence, it would be a mistake to refer to it as a local Israeli problem instead of a more global one.

13. A total of 146 countries participated in the study, including non-democratic countries. Thus, Israel's placement as 26th on the list puts it in a problematic position compared to the lion's share of Western countries, which aim to be liberal democracies ([www.transparency.org](http://www.transparency.org)).

14. Itzhak Zamir best defined "political appointment" in his writings as follows: "The appointment of a person to a certain position is "political" when it would not have been done had that same person not been a political figure. In this case politics, in the narrow sense of partisanship, is a central factor in the appointment" (Zamir, 1990, p. 19).

15. The comparative measures were assembled by the Israel Democracy Institute using data from a number of international research institutes, and include data from 36 democratic countries. The countries that took part in the study were: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, England, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Romania, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, and the United States.

16. The initiators of the surveys (Arian et al., 2003; Arian et al., 2004) divide the "non-institutional" aspects of democracy into (1) the aspect of rights and (2) the aspect of stability.

17. This series of studies was carried out by Peres and Yaar-Yuchtman at the Israeli Democracy Institute and included an examination of Israeli public commitment to democracy every 4–6 months. The surveys were published in the institute's journal, and later in two central books: Peres and Yaar (1992) and Peres and Yaar-Yuchtman (1998).

18. Zemach and Tsin (1984) studied 651 youth comprising a representative sample of Jewish youth aged 15–18 in Israel.

19. Ben-Sira (1990) surveyed 1,840 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students at 24 schools. The study was carried out at the invitation of the Chief Scientist at the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sport.

20. The Israeli team for this study included Prof. Dan Bar-On, Amda-Or, and Shifra Sagi.

21. The influence of religiosity on democratic attitudes was also expressed in the comparative study presented in the earlier part of this paper.

22. For this, some have termed Israeli democracy as a "democracy-in-the-making," some as a "defensive democracy" (Pedahzur, 2002, 2004), and others have defined it as a limited or "second-rate" democracy (Smootha, 2002A).