

Sitting on the Third Rail: Studying Israelis and Palestinians, Then and Now

Ian Lustick



*Ian Lustick is Bess W. Heyman Professor (Emeritus) of the Department of Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania. His most recent book is *Paradigm Lost: From Two-State Solution to One-State Reality* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019). E-mail: ilustick@sas.upenn.edu.*

I have been asked to describe what it has been like for a political scientist to specialize professionally on Israeli and Palestinian politics. Younger scholars are familiar with the strong emotions and political pressures they confront while laboring in this particular vineyard. How do these challenges compare with those I faced over the last half century? Well on my way to moosehead status, I am free to answer this question without affecting my career prospects.

First, I should say that I am neither to be regarded as a victim nor as a hero. On the whole, I have been delighted with and grateful for a career that has been well-supported by universities, foundations, and government agencies, and that has included work ranging far beyond my scholarship on Israel and Palestine—research, teaching, and consulting on computer simulation modeling, social science methods, applications of evolutionary theory to historical institutionalism, organization theory, constructivist approaches to collective identity, theories of control and hegemony, and analysis of how historiographical variation challenges the uses of history as evidence for comparative political scientists. I have had the added satisfaction of being rewarded for producing knowledge directly relevant to

the two peoples whose struggles are closest to my heart—Jews and Palestinian Arabs. Unsurprisingly, however, I have encountered obstacles and challenges that no one working in this area should imagine they can entirely escape.

When I left Brandeis University in 1971 for graduate study, my aim was to become a political scientist focused on comparative and international politics with a special, but not limiting focus, on the Arab-Israeli conflict. I chose Berkeley for two reasons. First, its program offered an historically grounded and theoretically sophisticated approach to social science, emphasizing deep and large questions and demanding conceptual and analytical rigor in attempts to answer them. Second, I did not trust anyone to teach me Middle East politics. Aside from George Lenczowski, who specialized on Pahlavi Iran and the Saudi monarchy, and with whom (since I was Jewish) I was in no danger of forming a close relationship, no one on the social science faculty at Berkeley taught or did research on the topics that mattered to me most.

The importance of this criterion for me, in 1971, documents how longstanding has been the saturation of our field with a Zionist/Isra-

el version of Lysenkoism—pervasive pressures, both official and unofficial, demanding obeisance to approved catechisms enforced by threats of social ostracism and career punishment. In fact, if anything, I vastly underestimated the scale of the professional and career challenges that I would confront by, in my mind, simply seeking to satisfy a deep curiosity about problems close to my heart.

Of course, my commitment to the topic was not simple. However melodramatic it may sound, the fires in my belly were lit in the crematoria of Nazi extermination camps, especially Treblinka, where all my relatives in my

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grandfather’s village nearby that site of horrors were exterminated. Above all I wanted to know enough about Jews, about Israel, and about the struggles in the Middle East, so that I could do my part to honor the categorical imperative of our age: “Never

Again” for any group—not for Jews, not for Palestinians, not for anyone. That meant arguing with those most passionately committed, either to Israel’s destruction or to Jewish domination of the entire country. These arguments quickly produced embarrassment by showing how much less I knew than did my interlocutors. Solving that problem drove me into years of obsessive study of Jewish, Zionist, and Palestinian history, Hebrew and Arabic, Middle Eastern politics, and anything related to contemporary Israeli and Palestinian affairs. Some of this was accomplished in

course work, at the Jacob Hiatt Institute in Jerusalem in 1969, with Ben Halpern and Nahum Glatzer at Brandeis, and with William Brinner at Berkeley, but mostly this was done on my own.

After two years in Berkeley, studying theories of comparative and international politics, I received support to spend a year in Israel and the occupied territories, doing dissertation research on the impact of the occupation on the development of Palestinian nationalism and prospects for an independent Palestinian state. My mentor, Ernie Haas, who left Nazi Germany with his family in the late 1930s, supported my efforts but only after telling me my project was a giant mistake: “The politics of working on Arab-Israeli stuff will make your life miserable. It will ruin your career.” My life has not been miserable and, as noted above, I have had a satisfying career, but as usual Ernie was telling me something I needed to know. I ignored it then but soon came to understand what he was talking about. If my skin were not so thick, and had it not been for some plain good luck, his prophecy would have come true.

Soon after my arrival in Berkeley I joined two Jewish communities—a small but dynamic orthodox synagogue and the Radical Jewish Union (RJU). The latter was a collection of socialist Zionists, Yiddishists, and counter-culture Jewish students based on the Berkeley campus. The RJU published its own newspaper, *The Jewish Radical*. In my first article for the paper I made a simple argument. Without asking who was responsible in 1948 for the transformation of three-quarters of a million Palestinians into refugees, I suggested it was appropriate for Jews to acknowledge that Israel was partly built on the suffering of others and that a portion of Jewish contributions to Israel should be used

to compensate and rehabilitate Palestinian refugees (Lustick 1972a).

Living on a shoestring, I needed whatever extra income I could find. I was therefore happy to accept a one-morning-a-week job as a Hebrew school teacher for a new cooperative school my synagogue was forming with a local conservative synagogue. But after my article appeared in the *Jewish Radical*, I received a telephone call from the Rabbi of my synagogue asking me to come to see him. He was sorry, he said, he thought it was wrong, but he had been told by the conservative synagogue's Rabbi, who had read my article, that if I were not removed immediately from the faculty of the new joint Hebrew school, the entire project would be cancelled. I was fired.

My main activity within the Radical Jewish Union was a petition campaign called *Yaish Breira* (There is an Alternative), supporting creation of a Palestinian state. The petition, which attracted some 400 signatures from Jewish activists around the world, demanded an end to Jewish settlement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. There were only 1,100 settlers in those areas at the time, but we saw them as the beginning of the end of what we still hoped could be a Jewish and democratic state (Lustick 1972b; *Yaish Breira* 1972; *Yaish Breira* 1973). Each signature was a battle. Often, I, and those working on the project with me, were insulted and condemned as self-hating Jews, as antisemites, and even as Nazis because we supported a “two-state solution.” Illustrating *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*, today I am still the target for these insults, but am now targeted in part because I consider the two-state solution to be no longer attainable.

In July 1973 I arrived in Israel to continue my study of Hebrew and Arabic while developing

a dissertation project focused on political implications of the occupation. But the 1973 War forced a change in plans. I shifted my attention to Arabs in Israel, who comprised 15 percent of Israeli citizens. The first title of the project featured Johan Galtung's theory of “structural imperialism” applied to analyze Jewish-Arab relations inside the country. After covering my draft with furious comments, Ernie smilingly informed me that I had indeed found a dissertation. Then he gave me advice that this time I took: “You'll be in enough trouble with what you're doing. Don't use the word ‘imperialism’ or ‘colonialism.’” So I adopted “control” for the dissertation and titled the book it became: *Arabs in the Jewish State: Israel's Control of a National Minority* (Lustick 1980).

It is never “easy” to turn a dissertation into a book, but the saga of my first book's publication opens a window onto barriers in the 1970s facing work considered critical of Israel. My dissertation committee—Robert Price, Ernie Haas, Ken Jowitt, and Don Peretz (from SUNY Binghamton)—was enthusiastic, though there were times when Ernie struggled with my analysis because of sympathies he had for Israel that were challenged by the dissertation's empirics. This enthusiasm, I'm sure, accounts for the Department's decision to nominate my dissertation that year for APSA's Gabriel Almond Award for the Best Dissertation in Comparative Politics. Unbeknownst to me, Ken Jowitt sent the dissertation to his friend, an editor at the University of California Press, who jolted Ken by refusing to send it out for review. Nothing like what I had written had ever been published in the United States—nothing examining the systematic policies of surveillance, resource extraction, and manipulation that accounted for the otherwise puzzling quiescence of Israeli non-Jews. Whether editors were them-

selves biased in favor of protecting Israel's image, whether they were too shocked to believe my account was accurate, or whether they were frightened away from what they considered a promising project by fear of rebuke or retribution by superiors, I do not know. What I do know is that when I submitted the manuscript to Harvard, Princeton, and other top academic presses, the responses I received were identical. Each press looked at the dissertation and refused to send it out for review.

I was tempted to send it to Britain, where publication would be possible, but I wanted to make a point by publishing it in the United States. In 1977 I reached out to the University of Texas Press, which had a Middle East focused book series. UT Press did send it out for review, and after receiving strong endorsements from one Israeli and one American reviewer, offered me a contract. I signed it, and spent the summer of 1977 in Israel gathering new material and the next academic year updating and polishing the manuscript for publication. But months after submitting the revised manuscript, I received a letter informing me that the Board of Governors of the University of Texas had decided to cancel my contract. No reasons were given in the letter, but in an agonized voice on the telephone the editor explained that the decision had nothing to do with the quality of the work.

I was furious and came as close as I have ever come to abandoning my hopes for a career in academia. Instead, I decided to fight. I knew the original reviewers were Mark Tessler and Sammy Smooha. I wrote to them, and they wrote to the press. The editor, who was ashamed by what had happened, appealed to his superiors and came back to me with a new plan. If the manuscript were sent out to

one more (Israeli) reviewer, then the Board would reconsider its decision based on that review. I breathed a sigh of relief, despite knowing that publication of the already delayed project would be postponed by at least another six months.

It took an agonizing four months before the review came back. The editor sent me the text of the review, which denounced my manuscript as a meritless attempt to "vilify" Israel. The Board would now maintain their original decision. From the scanty substantive comments provided I could tell that the reviewer knew virtually nothing about the topic of the Arab minority in Israel. When I called the editor, he accidentally told me who the reviewer was—the senior scholar and Israeli-expatriate, Nadav Safran, of Harvard University's Department of Government. I then composed a ten-page refutation of everything in Safran's review, in the course of which I explained my own point of view and background as a committed Jew, a Zionist, and a lover of Israel who believed that only by discussing, clearly and analytically, the problems the country faced and the long-term consequences of the policies it was pursuing, would Israel survive. UT Press responded by agreeing to publish the book, but only on one condition—that I include a preface quoting extensively from my long letter expressing my Jewish and Zionist values and my commitment to Israel.

I protested. I did not want my book judged based on who I was, but on the argument it made and the evidence it contained. But the choice was clear. If I refused to write the kind of preface the press wanted, the book would not appear. I accepted the condition, but negotiated hard to reduce the amount of personal information that would have to be included. In 1980 my book appeared and

went on to become one of the UT Press's most successful Middle Eastern titles—even-ually translated into both Hebrew and Arabic. Nonetheless, I was horrified by how the press (obviously worried about political backlash) chose to describe me on the book jacket. “Ian Lustick,” it said, “is an assistant professor of government at Dartmouth College, where he serves as a faculty advisor to Hillel.”

So the dissertation did become a book that was widely read, positively reviewed, and extensively cited. But years later, I learned that there was a part of the story I did not know. At a Dartmouth College conference in the 1980s, a somewhat inebriated Walker Connor drew me away for a private conversation. Tearfully, he told me he had a confession to make. I was taken aback. I had never met him before, though of course his work on “primordial” identities had served me well as a foil for my own approach. He related that years earlier, in 1976, he had served on the APSA's three-person Gabriel Almond Dissertation Award committee. He and one other member of the committee were persuaded beyond all doubt that my dissertation deserved the award, but the third member absolutely refused to accept their decision because of the negative light the work cast on Israel. Connor said that he had lived painfully for years with the guilt, as he put it, of surrendering to the third committee member's demand—of failing to insist on making the right decision, and not the easy one.

This episode helped me appreciate the extent to which, in ways unknown and largely unknowable, there had been and would be a high professional price to pay for producing honest scholarship on Israel and particularly on Israeli-Palestinian relations. Two more examples of my experiences will suffice,

when usually invisible practices of blacklisting and ostracism emerged from the shadows.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, I returned my attention to the question of the future of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, especially in relation to the flood of Israeli settlers in those areas whose explicit purpose was to prevent emergence of a Palestinian state and ensure their eventual incorporation into the Israeli state. The research program that developed included numerous articles on land expropriation, settlement, Jerusalem, and state-building, a book on the ideology and internal disagreements of the Israeli settler movement, and two books drawing on the British and French experiences in heavily settled but difficult-to-absorb territories—Ireland and Algeria—to analyze the structures, strategies, and choices shaping Israel's relationship to the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967.

For the Land and the Lord: Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel (Lustick 1988) originated in a research contract with the Department of Defense, but was expanded into a book with the advice and guidance of a group of experts assembled by Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). The committee recommended the manuscript enthusiastically for publication by the Council, but the final decision rested with Bernard Lewis, the famed Princeton-based Orientalist who chaired the Middle East Studies Committee at the CFR. The committee included J.C. Hurewitz, Stanley Hoffmann, and John Campbell. Both I and the advisory group were shocked to hear that Lewis decided against its publication. I called him to ask for his criticisms of the manuscript. He was evasive and would not provide them. The members of the study committee members then did something unprecedented in the history of the Council on

Foreign Relations—they voted unanimously to overrule the decision of the chair. The book was published in 1988 with a second edition appearing in 1994.

No one knew why Lewis had tried to stop publication of the book, though there were strong suspicions it was because he disliked its argument that an ideologically extreme movement of Messianists and ultranationalists was making Israel into something very different than the image of the country he cultivated, namely an exemplary liberal democracy hated by a backward Muslim and Arab world. Support for this theory came several years later when I was approached by the University of Pennsylvania with an offer to leave Dartmouth to help rebuild its Political Science Department. After the usual visits and preliminary negotiations, I received an unsatisfying offer letter from the Department Chair, Oliver Williams. When I told him that I would not leave Dartmouth for Penn unless my compensation was increased, his entire manner changed. “You had better take this offer,” he warned. “It’s the best you’re going to get. From what we’re hearing about you, I can tell you that you will never get an offer from any other institution.”

I responded by telling him from then on that negotiations would not be conducted between us, but between me and the Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, Hugo Sonnenschein (formerly of Princeton, soon to be President of the University of Chicago). From friends in the Political Science Department, I learned how ferocious was the opposition to my hire among alumni, donors, and others—including, notably, Bernard Lewis. Accordingly, I was mightily impressed with Hugo, who never raised any of these difficulties with me in our negotiations and who made my move to Penn possible by taking the heat

from what he recognized were strictly political efforts to suppress and punish scholars who did not toe the line on Israel. Thus, I have not stood alone against these intrigues, campaigns, and prejudices. Both

Dartmouth College and the University of Pennsylvania, and before them the University of California, Santa Cruz (where I taught a course on Arab-Israeli relations), have each withstood pressures associated with my presence on their faculties. Forty years ago, the Dickey Endowment at Dartmouth provided funds to convene a conference I organized at which the Association for Israel Studies was founded—an organization created to provide professionals specializing on contemporary Israel with a non-political and specifically non-Zionist space. Our objective was to provide an alternative to the American Academic Association for Peace in the Middle East which functioned transparently as an arm of Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. After arriving at Penn, I encountered the problem of spies in my classroom, faced Internet attacks by groups such as Campus Watch, CAMERA, and Canary Mission, and had to worry about harassment by extremist groups in Israel and in the United States who sought to silence critics of Israel by filing frivolous but expensive-to-defend-against lawsuits. This last threat was successfully dealt with by an official letter from the University of Pennsylvania, which promised to cover the legal fees I might encounter from such lawsuits.

In 1993, Cornell University Press published my tome entitled *Unsettled States, Disputed Lands: Britain and Ireland, France and Algeria, Israel and the West Bank/Gaza* (Lustick 1993). It was the culmination of almost twenty years of work, and among other things forecast not only secret negotiations between an Israeli government and the Palestine Lib-

eration Organization, but also, based on my comparison of crises in Britain and France over attempts to withdraw from Ireland and Algeria, warned of violence and civil war that would threaten any Israeli government seeking to end Israeli rule of the occupied territories. When the Oslo peace process began, and then when it was disrupted by the assassination of Prime Minister Yithazk Rabin by a member of the groups I had warned against, I urged Cornell University Press to publicize the book's timeliness as well as the accuracy of its forecasts. Unwilling, it seemed to me, to expose the Press to attack from those who virulently opposed the Oslo process, the marketing department refused to do so.

Instructively, the same thing happened thirty years later at the University of Pennsylvania Press. Penn Press published my latest book, *Paradigm Lost: From Two-State Solution to One-State Reality* (Lustick 2019), which analyzed the disappearance of precisely the opportunities to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian dispute via partition that I had studied for the first 35 years of my career. When the war in Gaza erupted following the October 7, 2023 Hamas and Islamic Jihad attacks on Israeli communities, I drew the Press's attention to the book's forecast that while *de facto* annexation had "made Israel's separation from the territories impossible," it had "not reduced the hostility of their Palestinian populations... [making] campaigns of nonviolent, semiviolent, and violent resistance all but inevitable. The Israeli response will be bloody and destructive, with casualties in the tens of thousands" (Lustick 2019, 142). In the midst of a wave of McCarthyist (or as I call it "McIsraelist") intimidation sweeping across university campuses, and with the University of Pennsylvania as the epicenter of attempts to weaponize accusations of antisemitism, Penn Press explained that "for various reasons," it

had become impossible to promote the book by drawing attention to the accuracy of its forecasts.

Yet I again want to affirm my gratitude and appreciation for the investments made and risks taken on my behalf in both Israel and the United States by the universities, foundations, presses, and journals, who have paid me to teach and write and who have published my books and articles. But it is also worth noting that the pressures and hostility I have faced in some quarters in the United States find their counterpart, and sometimes their origins, in Israel. During my last two visits to Israel for research and teaching purposes, in 2014 and 2017, I was sharply questioned at Ben-Gurion Airport about the lectures I was scheduled to give, who I was planning to meet, what my views were about the "situation," and my political opinions. In both cases my passport was taken, though after what were presumably quick Internet searches I was deemed too likely to make a public fuss to be further delayed. On each occasion, my passport was gruffly returned and I was sent on my way.

I regularly do promotion and hiring reviews for Israeli institutions. Last year I successfully chaired a review committee for the Open University in Israel. In 2010, however, I was suddenly removed from an international review committee established by Israel's Council on Higher Education to assess political science departments in all of Israel's major research universities. The order came from the Education Minister, after what I was told were objections to my presence on the committee from some right-wing faculty members. The Chair of the Committee, Professor Robert Shapiro of Columbia University, then resigned in protest. (I eventually received a letter of apology from the director of the Council.)

In the five decades or so of my professional engagement in the multidimensional field of Israel and Palestine affairs, its intellectual, emotional, and political ecology has remained, respectively, explosive, punishing, and underdeveloped. Recently I published an essay explaining publicly what I have always told my students about emotion and scholar-

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ship (Lustick 2020). Emotional investment in a topic is a sine qua non for mastering complex subject material and contributing new insights to any field of study, even as, in the assessment of evidence and the presentation of findings, one must remain steadfastly committed to what the combination of theory, method,

and data makes visible as the best available truth. Accordingly, I expect and fully understand the depth of emotion on all sides of the myriad of issues and disputes that arise in discussions of Israel and Palestine, whether among experts or among members of the general public.

Indeed, despite the intense emotions that are so easily triggered in discussion of Israel-Palestine issues, over the years the amount of pertinent and accurate information about this subject has vastly increased, along with the sophistication and precision of arguments. These improvements reflect a general elevation in the quality of social science, an increase in the sophistication of historiography, and extensive digitization and translation of

remotely accessible data sources. As a result, many silly arguments and claims have disappeared from serious discourse—for example, that the Zionist movement in the early twentieth century ignored the presence of Arabs in the country, that before the creation of Israel there never was a movement demanding an independent Arab Palestine, that the displacement of Palestinians in 1948 was due to orders from invading Arab states, or that Israel won the 1967 war because of the surreptitious participation of the United States Air Force.

In general, however, the consequence of these changes has been a widening gulf between the knowledge available to experts and the abysmal, unrecognized ignorance of the overwhelming majority of those in the general public who care about the issue. An array of general and specialized journals, and hundreds of monographs and edited volumes, now provide students of Israel and/or Palestine a breadth and depth of finely grained scholarship and access to a range of points-of-view unimaginable in the 1960s, 1970s, or 1980s. At the same time, discourse on these subjects in the general public domain is now, if anything, even less civil and more distorted and ignorant than it was in those decades. In part this is due to the extremization of Israeli politics and the pursuit of policies for most of the last 20 years, which the overwhelming majority of Israel's supporters in the US cannot and do not publicly support or defend.

In the 1970s, I received a letter from the Israel Consulate in San Francisco thanking me for debating anti-Zionists on campuses in the Bay area. In those debates drew on a manual specially produced by the Israeli Student Organization of North America (Neuberger 1970). It covered a variety of topics—refugees, war and peace, minority affairs, settle

ments, religion and politics, etc.—along with typical criticisms that would require rebuttal and useful lists of quotations to support those rebuttals. When it came to the topic of settlements, for example, the manual stressed that it was a complex issue, with proponents and opponents on both sides and that a case could be made both for and against them.

In sharp contrast, a popular Israel advocacy manual published in 2009 was put together by Frank Luntz—the Republican operative and spinmeister who made his reputation working for Newt Gingrich (Luntz 2009). Luntz focuses on “words that work.” His purpose was not to provide Israel advocates with information, but with rhetorical and emotional strategies for distracting audiences from substantive questions by redirecting conversations, including especially conversations about settlements, with words, phrases, and verbal maneuvers to evoke whatever useful biases the audience was judged to have.

More recently, Israel advocates have moved to an even more extreme strategy for avoiding engagement with substantive arguments. Current formulations, developed by Natan Sharansky and other right-wing Israelis and Israel supporters, do not suggest the use of arguments at all, whether advanced with evidence or rhetorical devices. Instead, the objective is to suppress public discussion by delegitimizing, demonizing, intimidating, and otherwise silencing those who criticize Israel by *ad hominem* attacks labeling them as terrorists, communists, neo-Marxists, or, most prominently, as antisemites. As Amichai Chikli, Israel’s Minister for Diaspora Affairs and Combatting Antisemitism put it in February 2024 when referring to how Israel advocates should defend the country: “The time has come to move from defense to offense, and to ensure that the perpetrators of

antisemitism are identified and treated appropriately.” Central to this strategy has been a hoax known as the “IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Association) working definition” of antisemitism. Though withdrawn and canceled by the defunct European organization that originally presented it, this list of ideas, questions, and critiques of Israel deemed to be evidence of antisemitism is being flagrantly weaponized to intimidate and silence potential critics (Gould 2020).

Nor do such tactics spare Jews. To be sure, the fact that I am Jewish, speak Hebrew, understand and use a good bit of Yiddish, and am comfortable with and capable of deploying the idioms, postures, and cultural tropes of orthodox Judaism, have provided me with protection that non-Jews, and especially Palestinians, Arabs in general, and Muslims, do not enjoy. Still, I am regularly attacked as a traitor to my people, the “lowest form of Jew,” or as a self-hating Jew. Indeed, some 25 years ago, I was even put on trial by my conservative synagogue located in a Lower Merion suburb of Philadelphia. Certain far-right members of the congregation prepared a detailed “brief” accusing me of antisemitism, based mainly on my advocacy of a two-state solution and on what they deemed as the dangerous popularity of a reading group I led in the community focused on Zionist thinkers, the findings of contemporary Israeli archeology, and popular Israeli novels. A lengthy and tearful debate among members of the Board of Directors of the synagogue ended in a narrow vote declaring me not guilty of the charge. During the discussion, one member of the Board, who was advocating for my conviction, asked permission to make an announcement. Without a trace of irony, she urged everyone to attend a play by her theatre troupe in Philadelphia about the excommunication of Baruch Spinoza for

challenging Jewish orthodoxies.

It is not possible to conclude this essay without some reference to the horrors of the Gaza war—both the massacres that triggered the Israeli assault, and the atrocities and horrific levels of death and destruction subsequently wreaked by the Israel Defense Forces on Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip. As noted above, in the mid-1980s I convened a conference at Dartmouth College, which became the founding moment for the Association for Israel Studies. We started out with twenty or thirty members. Now, 500 or so participants attend the Association’s annual meeting.

Over the years of my close involvement with the Association, I have benefited greatly and learned a great deal. I have edited its newsletter, chaired committees, served multiple times on the Board of Directors, organized two annual conferences, served as President, raised money, chaired panels, and published regularly in its journals. Unfortunately, but instructively for my purposes here, AIS has changed. The hyper-politicization associated with anything pertaining to Israel, and reflecting both the sharply increased number of Israeli members and the political and cultural tendencies dominating Israeli life in recent decades, has moved the Association away from its strictly non-political, non-Zionist, and non-ideological origins. It has assumed instead an increasingly apologetic posture.

Although AIS was proud to have been accepted as an affiliated group within the Middle East Studies Association, in response to ME-SA’s 2022 referendum supporting the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement, AIS suspended its membership. Six days after the Hamas and Islamic Jihad attacks on October 7, 2023, its leadership posted an impassioned

denunciation of the atrocities along with statements of compassion and solidarity with Israel and Israelis. In December 2023 and January 2024, eleven past presidents of the Association, including four of us who were present at the founding conference, asked the Board of Directors to post just one sentence of sympathy and concern for the suffering of Gaza Palestinians as a result of the war. Through repeated majority votes, the Board refused to do so, and refused as well to offer a substantive explanation for its decision. These embarrassing developments have reminded me that the world changes faster than can institutions and that, since under today’s circumstances no serious study of Israel and Palestine, as separate topics, is possible, a new departure is required.

Hence, I find myself a part of a new project—*The Palestine/Israel Review*—an open access, peer-reviewed journal.¹ Unlike either the Association for Israel Studies or the Institute for Palestine Studies, it is committed to developing space for discussion, scholarship, and debate that equally honors the aspirations, predicaments, fears, and traumas of Jews and Palestinian Arabs. It is on this note that I end this essay, looking toward horizons for scholarship that are more appropriate than traditional Zionist or Palestinian paradigms for addressing the challenges of life between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. ♦

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