The Mortality and Morality of Nations

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The Mortality and Morality of Nations

Images
Hamas is a constant reminder to the Palestinian people that the Zionist project is doomed. It’s a large—but cowardly—endeavor. The entire theft of a nation was a cowardly undertaking. What Jew can be proud of it? Already, we are witnessing the beginning of the end of the Zionist project.

A very respectable conference was held in Paris on the subject of “The Middle East in 2010.” There were people there from the highest levels of academia in the world, Israelis as well, of course. But none of the speakers discussed Israel. It seemed obvious to me that really the problem of the Middle East in the coming years is not Israel at all. Is there any lack of dangerous places? Then suddenly an Israeli woman diplomat came up to me, whose name I will not mention, looking very angry and insulted. I asked her what happened and she said: “I know why no-one has mentioned Israel,” she said. “Because none of you believes that Israel will be around in 2010.”

I was shocked. Who thinks something like that? That was the first time, but not the last, that I heard this fear. For us, the Europeans, it is difficult, almost impossible, to understand such deep existential fear, but I recognize it as one of the strongest factors impacting thoughts and decision making in Israel. Anyone taking this mood into consideration sees everything differently...

Gerard Araud
Former French ambassador to Israel (2003-2006)

*Ha’aretz*, September 29, 2006
Small nations. The concept is not quantitative; it points to a condition; a fate; small nations lack that felicitous sense of an eternal past and future; at a given moment in their history, they all passed through the antechambers of death; in constant confrontation with the arrogant ignorance of the mighty, they see their existence as perpetually threatened or with a question mark hovering over it; for their very existence is the question.

Milan Kundera, *Testaments Betrayed* 1994
If you choose to believe me, good. Now I will tell how Octavia, the spider-web city, is made. There is a precipice between two steep mountains: the city is over the void, bound to the two crests with ropes and chains and catwalks. You walk on the little wooden ties, careful not to set your foot in the open spaces, or you cling to the hempen strands. Below there is nothing for hundreds and hundreds of feet: a few clouds glide past; farther down you can glimpse the chasm's bed. This is the foundation of the city: a net which serves as passage and as support...

Suspended over the abyss, the life of Octavia's inhabitants is safer than in other cities. They know the net will only last so long.

– Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities, “Thin Cities” / Octavia
And God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. **The tree of life** was in the midst of the garden, and **the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**.
Meaning
The Mortality and Morality of Nations / Theory

**Meaning:** Identity Politics (nationalism, peoplehood, ethnicity)

**When?**
- Antiquity
- Early Middle Ages
- Late Middle Ages
- Early Modernity
- Modernity

**Why and How?**
- Inventing traditions
- Institutionalist / Statism
- Political Interactionism
- Anti-Imperialism
- Rational choice
- Industrialization
- Politicized culture
- Ideas and Ideology
- Communication
- (Ethno-Religious) Symbolism
- "Geo-Linguism"
- Romanticism
- Primordialism
- Social psychology
- Sociobiology

**Authors:**
- Aviel Roshwald
- Hugh Seton-Watson
- John Armstrong
- Anthony Smith
- Giuseppe Mazzini
- John Hutchinson
- Johann G. Fichte
- Johann G. Herder
- Joshua Fishman
- Steven Grosby
- Azar Gat
- Pierre van den Berghe
- Hans Kohn
- Max Weber
- Isaiah Berlin
- Elie Kedourie
- Marc Bloch
- Ernest Renan
- Anthony Giddens
- Michael Mann
- John Breuilly
- Rogers Brubaker
- John Acton
- Craig Calhoun
- Tom Nairn
- Michael Hechter
- Ernest Gellner
- Liah Greenfeld
- Miroslav Hroch
- Gerard Delanty
- Benedict Anderson
- George L. Mosse
- Carlton Hayes
- Donald Horowitz
- Walker Connor

**Notes:**
- Perennialism
- Rational choice
- Communication
- Social psychology
- Sociobiology
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**Meaning:** Identity Politics (nationalism, peoplehood, ethnicity)

- **Negative nationalism**
  People’s *purposeful rejection of foreign rule.*
  It *predates modernity.*

- **Positive nationalism**
  The *people as the origin of political authority,* justifying the *polity (self-determination)* and the *authority (popular sovereignty).*
  Positive nationalism is *modern.*
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Meaning: Identity Politics (nationalism, peoplehood, ethnicity)

- **Peoplehood** is a necessary but insufficient condition of nationalism—every nation is a people though not every people is a nation.
- **Peoplehood** is a public speech-act, a statement that creates a new reality. A people is a collective with a unique name, defined as such by its members and by others.

Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto *his people*, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land.

Exodus 1:8-10
The idea of death, the fear of it, haunts the human animal like nothing else; it is a mainspring of human activity—activity designed largely to avoid the fatality of death, to overcome it by denying in some way that it is the final destiny for man [...] Man’s best efforts seem utterly fallible without appeal to something higher for justification, some conceptual support for the meaning of one’s life from a transcendental dimension of some kind. As this belief has to absorb man’s basic terror, it cannot be merely abstract but must be rooted in the emotions, in an inner feeling that one is secure in something stronger, larger, more important than one’s own strength and life... [thus] using the cultural morality as the vehicle for his immortality.

-- Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death*
Meaning: The Moral Tree of Life
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Meaning: Collective *causae-sui*

The century of the Enlightenment, of rationalist secularism, brought with it its own modern darkness... What then was required was a secular transformation of fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning...

Few things were (are) better suited to this end than an idea of nation. If nation-states are widely conceded to be ‘new’ and ‘historical,’ the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past, and, still more important, glide into a limitless future. It is the magic of nationalism to turn chance into destiny. With Debray we might say, ‘Yes, it is quite accidental that I am born French; but after all, France is eternal.’


**Nationalism has emotional power** partly because it helps to make us who we are, because it inspires artists and composers, because it gives us a link with history (and thus with immortality).

-- Craig J. Calhoun, *Habermas and the Public Sphere*
Mortality
Mortality does not equal death, but signifies the awareness, in life, of the inevitability, availability, and indeterminacy of death: it is bound to happen, but its exact timing is unknown, unless we choose to bring it on. This is a unique human trait.

We search for immortality, and the kind of immortality we seek determines the kind of life we lead.

-- Hans J. Morgenthau, *Death in the Nuclear Age*
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**Mortality:** Death, Dread and Doubt in IR Discourse

*IR Literature*

**Certainty = Knowing** the Other’s capabilities and intentions

**Security = Safety** against the threats posed by the Other

Premise: State personification

*Small Nations*

**Security = Certainty** about the existence of the collective Self

Premise: man’s mortality-awareness; state de-personification
“Security” means the absence of threats. Emancipation is the freeing of people (as individuals and groups) from those physical and human constraints which stop them carrying out what they would freely choose to do... Security and emancipation are two sides of the same coin. Emancipation, not power or order, produces true security.

– Ken Booth

Security or insecurity is defined in relation to vulnerabilities, both internal and external, that threaten to, or have the potential to, bring down or significantly weaken state structures, both territorial and institutional, and regimes

– Mohammed Ayoob
Intersubjective establishment of an existential threat with a saliency sufficient to have substantial political effects...

The way to study securitization is to study discourse and political constellations: When does an argument with this particular rhetorical and semiotic structure achieve sufficient effect to make an audience tolerate violations of rules that would otherwise have to be obeyed? (1997: 25)

A successful securitization thus has three components (or steps): existential threats, emergency action, and the effects in inter-unit relations by breaking free of rules. (1997:26)
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Mortality: Death, Dread and Doubt in IR Discourse
There is no existential security in the world today. Perhaps there is assurance for the Chinese people because it is almost impossible to destroy them. But do the Poles have any assurance? ...The whole issue of prioritizing existential security has no meaning to me...

Yeshayahu Leibowitz, interview in 1966
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Mortality: Locating Small Nations

• **Scope**: Who discusses the threats and for how long?

• **Sort**: What are the threats?

• **Scale**: How dangerous are they? (How deep is the abyss?)

A small nation *continuously, widely and explicitly* frames threats as *probable and protracted*, endangering its *very existence*.

**Anxiety as unresolved fear:**
Turning anxiety into fear, thus more concrete and manageable, might help us cope, but failing to cope might turn fear into yet greater anxiety.
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**Mortality:** The Double Chasm

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<th>Abyss Without</th>
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<td>Cultural-Societal</td>
<td>Physical-Political</td>
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<td>Past-based (“do we have a past?”)</td>
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<td>Validity (soundness)</td>
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<td>Ontological (in)security</td>
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<td>“To be or not to be—what?”</td>
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<td>Losing Face</td>
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<td>Ethnic Identity</td>
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Morality
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Morality

The capacity and proclivity to **devise, and subscribe to, categories of good and evil**, involving conscience and feelings of shame, guilt, and remorse.

This stipulative definition **does not entail value judgment** and stresses morality as distinctively human.

It diverges from two **other prevalent definitions**:

- morality as “goodness,” which holds moral acts as virtuous
- morality as “benevolence,” which stresses animals’ “reciprocal altruism” and “fairness”
Who will refuse to see or even deny that today we find ourselves in the midst of a struggle that is not concerned merely with the problems of frontiers between peoples or States, but rather with the question of the maintenance or annihilation of the whole inherited human order of society and its civilizations?...

The discovery of the Jewish virus is one of the greatest revolutions that have taken place in the world. The battle we are engaged in is of the same sort as the battle waged during the last century, by Pasteur and Koch. We may be inhumane, but if we rescue Germany we have performed the greatest deed in the world...

The individual is transitory, the People is permanent.
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Morality: Political Legitimation

Public Conscience: Bridge over Troubled Water?

Philosophy

legitimacy as principled justification

Sociology

legitimacy as public support

Foundations

political philosophy, ideology, social imaginary, civil society, societal values, and public justification, public reason

Builders

Moral Agentation
Moral Structuration (Nomization)

Building Blocks

(en)Doxa: Deliberated Basic Beliefs
Discourse: The Language of Legitimation
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Morality: Political Legitimation

The four fronts of political legitimation:

- Subject: Who engages in legitimating (and delegitimating) politics?
- Object: What (or who) is being legitimated?
- Objective: What is the end of legitimation?
- Substance: What is the legitimating message?
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Morality: Existential Self-Legitimation

By the nation, of the nation and for the nation’s very existence.

Legitimating Identity

• Community members may turn from shame to shaming and blaming. This blame game may embolden virtue-legitimation to the point of sanctification: consecrating the nation as an infallible “chosen people” who must expurgate its vicious elements to retain its virtuous integrity. Often underscoring victimization and involving scapegoating.

• The nation may turn shame into guilt. The nation morally reason out its “collective conscience,” deliberating its underlying values. Such a transformation may cause it to put the moral onus not on “who we are,” but on “what we have done,” which is more malleable. Most importantly, guilt-driven responsibility, remorse and redress might enhance peace within and without.

• The nation may rebuild its ontological security by boosting its epistemic security.
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**Morality:** Existential Self-Legitimation

By the nation, of the nation and for the nation’s very existence.

<table>
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<td><strong>Values</strong> (doing)</td>
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Liberty
availability and viability of choice
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Liberty: Moral Malleability

**Challenges to the Legitimation**
(Potential for Legitimacy Crisis)

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<th>Internal</th>
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<td>Coherence (internal contradictions)</td>
<td>Cogency (clash with global norms)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>Integrity (deviation behavior)</td>
<td>Feasibility (clash with global practices)</td>
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(1) Dismiss
(2) Reaffirm
(3) Reframe
(4) Replace
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Liberty: Evolving Ethnosphere
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**Liberty:** Evolving Ethnosphere
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French Canadians
“Je me souviens” [I remember] is the official motto of Québec / Canada. Appearing since 1978 on all provincial license plates, it replaced the old motto of “La belle province” [the beautiful province].
Whatever the future of mankind in North America, I feel pretty confident that these French-speaking Canadians, at any rate, will be there at the end of the story.

-- English historian Arnold Toynbee (1948)

Over 400 years have passed since Jacques Cartier discovered Canada (1534), and it is almost four centuries ago that Champlain founded Québec (1608)... Why then is there, today more than ever, a “Québec question”? [...] We need to explain, why a group of New World Frenchmen are still asking, in 1969, the question “To be or not to be?”

-- sociologist Marcel Rioux (1978)
Indeed it seems to be a favourite object with them to be considered as a separate Nation; La Nation Canadienne is their constant expression, and with regard to their having been hitherto quiet and faithful subjects, it need only be observed that no opportunity has presented them an encouragement to show themselves otherwise.

-- The British governor to Canada, writing to London in 1810

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French / Canadiens / French-Canadians / Québécois

Louis-Joseph Papineau addressing a crowd
The Battle of Saint-Eustache, Lower Canada (1837)
French Canadians... are indeed a nation. Providence has given each nation a mission to accomplish. The mission of the French-Canadian people is to serve as a centre of Catholicism in the New World... The saving of our nation depends... on our constant, unyielding adherence to Catholicism

-- Louis-François Richer Laflèche (1866)

There is real selfishness in these two words language and blood... One can never think of a people’s language as an element of a nationality. Blood even less so, since it changes continually in modern times.

-- Gonzalve Doutre, president of Institut Canadien, (1864)
How and when will the French-Canadian people assume the place to which they are so evidently called among the autonomous nations of the earth? That is God's secret. But sooner or later that hour will certainly strike if we remain true to the Providential mission which He has assigned to us. This mission consists of carrying on in North America the work of Christianization and civilization... This providential hour will strike, be certain of it, for it is inconceivable that God could not have willed to make a true nation of the French-Canadian people whose birth and youth he has so visibly protected. It is folly to believe that the destiny of this prolific and vigorous race, which has acquired such strong roots in the St. Lawrence Valley, is to merge with its surrounding elements or to remain eternally in this violently unnatural state of a race distinct but not independent.

For despite all one might say or do, the French Canadians do form a people apart in Confederation and unless they are renegades to their mission they will never allow themselves to be assimilated.

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French / Canadiens / French-Canadians / Québécois

When a race ceases to express its thoughts and feelings in its own language ... it is lost as a race. The preservation of language is absolutely necessary for the preservation of a race, its spirit, character, and temperament.

In order to preserve and consolidate the moral unity, without which all our efforts would be in vain, the most essential things are a filial obedience to the teachings of the Church and a complete submission to the authority of the leaders who represent among us the power of the Church.

We must sometimes recall – the whole hierarchy of duties is upside down these days – that religion comes before patriotism, and the preservation of the faith and morality is more important than that of our tongue. I believed for a time in democracy and parliamentary government. Not in the sovereignty of the people as a source of authority. That is absurd, as unworkable in practice as it is wrong in theory.
Maria ... said to herself: “And yet it is a harsh land, this land of ours ... Why should I linger here?” Then it was that a third voice, mightier than the others, lifted itself up in the silence: the voice of Québec—now the song of a woman, now the exhortation of a priest. It came to her with the sound of a church bell ... Thus spake the voice: “Three hundred years ago we came, and we have remained ... if it be true that we have little learned, most surely nothing is forgot ... One duty have we clearly understood: that we should hold fast—should endure. And we have held fast, so that, it may be, many centuries hence the world will look upon us and say: These people are of a race that knows not how to perish ... We are a testimony.
The sun was setting; in gold dust passing through the cosmopolitan crowd ... the setting sun, the street that I had seen twenty years ago entirely French ... this crowd is now of races hostile to our destiny, a babble of languages, and our race is mainly represented by drunkards and twelve year old prostitutes ... all of this now struck me! We were still facing the window. I drew Ferland to the curb, and with a gesture pointed out the sun and the foreign crowd: “Look Ferland” I said: “you can watch French Canada dying.

Artist/poet Charles Gill described a chance encounter with poet Albert Ferland in May 1911, at a window overlooking Saint Laurent Boulevard
An imprudent break with history and the past, the nefarious influence of those who wish to uproot our entire nation, and, above all, political and moral colonialism: these are the causes for the almost complete annihilation of national feeling in our people... Such a mutilation of our conscience nevertheless contains grave dangers... Worse still: at times it almost seems as if our nation has lost its instinct for preservation... What is there still lacking for us to feel attached to this land and to determine to stay here at home?

First we must be... we must cease to be a shadow of a people, a shadow of Frenchmen, a shadow of human beings, and stand out as great French Canadians [...] To be! To be ourselves. To be vigorously!

The Church... the states of this world must subordinate themselves to her, for she is the fount of all power.
A change in vocation is a great upheaval for a people. They experience it profoundly, without admitting what is happening. Helplessly they stand by and watch the crumbling of old social frameworks, which are not immediately replaced. In vain the people tries to reaffirm tradition, but slowly realizes it is speaking empty words. Then it begins to doubt itself, and has periods of despair followed by bursts of irrational faith. Instead of seeking within itself the answer to new problems, it opts out temporarily either by repeating ineffective cliches like a deaf man or by ponderously importing ready-made solutions. When tragedy strikes a people whose existence has already been precarious, it produces the sensation of falling into an abyss. Only little by little will the crisis be overcome and the people gain a new equilibrium.
Nationalism will probably fade away by itself... in advanced societies, the glue of nationalism will become as absolute as the divine right of kings [...] Federalism represents the most sophisticated form of the judicial nation and embodies the exercise of reason in politics... the triumph old universalist ideals could be guaranteed only by marrying rational policy with pan-Canadian sentiment of belonging.
Being ourselves is essentially a matter of keeping and developing a personality that has survived for three and a half centuries... More is involved here than simple intellectual certainty. This is a physical fact. To be unable to live as ourselves, as we should live, in our own language and according to our own ways, would be like living without an arm or a leg—or perhaps a heart... [once self-determination is obtained] we would have within our grasp the security of our collective ‘being’ which is so vital to us, a security which otherwise must remain uncertain and incomplete.
A people that does not assert itself will perish.

[This] oblivion represents a collective memory crisis in which both the identity and the future of the nation are at stake... What is hidden behind this epistemological rupture whose consequences fill the shelves of our libraries? Shame of being ourselves? Shame of our past?
-- Serge Cantin, Philosopher (2000)
the French Canadians, especially among the upcoming generations, experience modernity (or postmodernity) in the uncertainty of a poorly anchored identity, an uncertainty just as sterile as and even more pathetic than in the past.

-- Léon Dion, Teacher and Intellectual (1995)

A primary characteristic of the Québécois identity has become its refusal to resolve the contradictions inherent to overlapping identities and nationalities. This is how most Quebecers see themselves, this has become a national characteristic of Québec and most Quebecers are comfortable with these overlapping identities.

-- Matthew Mendelsohn, Political Scientist (2002)
Zionism
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Zionism
The world has many images of Israel, but Israel has only one image of itself: that of an expiring people, forever on the verge of ceasing to be... He who studies Jewish history will readily discover that there was hardly a generation in the Diaspora period which did not consider itself the final link in Israel's chain. Each always saw before it the abyss ready to swallow it up... Often it seems as if the overwhelming majority of our people go about driven by the panic of being the last.
The world has many images of Israel, but Israel has only one image of itself: that of an expiring people, forever on the verge of ceasing to be... He who studies Jewish history will readily discover that there was hardly a generation in the Diaspora period which did not consider itself the final link in Israel's chain. Each always saw before it the abyss ready to swallow it up... Often it seems as if the overwhelming majority of our people go about driven by the panic of being the last.

Simon Rawidowicz (1869-1957), *The Ever-Dying People* (1948)
“In our little village of Anatevka, you might say everyone is a fiddler on the roof. It isn’t easy... you may ask, ‘Why do we stay up there if it is so dangerous?’ We stay because it is our home... Because of our tradition we have kept our balance for many, many years. Because of our tradition everyone knows who he is and what God expects him to do.”
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Zionism: Ontological Insecurity

Netanyahu is good for the Jews

Israel is strong with Peres

Ben-Simon: What happened in these elections?
Peres: We have lost.
Ben-Simon: Who is “we”?
Peres: We are the Israelis
Ben-Simon: And who has won?
Peres: All those without an Israeli mentality
Ben-Simon: And who are those?
Peres: You can call them the Jews
Zionism: Ontological Insecurity

A Jew Does Not Expel A Jew.
Zionism: Ontological Insecurity

“We are two different peoples... We are the Jewish people and you are the Israelis. We have nothing in common, and eventually we will win...We will defeat you with the wombs of our wives”

it looks like the Israelis want a state without Jews. We are living in an anti-Jewish state.

They, the descendants of ancient zealots, who twice already brought about our downfall, want only one thing: to bring about destruction and exile for a third time... I and they are not of the same religion.
Zionism: Epistemic Insecurity

Will Israel survive as a Jewish state 60 years from now?
Israel at 60: Proud but facing an uncertain future

From the Associated Press
11:08 AM PDT, May 7, 2008

JERUSALEM -- A Jewish astronaut greets Israel from space. Revelers try to set a record for the most people singing a national anthem. To celebrate turning 60, Israel is staging fireworks, air force flyovers and a birthday bash for anyone born on the day the Jewish state was founded.

A youth waves an Israeli flag as fireworks explode in the sky over Rabin's Square in Tel Aviv, Israel.
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Zionism: Epistemic Insecurity (existential threats)

We must never forget that the security problem Israel faces is unlike that of any other country. This is not a question of borders, sovereignty – but a matter of physical existence per se...

While it may not come about today or tomorrow, I am not certain that the State will continue to exist for long after my death.

A letter to American President John Kennedy about the Israeli nuclear project (May 1963)

David Ben-Gurion, Israel’s PM (1948-55, 1956-63)

The Israeli self (and the Jewish one before it) is an existential hypochondriac. It requires, as part of this hypochondria, double and triple safety belts, both physical and psychological, to ensure that the holocaust will not recur.

-- Israeli poet David Avidan
Zionism: Epistemic Insecurity (existential threats)

What most frightens me is that I am no longer confident of Israel's existence. That doubt was always there. I think that everyone who lives here also lives the alternative that maybe Israel will cease to be. That's our nightmare... The possibility exists that the great, heroic experiment that took place here will cease to be. That frightens me very much.

-- David Grossman, Haaretz daily (7 January 2003)

Can Israel cease to exist? ...It might not happen in my lifetime, but it can certainly happen in one or two generations.

-- Benni Zipper, Haaretz daily (January 13, 2005)
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**Zionism:** Epistemic Insecurity (existential threats)

it’s a pretty world really
it’s the new Middle East
this is Jaffa-Tel Aviv
and it’s only a week of unease
it’s a bubble teeny-weeny
and it’s you and it’s me
all that glitters is not gold
touch the bubble, it'll explode

Yehuda Poliker,
“living in a bubble” (2002)
Israel, which has both nuclear power and the strongest air force in the region, is weaker than a spider’s web.

Speech delivered at **Bint Jbeil** (al-Manar Television, 6 June 2000)
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**Zionism:** Epistemic Insecurity (existential threats)
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**Zionism:** Epistemic Insecurity (existential threats)
Our national sentiment is the reason for our existence, but our heart... cannot find peace knowing the reason alone. It also yearns for an underlying purpose to our existence... [The Jew must know] that he lives and suffers not only because he cannot die but because he must live.
Asher Zvi Hirsch Ginsberg [Ahad Ha’am] (1856-1927)

Some of the Jewish youth doubt the justice behind our arrival in Eretz Israel, the justice of Zionism... and view our actions with that same doubt. This is most dangerous... if we do not sense the justice of coming to a deserted land, which has space for the development of another people—we will also lack the fortitude to carry out this [Zionist] endeavour.
Eliyahu Golomb (1893-1945), a leader of Jewish self-defence forces in Mandate Palestine, 1944

I am shocked that there are those among us who cast doubt on the just nature of our cause.
PM Golda Meir, responding to “The Letter from 12th Graders,” 1970
The Land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people... Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books.

After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it throughout their Dispersion... Pioneers, immigrants and defenders, they made deserts bloom, revived the Hebrew language, and created a thriving community controlling its own economy and culture, loving peace but knowing how to defend itself, bringing the blessings of progress to all the country's inhabitants, and aspiring towards independent nationhood.

This right was recognized in the Balfour Declaration of the 2nd November, 1917, and reaffirmed in the Mandate of the League of Nations which... On the 29th November, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution...

The catastrophe which recently befell the Jewish people - the massacre of millions of Jews in Europe - was another clear demonstration of the urgency of solving the problem of its homelessness by re-establishing in Eretz-Israel the Jewish State...

This right is the natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State...

[THE STATE OF ISRAEL] will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex...

WE EXTEND our hand to all neighbouring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighbourliness...

[The Israeli Declaration of Independence, 1948]
An agreement with the Arabs (who are an “indigenous people”) would be possible “only when there is no longer any hope of getting rid of us, because they can make no breach in the iron wall.” Zionism’s patient perseverance would eventually prompt the Arabs to “drop their extremist leaders, whose watchword is ‘never!’ and pass the leadership to the moderate groups, who will approach us with a proposal that we should both agree to mutual concessions.”

Ze’ev Jabotinsky, 1923, *The Iron Wall*

Morality “comes before everything else,” even if necessitating the use of force, and the Zionist cause is “moral and just.”

“National self-determination” is a “sacred principle,” which justifies a Jewish state. It stipulates that “human society is built upon reciprocity. Take away reciprocity—and justice turns into a lie. That man walking in the street has a right to live only because and insofar as he recognizes my own right to live; but if he is determined to kill me then, in my opinion, he has no right to exist—and the same rule applies to peoples as well.”

Ze’ev Jabotinsky 1923, *The Ethics of the Iron Wall*
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**Zionism:** Epistemic Insecurity (existential threads)

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South Africa

- The Cape (19th century)
- Acculturation
- Union (1910-1948)
- Volkstaat OFR, ZAR (suzerainty)
- Afrikanerdom 1948-1994

Subjugation

- Afrikaner Identity

Sovereignty

- Civil Equality

Diaspora

- "one person, one vote"
Afrikaners

Such a unique human species is the true South African Boer... He becomes fully comprehensible only when we recognize the fact that he is a survival of the past; that the peculiar faiths, habits, superstitions, and virtues now peculiar to him were once the common properties of all European peoples.
-- Olive Schreiner, South African author (1896)

Can a small Volk survive for long if it becomes something hateful, something evil, in the eyes of the best in—or outside—it's fold?
-- N.P. Van Wyk Louw, Afrikaner Poet (8 August 1952)
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Afrikaners

It is an error that we have frequently opposed to suppose that as British subjects we are compelled to adopt a British nationality. A colonist of Dutch descent cannot become an Englishman, nor should he strive to be a Hollander.

De Zuid Afrikan (1830-1904), the Cape, 1835

I do not wish to submit myself to any British or any other power in the world. And I am not British, and I hope and trust never to become that... [I hope the trekkers] presently wandering around will still become a volk and live in His honor.

-- Piet Retief, a Boer leader of the Great Trek, a Manifesto, 1836
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Afrikaners

The covenant of 1838
My brethren and fellow countrymen, at this moment we stand before the holy God of heaven and earth, to make a promise, if He be with us and protect us, and deliver the enemy into our hands so that we may triumph over him, that we shall observe the day and the date as an anniversary in each year, and a day of thanksgiving like the Sabbath, in his honor; and that we will build a temple to His honor where we may worship him; and that we shall enjoin our children that they must take part with us in this, for a remembrance even for our posterity.

Memorials to The Battle of Blood River, December 16th 1838, The 64 wagons Laager (wagon circle)
Here at [the] Blood River [battlefield] you stand on holy ground. Here was made the great decision about the future of South Africa, about Christian civilization in our land, and about the continued existence and responsible power of the white race...

There is still a white race. There is a new People. There is a unique language. There is an imperishable drive to freedom. There is an irrecusable ethnic destiny. Their task is completed...

Their freedom was . . . the freedom to preserve themselves as a white race.

You stand here upon the boundary of two centuries. Behind you, you rest your eyes upon the year 1838... Before you, upon the yet untrodden Path of South Africa, lies the year 2038, equally far off and hazy. Will South Africa still be a white man's land? Will South Afrikanerdom be one and free? Will your people still know God? This century ahead will provide you an answer. The year 2038 will judge you.
I question the morality of forced assimilation or absorption of peoples... Must the white population be assimilated and lost; must all that they possess and have gained be lost? Would this be right for them? Would this be right for the Coloured and the Indian minorities who would also have to be absorbed in spite of their differences, their own ambitions, partially their own religions? Must they be assimilated and lost? And for the Bantu, would it be right for them to become the dominating group, but in the course of that process to lose their various national identities and perhaps languages and customs? [...] Would it be moral to create the semblance of freedom, but in fact allow living conditions of slavery?

[This Republic] is built on the high values, the high moral values, which Western Civilization has created through centuries and centuries of endeavour.

Racism is a sin... As a moral aberration it deprives a human being of his dignity, his obligations and his rights.

The NGK commission’s report Kerk en Samelewing (Church and Society), 1986
Afrikaners

In the 1980s, the Afrikaners faced **acute challenges** to their national legitimation of Apartheid. From within:

- **Afrikaner intellectuals** questioned the justice of Afrikanerdom (Afrikaner ethnic domination), exposing its self-contradictory propositions (**coherence**)
- **Apartheid practices** (especially in the economic domain) deviated from the alleged normative adherence to separate development (**integrity**)

From without:

- In the West, **anti-racism** ascended (**validity**)
- Mounting **international sanctions** challenged the Afrikaners’ ability to practically sustain Apartheid (**viability**)
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Afrikaners

- The *coherence* challenge at first prompted the Afrikaners to *reaffirm* Apartheid via the Bantustan policy (1959-94).

- When the Bantustans were later exposed as a sham, challenging Apartheid’s *integrity* and *feasibility*, the Afrikaners tried to *reframe it* by granting electoral privileges to the “coloreds” (The Tricameral Parliament, 1984-94). But to no avail.

- The mounting challenges eventually propelled most of the Afrikaners to *renounce* the idea, and subsequently the practice, of Apartheid.
The significance of the Czechoslovak autumn may even surpass the significance of the Czechoslovak spring... What happened is something that no one expected: a new politics has endured this frightful conflict. It has retreated, true, but it has not broken down, it has not collapsed. It has not reestablished a police state... If its political representatives must work with the possibilities as they exist right now, people from all walks of life, especially the young, are preserving within themselves a consciousness of the pre-August goals in their uncompromising entirety. And in this there is enormous hope for the future. And not for the distant future, but for the near one. -- Milan Kundera, “The Czech Lot,” Listy (1968)
I do not believe in this fate, and I think that first and foremost we ourselves are the masters of our fate; we will not be freed from this by pleading selfishness nor by hiding behind our geographic position, nor by reference to our centuries-old lot of balancing between sovereignty and subjugation... If we accepted the premise that Kundera has outlined for us – the notion that tiny, ill-placed, good, intelligent, tormented and condemned-to-torment Czechoslovakia... so that the only thing that remains for it is its spiritual (and cultivated in private, apparently) superiority over them – if we accepted this kitschy notion of our “lot,”... we would furthermore fall into national self-delusions that could paralyze us -- as a national community -- for decades....

-- Václav Havel, “The Czech Lot?” Tvar (1968)
If Havel declares that the Czech lot is a fate in which he does not believe, there is no more reason in that than if he were to declare that he does not believe in the human lot and then decided not to grow old. **A lot is what is allotted. Man is mortal and Bohemia is in the middle of Europe. Czech politics must flow from recognition of the Czech lot and the possibilities contained in it...**

Havel does not have just any sort of act in mind, but -- as he calls it -- a **risky act; an act, in other words, that does not fear the risk of failure**, which probably (indeed, let us remind ourselves once more: no hopes endured!) does not even count on success... Such action thus has only **a twofold aim: (1) to unmask the world in all its irreparable amorality, and (2) to display its author in all his pure morality.** In this way what was originally a purely moral attitude (the rejection of the unjust world) has turned into pure moral exhibitionism. **The effort to publicly demonstrate the beauty of one’s own morality outweighs the effort to change things for the better...**

The End