

Jewish Political Studies Review

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Jewish Political Studies Review 13:3-4 (Fall 2001)

Citizen Rights in Flux: The Influence of American Immigrants to Israel on Modes of Political Activism

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Although American-born Israelis are among the smallest immigrant groups in Israel, they have been at the forefront of extra-parliamentary activity in Israel for nearly thirty years. The ubiquitous presence of American-born Israelis in such frameworks is particularly pronounced in extra-parliamentary groups active in the political-security realm. The difficulty these immigrants experience in integrating themselves in the formal Israeli political structure seems to reinforce a basic "activist" political socialization received prior to their arrival in Israel. Through their activities, American-born Israelis have not only introduced new methods to the public debate, but also have helped focus attention on the potential for citizen groups to contribute - if not direct - public debate.

Israel is a nation of immigrants. In fact, over 30 percent of the current population of Israel was born abroad.¹ Among the smallest immigrant groups in Israel are those individuals who immigrated to Israel from the United States. These American-born Israelis (henceforth referred to as ABIs) number roughly 85,000; or 1.5 percent of the current population of Israel.² But despite their numerical marginality, ABIs have played a prominent role in the development and operations of extraparlimentary political groups. Indeed, ABIs can be found at the forefront of a wide variety of such groups dealing with civil rights, women's issues, "bridge-building" between religious and secular, election reform, environmental concerns and the peace process and its implications.

This work offers a glimpse into the on-going activities of the ABI political activists: their motivations, the nature of their activities and their impact on Israeli political life.

American-Born Israelis: A Demographic Overview

Most of the estimated 85,000 ABIs reside in central Israel. Besides Jerusalem, large concentrations of ABIs can be found in the Tel Aviv suburbs of Petach Tikva, Kfar Saba, and Raanana. In addition, there is a very strong American presence in settlements in Judea and Samaria and in the fast-growing town of Beit Shemesh, situated almost equidistant between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.³

American immigration to Israel has always been motivated by "pull" factors rather than "push" factors, key elements in the political activism of ABIs. Unlike most other immigrants, ABIs did not come to Israel to escape persecution or to seek economic opportunity, but rather out of a desire to realize goals related to their Jewish identity. Indeed, for the overwhelming majority of ABIs, the move to Israel was made with the acknowledgment that they were trading a materially comfortable and placid existence in the United States for the opportunity to take part in the Zionist enterprise of creating a Jewish state in the Land of Israel.

For most of the approximately 7,500 ABIs who arrived in Israel from the founding of the state in 1948 until 1967, the Zionist enterprise meant the creation of a Jewish homeland based on progressive social ideas.⁴ It is estimated that between one-third and one-half of these individuals are no longer in Israel. Many of those who have remained are associated with progressive - if not radical - groups operating both on the foreign policy-security plane, as well as with groups that focus on domestic issues.

The largest wave of American immigration to Israel was in the heady years following the Six-Day War in 1967. It is estimated that some two-thirds of the 30,000 immigrants from America who arrived between 1967 and 1973 remained in Israel. Although this group was both diverse with regard to its background and professed a wide variety of explanations for their decision to immigrate to Israel, about half described themselves as "religious."⁵ Indeed, this group was far more likely to acknowledge religious motivations in their decision to move to Israel than those ABIs who had preceded them.

Over the last quarter century since the Yom Kippur War, some 60,000 American Jews have settled in Israel. Sixty percent of this group is estimated to be Orthodox. The Orthodox not only comprise a clear majority of the American immigrants who arrived during this period, but are estimated to have a "return rate" of roughly 20 percent - only half that of their non-Orthodox counterparts.⁶

A prime factor contributing to the numbers and staying power of Orthodox immigration is the American Jewish day-school and yeshiva educational system that strongly encourages students to spend extended periods of time studying in religious seminaries in Israel. This "Israel experience" reinforces previous education concerning the central role of the Land of Israel in religious life. In addition, it serves as a basis for interpersonal ties, which contribute both toward the decision to settle in Israel and toward the success of that endeavor. In recognition of this, the Amana settlement organization, an outgrowth of the Gush Emunim movement that created new Jewish villages in Judea and Samaria beyond the pre-1967 border, has worked to actively recruit Orthodox American Jews as

potential new residents.⁷

The Political Socialization of American-Born Israelis

On the whole, recently arrived ABIs are far more likely to express "rightist" positions with regard to the peace process and territorial compromise. This conclusion is based on extensive interviews with over fifty informants, including ABI and Israeli-born activists from all points of the political spectrum, journalists, academics, professionals dealing with ABIs during and after the aliya process, and others.

Regardless of date of arrival in Israel, ABIs bring with them beliefs about political systems and the role of citizens based on Western liberal ideas which are often foreign to the average Israeli. As this author has written elsewhere,⁸ on the basis of their earlier political socialization, ABIs bring with them to Israel a well-honed sensitivity to their rights as citizens and the firm belief that they have not only the right to actively seek to impact policy decisions, *but an obligation to do so*. Indeed from Tocqueville's reflections on the emerging American republic⁹ in the early nineteenth century to recent statistical data on political behavior,¹⁰ Americans exhibit a tendency toward political activism and a belief in protest politics. Americans assume that the system will work if citizens make it work. Believers in this "civic myth" view the achievements of protest campaigns such as the civil-rights movement and the anti-Vietnam War movement as proof of the efficacy of grass-roots political protest.

If the American body politic can be viewed as an exemplar of a "civic society," then the American Jewish community is perhaps the archetypal group in such a society. Due to high levels of education, considerable concern for both domestic and international issues, and perhaps slightly insecure about their political and social standing, American Jews are greatly overrepresented and very active in both the formal and informal political frameworks in the United States.¹¹

The Israeli Political Reality

But what is the basic character of the political system in the state to which they have arrived? The prime architects of the Israeli political system were those Eastern European Zionists who came to Palestine at the beginning of the twentieth century. The type of system they put in place was modeled on the emerging democracies of early twentieth century Eastern Europe. While Western "liberal democracies" (such as the United States) stress both the political and civic rights of citizens, the Eastern European democracies give lesser priority to civic participation.

Accordingly, the Israeli political system has traditionally focused on preserving the legitimacy and effectiveness of political institutions. Not surprisingly, then, these

institutions - particularly the political parties and affiliated frameworks - have traditionally dominated Israeli society. The ebb and flow of the political fortunes of the parties have impact on almost every element of Israeli society, from civil-service appointments to the operation of health care organizations, from campus politics to appointments to the Chief Rabbinate, from deals over the control of the Jewish Agency and World Zionist Organization to the vigor with which the Histadut labor federation confronts the government's economic program.

Due to the nature of the Israeli political system, the political parties themselves have not been very responsive to voters. The major reason for this is the fact that, unlike the American system, Israelis cannot point to a particular member of the Knesset as "their representative." Israel is not divided into electoral districts which could provide politicians with a limited constituency. Israelis vote for a party, not an individual, and the number of votes the party receives determines the number of individuals on its list who will subsequently become Knesset members.

This situation is particularly irksome to ABIs. Indeed, the Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel was a key player in the public campaign that resulted in the adoption of "American-style" direct elections for prime minister, which first took effect in 1996 and was subsequently repealed by the Knesset in 2001.

For much of Israel's history, political activity was confined to the parties. It took the cataclysmic Yom Kippur War to bring about significant extraparliamentary activity. In the aftermath of the war, public pressure forced both Prime Minister Golda Meir and Defense Minister Moshe Dayan to resign as the public held their political leaders accountable for their policies and actions.

The development of extraparliamentary activity in Israel was directly linked to the erosion of public trust in the leadership of the Labor Party, which had built the major institutions of the state. The post-Yom Kippur War period saw the emergence of new Zionist pioneers in the guise of the extraparliamentary nationalist Gush Emunim movement that was committed to Jewish settlement everywhere in the Land of Israel. This movement acted as a catalyst for the settlement policy of the Likud-led governments that ruled almost continuously from 1977 to 1992.¹²

With the decline of the Labor Party came the formation of the extraparliamentary Peace Now movement that emerged in the late 1970s as the clearest and most strident voice of left-leaning sectors traditionally associated with the Labor Party. Thus, for the first time, large numbers of Israelis *across the political spectrum* sought to realize their political aspirations outside the party machinery. Concurrently, the Israeli political scene witnessed an increase in activities which are examples of direct citizen action such as public protests and demonstrations.¹³

However, the underlying political culture of Israel remains far removed from that of America. While Americans may take to the streets out of conviction to exercise their right to protest in order to influence public policy, Israelis seem to engage in direct-action

protest out of a sense of frustration that none of the "legitimate" avenues have led to the desired outcome. They may be seen as being less certain about both the legitimacy and efficacy of their actions.

David Romanoff, an ABI and one of the founders of the right-leaning Zo Artzenu ("This is Our Land") organization, spoke directly to the difference between ABI and native Israeli activists: "We are free of past memories and do not suffer from deep-seated Israeli inhibitions and commitments."¹⁴

Indeed, while the average Israeli may be far more politically astute than his American counterpart, he expresses a lower level of felt political efficacy. A study comparing how Israelis and Americans would respond to an unjust or harmful law showed that roughly 65 percent of Americans said that they would contact their political leaders, as opposed to only 5.4 percent of the Israelis. Forty percent of the Israelis said that they would do "nothing," a response offered by only 14.5 percent of the Americans.¹⁵

American-Born Israelis Meet the Israeli Political Reality

As has been seen, ABIs are likely to arrive in Israel with both ideological goals in mind and a basic predisposition to seek out avenues to influence the political system. Numerous ABIs with whom this author spoke expressed a belief that, as American born and bred political beings, they "naturally" had a stronger sense of individual civil and political rights. According to Moshe Feiglin, an Israeli-born activist from Zo Artzeinu, "There is an American approach to freedom which does not exist in this country *and I live among Americans who know the real meaning of individual freedom*" (author's emphasis).¹⁶

ABIs point out that they had made a conscious decision to link themselves to the Zionist enterprise. As such, they are more likely to have ideas and expectations from the nature of life in Israel and the actions of societal and governmental mechanisms. Speaking both to the issue of political ideology and political initiative, Eve Harow, an ABI and one of the founders of the right-wing Women in Green, noted that when one comes to Israel: "You leave your family behind, all the world that you're familiar with. That takes get-up-and-go. We're an assertive kind of people. And in order to prove that we did the right thing, we have to help Israel be the best it can."¹⁷

However, despite an interest in contributing to the advancement of Israeli society, a sense of mission, and a relatively well-defined ideology, ABIs have traditionally been conspicuously absent from the higher echelons of Israel's political parties and senior government positions. No ABI has ever held a ministerial position. Golda Meir became Israel's prime minister in later life. Born in Russia, she spent many years in the U.S., but was able to integrate herself into the elite of the Yishuv already in the prestate period when most of Israel's leadership was made up of immigrants. The only other American

immigrant to serve as a minister was Moshe Arens, who, while raised in the United States, was born in Lithuania. Arens' road to government was rather arduous. He succeeded in moving into the inner circle of the Likud party only after thirty years of political activity and service in senior positions in the Israeli defense industry.¹⁸

The Netanyahu government offers further insight into the attitudes of the Israeli public-at-large toward ABIs. Former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was, himself, a product of American society to a great degree. Raised and educated in the United States, Netanyahu was perceived to have brought to Israel a distinctly American style of campaigning and leadership. This assessment of his style and political behavior was not offered as a compliment.

Significantly, Netanyahu was seen by some as having surrounded himself with "foreigners" in the form of a Russian immigrant head of the prime minister's office (Avigdor Lieberman) and Americans in the key positions of spokesperson (David Bar-Illan)¹⁹ and chief foreign policy advisor and later Ambassador to the United Nations (Dr. Dore Gold). Some veteran Israeli columnists, who were uncomfortable with the high-profile role of Americans in the Israeli political system, even charged them with dual-loyalty. The rumored misgivings of the Israeli public concerning the "American-ness" of these two figures led them to minimize the number of their radio and television interviews in Hebrew.²⁰

Interestingly, while Lieberman's rise to power was via party activities, both Bar-Illan and Gold's lack of party support was typical of the ABI. The American-raised Professor of International Relations Galia Golan noted that ABIs tend not to easily penetrate Israeli parties for a variety of reasons. First, the Israeli parties are not simply voluntary organizations as in the United States, but an intricate social framework regulated by accepted code words and "mythology," personal loyalties, and shared experiences from school, youth organizations and military service. ABIs invariably lack the actual experiences and understanding of such dynamics.

Further, Americans tend to enter politics for different reasons than native Israelis. First, it is possible that ABIs subconsciously believe that they cannot advance within the party framework due to the lack of ties discussed above. Also, ABIs are typically drawn to party activity due to ideas identified from the outside, and not after political socialization in party associated youth groups and campus politics.

ABIs, generally considered by others and perceiving themselves to be outsiders to institutionalized politics, naturally seek alternative areas.

The Extraparliamentary Life of the ABI

Right-Leaning Groups

The principle rightist extraparliamentary group is the Yesha Council, which has served as the political arm of Jewish settlers in the territories since its establishment in 1980.²¹ Many of the council's central figures have worked and socialized together since adolescence. This cohesiveness leads to a very centralized and defined power structure into which ABIs have difficulty entering. Typically, the chief ABI working at the council is in charge of the "foreign desk," handling overseas fund-raising and contact with the foreign press.

Yechiel Leiter, a former head of "the foreign desk," noted that relatively high percentage of ABIs among the settlement population, who are far more likely to take part in public protests than their native born cohorts, they have little impact on policy.²² However, the American-accented Hebrew and abundance of signs in English at such protests speak to both the number of ABIs aligned with the council's policies and their proclivity to take to the streets.

The activities of the council, like those of other groups on the right, peaked in the months prior to the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin in November 1995. The Oslo peace process and Rabin's confrontational relationship with the settler population led to frequent and emotional protests, including a two-month sit-in of whole families in a tent city set up across from the prime minister's office in the summer of 1995.

As government and public support for the settlement enterprise waned, Leiter urged the Yesha leadership to accept new and characteristically American modes of behavior aimed at stimulating a groundswell of support. The publicity campaign launched included such characteristic American elements as hosting missions of diaspora Jews; cultivating positive, pro-active relationships with the press; encouraging ordinary Israelis to contact their elected officials; doing outreach to the general public; and coalition-building with like-minded groups. In addition, Leiter, and especially Zo Artzeinu, called for passive resistance modeled on the successful civil-rights demonstrations led by Martin Luther King, Jr. in the United States in the 1960s.

Leiter recalls that the Yesha leadership never quite fully accepted the legitimacy and efficacy of these activities. While they did become more accepting of the power of the press and mass protest, they remained convinced that the future of the territories would eventually be determined through the creation of facts on the ground - the settling of yet another hilltop.

In the wake of the Rabin assassination, activism declined. There was a sense of persecution, a result of fear of legal action and negative publicity surrounding the charge of "verbal violence." The perceived limits imposed on free speech were particularly offensive to ABIs for whom freedom of speech was the political equivalent of the Golden Rule.

The subsequent election of Benjamin Netanyahu as prime minister further reduced the ability (and, perhaps, necessity) for political protest on the part of the right. With time, however, the Yesha Council came to oppose Netanyahu, hoping (vainly) that the Likud

government would emerge from the subsequent election and abandon the Oslo process.

Despite the commitment of Prime Minister Ehud Barak to actively move the peace process forward, his election did not lead to the kind of protest seen in the days of Yitzhak Rabin. Barak succeeded in disarming the right by avoiding verbal attacks on them.

One extra-parliamentary group operating on the right with an overwhelmingly American membership and style is "Women for Israel's Tomorrow" (most often referred to as "Women in Green" due to their trademark green hats). Established in 1993 to oppose the Oslo Accords, "Women in Green" was a response to the left-leaning (and also significantly American-influenced) "Women in Black" (see below). The Women in Green group was described by a leading Israeli paper as "the most authentic and exciting popular resistance movement to have arisen here (in Israel) in the last few years."²³

Women in Green focus much of their energies toward an appeal to the American Jewish community and the foreign (and particularly American) press.²⁴ Ruth Matar, a leader of Women in Green, explained that the organization sought to influence American Jewish attitudes by emphasizing "the undemocratic nature of the Labor (then Rabin) government." During the heyday of the Oslo protests, Women in Green communication included newsletters, photographs, and even videotapes depicting both alleged police brutality toward members of the group and other attempts to stifle the activities of the group.

The group gained notoriety for plastering posters all over Israel portraying the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in the traditional Arab kefiya. Later the group would make use of this same gimmick to show their disapproval of the policy of former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The group is also known for the annual walk around the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem, which it sponsors every year on the ninth of Av, the Hebrew date on which Jews commemorate the destruction of the Temple. The annual event is part social happening for English-speakers and others from Israel and abroad, and part political statement concerning exclusive Jewish rights over Jerusalem. It has evolved into one of the largest annual political events in Israel and is a cornerstone of the group's public relations efforts.

Like other American-dominated groups on the right, Women in Green make extensive use of the Internet in their public relations efforts. Their website serves as a funnel for a wide variety of information concerning Israel, in general, and the peace process, in particular. The Internet allows the Women in Green to transmit their message to their main audience: English-speakers abroad. Indeed, the group prides itself on its chapters in major North American cities which provide a source of financial and political support for the group's agenda.

No survey of American influence on the Israeli political scene would be complete without

a discussion of those associated with the ideology of the late Rabbi Meir Kahane. Elected to the Knesset in 1984, Kahane's party was banned from participating in the 1988 elections. In February 1994, after American-born Dr. Baruch Goldstein, a long-time associate of Kahane, massacred Muslims at prayer in the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron, the Kach and Kahane Chai groups in Israel were outlawed.

In a Knesset address regarding Goldstein's actions, Prime Minister Rabin commented: "To him and to those like him we say, 'You did not emerge from us, you are not part of the community of Israel....You are a *foreign implant* (emphasis added), an errant seed. Sensible Judaism spits you out.'" During that same period, President Chaim Herzog stated that "the U.S. is the breeding ground for Jewish extremists....All of these groups, right wing and religious, collect money from naive Jews for their own purposes."²⁵ Minister of Absorption Yair Tsaban went so far as to suggest that certain "Brooklyn Jews" - those associated in any way with the ideology of the late Rabbi Meir Kahane - should be barred from utilizing the Law of Return to claim Israeli citizenship. Thus, some Israelis view ABIs as potentially dangerous extremists.²⁶

With his arrival in Israel in the late 1960s, Kahane brought to Israel a new political agenda and new methods for achieving it. While the agenda was a conscious - almost obsessive - rejection of mainstream American values, the tactics were characteristically American. Indeed, the ideas and strategies advocated by Kahane and his followers are considered a uniquely American import into the Israeli political reality.²⁷

Kahane advocated policies and ideas which were previously taboo. He was the first prominent figure in recent decades to call for the transfer of Arabs, later a policy option openly debated in the mainstream right. Transfer by agreement, as opposed to Kahane's forcible transfer, became a central plank of the Moledet party platform. Kahane was a religious Zionist who attacked the political, social, and cultural legitimacy of what he terms a "Hellenized" Jewish state, and described certain Israeli political leaders as "traitors." With his blessing, his followers established Jewish terrorist group (TNT), and made active use of show trials and other theatrics. The publication of a book extolling Goldstein, annual memorials for him and his mentor, and the continued existence of yeshivot based on Kahane's philosophy all point to the tenacious nature of the Kahane subculture which exists throughout the country - and particularly among ABIs.²⁸

The importance of the American connection of these Kahane-influenced individuals and groups is evident in the considerable political, moral, and financial support they receive from the American Jewish community. Interpersonal contacts between individuals in Israel and the United States are supplemented by information concerning the groups' philosophy and activities both in the New York-based *Jewish Press* and at the Internet site of the Kach movement. Visitors to the site are urged to continue the work of the late Meir Kahane and to sign a petition against the decision of the Israeli government to outlaw Kahane-influenced parties.

Left-Leaning Groups

There are also prominent American-born activists and leaders on the left. One example of this can be found in Peace Now, the largest and best-known extraparliamentary organization on the left. Since its establishment in 1978, Peace Now has been an active advocate of mutual recognition between Israelis and Palestinians and the creation of a Palestinian state. In addition, Peace Now is committed to the cessation of Jewish settlement in the territories.

Mordechai Bar-On, a senior member and historian of the Peace Now movement, suggested to this author that the movement had been influenced more by European peace movements than by anything American.²⁹ However, Peace Now does have certain "Ameri-can connections." Two of the top decision-makers in Peace Now are Americans: Janet Aviad and Galia Golan. Aviad notes that roughly 20 percent of those who take an active role in the movement are ABIs.

Significantly, Aviad notes that groups on the left are far more open to "foreign" ideas. "Peace Now," she says, "is an example of civic society in the American tradition."³⁰ Indeed, like colleagues on the right, Aviad invokes references to the civil rights movement and tactics of civil disobedience advanced by Martin Luther King, Jr., and she has even handed out pamphlets at Peace Now rallies that describe the principles of civil disobedience and the rights of peaceful demonstrators.

However, the American connection has many more concrete consequences. First, American Friends of Peace Now has been a source of both political and financial support for the group's efforts. Bar-On recounted that funding for the Tel Aviv Peace Now protest against the Sabra and Shatilla massacre during the Lebanon War came from American supporters.

More recently, Aviad suggested that the political preferences of Peace Now have benefited from members and sympathizers of the American Friends of Peace Now who either worked in the administration of U.S. President Bill Clinton or were central figures in the Democratic Party. Peace Now maintained an active American branch that included Clinton's national security advisor, Sandy Berger, and other prominent liberal Americans. The impact of American Peace Now supporters on the shaping of American Mideast policy was confirmed by a member of the staff of former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Related to the above, Tzalli Reshef, an Israeli-born leader (and founding member) of Peace Now, commented that Peace Now has been able to flourish and gain influence for its agenda because American-born members in the movement "understand how Americans think and how things work in America."³¹

In light of the key role played by ABIs in the feminist movement in Israel, it is no surprise that they were instrumental in the formation of the peace organization Women in Black. Formed in early 1988 as a response to the first intifada, the group became outspoken advocates of Arab rights. According to ABI Judy Blanc, one of the founding members of

Women in Black, the motivating principle of the group's activities was "the liberal feeling about racism held by people who were raised in the United States."³²

Clad in black, the weekly (Friday) silent protest of these women became a central feature of the political landscape and political consciousness of Israel. The group kept up its regular vigil for over 300 weeks; stopping only after the announcement of the Oslo Accords. Following Oslo, the group shifted its activities toward increasing contact and cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian women. A veteran member of the group, Jerusalem Municipal Council Member Anat Hoffman, estimated that since its inception, ABIs have comprised between a quarter and a third of the women actively involved in the activities of the group.³³

ABIs have also been central in the activities of two organizations on the left that approach the Arab-Israeli conflict using the language of Jewish tradition. The first and more radical of the groups is Rabbis for Human Rights, a group which addresses the Arab-Israeli conflict and the issue of Arab rights from a liberal Jewish perspective. The group's leadership seeks to apply the "prophetic mission of Jewish life: social justice and equality," to the political and interpersonal issues surrounding the Arab-Israeli conflict.³⁴ It has been active in the documentation of human-rights violations in the territories and the expression of solidarity with Arab victims of such violations.

Similarly, ABIs are disproportionately represented in the more religiously traditional, left-leaning "Netivot Shalom," which has links to the Meimad political party. The largely academic group makes the argument that the Jewish heritage gives priority to democratic and human values over territory and, accordingly, breaks with the views of the mainstream Israeli Orthodox electorate which opposes territorial compromise in principle. Significantly, despite their considerable presence in the ideological framework of Netivot Shalom, ABIs are strangely absent from the list of candidates and activists of the Meimad party.

Natives and Newcomers: ABIs in the Eyes of Israeli Colleagues

Native-born Israeli activists noted that ABIs not only stood for the right, but the obligation, of the individual to take a stand for and act upon what they believed was right. In addition, the personal connections and knowledge that these ABIs bring with them to the Israeli political scene was seen as an invaluable contribution to gaining political and financial support abroad.

The former secretary of the Beit El settlement noted: "We (native-born Israelis) may protest, but we feel - somehow - we are not being good citizens by doing this. The ABIs, on the other hand, feel they are only good citizens when they actively make their views known. This is something we can learn from."

ABIs have brought a unique set of attitudes and strategies to the sphere of

extraparliamentary behavior in Israel. The ABIs' sense of obligation and commitment toward activism and "standing up for one's rights" may serve as a benchmark of civic behavior as Israel moves toward a more representative democracy with a greater emphasis on citizen rights. Whatever the future holds, American-born Israelis have presented to the Israeli populace a conception and approach to political behavior different to that to which they were accustomed.

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Notes

1. According to 1998 *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, the population of Israel was 5,685,000. Of these, fully, 30.4 percent (or 1,714,000) individuals were born abroad. When analyzing the demographics of the Jewish population of Israel, the figures are even more striking, for immigrants comprised fully 37.5 percent of that population of 4,569,000.

2. As will be seen in the ensuing discussion, it is virtually impossible to ascertain the precise number of American-born Israelis currently living in Israel. This is due to both the lack of precise information concerning the (rumored high) return-rate of American immigrants to the United States and the fact that there is a considerable population of (mostly ultra-Orthodox) Americans who are permanently residing in Israel but have not formally become Israeli citizens due to ideological and/or financial considerations.

3. The traditionally backwater town of Beit Shemesh has seen an influx of "Anglo-Saxons" (the local term for English-speakers) over the last few years. Anecdotal information indicates that many of the young Anglo-Saxon couples populating the English-speaking neighborhoods emerging in Beit Shemesh chose not to settle in settlements beyond the green line due to political and security uncertainties concerning the future of those settlements in a post-Oslo peace process Israel.

4. Chaim Waxman, *To Israel and Back: American Aliyah and Return Migration* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1986).

5. *Ibid.*

6. Personal communication with the head of the North American Desk of the Jewish Agency for Israel, Joe Romanelli, Summer 1994.

7. It is estimated that 5-10 percent of the overall population of the settlements are ABIs. This figure reaches 10-15 percent when speaking of what are termed the ideological settlements. Personal communication, Yechiel Leiter, June 1994.

8. Avi Kay, "Making Themselves Heard: The Impact of North American Olim on Israeli Protest Politics," New York: The Institute on American Jewish-Israeli Relations of the American Jewish Committee and the Argov Institute of Bar-Ilan University, 1995.

9. I believe that the ideas and impressions that Alexis de Tocqueville had concerning America, in themselves, helped create the civic society that he believed he saw during his trip to the - then - young republic.
10. Taken from Russel J. Dalton, *Citizen Politics in Western Democracies: Public Opinion and Political Parties in the United States, Great Britain, West Germany and France* (New Jersey: Chatham House, 1988).
11. The percentage of American Jews serving in the U.S. Congress and those active in political parties far exceeds the proportion of Jews in the general population. According to figures provided by the Center for Public Policy of the B'nai B'rith, while Jews comprise only 2.2 percent of the total population of the United States, there are ten Jewish senators (fully 10 percent of the United States Senate) and 24 Jewish members of the House of Representatives (5.5 percent of the total number). www.bnaibrith.org.
12. During this period, the country was ruled either by a Likud-led government or "national unity" governments in which the Likud advanced its settlement policy.
13. Taken from Gadi Wolfseld, *The Politics of Provocation: Participation and Protest in Israel* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988).
14. Taken from Ehud Sprinzak, *Brother Against Brother* (New York: Free Press, 1999), p. 271.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*, p. 272.
17. Quoted in *Jerusalem Post*, April 21, 1994.
18. A conversation between this author and David Makovsky, then Editor-in-Chief of the *Jerusalem Post*, sheds light on the manner in which American immigrants are viewed by many in the Israeli establishment. Makovsky commented on his astonishment that a very senior Israeli journalist had referred to Arens' appointment as defense minister in the Netanyahu government as the intrusion of a "foreign implant" on the Israeli political scene. Makovsky noted that he contacted his colleague to ask how a person who had served in extremely prominent positions in the private and public sector in Israel over the past 45 years could be termed a "foreign implant." It seems that even after nearly a half a century here, Arens' American mannerisms pigeonhole him as something other than truly Israeli.
19. While Bar-Illan was actually born in Israel, he spent a significant part of his life in the United States and was more often than not viewed as belonging to that culture.
20. The source of this information is a very senior figure in the Netanyahu government

who requested anonymity.

21. "Yesha" is the Hebrew acronym for Judea, Samaria and Gaza.

22. This author carried out a series of interviews with Leiter in 1995, 1996 and 1999.

23. Maariv newspaper, as quoted at the website of the Women for Israel's Tomorrow.

24. The impact of the media on the image of the ABI activist cannot be overestimated. The fact that the foreign press - and particularly the American press - seeks out English-speakers has made the ABI a much more common commodity of network news. Leftist ABIs are virtually invisible to the reporters with whom this author spoke. While these reporters respect the ABI's media savvy, most - like Dean Reynolds of ABC News - found them a bit too slick and overheated.

25. *Jerusalem Post*, March 18, 1994.

26. An example of these attitudes can be seen in an article by Eitan Haber, former press secretary to Yitzhak Rabin, in which he questions why so many ABIs he knows have such extreme religious and political views, *Jerusalem Post*, October 3, 1999.

27. Sprinzak, *Brother Against Brother*.

28. *Ibid*.

29. This and other comments were made in the course of private communication with Mordechai Bar-On in 1994.

30. This author had a number of discussions with Janet Aviad concerning the political activism of American immigrants from 1994 until November 1999. All quotes come from those conversations.

31. Private correspondence with Tzalli Reshef.

32. Judy Blanc is typical of her cohort - a veteran ABI who has been active in a variety of left-leaning frameworks since her arrival in Israel in the 1950s.

33. In her capacity as councilwoman, the Israeli-born, American-educated Hoffman has been at the vanguard of many issues typical of interest to ABIs: feminism, religious pluralism, and a general concern with the protection of the civil rights of the citizenry.

34. In conversations with leaders of the group, such as ABI Rabbi David Forman, it is clear that the group's members identify with the role played by the late Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel who marched with Martin Luther King, Jr.

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The above essay appears in the Spring 1999 issue of the *Jewish Political Studies Review*, the first and only journal dedicated to the study of Jewish political institutions and behavior, Jewish political thought, and Jewish public affairs.

Published by the [Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs](http://www.jcpa.org/) (<http://www.jcpa.org/>), the *JPSR* appears twice a year in the form of two double issues, either of a general nature or thematic, with contributors including outstanding scholars from the United States, Israel, and abroad.