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A post-secular interpretation of religious nationalism: the case of Religious-Zionism

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ABSTRACT

Adopting the 'post-secular' critique of the mainstream discourse on 'religion and politics', this article aims to offer a novel consideration of what is commonly identified as religious nationalism. Following the post-secular cue, we highlight the importance of the nation-statist configuration of power for the very construction of the conceptual and categorical frameworks into which discussions of religion, secularity, politics, and nationalism have usually been put. We use a comprehensive study of Religious-Zionist ideology, as manifested in public debates between 1967 and 2014, to examine how this phenomenon can be interpreted without falling into the trap of employing historically and politically embodied conceptual toolkits as if they were ahistorical and universal. Our analysis highlights the foundational indebtedness of Religious-Zionism to the nation-statist configuration of power, a commitment that in effect 'politicizes' and 'nationalizes' what is seen as theology or religion.

Introduction

How are we to understand a self-proclaimed 'religious-nationalist' ideology, on the identity construct built upon it, if we take seriously the critical insights of a wide field of studies that question the very meaning of and distinction between the two organs of this hyphenated identity (i.e. religion and the supposedly secular nationalism)?

These studies[1] – we may title them under 'post-secularism' or 'critical religion' – have convincingly situated the emergence of the modern usage of these terms, categories or concepts in specific historical and political configurations of power, debunking the (nevertheless prevalent) notion that 'religion', 'the secular', and 'nationalism' are universal and supra-historical concepts, the distilled essences of which can be found everywhere and everywhen in human history, only the outer appearance of them changing from place to place and from time to time.[2] Highlighting the various contingent, ideological and political determinants of 'the western construction of religion',[3] these critical studies caution us not to accept the assumed distinction between irrational, apolitical and private 'religion' and secular, public and rational politics (especially that of the modern sovereign nation-state, which plays a major role in the very construction of

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this view of religion) as a natural 'given'. Instead, they encourage us to highlight exactly the specific political and historical makeup of the configuration of power that motivates the very construction and usage of these concepts.

As summarized by William Cavanaugh, the critical implications of these insights lie in our understanding of the historically and culturally situated power-relations that give birth to the dominant constructions of religion and secular politics:

> The first conclusion is that there is no transhistorical or transcultural concept of religion. Religion has a history, and what counts as religion and what does not in any given context depends on different configurations of power and authority. The second conclusion is that the attempt to say that there is a transhistorical and transcultural concept of religion that is separable from secular phenomena is itself part of a particular configuration of power, that of the modern, liberal nation-state as it developed in the West. In this context, religion is constructed as transhistorical, transcultural, essentially interior, and essentially distinct from public, secular rationality.[4]

Furthermore, these studies also caution us not to apply these concepts, with their heavy Western, Christian 'baggage', on non-European and non-Western histories, traditions, worldviews, etc., as if a conceptual framework emerging from a specific politico-historical context could be freely and unreflectively applied to other contexts.

Note that the thrust of the critical argument at hand is aimed *not* at a 'technical' attempt at highlighting the 'impurities' of the binary distinction (i.e. to expose 'religious' elements within the 'secular' realm and vice versa) and a corresponding expectation that the categories ought to be 'purified'. Rather, it is an epistemological intervention, seeking to make explicit – and, following this, to deconstruct – the ways in which the knowledge produced through the application of the categories comprising this foundational binary reify a specific scheme of power relations, that in turn reinforces and naturalizes the categorical distinction at hand. Needless to say, this critique of the power/knowledge construct at hand also leaves us with the task of understanding – and communicating our analysis – of the phenomena at hand without falling back to un-reflectively using those pervasive categorical schemes.

The above is necessarily but a crude summation of some of the implications of the insights of those 'post-secular' or 'critical-religion' studies. But it should suffice to clarify the question with which we opened this essay, and which we would want to further investigate below: If we keep in mind the politico-historical background of the construction of these concepts and categories, how are we to approach ideological systems and identities, which are built upon these concepts, or at least utilize them as if they were universal and supra-historical 'givens', to construct a collective 'being in the world'? And more specifically, how are we to understand non-Christian movements that self-identify as 'religious-nationalist', quite obviously building their ideologies, identities and political actions on an infrastructure that nourishes directly from what these ideologies themselves would take to be 'foreign' and even 'alien' concepts, terminologies, etc.?[5]

Zionism and the secularist epistemology

The case through which we want to approach these questions here is usually seen as a Zionist, Israeli and Jewish 'instance' of religious nationalism, namely Religious-Zionism. The very name of this politico-historical phenomenon, identity construct and

ideology – a name used by insiders and outsiders alike – assumes a rather simple premise: that the very foundation of Religious-Zionism is the uneasy (problematic or redeeming; depending on one's judgement) 'synthesis' of secular nationalism (i.e. in the case at hand, Zionism) and religion (i.e. Judaism).

Many works in the field seek to chart what almost immediately emerges as the complex, convoluted association of these supposedly mutually oppositional 'ingredients' in Religious-Zionist ideology. These works rarely challenge, if they ever raise the issue in the first place, the conceptual infrastructure of their debate on the nature and meaning of Religious-Zionism.

To understand this, it is vital to keep in mind the apparent yet often unacknowledged commitment of the wider, mainstream study of Zionist ideology to the secularist, modernist epistemology, encapsulated in the bipolarity of rational secular politics and irrational or non-rational religion. Nourishing on this secularist epistemology, the mainstream discourse on Zionism takes it as an almost trivial (and obviously unchallenged) 'given' that this modern Jewish-European nationalist ideology is, 'in essence', secular.[6]

Indeed, this predominant strand of scholarship assumes it as a 'given' that this secularity – or the secularization of Jewish identity or of Judaism at large – lies at the very core of Zionist ideology and of the political project it has motivated more generally. The argument entailed here is a (European) Jewish rendition of a well-known narrative: Zionism, it argues, is primarily the project of the modernization, secularization, and politicization of Judaism, aiming to adapt Jewish identity to the modern, dominant socio-political framework of the nation-state. This revolutionary re-creation of Jewishness comes after 'religious' aeons, in which a politically invalid Jewish religion dominated the Jewish world and subdued the vitality of the Jewish people. Secularization emerges in this framework as an unchallenged, 'natural' and universal historical development. Furthermore, this is a quintessentially nation-statist narrative, explicitly assigning theological and teleological properties to the nation-state. The latter emerges as the very heart of the modern Jewish people's existence, as virtually the sole agent instilling meaningful content into this collectivity and enabling it to remain a unified people.[7]

This mainstream study of Zionism has taken the presumed infusion of religion into nationalist politics (an infusion, which Religious-Zionism allegedly champions) to be a regrettable carrying over of an element from the past – that is, religion – into (secular) modernity. This anachronism renders a non-secularist form of Zionism missing at best, dangerous at worst, as it fails to account for the revolutionary sense of the Zionist (secularist) re-construction of Jewish politics. As one student of what at closer look emerges as the complicated relation of secularist Zionism to Jewish religion critically notes, certain historians and sociologists are so committed to the secular presupposition that they view the very notion of a religious rendition of Zionism as oxymoronic.[8]

This narrative also tends to acknowledge and even to celebrate the Zionist endeavour to fit Jewish traditions into Christian frameworks, which it sees as universal. As one influential author approvingly notes, Zionism has been compelled 'to define Judaism in the terms of Christianity [...] to find even a small thread that will enable the tying of Judaism to the world of general history [and to seek] meaning and essence to the existence of Jews by the criteria common among the nations of the world.'[9]

The prevalence of this mainstream understanding of Zionism notwithstanding, critical studies, especially those informed by a post-secular epistemology, suggest the

obvious limitations of this view. Such critical readings highlight the inadequacy of a conceptual toolkit that is born from Christian, European history to the case of Jewish traditions, histories, and worldviews at large. These critiques encourage us to problematize the notion that Judaism fits into the category of religion and to study and deconstruct the genealogy of the argument that it should be understood as such.[10] Primarily for the purpose of the current discussion, they encourage us to question and contextualize the foundational duality of the 'religion and politics' discourse. They thus highlight, for example, the apparent theological-political or 'theopolitical'[11] impetus of allegedly secular Zionist ideology, questioning the validity of a view of Zionism as an 'essentially secular' ideology.[12]

Religious-Zionism and the 'fundamentalism' framework

The dominance of the secular epistemology in the study of Religious-Zionism is apparent. While there are varying, sometimes contradicting readings of this phenomenon based on this epistemology, these are nevertheless all variations on the notion that religion and nationalism are two distinct, categorically separate realms of human activity that come into mutual play in the case of Religious-Zionism. Accordingly, much of the relevant literature focuses on exploring the nature of this interaction, highlighting the 'religious' element as the key to understanding Religious-Zionism. This literature views the phenomenon at hand as essentially theological and religious, depicting Religious-Zionism as taking over elements of nationalist ideology to promote its theologically messianic, theocratic aspirations.

Most influentially, scholars have placed Religious-Zionism in the framework of the distorting discussion on 'fundamentalism,' which culminated in the formidable 'Fundamentalism Project.'[13] A basic premise of this project is that fundamentalist ideologies and movements are, by definition, found in a conflictual relationship with the modern, secular nation-state. Accordingly, researchers view Religious-Zionism as a socio-historical attempt to bridge the apparent tension that the very hyphenated term entails. They argue that Religious-Zionist ideology indeed sanctifies the state, but only instrumentally and conditionally so: It valorizes the state and advocates loyalty to it (only) as long as the state serves the theological messianic aspirations of Religious-Zionism, which presumably centre around the Jewish settlement of the Promised Land as a necessary step on the path to 'religious' redemption.

This branch of scholarship narrates the history of Religious-Zionism as a process of gradual radicalization and of heightening utopian or messianic tension, on expense of (rational) citizenship and loyalty to the state. This process allegedly started with the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1967, but scholars mostly focus on its development since the early 1990's when Israel and the PLO signed the Oslo Accords. They suggest that the Religious-Zionist reaction to the Oslo peace process resulted in the weakening of the status of the state in this ideology, and, correspondingly, a strengthening of the theological-religious element.[14] These developments are allegedly motivated by the 'secular' state's deviation from a messianic course the Religious-Zionist ideology charts for it (the state's willingness to make territorial compromises being the expression of this deviation).

This, indeed, is a rather immediate implication of this scholarship's view of Religious-Zionism as a primarily 'religious' phenomenon, for which the territorial claims are of

a theological, not political concern: Scholars draw an image of aims (colonizing the Land, achieving complete redemption; or messianic eschatology more generally) and means for achieving it (Zionism, the state). In this context, they dedicate much of their attention to Gush Emunim, an activist movement from within the Religious-Zionist camp that spearheaded the settlement project in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. They suggest that Gush Emunim has propelled a reformulation of Religious-Zionist ideology, characterized by religious radicalization and emphasized ultranationalism. The theological aim of ushering in redemption by way of territorial expansion and settlement is allegedly Gush Emunim's primary motivator. And this avant-garde's dominance over the wider Religious-Zionists movement shifts the latter away from Zionist nationalism and towards religious messianism.[15]

The political developments since the 1967 Six-Days War, which have placed Religious-Zionism at the forefront of the settlement project and of the Israeli far right in general are understood in this framework as a gradual strengthening and realization of the always present fundamentalist potential of the Religious-Zionist fusion. The academic field offers in this regard a narrative of the gradual release of the 'religious' element from the moderating 'national' hold, in an ongoing process of undermining the state's sovereignty.

Yet the history of the Religious-Zionist politics clearly shows that time and again, when those supposedly 'theological' commitments conflicted with state policies (such as happened, for example, when the State of Israel forcibly evacuated Religious-Zionist settlers from the Sinai Peninsula in 1982 and from the Gaza Strip and the Northern West Bank in 2005), adherents of Religious-Zionist ideology ultimately complied with these policies.

The scholars studying Religious-Zionism thus seek to explain the largely 'moderate' stance (in terms of its presumed religious extremism) taken by the practitioners of this ideology. Some explain this rather 'unnatural', or at least unexpected moderation as the outcome of the cultural, social, and political ties between the Religious-Zionists and their secular counterparts; The secular is assumed to have kept the fundamentalist, messianic DNA of the Religious-Zionists at bay. Such explanations often refrain from utilizing the fundamentalism framework for the study of Religious-Zionism, yet they tend to nevertheless hold on to the epistemological dichotomy that informs the fundamentalism framework. Religious-Zionists, so this 'revisionist' (as in rejecting the dominance of the fundamentalism framework) argument goes, are indeed found in a constant tension between their religious commitments and their political affiliation with the Zionist state; but they have time and again solved the tension by adhering to the 'secular' or political (as opposed to 'religious') sanctity of the state's sovereignty. Another such 'revisionist' argument highlights religion's moderating influence on this ideology: in this view, it is exactly the 'religious' sanctity of the state that inhibits radicalization. Statism, it is argued, is a central, organic part of Religious-Zionist theology, which has been overlooked by the scholars indebted to the fundamentalism framework. This revisionist scholarship thus reads the socio-politics of Religious-Zionism as a continuous, developing endeavour to negotiate the tensions surrounding this statism.[16]

Our argument: Religious-Zionism beyond the secularist epistemology

As we noted above, this epistemologically secular gaze seems to miss the substantial degree to which Religious-Zionism could (and should, we would argue) be seen primarily

as an iteration of the theopolitics of the sovereign, modern, European-in-origin and allegedly secular-in-essence nation-state. Committed to this epistemology, the academic field (on its adjoining political discourse) has failed to see Religious-Zionism as the nationalist ideology dedicated to the theopolitics of the sovereign nation-state that it is; Religious-Zionism is at root, we would argue, a political, national(ist) ideology focused on the sovereign nation-state.

A post-secular point of view encourages us to challenge the conceptual duality and to overcome the effects of the constructed categorical distinction between secular politics and apolitical religion. This would necessarily put in question the analytical exercise of trying to decipher the correct relations between these two organs. Yet overcoming the constraints of this secular analysis cannot in itself guarantee a better understanding of the ideological and political cases at hand, since the very people who have played central roles in formulating and shaping this ideology have themselves relied on the secular epistemology to do so. Religious-Zionist ideology itself has for generations reified the secular duality, focusing much of its carriers' efforts on the manner in which they propose to 'bridge' the alleged conceptual abyss stretched between the secular politics of nationalism and religion.

The development of this ideology over the past half century reflects an ongoing, evolving attempt to solve this presumed tension. A detailed account of the developments of the mainstream of Religious-Zionist ideology between 1967 and 2014 (presented in detail elsewhere by one of us[17]) reveals a critical, continuous shift in the ways in which leading spokespeople and formulators of Religious-Zionist ideology have understood the practical meaning of its/their self-professed 'religious' commitment and its relation to secular nationalism. Yet, as a general rule, these attempts have remained contained within the Western construction of religion. In what follows, we rely on this detailed analysis, but focus exclusively on the conclusions it has produced.[18]

For roughly two decades following the Six-Days War in June 1967 (an event generally seen as instigating and marking a crucial watershed in the development of Religious-Zionism, as in the history of the State of Israel more generally), Religious-Zionists spokespeople have encountered an obvious ideological tension: Viewing Religious-Zionism as a political ideology that 'combines' religion with the general (secular) values of Zionist nationalism (regardless of- or clearly contrary to- the foundational distinction between these two realms) they have dedicated much attention to arguing against the 'duality in the composition of the nation, or the separation of the national part from the religious one.'[19] They decried the limiting of Jewish religion – which they have singled out as 'the whole substance of the nation, a dynamic factor that has shaped the whole of Jewish destiny'[20] – to the private realm, and demanded a more assertive symbolic and legal expression of this religion in the Israeli public sphere, depicting opposing judicial rulings as a 'declaration of war against traditional Judaism'.[21]

Yet they have clearly based this view on the basic assumption that, on a most fundamental, universal, and conceptual level, religion and nationalism are mutually distinct, not to be confused with one another. They were thus reiterating the foundational distinction between theology and politics by the very demand to allow the two to cohabitate in a fruitful synthesis. Thus, for example, one writer mapped the entirety of Jewish history as oscillating between 'the political-social' and 'religious' bases, noting eras in which 'harmony' or 'discord' characterized the relations between the two, and insisting that the

contemporary resurgence of the national-political 'impetus' should not cause the 'relegation of the religious basis to the side-lines'.[22] Motivated by this concern, the same writer insisted elsewhere that it is the 'deep rooted religious affiliation' and not 'the thinly nuanced' national affiliation that defines individuals and collectives: 'Only religion revealed and embodied the affiliation with the East or the West. It is only natural that national language, national territory and national memories cannot take the place of the religious ties, which touch upon the very roots of the human soul'.[23] Indeed, it is a 'clear fact', stated another writer, that 'only the religious element [...] and no other element [read: politics, nationalism]' had saved the Jews while they were dispersed among other nations.[24]

Clearly, these spokespeople have been aware of the 'problematic' nature of this demand to both hold on to the two supposed poles ('religion' on one side and 'politics' or 'nationalism' on the other), and to strive for their harmonious synthesis. Yet they seem to have been unable to overcome it, trapped as their discourse has been in a categorical confusion.

This tension came to a rather rapid conclusion with the signing of the Oslo Accords between Israel and the PLO during the first half of the 1990's, a development to which Religious-Zionists fiercely objected. Read as a culmination of 'secular' politics, the signing of the Accords has refocused the Religious-Zionist political discourse on delegitimising the 'secular' aspect of Zionist ideology, the 'peace process' being a manifestation of a wholesale (secular) abandonment of Zionism itself. Commentators depicted secularity as undermining the very foundation of the nationalist ideology: 'A third and fourth generation of Sabras [i.e. native born Israelis] have resided here [in Israel] and they do not know what ties them to this land. They cannot love the land as Jews, since they are alienated from the Torah, which is the only agent connecting the People of Israel with its land.'[25] Non-religious Zionism, argued one writer, has 'reached the end of the road and went bankrupt',[26] while another described it as 'sinking with the West in a spiritual exile', since from the very beginning this Zionism 'has not constituted for itself a deep internal centre [...] All of its solutions have been built on the external plane only [...] And it is now in a stage of spiritual and material self-destruction.'[27]

Importantly, the state remained firmly at the heart of the Religious-Zionist ideational core, as the disillusionment from secular Zionism did not translate into an abandonment of the so-called secular state. Quite the contrary: Religious Zionists solved the tension between the secular politics of the nation-state and Jewish religion exactly by the transforming the state itself and Zionist nationalism more generally into a superior *religious* value.

Yet, clearly, this Manichaean picture, too, is built on the original duality that in effects insists on distinguishing between the two organs (religion and nationalist politics). It left the formulators of Religious-Zionist ideology with a dilemma: How to account for the still dominant (at least in terms of parliamentary politics) secular Zionism, which does not, by definition, adhere to the nation-state as a matter of *religious* commitment? A dominant answer to this dilemma has been to deny in effect the very authenticity of any political ideology of Jewish nationalism that is not Religious-Zionist. 'There is no point in speaking about Religious Zionism,' noted one writer, 'since there is no other' kind of Zionism.[28] 'Those who wish to remain Zionists,' echoed another article, 'are faced with only one option – to be more Jewish. The last generation has witnessed a clear process in which: more Zionist = More religious.'[29]

Against what these writers depicted as a secular degeneracy, the religious commitment was transformed into the very infrastructure of authentic loyalty to the core Zionist values (which must amount to, so the argument went, to opposition to territorial concessions, which manifest the limiting of Jewish nation-statist sovereignty). As one writer put it, Religious-Zionists have been sent by God 'to save Zionism from itself [. . .] We, settlers, have been tasked with helping and saving Zionism [. . .] from the self-destructive forces within it.'[30]

This view, too, proved insufficient, and rather swiftly so. This became clear during the debate over the 2005 'disengagement', in which the State of Israel has unilaterally evacuated Israeli settlements (mostly inhabited by Religious-Zionist communities) and military bases from the Gaza Strip. This debate manifested a certain uneasiness with the designation of the ideology and its carriers as 'religious.' Instead, 'Judaism' – a broader and somewhat more flexible term (in allowing varying, even conflicting understandings of the meaning of the term, including 'secular' renditions of it, to cohabitate) became the key term in this debate. Thus, for example, one author, decrying the state's failure to instil Israelis with Zionist commitments (an ideological lack which enabled and legitimized the 'disengagement'), described it as a *Jewish* failure: 'After fifty years of "Zionist education", it is hard to deny that the Zionist state has failed in its mission to educate for a connection with the heritage of Judaism and for a commitment to Jewish identity [. . .] the legitimate heir of Zionist culture is the thin and shallow anti-identity called "Israeliness".'[31] Similarly, another writer identified 'the attack by the Left during the last 40 years on Jewish identity and on the foundations of Zionism' – an attack manifested in the 'deterioration of the Jewish content in public education and in daily life' and culminating in the 'destruction of Zionism and its replacement by Israeliness, and the replacement of the Jewish nation by a secular, pluralist republic' – as the larger framework in which the uprooting of Zionist settlements from Gaza should be understood.[32]

During the campaign against the Israeli withdrawal and in its immediate aftermath, some (although not by any measure all) spokespeople also expressed uneasiness with the prevalence of 'religion' in Religious-Zionist politics. They saw religion as encouraging an 'unrealistic premise' nourished by an attitude of 'many good intentions and readiness to sacrifice' but rather deprived of 'critical thinking and realism.'[33] These critics represented something of a maverick view that sought to delimit religion, and contain it, so as to decrease its influence (remaining, that is, trapped in the conceptual duality that dissociates it from secular politics). According to this view, the 'religious element' or 'belief' was no longer considered an advantage but a liability, encouraging an inclination towards a passive 'reliance on miracles',[34] an unrealistic vision in place of what should be cold, calculated (i.e. 'secular') Zionist realpolitik. The decade following the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza thus also exhibited, at least among adherents of this view, a gradual distancing of Religious-Zionism from 'religion', designating a rather abstract and utopian – as in clearly, manifestly irrelevant to day-to-day politics – role for religion in this ideology, while remaining fiercely committed to the interests of the sovereign state.

Land and security: statist theopolitics in a 'religious' guise

A consideration of the developments of Religious-Zionist ideology that is not bound to the secular binary (regardless of this binary's prevalence in the self-understanding of the

practitioners, formulators, and propagators of this ideology) encourages us to refocus our analytical attention on the *nation-statist* commitments of this ideology. It is, at root, a Western, modern nationalist ideology, at the centre of which is a rather 'generic' (and globally prevalent; regardless of normative, ethical challenges against it) political theology built on the sacralization of the state, its sovereignty, its military power, its control over territory, and the aspired absolute correspondence between its citizenry and its national identity. This, indeed, is true of Zionism at large; What distinguishes the Religious-Zionists from their non-religious counterparts are their competing understandings of the prescribed role of what this ideology designates as Jewish religion in this political theology. While the so-called 'secular' Zionists engage mostly in an adversarial dialogue with these traditions,[35] the Religious-Zionists are committed to a conservative observance of (a certain modern, orthodox interpretation) of Jewish 'religious' tradition as part of their wider Jewish (nationalist) outlook.

This nation-statist (Zionist; whether 'religious' or not) framework, re-interprets and constructs major elements of Jewish tradition in a manner that would render them subservient to this political theology; they are 'nationalize', as in made to fit and serve the ultimate values of the sovereign nation-state. We would hence better understand Religious-Zionism if we view it *not* as an attempt to harmoniously combine and reconcile the supposedly mutually antagonistic categories of nationalism and theology, but rather as holding on to both as to manifest an ontological unity focused on the state. In this framework, patriotism does not contradict theology: rather, it is in itself the essence of this theology.

Sovereignty, territory, security/military and identity emerge as the main pillars of Religious-Nationalist ideology. Of these we will focus, by way of exemplifying our argument in the remainder of our discussion here, on territory and security.

Both the academic and the public discourses tend to highlight 'the sanctity of the Land of Israel' or, more generically, maximalist territorial claims, as the most powerful gravitational core of Religious-Zionist ideology.[36] They see this as reflected in – and as the primary explanation of – the spearheading by Religious-Zionists of the settlement project in the West Bank post-1967. Students of Religious-Zionism (some of which also self-identify as unmediatedly familiar with this ideology, instilling their analysis with first-hand impression of the phenomenon[37]) describe a historical process in which the value of Land gradually took primacy and became the very centre of this ideology. One such scholar describes this critically as an 'almost total' domination of the territorial preoccupation on the Religious-Zionist political mind, in a manner that amounts to a sweeping exclusion of 'foundational, essential principles of Zionism.'[38]

The mainstream, secularist frame of analysis explains Religious-Zionism's commitment to the (political) act of 'settling (or colonize) the Land' as a matter of religious observance, to which Religious-Zionism is uniquely committed. Critically, scholars view it as such a foundational religious value – an ultimate theological end in and of itself – that is renders the nation-state and Zionism writ large mere means for its achievement; or, at the very least, they view it as an 'independent' religious value that often competes with the Religious-Zionist political (as in 'non-religious') commitment to the state. Accordingly, this mainstream scholarship reads the recent history of Religious-Zionism – dominated by tensions vis-à-vis the State of Israel surrounding the settlements project – as an ongoing, volatile conflict between its political and religious commitments.

Crucially, practically all variations of the argument regarding the 'religious' or theological centrality of the value of the Land do not view this maximalist territorialism as part of a comprehensive modern, nationalist, *political* ideology (as they would claim, for example, in the case of the Labour Zionists members of the 'Movement for Greater Israel'); instead, they mark it as 'religious,' and hence at least by implication, as non-political, as in not given to political reasoning.

Yet a careful reading of the Religious-Zionist public discourse surrounding the main historical flashpoints of this conflict in the past half century clearly shows that central as the territorial claim has been for this ideology, it has on most occasions remained subservient to the ultimate values of the sovereign state, (political) nation and nationalism. Importantly, spokespeople for this ideology framed territorial claims primarily as a matter of political sovereignty and strategic calculation, not as a matter of 'religious' dictates. Explicitly 'theological' arguments regarding the holiness of the Land of Israel have been marginal in this discourse, if they were present at all. Instead, Religious-Zionist spokespeople have focused on what the mainstream argument will designate as quintessentially 'secular' arguments, focused on a generic national claim for control over territory.

Thus, for example, one of the arguments that has dominated the Religious-Zionist discourse on the Land (mostly in the first decades following Israel's occupation of territories from neighbouring countries in June 1967) focused on Israel's – or the Jews' – 'historical right, which cannot be questioned'[39] to buttress the claim to these territories. And much like their 'secular' counterparts, Religious-Zionist spokespeople, too, agreed that it must be the State of Israel who is tasked with realizing this historical right.

The 'historical right', we must stress, is not a theological but a nationalist concept. Indeed, it is as prevalent among 'secular' – and vehemently secularist, anti-religious as a matter of ideology – Zionist leaders as it has been among Religious-Zionists. Religious-Zionist writers presented this notion of a (Jewish, Zionist) 'historical' right over the Land as an axiom that needs no explanation, clarification, or qualification. They decried 'the enemies of the historical right' who present it as inconsistent with the values of '"enlightened" people,'[40] and equated 'our right over the Land and in it' to 'our right to life, which cannot be denied.'[41] It was this right that ultimately justified their objections for territorial concessions in the 1970's and 1980's.

Interestingly, this argument has gradually lost its dominance – rather in line with the mainstream Zionist discourse, which was confronted by a 'post-Zionist' re-examination of some foundational ideas of Zionist nationalisms. Among Religious-Zionists, arguments of the 'historical right' type were replaced by reasonings focused on security concerns and considerations. Commentators presented the Religious-Zionist objections to territorial concessions as a matter of strategic calculations, according to which Israeli control over (primarily but not exclusively) the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank are essential for guaranteeing the security of the state. The value hierarchy here is quite clear: the state and its security are of the highest value; 'the Land,' or a maximalist territorial claim, is but a means to secure this value, and not an ideological end in for itself. Land/territory are rendered a mere political tool, which is elevated in importance due to its role in guaranteeing the security of the ultimate end, the sovereignty of the state.

The instrumental importance of the maximalist territorial claim in the service of the higher value, that of the 'will' or interest of the sovereign state, was most strikingly apparent against the background of the Religious-Zionist opposition to the 2005 Israeli withdrawal from Gaza. The most central and dominant argument motivating this opposition was the threat to the state's security, an imminent threat if it follows through with the plan. 'Rockets shot by Hamas will easily reach the heart of Israel,' commentators warned, 'once Israel withdraws from the Gaza Strip and settlements there are dismantled,'[42] and the 'monster of terror'[43] will have a free hand. They presented the Israeli settlements within the Gaza Strip as a protective wall for the rest of Israel proper, and warned of the military and political harm the evacuation is bound to cause. Gaza, 'this pressure cooker,' they warned, will 'keep on boiling, and its only valve will be directed at Israel [. . .] The security burden will not significantly ease, and the IDF [the Israeli military] will be forced to keep on penetrating Gaza [. . .] while the political difficulty of carrying such attacks will only increase.'[44]

This was a reasoning of the nationalist kind with barely any connection to what the mainstream discourse on Religious-Zionism highlights (rather exclusively so) as 'the religious sanctity of the land' that allegedly motivates the Religious-Zionist maximalist territorial stand.

Clearly, at certain points in Israel's history (such as the evacuation and demolition in 1982 of Yamit, an Israeli settlement in the Sinai Peninsula, the redrawing of the lines of control over the West Bank as part of the Oslo Accords during the mid 1990's and the evacuation of Israeli settlements from the Gaza Strip in 2005), the value of 'the Land' clashed with that of the loyalty to the sovereign state. But this should not be understood (nor was it viewed by the people experiencing it) as a clash between so-called 'religious' and 'secular' commitments of Religious-Zionist ideology: Rather it was a clash between conflicting nationalist commitments, a clash that was similarly experienced by vehemently secularist Zionist ideologues throughout the history of Zionism and the State of Israel. Time and again this tension was clearly decided in favour of the ultimate value, that of loyalty to the sovereign state. Furthermore, even when speakers used a language that is rooted in a traditional, so-called 'religious' language to advocate their maximalist territorial arguments, they have clearly positioned these arguments under the auspices of the nation-state.

The values of militarism and security, which have gradually grown in dominance, culminating in their occupying the very centre of Religious-Zionist ideology in the past decade or so, are also a rather stark expression of the all-encompassing commitment of this ideology to the politics of the sovereign nation-state. Militaristic political ideals – sacralizing the security of the state and the nation and their armed forces, who in turn are endowed with the most important ('sacred' is a word commonly used in this context) task of guaranteeing this security, rendering this an absolute value, and justifying in its name violence and bloodshed – are indeed by definition bound to the nation-statist thought.

Religious-Zionist ideology's valorization of the state's security was most explicitly pronounced in the context of justifying and rationalizing the death of Israeli soldiers as the price demanded for guaranteeing this security. 'The state exists by the blood of the heroic sons, who in their death command that Israel shall reside in security;' the fallen soldiers 'command us to heroically and self-sacrificially defend the state.'[45] Their death 'is the price that the nation pays in its constant fight for its existence.'[46] Even if this death

was the result not of a military battle but of a training accident, it is justified since it is 'the price excreted from us' to keep the military prepared to fight.[47]

This became all the more pronounced against the background of violent conflicts around which there was no consensus among Israelis. Especially when critics (usually coming from the Zionist Left) doubted whether such deaths were justified, questioning the necessity, reason and morality of the violent conflicts into which the Israeli government sent its armed forces (this was the case, most evidently, during the 1982 and 2006 wars in Lebanon as well as during a series of Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip between 2009 and 2014), Religious-Zionist pronouncements became all the more dominated by intensive, militant militaristic tone. Our reading reveals that cumulatively, Religious-Zionist platforms voiced an explicit argument: the security of the state is an absolute value, that justifies the highest of sacrifices, that of soldiers' lives. Indeed, a dominant theme in the Religious-Zionist militaristic discourse surrounding these events has been the demand that the Israeli military is sent to fight, even if this entails the death of Israeli soldiers. 'There must be no doubt' insisted one writer: 'we must not avoid carrying a military operation that could result in the death of hundreds of soldiers'[48]; We must guarantee the state's security, even if in the price of 'loss of tens of tanks,' chimed another.[49] Commentators made this demand against a background of public debate, which questioned the merit of this military adventures, exactly because of their price in human lives.

Even more pronounced was this valorization of the state's security when at stake where the lives of civilians from the enemy's side. There has been little doubt among formulators of the Religious-Zionist stance on these armed conflicts that such conflicts are a normal feature of the lifecycle of states, and that in this context the killing of civilians on the enemy's side, unfortunate as it may be, can be justified and acceptable. 'If civilians are killed [. . .] it is unfortunate, but sometimes it is the unavoidable result of war;'[50] 'the heart aches, but as long as there are wars [. . .] there will be victims of war.'[51] Above all, this stance was most pronounced in the determined demand these formulators made that Israeli military aggression would be further heightened. This was especially apparent during the first and second Palestinian revolts in the late 1980's and early 2000's, as spokespeople of Religious-Zionism repeatedly demanded that Israeli soldiers are given a free hand to deal with these revolts. 'The only way to restore calm is by forcefully reacting to the thugs and those who sent them',[52] and the Israeli military 'should be allowed to do its work according to accepted norms and rules, and without imposing new norms with which no soldier can comply.'[53] This was so also during the 2006 war in Lebanon and the following operations against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, as these spokespeople called upon the Israeli leadership to use all needed force, and to engage in a wider, determined military campaign aimed at an ultimate guaranteeing of the state's security. 'What is required' in such confrontations, claimed one editorial, is that the Israeli military is allowed to hit the 'soft belly' that hides behind the 'tough shell' of military forces fighting against Israel.[54] Another writer, furious at what he saw as the indecisiveness of the political leadership when confronted with the spectre of casualties, wondered: 'have we forgotten that you go to war to win it?'[55]

A striking feature of this Religious-Zionist militaristic discourse is its utter indifference to the kind of language, argumentation and reasoning that would usually (that is, when seen through the prevalent religious-secular binary) be put under the heading of

'religious.' One would be hard pressed to find such 'religious' aspects of this militaristic thought, with its focus on 'secular' values of security and statism.

Conclusion: a theology of the state

Needless to say, the Religious-Zionist discourse does offer some – few and dispersed, but nevertheless apparent – appearances of notions and argument of a theological nature. How are we to understand these in the context of what emerges as a quintessentially modern, nation-statist political thought? One crucial part of the answer has to do with the nature of these theological language and argumentations: they do not fit what the prevalent discourse will mark as the category of 'religion'. As we suggested above, this mainstream discourse does not consider the traditional Jewish elements within so-called 'secular' Zionist ideology as 'religious', no matter how deeply rooted they may be in what this same discourse sees as 'religion'; instead, it would view the appearance of these elements within Zionism as a product of their 'secularization.' These theological language and argumentations are seen as essentially modernized, politicized and 'rationalize', and they are ultimately aimed at the politics of the nation-state: they fit neither within an apolitical, individual, and a-rational notion of religion, nor within the frame of 'fundamentalism', which would put the interest of the state under a higher religious diktat.

Furthermore, they cannot be framed as one side of an alleged ideological 'synthesis' of two allegedly separated-in-principal organs. The Religious-Zionist nation-statist commitment (or its patriotism) does not clash with, serve, or complement theology; rather, it is the very essence of this theology. The God, who has traditionally occupied the very centre of Jewish theology, was now joined, if not even pushed aside, by the state. At best, God is seen as sanctifying the state, shifting the focus away from the 'Sovereign of All Worlds' to the (political, this-worldly) sovereign. Either way, Religious-Zionist theopolitics marks nationalism and the state, not God, at the ultimate purpose.

Religious-Zionist spokespeople have consistently idealized the modern, sovereign nation-state as the ultimate cause of their political thought. The political stances they have formulated and taken have been invariably derived from considerations of the interests of the state and its security, which they clearly mark as the ideology's highest values. This has been true also of the 'more theological' rhetoric these spokespeople offered: their theology, too, focused on the state. They have offered so-called 'religious' formulations to the otherwise well-rehearsed nation-statist argumentations that valorize the modern, sovereign state. These formulations 'mobilize' God to sacralize the state and to elevate its status beyond all others. If the mainstream, so-called 'secular' Zionist position has been, in the apt formulation of Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, that 'God does not exist, but he promised us the Land,'[56] then the Religious-Zionist version would argue with the first part of the sentence, but not with the sacralization of the state, either implied or explicated, which the second, politically important second part of this proclamation.

Religious-Zionist ideologues have gradually become distanced from (an apolitical notion of) 'religion,' focusing instead their ideological fervour on the state, its security, and its military. This development became especially apparent during the campaign against the Israeli 'disengagement' from the Gaza Strip and the ideological soul searching that succeeded it: It was exactly against the background of the most difficult ideological

crisis experienced by the Religious-Zionist camp that saw the emergence of a certain (although surely not dominant) interpretation, according to which 'religion' was no longer presented as a central ideational pillar. What in the past was understood to be a matter *Zionist* expediency was now also discussed by some as a problematic feature of Religious-Zionist ideology. It was against this ideological crisis that commentators sometimes relegated 'religion' to the side-lines of the Religious-Zionist narrative. Statements voicing apprehension regarding the presence of religion in Religious-Zionist politics have grown stronger (although they were not left uncontested). Their solution to the apparent tension between what they viewed as the two, complimentary organs of Religious-Zionist ideology has been to relegate religion to the private realm, and to bar it from the field of politics. 'Religion' was replaced in the context of this argumentation by 'Judaism' or 'Jewish identity', as these are understood by the modern, nationalist, Zionist discourse. Like the founding ideologues of the Zionist movement, a growing number of Religious-Zionist spokespeople, too, came to argue (either implicitly or explicitly) that Judaism is not necessarily (or not even primarily) about 'religion': rather, it is about (political) nationalism, and its primary value is patriotism.

An understanding of the strong gravitational force of nation-statism that dominates Religious-Zionist ideology necessitates the release of its analysis from the grip of the Western, secularist epistemology, which developed as part of the modern configuration of power, that *of* the modern nation-state. It is this configuration of power that naturalizes nationalism and the sovereign state by identifying them as 'secular', while delegitimising competing ideologies by identifying them as 'religious', rendering them incompatible with the modern notion of politics. A vast academic field dedicated to the study of Religious-Zionism, and of religious nationalism more generally is based on this conceptual scheme, attempting to understand the ideology and political phenomenon at hand by utilizing a historically and politically situated set of terms – primarily, of course, 'religion' and 'the secular' – as if they were 'neutral', universal, and ultimately unproblematic. These studies invest many resources in trying to pin down the exact type of relationship between the two mutually exclusive categories among adherents of an ideology that proclaims exactly to 'combine' them, unwittingly (in the best of cases) accepting the heavy political charge of what Timothy Fitzgerald dubbed as the (European, colonial and Christian) 'discourse on civility and barbarity'[57] from which these categories emerge.

This is further complicated by the fact that the formulators and propagators of Religious-Zionist ideology themselves are also employing this Western, secularist and nation-statist epistemology to shape the ideology and identity they are propagating. Religious-Zionist identity has for generations been built on the foundational distinction between Jewish 'religion' and 'secular' Zionism, understood itself in terms of these oppositional categories, and has consistently struggled to negotiate the tension that naturally arises from their 'cohabitation' within this ideological framework. The most recent developments this ideology has undergone suggest that this tension has been ultimately (but surely not finally) resolved by a gradual exclusion of what was seen as 'religion' from the political area, and a tighter realignment of Religious-Zionism with 'secular' Zionist political thought.

Our analysis highlights, then, the foundational indebtedness of Religious-Zionism to the nation-statist configuration of power, a commitment that in effect 'politicizes' and

'nationalizes' what is seen as theology or religion. If we wanted to insist on employing the secular-religious binary, we would be forced to conclude that ultimately Religious-Zionism, too, follows in the footsteps of the mainstream 'secular' Zionist ideology in 'secularizing' Judaism. Yet the Religious-Zionist proclaimed adherence to Judaism as a religion (as opposed to the secularist Zionist camp, which proclaims itself either indifferent or outright hostile to this religion) charges this designation with a unique effect: it suggests that Religious-Zionism adheres to a secularized sense of Jewish religion. This, indeed, is a rather cumbersome formulation, that may simply end up further obscuring the picture. Instead, as we suggested above, a focus on the dominant configuration of power that in effect shapes the very terminologies or conceptual toolkits usually employed in the discussion of Religious-Zionism – and of religious nationalism more generally – proves to be most fruitful. It allows us to see how the sovereign state, cast in those soterial roles as guarantor of national (and individual) existence, in effect shapes not only the meaning of 'secular politics' but also of 'religious' commitments, which may very well end up – contrary to what a 'Fundamentalism Project' view of religion may suggest – in the service of the nation-statist sovereign.

Notes

1. It would be futile to try and reference here all relevant works. Our summary below relies primarily on: T. Fitzgerald, *The Ideology of Religious Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); T. Fitzgerald, *Discourse on Civility and Barbarity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); W. T. Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); T. Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2005); D. Dubuisson, *The Western Construction of Religion: Myths, Knowledge, and Ideology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007); T. Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); T. Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003); E. S. Hurd, *Beyond Religious Freedom: The New Global Politics of Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015); W. B. Hallaq, *The Impossible State: Islam, Politics, and Modernity's Moral Predicament* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); S. Mahmood, *Religious Difference in a Secular Age: A Minority Report* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016); T. Asad et al., *Is Critique Secular?: Blasphemy, Injury, and Free Speech* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013); H. A. Agrama, *Questioning Secularism: Islam, Sovereignty, and the Rule of Law in Modern Egypt* (Chicago ; London: University Of Chicago Press, 2012).
2. Needless to say, the view of nationalism as a quintessentially modern phenomenon that nevertheless tells a story of its primordial roots has become the orthodoxy of the study of nationalism, and there is not much new to claim in this regard. Our point here has to do with the view of this 'thin centred ideology' (M. Freeden, 'Is nationalism a distinct ideology?', *Political Studies*, 46 (1998), 748–65, at 750) as the epitome of secular politics.
3. Dubuisson, *The Western Construction of Religion, op. cit.*, Ref 1.
4. Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence, op. cit.*, Ref 1, p. 59.
5. Preferring to focus on our case study to illustrate the wider epistemological point at hand, we would not assume to offer here an exhaustive review of the wider field concerned with religious nationalism. For the purpose of this article, suffice is to say that much of the discussion in this field has been built exactly on the premise of the essential distinction between religion and nationalist politics, depicting religious nationalism as the disruption of

this distinction, a 'fusion of religious and national identities and goals' (A. Grzymala-Busse, 'Religious Nationalism and Religious Influence', *Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of Politics*, <https://oxfordre.com/politics/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228637-e-813> accessed 12.7.2020 (2019), 1.) 'such that they are inseparable' (B.-A. J. Rieffer, 'Religion and nationalism: Understanding the consequences of a complex relationship', *Ethnicities*, 3 (2003), 215–42, at 225.). See specifically Juergensmeyer's works: (M. Juergensmeyer, 'Religious nationalism in a global world', *Religions*, 10 (2019), p. 97; M. Juergensmeyer, 'The global rise of religious nationalism', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 64 (2010), pp. 262–73; M. Juergensmeyer, 'The worldwide rise of religious nationalism', *Journal of International Affairs*, 50 (1996), pp. 1–20; M. Juergensmeyer, *The new cold war?: Religious nationalism confronts the secular state* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

6. G. Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1995). S. Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State* (New York: Basic Books, 1981). For a critique of this view that is nevertheless trapped in the secularist epistemology, see Y. Salmon, *Religion and Zionism: First Encounters* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2002).
7. Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism, op. cit*., Ref 6, p. 221.
8. Y. Salmon, 'Religion and nationalism in the early Zionist movement', in J. Reinharz et al. (Eds.) *Jeweish Nationalism and Politics: New Perspectives* (Jerusalem and Boston: The Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History and the Tuaber Institute, Brandeis University, 1996), pp. 115–40, at 117.
9. S. Avineri, *Varieties of Zionist Thought* (Tel-Aviv: Am-Oved, 1980), 21.
10. For example: D. Boyarin, *Judaism: The Genealogy of a Modern Notion* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2018); L. F. Batnitzky, *How Judaism Became a Religion: An Introduction to Modern Jewish thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); D. Herman, 'Christian Israel', in Cooper, Davina et al. (Eds.) *Reimagining the State: Theoretical Challenges and Transformative Possibilities* (London: Routledge, 2019), pp. -114–32.
11. We are borrowing the term 'theopolitics' from William Cavanaugh. As he explains, the term is aimed at highlighting that 'Far from being "secular" institutions and process,' the state, civil society and globalization are 'ways of imagining [that] organize bodies around stories of human nature and human destiny which have deep theological analogies. In other words, supposedly "secular" political theory is really theology in disguise.' W. T. Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination: Christian Practices of Space and Time* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2003), p. 2.
12. Y. Yadgar, *Sovereign Jews: Israel, Zionism, and Judaism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2017).
13. Esp. M. E. Marty and R. S. Appleby (Eds.), *Fundamentalisms Observed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); M. E. Marty and R. S. Appleby, *Fundamentalisms and Society: Reclaiming the Sciences, the Family, and Education* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); M. E. Marty and S. R. Appleby (Eds.), *Fundamentalisms and the State: Remaking Polities, Economies, and Militance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). For a sharp critique of the project see: P. L. Berger, 'Secularism in retreat', *The National Interest*, 46 (1996), pp. 3–12, at 3.
14. A. Naor, 'The Religious-Zionist argument against the Israel – PLO agreement: A reality test to ideology', in A. Horowitz (Ed.) *Religion and State Yearbook 5753–5754* (Tel-Aviv: The Centre for Jewish Pluralism, 1994), pp. 54–88; A. Horowitz, 'Religious-Zionism – from Zionist radicalism to religious-national fanaticism', in D. Arieli-Horowitz (Ed.) *Religion and Politics in Israel* (Tel-Aviv: The Centre for Jewish Pluralism, 1996), pp. 41–55; B. Brown, 'The "da'at tora" debate in Israeli Religious-Zionism: The background, the stances, and the meanings', in A. Cohen and I. Harel (Eds.) *Religious-Zionism: The era of change. In Honour of Zebulon Hammer* (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 2004), pp. 422–74, at 456.
15. G. Aran, 'Jewish Zionist fundamentalism: The Bloc of the Faithful in Israel (Gush Emunim)', in M. E. Marty and R. S. Appleby (Eds.) *Fundamentalism Observed, op. cit*.,

Ref. 13, pp. 265–344; G. Aran, 'From religious Zionism to Zionist religion: the roots of Gush Emunim', *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* (1986), pp. 116–43; G. Aran, 'A mystic-messianic interpretation of modern Israeli history: The Six-Day War in the religious culture of Gush Emunim', in S. Deshen et al. (Eds.) *Israeli Judaism, Studies of Israeli Society*, 7 (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1995), pp. 197–212; Ṣvi Raʿnan, *Gush Emunim* (Tel Aviv: Sifriyat Poʿalim, 1980); A. Rubinstein, *From Herzl to Rabin: A Hundred Years of Zionism* (Jerusalem: Schocken, 1997), pp. 138–82; U. Tal, *Myth and Reason in Contemporary Judaism* (Tel Aviv: Sifriyat Poʿalim, 2011), pp. 136–55.

16. A. Cohen, 'Patriotism and religion: Between coexistence and confrontation', in Ben-Amos, Avenr and D. Bar-Tal (Eds.) *Patriotism: Homeland Love* (Tel-Aviv: Haqibutz Hameuḥad and Dyonon, 2004), pp. 453–78; A. Cohen, 'Changes in the Orthodox camp and their Influence on the deepening religious-secular schism at the outset of the twenty-first century', in A. Dowty (Ed.) *Critical Issues in Israeli Society* (Westport and London: Greenwook, 2004), pp. 71–94; E. Don-Yehiya, 'The book and the sword: The nationalist yeshivot and political radicalism in Israel.', in M. E. Marty and R. S. Appleby (Eds.) *Accounting for Fundamentalism* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 264–302; Don-Yehiya, 'Messianism and politics: The ideological transformation of religious Zionism', *Israel Studies*, 19 (2014), p. 239; M. Hellinger et al., *Religious Zionism and the Settlement Project: Ideology, Politics, and Civil Disobedience* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2018).
17. A comprehensive analysis of thousands of publications in Religious-Zionist's platforms focused on the public debate they offered surrounding the following critical events in Israeli history: The Six Day War (1967), the Yom Kippur War (1973), the attempts at establishing a settlement in Sebastia and the first wave of the settlement led by Gush Emunim (1974–1975), the Egyptian-Israeli peace process and the signing of the Camp David Accords between the states (1975–1979), the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Sinai and the evacuation of Yamit (1982), Israel's war against the PLO in Lebanon (1982), the capturing of the 'Jewish underground' terrorist organization (1984), the outbreak of the first Palestinian uprising (1987–1988), the negotiations between Israel and the PLO and the signing of the Oslo Accords (1993–1995), the terrorist attack by a settler on the Hebron mosque (1994), the signing of the peace agreement between Israel and Jordan (1994), the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (1995), Israel's 'Defensive Shield' operation in the West Bank (2002), the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip (2002), the Second Lebanon War (2006), Israel's 'Cast Led' operation in the Gaza Strip (2008–2009), the debate over the prisoners swap in 2011, and Israel's two military operations in Gaza in 2012 and 2014. The full presentation and analysis of this empirical work is published (in Hebrew) in: N. Hadad, *Religious Zionism: Religion, Nationalism and Politics* (Jerusalem: Carmel, 2020). In the following, we rely on this analysis, but do not repeat it in detail.
18. Our use of few primary sources below is made for illustrative purposes only. For a comprehensive presentation and analysis of these sources see Hadad, *Ibid*.
19. A. L. Gelman, 'Beyn pilug le'iḥud', *Haṣofe* (23 February 1968).
20. S. B. Auerbach, 'Zehut yehudit veqiyum yehudi', *Haṣofe* (29 Nov.1986).
21. A. L. Gelman, 'Giluyim sheliliyim', *Haṣofe* (29 November 1968).
22. S. B. Auerbach, 'Kol ha'areṣ ḥaziṭ', *Haṣofe* (11 Jul.1969).
23. Auerbach, *op. cit*., Ref 20.
24. A. L. Gelman, 'Beyn ʿavar veʿatid', *Haṣofe* (24 January 1969).
25. M. Breuer, 'Eineni mevin et qolot haye'ush haboqʿim mishurotenu', *Nequda*, 184 (1995), p. 13.
26. ʿAzriel Ariel, 'Ha'im ṣadqa haderekh ha'aguda'it?', *Nequda*, 175 (1994), p. 16.
27. D. Shalit, 'Pesaḥ she'aḥarei purim', *Nequda*, 176 (1994), p. 16.
28. D. Be'eri, 'Hamaslulim nifredu', *Nequda*, 193 (1996).
29. M. Felix and Y. Pelai, 'Ru'aḥ aḥeret', *Nequda*, 196 (1996), p. 14.
30. Y. Ḥalamish, 'Lehaṣil 'et haṣionuy meʿaṣma', *Nequda*, 175 (1994), p. 175.
31. Y. Klein, 'Hameḥa'a ha'ilement', *Nequda*, 282 (2005), p. 34.
32. M. Dan, 'Shetaḥim temurat ḥalom', *Makor Rishon* (2005), p. 19.

33. Y. Sorek, 'Hapeʿula nigmera', *Makor Rishon* (7 October 2005).
34. Y. Ariel, 'Ma'amin vezoreʿa', *Makor Rishon* (2 September 2005).
35. C. S. Liebman and E. Don-Yehiya, *Civil Religion in Israel: Traditional Judaism and Political Culture in the Jewish State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 2; E. Don-Yehiya, 'Secularization, negation and accomodation of conceptions of traditional Judaism and its terms in Socialist Zionism', *Kivunim*, 8 (1980), pp. 29–46; Yadgar, *Sovereign Jews, op. cit*., Ref 12, ch. 6.
36. Aran, in Marty and Appleby (Eds.), *Fundamentalism Observed, op. cit*. Ref 13, pp. 265–344; A. Naor, *Greater Israel: Theology and Policy* (Haifa: Haifa University Press, 2001); Hellinger et al., *Religious Zionism and the Settlement Project, op. cit*., Ref 16.
37. A. Sagi and D. Schwartz, *Religious Zionism and the Six Day War: From Realism to Messianism*, trans. B. Stein (London: Routledge, 2018).
38. A. Sagi, 'From the Land of the Torah to the Land of Israel – From one broken dream to another: A study of the crisis in religious Zionism', in A. Sagi and D. Schwartz (Eds.) *A Hundred Years of Religious Zionism. Vol 3: Philosophical Aspects* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2003), 457–74, at 461; D. Schwartz, *Religious Zionism: History and Ideology*, trans. B. Stein (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2008); D. Schwartz, *Faith at the Crossroads: A Theological Profile of Religious Zionism*, trans. B. Stein (Leiden: Brill, 2002).
39. S. Qadari, 'Ḥazon vehitgashmuto', *Haṣofe* (29. Mar. 1972).
40. K. Shabtai, 'Hashoḥakhim et haʿiqar', *Haṣofe* (17 August 1967).
41. S. Z. Shragai, 'Shelosha ʿiqarim levisus hasbaratenu', *Haṣofe* (25 July 1969).
42. H. Hoberman, 'Qasamim baderekh le'ashqelon', *Basheva*ʿ (15 October 2004).
43. B. Haʿeṣni, 'Zo hitnatqot vezo sekhara', *Makor Rishon* (18 June 2004).
44. Y. Gelber, 'Ha'im hahitnatqut maʿasit?', *Nequda*, 274 (2004), p. 42.
45. Editorial, 'Nerut gevura', *Haṣofe* (4 April 1968).
46. Editorial, 'Me'arayot gaveru', *Haṣofe* (15 October 1973).
47. Editorial, 'Ason kaved', *Haṣofe* (12 May 1977).
48. H. Lifschitz, 'Ha'im hamemshala temale 'et ḥovata hahistorit?', *Nequda*, 293 (2006), p. 18.
49. C. Glick, ''Im tirṣu, ein zu agada ṣefunit', *Makor Rishon* (28 July 2006).
50. Editorial, 'Haginui vehahagah haʿaṣmit', *Haṣofe* (25 July 1979).
51. M. Ishon, 'Beharei levanon uveḥuṣot yerushalyim', *Haṣofe* (18 June 1982).
52. Editorial, 'Yad lashalom', *Haṣofe* (8 January 1988).
53. M. Ishon, 'Patshegen haketav', *Haṣofe* (26 February 1988).
54. Editorial, 'Beyn loḥamim litvustanim', *Makor Rishon* (11 August 2006).
55. Y. Fishman, 'Lo paḥot minisaḥon', *Makor Rishon* (2 January 2009).
56. A. Raz-Krakotzkin, 'There is no God, but He promised us the land', *Mitaʿam*, 2 (2005), pp. 71–6.
57. Fitzgerald, *Discourse on Civility and Barbarity, op. cit*., Ref 1.

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