Tel Aviv, The Modern City in British Mandate Palestine

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In *One Palestine Complete: Jews and Arabs Under the British Mandate* author Tom Segev draws on recently opened Israel State Archives and Central Zionist Archives to recount untold narratives related to the political and social landscape of Palestine during the Mandate years. In the chapter entitled "Made in Palestine" Segev identifies the efforts on the part of the Zionists to spread the Hebrew language and strengthen Hebrew education, as well as the debate among Jewish settlers and with Arab workers about the exclusive use of "Hebrew labor."

"In the mid 1930s the Association for Palestinian Products was established in Tel Aviv, its name was misleading, as the association sought to promote not products of Palestine but of the Jewish economy. Like the Battalion for the Defense of the Language, the organization was an attempt to impose national loyalty on people as part of their daily routine. "Every man and woman in the Yishuv, without regard to faction or part must lend a hand to this important effort, directed at strengthening the economy and against the enemies of our rebirth," one declaration stated. The group would soon change its name to the Product Loyalist Alliance; buying agricultural and industrial products from Jewish farms and factories. . . . "We should impress upon the public to refrain from buying merchandise produced in Palestine if it has no labels, wrappers or tag in Hebrew." Wrote the Central Council for Instilling Hebrew in the Yishuv"[1]

The "Buy Hebrew" campaign was an extension of the struggle for the status of the Hebrew language. The campaign was instrumental to the nation building enterprise and had far reaching implications for what would become the national identity and societal structure of Palestine and later Israel. The Zionists' will to establish the supremacy of "Hebrew" goods, services and labor was bound with the establishment of nearly every aspect of the material, economic and political infrastructure put in place in the years before the establishment of the State. As a result one cannot examine the engineering, building, architectural and planning projects that were undertaken in those years without referencing the Zionist institutions, practices and organizational networks that supported and in every sense created "Hebrew" labor.

The Zionist strategy under Weizmann was dependent on economic development which in turn entailed the resettlement of a large body of immigrants and the extension of territories for an eventual claim to an independent national status. This goal would be implemented through the broad and focused efforts of the labor Zionists, in what historians Reinharz and Halpern have referred to as the "Hegemony of Labor" in the Yishuv. Labor was sponsored and organized by the Histadrut Haovdim Haivrim be-Eretz Israel (Histadrut) — the General Federation of Jewish Workers in the Land of Israel which was founded in 1920 and grew to become the largest single employer in the Yishuv in less than a decade. The socialist workers organization was founded with the mission to build Palestine on the basis of the new social models emerging from diverse socialist currents in Europe, and it transformed rapidly into a national instrument for the realization of Zionism. The British administration and local municipalities could not provide social services to mounting waves of European immigrants flooding Palestine. The Histadrut assumed responsibility for all spheres of activity in workers lives including housing, defense, trade unions, education, banking, public works, welfare — "resettlement, economic, and also cultural matters."

The Histadrut was empowered to act for all workers in an unusually dialectic capacity that Reinharz and Halpern identify as "revolutionary constructivism." Histadrut consensus, they posit implied a dual form of organization: "The Histadrut, as revolutionary, "represented the workers" — that is, conducted

its trade union and its joint political affairs; on the other hand as "constructivist," it fostered and controlled its cooperative, collective and corporate economic enterprise."[2] The Histadrut's main organizing efforts were directed to the cities and plantation villages where it established itself both as a permanent contractor and as client.

My dissertation research examines the building activities in Palestine dating from the years following the 1917 signing of the Balfour Declaration and the entry of the British Mandatory Government (replacing the four hundred year old Ottoman rule of Palestine) until the founding of the State of Israel in 1948. The goal of the research is to analyze the particular conditions that caused European Modern architectural idiom to become the dominant architecture of Tel Aviv, and to identify the complex strategies associated with the formation of cultural identity as expressed in the architectural landscape of British Mandate Tel Aviv. The research surveys the architecture of cultural institutions produced in Tel Aviv in those years from a perspective which takes into account the revisionist political and social histories of the *Yishuv* period which have recently emerged.[3]

The research focuses on the expansive and intricate systems which enabled the construction of "Hebrew" public buildings in a Tel Aviv of the '20s and '30s. These by necessity must include all the aspects of labor practices that resulted in the manufacture and distribution of their materials and infrastructure as well as in their programmatic criteria. I contend that an analysis of the particular characteristics of the buildings' "Hebrew" labor, products and structures will produce a more thorough and nuanced reading of an architecture that has for too long been defined in purely stylistic 'internationalist' terms.

The investigation concentrates on the founding histories of five public institutions and their corresponding structures built in Tel Aviv within the Mandate Period. The five institutions are the Histadrut's Construction Company known as *Solel Boneh*, the Levant Fair created to promote "Palestine Products", *Beit Chana*, *Meshek HaPoalot* Women Laborers' Agricultural Training Farm and boarding school, the *Kupat Cholim* (Workers' Sick Fund) and the Palestinian Broadcasting Service. Each of the institutions frames a distinctive discursive territory with respect to issues surrounding the "Buy Hebrew" campaign.

In this paper, I concentrate on an analysis of the recent 'new histories' of Palestine, on the context that they establish and on the methodological approaches which may suggest to a study of the architecture built during the British Mandate.

In its short history as a State, and the long and varied histories of its inhabitants, Israel has been the site of a wide range of political and social movements, as well as fertile ground for debate and historic revision. The founding of the State in 1948 was fraught with numerous struggles including the internal struggle between ideologically divergent European Jews, the struggles between the land's inhabitants and the fading British colonial power, the schism between the European and the Semitic Jews; the on-going struggles between the Jews and the surrounding Arab nations, and the struggles between the Jews and the Palestinians. The outcomes of these and other struggles seemed determinant – it appears as though the singular power in Israel is the European descended Jewish citizenry. However, because the margins of these victories were so narrow, the conflict so raw and seemingly everlasting, and, it can be argued, the nature of the Talmud-centered culture particularly prone to self-reflection, historic revision, through the practice of political debate, seems to abound. As the result of the plurality of truths, their short lived reigns and the victor's triumph so fleeting, it is inherently difficult to sustain a monolithic, singular historical narrative. If history is generally written by the winners, and in Israel's case the winner's hold is so tenuous, historic revision from an ideological standpoint seems inevitable and interminable.

Each moment in history has a distinct ideological character. In Israel's case, the detractors and advocates of resultant histories are granted particularly limited periods of time in which to voice those positions. Instead of imposing a new layer of polemic to the already fierce debates about territory, sovereignty and identity, I attempt to locate new critical models through which to view the official and revisionist histories and apply that same method to study of the architecture of early Palestine. I will describe the efforts of the 'new historians' to debunk many of the founding myths of the modern state of Israel, frame their work in the context of post-modern discourse, and offer further revisions of that very framework from a critical perspective in order to develop a process for achieving a fuller understanding of the historic moment from which the modern state was born.

NEW HISTORIES

The self titled 'new historians' focus on the history of the Yishuv and the events leading up to the founding of the State of Israel.[4] They target what they claim are three contested areas of Israel's young history, broadly outlined as follows:

The first concerns the military balance in 1948. The old historians say that the Arabs had overwhelming military superiority while the 'new historians' contend that the Jewish forces had superiority over all Arab forces operating in the Palestine theater, and dismiss the notion of 'a few against the many.' Rather than the idea of victory via miracles they contend that in this war, as in all wars, the stronger side won. A second point of contention concerns the reason for the Palestinian exodus in 1948. The old historians say that the Palestinians left of their own accord or on orders from their leaders, and in the expectation of a triumphal return. The new historians say that

for the most part, the Palestinians were forced out. The third and, perhaps, most controversial issue concerns the reasons for the political deadlock after the war. Why was there no peace between Israel and the Arabs in the aftermath of the war? The old historians say quite simply – Arab intransigence. Israel's leaders wanted peace and strove for peace indefatigably, but there was no one to talk to on the Arab side. The new historians demonstrate with documents from the Foreign Ministry of Israel, that Arab leaders were pragmatic and were prepared to negotiate, for a price.

The 'new historians' call into question the State of Israel's accepted foundation myths, re-telling the stories from the perspectives of new sources and uncovered material not previously accessed. Yet while the 'new histories' inevitably reference a history which spans the course of millenia and reflects deep attachments on the parts of all parties involved with the territories, the story of the State is ultimately a modern one. Zionism's nationalist aims, the *Yishuv*'s socialist ideological orientation, the sanctioning of statehood in the shadows of the colonial eclipse and the implementation of modernization and technologies of 'progress', are among the features of its modernity. The 'foundation myths' in question are therefore ones that were generated in the modern period. Hence the study of Israel's official history and its subsequent revisions is a history of modernity. As a history of modernity its challenges and assertions will tend towards pastoral assessments on one day and anti pastoral judgements the next.

TABULA RASA

The 'new histories' do not simply reconstruct particular political negotiations and military events within a given chronology, but cast in doubt the official history of the Settlement. It is however in the methodologies and discursive strategies inherent to culling, deciphering and interpreting previously sealed archival material and personal accounts that their challenges engage the postmodern positions and methodologies described above. And while the 'new historians' do not identify their pursuit as such, most of their challenges deal with the theme of 'tabula rasa' and its pivotal role in the cultivation of a national identity – the relationship between existing conditions and resources and the building of a national home. Ultimately their claim is that the current conflicts in the region are tied directly to the strategies of immigration, occupation and expansion developed and implemented by the first generations of emigres to Palestine with the support of their British Mandatory counterparts, which were based on a conception of the 'site' (from physical, historical and temporal perspectives) as a clean slate. As has been pointed out by their supporters and critics alike, the 'new historians' are not the first or only to challenge received histories or apply closer reading of the conditions on the ground.[5] The image of *tabula rasa* has been invoked in other studies of Palestine and used as a rhetorical device

through which to chart the theme and ideological and physical sites of contestation. Following are brief reviews of works of three historians in which can be identified a common thread of the *tabula rasa* model in the development of the founding myths of the state of Israel. The tabula rasa model will be illustrated in the examples of the invention of national origins, the conception of an empty and uninhabited land, and the cleaning of the slate or the establishment of the structures of modernization.

INVENTION OF NATIONAL ORIGINS:

Benedict Anderson proposes that: "All profound changes in consciousness , by their very nature, bring with them characteristic amnesias. Out of such oblivious, in specific historical circumstances, spring narratives." He later quotes Ernest Gellner in identifying nation-ness and nationalism as cultural artifacts of a particular kind: "Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist."[6] The national origins of the Jewish State may be seen as having been activated by such an invented, amnesiatic, *tabula rasa* narrative in which as Yael Zerubavel identifies, "the construction of commemorative strategies that work to form or reformulate memory itself," and questions surrounding the very historical truth of a national culture act as the primary symptoms.[7] Zionism was a historiscist construction in which the development of a Zionist collective memory in the Yishuv, and after the founding of State, was actually a recreation, a recultivation of identity and invention of tradition. According to Zerubavel this is a process that occurs when "some aspects of the past are uncovered or shift from the margins to the center of our historical consciousness, while other aspects of the past are marginalized or fade into oblivion." In this case the Zionist settlers' revolutionary rhetoric recovered the Hebrew nation's ancient roots while suppressing the memory of for example non-Zionists, Orthodox Jewry, or the memory of Palestinian Arabs and their ties to their own past on the land.

AN EMPTY AND UNINHABITED LAND:

In *Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Victims* (1979), Edward Said identifies what might be considered another expression of the *tabula rasa* mentality projected in early Zionist rhetoric and the policies of the Jewish settlement in Palestine then and now. According to Said the land was conceived by the European immigrants as empty of inhabitants. Said claims that the underpinning of Zionism is a form of European colonialism, lacking only the traditional colonialists motivation to convert the natives. In this manner, the Zionists were able to view the land of their ancestral home as impatiently awaiting their return and renewed cultivation without regard to a population that had existed there for centuries. Furthermore, Said contends that the

myth cultivated by the Zionists of the Jews as homeless throughout the so-called Diaspora lent further justification to this re-population of the land (and in any case, the white Europeans who halfheartedly supported the Zionist enterprise gave little, if any, thought to the autonomy of the subjects of the previous Ottoman empire who inhabited the land).

CLEANING THE SLATE — CONQUERING THE GROUND:

In the early years of the *Yishuv* the hebrew expression *kibush ha-adama* — conquest of the ground — was used to describe the transformation of deserts to orchards, or the dredging of marsh lands. 'Auto-emancipation', the fundamental principle of Zionism, was tied to this transformation of nature, into sites of production, as well as to the transformation of the Jewish identity from the stereotypical image of cerebral, urban, bourgeois, merchant to that of self-possessed laborer, physically working the land. The conception of a wild or barren ground that needed to be tamed and made efficient is another expression of the *tabula-rasa* perspective. The instrumentalization, the act of giving heretofore barren land a purpose as Derek Jonathan Penslar shows, was carried out by a newly established practice of Jewish social engineering in Palestine between 1870 and the end of World War I.[8] It was led by the work of settlement agencies to create a Jewish agriculturalist community and economy in Palestine built on reformist utopian ideas and utilizing modern technological tools. The mass immigration was structured by these technocrats whose administrative function was a direct outgrowth of their political and ideological bent towards personal, political and environmental transformation. With the relocation of technology to a new geographic location, Jews in the *Yishuv* took an active part in the production and dissemination of scientific knowledge. Towards the aim of transforming Jews into people "like the nations of the world", and following Herzl's theoretical outline for the melding of Zionism and technocracy. Zionists invoked the spirits of both technological progress and state power. Arthur Ruppin, director of the Palestine Office, is known to have synthesized Herzl's "utopian techno-philia" and Warburg's "developmental ethos or moral regeneration" which the *haskala* prophesied would arise from transfer of Jews from commerce to manufacture and from retail to agriculture. By 1948 technocracy in Palestine had matured and played a significant part in not only technical and administrative aspects but in the political reality of the new society. In the *Yishuv* technocrats joined the ranks of farmers and warriors as Zionist ideal heroic types. They were respected because of their role in the effort towards national independence and perhaps more importantly because they represented a "national existential change": change from a passive, superstitious orthodoxy to an empirical pragmatic and scientific progress. Edward Said refers to the apparatus for implementing this change as Zionism's "company," which made possible "the translation of a vision

into a set of instruments for holding and developing a Jewish colonial territory right in the middle of an indifferently surveyed and developed Arab territory."

CRITICAL HISTORY

Above I have identified the conceptual context of *tabula rasa* in the work of the 'new historians' via other revisionist readings of the period. The identification of the tabula rasa mind set embedded in the founding myths has been an enlightening tool which set out to provide a more inclusive account of the history of the State. We could therefore apply the same framework illustrated by these studies to the examination of the architecture of Palestine, by simply locating the manifestations of a *tabula rasa* mentality in cities, buildings, and sites of production. However, in my mind, this framework is limited in its scope and can all too quickly assume the mantle of grand narrative in its own right, wherein the pendulum of historical 'truth' swings too far in the other direction. The revisionist readings of the history of the *Yishuv* and the founding of the State, despite their author's defense of the objectivity of their historical methodology, strongly suggest ideological, if not political, orientations and motivations. They are, in this sense, useful towards the advance a specific political or ideological agenda. I believe, however, that in an effort to produce a critical history that searches, and attempts to reflect the dynamism of the moment under investigation, the revision needs to admit to an indeterminacy and to invent tools for inquiry that incorporate doubt. Along those lines, I seek not to introduce a new political argument, but to weave between the polemics of the official histories and their revisions to try to identify common critical planks on which both are positioned.

EDGES NOT SLATES:

There are a number of studies within the post-colonial discourse that attempt this approach which may supplement the 'new historical' findings, and may guide further analysis of the context of *Yishuv* Palestine. In *Edge of Empire: Postcolonialism and the City*, (1996), Jane M. Jacobs attempts to wrest colonial and postcolonial spatial analysis from the purely theoretical and metaphorical discursive domain and locate its rhetoric within what she refers to as 'real geography.' It is in actual contexts, in contested sites, that according to Jacobs the structures of domination and subordination of empire have persisted well beyond the colonial limit.[9] She proposes that the material and political space of the city and processes of contemporary urban redevelopment are active legacies of imperialist ideologies and practices. Urban redevelopment and gentrification — the recasting of collective identities — are material and representational practices. This recasting is an appropriation of territory that mimics in often perverse ways the older

forms of domination and conquest of expansionist colonial exploits. Jacobs' most compelling argument is that "the past inheres in place."[10] Here the reference to past is not the conventional invocation of distant and unknowable histories embedded in a city's ruins, to be retrieved only through the process of hypothetical archaeological projections. Rather Jacobs' point is that the past — as a set of power relations and economic forces — is in fact never stopped or suspended. Having acted in some previous moment the forces continue to act and assert influence as occupation. In other words the present is a grotesque and undying past. Jacobs contends that the articulation of identity happens through place — she examines the cultural politics of two post-imperial cities in Britain and in Australia. However the true revelation in her work is that 'place' is not Britain. the city or a contested street site per se. but rather the phenomenon of the "edge". 'Edge of Empire' refers to periphery and distance as well as to a limit condition. Jacobs' conceptual model of the binding of identity to place, and of the notion of place as a condition of 'edge'. suggests a methodological approach to be used in the investigation the formation of identities in British Mandate Palestine (1918-1948). In the case of occupied Palestine, the British Mandate presence in the brief window between the centuries old Ottoman Imperial occupation and the creation of the State of Israel appears now as a stop-gap. Delaying for as long as was feasibly possible the abdication of control in the Middle East, Britain engaged in a holding pattern of sorts, hovering between its colonial past and its post-colonial future.[11] Using Jacobs' conception of edge as bridge and boundary, the period itself might be thought of as a temporal 'edge' and a very 'real geography' along which identities were defined. The approach suggested a specific time frame. the liminal period of British occupation to be considered as an 'edge' condition where identity is revealed. Analysis of sites and structures which reference the pre-national identity of Jews, the 'on edge' identity of Palestinian Arabs, at the edges of the colonial enterprise may generate new readings of Palestine in which the *tabula rasa* conception of the invention of the nation can be challenged or viewed in its fuller complexity.

"ANTI-CONQUEST" OF THE GROUND:

With respect the instrumentalization of an otherwise non-productive ground it is important to recognize that in the Jewish settlement of Palestine at least two equally compelling and dynamic forces can be said to have been at play at once. On the one hand the land was steeped in history and meaning, a receptacle containing five millennia of material and symbolic artifact. On the other hand as a 'promised land' its meaning derived from what it would become. Charting biblical stories such as the granting of Canaan to Abraham, the exodus from Egypt to the land of milk and honey. the conquest of Canaan by Joshua Bin-Nun. the sanctification of places where and the kings of Israel had fought, the rebellion against Rome, etc..

Martin Buber in *On Zion* defines the unique. divinely guided covenant between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel as one in which "the land appeared not as a dead passive object but as a living and active partner." Zionism's call for contact with the soil. the desire to strike roots in it. and the need to lay a foundation for the legitimization of a return to the country. draws on what Zeev Sternhall. in his recasting of the founding myths of Israel. calls the "cult of ancient history." 'Land' is conceived as palimpsest. an accumulated reality whose layers live as much in the present as they had in the past(s). A ground readied for fresh beginnings necessitating the erasure of palimpsestic residue. That the ground was not a literal *tabula rasa*, however becomes evident through a critical examination of studies such as Beshara Doumani's recent account of the last two centuries of Ottoman rule in Palestine. He proposes that "many of the features associated with capitalist transformation had indigenous roots that were clearly evident before they were supposedly initiated by outside forces, and ingrained modes of social organization and cultural life. far from being shattered. proved highly resilient and adaptable."[12] The notion of 'transculturation' provides us with another way of viewing the conquest of the land and the psyches of conquerer and conquered.

In *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992) Mary Louise Pratt defines 'transculturation' as the way in which modes of representation from the metropolis are received and appropriated by groups on the periphery, as well as the transfer of representation from the peripheral sites to the metropolis interior. The transport. presentation and ultimate implementation of these encoded messages was facilitated in the travel writings of imperial agents who undertook various reconnaissance missions from Europe to document and in a real sense to — "produce the rest of the world."

Pratt describes the colonial posture in the late eighteenth century as having a peculiar apologist quality: a utopian innocent vision of European global authority which she calls the "Anti-Conquest." The "Anti-Conquest" was a representational strategy which European bourgeois subjects constructed to secure their innocence while continuing to assert European hegemony. The picture of innocence was sustained through a practice of "reciprocity" rather than the previous absolutist territorial conquest. For Pratt. "Reciprocity has always been capitalism's ideology of itself" and in its service the protagonist of the 'anti-conquest' empathizes as he possesses. Pratt's inventive analytical operation has two aspects — the informational scientific mode and the sentimental self effacing consumptive mode. She concludes that science and sentiment, the one more sanitized and righteous than the other, colluded to further European expansionism.

Science and sentiment are an operative pair in the contemporary discourse and the two seem to operate powerfully in the settlement of Palestine in the beginning of the twentieth-

century. The profound change which Pratt notes in European elites' understanding of themselves evidenced in the writing on the frontiers of European expansion might be said to have existed in a manner in the technocratic and scientific objectification of the 'ground' which was made more palatable when implemented in Palestine by a socially progressive newly formed proletariat collective. Given this dynamic, the issue of identity surfaces once again and may serve to reframe the Settlement as a strategy of 'anti conquest' in which the scientist and sentimental "seeing man" converge in the identity of Jewish settler. This in turn demands the reconditioning of the identities of 'anti conquest', while the territorial *tabula rasa* on the one hand and the native soil projections on the other recede, to be replaced with a more nuanced context of negotiation and concession.

FILLING THE VOID AND FRAGMENTED VOICES:

Said set out to give voice to the Palestinians rendered voiceless by the Zionist colonizing force on the land of Palestine, contending that the Zionist settlers completely ignored the existence of the native populace and saw the land as empty and awaiting their own return. While Said's intention is to fill the voided and granting voice to the muted, he ends up shaping the Palestinian identity as a product only of conflict with the Jews. In this scenario, the conception of identity is limited, and the *tabula rasa* model is reinforced (which is to say, that the Palestinians do not exist without the character of the Zionist oppressor). We may instead attempt to view the Palestinian identity, as well as the range of identities in the region, as having developed via a more complex route, not simply as caricatures formulated out of contrast with each other, but built out of a series of interactions and desires which can be charted identify through a variety of streams of critical analyses.

Irit Rogoff, in *Terra Infirma*, has attempted to analyze the multiplicity of factors that determine identity in the region by challenging the traditional monolithic European Zionist myth, by identifying the female body as an ironic and manipulated canvas upon which the contradictory reality of the Zionist enterprise was transposed. Rogoff sets up the founding myths of Israel as borne out of a necessity to reinforce nationalism for the purpose of sustaining the will to pursue this grand experiment. Rogoff problematizes the state's grand narrative with respect to its contradictory and overbearing control over identity, and claims that many of the regions conflicts can be read through an investigation into the feminine Israeli identity. This critical framework can be useful in the larger discussion of identity within the state of Israel. While the *tabula rasa* model employed by some of the revisionists conveniently imposes the singular monolithic moniker of colonialist to the Zionist, Rogoff's model challenges us to refine those descriptions and attempt to develop a more nuanced narrative.

Stuart Hall posits that identities, precisely because they are constituted within representation continue to be dismantled and their integral, originary status undermined: ". . . the concept of identity does not signal that stable core of the self ... though they seem to invoke an origin in a historical past with which they continue to correspond. actually identities are about questions of becoming rather than being: not who we are or where we came from, so much as what we might become how we have been represented, and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves."[13]

Colonial and post-colonial discourse struggles to name these representations and lay bare the unstable identity formations. Jacobs, Pratt, and Rogoff have offered models for the reading of, or the reading through postmodern landscapes, identifying the contemporary meaning of historical phenomena and their representations. Using very different case studies and approaches they activate the abstract rhetorical schema by constructing 'representation' (whether city building, travel writing, or the body) and thereby render these apparatuses complicity in the very formation of identities. In turn, these texts plot a new constellation of questions, point to fertile sites of inquiry and configure potential methodological procedures to be applied to the Palestine context in order to arrive at a closer reading of what Hall refers to as "narrativization of self — constructed within." The texts have suggested a methodological approach and a conceptual framework for locating 'identity' in the context of the pre-Israel Palestine: The first approach suggested is a specific time frame, the liminal period of British occupation to be considered as an 'edge' condition where identity is revealed. The second approach the analysis of processes of land acquisition to be read with the history of conquest and "anti-conquest" in mind. The third approach focused the investigation on the development and fragmentation of identities in an odd nationalist movement which exerts authority and control in part by claiming a diasporic status of victimhood.

CONCLUSION

Manfredo Tafuri has described the avant-gardes' relationship to history as dialectical, in that their programmic attempt to quicken a break with the past, only set the stage for further development. The generation of artists and architects associated with the historical avant-garde is the same generation that is associated with Israel's 'founding myths.' With respect to the building of the modern city in Palestine the founder and architect are in fact the same person, ie: engineers trained in European institutions, or architects educated at the Bauhaus, who left Europe and built the infrastructure and architecture of the Settlement and State. It can be said that in much the same way that the 'new historians' Avi Shlaim, Ilan Pappe, Benny Morris and others, challenge the founding myths of Israel and draw from them subsequent political consequences, Tafuri's

revision of the history of modern architecture challenges to received myths of modernism. Re-reading the history of modern architecture "in the light of methods offered by an ideological criticism, understood in the strictest Marxist acceptance of the term"[14] Tafuri identifies capitalist modernization since the Enlightenment with the ever expanding activities of planning and social rationalization. The course of modern architecture, he claims, cannot be understood independently from the economic infrastructure of capitalism. Even the *avant garde* movements, who proposed a radical break with the aestheticism of high modernism by questioning the autonomous status of art in bourgeois society, in Tafuri's mind created work that by collusion furthered modernization.

I propose, as I have in response to the 'new historical' revisions of Palestine's political history, that Tafuri's historical revision be overlaid with a nuanced 'critical history' of the building enterprise in Palestine during the British Mandate. Historic criticism is not a position of neutrality, but rather according to Tafuri, a mode of resistance whose eventual goal is to put the whole reality to crisis.

Tafuri calls history a "project" because it also has to do with design: "The total disillusionment about the age and nevertheless an unreserved profession of loyalty to it." History is concerned with a continual redesigning of the past, it is constantly engaged in reconstructing the theoretical framework within which historical events are to be understood.[15]

Application of "historic criticism" as methodology, onto the programme of the avant-garde and their projects in Palestine, will mean (in ways that Tafuri may never have intended) considering the nuanced identities, and the representations in turn, of the protagonists, sites and transactions. By nuanced identities I mean definitions that allow for complication and modulation because they contain contradiction — core/periphery, oriental/occidental, victim/victim. The 'project' will need to recognize temporal edges, sentimental conquests, and fragmented voices and thereby offer challenge to the 'new historical' myths.

NOTES

[1] Tom Segev, *One Palestine CompleteJews and Arabs Under British Mandate* (Metropolitan Books, New York, 2000), p 389. Segev cites *Instilling Hebrew*, 26 May 1941, Central Zionist Archive S25/6734.

[2] Ben Halpern and Yehuda Reinharz Zionism and the Creation of a New Society (Oxford University Press, New York, 1998)p. 217.

[3] The self titled 'new histories' (by Avi Shlaim, Ilan Pappe, Benny Morris, Tom Segev) attempt to debunk many of the founding myths of the modern state of Israel, frame the work in the context of post-modern discourse, and offer further revisions of that very framework from a critical perspective.
In "Contested Zionism – Alternative Modernism Erich Mendelsohn and the Tel Aviv Chug in Mandate Palestine," *Architecture History*, vol. 39, Sept. 1996, pp. 147-180. Architectural historian Alona Nitzan-Shiftan initiates revision to the established architectural history as do Ron Fuchs, Gilbert Herbert and Edina Meyer-Maril in reference to Jerusalem.

[4] Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims, A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-1999(1999)*, Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, (2000), Tom Segev, *One Palestine Complete* (2000)

[5] Zeev Sternhall *The Founding Myths of Israel: Nationalism, Socialism and the Making of the Jewish State* (1998), Anita Shapira, *Power and Land* (1997), Michael Berkowitz *Zionist Culture* (1996).

[6] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (Verso, London/ New York,1983)p.4.

[7] Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (University of Chicago Press, 1995)pp.39-48.

[8] Edward Said, "Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Victims" in *The Edward Said Reader*, ed. Moustafa Bayoumi and Andrew Rubin, (Vintage Books, 2000, p.126.

[9] Derek Jonathan Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy : The Engineering of Jewish Settlement in Palestine 1870-1918* (1991),pp. 80-111.

[10] Tom Segev, *One Palestine Complete, Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate* (NY: Metropolitan Books, 2000), pp.375-415.

[11] Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus 1700-1900* University of California Press,1995. pg 235 For more on Territory: Yosef Gorny, *Zionism and the Arabs. 1882-1948:A Study of Ideology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987),Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Regugee Problem. 1947-1949j* Elihu Grant. *The People of Palestine* (London, 1921)

[12] Hall, Stuart, and Paul DuGay. *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London, Sage. p 4.

[13] Manfredo Tafuri, *Theories and History of Architecture* (Harper & Rowe, NY, 1976), pp.1-11.

[15] Manfredo Tafuri, *Theories and History of Architecture* (Harper &Rowe, NY, 1976), pp.1-11.