

analysis may clarify some of the issues that have agitated Israel and put them into a perspective that most Israelis and their friends are unaware of. Doing that could take the edge off some of the arguments about the "Jewish character" of the state, though these are so laden with emotion and so entangled in political and personal interests that one cannot be very sanguine that academic analysis would change the tone, let alone the substance, of the discussion. For students of comparative politics, as for so many other social scientists, Israel is an excellent laboratory in which many central issues can be studied. In short, the application of the approaches of comparative politics to the Jewish political experience, from ancient times to the present, could enrich our understanding of both politics and of Jewish experience.

### Notes

1. Gabriel Almond and G. Bingham Powell, *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1966), p. 9.
2. David Apter and Harry Eckstein, *Comparative Politics* (New York: The Free Press, 1963), p. v.
3. Mattei Dogan and Dominique Pelassy, *How to Compare Nations* (Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House, 1984), p. 3.
4. *Mishneh Torah*, Hilkhoh Melachim, I, 1.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, I, 9.
7. Daniel J. Elazar, ed., *Kinship and Consent* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1983), p. 9.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
9. See, for example, Gregory Mahler and Richard Trilling, "Coalition Behavior and Cabinet Formation: The Case of Israel," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (July 1975).
10. See, for example, Yoram Peri, *Between Battles and Ballots* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

## THE JEWISH DIMENSION IN TEACHING INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Efraim Inbar

*This article gives a positive answer to the question whether there is a Jewish dimension in the study of International Relations. It elaborates on why one should introduce or emphasize the Jewish dimension in International Relations courses. Finally, it makes several practical suggestions about how to do so.*

### Is There a Jewish Dimension in International Relations?

The Jewish dimension of that subject means describing and analyzing how Jews in a sovereign state, or otherwise organized, behave in an international political context, or think about such an environment. International relations is a discipline which tries to explain political activity across state boundaries. It has been chiefly concerned with political relations between governments, the official representatives of states. These political interactions are seen as displaying a distinct character and therefore deserve a separate discipline, because they are conducted in a political system where there is no final central authority. Those political units are sovereign and it is emphasized, by Raymond Aron for example, that this unique characteristic allows the international actor to use military force in war.<sup>1</sup> According to such an understanding of the field of international relations, the objects of inquiry are primarily those political actors that have a potential for waging war.

The significance of such a perspective for an analysis of the Jewish dimension in teaching international relations seems to be rather drastic. Only during a few periods in its long history could the Jewish people freely use military force or did enjoy sovereignty that entails the potential for waging war. This means that, at least in terms of available historical materials, this Jewish dimension is quite meager, since it is not self-evident that the Jewish people or its scattered communities have acquired the qualities of an international actor as described above. In light of this perspective, the proposition that the Jewish communities in the diaspora constituted international actors is quite problematic.

Another difficulty lies in the area of political theory. The philosophy of international relations is not divorced entirely from praxis. Political theory has rarely been developed in a political vacuum. There is a dynamic relationship between thinking about political phenomena and the political reality surrounding the theorist. The lack of the instruments of power associated with a state is not conducive to an inquiry of the relations among states. Indeed, it has been suggested by Susser and Don-Yehiya that the great issues which have been the focus of political inquiry within Jewish political tradition are: a) the nature of the ideal polity; b) the proper Jewish relationship to foreign rule; c) the principles of operation and organization of autonomous Jewish communities; d) the issues surrounding an independent Jewish polity.<sup>2</sup> Only the last item borders on the issues associated with the field of international relations. The problem of "the legitimate purposes and methods of war" was mentioned just in passing and other areas of interest to the student of international relations were conspicuously missing.

Similarly, Elazar and Cohen, in their comprehensive presentation of the patterns of Jewish political organization from biblical times to the present, pay little attention to the institutional arrangements that served the Jewish communities in their relations with the surrounding international environment.<sup>3</sup> To a great extent this seeming oversight is not accidental, but quite understandable. This is also reflected in the absence of any reference to the international relations aspect in a selected syllabi of Jewish political studies.<sup>4</sup>

These reservations still do not constitute a negative answer to the question posed at the beginning of this presentation for two reasons. First, we are now living in a period when the Jewish people succeeded in building a state of their own in their ancient homeland. Furthermore, this Jewish political entity has the unfortunate need to defend its sovereignty quite often by exercising its military force. The State of Israel is quite an active international actor and is also a fascinating subject of research.

While some emphasize the role played by sovereign political units in the international arena in accordance with the state-centered model in world politics, an alternative theory for analyzing international politics is available. This is the second reason for not denying a Jewish dimension to international relations. The transnational relations approach, as developed by Keohane and Nye, obviously has some merits, as it takes into consideration the international impact of non-state actors, phenomena rather neglected by the traditional model of international relations.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, some multi-national corporations carry greater diplomatic weight than many of the new political units in Africa, for example, although they do not possess the trappings of independent statehood. Similarly, the PLO, to our liking or not, is still a

recognized international participant, with considerable potential for military action and political mischief, although it lost its control over a territory following the 1982 Lebanese war.

This second model, which illuminates the role played by sub-state actors, can also be beneficial in broadening the Jewish dimension of international politics. Since it offers a conceptual framework for the incorporation of non-state organizations as participants on the international scene, the influence occasionally exercised by Jewish communities and their organs in the diaspora on world politics can be accounted for. The support for Israel or the demand for free Jewish immigration from the Soviet Union seem to have international political significance.

While the above-mentioned examples are contemporary, Jewish experiences in earlier periods are also relevant to the study of international relations as elaborated later. Social scientists assume the existence of regular patterns of behavior that can be explained in terms of specified variables. Historical data is necessary to elucidate or illustrate the generalizations made here. Jewish history can also be mobilized for such an endeavor.

Intellectually, international relations, in contrast to political science, is a relatively young field.<sup>6</sup> The ancient preoccupation with power and justice and the issue of the ideal regime has not included a systematic treatment of inter-state relations. This is true of the Jewish political tradition as well. Prof. Elazar talks about a political tradition that is simply unrecognized and argues persuasively that there are great benefits to be derived from developing a conscious understanding of it.<sup>7</sup> Yet there is some doubt as to whether this argument can be fully applied to the area of international relations. The general tendency to refrain from theorizing about international politics in the past, as well as the long periods of time in which Jews were in no position to participate in world politics, hindered the development of a body of Jewish literature systematically dealing with international relations. The legalistically-oriented Jewish tradition may also not be so easily applicable to an analysis of the power politics characteristics of international relations.

Nevertheless, the exploration of the past, in the fashion Elazar points out, can be fruitful also in the area of the philosophy of international relations. This author has made a modest attempt in that direction by examining Jewish texts on the issue of *jus ad bellum* — the just war.<sup>8</sup> Seeking to relate the *halakhic* tradition to Western political theory is a most gratifying intellectual endeavor.

In contrast to the distinct federal arrangements characteristic of Jewish polities, the external relations of Jewish communities do not display such consistent patterns over time and place. Foreign policy is probably more influenced by the outside environment in which it has to

operate, rather than by the intrinsic political features of the Jewish community. Nevertheless, some scholars underline the effect of a Jewish prism on the Israeli foreign policy.<sup>9</sup> The belief system of a society, which is the result of a dynamic relationship between the interpretations of the past and the present, undoubtedly has some impact on foreign policy.<sup>10</sup> The mythology created in the wake of events such as the struggle at Massada or the Holocaust influences decision-making. However, a *realpolitik* perspective relates greater importance to the situational rather than the psycho-cultural parameters. Every country is endowed with a psycho-historic background that serves as an intervening variable in foreign policy-making. For example, the hesitation to get involved in entangling alliances is a characteristic, albeit sometimes subdued, of American foreign affairs. The weight of this background should not, however, be exaggerated.

### Why Introduce or Emphasize the Jewish Dimension in International Studies Courses?

To some extent, social science and especially international relations, particularly as taught in the United States, is ahistorical. Adding the Jewish dimension is, therefore, initially a digression from the theoretical emphasis, which occasionally becomes quite an obsession for many teachers. Jews have always displayed a long memory. Learning about Jews in a politico-historical context is a contributing factor in moulding a historic consciousness in our students. For that purpose, the study of the city-state system in China or Italy in the past could be, of course, just as useful. This author simply knows much more about the bipolar system in which the kingdoms of Judea and Israel operated. Furthermore, the Bible is an easily available text.

Another motivation for teaching the external relations of a Jewish community is simply to satisfy basic human curiosity about how Jews act or think when it comes to international relations. This is consistent with the general thrust of social sciences to help human beings understand themselves better. It is noteworthy that Jewish affairs have always attracted the attention of many in intellectual circles and elsewhere. The widespread anti-Semitism since Greco-Roman times seems to be just one proof for this contention.

Third, international relations is a discipline that covers some of the most important issues with which mankind is faced today. Including the Jewish dimension in a course on nuclear terrorism, for example, means grappling with life and death issues for the Jewish people on a grand level. This could be an intellectually gratifying experience, although some may find it quite frustrating.

Fourth, the comparative perspective resulting from the inclusion of

a Jewish component in the course taught is an unequivocal blessing. Such a perspective allows a better understanding of Jewish affairs, but is equally beneficial to the comprehension of the non-Jewish case studies. The comparative case study approach is extremely useful for making general observations, while pointing out the singular characteristics of various actors.

Teaching duties are not limited only to transferring a body of knowledge to students and encouraging them to think systematically about the issues raised in the course studied. My involvement in the topics I teach within the discipline of international relations is not intellectual only. For a committed Jew who is also a Jewish educator, teaching the Jewish dimension in international relations allows me to capitalize on the interest of the student in world affairs to broaden his Jewish horizons. Cultivating greater knowledge and understanding about various aspects of the international involvement of Jewish communities could be of importance to the development of the student's Jewish personality. This is true in Israel, as well as in the diaspora.

Jewish studies of any kind, including the Jewish dimension of international relations, are also a vehicle for strengthening Jewish identity. After all, learning is a typical Jewish mechanism for socialization. Increased knowledge about Jews and the realization that past Jewish political wisdom has relevance to today's problems could be an additional barrier to losing interest in Judaism.

Finally, the Jewish people is presently at the forefront of world attention because it is a party to controversial conflict with powerful international actors. Moreover, the regional conflict in the Middle East has global ramifications. The clarification of the international issues involved could remove many existing misconceptions. In the final analysis, knowledge and truth serve the Jews best.

### How to Introduce the Jewish Dimension into the Study of International Relations

First, a Jewish component can be incorporated into an international relations course of a general nature. Israel is, of course, a good case study for numerous world politics issues. A short list of examples includes: Small States; Nuclear Proliferation; War and Strategy; International Cooperation and Foreign Assistance; The Economics of National Security; Arms Races; Weapon Transfers; Terrorism; Isolation in World Politics; Armed Conflict and International Law. Any course on Middle Eastern international politics cannot but relate also to Israel. These examples cover the traditional concerns of the field. Less conventional international relations topics are also candidates for incorporating the study of Israel: The International Aspects of Partition Politics; The UN

and International Conflict; Internationalized and Divided Cities are just a few examples.

Israeli Foreign Policy draws considerable attention in university curricula, although additional instruction is desirable. The non-state actor, the Jewish community in the diaspora, is the one neglected.

Those communities could be the subject of study within the framework of a course on Human Rights in World Politics. Jewish communities have a long record of being active on the international scene on this issue in contemporary history since the Damascus blood libel case in 1840. Similarly, those communities could serve as a case study when teaching Ethnicity and Foreign Policy. Center-diaspora relations is still an unexplored subject in this discipline. The Chinese diaspora of today and the Greek one in ancient times could be the additional case studies to illuminate a rather neglected phenomenon in world politics. Liebman claims the existence of an asymmetrical relationship in which the center is more powerful and takes the lead in the relationship.<sup>11</sup> The argument is plausible. Yet, the struggles to prevent the sale of F-15 airplanes in 1978, and the export of the AWACS in 1981, in which the leading role was not Israel's, indicate the need for some qualifications in the center-diaspora model. The International Politics of Refugees is another little-dealt-with topic that allows the inclusion of the Jewish dimension. The last two examples could be of interest to a student of international demography.

Similarly, topics bordering on the discipline of international relations, such as the Politics of International Trade and Cross-National Cultural Transfer, could include the study of Israel as well as of Jewish communities elsewhere. A course on the History of Political Economy could pay attention also to the role of Jews in international banking in Western Europe, or to the prominent place Jews held in Venetian international trade, or in that of the Ottoman Empire in certain periods.

Theory is also susceptible to the intrusion of the Jewish factor. A course on International Systems could include, as suggested above, analysis of biblical data. The analysis of the international activities of Jewish organizations could be a persuasive method of demonstrating the validity of the Transnational Politics model. Similarly, War and Peace in Western Civilization, reviewing readings on this subject, could also cover Jewish texts. The issue of World Order is related to the messianic idea. Its impact on Western thinking is obvious, although the subject still has to be researched. There is no parallel to Walzer's study on the impact of the Exodus motif.<sup>12</sup>

Another way to introduce the Jewish dimension is simply to offer a course on a Jewish topic. Israel-centered courses, like Israel's Foreign Policy or the Arab-Israeli Conflict, are obvious candidates.

The international activities of the diaspora communities are also broad enough to provide the substance for several courses in

international relations. The support for the Zionist enterprise and the world-wide struggle against anti-Semitism are two examples of topics that justify the existence of two separate courses. International campaigns by non-state actors is a subject with little theoretical base that can be enriched by the inclusion of the Jewish case studies.

The conceptual framework developed by theorists of international studies could be applied to courses in Jewish history. The international relations of the Israel and Judea kingdoms or of the Hasmonean state could be extremely interesting for students of history as well as of international relations. War-making in ancient times has attracted many scholars. A plethora of material on the ancient period is available.<sup>13</sup>

Jewish texts about the concerns of international relations do not deserve, at that stage, a separate course. Yet, teaching about the Jewish political tradition should include a chapter on Jewish attitudes toward the main questions addressed by the field of international studies.

There are also more limited ways to introduce the Jewish dimension when teaching international relations. First, one can consciously use more examples from Jewish history, new or old, to clarify the points being made in class. This need not require any in-depth familiarity with the example, since it functions only as an illustration and not as a case study.

Second, one might use Jewish texts as a trigger to a discussion about a general issue. For example, Malbim's commentary on the Haftorah of Parshat Zachor may serve as an opening to the subject of typology of wars. Or one of the midrashim on the reasons for the fight between Cain and Abel, the first conflict in human history, may be used to start a discussion on the origins of international conflict. While some Israeli students were initially surprised at the use of this technique, the exercise has always succeeded in generating a good discussion and also some appreciation for the Jewish tradition. The English version of many Hebrew or Aramaic texts is within easy reach.

Third, there is the possibility to enable students to choose a Jewish topic for the various class assignments. Such work deserves our special encouragement.

Fourth, assuming that students take reading lists seriously, it is desirable to include texts that touch also on Jewish affairs. The reading list in a course on decision-making in foreign policy, for example, should incorporate Brecher's model and its application to Israel.<sup>14</sup> Vital's treatment of Israel as a small state could be required reading when teaching this subject.<sup>15</sup> The discussion of isolation in world politics could be well served by the reading of *Outcast States in the World Community*.<sup>16</sup>

## Conclusion

There is a Jewish dimension to the field of international relations and there are good reasons, as mentioned above, for teaching it. Some practical ways were presented to incorporate Jewish aspects in the work of teachers of international studies. However, some difficulties must be overcome in order to achieve success in such an endeavor. First, the teachers themselves must become more knowledgeable about Jewish heritage. Unfortunately, many academicians, although well read in their field, have only superficial knowledge about the Jewish material that could be relevant to their teaching interests. Overcoming this difficulty is of service not only to the students, but is beneficial for the teacher. Another difficulty is the lack of suitable material to be used in class. No reader on Jewish political thinking or on the external relations of Jewish communities seems to be available. With the exception of the large literature on Israel and the support for it, neither the international role played by diaspora communities, nor Jewish thinking about world politics issues is well researched. The scarcity of research on those topics is unavoidably reflected in teaching. Filling in this lacunae is a precondition for introducing the Jewish dimension into the study of international relations.

## Notes

- \* The author wishes to acknowledge the benefit he has received from the comments of the participants in the Workshop on University Teaching of Jewish Political Studies, Jerusalem, July 1987.
- 1. Raymond Aron, *War and Peace. A Theory of International Relations* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1966), p. 94.
- 2. Bernard Susser and Eliezer Don-Yehiya, "Prolegomena to Jewish Political Theory," in Daniel J. Elazar, ed., *Kinship and Consent* (Ramat Gan: Turtledove Publishing, 1981), pp. 96-98.
- 3. Daniel J. Elazar and Stuart A. Cohen, *The Jewish Polity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).
- 4. Daniel J. Elazar and Tzipora D. Stein, eds., *Jewish Political Studies, Selected Syllabi* (New York: Markus Wiener Publishing Inc., 1985).
- 5. Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, eds., *Transnational Relations and World Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970).
- 6. Trevor Taylor, "Introduction: The Nature of International Relations," in Trevor Taylor, ed., *Approaches and Theory in International Relations* (London: Longman, 1978), p. 1.
- 7. Elazar, *Kinship and Consent*, Introduction, pp. 3-4.
- 8. Efraim Inbar, "War and Jewish Tradition," *The Jerusalem Journal of International Relations*, 9 (June 1987):83-99.
- 9. Michael Brecher, *The Foreign Policy System of Israel* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 229-43.
- 10. For a somewhat overstated case study of Israel, see Ofira Seliktár, *New Zionism and the Foreign Policy System of Israel* (London: Croom Helm, 1986).
- 11. Charles S. Liebman, "Moral and Symbolic Elements in the Politics of Israel-Diaspora Relations," in *Kinship and Consent*, p. 345-47.
- 12. Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1985).
- 13. See *inter alia* Yigael Yadin, *Warfare in the Lands of the Bible* (Ramat Gan: The International Publishing Co., 1963) (Hebrew); Israel Abrams, *Campaigns in Palestine from Alexander the Great* (Chicago: Argonaut, Inc., 1927); Menashe Harel, *Campaigns and Battles in Ancient Times* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense Publishing House, 1981) (Hebrew); Yaakov Liver, *Military History of Palestine in Biblical Times* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense Publishing House, 1973) (Hebrew).
- 14. Michael Brecher, *Decisions in Israel's Foreign Policy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), Introduction and any other chapter in the book.

15. David Vital, *The Survival of Small States* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972).
16. Efraim Inbar, *Outcast States in the World Community*, Monograph Series in World Affairs (Denver: University of Denver, 1985).

## TEACHING THE JEWISH POLITICAL TRADITION TO THE JEWISH CIVIL SERVICE

Jonathan S. Woocher

*A convergence of three developments — the American Jewish community's maturing self-awareness, the growth of Jewish communal service as a professional field, and the emergence of Jewish political studies as an academic discipline — makes possible a new emphasis on serious study of the Jewish political tradition as a key component in the training of Jewish communal professionals. Jewish political studies can provide these professionals (and lay leaders) with a knowledge base and perspectives that link Jewish values and historical experience to contemporary issues of communal organization, process, and policy. Experiences in both academic and non-academic settings have shown that a thematic, issue-oriented approach to teaching the Jewish political tradition can enhance lay and professional leaders' sense of authenticity and effectiveness as Jewish leaders.*

### I

Over the course of the past several decades, three developments in American Jewish communal and intellectual life have begun to open new possibilities in defining the field of Jewish communal service and in training its professional practitioners.

During this period, the American Jewish community has moved toward a new understanding of itself as a voluntary, ethnically and religiously based, polity. To be sure, political elements have never been lacking in American Jewish communal life. Indeed, attempts have been made to organize American Jewry on both local and national levels in *explicitly* political structures (cf., e.g., the New York Kehilla and the American Jewish Congress in the first two decades of this century). Such efforts, however, have generally met with resistance, and Jews have been reluctant to conceive of themselves as a politically structured sub-community. In recent years, though, at least the leadership segments of the community have grown more willing to accept the fact that there is an American Jewish polity which carries out a wide range of functions constituting the "public agenda" of American Jewry. This heightened self-awareness of the political dimensions of American Jewish communal organization has brought to the forefront new concerns regarding the structures and dynamics of communal life, the processes of