

THE COMPLEXITY OF THE MIZRAHI-PALESTINIAN CONNECTION

*"I think we are weak. We are walking around with huge Jewish Stars...lest we be affiliated, heaven forbid, with the Arabs"
– "Yes, but you are also walking around us...with clubs and guns and giving us orders. You control our lives...I can't think about that soldier that...shoots us as a Moroccan or Iraqi. For me he is the Israeli oppressor"¹*

The linkage between the Mizrahi issue and the Palestinians has not been given a place in the pages of historiography, sociology and political science². The connection between the groups has many implications. Both the Mizrahim and the Palestinians are the underdogs of Zionism. The Mizrahim have been "rescued" by Zionism to bring them to the state of Israel, to save them from the dark ages and bring them "back to history", forgetting and deleting their histories. The same Zionism "saved" Palestine from the wilderness, to bring it back to history – as if it never had its own history – without alluding to the people that had been living in that land. Finally and ferociously, it forced most of them into exile, and rendering the Palestinians that stayed as third class citizens that should be thankful that they were allowed to stay at all³.

In the following chapter I will explore a few explanations for the Mizrahi's ambivalent place vis-à-vis the Palestinians, as a group that both *belongs* to the dominant Jewish group and is *dominated by it*⁴.

THE IDENTITY EFFECT

A key issue in the understanding of some Mizrahim's anti-Palestinian attitudes is the complex self-identity. Self-hatred was projected in hate for the Arabs. In other words, the Palestinians – the "other" of Jewish nationalism – mirror to the Mizrahim their otherness. The Mizrahim reject the Palestinians, who reflect to them the same culture (and looks) from which they try to dissociate. Not surprisingly, one study shows that the respect Mizrahim have towards Arabs increases in a direct correlation with their self-esteem⁵. Elyachar clearly notes the direct correlation between the cultural oppression of the Mizrahi youth at school, and their non-tolerance towards the Palestinians. In an essay "About Education for Knowing our Neighbors" he warned against the negation of the "rich culture that is so intimately close to the Arab culture" and observed with a great frustration: "The Sephardic-Mizrahi youth, of all youth, that by nature must have been closer to the Arab culture... and

¹ A dialogue between the Palestinian Reihab Isawi and the Mizrahi Eli Hamo, in Chetrit 1999, p. 173.

² Some books that addressed the subject have not been translated into Hebrew. The book "The Lure of Zion" by Abbas Shibliak, and "Ben Gurion's Scandals: how the Haganah & the Mossad Eliminated Jews by Giladi Naeim, both allude to the connection between the displacement of the Arab-Jews and the Palestinians, are two examples. The second book couldn't get published in Israel at all. See Giladi p.1.

³ Another historical linkage between the Mizrahi and the Palestinian is in the question of compensation for property that both were compelled to leave behind. Elyachar kept lobbying for the inter-twinning of the compensation of both communities. The Ashkenazi Zionist establishment largely ignored that request. See for example pp. 188, 196, 239. For an analysis of this issue see Shenhav 2003

⁴ Some of the issues I will discuss are more relevant to the attitudes towards Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories. The uniqueness of the relationship between Mizrahim and Palestinians that are Israeli citizens deserves a separate discussion.

⁵ Shohat 2001, p.188.

act as a connecting element between the two cultures, has turned into an obstacle to any understanding between us and our neighbors"⁶.

Furthermore, one of the preconditions to becoming "a good Israeli" was to hate Arabs, the national enemy. The Mizrahim, whose culture and appearance forced them into the seam between two nations, had to "prove" and acquire their Israeliness by adopting nationalist views and symbols, such as wearing a Jewish star ("Hai")⁷. Azmi Bashara, a Palestinian Knesset (the Israeli parliament) member, describes it succinctly: "The Ashkenazi has a clear stance as to the relationships with Palestinians: You are there, we are here...but the Mizrahi resembles the Palestinian in looks, customs, dialect...it forces him to distinguish himself from the Arab...if the criterion for equality is nationalism, then they must prove their nationalism"⁸.

THE USE OF MIZRAHIM IN NATIONAL DUTIES

The Ashkenazi-Zionist establishment enhanced the hostility of the Mizrahim towards Palestinians by "divide and rule" methods. First, the Mizrahim were settled along the Israeli border – in the front line of confrontation – and thus their bodies have become the state's protective fence⁹. Not only were they the ones who suffered most frequently from attacks by Palestinians, but also they were asked to stop the Palestinian refugees ("infiltrators") who tried to come back¹⁰. Second, the government's investment in the Palestinian occupied territories has prompted many Mizrahim to move there, since they are located in the lower class and found economic incentives attractive¹¹ (Most Mizrahi settlers are not there for ideological reasons, as opposed to most Ashkenazi settlers). Third, the state exploits the Mizrahim for national duties in the armed forces. There, interestingly enough, the state finds their "Arab looks" and knowledge of Arabic language of great value. Mizrahim serve in the intelligence force, in the border police and as Mistaaravim¹². Giladi recounts that his knowledge of Arabic qualified him for translation jobs for the Military Governor's office. He asked Palestinians to sign on petitions for the UN to be transferred out of Israel to Gaza – in fact forcing them to leave. Giladi says, "I was there and heard their grief... I could no longer be part of this oppression and I left"¹³, but most Mizrahim stayed and only confront their Arabness again as the enemy, further reinforcing their self-hatred and Arab-hatred.

Finally, wars have always been the best opportunity for the Mizrahim to prove their loyalty to the State of Israel and hence feel a part of the nation. In fact, the State has always made a

⁶ Elyachar, p. 227

⁷ Shenhav 2001. Shenhav refers to both "Hai" and wearing a yarmulke ("kipa") as expressions of nationalism rather than religion.

⁸ Bashara quoted in Chetrit 1999, p.173.

⁹ Shohat 2001, p.173.

¹⁰ Shenhav 2003, p. 153.

¹¹ Shohat 2001, p.189.

¹² Mistaaravim- a unit in the Israeli Defence Army. The soldiers in this unit penetrate the Palestinian Occupied territories disguised as Palestinians.

¹³ Giladi, p.4. Giladi was initially involved in Zionist activity in Iraq. Following his immigration to Israel, he was disappointed with the attitude towards the Mizrahim and participated in the "Black Panthers" struggle. Later, "with Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the Israeli-condoned Sabra and Shatilla massacres, I had had enough of Israel. I became a US citizen and made certain to revoke my Israeli citizenship".

manipulative use of the constant "state of emergency" – or rather the security complex – to silence and delegitimize any Mizrahi struggle. Moshe Dayan, former defense minister, invented the two-flags cliché: one should not wave the "security" flag together with the "social" flag¹⁴. In other words, "first we'll deal with the Palestinians, then we'll deal with the 'blacks' in Israel. Until then – die and stay quiet". The Mizrahim have rarely contested this perception¹⁵. The latest example of Al-Aqsa Intifada exemplified it once again: the chairman of Shas, the first significant Mizrahi party, said right after the outbreak of the Intifada: "We are all drafted by decree 8"¹⁶.

VOTING PATTERNS

The voting patterns of Mizrahim have allegedly been a clear manifestation of their anti-Arab attitudes. Since 1977, most of the Mizrahim have given their vote either to the Likud party or to Shas¹⁷. It is probably true that many Mizrahim express anti-Palestinian sentiments. However, the simplistic assertion that it makes Mizrahim anti-Arab by essence needs to be examined.

1977 is known in Israel as "The year of the turnabout". For the first time in the history of Israeli elections, the "Avoda" (labor) lost its power and the Likud became the largest party, thanks to the vote of the Mizrahim. Giving their vote to the Likud on the part of the Mizrahim, however, was mainly motivated by social reasons and not by the political position of the Likud vis-à-vis the Palestinians¹⁸. The Mizrahi uprising led by the Black Panthers in 1971-77 prepared the ground for the Mizrahim to resist the Ashkenazi hegemony and for the first time to turn their backs on it. The animosity between the Mizrahim and the labor party – and other "liberal", "leftist" movements such as Meretz and "Shalom Achshav" – still prevails. Those institutions aptly represent for many Mizrahim the patronizing Ashkenazi elite members, who occasionally let slip their scorn towards Mizrahim. For instance, one of Meretz's senior members called Mizrahi demonstrators "tribal and barbarian forces" that are "moving as a herd to the Tam-Tam sounds"¹⁹.

Therefore, the nationalist stance of the Likud party is not the main reason for the Mizrahim to cast their vote for the party, though it does further motivate them to do so. By affiliating with a nationalist party, the Mizrahim prove their devotion to the Jewish state and reclaim

¹⁴ Chetrit 2004, p. 131.

¹⁵ The Black Panthers movement which will be discussed later, was an exception to the rule.

¹⁶ Chetrit 2001, p. 288. Decree 8 is the form used by the army to draft reserves in a case of war.

¹⁷ Shas is an ultra-orthodox party. It is considered the first significant Mizrahi party. Most of Shas voters are Mizrahim from the working-class and lower-middle-class. The leaders of Shas held a moderate position with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In 1979 the spiritual leader of Shas, Rav Ovadia Yosef, issued an edict that permits withdrawal from Palestinian territories ("land for peace"). Nevertheless, Peled stresses that the majority of voters of Shas hold anti-Palestinian attitudes. According to Peled, several factors are responsible for this tendency. First, harsh competition between the Palestinians and the Mizrahim in the labor market, and second, Shas emphasizes the Jewish identity, the only thing the Mizrahim share with the Ashkenazim and their only advantage over the Palestinians. See Peled p. 285.

¹⁸ Chetrit 2004, p. 179.

¹⁹ Shulamit Aloni, who was the head of the civil rights movement and a Knesset member, Shohat 2001, p.146.

their part in the Jewish collective²⁰. In any event, the Likud's political position towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is very similar to that of the labor, and Ashkenazim head both²¹.

²⁰ Chetrit 2004, p. 200.

²¹ Shohat 2001, p.193.

EXCLUSION OF THE MIZRAHIM FROM PEACE TALKS

The Mizrahim have been largely excluded from politics. In the last few years they succeeded in achieving more representation in the government and in the parliament, but the Mizrahi leaders have been co-opted by the Zionist-Ashkenazi parties and have cooperated with the hegemony. Even when a Mizrahi representative does raise a claim for equality – it is delegitimized as "ethnic-based". By the same token, the Mizrahim have been excluded from the negotiations with the Palestinians. A survey that was conducted in 1978 revealed that educated and Ashkenazi populations showed more rejection to the inclusion of Mizrahim in the negotiations with Arab countries²². For example, in Madrid talks, Prime Minister Barak opted for Netanyahu rather than David Levy the Mizrahi, which led to Levy's withdraw from the government²³.

When the Mizrahim have raised demands to be included in negotiations and as representatives of the foreign ministry, they adopt national-instrumentalist justification rather than the unacceptable ethnic disenfranchisement justification:

"The representatives of the State of Israel abroad (should not be)...only from South Africa, or Anglo-Saxons, or Irish. Also among them should be some dark skinned people, so that they (the Arabs) will see that they are really part of the Middle East...that is a proof regarding the Middle East subject"²⁴.

In other words, including the Mizrahim in delegations is in the interest of the state, since it will provide a living proof that Israeli citizens belong to the region and justify Israel's existence in the eyes of the Arab states²⁵.

The Palestinians, in turn, have sought for partners in the "left" parties and peace organizations, both dominated by Zionist-Ashkenazim. As Bashara notes, "We have never found the Mizrahim as a counterpart for a dialogue".²⁶

²² The survey asked about the inclusion of members of the World Organization of Jews from Arab Countries (WOJAC) in peace negotiations with Egypt. Shenhav 2003, p. 196.

²³ Chetrit 2004, p. 216.

²⁴ Ben Porat, cited in Shenhav 2003, p. 195.

²⁵ Elyachar iterated repeatedly the same idea. See Elyachar, p. 240-1. However, a few years later, he admits a deliberate denial of the Arab component in Israeli society: "Maybe there has been a desire to play down the fact that most of the citizens of Israel are from the Orient – something that the Western leaders, or more correctly from East Europe, regarded as inferior" (p. 280). This is a clear departure from the moderate and non-accusing tone that prevails in his writing thus far, regarding facts as circumstantial and "not-intended".

²⁶ Bashara in Chetrit 1999, p.173

MIZRAHIM AND PALESTINIANS – ALTERNATIVE VOICES

In light of the processes explored above, the combination Mizrahim-Palestinians (or Mizrahim-left wing) may sound to many Israelis as an antonym. Nonetheless, there have been a few significant convergences between the groups. Here I will look at a few instances of cooperation or connection between the Mizrahi issue and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict²⁷.

THE BLACK PANTHERS

The Black Panthers²⁸ – a Mizrahi movement – led one of the most important social struggles in Israel. Relative deprivation theory can explain the timing of the uprising. The movement arose a few years after the 1967 war –the first opportunity for the Mizrahim to demonstrate their devotion for the State. Pursuant to the war there was an economic boom, and many had expectations for betterment in standards of living. However, the Mizrahim soon realized that they were equal citizens only in the battlefield. The unequal distribution of resources persisted, and their socio-economic situation remained unchanged. The Black Panthers stood up against the social injustices, through demonstrations and other means.

The protest of the Black Panthers was unprecedented in many aspects, but for our purposes they were the pioneers in connecting the oppression of the Mizrahim to that of the Palestinians. The movement's members cooperated with radical left movements such as "Matzpen" and organized joint demonstrations against the occupation and poverty²⁹. The Black Panthers saw themselves as a "natural bridge" for peace and called for a "true dialogue" with the Palestinians: "we must let Palestinian representatives take part in all the discussions...concerning a solution to the conflict"³⁰.

Furthermore, Black Panthers' leaders were among the first Israelis to establish contacts with the PLO³¹. Cohavi Shemesh, one of the leaders, tells about those meetings:

"We had conversations and we realized their need for independence and elimination of the occupation and we agreed that the problem of the Mizrahim and the Arabs are intertwined. There will be no equality and no chance for the Mizrahim as long as there is occupation and a national struggle, and on the other hand the national struggle will not be over as long as the Mizrahim are at the bottom of the ladder and constitute anti-Arab leverage"³².

Galtung draws a circle of violence wherein the needs deficit of a group leads to collective trauma that can take two directions: direct violence or frustration that becomes self-directed

²⁷ There have been a few cases of a meaningful dialogue between the Mizrahim and Palestinians. Eiby Natan, "the pilot of peace", was one of the first pro-peace Mizrahi activists. However within the scope of this paper I narrowed my focus to the Black Panthers and the new Mizrahi discourse.

²⁸ The leaders of the movement borrowed the name from the U.S. movement.

²⁹ Chetrit 2004, p. 157.

³⁰ Shohat 2001, p.198. The theme of Mizrahim as a bridge has been brought up often by Mizrahi activists. Elyachar, as early as 1968 and a year after the occupation of the Palestinians started, said: "The Sephardic Jews and the Eastern Jews will be the best mediators between Israel and the Arab countries, thanks to their staying hundreds of years among Arab countries and their...knowledge in the way-of-life and the language of the Arabs, the shared cultural contacts...indeed, our words written in times like this ring like a dream". Elyachar, p. 217.

³¹ Charlie Biton, one of the leaders who became a Knesset member, was the first Knesset member to meet PLO representatives. Chetrit 2004, p. 273.

³² Cited in Chetrit 2004, p. 164.

aggression and apathy on the outside. The authorities "prefer a freezing, apathetic society. They prefer "governability" to "trouble, anarchy". They love "stability". A major form of cultural violence indulged in by ruling elites is to blame the victim of structural violence branding him as "aggressor"³³. Indeed, the reaction of the regime to the protest was strong and violent. The leaders were regularly arrested and were labeled "criminals". Demonstrators were brutally beaten by the police forces.

There has been a precedent of Mizrahi uprising, but this one was different. Not only was the rebellion well organized and popular among the Mizrahi public state-wide, but the Black Panthers dared to wave both flags simultaneously: the "security" flag with the "social" one. In that, they posed a real danger to "stability". The connection between the Mizrahi oppression and the Palestinians was the thing that upset the regime the most. Such a connection threatens the Jewish-Arab and internal-external dichotomies on which Zionist nationalism is built³⁴. Therefore the Ashkenazi-Zionist regime – supported by most of the media – emphasized the connection between the Black Panthers and the anti-Zionist Matzpen movement in order to delegitimize them and maintained they were "aiding the enemy". One popular newspaper even asserted they were terrorists³⁵. It worked. In times of a vast consensus surrounding the occupation and the expansion of settlements, the Mizrahim, disaffected as they were, still could not support a movement that "crossed the border". That was the main reason for the disappearance of the movement³⁶. This theme will recur in the discourse concerning Tali Fahima's struggle, which will be discussed in depth next month..

THE NEW MIZRAHI DISCOURSE

During the last two decades, a new Mizrahi alternative discourse has emerged. It is shaped by academics, students, artists, writers, intellectuals, organizations and movements – "the new Mizrahim"³⁷.

Chetrit characterizes the new Mizrahi discourse with a few elements³⁸:

- Asserting the collective identity of Mizrahim as a political identity.
- Providing critical and thorough analysis of the social, economic, cultural and political structures of the Israeli society as being dominated by the Ashkenazi-Zionist hegemony.
- Deconstructing the Arab-Jewish dichotomy. Highlighting the adverse affects of Zionism on both Mizrahim and Palestinians. Holding political left worldview that supports the national struggle of the Palestinians for self-determination, and identifies with the struggle of Palestinians in Israel for civilian equality³⁹.

³³ Galtung , p. 200

³⁴ Shenhav 2001.

³⁵ Chetrit 2004, p. 157.

³⁶ Ibid, p. 164.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 268.

³⁸ Ibid, pp. 268-272

³⁹ A significant first meeting between new-Mizrahim and Palestinians took place in 1989 in Toledo. The meeting brought together intellectuals, academics, writers, activists and politicians. In the meeting, Abu

- Holding a socio-economic left worldview that suggests universal social class struggle so as to reconstruct the unequal structures and address the power-relations between all groups: Mizrahim and Ashkenazim, women and men, Jews and Arabs and so on. This worldview is represented as a contrast to the "so-called left". It states that in Israel currently there is no real left in the socio-economic sense⁴⁰.

I will hereby elaborate on a few aspects in the new Mizrahi discourse, which later will be used to shed light on the discourse around the struggle of Tali Fahima.

Multifaceted collective identity

A core component of the new Mizrahi discourse is reclaiming a collective identity. Eventually the structural and cultural oppression in Israel has invented the Mizrahim as a group, or, in Anderson's terminology, an imagined community, a group that does not necessarily have discernable common features such as history or customs⁴¹.

The socially constructed identity is of paramount significance to imagined communities⁴². Polletta and Jasper define collective identity as "describ[ing] imagined as well as concrete communities, involv[ing] an act of perception and construction as well as the discovery of preexisting bonds, interests, and boundaries"⁴³. This definition applies to the use of collective identity by "the new Mizrahim" and in the discourse they have developed. Since the boundaries around the group are pure social constructions⁴⁴, one does not have to be a Mizrahi in order to have a Mizrahi consciousness. Adversely, one can be a Mizrahi by birth but not in consciousness, as in the case of many Mizrahi politicians who have de-politicized Mizrahiness⁴⁵. In this context it is important to note that the Mizrahi identity is multifaceted. It is experienced and manifested differently. In fact, the discourse on what comprises the Mizrahi identity is a major issue that preoccupies the new Mizrahim. Some emphasize they are Arab-Jews, others opine that there is no such thing as an Arab-Jew today.

A few citations demonstrate the diversity of definitions and meanings applied to the identity issue among "the new Mizrahim":

Mazen (Mahmud Abbas, current Palestinian president) declared: "in times that the Ashkenazi establishment refuses to negotiate with the PLO, it is important to negotiate with the Mizrahim that represent the majority in Israel...and therefore matters of peace will be dependent on them. They are an organic part of our culture, our Arab-Islamic society, part of our history and our memory. We have to revive our memory and use our shared culture, in order to overcome the present and plan the future". See Chetrit 2004, p. 274.

⁴⁰ Thus, the new Mizrahi discourse conceives of the kibbutz's – founded by the labor movement and have been praised as a model for fulfillment of socialism and humanism – as capitalist units which gained their power by occupying lands from the Palestinians and exploiting cheap labor of neighboring Mizrahi towns.

⁴¹ Tilley, in Davis p. 25. In this regard, it is an interesting counter-reaction to the Ashkenazi-Zionist regarding of all the Jews from diverse geographies, historical experiences and languages as one "black" group.

⁴² Stürmer and Bernd. 2004. p. 68. However, the new-Mizrahim is not a social movement per-se.

⁴³ Polletta and Jasper, p. 298.

⁴⁴ Nagel J., in Davis, p. 26.

⁴⁵ Shenhav 1997.

"Today I am no longer an Arabic Jew, I am 100 percent Israeli, but I came to Israel...as a full Arab from a cultural point of view...people did not use that (Arab-Jew) definition, because the Israeli society didn't like it. I am not afraid to use it...but also do not use it too much"⁴⁶.

"– I was raised in Egypt till I was 4 years old...I don't have such a natural organic tie to the Arab culture...I've never spoken Arabic...I don't sing Um Kul Thum and I don't belong to the Arab space as naturally as you put it"
– "you bet we belong"⁴⁷

The discovery of preexisting bonds is also typical to the new Mizrahi discourse, which relates often to the cultural and historical ties between the Mizrahim and the Arab countries and brings back the history that the Mizrahim have been forced to forget. In the 80s, "the Mizrahi front" emphasized their love and respect for the Arab culture and announced: "we are grateful to the Arab countries that endowed us with protection for hundreds of years"⁴⁸.

Criticizing Ashkenazi-Zionist left

The linkage between the Mizrahim and the Palestinians implies criticism of the left and exposes its hypocrisy, which is manifested in its denial of the intended structural violence towards the Mizrahim. The reactions to an article published in 'Ha'aretz' by Shenhav exposed this denial⁴⁹. In his article, Shenhav accused the Ashkenazi-Zionist hegemony – including the "new historians" who initiated a post-Zionist discourse which discusses the wrongdoing of Zionism to Palestinians – of denying and avoiding the Mizrahi oppression. Shenhav explained the de-politization of the Mizrahi issue in terms of preserving the power relations and Eurocentric Orientalism. Thus, the same left that is self-acclaimed as "the peace camp" – and by doing that expropriates the wish for peace and blames the Mizrahim for precluding peace agreement with the Palestinians – supports the Palestinian cause only *as long as there will be a wall between the people*, between the Arab world and the representatives of the Western culture, as long as "us here, them there"⁵⁰. The Mizrahim, in contrast, challenge the hegemony and endanger the cultural and economic status of the Ashkenazim; therefore the latter do not support their claims⁵¹. The article evoked a vivid debate for many months. Hostile reactions from intellectuals who are affiliated with the hegemony only confirmed the denial.

Moreover, a Mizrahi-Palestinian cooperation is perceived by the Ashkenazi hegemony as crossing the boundaries. First, it breaks the perception of Mizrahi as right wing and Ashkenazi as left wing and takes the monopoly on peace issues from the Ashkenazim. Second, it blurs the Arab-Jew distinction that is fundamental to the Ashkenazi-Zionist ideology. Hence the new Mizrahi discourse is considered radical and provokes antagonistic reactions from the Ashkenazi-Zionist elite. Mizrahi scholars and writers such as Ella Shohat,

⁴⁶ Tamari.

⁴⁷ A discussion between Viki Shiran and Eli Hamo, both new-Mizrahi activists, in Chetrit 1999, p.177.

⁴⁸ Shohat 2001, p.199.

⁴⁹ Ha'aretz is considered a respected newspaper read by elite members, and with the most left-leaning tendencies. There will be a several references to Ha'aretz in the chapter about Tali Fahima.

⁵⁰ The slogan that Yitzhak Rabin used in the 1992 elections in which he won. Ashkenazi leaders of left parties have often expressed the desire for complete separation. Moshe Dayan, Israel's defense minister said: "I don't believe in what we call integration of Israel in the Arab world. The Arabs don't have much to teach us. Undoubtedly, Israel is close to Europe culturally, politically and economically". Cited in Elyachar p. 211

⁵¹ Shenhav. 1997.

Naeim Giladi and others were forced to publish their critical work outside of Israel⁵². Ashkenazi politicians have occasionally called for recognition of the PLO as the representative of the Palestinians. Yet it was only after Mizrahi politicians met with Arafat that the government enacted a law that prohibits meetings with Arafat⁵³.

Breaking the boundaries is perceived as illegitimate in the eyes of many Mizrahim as well. A Mizrahi activist describes the reactions of Mizrahim when he demonstrated with left-wing organizations as Mordechai Vanunu was freed⁵⁴:

"I stood there with a sign: "Vanunu, you are my Mizrahi hero". It was obvious that for the Mizrahim...the sign broke the dichotomy between the left-wing camp, that symbolized the Ashkenaziness, the center and prestige...and the right-wing camp, that symbolizes the Mizrahiness, periphery, misery...They tried to take down the sign...what their act said to me was: "we are interested in the continuation of the Zionist-Ashkenazi oppression, we are interested in the continuation of the separation between the Palestinian poverty and our Arab-Mizrahi poverty...[however,] the left-wing camp couldn't contain me yet..."⁵⁵

Thus far I have tried to explain the complexity of the convergence between the Mizrahim and the Palestinians, as well as to give room to marginalized cases of cooperation and the responses those engender. I will now turn to the case study of Tali Fahima, using elements that were discussed so far to analyze the discourse around it. (to be continued...)

⁵² It is important to stress that also Ashkenazi post-Zionists are rejected from the mainstream. Post-Zionist historians, for example, are constantly attacked by the academia.

⁵³ Chetrit 2004, p. 273.

⁵⁴ Mordechai Vanunu is a Mizrahi peace activist who was a nuclear technician that stood up against Israel's nuclear programs. He was jailed for 18 years and freed on April 2004.

⁵⁵ Shmuelof.