SIEGE MENTALITY IN ISRAEL*

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Abstract. Israeli Jews harbor the belief that the world has negative behavioral intentions toward them. This belief reflects their deeply embedded Siege Mentality. A long history of world's persecutions and hatred throughout the world, epitomized by the Holocaust has grounded Siege Mentality in the Jewish tradition. In the present century, the beliefs of Siege Mentality playing an important role in Zionistic ideology, have become part of the Israeli ethos. A review provided several examples of Siege Mentality beliefs as expressed in the Israeli literature, films, education, press and by political leaders. These beliefs have an influence on Israeli attitudes and behaviors, causing mistrust and negative attitudes toward the world, sensitivity to information coming from the world, pressure to conformity among the Israeli Jews, and self-defensive acts. It is suggested that within the framework of Siege Mentality beliefs and their consequence, can the Israeli way of managing the Middle-Eastern conflict be understood.

A belief held by group members stating that the rest of the world has highly negative behavioral intentions toward them reflects a state of Siege Mentality[1]. (Bar-Tal, 1986; Bar-Tal & Antebi, in press). Specifically, the content of Siege Mentality belief refers to perception of group members that the outgroups have intentions to do wrong or inflict harm on their group. The crucial focus of this belief is on the rest of the world. The group generalizes the negative attribution to all'the outgroups and often equalizes among all of them, although sometimes it may find one or two exceptions. Since most of the groups have a conflict with one or several groups, the emphasis of this belief is on standing alone against the hostile world. It implies also that there is a threat to the group's existence and that it cannot expect help from anyone in time of need. Thus, Siege Mentality should be viewed as reflecting one described core belief accompanied by such beliefs as "No-one will help us in time of need", "The world should be glad to get rid of us", "We cannot rely on others advice" and so on (see Bar-Tal & Antebi, in press).

Siege Mentality is not a unique attribute of one group, but characterizes various groups in human history. The characterization implies that a significant majority of group members hold the belief about negative intention of the world as a *central* belief attributing to it *high confidence*. The former feature indicates that the belief is often accessible in the group members cognitive repertoire and they frequently take it into consideration while making different decisions. The latter feature suggests that group members attribute to the belief high validity and consider it as true.

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[1] In the original conception, the term Masada Syndrome was used (Bar-Tal, 1986). But since this term implies also to many people a common suicide of group members, as it happened in the historical event in Masada, it was substituted with the term Siege Mentality, without changing the original conception.

The strength of Siege Mentality is contingent on the number and the influence of the group's members who believe in the negative intention of the world. The larger and more influential the group members who hold the belief, the stronger the consequences of the Siege Mentality. In some cases, group members may even widely share the conviction and believe that it characterizes their group (see Bar-Tal, 1990-a).

Nevertheless, it should be noted that Siege Mentality is not an inherited disposition or a stable trait, but a temporary state of mind that can last for either a short or long period of time, depending on the group's perceived experiences and on the educational, cultural, political and social mechanisms which maintain it. This state is aroused when the belief becomes central in the cognitive repertoire of the group's members. But, with a change in conditions or circumstances, the maintaining mechanisms may be weakened and the belief may become less central. In time, it may even disappear from the repertoire. (Bar-Tal, 1986).

The assumption that guides the present conception is that the beliefs that people have about the world, determine their reactions. People act and react to the world they believe exists. (Brunswick, 1956; Heider, 1958; Krech, Crutchfield, & Ballachey, 1962). *Therefore, an attempt to determine whether the world is actually hostile toward the particular group is irrelevant for the understanding of this group behavior. When group members believe that the rest of the world has negative behavioral intentions toward them, they react accordingly.* Thus, the study of groups' Siege Mentality is of special importance, since it may shed light on various groups' behaviors.

In modern history, a number of groups can be characterized with Siege Mentality. The Albanians, Iranians, Afrikaners, Japanese in the 30's or Russians in the 20's are only a few, but nevertheless well-known examples of this phenomenon (see Bar-Tal, 1986 for the presentation of these examples). The present paper intends to focus on one example of Siege Mentality, namely the case of Jews, and especially the Israeli Jews. Such analysis is of special importance in view of the protracted conflict which is presently waged between Israeli Jews and Palestinians. Any one who would like to comprehend the reactions of the Israeli Jews in this conflict must consider also Israeli Siege Mentality. Their beliefs, attitudes and behaviors are shaped to a large extent by the deep conviction that the world is hostile toward them and no-one will make any special effort to save them in a case of disaster.

The present paper will describe the roots of Siege Mentality in the Jewish history and tradition. Then, the expression of Siege Mentality in the Israeli ethos will be described and the consequences analyzed, with the implications regarding the current Israeli- Palestinian conflict emphasized.

THE SCOPE OF THE ISRAELI SIEGE MENTALITY

The basic premise of the present paper is that Siege Mentality is widely shared by the Jewish population which has experienced a long history of persecutions, libels, special taxation, restrictions, forced conversions, expulsions and pogroms. From the Roman period through the Middle Ages, the Reformation and the Industrial Revolution until today Jews consistently and continually have been subjects of anti-Semitism almost in every place they have lived. (e.g. Grosser & Halperin, 1979; Poliakov, 1974). The climax of the Jewish suffering took place in the twentieth century when the systematic genocide, "the final solution to the Jewish problem", called the Holocaust, was carried out in Europe (see Dawidowicz, 1975). The fact that six million Jews perished in view of the world's

indifference (e.g., Morse, 1968) served as crucial evidence for strengthening the Siege Mentality of the remaining Jews and imprinted all their following experiences (Bar-Tal, 1990-b). In the Jewish point of view the Holocaust does not stand alone as one grim event, but is a metaphor for Jewish history itself (Stein, 1978). It is of crucial importance for the understanding of the Israeli Siege Mentality in that it encapsules the Jewish suffering of many hundreds of years. On the basis of this view it is possible to understand Elon's observation that:

> "The holocaust remains a basic trauma of Israeli society. It is impossible to exaggerate its effect on the process of nation-building.... There is a latent hysteria in Israeli life that stems directly from this source.
> It accounts for the prevailing sense of loneliness, a main characteristic of the Israeli temper since Independence. It explains the obsessive suspicions, the towering urge for self-reliance at all cost in a world which permitted the disaster to happen. It explains the fears and prejudices, passions, pains and prides, that spin the plot of public life and will likely affect the nation for a long time to come. The lingering memory of the holocaust makes Arab threats of annihilation sound plausible. But even had there not been any Arabs, or if by some wondrous event their enmity were to disappear overnight, the lingering effect of traumatic memory would probably be almost as marked as it is today. The trauma of the Holocaust leaves an indelible mark on the national psychology, the tenor and content of public life, the conduct of foreign affairs, on politics, education, literature and the arts" (Elon, 1971, p. 198-199).

In addition, the recent history of the State of Israel, especially in the first 30 years of its existence, contributed greatly to the feeling of Siege Mentality. With the establishment of the Jewish State in 1948, Arab countries tried actively to destroy it. First, it was invaded by five regular armies from Egypt, Transjordan, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon. Later, until the peace treaty with Egypt, all the Arab states closed their borders, declared an embargo, pressed the world to stop relations with Israel and maintained the pressure of a state of war, refusing to recognize Israel and employing instead the rhetorics of the "liberation of Palestine" and the "liquidation of Zionist aggression". Moreover, in its forty-four years of existence, Israel has been forced to fight several major wars with Arab states in which thousands of Israelis have been killed. Of particular note is the fact that the Palestinians have constantly carried out murderous raids into Israel which have caused many civilian casualties. (see Ben Gurion, 1963; Eban, 1957; Meir, 1973).

In view of these experiences, it is not surprising that Jews in Israel express beliefs deriving from their Siege Mentality. For example, following the Yom Kippur war in 1973, respondents were asked what in their opinion was the attitude of the nations of the world to the State of Israel. Forty percent of all the respondents felt that the nations of the world were always, or generally, against the State of Israel, whereas only five percent of the sample were willing to make the opposite generalization (Liebman and Don Yehiya, 1983, p.198). With regard to other contents, results of an opinion poll taken in Israel on September 24-26, 1978, following the broadcasting of the TV series Holocaust, showed that forty-one percent of the adults believed that "What happened then, can happen again" and seventy-two percent believed that "There is still a hatred of Jews in the world" (Levinson, 1979).

In a survey of Israeli youngsters aged 15-18 carried out in May 1987, sixty-three percent of the interviewees reported that they agree with the item "The Holocaust is not a one-time event and can always recur" and eighty-four percent agreed with the item "In all the world there exists anti-Semitism, even if not expressed explicitly". (Zemah, 1987). Also, in a survey performed on a national sample in January 1986, fifty-one percent of the respondents believed that "The whole world is against us" (Arian, Talmud, & Hermann, 1988).

A year later (January 1988) a similar survey revealed that fifty percent of the respondents believed that "The whole world is against us"; sixty-seven percent believed that "World criticism of Israeli policy stems mainly from antisemitism"; and sixty-three percent believed that "Israel is and will continue to be 'a people dwelling alone'". (Arian, in press). The important finding about these beliefs is that they are distributed in the Israeli Jewish population independently of socio-economic class, education, age and even political ideology. (Arian, 1989). Similarly, in June 1989, seventy percent of a national sample of Jewish adults agreed that "In all the world there exists anti-Semitism, even if not expressed explicitly" and 65 percent agreed that "The Holocaust is not a one-time event and can always recur".

ROOTS OF SIEGE MENTALITY IN JEWISH TRADITION

Beliefs of Siege Mentality are founded in the Jewish tradition. "Jewish tradition finds antisemitism to be the norm, the natural response of the non-Jew .... The term 'Esau hates Jacob' symbolizes the world which Jews experience. It is deeply embedded in the Jewish folk tradition" (Liebman, 1978, p. 42). Stein (1978) pointed out that "persecution is not simply a tragic consequence of being a Jew in a hostile world; rather it is built into the fabric of the Jewish covenant with history" (p. 154). Years of history taught the Jews about the world's hostility and hatred. Almost in every part of the world they lived, Jews received in different ways, the same message of rejection, animosity and estrangement. It is thus not surprising that Jews absorbed this message into their tradition. Generation after generation were reared on its basis and maintained it as one of the central tenet of their repertoire. In the present century, with the return of the Jews to their home land and the establishment of the State of Israel, the beliefs of Siege Mentality were integrated into the evolving national ethos. The literature, school books, media commentaries and leaders' expressions, inculcate them and help to maintain them accessible.

The foundations of Siege Mentality can be traced to the times of the Bible (Mirsky, 1982). The sons of Israel, professing to monotheism felt different, and most important, lonely in the hostile world. The following verses from different books of the Bible provide some examples of the described feeling:

"And he said unto Abraham, know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land which is not theirs, and they will make them serve, and they will afflict them four hundred years." (GENESIS, XV, 13)

"And I have separated you from the nations, that ye shall be mine." (LEVITICUS, XX, 26)

"Lo, it is a people that shall dwell alone, and among the nations it shall not be reckoned." (NUMBERS, XXIII, 9)

"Many are my persecutors and my assailants yet from thy testimonies do I not turn away." (PSALMS CXIX, 157)

Jewish religious tradition differentiates between Israel and all the other nations. Every Saturday night a Jew recites a blessing saying "He who distinguishes between holy and secular, between light and darkness, between Israel and all other peoples". In addition to the belief in Israel's isolated status among the nations of the world, the Jewish tradition contains a deeply rooted belief in the other nation's hatred of Israel and their intentions to hurt it. Thus, for example, the "Passover Haggadah", which is read once a year, says:

"For more than once they (other nations) have risen against us to destroy us; in every generation they rise against us and seek our destruction. But the Holy One, blessed be he, saves us from their hands".

and in another place it reads:

> "Pour out Thy wrath upon the nations that know Thee not; and upon Kingdoms that call not upon Thy names; for they have consumed Jacob and laid waste his habitation".

The Midrash (homiletic interpretation of the Scriptures) directly states that "all nations hate Israel" (Bereishit Rabbah, 63:7). As a commentary to this view, Rabbi Shimon, one of the Tanna who lived in the 2nd century, suggested that the hatred of Israel is as a "rule", meaning that the hatred of Israel is imprinted "in the Peoples of Esau and cannot be uprooted".

Centuries later, Maharal (Rabbi Yehuda Liva Bar Betzalel from Prague who lived in the 16th century and was one of the leading scholars during the Renaissance) in his interpretation of the Passover Haggadah, expressed the view that the hatred of Israel is an unique phenomenon, which has no logical basis, and is not dependent on particular circumstances (see in his book "Beer Hagolah" the passage Tze Ulmad). Similarly, Rabbi Dov Halevi Soloveitzik, who lived in the 19th century indicated in his book "Beith Halevi" that "There is no point in trying to adapt ourselves to the gentile leaders in order to find favor in their eyes because their hatred is so deep and they wish to destroy the soul of Israel". Furthermore, he pointed out that "Any feeling of hatred by nature, weakens with time but the hatred of Israel is different than any other hatred. On the contrary, the hatred of Israel strengthens over time, rising up from time to time". (Interpretation of Parashat Shemat in "Beth Halevi")

These few examples were only brought to demonstrate the ancientry of Siege Mentality tradition. Century after century Jews learned the tradition and at the same time experienced themselves the hostility of the surrounding world. These experiences reinforced the recited learnings and were added to the history and folk-tales to be told to the next generations.

SIEGE MENTALITY IN ZIONISM

Siege Mentality is one of the bases upon which Zionist ideology developed. In viewing Jewish history as a continuous anti-Semitic persecution, the heralders of Zionism concluded that the hatred of Jews is a universal and permanent phenomenon (Rubinstein, 1984). Following this view, they recognized that assimilation could not be a solution to the Jewish problem, since the Jewish people would forever remain foreign to and different from the peoples among whom they live. They, therefore concluded that only a Jewish State in which Jewish People could live like any normal nation, would put an end to the anti-Semitism and thereby solve the Jewish problem (See the writings of Dov Borohov, Ehad Haam, Theodor Herzl,Moshe Lilenblum, Yehuda Pinsker or, Peretz Smolenskin).

For example, Peretz Smolenskin, the father of Spiritual Zionism, posited that anti-Semitism is an emotion rooted in the hearts of other nations, which is handed down from one generation to the next, and which arose and developed in response to the Jewish People's special situation in the Diaspora. In order to justify this emotion, the haters of Israel built a complex structure of justifications and excuses which lack any real basis.

> "All of humanity among whom Jews live, is infected to the depths of their soul with the poison of anti-Semitism, from the illiterate farmer to the outstanding personalities of the current generation" (in Briman, 1951, p.6).

Also, Pinsker in his "Auto-Emancipation" in 1882 explained:

> "With the loss of their fatherland, the Jewish people lost their independence and fell into a decay which is not compatible with existence as a whole vital organism.... But after the Jewish people had yielded

up their existence as an actual State, as a political entity, they could nevertheless not submit to total destruction - they did not cease to exist spiritually as a nation.... Fear of the Jewish ghost has been handed down and strengthened for generations and centuries.... Judeophobia is a psychic aberration. As a psychic aberration it is hereditary and as a disease transmitted for two thousand years it is incurable.... Thus have Judaism and anti-Semitism passed for centuries through history as inseparable companions. Like the Jewish people, the real wandering Jew, anti-Semitism too seems as if it would never die.... No matter how   much the nations are at variance in their relations with one another, no matter how diverse in their instinct and aims, they join hands in their hatred of the Jews; on this one matter all are agreed" (p. 7,8,9).

Anti-Semitism as an eternal phenomenon is grounded also in the thinking of the founder of the Political Zionism, Theodor Herzl. In his influential book "The Jewish State", he wrote in 1896:

"No-one can deny the gravity of the situation of the Jews. Whenever they live in perceptible numbers, they are more or less persecuted... the forms of persecution varying according to the countries and social circles in which they occur .... I say that we cannot hope for a change in the current of feeling ... The nations in whose midst Jews live are all, either covertly or openly antisemitic." (Herzl, 1934, p. 23)

The described beliefs were absorbed by Jews who accepted the Zionistic ideology and immigrated to Israel (Palestine at that time) to implement the idea of Jews' returning to establish their own state. The beliefs of Siege Mentality were thus implanted in what can be seen as seeds of the evolving ethos of the new-old emerging nation.

SIEGE MENTALITY IN THE ISRAELI ETHOS

In discussing the sources of the Israeli Siege Mentaliity, it should be noted that the Siege Mentality beliefs of the Israeli Jews were not only fed by the Zionistic ideology, but were also absorbed as indicated by Jews in all the parts of the world, from the long history of persecutions and hatred which has been expressed in the long-standing Jewish tradition. The climax of the anti-Semitism, the Holocaust, established the Siege Mentality as the primary political myth of the Israeli society which symbolizes Israel's present conditions (Liebman & Don-Yehiya, 1983). In addition, the recent experiences of the State of Israel typified by protracted vicious conflict, feelings of insecurity, and political isolation only reinforced the already existing Siege Mentality among the Israeli Jews (Arian, 1989; Bar-Tal, 1990-b; Liebman & Don-Yehiya, 1983). On this basis it is suggested that the belief about the world's negative behavioral intentions against Jewish People has become part of the Israeli ethos. As indicated, many Israeli Jews report this belief directly, while cultural, educational and political mechanisms maintain it by expressing the belief repeatedly. The popular Israeli song "The Whole World is Against Us" composed in the late 60's is probably the most vivid and simple expression of the Israeli Siege Mentality. It captures the whole essence of the belief. The words of the song read.

"The whole world is against us.
This is an ancient tale
Taught by our forefathers
To sing and dance to.

If the whole world is against us,
We don't give a damn
If the whole world is against us,
Let the whole world go to hell."

The coming review will provide several examples of Siege Mentality expressions in Israeli ethos. They do not serve as a thorough review, but only as demonstrations to the above point.

Siege Mentality in Israeli Literature

Expressions of Siege Mentality can be found in various forms of the Israeli literature, prose, poetry and humoresque. A literary critique, Ben-Ezer (1977) suggested that the motif of being under siege played a large part in shaping the literature written before the Six Day War in 1967, and even before 1948. He brings Brener's stories as an example of this tendency. Chaim Yosef Brener, who wrote during the first waves of immigration to Palestine (at the beginning of the present century) expressed in his writings a feeling of being surrounded and a sense of existential anxiety. In his stories, Arabs are not portrayed as individuals, but rather as an entity representing horror and strangeness - a continuation of anti-Semitism and hatred of the Jews.

According to Ben-Ezer (1977), the establishment of the State of Israel has not changed the feelings of nightmare, estrangement and siege, as expressed by the Israeli writers. Thus, for instance, the hero of the story "A country sunset" by the writer Yitzhak Ben-Ner (1976), born in Israel, is described as living a walking nightmare - in fear of the terrible disaster which is about to happen. He says:

> "I am filled with fear at the thought that one day someone from my village who is dear to me will stand on the path that heads to the main road, will look out towards the world and will see the catastrophe which is galloping toward us like a whirlpool of dust coming in a way, destroying everything and turning all into a cloud of splinters - and then, without protection all of this greenery will be destroyed, all this that is peaceful, dear and good, which has been amassed on this little hill on the corner of this road, will be permanently destroyed." (Ben Ner, 1976, p. 62 from Ben Ezer, 1977, p. 14)

Similarly, Amos Oz, one of the most popular Israeli writers often expresses fears of nightmares. He feels that Israeli existence "is a piece of culture in a jungle, which surrounds us" .... (Ben Ezer, 1968, p. 130). In his story "The Jackal countries", he tells of a nightmarish hallucination:

> "Many of black skinny people, rushing, falling like a collapse of stones and flowing swiftly in the lower plain.... Already they are near enough for you to distinguish their shape. A filthy mob, dark, skinny, lice and flea infested, definitely smelly. Hunger and hatred disgust their faces. Their eyes burn with madness... And suddenly you are also surrounded. Besieged. Standing motionless from fear." (Oz, 1976, p. 22)

Hannah Yaoz in her book "Hebrew Holocaust fiction" (1980) refers to a type of fiction which she calls "trans-historical fiction". It refers to fiction characterized by the lack of a historical period as its basis. That is, it possesses neither chronological time markers nor a factual historical grasping point rooted in a particular historical period. Even a geographical location is not identified by name. Works of this kind do not aim at describing the actual horrors of the Holocaust, but rather "the reality of the life of the Jew persecuted throughout history" (p. 129). An illustration of the outlook which typifies trans-historical Holocaust fiction can be found in the story "The Hunt" by Aharon Appelfeld (1971) in his description of the Jew's hunter. The image of the hunter serves as a colorful expression of anti-Semitism, which does not require political basis, or social background, but rather is a natural phenomenon which exists just as the hunter has existed since the beginning of humanity.

In Israeli poetry it is also possible to find themes which pertain to the Jewish loneliness in the hostile world (See for example the literary work of Beth Mordecai, David Shimoni, or Moshe Tabenkin). The poet Uri Zvi Greenberg (1979) was especially preoccupied with this motif. In the poem Ask he wrote:

"Ask the Knesset of Israel, you that has been burnt by Titus, ask the Sun about to set whether, God forbid, the Lord's anger at Israel among gentiles has been unleashed.

We have no more fields to plow in the big world and will only be able to buy a small quantity of water from strangers' wells." (Greenberg, 1979, p.17)

Chaim Nachman Bialik, considered as the Israeli national poet, wrote in his poem "On the Butchery" which referred to the Kishinev pogrom of Jews in 1903:

"Headsman! Here's my neck - come
strike it through!
Neck me like a dog, the axe
is in your hand,
And all the world's my block -
And we - why are few!"

Similarly, years later, Nathan Alterman, a prominent Israeli poet wrote:

When our children under gallows wept,
The world its silence wept ....
(From Elon, 1971 p. 273)

The Israeli popular satirist Ephraim Kishon has frequently used in his writings the expression "our little country surrounded by enemies" referring to the political isolation of the State of Israel. In his satire entitled "A nation that dwells alone" Kishon wrote

"This title was given us by Bilam while being interviewed in the paper "Numbers" and till this very day we do not know if it was meant as a compliment or a curse. In any event, from then until today we have succeeded in preserving our special status as the only nation who does not have an ally for sure".

Siege Mentality in Israeli Films

Recently, Ben Shaul (1989) analyzing Israeli films pointed out that the theme of Siege Mentality is one of their leading tenets. Israeli films, which reflect the society's state of mind, exhibit the hostility of the world toward Israeli as a tragic reality. This hostility has become a stable factor in the Israeli life. As examples, Ben Shaul (1989) described three films "Silver tray", "Behind the bars", and "Night film". In all of them the reality is closed and oppressive, filled with suspicion and mistrust, characterized by intrigues and plots in which all the means for survival are justified. The main characters in these films are "chased by the whole world; they are lonely in the world; they are under constant threat to their existence; and they cannot expect help from anyone in time of need" (p.3).

Siege Mentality in the Israeli Education

It is widely accepted that schools play an important role in transmitting society's ethos. Through school books, curricula and teachers' opinions, students are exposed to dominating values, ideology, and tradition (Bar-Tal & Saxe, 1990; Ehman, 1980; Hess & Torney, 1967; Jaros, 1973).

A study by Adar and Adler (1965), which analyzed the values taught in Israeli schools, found that one of the central issues which preoccupied educational curricula is Israel's

relationship with other nations. The general outlook that the schools attempted to instill refers to Israel's isolation among the nations and their hatred of Jews (Ada & Adler, 1965, p.59). In the analysis of the ways in which values are transmitted, the investigators found a tendency on the part of teachers to emphasize these motifs, even beyond what is written in the schoolbooks. They tended to focus on anti-Semitism, isolation, persecutions or pogroms and to present any help or positive deed as being accompanied by ulterior motives.

Another study which concentrated on the analysis of history schoolbooks was done by Firer (1980). She found that books dealing with the history of Israel between 1900-1980 presented the relations between Israel and other nations as characterized by hatred of the world, glossing over other qualities of the contact. In these books, especially in those published until 1967, the nations of the world were portrayed as possessing attributes such as wickedness, malice, enmity or envy and the hatred of Israel was described as if it is a genetic trait (Firer, 1980, p 81). In general, in all the books, anti-Semitism is presented as an eternal evil which appears under the guise of different pretexts. The idiom "The eternal hatred of the eternal people" expresses the prevalent theme which appears in the history textbooks. The hatred of Jews is permanent, while its expression changes from time to time, or from nation to nation. Periods in which Jews were not persecuted are seen as short, temporary reprieves which occur only in order to prepare the next wave of pogroms.

Siege Mentality in Israeli Press

The press in Israel, which is widely read, has a significant influence on the accessibility of ideas. Over the years, it has been possible to find numerous references to the world's hostility toward the Jews and the State of Israel. These type of beliefs are not limited to newspapers associated with a particular political position, but rather reflect a general view of the whole Israeli press, representing a wide scope of political opinions, including the left wing newspapers, Davar and Al Hamishmar.

Several examples are provided to demonstrate the prevalence of Siege Mentality beliefs in the Israeli press. An article in the Labor Party's newspaper Davar reads:

> "Right and left joined together in order to inflame the old-new anti-Semitism: The cross-fire within which the Jewish People, Zionism and the State of Israel find themselves on both sides of Europe ... shows that the illusions encouraged at the beginning of the Emancipation and which were proven false by the distorted metamorphases of liberalism and socialism have been dashed... the anti-Semitic movement in all its anti-zionist and anti-Israel revelations proves that its perpetrators wish to complete the "final solution" which Hitler initiated through the division of roles: The Arab nations will continue with physical genocide and the "englightened"nations will conduct a spiritual genocide of survivors. (Gothelf, 1970, March 13)

Another article in one of the leading newspapers Ma'ariv says:

> "Perhaps the time necessary for destroying anti-Semitism is equal to the amount of time it took for it to come into existence - no less than two thousand years...And we will have to live with this reality.... which does not relate neither to the type of policies we try to perform nor to the ways in which we go. Rather it is an additional chapter in the old and sad story, which perhaps does not have an end at all." (Schnitzer, 1979, October 19)

The following article in Ha'aretz analyses the illusion that Zionism and the establishment of a Jewish State would bring an end to hatred of Jews:

> "If throughout the world Jews, at best, were only permitted to be absorbed into their surrounding, and at worst, were persecuted until death, then having their own state should have been the only logical solution to the ghettos, pogroms and annihilation. Israel was established on the ashes of the Holocaust in order that Jews would no longer have to stand alone. However, after 32 years as a

sovereign state, Israel finds itself in the same situation in which Jews stood in the past - ostracized and oppressed in the diaspora; gradually isolated among the community of nations. Israel has become an almost universal target for anger, resentment and even hatred. Is this perhaps the Jewish fate - with or without a State - eternal and unchanging? The 20 or 30 years since the Holocaust were but an exceptional breathing space in the merciless path of universal anti-Semitism." (Yoffe, 1980, April 20)

Similar ideas were expressed by Shalom Rosenfeld, one of the leading Israeli journalists and an editor of "Ma'ariv":

"... The hatred of Israel has always been the all powerful cement which connected the different nations and states , which in other areas not only did not share similar interests but were after contradictory and at odds with each other ... Let the historical philosophers and anthropologists search for the explanation of this remarkable phenomenon which has swept away the masses, coming from different traditions and cultures to a common ritual of hatred towards a nation and state whose name they can hardly pronounce ... what preoccupies us primarily is the spiritual, political and security expressions which this international brotherly hatred has toward the existence of the State of Israel and the security of the masses of Jews in the Diaspora." (Rosenfeld, 1980, September, 10)

Siege Mentality Beliefs as Expressed by Political Leaders

Public statements of political leaders reflect society's ethos. These statements not only help to maintain already existing beliefs, but also help to create new perceptions in the public, especially among the new generations (Liebman & Don-Yehiya, 1983). In other words, leaders define situations for the public who readily absorb the definitions and internalizes them (Keis, 1975). With regard to beliefs reflecting Siege Mentality, a review of political leaders' speeches reveal that irrespective of their ideology or political affiliation these beliefs are deeply rooted in their repertoire. Several examples will illustrate how political leaders express them.

The first Prime Minister of Israel David Ben Gurion stressed in a speech made in 1953 the total and constant hostility of the world towards Israel:

"We took upon ourselves a mighty struggle with 3 focal points: A struggle with ourselves, with our Diaspora mentality ..., a struggle with the nature of the land ..., a struggle against forces of evil and hatred in the world, far and near, that did not understand and did not want to understand the uniqueness and the wonderous mission of our nation since we stepped onto the stage of history in ancient times until this very day." (Ben Gurion 1965, p.11)

Abba Eban described the preceding days to the Six Day War, when he was a Foreign Minister, in the following way:

"As we looked around us we saw the world divided between those who were seeking our destruction and those who would do nothing to prevent it." (Eban, 1977, p. 329)

The third Prime Minister of Israel, Golda Meir, in press conference in Washington turned to a columnist Steward Alsop and said:

"And you Mr. Alsop you say that we have a Masada complex ... it is true. We do have a Masada complex. We have a Pogrom complex. We have a Hitler complex." (Newsweek, 1973, March 13)

Similarly, the late Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir, one of Israel's most prominent leaders and a founder of the Labor Party, said in the Knesset:

"We have a Warsaw Ghetto complex, a complex of the hatred of the Jewish People, just as we are filled with a Masada complex ... From the fighters of the Warsaw Ghetto, from the fighters in the ghettoes, in the forests and from the other camps we inherited the justified feeling with our backs to the wall. This feeling guided us in our various struggles and wars ..." (Ha'aretz, 1973, April, 29)

At the Holocaust memorial assembly in 1987, Yitzhak Rabin, then Minister of Defense, who had also been a Prime Minister said:

> "In every generation, they rise up to destroy us, and we must remember that this could happen to us in the future. We must therefore, as a state, be prepared for this." (Ha'aretz, 1987, April 27)

Recently, the President of the State, Haim Herzog, a Labor Party member, said in a speech delivered in 1988:

> "Both the Holocaust with all its hardships and the establishment of the State of Israel did not remove the anti-Semitism from the world. The hatred of Israel has not ceased; rather it has found other avenues of expressions - against Zionism and against the State of Israel. The phenomenon of hostility towards Israel in the world often takes on very extreme and irrational emotional qualities, which discloses something far deeper than political disagreements per se." (Yedioth Ahronoth, 1982, April 14)

Yitzhak Shamir, the present Prime Minister, frequently uses the theme of world's hatred. In one of the speeches he said:

> "We have plenty of ... 'friends' in the world who would like to see us dead, wounded, trampled, suppressed. And then it is possible to pity the wretched Jew, to commiserate with him." (Newsweek, 1988, January, 25)

The few selected illustrations show that beliefs of Siege Mentality are maintained by various cultural, educational and political sources. They keep these beliefs accessible, as part of the Israeli ethos.

CONSEQUENCES OF SIEGE MENTALITY

The importance of Siege Mentality does not refer only to the mere holding of beliefs which reflect this phenomenon, but especially to the effects they have on the group members. When beliefs of Siege Mentality are central in group members repertoire and are held with great confidence, they have a far-reaching influence on the reactions of group members. These beliefs, then, constitute reality for group members, who act in accordance to what is real for them.

Siege Mentality has at least five effects. First, it is suggested that the threatened group develops negative attitudes toward the other groups - the rest of the world. Second, the group develops mistrust toward them. Third, the threatened group becomes sensitive to information that may indicate negative intentions. Fourth, the threatened group develops internal mechanisms to cope with the potential threat by increasing pressures among group members toward conformity and unity. Finally, the group, in view of the perceived threat, uses all the necessary means to protect itself. The description of these five consequencea allows for a better understanding of the Israelis' reactions in the framework of international relations, and especially of their way of managing the conflict with the Palestinians and the Arab States.

Development of Negative Attitudes

Israeli Jews who believe that the world has negative intentions toward them have developed negative attitudes toward the outgroups. This reaction can be predicted on the basis of a number of psychological theories. Balance theory suggests that individuals tend to dislike those whom they perceive to dislike them (Heider, 1958). Exchange theory proposes that individuals reciprocate with hostility to perceived negative intentions (Blau, 1964). The described reactions are not unique to interpersonal relations, but are also observed in the

context of intergroup relations as well (e.g. Lieberman, 1964; Phillips, 1973). A group can only dislike outgroups which intend to harm it.

Indeed, Israeli Jews view the nations of the world as evil, immoral, utilitarian, indifferent and often brutal (see previously provided illustrations). These feelings have not been formed recently, but are also outcomes of the long history of Jews' hatred by the world. (Stein, 1977). The experiences of the State of Israel, and especially the preceding years of the Holocaust, reinforced these feelings. The beliefs of Siege Mentality are related to the negative labeling of the outgroups which provide an explanation as to why they have the intentions to harm (see Bar-Tal & Antebi, in press).

An example of the negative attitudes, which are implied from the description of the world, can be found in the following statement of the Likud party, published in the newspaper "Ha'aretz":

"The central question facing us is how we in Israel and the Diaspora can stand against a world which is half tyrannical, evil and hostile and half democratic yet whose degenerated soul has been poisoned by the black liquid." (Ha'aretz, 1975, November 14)

A similar description can be found in the editorial article of the "Jerusalem Post" following the resolution in U.N. in 1975 condemning Zionism as a type of racism:

"Barbarity has instead been installed as an international virtue, and the ideal of national liberation, which democratic societies always held invisible with personal liberation has been defined as debased by an ethos of butchery and oppression." (Jerusalem Post, 1975, November, 14)

Development of Mistrust

Members of a group having Siege Mentality develop lack of trust and suspiciousness toward the outgroup. The world that has intentions to harm cannot be trusted. This is a direct logical derivative. Israeli Jews do not trust the world's nations, which expressed hostility through centuries, did not intervene to stop the Nazi genocide, and according to their perceptions would not help the State of Israel in times of danger. Days of tension before the Six Day War, the Yom Kippur War and the following reaction to the oil embargo, as well as the United Nations resolution against Zionism have validated the mistrust. Arian et al. (1988) pointed out that "The clear feeling of basic mistrust regarding the international environment is the basic feature of the foreign and security polity of Israel. There is a fundamental belief that in the final analysis the world will do nothing to protect Jews, as individuals, as a collectivity, as a State" (p. 21-22).

The previously presented passages demonstrated the deep feeling of mistrust which leads also to the feeling of loneliness. Israeli Jews believe that they cannot count on help from other nations in time of need. They can only rely on themselves.

Development Sensitivity

Israeli Jews develop special sensitivity to cues emitted by different outgroups that may indicate negative intentions. Siege Mentality makes them alert to information which indicates a potential danger. Believing with great confidence that the world has negative intentions, Israeli Jews are tuned to information confirming their beliefs. They often selectively search for it and frequently interpret ambiguous information in line with their belief. In this situation, any criticism, disapproval, blame, or condemnation, performed even in the most constructive and friendly way, may be perceived as a demonstration of negative intentions.

The described tendency is in line with the psychological evidence showing that (a) cognitive sets may sensitize individuals to lower their threshold for recognizing and attending to certain information (e.g. Dearbon & Simon, 1958; Postman & Brown, 1952); (b) individuals may distort the incoming information so that it fits their cognitive sets (e.g. Hastorf & Cantril, 1954; Pepitone, 1950).

In the following example, a journalist Yitzhak Shalev (1982, October 21) makes negative attributions to positive behavior:

> "...when instead of all this splendor and glory, the Jewish Independence Day parade appears, and the Israeli flag flutters high above - it is not surprising that certain diplomats will grit their teeth and hide their hatred while saying acceptable greeting." (Shalev, 1982, October 21)

Abba Eban described this reaction directly when referring to Prime Minister Begin's reaction toward world criticism of Israel as a result of the Palestinians' massacre in Sabra and Shatila during the Lebanon war by Christian militia said "What most people call 'criticism of the Prime Minister' is described by Mr. Begin as a 'blood libel' against the State of the Jews". (Jerusalem Post, 1982, September).

Pressure toward Conformity

In view of the perceived threat from the world, Israeli Jews appeal to cohesiveness and unity in order to withstand the potential danger. This appeal can take various forms, among them calls for unity, calls for concealment of disagreement within the group, pressure to conformity, as well as exerting negative sanctions against those who disagree within the group. It is Coser (1956) who suggested that:

> "Groups engaged in continued struggle with the outside tend to be intolerant within. They are unlikely to tolerate more than limited departures from the group unity." (p.103)

Yitzhak Rabin, the Prime Minister during the time of the UN resolution against Zionism, proposed that:

> "Israel and the entire Jewish people must learn a lesson from the latest resolutions by the General Assembly. The lesson is that we must all fight as one man for the aims we believe in for the sake of the Jewish people and the State of Israel." (Maariv, 1975 November, 11)

Also, following the Sabra and Shatila massacre in September 1982, for which Israel was blamed, an editorial in "Maariv" stated:

> "Many of us would like to see during these terrible times a sign of national reconciliation after everything we have gone through, especially after the anti-Israel and anti-Jewish pogrom atmosphere in Europe and also partly in the United States." (Maariv, 1982, October, 1)

During the same period, in an article attacking the media for criticizing the governments policies, the following was written in the newspaper "Hatzofeh":

> "Today what is written and broadcast in Israel is at times seven times worse than the articles criticizing Israel which appear in the international media ... Israel is a state which is accompanied by the blessing, and the nation "dwell alone" and its solitude is part of our life whether we decree it or not. This is the way the world treats Israel. And if we want to live, we must live with this reality, with a great internal solidarity." (Ishon, 1982, August 6)

Yitzhak Shamir, the Prime Minister, recently called, in view of the Palestinian uprising and world criticism of Israel, for unity of all the ethnic groups, trends, factions and parties - "Only if we appear united vis a vis those who surround us, we will be able to reach the desired peace" (Ha'aretz, 1989, April 12).

Self Protection and Self Reliance

Group members who hold beliefs of Siege Mentality, may take drastic measures in order to prevent possible dangers. Pruitt and Snyder, (1963) observed that a perceived threat is one of the causes for war and Lieberman (1964) noted that militant actions are stregthened under external threat (see also Bar-Tal, 1990-c). Indeed, Israeli Jews feel that the goal to survive is so important that all means can often be used to insure security. It sometimes may lead to courses of action considered extreme and unacceptable by the international community.

Israeli Jews in some cases disregard any unfavorable reaction from other groups and continue to behave in a way they believe repulses possible dangers to their existence. In their view, the civilized world, which did not act on behalf of Jews during the Holocaust and did not help to prevent it, has little moral grounds to sermonize Israel. Indeed, 64 percent of Jewish adults from a national sample in June 1989 expressed a belief that "All the means are right to secure the existence of the State of Israel". In the late 1940's, David Ben-Gurion expressed this feeling in the remark: "It is not important what the Gentiles are saying, but what Jews are doing".

Chief of Staff David "Daddo" Elazar addressed this question half a year before the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War, in a ceremony commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising.

> "Only five years separate 1943 from 1948, between the revolt of the ghettoes and the battles of liberation in our land... When we, fighters in the Palmach, first heard on the sandy beaches of Ceasaria the tale told us by the survivors of the Warsaw Ghetto, we felt that we belonged to the same fighting corps, sons of the same nation, fighting the same war... We do know that they died a thousand cruel and unusual deaths because they were the exiles, the different, the weak and because we did not have the State of Israel in those cruel days. This is why we are convinced that power is vital. This is why we have sworn to be strong and well armed. This is why we have decided not to live the sufferance of others." (Bartov, 1978, p. 261)

Similarly, in a statement issued by the Israeli government following the Beirut massacre, there is a sentence saying: "Nobody will preach to us on ethics and dignity of human life". (Yedioth Ahronoth, 1982, September 20). In this vein the Minister of Energy Yitshak Berman, who resigned following the massacre, said in an interview:

> "The premise on which the new policy was based was that Israel could simply ignore the reactions of the outside world, with the exception perhaps of the U.S. which should be treated with more caution. The underlying philosophy was: the goyim are against us anyhow, so it is immaterial what Israel does - the goyim will react negatively." (Jerusalem Post, 1982, October 4)

In addition, group members with Siege Mentality try to be as less dependent on the world community as possible, developing maximum self-reliance as they can. Self-reliance frees the group from dependence on others who cannot be trusted. In this line Israeli Jews made special efforts to lessen the dependence on other nations, especially in security matters. Development of excellent intelligence institutions, military and aviation industry, or atomic capability are salient illustrations of the Israeli drive for self-reliance.

CONCLUSIONS

A stranger to the Israeli psyche may have difficulty in understanding the feeling of insecurity of the Israeli Jews. "How is it possible" one may ask "that a nation, which is technologically so advanced and militarily so strong, worries deeply about its security in the face of the possibility of a Palestinian State or vis a vis neighbouring Arab states?"

Nevertheless, this feeling is genuine and real (see Arian, 1989; Arian, Talmud & Herman, 1988; Stone, 1982). Israeli Jews believe that for them world is insecure. Two thousand years of negative experiences have taught them that the outgroups have negative intentions toward them. The beliefs of Siege Mentality are deeply rooted in the cognitive repertoire, though they vary in the degree of confidence and centrality that particular individuals hold. For some Israeli Jews, they are more real and central than for others, and some may even hold them in low confidence.

In addition, the centrality of Siege Mentality beliefs is not stable and may fluctuate over time, depending on the internal situation and international events. In certain times, they become especially accessible and Israeli Jews often express them. This was the case in the preceding days of the Six Day War in 1967, when the world did not react to the Egyptian threats; after the Arab oil embargo in 1973 that followed the Yom Kippur War, when the world blamed Israel for the oil shortage; following the adaptation of the General Assembly of the United Nations on November 10, 1975, a resolution defining Zionism as a form of racism and racial discrimination; during the Lebanon War and during the present Palestinian uprising, when the world media and many governments blame and denounce Israel's policy and actions (see Bar-Tal, 1986) and even in the preceding months and during the Madrid Peace Conference when the Israelis believed that they stand alone against the pressure of all the world.

Perhaps one of the most important implications of Siege Mentality beliefs is their influence on the attitudes of the Israeli Jews toward Arabs, in general, and Palestinians, in particular, as well as on the opinions regarding the solutions for the Middle Eastern conflict (Arian, in press; Bar-Tal, in press; Bar-Tal & Antebi, in press). Obviously, these attitudes and opinions are not only fed by Siege Mentality, but are especially stamped out by continuous evidence in the last century in the form of Arab attacks on Jews, imposed wars, continuing embargo, and stated hostile intentions. Still, Siege Mentality has remained an important factor determining Israeli political beliefs regarding various issues and especially solutions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The late Finance Minister, Pinchas Sapir expressed this idea directly when he said:

> "If we don't believe (that our backs are against the wall), if we don't take into account the worst possibility, we will bring upon ourselves a Holocaust because of our short-sightedness." (Haaretz, 1973, April 29)

In the eyes of many Israeli Jews the attitudes and behaviors of the Arabs are the direct expression of the world's hostility. Their anti-Zionism is a continuation of old anti-Semitism. (e.g. Harkabi, 1972). Most Israeli Jews believe that Arabs in general and Palestinians in particular threaten their personal security and the existence of the Jewish state. Their negative actions and deeds keep the beliefs of Siege Mentality accessible. In the eyes of many Israeli Jews, the current conflict and the involved actions reflect the Arab desire to annihilate Jewish populations and destroy the State of Israel. (About sixty percent of the Israeli Jews have continued to hold this belief for the last fifteen years, Bar-Tal, 1991). Moreover, the reaction of the world to the recent events (i.e., perceived support of the Palestinians) validates the feelings of loneliness among the hostile world.

Specifically, the majority of the Israeli Jews believe that the Palestinians see the establishment of the Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip only as the first step in the grand scheme to conquer the State of Israel. In their view, the anti-Semitic world will not intervene and will even support such a move. It is assumed that, partially, Siege Mentality

underlies these beliefs. Israeli Jews perceive the nations of the world as having negative intentions towards the State of Israel. Palestinian goals only reflect these intentions. The basic mistrust causes an adoption of hawkish political opinions which prescribe a continuation of the occupation of the conquered territories in the 1967's Six Day War, because they are necessary for Israel's security. In the view of those hawks, who do not support the uncompromising positions because of ideological and/or theological reasons, Israel cannot rely on the will of other nations and its existence cannot be dependent on security arrangements or guarantees which are temporal in their nature and can be violated (Bar-Tal, 1991). According to this position, "Security of Israel is contingent upon our presence and control of the territories of Eretz Israel" (an announcement by the hawkish organization the Council for Security and Peace in Ha'aretz, October 28, 1988).

Yohoshua Sagi from the Council for Security and Peace, who was the Chief of Intelligence in the Israeli Defense Forces, illustrates this opinion by saying:

"The point which negates a possibility of withdrawal from the territories is a basic given of Israel. There is nothing to do, but the population and our national base are mostly in the coastal plain. Without strategical hinterland of the territories our defense lines will be within our civil population." (in Erlich, July 24, 1988)

The above stated argument is especially convincing among individuals with the Siege Mentality. They adopt the hawkish, uncompromising opinions, because of fears, mistrust, and genuine concerns regarding their security.

Indeed, Arian (1989) found among the national sample of the Israeli Jewish adults in January 1988 that a belief set of Siege Mentality (or as he called it "go-it-alone" construct) is a powerful variable related to beliefs about threat and also to beliefs about desired solutions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The more confidence one has in beliefs expressing Siege Mentality, the more he/she feels threatened ($r = .39$) and holds less conciliatory beliefs about solutions regarding the future of the West Bank and Gaza Strip ($r = .56$). Path analysis showed that the beliefs of Siege Mentality played an important role in explaining political beliefs about the conflict and were even more powerful than demographic variables. Similarly, Bar-Tal and Antebi (in press) found that the hawkish opinion was best predicted by the Siege Mentality - better than other attitudinal or personal variables. These results indicate that the uncompromising positions about the Israeli-Arab conflict are at least partially based on the Siege Mentality.

It is imperative than anyone who deals with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will realize that the long history of anti-Semitism has made the Israeli Jews mistrustful and suspicious of the world's intentions. Israeli Jews feel strongly that no steps should be taken to put their security in jeopardy, whatever the political price may be. The world's negative intentions were validated and, now only they can decide their own fate, being absolutely determined not to return to the situation of helplessness as in the past.

It is impossible to erase the Siege Mentality since it is based on negative experiences, a long history of traumas and the nightmare of the Holocaust. However, since its maintenance depends on the political, cultural and educational mechanisms, it is possible to diminish it not by denying past events which should be kept in collective memory, but by adding new themes in the channels of information. The question is whether the political, cultural and educational sources of knowledge concentrate solely or mainly on the beliefs which maintain the Siege Mentality, or transmit information about such themes which express hope, difference of the present situation from the past, strength of the Israeli state, or the integration

of the State of Israel within the international community. Of special importance are the messages of political leaders who have an immediate influence, shaping the public opinion regarding the desired solutions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Arian, Talmud & Hermann, 1988). The Israeli public depends on political leaders for guidance with regard to their political beliefs and their ramifications concerning the conflict. Political leaders can continue to provide messages which strengthen the existing fears, or they can form new ideas, reinterpret old ones and shed new light on information coming from the parties which are perceived as a threat. The latter direction may be based on the evolving peace with Egypt, changes which take place in the Palestinian camp or even changes which occur in the Eastern European and African States regarding their policy towards Israel. This direction may provide new accessible beliefs which at least may weaken the detrimental effects of the Siege Mentality. Appearance of the described themes in other channels of information such as school books, films, poetry, newspapers, may further strengthen the theme of hope and integration of Israel within the international community.

In addition, on the part of the world, what is needed is an understanding of the foundations which underline the Israeli positions, since only when they are taken into account during negotiations and in the proposed solutions, can progress towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict be made. It is not the only condition for movement toward peace in the Middle East, but clearly an important one that cannot be disregarded by either the mediating third party or the Arabs, and especially not by the Palestinians. Operatively, it means that any solution will have to provide the conditions of security; without them the conflict cannot be peacefully resolved. Also, signs of acceptance, peaceful rhetorics, gestures of reconciliation, and rejection of violence may convince the Israeli Jews in the goodwill of the past enemy and rest of the world.

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