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Threats of Terror: Objectives, Options and Obstructions in Moral Education

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Abstract

This article analyses the intellectual, religious, national and moral processes through which a democratic society has had to confront in its day-to-day routines under the ever-present threat of terror. It discusses the effects of the terror over the character of Israeli society and the critical debates in its system of education. As far as it can be ascertained through the observations in this study, the general publics' attitude could be defined as a mildly moral realistic one: people think that terror and violence have objective foundations but certainly embody some subjective human conventions and beliefs.

Is it possible in a democratic society to aspire to peace during a long period of war and terror, and how should moral education be taught in accordance with critical and reflective principles in such circumstances? What are the intellectual and spiritual options to explain the existence of terror in Israeli society, a daily fact of life that compels an entire society to carry on with their day-to-day routines under the ever-present threat of terror? How then, should teachers start their daily teaching routine or react in front of their pupils to the reality of living with the constant threat of terrorism or actually experiencing acts of terror?

These questions and many other similar questions are asked in every Israeli classroom as well as in many other places all over the world. By definition, it is quite obvious that terror is a universal method of exercising power by spreading fear and horror. In that case, if terror is a constant universal reality, should teachers put aside their regular daily teaching in an attempt to give explanations again and again about what has happened? Would this be a successful way of providing a channel to filter students' responses while allowing them to vent their feelings? If everyone in every society could be a target of terror, are there any particular proficiencies or skills that would enable teachers to explain what had happened and why? Should every teacher carry on with 'business as usual' thus seeking to maintain normalcy and a sense of control by adhering to routine as the best manner of addressing such a horrific reality?

Aspirations for a global society governed by everyone playing fairly by the rules, has been one of the casualties of September 11th. The fall of the Berlin Wall brought with it hope of establishing a new world order, founded on international law and paralleled by the spread of institutions for international co-operation. However, in recent years a nightmare scenario of growing world disorder and rising ethnic tensions has replaced the global dream of a world governed by enlightened self-control by a community of peace-loving nations with a world rife with the prospect of mega-terrorism and amplification of violence and bloodshed

as a frightening reality. Apparently the political goals at the beginning of 21st century inflame new wars and terror, on the basis of traditional identities, i.e. religion, tribe and nation.

The postmodern culture, characterized by rapid social, technological and global change has not collapsed in the wake of September 11th. The recent phenomena of terror challenge our minds and spirits. To advance our agenda, we must try hard to understand it, empathize with it, and above all use its shocking images to mobilize public opinion against it. Even the debate as to what should be defined as an act of terror has been transformed into a question that postmodernists believe should be answered in accordance with the philosophical tools of relativism and deconstruction.

Postmodern culture has turned traditional concepts of objective reality, truth, morality and justice upside down. Everything that in the past was the product of complex traditions, history and tragic conflict is considered too complicated, removed and distanced from the new media and relegated to the level of a provincial problem that has no relevance or impact on normal life patterns in any Western country. Problems are framed in simplistic and hollow universal contexts, devoid of genuine content or depth that can be summarized in a few simple sentences. At one time, terror as a phenomenon had been relegated to the province of underdeveloped countries, and only became universal when it reached New York, Washington, Paris or Madrid. In the hands of postmodernists, deciphering terrorism as a phenomenon has suffered the same simplistic explanations as other facets of reality viewed through the prism of postmodern relativistic values.

The intellectual romantic view tends to mitigate and humanize horrific and inhuman terrorist acts by highlighting and underscoring the fact that terror has contributed far less to the sum total of human violence than state-sponsored violence, modern mass ideologies (i.e. Fascism, Nazism, Communism, religious wars, etc.), organized crime, poverty or diseases. Furthermore, they would argue, terror as seen in Algeria, Chechnya, Sri-Lanka, Russia, USA, Columbia, Afghanistan, Spain, Indonesia, India, Iraq or Israel, has been provoked by local problems and tensions – poverty, civil war and/or continuous traumas of the decolonization processes. Therefore, is not really terror since the latter requires a demonic perpetrator and an innocent victim.

Postmodernists not only view these forces as irrelevant to enlightened, advanced developed nations which are now above such despicable behavior other than they tend to legitimize such violence, justifying it as motivated by "noble" ideals, viewing the loss of human life as excesses that may be a necessary prelude or preliminary stage to a better social, economical, political or religious order as had been the case in their own dark history. Terror is viewed, if not outwardly, as a legitimate tool or in the least as an unavoidable escort to every social, political or religious revolution that one should expect, if not accept as part of the game. Far more damaging, to a certain extent, the romantic worldview seems tainted by a fascination, even a love, of the forces of destruction wrought by acts of terror. Such an approach seems to be shortsighted and unproductive, calling in a need for a far more comprehensive and complex approach to addressing terrorism is called for.

Although terror currently holds the entire world in suspense, anxiety and mental uncertainty, many intellectuals, teachers and social-political experts still argue that living under its siege could be avoided if every existing democratic society would be pushed into developing a military culture based on the realities of war and terror.

From the international point of view, terror is comprehended as a privatized method which is derived from a combination of fundamentalist fanaticism – either religious or nationalist – and blatant crime. Crime is involved in the procurement of means as well as the methods of combat in which humane laws become irrelevant. This mixture of fanaticism and crime, in various proportions, can be observed everywhere by social-political extremists as well as by their victims, by fundamentalists as well as by Western societies, by poor as well as by wealthy people. In the case of the Middle East conflicts, terror is flourishing all the way through the continuous conditions caused neither by war nor peace, conditions that seem permanent… a desperate infinity. There is no monopoly of power in the Middle East and there is no ultimate body that would elaborate the criteria of a legitimate force for combating violence and terror. The challenging reality in Israel, the past tragedies of the Jewish people as well as the tragedy of the Palestinian people and the seemingly hopeless situation in the present, continue to be a nihilistic threat to the society's very existence so that a profound sense of psychological depression, personal worthlessness and social-cultural despair overwhelm the society as a whole.

The outcomes of this delirious situation of Israeli society have a high impact on every domain of life, on daily base, on every decision that is taken at each moment. Consequently, the civil and cultural conflict over the character of Israeli society is at the present time enlightened under the shadow of war and terror, and is one of the most critical debates in that country's history and its system of education. The stakes in this battle are very high. Crises in identity and values accompanying the State since the beginning of this century have characterized the modern history of Israeli versus Palestinian societies.

This study sees social-political debate and current events focusing on terrorism as a work of both reconstruction and deconstruction:

1. <u>Reconstruction</u>: What really is happening in every society and why are we facing an increase in terrorism as a widespread phenomenon?   This can be addressed by reading government and media reports together with social-political enquiries. In addition, discussing and analyzing underutilized sources of recollections, oral testimonies, and other materials can provide fruitful resources for a reconstructive curriculum of sociology, moral education, history, psychology and debates on actual events.

2. <u>Deconstruction</u>: What did acts of terror want to achieve and what did they achieve in reality? What are the cultural trends to which they related and who are the professional authorities on which they state their cases?

In point of fact, the object of this study on terror is to provide an educational tool by which people can more readily create an image that will be universally respected, and in effect sustain and broaden the personal, social, and intellectual conditions in which such a phenomena can flourish, not for its own sake but for moral human ends. Granted, such an explicit practice may not appear to have the intensity one could imagine present in a heated dialogue with one of the terrorists or in the internal dialogue about moral and social causes and means. It is also important to note that the destruction wrought by terror has a high impact going beyond the immediate victims – reshaping the society subject to such

onslaughts of terror. Reflecting on this phenomenon, some major trends seem to emerge when one seeks to examine and analyze the phenomenology of terrorism in the light of the literature, testimonies and recollections.

- Terror and violence is a central issue of discussion all over the world. Traditional definitions of evil hold that intentions are evil if they lead to evil actions, namely terror and violence. So are of terrorist acts - if the preponderance of their actions is evil. People often refer to institutions, states, tribes, cults or beliefs as evil. It is common to consider evil actions to be a widespread phenomenon and to hold that their main goal is to inflict suffering (Alston, 1991).

- Questions relating to the subjects' definitions of terror and violence, the quality of terror and violence and its distribution in the world seem to result in people redefining their daily attitude towards reality. Do we accept terror and violence as part of our everyday existence, or is it an ex-mundi experience? Are we dealing with ordinary people caught up in extraordinary deeds and driven to achieve their goals by indulging in evil acts? Is terror a genetic or environmental factor or a combination of both perhaps? Do we attribute vice and evil to the Other in order to 'prove' that evil is not a part of we ourselves? (Kekes, 1990).

- The perpetrators of acts of terrorism are untroubled by guilt or feelings of remorse about innocent people who would be killed or maimed. The widespread reaction of the public-at-large is due to the haphazard nature of the acts which leave everyone feeling vulnerable. In addition, because the identity of the victims and the identity of the perpetrators tend to be mutually exclusive and ethnically defined, public hatred tends to be towards every person belonging to that group perceived to be an enemy. The growth of such a culture of defused hatreds is one of the greatest achievements of terror for it tends to muffle the effectiveness, if not completely silence the voice of the rational humanist educator.

- Horrific acts of premeditated terrorism motivated by high ideals and principles, not the product of a spontaneous yet wanton act of hatred toward the potential victims, is not just acceptable or justifiable in some circles. All too many national and religious leaders are treating terror as something patently and positively good. Instead of serving as a vehicle for implementation of a calculated rational policy, the act of terror has been characterized by broader circles as a vehicle for expressing more general frustrations and resentment, forcing the normal strata of society to recognize not only the terrorists' existence, but the Other's existence as part of their own reality. This strategy, however, tends to disrupt normality between ethnic communities altogether and exacerbating tensions.

- Acts of terror have not brought about the political, social or religious goals they were meant to encourage. They have sparked countermeasures where governments adopt repressive measures that are justified by the general public as a suitable response to aggression – attitudes that one finds echoed in every classroom. Terrorism triggers a cycle of aggression described by the participants of both sides as inevitable and unending as each side seeks to defend themselves; the perpetrators perceive themselves to be victims of an oppressive and repressive government and the genuine, true victims.

- Adopting a moral code of democratic education is ineffective and ultimately unsuccessful when it comes to terrorism. Even when legitimate means of protest are

available, there has been no shortage of those who opt for terrorism anyway, perceiving these implemented methods as purposely deceitful and ineffective. The temptation to excuse terrorist methods because other avenues for protest are blocked simply is not substantiated in reality.

- The facet of terrorism that is hard to explain to the secular public is how individuals can be so driven by vengeance, by a culture of martyrdom and religious fervor to "go to Heaven". The assumption of rational secular human beings is that religious wars are history, a period that is not only behind us, but best done, buried and forgotten. Reconsidering the motivations that drive suicide bombings in this light is difficult for the vast majority of the public, it being far easier to assume there is a logical (i.e. addressable and treatable) force driving people to blow themselves up – despair or poverty or the meaningless of life. Indicative of these approaches are the words of a young man who opposes any attempt to blacken the "good name" of each and every suicide bomber remarking: "If I die when I'm dead, that's one thing. But if I die while I'm still alive, then what's the point of living? A person like me is driven by emotions and the faith that Allah will protect and help you achieve victory" (Haaretz, 2003).

- The belief that those who are ready to die for the exalted cause can look forward to the delights of Paradise are evidently enough for many young people to commit such acts. What underlies this motivation? Reports indicate that the promise of eternal life in Paradise plays a central role among volunteers ready and willing to blow themselves up. Every individual cherishes the earthly life, yet it is easier to give up that life if one believes this will lead to an even better life in the Next World. Thus, those who choose this avenue seek not to end their lives but to extend it. While this logic may seem twisted to a secular mind, choosing to die in sanctification of Allah's name stems primarily from a love of life. Furthermore, promising 72 virgins to every **Shahid,** especially in a puritanical and traditional society that offers few legitimate outlets for sexual tensions, demonstrates the power potential in redirecting the sex drive to other ends and now well in tune with human nature these promises in the Koran and in Islam are – well before Freud appeared on the scene.

- What about the old theological question whether the existence of evil and violence shows Biblical theism to be logically inconsistent? That is: is it logically possible for an omnipotent and perfectly righteous God to create a world containing so much evil, violence and terror? (Rowe, 1991). There are many mystical and religious theories that, through revelations and ultimate explanations about violence and terror, seek to reconcile the two. While many of these explanations perhaps make human misery and suffering more endurable, are they reasonable in the eyes of the beholder?

- Numerous killings by suicide bombers and other terror attacks as well as casualties in combat: During the new **Intifada** in Israel (2001-2004) peace has been transformed from a reasonable arrangement that is supposed to prevent terror and violence between nations, into a concept of deliverance full of violence, brutality and disaster. Jews and Arabs gave up the assumption that "Good" is predominant, then vainly struggled to explain the prevalence of terror and violence. Jewish tradition maintains that "for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen. 8:21); thus, a reasonable account of evil and violence must acknowledge the reality and prevalence of terror and violence. There is an antithesis to the concept of the monster and this implies that

ordinary persons do not perpetrate evil deeds, that is, evil is not an inherent part of us. In short, one can be kept at bay as a mutation of the human psyche.

• Many cases of terrorism are justified in the media as being based on noble ideals that sanction killings of individuals as a preliminary stage for a positive social, economical, political or religious Moslem revolution. That is, terror is viewed as a legitimate tool for social, political or religious progress that requires a war of destruction, a merciless war to the death. It entails an infatuation with destruction expressed in acts of terror. Many leaders who favor terror as a legitimate tool for achieving religious, political or social goals seek to illuminate, i.e. broadcast or amplify their problems by creating acts of terror. They would argue that they have contributed far less to the sum total of human violence than that generated by state-sponsored violence, mass ideologies of the past (i.e. fascist, Nazism, Communism, religious wars, etc.), organized crime or poverty or diseases. "Current national-religious terror," they argue, "never reached the level of organization and indiscriminate slaughter generated by wars, nor have they practiced wholesale genocide as some governments have done."

• To a large extent, it was a lament over the death culture expressed by ***Hassan***, the religious hero of Shiites' Moslems, that has made deep inroads among Palestinian youth who, if they are not deflected from this line of thought, will be lost to the mainstream of the Palestinian national movement and be pulled to the extreme. This phenomenon is reminiscent of two similar phenomena, the mode of suicide that swept Romantics in Europe after Goethe published ***The Sorrows of Young Werther*** (Goethe, 1989), and the success of instructors in a fanatic Islamic organization in Algeria in perpetrating terrorist attacks from which there was no avenue of escape. "What will life be like after death or after the victory?" the suicide candidates asked (many of them eventually changed their minds and surrendered to authorities). "Like in telenovellas," the instructors promised, "not like in the Koran - like in telenovellas."

• Terror as a crucial risk in a post-colonial society denotes rationalization of violence and terror by arguing that it falls in line with historical parallels or theoretical cases. In other words, one can pin the country's troubles – namely war and terror, poverty and a protracted conflict – on the long process of de-colonization and the special conditions of the State of Israel vis-à-vis the idle east. So it is argued that the breakdown of the peace process generated and even amplified Muslim radicalism and opposition to Jewish society while secularists and peace-seekers served as a hotbed for warring political factions and armed militias. In the ensuing chaos, it is hardly surprising that Islamic fundamentalism has been perceived as evil and blamed for terror and violence, while others place the blame on 'Jewish colonialism' for creating a constant state of violence and terror (Aussaresses, 2001; Le Sueur, & Bourdieu, 2000; Stora, 2001).

Acts of terror have reinforced the post-colonial stream in Israeli society and it has become seen as a challenge to formal Israeli history curriculum, cultural education and moral education. Post-Zionism, as a post-colonial stream is a cultural, historical, political and social school, seeks to prove the lack of moral validity of the Zionist dream in contemporary times. Its major aim is to expose the current situation in Israel as a phase during which Zionist truths about the moral purpose of Jewish nationalism has almost completely collapsed. Consequently, the major task of this trend is to give accurate, reasonable and realistic answers to the circumstances and major reasons of contemporary culture of violence and terror. However, the major studies of the Post-Zionism are related to

processes of reflection on the major problems of Israeli society and culture, so that all the way through these reflections, the major causes for the contemporary state of terror reveal themselves and are better comprehended.

Post-Zionists claim to be post-modernist, meaning they subscribe to a philosophical school that views everything as relative and seeks to deconstruct and transcend modern reality and values. This way of thinking was first introduced into Israeli life through the work of Israeli academics, particularly historians and sociologists. New Historians and New Sociologists, as these individuals described themselves, challenged mainstream Zionist historiography as ideologically biased in employing research to prove the moral validity of the Zionist claims.

Starting an intuitive journey into the depths of the characteristics of Israeli culture, a broad-spectrum diagnosis exposes the Israeli addiction to power. Nowadays, it is a general assumption that Israeli society has adopted, with almost no questions asked, the culture of power and the belief that the relationship between Israel and its neighbors must be based almost exclusively on military might. It is further assumed that since the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, its leadership has generally preferred to use force to solve problems, not all of which have been life-and-death issues. This means that peace has not always headed Israel's list of priorities and war has not always headed the list of priorities of its neighbors.

This is, in fact, a bald denial of the sacrosanct Israeli ethos according to which Israel has always aspired to peace, a road its neighbors have constantly refused to tread preferring to travel, instead, the path of the war. Several New Historians identify and analyze this tendency of the Israeli political and military establishments. Following in their footsteps, Israeli society as a whole base themselves on this culture of power and on the understanding that every problem Israel faces can be solved through the use of military power. They present their thesis to the general public of Israel's consistent choice of the military option and believe that there are three factors behind this choice:

- First is the victory of the "offensive ethos" and its transformation into one of Israel's major policies.

- Second, the institutionalization of power and its total transfer to the responsibility of political and military establishments.

- Third, Israel's military success in the past, i.e. every successful war has made it that much easier to opt for the use of power in the next war.

- Fourth, symbols of right and wrong ideology have become lodged in the Israeli political consciousness and decision-making culture. These symbols make certain choices automatically less acceptable, and in doing so they impoverish the process by which policy is made. Israeli society is biased in favor of opinions that it considers to be the tough ones and against those that are seem to be tender. Therefore, the value of toughness is an end in itself.

These reasons provide a basic understanding of the processes that have led to the fact that Israeli society has learned how to live with the consistent choice of the military alternative which has turned into the development of a unique culture which could be termed

a military one. In this culture, military issues receive top priority and invariably take precedence over all of Israeli society's other spheres of activity.

Israel is still the only country in the Western World where security problems constitute so central a component in its very essence. This fact is reflected in the degree, to which national resources are allocated, directly or indirectly to defense, to the extent of the average Israeli citizen's service and involvement in the army, in the percentage of security research studies and in similar quantitative terms. Moreover, from the standpoint of the national psyche and of the government's considerations, defense occupies a central and prestigious position on the national agenda in a manner that is distinct from the way defense is viewed in other democratic nations.

The analysis of this particular national psyche and the establishment's national considerations leads to one of the central concepts of Israeli military culture, namely that there is no social-political option on which Israel can base its security. The conclusion is that Israel has only the military option that is regarded as inevitable. The Israeli national psyche suffers from profound trauma of continuous war and terror, events that upset its fundamental ideas about what can and should happen and challenge the authority of its basic values. In every particular case, political, social, economic, military or religious people look to their myths for precedents, invoking past experience embodied in their myths as a way of getting handle on crisis.

Such a Weltanschauung, i.e. that the use of military power is unavoidable, appears on center stage in terms of both public life and the Israeli psyche**,** and was the rise of the concept of power in the Israeli ethos. Frightening the public is an example of how Israel's political-military leadership uses fear-mongering tactics in security issues. That leadership generates anxiety in order to mobilize Israeli society and deflect the public's scrutiny of from domestic problems, such as a deteriorating economic situation, a growing unemployment rate or a collapsing system of education. The current country's leadership is not interested in broadcasting calm but instead chooses to make use of these genuine feelings of anxiety in order to mobilize the Jewish community in Israel, the Jewish people as a whole and the international community to further the Israeli issue.

The old-new contra-point argument against the previous assumptions of the New-Historians is that the military option and the use of military might have been forced upon Israel. Israel has no other choice but to fight wars which have been forced upon it and must be won in order to prevent its annihilation. Israel's unique situation revealed by officials and non-official speakers is of a country confronted by the aggression of it's Arab nations and which has no real option of turning to the social-political sphere in order to obtain a compromise that would constitute a genuine breakthrough as no compromise would ever satisfy the Arab nations. Consequently, the concept by which the only way to deal with the problems created by Israel's conflict with the Arab states is the use of military power has not remained solely a theoretical idea but has been translated into actual policies

The Israeli establishment and many historians reject the New Historians arguments for the simple reason that social-political experience in the history of modern Israel has demonstrated that even when such political manipulation is carried out, it never leads to disaster. Furthermore, the leadership in both the political and military spheres is never called upon to give an accounting of such manipulative actions to the public.

Another issue that is far from being discussed in Israeli society and its system of education is the military's involvement in policy-making processes. It is one thing to draw up a blueprint for war and implement it. That is the job of an army in a democratic regime. It is quite another thing, though, to intervene in the political-diplomatic debate, not as an expert military consultant but rather as someone who has a clearly defined approach and who tries to induce decision-makers, even through the use of force, to accept it.

This extremely important topic has not been echoed in Israeli history textbooks, lessons or public debate, although there is no other democracy on earth where the army has such a major role and exerts such critical influence on policy-making. In addition to the existence of a "military culture" facilitating such a situation, another central factor to consider is the total absence of any agencies or mechanisms capable of submitting a policy proposal to policy-makers that may be considered as an alternative to the policy formulated by the army.

Another major argument that has been developed by the New Historians in reference to Israeli military culture, points towards the total denial of any criticism by the defense establishment in general, and the army in particular because criticism could do serious harm to their ability to function and thus, in the final analysis, could undermine national security. Since the army is perceived as the sole instrument capable of saving the country from the threat of annihilation, any blow dealt to the military is interpreted as a direct blow to national security. Therefore, the army and the defense establishment are simply not issues for public debate. In light of this situation, the assignment of a unique status to the subject of defense has become a sacred cow that must never be harmed and whose functioning of operations and decisions must never be questioned. As a result, no public debate has ever been held on issues pertaining to the application of force primarily because the successes in this field have been perceived as the successes of the political and military establishments.

The social-political consequences of the military culture have preceded a convenient basis for the development of a taboo on anything that could be construed as criticism regarding defense issues in general and the use of force in particular. Consequently, the Israeli defense establishment seeks to prevent any open debate on the history of the use of force by Israel and on the manner in which force is applied by Israel today. The lack of public debate has far-reaching implications because making peace with survival based solely on the application of force blinds us to both external and internal change.

Regarding this blindness, here one could mention the fact that the Israeli public takes little notice of many peace initiatives. Moreover, the Israeli society is not aware of the far-reaching consequences that may arise from the massive use of military force in the occupied territories that has developed over the past three years. Nor is it aware of the gradual process in which segments of Israeli society are adopting more and more signs of fascism. The culture of power has influenced the development of Israeli society's system of norms and values as well as the human infrastructure that did not try to fight the violent reality into which they had been born. Instead, they surrendered themselves wholly to that reality.

These perceptions of Israeli society are far more outreaching from Israeli curricula as well as the implementations of the Palestinian nationalism and usage of power. It is also one of the arguments of the New Historians that Palestinian nationalism is a response to external forces more than it is an internal development and the "digestion" of external influences. Besides, reflecting on the tendency of Israeli historiography to wage wars, the organizing

principle of the history of Zionism and the State of Israel could lead to the conclusion that wars are not necessarily the high point of the story. The noise of battle often conceals the fact that war is just an ending, or an introduction to new chapters of immigration and population movement, generational change and changes in social values alongside economic and social changes.

Relating both to Israel and to the Palestinians, positive manifestations are to be anticipated, namely the transition from a position of denying the other as a condition for the formulation of an independent identity to a position of coexistence with the other, as well as a commitment to resolve the conflict through dialogue and not through violence. From the other point of view, the negative manifestations have been the emergence of an asymmetrical agreement favoring the stronger side, Israel, without mechanisms that will decrease the gap. The Palestinian side relinquished a priori, i.e. its main card recognition of Israel, but received very little authority and territory and a great many vague promises that it stood to lose as well because of Israel's Jewish settlement activities in the territories. Israel had very few incentives to concede in a situation in which the power relations were in its favor and a Palestinian impetus emerged to use violence in order to narrow the gap; no mechanisms were introduced that would prevent extremists from blowing up the process by means of terror and succeeding in imposing a veto on the process.

On both sides, there were unstable political configurations. The leaderships engaged in attempts to conciliate their coalition partners and sent out contradictory messages, focused on short-term goals and erred in underestimating the public support that was needed to achieve real progress in the process. The peace process does not include a mechanism for mediation and compromise for reciprocal accusations of breaking the agreement. The advantage of direct bilateral contacts, which created certain agreements without intermediaries, became disadvantages.

As a result, the far-reaching New-Historians theories deserve an in-depth study by researchers, students and the general public for all intents and purposes during an era when the Weltanschauung of the country's policy-makers almost totally reject any possibility of self-restraint or compromise. Israeli decision makers as well as general public opinion need a better understanding in order to form a consensus with which they must learn to live. The consensus regards national security and Israel's very existence as topics that can never be separated. Consequently, in line with this approach, security considerations must take precedence over every other consideration, including democratic principles.

The challenge each and every educator faces is to move beyond tendencies to treat terrorism as stable, rational and comprehensible phenomena. Ethics curriculums, civic education and democratic studies aspire to nurture a humanistic tradition and promote moral education activities across the board among the vast majority of Israeli and Arabs. The reality of terror and violence experienced by members of Israeli and Palestinian societies could act as a touchstone for testing the impact of various civic and moral programs - exposing far more about the subjects' inner world and moral attitudes than any other moral, religious, political, social or ideological concept and terror (Aussaresses, 2001; Le Sueur, & Bourdieu, 2000; Stora, 2001).

The publics' attitude towards the problems and explanations of terror and violence are

of vital importance for Israeli society as well for many other societies these days. As far as it can be ascertained through the observations in this study, the general publics' attitude could be defined as a mildly moral realistic one: people think that terror, evil and violence have objective foundations but certainly embody some subjective human conventions and beliefs. Terror and violence should not be defined according to abstract conceptions of morality, but comprehended in conjunction with actual behavior and deed. In spite of the fact that moral values and definitions of violence and terror vary depending on the cultural background of the respondents, every illuminated and civilized human being need to condemn such deeds universally and in one clear voice.

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