ISRAELI SUMMER

HOPING FOR CHANGE, CALLING FOR VIOLENCE

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of Master of Arts in
Mass Communication

By

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Signature Page  ii

Acknowledgements  iv

Abstract  v

Chapter One: Introduction  1

Chapter Two: Literature Review  6

Chapter Three: Methodology  40

Chapter Four: Scripts and Published Text  48

Chapter Five: Conclusion/Reflection  62

References  65

Appendix  68
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During the summer of 2011, a social and economic revolution began in Israel. The events were catalyzed by rising costs of food, rent, and health care without a similar rise in income. The protests were predominantly attended and organized by people between the ages of twenty and forty. I gleaned from interviews with over a dozen young Israelis the following opinions regarding the zeitgeist of the movement: First, violence is necessary to create meaningful change. Second, many young adults consider emigration from Israel to another country a valid option in seeking a better life. Third, those who choose to stay in Israel and attend school will seek education in conflict zones due to lower costs of living and tuition. These sentiments diverge greatly from those of previous generations.

Keywords: Israel, Israeli Spring, Protests, Revolution, Social Equality, Conflict
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The summer and fall of 2011 saw the largest protests in Israeli history—at the height of the protests in Israel this summer, half a million Israeli citizens rallied in the streets for social reform. One of the most remarkable aspects of the protests was that there appeared to be no violence: no police brutality, no outside agitators, no political arguments turned into fist-fights. In contrast to the Arab Spring and London Riots, it seemed like Israelis from all walks of life were gathered in solidarity--ready to make dreams of social reforms become a reality. The tools they were using were non-violent protest and peaceful discussions.

Kobi Oz, a famous Israeli singer summarized this sentiment at a rally in the southern city of Be'er Sheva: a rally that drew approximately 25,000 people.

“I want to say that the middle class, we, the middle class, we are not going to give up and we’re intertwined with the impoverished. If we get further along or make progress, the poor also progress with us. We won’t stop and let the tycoons leave us behind. We’re taking with us the weak class, and the weakened class. We will take care of the orphan, the widow, the foreign citizen, the poor, and all the ones who are having a hard time” (Oz, 2011).

However, the news coverage of this historic time was largely limited to Israeli news outlets. The rallies were overshadowed in the international arena by the violent revolutions occurring all around Israel. Many young Israelis wondered whether their neighbors were, in fact, more effective at bringing about change because of the violence. Many started to feel that no major social reforms could come to fruition until Israeli citizens died. Not just a few, but enough to shake the government out of its coma. This morbid maxim was uttered by Hawks, Doves, and Anarchists alike.
Although the theme of hope was ever-apparent in the protest activities, it was tinged with the fatalistic notion that if this didn't accomplish the social and economic reforms that the protesters set out to accomplish, there was no realistic dream for a better future in Israel.

As it stood, many young adults were considering leaving the country to find employment opportunities that would allow them to thrive. Others chose to attend college in an active conflict zone because it was the only way they could afford to attend college—and the education was worth the sacrifice in their minds.

During the many interviews I conducted over the course of the two weeks I was in Israel, one phrase was repeated over and over again, “We want to thrive, not just survive.” This is a documentary about those young adults who want more to their lives than they feel they are currently getting under the governmental and social system of 2011.

**Research Questions**

In this thesis project, I aim to answer the following questions: What are the biggest challenges faced by young adults in Israeli society today? How did the interviewees become involved with the tent cities and protests? What would the interviewees like to see accomplished (either politically or socially) as a result of the protest movement? What outcome did the interviewees want to see from the movement? What outcome did the interviewees fear? How do the interviewees see themselves through both an Israeli and Jewish lens? What do the interviewees consider the most important part of their identity?

**The Project**
I conducted in-depth interviews and recording sessions with young adult Israelis in regards to the wave of peaceful protests and rallies that swept across Israel this summer. I also photographed and filmed the interviewees at their homes and tent cities, as well as people at the Be’er Sheva rally and on Sderot Rothschild, the Tel Aviv boulevard that acted as the symbolic heart of the movement as well as the staging ground for 10,000 protest tents.

I created a feature-length multimedia documentary about the economic protests in Israel that drew hundreds of thousands of people over the course of the summer. I spent two weeks at Kibbutz Gevim in the southern town of Sderot, interviewing students who attend Sapir College; a university located roughly 2km from the Gaza Strip. I also interviewed young adults in the Eastern city of Arad, as well as some students who attended the August 13th protest rally in Be’er Sheva which drew approximately 25,000 people. I concentrated on three themes, or “chapters” as a way to bring light to the multiple angles of the story that have, rarely, if ever, been reported by Israeli or American media: 1) The story of those choosing to live in, or attend school in missile range of Gaza for financial reasons 2) The story of young adults wanting to leave the country for employment despite the stigma/difficulty of leaving the country and 3) The calls for violence among peaceful protestors as the only route to change. I am using photos, audio, and video of the interviews, tent cities, and large rallies.

**Significance**

The aim of this project is to report on an aspect of life in Israel that is rarely touched upon by American media. The United States media tends to emphasize the “conflict” aspect of Israel rather than the citizens that live there. In fact, on the day after
the largest protest in the history of the country, between The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, and The Washington Post, only The New York Times covered the protest. If there is only one article in three of the largest mainstream media outlets in the country regarding a record-breaking historical event in Israel, it shows a gap in media coverage.

With this documentary, I plan to try to fill the gap by reporting on the lives of young adult Israelis and how they have chosen to become (or not become) politically active in the face of current economic and social stressors. The people I interviewed came from a large range of educational and ethnic backgrounds—the common trait they all shared was being a young Israeli adult, an age I define as 20-33 years old.

I also tried to give a voice to young adults that might now otherwise be heard; whether because they live in a dangerous area, or as an ethnic minority, they are ignored by media. Although the protest movement started in Tel Aviv, it affected people in every corner of the country because it was impossible to escape the hike in the price of food, or the fact that many doctors and nurses went on strike as part of the movement.

Because of the United States’ financial and political involvement with the state of Israel, it is important for these struggles to be heard about domestically.

The Following Chapters

The next chapter consists of three parts. The first will discuss the history, theory, and ethics of the production of ethnographic documentaries, specifically focusing on the use of sound as the main medium. The second part will outline the history and the politics of the Israel/Palestine region from 1881 to the present. The final part of the chapter explores alternative and pilgrimage tourism among the Jewish American population and the affect it has on the construction of personal identity. This had been
written when the original intent of my project (which changed upon landing in Israel) was to document American and Israeli ideas of Judaism and identity in light of the recent up-tick in Birthright trips to Israel. Chapter three is a detailed methodology of the production of the final documentary. The fourth chapter consists of the transcription of the documentary, as well as the transcription and text of my two published media pieces about the protests; a sound-slides presentation and article for The Jewish Journal. The fifth and final chapter is the conclusion, and a reflection of what I have learned while completing this thesis project.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this literature review I examine the modern history of the disputed territory of Israel/Palestine from 1881-Present. The next section is about the history, ethics, and technical aspects of creating documentary projects. The third and final section focuses on the history of Jewish identity and how alternative tourism is used to create an authentic cultural and personal experience for the traveler.

History of Israel-Palestine

Beginnings: 1881-1915

Starting in the late 1800s and into the early 1900s, there was a massive exodus of millions of Jews out of Europe, particularly Russia, to escape the violence specifically targeting them called 'pogroms,' the Russian word for devastation (Dowty, 2008, p:31). At this point, Zionism (a return to Eretz Yisrael), became a political and social movement among young Russian Jews who believed that building a state with a distinctly Jewish identity was the only way to protect themselves from violence. Between 1881 and 1903, approximately 50,000 Jews moved to Eretz Yisrael in a migration known today as the first aliyah (which means 'ascent' in Hebrew). Hebrew quickly became the communal language after having not been spoken outside of religious rituals for 2000 years because most Jews were able to read and speak some Hebrew, and therefore had a common language across national identities (Dowty, 2008).

During this same time period, the face of Ottoman Palestine was changing, largely due to a set of modernization reforms called Tanzimat (Dowty, 2008). One of these reforms, the 1858 Land Law, essentially took away communal land from Palestinian peasants, despite generations of communal farming, and gave it to private owners.
(Dowty, 2008). These owners, many of them absentee, could choose to sell the land to non-citizens. Zionists saw this as an opportunity to purchase land; land on which to build kibbutzes, and eventually, land on which to recreate the historical Jewish homeland (Dowty, 2008).

During the same period of the late 1800s, Theodore Herzl, a “35 year old assimilated Viennese journalist” covered the trial and conviction of a French, Jewish army officer named Alfred Dreyfus in a wave of “rabid” anti-semitism (Dowty, 2008, p.35). Although Herzl wasn't particularly religious nor educated about the first aliyah, in 1896 he wrote a pamphlet titled The Jews' State: An Attempt at a Modern Solution to the Issue of the Jews. Herzl stated that anti-semitism was inescapable and therefore assimilation into other nations would never be a successful strategy for the Jewish people. Instead, they needed to form a multinational state under the banner of Judaism. This Jewish state should be in historical Eretz Yisrael, and the migration of educated European Jews would help the local population achieve more wealth and a better life (Dowty, 2008). According to Dowty, “this was the breakthrough that brought Zionism to the world's attention” (Dowty, 2008, p. 36).

In 1897, Herzl formed the World Zionist Organization and held the first meeting in Basel, Switzerland (Dowty, 2008). This was called the First Zionist Congress (Dowty, 2008). During the congress, Herzl gathered all of the small groups who had taken part in the first aliyah and Zionist movement, and tried to create a unified movement to establish a homeland in Palestine under their existing government (Dowty, 2008). With the start of the Russian Revolution, Jewish communities were being violently terrorized. This sparked a second Diaspora from Russia. This time, roughly 34,000 Russian Jews went to
Ottoman Palestine to seek refuge between 1905 and the beginning of World War I. This mass exodus became known as the second aliyah, and brought with it the modern Zionist ideology of a Jewish population that is immersed in physical labor (Dowty, 2008). It was during this time that the Zionist form of a commune, called a kibbutz, came to symbolize the new Jewish identity (Dowty, 2008).

During the same decade, Arab Nationalism became a force against the Zionist colonization of Ottoman Palestine (Dowty, 2008). “In 1905 Najib Azuri, a Lebanese Christian who had served in the Ottoman bureaucracy in Jerusalem” began publishing books and articles calling for an Arab state, outside of the rule of the Ottoman Turks, because they had been allowing Palestinian land to be sold to Europeans (Dowty, 2008, p.65). There was a growing sentiment in Palestine and other Arab lands, that unless they could create their own Arab state, the land would pass from Turkish power to European power, and they would lose any political and geographic rights that they had (Dowty, 2008).

At the same time, Great Britain was fighting against the Ottoman Empire to become the leading world power. In Arab Nationalism, they saw the key to defeating the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East by supporting Arab statehood (Dowty, 2008). In 1915, Great Britain instigated the Arab Revolt against the Ottomans, “promising to secure the establishment of an Arab state in the Middle East” (Dowty, 2008, p.232). Various Palestinian and other Arab provinces saturated the newspapers with articles about the problem of Zionism; some articles recognized the rights of European Jews to come into the country and assimilate into Arab culture, but not the right of the Ottoman Empire to effectively displace Arab citizens in favor of European Jews and European culture
Leading up to Independence 1916-1947

After successfully defeating the Ottoman Empire in World War I, the three major European powers (Russia, France, and Great Britain) divided the Middle East amongst themselves (not taking into account previous promises of securing an Arab state) and made Palestine an international territory (Dowty, 2008). With the release of the Balfour Declaration on November 2, 1917, it became clear that Great Britain was supporting the creation of a Jewish national home in the Palestinian territory (Dowty, 2008). It became fully “legally relevant when it was written into the British Mandate for Palestine by the League of Nations,” a document that eventually brought Palestine under British, not international, rule (Dowty, 2008, p.71). On December 9, 1917, under the British mandate, British forces marched to Jerusalem and captured it. Both the mayor and Mufti of Jerusalem cooperated with British forces with hopes that the government would protect the Arab citizens (Mattar, 1988).

In April 1936, a violent general strike against the British troops and Zionists began. The Mufti of Jerusalem, who until then had remained cooperative with the British, accepted the leadership role of the Arab Higher Committee that united “all the political parties, and therefore became the leader of the general strike” (Mattar, 1988, p.235). In 1937, the Mufti rejected the British partition plan of Palestine which led to further violence. From 1938-1939, the violence continued until it had taken a toll on the Palestinian population, resulting in the death and incarceration of nearly 10,000 Palestinians (Mattar, 1988).

In 1937, the British Peel Commission was formed to investigate the cause of the
revolt and come up with a resolution to the conflict (Dowty, 2008). The Peel Commission felt that, “[the British] cannot - in Palestine as it is now – both concede the Arab claim to self-government and secure the establishment of a Jewish National Home” (Dowty, 2008, p.79). The Commission recommended a two state solution in which 80% of Palestine merged with Transjordan to be an Arab state, and 20% of Palestine would become a Jewish state. Neither side fully accepted those specific terms of partition (Dowty, 2008).

According to historian Michael Cohen (1973), the 1939 British White Paper severely restricted Jewish immigration into Palestine for the next five years and made further, “subsequent immigration dependent upon Arab consent” (Cohen, 1973, p.571). In light of the Shoah (the Hebrew word for Holocaust), in which one third of the world's Jewish population was killed by the Nazis during World War II, the 1939 White Paper lost support (Dowty, 2008). Jews worldwide began to accept “the basic tenet of Zionism: Jews needed a state of their own, if only to insure their physical survival” (Dowty, 2008, p.31).

In 1947, postwar Great Britain didn't have the ability to rebuild at home while maintaining a strong foothold in the Middle East, and thus decided that it needed to extricate itself from the Palestinian conflict (Dowty, 2008). Great Britain brought the conflict before the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (a committee formed to resolve the conflict), and “on November 27, 1947, the UN General Assembly adopted the partition plan,” Resolution 181, in which the Jewish residents were given just over half of the country to form a separate government, and the Arab population received the other half for the creation of an independent Palestinian state (Dowty, 2008, p.83). After
the passage of Resolution 181, the British troops intervened no further in the conflict, and began leaving the territory. As the troops left, the first Arab-Israeli war broke out as both sides tried to claim territory for statehood (Dowty, 2008).


The First Arab and Israeli War lasted through July 1949, ending with armistices between Israel and Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon (Dowty, 2008). Before the armistice agreements were established, Israel declared statehood on May 15, 1948. The declaration of Jewish statehood became the definitive icon of the dueling narratives between the Israelis and the Palestinians. According to Dowty (2008):

“It is hard to imagine a more complete contrast than [the declaration of Israeli statehood's] impact on the two sides. For Jews, coming so quickly after the greatest tragedy in their history, the re-emergence of a Jewish state after 2,000 years was one of the greatest historical moments, if not the very greatest, in their long history. But for the Palestinians it was simple an-nakba, the disaster, as it has been referred to ever since” (p.89).

In 1955, in response to the death of Josef Stalin, the Soviet bloc entered the Middle East as a way to secure oil and a strategic foothold in the region. A major weapons deal was made between Egypt's new leader, Gamal Abdul Nasser, and Czechoslovakia (Dowty, 2008). During 1955, Egypt, with the help of the Soviet arms deal, was able to block Israeli ships from the Suez Canal, and then in September 1955, from the Strait of Tiran, “Israel's only outlet to East Africa and Asia” (Dowty, 2008, p.98).

In October of 1956, “Israel [invaded] the Sinai Peninsula in coordination with British and French efforts to regain control of the Suez Canal” from Nasser (Dowty, 2008, p.98,99). Part way through the conflict, British and French forces withdrew due to international pressure. Israel attempted to hold onto the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip,
but within weeks, withdrew “in return for the stationing of a UN peacekeeping force, the first ever, to stabilize the Egypt-Israel border and ensure free passage through the Strait of Tiran” (Dowty, 2008, p.234). In March 1957, the UN Emergency Force secured the Strait of Tiran so that Israeli ships could safely pass through the Strait.

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, Palestinians felt a rise in nationalism, although they still believed in pan-Arabism. However, they felt that they needed to, as a group, stand up for their own Palestinian liberation (Dowty, 2008). It was during this time that Fatah, the most important group in the Palestine Liberation Movement, gained popularity in the fight for Palestinian freedom. Fatah was headed by a young Yasir Arafat and used guerilla war tactics, modeled on the Algerian Arab rebels tactics in the French-Algerian war (Dowty, 2008). Fatah “carried out cross-border raids into Israel” with the help of Egypt, who also helped with the creation of The Palestinian Liberation Organization; an umbrella organization for all Palestinian political sects (Dowty, 2008).

The years between the Suez crisis and 1967 were relatively calm; however, in late spring of 1967, one of the most important wars broke out in the region (Dowty, 2008). On May 22, Nasser, for the second time in less than fifteen years closed the Strait of Tiran to Israeli ships. Israel had vowed not to attack Egypt unless they attacked or closed the Strait of Tiran, a strategically important international waterway (Dowty, 2008). On May 23, Nasser publicly declared the act as a tool to get Israel to retaliate and start a war (Dowty, 2008). One week later, the King of Jordan went to Cairo and signed a mutual defense pact with Egypt, promising to defend them in case of war with Israel. Egypt had a similar pact with Syria (Dowty, 2008). On June 4, the Israeli cabinet unanimously decided to take military action against Egypt and all hostile parties (Dowty, 2008).
On June 5, 1967, Israel dealt an early morning blow to Egypt's airfields, successfully crippling the Egyptian Airforce and then carried out similar attacks on both Jordan's and Syria's airfields (Dowty, 2008). Since it is extremely difficult to fight a ground war in desert territory, all four countries relied heavily on their airforces. With Israel's airforce the only one to remain mostly intact, it allowed Israel to capture all of Jordan's West Bank; the Gaza Strip, Sinai Peninsula, and territory up to the Suez Canal from Egypt, and the Golan Heights from Syria. Israel had won the war in six days; the war came to be known as The Six Day War (Dowty, 2008).

Anwar Sadat, Nasser's successor, made it his goal, along with Syria, to make a surprise attack on Israel to reclaim the territory lost in The Six Day War. Sadat wanted to inflict enough damage, physical and psychological, that Israel would come to the conclusion that continued occupation wasn't worth the losses (Dowty, 2008). On October 6, 1973, the first day of the Jewish high holy day Yom Kippur, Egypt and Syria broke their cease-fires and attacked along both the Suez Canal border, and the Golan Heights (Dowty, 2008). During the following two weeks, it appeared that Egypt and Syria would be successful in recapturing their territories. However, on October 19, Israel managed to begin a successful counterattack. The Yom Kippur War ended on October 24 (Dowty, 2008). Syria lost more territory than they initially had lost in the Six Day War, and Egypt was unable to gain a stronger foothold than the East Bank of the Suez Canal, which was in fact a small gain in territory (Dowty, 2008).

The Yom Kippur War led to “the first face to face diplomatic meeting since 1949” in December of 1973, just two months after the war. Israeli, Egyptian, and Jordanian leaders sat down and talked for two days in Geneva; this became the first step on the road
to disengagement and peace (Dowty, 2008, p.120).

**Land for Peace to the First Intifada 1974-1987**

Despite making progress towards peace with Egypt and Jordan, Israelis and Palestinians were still in a state of conflict, partly because Israel was an internationally recognized country while the Palestinians were still functioning as an unofficial group of people living in an occupied zone (Dowty, 2008). It wasn't until the 1974 Rabat Arab summit meeting that the PLO became the official representative entity of all Palestinians, and was therefore much more capable of pursuing political solutions to the conflict rather than the disparate guerrilla military tactics it had been forced to use in the past (Dowty, 2008). Yasir Arafat became the leader of the unified Palestinian people.

Israel saw the PLO as a threat to security and statehood, and started a military campaign to drive them from the neighboring countries. In 1978, Israel specifically targeted the PLO faction that was based in Lebanon, fearing that they would strike Israel from across the border if not stopped by military and political action. That year, Israel invaded Lebanon and established a military “buffer zone on the Lebanese side of the border, controlled by anti-Palestinian Lebanese forces” (Dowty, 2008, p.128).

In March 1979, Anwar Sadat, who had begun the Egyptian-Israeli conflict disengagement process in 1973, reached a bilateral peace agreement with Israel. Within three years of the peace agreement being signed, Israeli forces had been fully pulled out of the Sinai Peninsula; a successful example of land-for-peace (Dowty, 2008). Despite Sadat's assassination a year later, and numerous conflicts, the peace has been maintained up through today (Dowty, 2008).

In 1982, Defense Minister Ariel Sharon decided to invade Lebanon in concert
with Christian Lebanese forces (Maronites) to extend the buffer zone approximately 25 miles into Lebanon (Dowty, 2008, p.128). The Israeli army did not stop at 25 miles, but rather marched into Beirut, the “heart” of PLO forces in Lebanon with the intention of defeating the PLO (Dowty, 2008, P:129). Shortly after the Israeli army occupied Beirut, the newly elected Maronite president of Lebanon was assassinated. Maronite forces retaliated by marching into the “Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatilla, in Israeli-controlled Beirut, and massacring an estimated 700-800 Palestinian civilians before being stopped – after some 36 hours” (Dowty, 2008, p.129). Ariel Sharon was held responsible for the massacre and was forced to resign as defense minister (Dowty, 2008). Between 1983 and 1985, Israeli forces withdrew from Lebanon, leaving a buffer zone controlled by pro-Israeli Lebanese forces (Dowty, 2008).

At the end of 1987, the first intifada, a major Palestinian uprising began as two decades of anger and frustration at lack of progress came to a head (Dowty, 2008). Two seemingly small events catalyzed the December uprising: on November 26, a Palestinian guerrilla fighter killed six members of the Israeli Defense Force, and on December 8, a number of Palestinian workers were killed when their van was struck by an Israeli vehicle (Pressberg, 1988). A rumor was spread among the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip that the car accident was retaliation and not an accident. This combined with two decades of occupation, reports of abuse, lack of political freedom, and little help from the other Arab countries, pushed the Palestinians to protest and strike en masse (Pressberg, 1988).

The Palestinian uprising was mostly “nonviolent, consisting of strikes, boycotts, and demonstrations. Since [they] had no firearms, the most they could do was to throw stones...[which] became a symbol of the uprising” (Dowty, 2008, p.132). However, the
**intifada** also brought about the emergence of Islamist groups such as *Hamas*, which pushed for Islamic solutions to the problem of Jews in Palestine, referring to them in “the language of classic anti-semitism” (Laqueur and Rubin, 2001 in Dowty, 2008, p.133). For them, the uprising was as much religious as political (Dowty, 2008).

Among the Israeli population, the **intifada** was an incredibly divisive issue pushing those on the right (Hawks) farther right, and those on the left (Doves) farther left (Dowty, 2008). However, polls taken the following four years saw a dovish trend toward the question of a two-state solution; a majority of the population was willing to give back some or all of the land in exchange for peace (Dowty, 2008).

**Rabin's Assassination, the Unofficial End of the Oslo Peace Accords: 1988-1999**

On September 13, 1993, after the PLO had accepted UN Resolution 242 (which was a plan for a two state solution), Israel and the PLO mutually recognized each other as having sovereign governments. The first comprehensive plan for a peace agreement, called the Declaration of Principles, allowed the for self-governance of the West Bank and Gaza Strip by Palestinian entities. In September 1995, the Oslo II Agreement, the second step in the Oslo Peace Accords, gave the Palestinian Authority power in the major cities of the West Bank; a large step towards self-governance. At this point, more than half of the Israeli population was in support of the peace process, and almost two-thirds of the Palestinian population was ready to accept the two state solution set out by the Oslo Peace Accords (Dowty, 2008).

On November 4th, 1995, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (who had spearheaded the Oslo Peace Accords according to Dowty) was assassinated by an Israeli extremist who was against a two-state solution. At first, the assassination motivated a wave of pro-peace
sentiments, but in 1996, when elections were being held for the next Prime Minister, Palestinian extremists conducted four attacks on Israeli civilians in a nine day period, and the peace process effort ended.

The next three years saw a tenuous peace punctuated by outbursts of violence and riots. In 1999, the Israeli government and Palestinian Authority reached another milestone in the peace process, the Sharm Esh-Sheikh Agreement which was an agreement in which Israel promised to withdraw completely from 40% of the West Bank (Dowty, 2008).

**The Second Intifada: 2000-2006**

In 2000, Barak, U.S. President Bill Clinton, and P.A. Leader Yasir Arafat met at Camp David to finalize the peace agreement that had been sought in the Oslo Accords. However, the peace talks failed when Barak was unwilling to create a two-state solution that prohibited further Israeli settlement in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Dowty, 2008).

In September of 2000, the second intifada, also called the Al-Aqsa Intifada began. There was no specific event that triggered it, and according to surveys, most Israelis and Palestinians still wanted a two-state solution. The difference was how they were willing to negotiate the peace. The Israelis wanted a “negotiating model” in which “mutually dependent” assets were traded and concessions were made until both sides were in agreement that enough had been done (Dowty, 2008, p.158). The Palestinians were more inclined to follow an “implementation model” in which Israel had to give up all land that was considered occupied Palestinian territory in exchange for peace.

In 2001, as the intifada continued, Ariel Sharon was elected Prime Minister of
Israel. Sharon refused to take part in any peace negotiations unless the attacks on Israeli citizens were stopped. Instead, 2002 saw a wave of suicide bombings “with 127 Israelis killed by suicide bombers in the month of March alone” (Dowty, 2008, p.163). As a response to the violence, Israeli forces returned to previously evacuated areas of the West Bank, including Jenin, in a military operation called Operation Defensive Shield; its purpose was to reoccupy major West Bank cities in an effort to head off more violence (Dowty, 2008, p.163,237). According to the United Nations investigation of the damages caused by Operation Defensive Shield, 497 Palestinians were killed.

In 2003, Yasir Arafat, who until that point had been the sole leader of the Palestinian Authority, created the post of Prime Minister to which he appointed Mahmoud Abbas. Within four months of Abbas's appointment, both Fatah and other Islamic militant groups agreed to a three month cease-fire; a break in the intifada which had been going on since 2000.

Less than three months after the cease-fire was announced, Hamas orchestrated a suicide attack in Jerusalem. Although Hamas was not part of the original cease-fire, the attack led to Israeli retaliation which then led to an end to the cease-fire. With continuing violence, Sharon announced in 2004 that there would be an evacuation “of Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip” (Dowty, 2008, p. 174). On June 6 2004, the Israeli government agreed that all settlements in the Gaza Strip, and four in the West Bank would be evacuated and dismantled before the end of the following year The evacuation was completed in August 2005 (Dowty, 2008).

On November 11, 2004, Yasir Arafat passed away. Although Mahmoud Abbas had resigned after the collapse of the 2003 cease-fire, he won the majority vote in the 2005
PA Presidential election. Abbas's first priority was to re-ignite peace talks with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. The withdrawal from Gaza in 2005 was the first step in the unilateral disengagement plan (Dowty, 2008).

**Gilad Shalit, the Mavi Marmara Flotilla Raid: 2006 to Present**

On January 4, 2006, Ariel Sharon was left unable to function after having a severe stroke. Ehud Olmert became Prime Minister in his place.

Meanwhile, the global political atmosphere was shifting. According to Dowty, (2008) three main shifts brought about the fourth stage of the Israel-Palestine conflict:

“(1) The decline of state authority and monopoly of power, with the rise of non-state actors; (2) changes in the nature of warfare, with the end of classic wars and rise of 'irregular' wars; and (3) the general rise of religious extremism, redefining the goals and norms in national and international politics” (pp.178-179).

An example of this was the rise to political power of Hizbollah in Lebanon, and Hamas in Palestine. Hamas was (and still is) a Sunni movement, with a basic belief that Islamic movements and not Arab national movements are the only way to regain power and control. Hizbollah launched attacks on Israel from Lebanon beginning in 2006, while Hamas launched attacks from Gaza (Dowty, 2008).

On June 25, 2006, an Israeli soldier named Gilad Shalit was kidnapped on the Gaza border while on patrol (Djerejian, 2006; Inbar, 2007). On July 12, 2006, two more Israeli soldiers were kidnapped—this time on the border of Lebanon by Hizbollah forces (Djerejian, 2006; Inbar, 2007). These two separate acts began the second Lebanon war (also known as the Israel-Hizbollah war) which lasted just over one month. It ended on August 14, 2006 after the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1701. Hizbollah fired approximately 4000 rockets at Northern Israel. Israel incurred a loss of 159 Israeli citizens (Djerejian, 2006; Inbar, 2007). Three months later, Israel, Palestinian Authority
President Abbas, and Hamas agreed to a cease-fire (Dowty, 2008).

In January 2006, Hamas won a majority of seats in the Palestinian Authority's parliamentary elections (Dowty, 2008; O'Donnell, 2009). After the elections, Hamas split from Fatah, the political party headed by Abbas. In June 2007, “Hamas violently expelled Fatah from Gaza” (O'Donnell, 2009). Not only did this split cause a fracture in the Palestinian Authority, but it essentially created two separate Palestinian states; one in Gaza, headed by Hamas, and one in the West Bank, headed by the Fatah representative, President Abbas (O'Donnell, 2009).

In 2007, Gaza began sending a barrage of rockets and mortars into Israel, approximately 1500 in 2007, and “in the first months of 2008, up to several dozen” each day (O'Donnell, 2009). In February of 2008, both a faction of Fatah and Hamas claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing. In March of 2008, an attack left eight Israeli students dead. Israel retaliated by killing “more than 100 Palestinians within a few days” (O'Donnell, 2009).

Rising tensions between Gaza, settlers, and Israel resulted in Israel implementing a blockade disallowing access to Gaza's ports (Esposito, 2010). Meanwhile, a Turkish fleet of aid ships led by the Mavi Marmara attempted to broach the blockade (Esposito, 2010). On May 31st, 2010, members of the Israeli Naval forces boarded the Mavi Marmara and in an ensuing violent attempt at taking over the ship, killed nine Turkish activists and injured 53 passengers (Esposito, 2010). Despite coming under intense global scrutiny, the commandos continued the blockade and boarded the aid ship, the Rachel Corrie, on June 5th. On June 8th, the Israeli government agreed to do an internal investigation on the raid (Esposito, 2010).
In the West Bank, the IDF tore down the newly built foundations of Israeli settlements that had been built by settlers despite a recent freeze on settlement construction while peace negotiations were going on between Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, and President Abbas. The IDF also arrested settlers who violently protested the demolition of their settlements (Esposito, 2010).

**History of Documentaries**

Louis Lumière produced the first documentary film, *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory*, in March 1895 (Barnouw, 1993). In 1898, Bolesław Matuszewski, an early cinématographe operator in Europe, wrote a book in which “he proposed a 'cinematographic museum or depository' for material 'of a documentary interest to...slices of public and national life’”(Barnouw, 1993, pp.26-27). This launched what is considered to be the first series of ethnographic films (Barnouw, 1993). These films were often about “people subjugated by capitalist empires and socialist satellites [and viewed through] the Western male, middle-class, [and] heterosexual” gaze (Ruby, 1991, p.53).

In 1920, film-maker Robert Flaherty was funded by a fur company to make his famous, full-length ethnographic film about an Inuit family, 'Nanook of the North' (Barnouw, 1993). The film was released to public cinemas in 1922, and was an instant success worldwide, even being compared to a Greek classic drama by a French critic (Barnouw, 1993). "Documentary had suddenly acquired a financial legitimacy it had not had for years” (Barnouw, 1993, p.42).

'Documentary' began the journey towards its modern permutation in the 1930s with films such as “Song of Ceylon”, “Night Mail,” and “Housing Problems”; a mix of product-sponsored and pro-worker documentaries that used highly edited soundtracks as
part of a new movement in documentary film-making (Barnouw, 1993). During World War II, Nazi Germany utilized actor-cum-director, Leni Riefenstahl, to produce masterful propaganda films for The Third Reich (Barnouw, 1993). At the same time, Humphrey Jennings, a British film-maker, produced a number of pro-Britannia war films and documentaries; Western Europe's answer to the Riefenstahl films (Barnouw, 1993).

In the early post-war years, anthropologists such as Gregory Bateson, Margaret Mead, John Marshall, and Robert Gardner took documentary in yet another direction and began conducting “anthropological field work, including film-making” that resulted in films such as 'Trance and Dance in Bali,' and 'Dead Birds.' These films were funded by various educational foundations (Barnouw, 1993).

Until the 1960s, most documentary films relied on soundtracks that were recorded separately from the film. Synchronized sound had been possible for decades, but made difficult by “cumbersome equipment” (Barnouw, 1993, p.234). However, Richard Leacock, a protege of Robert Flaherty's, and Robert Drew, a sound enthusiast, “developed a wireless synchronizing system” which allowed the subjects of documentaries to more easily tell their own story, as it was being filmed (Barnouw, 1993, pp.235-236). This paved the way for a new breed of ethnographic documentaries in the 1970s. According to Barnouw, “When the field footage began to talk and assume human dimensions,” it raised concern over the necessity of separate film narration (Barnouw, 1993, p.251). Synchronized sound made it more necessary that the editing of the film followed “the structural integrity of events” (Barnouw, 1993, p.251). The concepts of cultural relativism and reality as a social construction also influenced the documentary process, in that it was allowable for 'the other' to tell their own story without it losing validity (Ruby,
Another major advancement in film technology was the mass availability of videotape and portable video cameras in the 1970s that provided the average person an affordable way to create their own documentaries (Barnouw, 1993).

In the 1970s and 1980s, there was an increase in the use of found-footage for making documentaries; specifically ones about nuclear energy and atomic weapons such as the award-winning film, “The Atomic Cafe” (Barnouw, 1993). These found-footage films led to the production of a number of films based on social problems; from environmental pollution, to gay and ethnic rights (Barnouw, 1993). In the 1980s and 1990s, besides making social advocacy films, documentary makers also began to make multi-part historical documentaries like Ken Burns' “The Civil War,” or Claude Lanzmann's, “Shoah.” The former used photographic stills and narration as the core of the film while the latter documentary utilized first person accounts of people who had been directly involved with some aspect of the Holocaust (Barnouw, 1993).

Throughout the history of documentary, it has been compared to, and often called propaganda. "One can hardly imagine a documentary, or a film, or any kind of communication, that is not propaganda—in the sense of trying to present evidence that may enlarge understanding and change ideas” (Barnouw, 1993, p.345). By being self-aware, documentary film makes the audience keenly aware of the topic and point of view that it is trying to convey, nearly the opposite of the sublimated messages of true propaganda (Barnouw, 1993).

Radio Documentaries

According to Jay Allison (2001), there is at once an anonymity and intimacy in a
human voice that is broadcast over the airwaves. The lack of visual cues allows each person to identify with the voices they hear in a radio documentary in their own unique way (Allison, 2001). Stephen Smith (2001), agrees that, “these kind of character-driven stories are a powerful way of exploring larger social themes” (p.2).

What sets apart a radio documentary from any other type of radio-based investigative journalism, is the amount of time spent in the field with subjects, and the detail with which those subjects are covered (Smith, 2001). David Isay (2001), elaborated on this. “If [these radio documentaries] had been done as a straight reported news piece, the research that would have gone into [them]...[would have been] much less” than the work that goes into a standard radio documentary (p.2). Radio, as a format, allows the producers to focus on stories that cannot easily be told in any other medium, due to the inability to get camera equipment on location for one reason or another, or due to the fact that, “a lot of people don't want photographs, don't want their faces shown. Many times they communicate best through talking” (p.1). Radio is also a format that can reach millions of people, and therefore, influence a large portion of the public (Smith, 2001).

Ethics of Documentary-making

The concern of how documentary subjects are portrayed is just one of the ethical quandaries that presents itself to the documentarian. Questions of ethics color the work that most documentarians create. According to Pryluck (1978), “only occasionally is it pointed out that the apparent ethical lapses are recurrent, not isolated. More than morality is involved; ethical assumptions have aesthetic consequences, and aesthetic assumptions have ethical consequences” (Pryluck, 1976, p.256).
The ethical quandaries of documentarians begin with the presence of a documentary crew; both their presence and equipment are “subtly coercive” and possibly intimidating (Pryluck, 1976). The documentarian automatically holds more power in the documentary-subject relationship than the subject, who has little, if anything to gain from the documentarian’s presence (Pryluck, 1976). Therefore, the most important thing to do before beginning a documentary endeavor is to make sure the subjects have given consent to being part of a documentary. According to Pryluck, “consent is not valid unless it was made (1) under conditions that were free of coercion and deception, (2) with full knowledge of the procedure and anticipated effects, (3) by someone competent to consent” (Pryluck, 1976, pp.261-262).

Even with these safeguards in place to protect the subjects, there are still a variety of unknowns that could negatively affect the subjects that need to be taken into account. For instance, there is no knowing how an audience will react to the subjects once the documentary has been released. There is also no perfect moral equation that works out the importance of the public’s legal right to know certain things, versus the privacy and integrity of the subject (Pryluck, 1976). It is up to the documentarian to put the subject's best interest at the forefront of the process. There is no perfect equation for calculating the harm versus the good brought to the public and subject by a documentary.

“Ultimately, students and fieldworkers must sort out the questions that keep coming to mind as partly psychological, partly moral—though there is (and ought to be) a blur when one looks for a boundary between the two” (Coles, 1997, p.9).

Another major ethical dilemma is intervention. There is a moral gray area between making observational films and helping those in need (Leeman, 2003). There is
a consensus among a number of documentary makers that the integrity of a film is never more valuable than the integrity of a human life. Building a relationship with the subjects of the documentary means that there is an unspoken understanding of responsibility towards the people being documented (Coles, 1997). Leeman (2003) summarized what she feels is the goal of most social documentarians:

“Ultimately, we documentarians hope that our films can have a positive impact --that our subjects' sacrifices and generosity in opening their lives to the world can do some good, break down stereotypes, foster understanding among divergent people and affect public policy positively” (p.17).

**Balance in the Voice of Documentaries**

By their nature, documentaries cannot be fully objective. Objectivity in and of itself is a subjective idea. "Documentaries were all forms of re-presentation, never clear windows onto 'reality'; the filmmaker was always a participant-witness and an active fabricator of meaning” (Nichols, 1985, p.49). Coles argues that each documentarian has a specific past, history, and culture that directs what he chooses to record, how he edits, and what to document in the first place (Coles, 1997). Thus, it is of utmost importance that the documentarian be forthright in his documentary intentions; he is the imagemaker and therefore responsible for the portrayal of his subjects (Ruby, 1991). Stuart Hall (1988) said that it is also the duty of the documentarian to avoid the “false symmetry” that so often passes for objectivity in journalistic endeavors (Hall, 1988, p.360).

The “voice” used to tell the story is an important part of the balance between creativity in production, and the reality lived by the subjects. Documentaries “attempt to make statements about life that are quite general, while necessarily using sounds and images that bear the inescapable trace of their particular historical origins” (Nichols,
It is impossible to have a documentary that is at the “periphery” rather than “existing within history itself” (Nichols, 1985, p.52.) It is also impossible to have a subject be able to speak objectively about their own lived experience (Ruby, 1991). By allowing the subjects to speak for themselves, they gain slightly more control of their image than if left completely up to the whims of the documentarian (Ruby, 1991).

Hagopian (2000) stresses the importance of listening to oral histories as anecdotes and stories that contain value in their socio-cultural context, rather than as hard facts and evidence. According to Hagopian (2000):

“Stories are told and retold because they are meaningful to the speakers and, presumably, to the listeners. The measure of such stories' interest may not be whether they are factually correct but whether they convey a moral or psychological truth important enough for the narrator to wish to share it. Storytellers attentive to their audiences adjust the rhythms and the content of their narratives to capture and sustain the listeners interest” (Hagopian, 2000, p.4).

Ruby (1991) suggests that most people cannot truly understand their own motivations, and the context of their own existence (1991). However, this has no more effect on the final product than the editing process; a process also informed by context and personal motivation on the part of the editor (Hagopian, 2000). Coles (1997) points out that the documentarian (and social observer) will always face the dueling polarities of reality versus art, objectivity versus subjectivity, “the tone a first-person narrative offers against one executed in third person” and any other decision that comes along with the documentation process (p.27).

**Technical and Methodological Aspects of Documentary Making**

Without a clear focus, it is difficult to begin the field work required to do the thorough research needed for a documentary. First, a documentarian needs to pick a basic topic and stick with it (Barbash & Castaing-Taylor, 2009). The next important
decision is in regards to choosing a location in which to do the field work and recording. It is necessary that the documentarian knows that they will physically be able to capture footage in their chosen location. If it's too difficult to get to with their equipment, or if there is a government ban on shooting without permission, it might not be possible (Barbash & Castaing-Taylor, 2009).

The next step involves finding people to talk to and to record. There are specific reasons why certain documentarians choose to use some informants over others. For some documentarians, it's a matter of documenting people with whom they've had standing relationships with; this guarantees some level of trust between the documentarian and the subject (Barbash & Castaing-Taylor, 2009). Directors and producers often do extensive pre-interviewing of strangers to find those most capable of holding their own in front of a camera, and those who appear to be most relatable to the imagined audience (Zheutlin, 2005).

Once a location and subjects have been chosen, it's important for documentarians to maintain a trusting relationship with their subjects (Barbash & Castaing-Taylor, 2009). An important part of this has to do with reciprocity. A subject should never be asked to give something to a documentarian for the sole gain of the documentarian and at no gain, and possible loss, for the subject. A number of artistic and ethical dilemmas arise under the umbrella of reciprocity; it brings into the spotlight “relations of power and paternalism,” and there is a concern over “what effect it might have on the community” (Barbash & Castaing-Taylor, 2009, p.62). However, it is a practice that under most circumstances is generally accepted, although quietly, among anthropologists in the field. Barbash and Castaing-Taylor (2009) recommend that social documentarians compensate
“people only after the fact, or be reciprocal in ways that are unlikely to be recognized as a return on a service” (p.63).

The research and editing periods of the documentary process take the most time, while the actual recording is generally done over a fairly brief period of time. It is important to have a general idea of ‘suspense, conflict, storyline, and drama’ when developing a documentary (Zheutlin, 2005, p.229). Some basic questions that should be answered before one begins to film are: “What is the subject or focus of your film? How are you going to work with your subjects? How will the film ‘hang together’? What will the film actually look like?” (Barbash & Castaing-Taylor, 2009, pp.73-74).

The final thing that needs to be taken into consideration when making a documentary is the contextualization of the subject and documentary in history and socio-political culture, and a flexibility about the content that allows for human interactions and interests to be at the forefront of production (Barbash & Castaing-Taylor, 2009).

**Identity and Direct Engagement via Tourism**

**Opposing American Zionist Ideals:**

Scholars argue that there are two distinct groups of American Zionists: liberal Zionists and Orthodox Zionists (although the former is rapidly disappearing). Liberal Zionists believe in a Zionism that was peace-oriented, respected the rights of Palestinians, and was willing to be critical of the Israeli government. Orthodox Zionists believe that they have a right to settlement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip because they are historically Judea. They also believe in limited (if any) rights for Palestinians and Arab-Israelis (Beinart, 2010).

These two diametrically opposed groups form the extreme forms of American
Zionism. Most people, especially the younger generation, fall into a category of liberal, Jewish non-Zionist. “For several decades, the Jewish establishment has asked American Jews to check their liberalism at Zionism's door, and now, to their horror, they are finding that many young Jews have checked their Zionism instead” (Beinart, 2010). This is not to say that the majority of young American Jews are uninterested in Israel and the Jewish community there, but they don't feel the same sense of personal peril that previous generations have felt. Their grandparents had witnessed the Holocaust. Their parent's generation witnessed the Six Day War and Yom Kippur War (Beinart, 2010).

Today's generation of American Jews have been raised during both intifadas, West Bank occupation, and the Gaza blockade. Today's generation has “no memory of Arab armies massed on Israel's borders...Instead, they have grown up viewing Israel as a regional hegemon and occupying power” (Beinart, 2010). With the exception of those Jews raised in the Orthodox population, liberalism is at the forefront of American Judaism, and it is not compatible with the current Zionist trend towards Orthodox Zionism. One survey found that 25% of young to middle-aged Orthodox American Jews support a separate Palestinian state. The figure is 60% for non-Orthodox Jews in the same age range (Beinart, 2010).

American Jews (both liberal and Orthodox) are continuing to remain active in Israel, politically and socially, just not all under the umbrella of Zionism (Sasson, 2010). The way in which American Jews have chosen to engage with their Jewish counterparts abroad is what has changed so drastically over the last few decades.

**Contemporary Influence of the Myth of the Wandering Jew:**

The Myth of the Wandering Jew is one that became widely recognized in the 17th
century. The story was part of Christian mythology: according to the myth, the
Wandering Jew represents Ahasuerus, a Jew that was cursed to wander the world forever
(or until the second coming of Christ) for rejecting Jesus as he carried the cross. The
Wandering Jew is interchangeable with the Eternal Jew. Both represent the supposed
supernatural character of the Jewish people, and the suffering they have (and will
continue) to endure until the Messiah comes again (Idalovich, 2005).

The myth prompted anti-semitism across Europe and throughout the centuries; the
Eternal Jew was the ultimate scapegoat. The indestructability of the race seemed to many
people to represent evil, supernatural forces. From Shakespeare to Mark Twain, even
great intellectuals feared the power of the Jewish people (Idalovich, 2005).

However, the myth not only influenced outside stereotypes of the Jewish
community, but influenced how the Jewish community self-identified. Jews had come to
accept themselves in a constant state of Diaspora; always seeking and never finding a
home to settle in. Zionism was a direct challenge to that notion. According to Idalovich,
“the Zionist movement took upon itself the mission of transforming the Jewish People
from a People in Exile to a People rooted in their homeland,” effectively turning the

Zionists rejected life in the Diaspora as giving in to the stereotype of constant
victimhood and second-class citizenship. However, the first people to settle in Israel still
felt that they had one foot in each world. The hope of a New Hebrew lay in the first
generation of native-born Israelis, also known as sabras. Sabra means prickly pear cactus;
an allusion to the new generation of Jewish people that would be physically strong and
yet hold gentle, romanticized views of the life and the land that they were inheriting
It was at this juncture in Jewish history that there became one large fissure in the Jewish community and identity. Sabras felt that once the state of Israel had been established as the Jewish homeland, it was every Jew's duty to move there and defend it. Jews who chose to remain in Diaspora (exile) were not considered Jews in the authentic sense (Idalovichi, 2005). Idalovichi summarized the sabra ideology as such:

“To this day, the yardstick of New Jew ideology remains vibrant, espoused by countless secular Israelis whose outlook has been forged within the Zionist crucible; those who have not espoused Zionist ideology are viewed as despicable, perceived to be lacking vision, dignity, enlightenment or a sense of mission and living an unworthy life” (Idalovichi, 2005, p.20).

Not only this, but there is a feeling among secular sabras that any Jew that moves to Israel and continues to practice a diasporic way of life, threatens the Jewish Homeland (Idalovichi, 2005).

The myth of the wandering Jew therefore creates at least three distinct Jewish identities. The first identity is that of the Diaspora Jew; the American Jewish community is an example of Jews still living in Diaspora and therefore representing (in sabra eyes) the Wandering Jew. In Israel, there are two distinct Jewish identities as well; those who believe in political and social Zionism (the creation of the New Jew), and those who believe in religious Zionism and settlement in its current form (essentially Diaspora Jews living in Israel) (Idalovichi, 2005). There is no global Jewish identity outside of the very general shared history of the Jewish People.

**American Jews and Direct Engagement with Israel**

American Jews are increasingly involved with Israel in a more personal, political, and direct way than ever before. Up until recently, Sasson (2010) claims that American
Jews have followed a 'mass mobilization' model of engagement with Israel and Israeli causes. Now, Sasson says, there has been a shift to a 'direct engagement' model.

Mass mobilization has a number of distinct characteristics including: generalized political support for Israel among American Jews (and U.S. support of Israel); American tourism to Israel sponsored financially by either religious groups or the Jewish Agency through private donations; financial support of Israel via groups such as the Jewish National Fund; and an idealistic view of Israel and Israeli policy (Sasson, 2010).

The direct engagement model is distinctly different from the mass mobilization model in these aspects: there is a partisan political view of Israel ranging from pro-peace movements to staunchly pro-settler movements (and mixed feelings about U.S. support); financial support is more direct and most often given to specific causes and NGOs in Israel without a liaison group; and there tends to be a realistic rather than idealistic view of Israel and Israeli policy (Sasson, 2010). Sasson (2010) summarizes the American Jews direct engagement as such:

“Increasingly American Jews relate to Israel directly, by advocating their own political views, funding favored causes, visiting frequently or living there part time, consuming Israeli news and entertainment, and expressing a distinctively 'realistic' rather than idealistic orientation toward the Jewish state” (Sasson, 2010, p.173).

This is not to say that this direct engagement model came originally from the liberal Zionist perspective. In fact, Benjamin Netanyahu tried to get the Orthodox American Jewish population to rally against the Oslo peace accords because he felt that the U.S. was taking too liberal of a stance on it (Sasson, 2010). In response to Netanyahu's attempt at rallying the American Orthodox, groups such as American for Peace Now, a liberal group, lobbied in support of the Oslo peace accords (Sasson, 2010).
This catalyzed a shift from moderate political ideology and mass mobilization of the American Jewish population, to the newer direct engagement model and more starkly partisan views on Israeli policy (Sasson, 2010).

Two routes have been particularly popular among American Jews in the direct engagement model: direct donation and advocacy focused on specific causes, and an increase in travel and immigration including choosing to have dual-citizenship with Israel and the U.S. (Sasson, 2010). Among liberal American Jews, some of the popular avenues of donation (and direct volunteerism in Israel) are for causes such as environmentalism, human rights, and Palestinian-Israeli coexistence programs. Among Orthodox American Jews, some of the popular avenues of donation are for University-level education, help for settlers in the West Bank, and general funds for community projects and settlements (Sasson, 2010).

Alternative tourism is an increasingly popular way for American Jewish youth and young adults to directly engage with Israel and Israeli citizens. On the short-term end of the spectrum, Birthright Israel trips sponsored financially by the organization Taglit are a way to build ties between American youth and Israel. Recently, an added dimension of the Birthright tours (which last an average of ten to twelve days) is the addition of a handful of Israeli peers that participate in the tour as part of the touring group, as well as also acting as teachers explaining what it's like to be a youth/young adult in Israel (Sasson, 2010). This is referred to as “mifgash” in Hebrew. The next section will explain Birthright more thoroughly and elaborate on the different aspects of the tours.

The Jewish Agency sponsors long-term experiential learning and volunteer programs through the Masa initiative (a partially funded program for Diaspora Jews).
This is often a step towards making 'aliyah' or immigration to Israel. Immigration, which used to be the territory of the Jewish Agency, is now mainly in the hands of the private Israeli group Nefesh B'Nefesh (Sasson, 2010).

Some observers argue that the gulf between alternative tourism and pilgrimage tourism is closing. Both Israeli and American Jews feel a drive to visit sites such as Rachel's grave as part of the experiential aspect of direct engagement. Visits to these sites create an authentic experience that brings the tourist closer to whatever they were seeking, be it knowledge, a sense of Jewish identity, or spiritual guidance (Collins-Kreiner, 2010).

A third prominent form of direct engagement, media and cultural crossover between U.S. and Israel, normally goes hand-in-hand with travel to Israel and relationships made with Israelis while there. According to Sasson, globalization and the availability of Israeli news in English online allows any American Jew to more actively stay tuned into the current politics and culture of Israel. Not only that, but the internet creates imagined communities of American and Israeli Jews that act as forums for sharing music, fashion, film, and general ideologies of being young and Jewish (Sasson, 2010). “Individuals acting according to the emerging paradigm [direct engagement] are more likely to identify and behave as if they were dual citizens of both the U.S. and Israel” even if they are legally only citizens of the U.S. (Sasson, 2010, p.188).

This growing practice of direct engagement, and the knowledge of attainable citizenship in Israel for American Jews has created an image of Israel as “a 'real country,' in addition to being a symbol and a source of identity” (Sasson, 2010).

Efficacy and Authenticity of Birthright and Alternative Jewish Tourism
As mentioned earlier, Birthright trips are short term alternative tour-groups that take young adult Diaspora Jews to Israel for ten to twelve days free of charge. The objective of these Birthright tours (so called because any person who is Jewish has a 'birth right' to become a citizen of Israel by virtue of that Jewishness) is to bring Diaspora Jews an authentic Jewish experience that will profoundly affect the way that they relate to and engage with Israel (Kelner, 2001; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, et al., 2002).

There has been skepticism both within and with-out the Jewish community at the effectiveness of these tours, whose purpose, as stated above, is to have a profound effect on the identity of every participant. This is because there is a question as to whether or not a person can have an authentic, and therefore identity-shifting experience in less than two weeks. Both Shaul Kelner and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett et al. have done extensive research on the efficacy and authenticity of Birthright tours on Jewish American youth and young adults. Authenticity is seen by some scholars as personally constructed and tourism is just as real and authentic an experience as anything else, even if its abbreviated context creates a different 'realness' (Kelner, 2001). Authentic Judaism, in and of itself, is just one part of a multi-faceted identity. To try and locate one specific aspect of authenticity in any given situation and person is to simplify things, yet, it still points to an authentic aspect of a person's identity (Kelner, 2001).

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett et al. go into greater detail of the mechanisms through which profound identity shifts are facilitated by the programs. The operative mechanism are: (1) they act as a rite of passage for participants, (2) they try to ground the program in historical realities that are familiar to the participants, (3) they use an informal pedagogy that includes participatory bond-building conversations and 'projects', (4) they use
'techniques of the body' to build a state in which physical challenges and successes produce an emotional response tied to identity and Israel, and (5) they aim to inflate the Jewish sense of identity and the personal relationship to Israel and the Jewish community, past and present (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett et al., 2002).

The Birthright trip is becoming a rite of passage for American Jewish youth— an initiation into a new Jewish identity that revolves around the trip to Israel signifying a step towards adulthood and maturity. It begins with the separation of the American Jewish youths from their families, friends, and daily lives. They, and a cohort of other youths are then transported to Israel where they are asked to re-evaluate their Jewishness while taking a whirlwind tour of ancient historical sites, natural preserves, and 'typical' markets and cafes. This is the transition phase; leaving complete American Jewishness behind for a more complex transnational Jewishness. The Birthright trips end in the incorporation of the American Jewish youth into transnational advocates for Israel, sometimes so much so that they choose to stay in their newly incorporated role in their newfound 'home' (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett et al., 2010).

Since the 1990s, an important area of authenticity and efficacy has been added to the Birthright trips. Mifgashim, or 'peer encounters' were set-up between the American Jews and Israeli Jews as part of the standard trip itinerary (Kelner, 2001). The idea was to facilitate the kind of direct engagement between Americans and Israelis that created a bond between the two, consequently forming a bond between nations (Sasson, 2010). The tours also tried to relate past historical events to the American participants by having them recreate historical scenes such as the arrival of the Exodus in Israel, or more simply, trying to connect to the Jews of the past at Yad Vashem; the Holocaust memorial
All of these parts of the itinerary were meant to draw out an emotional connection between the American tourists, Israel, and a globally shared Jewish history (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett et al., 2002).

The Birthright trips also use informal pedagogy to educate the Jewish American youths without any outright teaching. Instead, they immerse the youths in experiences and ask them to examine certain aspects of their identities within these carefully planned circumstances. According to Kirshenblatt-Gimblett et al., immersion in an experiential learning setting—for example, an intense nature hike along the Syrian border on a scorchingly hot day—allows the American Jewish participants to soak up all aspects of the experience like a sponge, educating without actively teaching in the formal sense (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett et al., 2002).

The Birthright tours tend to use 'techniques of the body' as a way to boost the effectiveness of the informal pedagogy. Part of the experience of being elsewhere is the way it feels, tastes, smells, looks, and sounds; this is why experiential tourism is so effective in inculcating the American Jewish youth to emotionally and physically embody their Israel experience (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett et al., 2002). “A defining feature of tourism is precisely one's physical presence in a location and experiences that are above all sensory and proprioceptive, or having to do with the body's orientation in space” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett et al., 2002).

The final method used by the Birthright tours in the quest to profoundly affect the American Jewish youth was by appealing to their Jewishness and by attempting to mold their still-malleable young adult identity. According to Kirshenblatt-Gimblett et al.,:

“The youngsters were embarked on an emotional itinerary that served as a training ground for how to feel Jewish. [They] were encouraged to identify
emotionally with people, events, and places of Jewish significance. The program incited, channeled, and modeled how to feel Jewish” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett et al., 2002).
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Overview of Topic:

Beginning in July of 2011, a wave of economic rallies and protests swept through Israel. Tent cities sprung up throughout the country to protest the rising cost of housing. People marched in the streets and gathered in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Be’er Sheva to fight for social and racial equality. Citizens demanded the price of dairy, specifically, the cost of cottage cheese—a staple of the Israeli diet—be brought down. Doctors and nurses went on strike until they could convince the government to pay them higher wages (they eventually succeeded in getting a 50% increase).

The people leading this movement, nicknamed “Israeli Spring,” a take on “Arab Spring,” were mostly young adults. They were finished with their mandatory full-time military service and found themselves unable to secure jobs that paid enough to cover the costs of school or the costs of raising a family. They spoke of having enough to survive, but not enough to ever thrive.

Some people took direct action against the government and corporations by joining the protests. Others chose to leave the country out of frustration. There were also those who chose to make personal sacrifices to adjust to the status quo. Despite the varying ways in which each person I interviewed dealt with the economic and social problems of their country, there was an overall feeling of disillusionment with the nation they had fought to protect.

Preparation:

I initially made contact about the thesis project with prospective participants Paz Edry and Ron Sade between October 2010 and February 2011. Paz Edry, an Israeli, was my main contact throughout the project, and during my stay in Israel in August of 2011.
Edry helped put me into contact with all of the interviewees from Tel Aviv and Be’er Sheva, and put me into contact with a liaison to the Sderot region. He also assisted me in any translation between Hebrew and English that I needed. Ron Sade, also an Israeli, helped answer my questions about Israeli cultural sensitivities that I might encounter while interviewing. He also acted as my liaison to interviewees from Arad.

Once arriving in Israel, I was introduced via Edry to a woman named Shiri Barr, who was involved with the Sderot tent city and protest movement. Barr took me to the Sderot tent city where she introduced me to the majority of my interview subjects: young adults from the region who were actively (or semi-actively) involved with the movement.

**Interview Subjects:**

Paz Edry: I met Paz Edry on a Birthright tour in 2010. We became friends and stayed in close contact. I stayed with Edry at Kibbutz Gevim in Sderot during my August 2011 trip to Israel. I have the most extensive interviews with Edry because we were able to build trust and rapport over the year that we knew each other. He acted as my main liaison as well as providing me with transportation all over the country.

Edry was currently a college student living in Sderot and going to school at Sapir College near Gaza. He was 25 years old during the time of the interviews. He was peripherally involved with the protest movement.

Ron Sade: I met Ron Sade when he was a security guard and medic on the 2010 Birthright tour. We also became friends and stayed in contact over the year between trips. I spent one entire afternoon interviewing Sade in his hometown of Arad.

Sade went straight from the military to working as a medic and security guard on Birthright tours. He was 22 years old during the time of the interview. He was not
involved with the protest movement. He considered himself an ethnic minority.

Or Golan: Or Golan was introduced to me by Ron Sade. Golan was one of Sade’s best friends. Golan was 23 at the time of the interview. Golan did not approve of the protests but was still frustrated with the lack of employment opportunities in Israel. Golan went to Greece to work a week after our interview.

Reuma Mantzur: Mantzur was Paz Edry’s teaching assistant from Sapir College. She lived in Kibbutz Bror Hayil, also near Gaza. Mantzur was supportive of some aspects of the protests, but minimally involved at the time of the interview. Mantzur was 33 years old at the time of the interview and considers herself an ethnic minority.

Ilana Kishko: I was introduced to Kishko via Shiri Barr at the Sderot tent city. Kishko was actively involved with the protest movement. She was 26 years old at the time of the interview and a student at Sapir College.

Nick Rudick: I was introduced to Rudick via Kishko at the Sderot tent city. Rudick was partially involved with the protest movement. He was 26 years old at the time of the interview. He was a student at Sapir College.

Dorin Elhadad: I was introduced to Elhadad by Barr. Elhadad was actively involved in the protest movement. She was 23 years old at the time of the interview. She considers herself a member of a low socio-economic stratum. She was a student at Sapir College.

Shai Parnes: I was introduced to Parnes through Elhadad. He was actively involved with the protest movement. He was a journalist who had attended school at Sapir College. At the time of the interview, he was 28 years old.

Uri Shchory: Shchory was introduced to me via Barr. He was very active in the protest movement and acted as a regional speech-writer for southern Israel. He had attended
Sapir College and was a working journalist. Shchory was 28 years old at the time of the interview.

Shiri Barr: Barr was introduced to me via Edry. She lived in Kibbutz Gevim. Barr was very active in the protest movement but reluctant to do much in-depth discussion due to the language barrier. Barr was a student at Sapir College.

Assorted people at rallies/tent cities: I grabbed sound bites with roughly a dozen people at the Be’er Sheva rally and Tel Aviv tent city regarding the protest and political movement.

**Focused Interviewing:**

The methodology I used to conduct my research was focused interviewing.

Focused interviewing is a technique that allows the interviewer to gather in-depth responses from the interviewees about the subject of interest and can be used in academic journalism projects (Iorio, 2010). A focused interview should elicit the following information regarding the answers to questions asked of the interviewee: range, specificity, depth, and personal context. To be effective, the questions should be open-ended.

**Pre-trip Preparation:**

I spent over one year (between April 2010 and July 2011) researching Israeli history and regional politics. I did this by both reading and researching peer-reviewed academic articles and books and by reading various Israeli online newspapers every day (such as Ha’aretz and Ynet). I also spent time discussing culture, religion, and regional politics with Paz Edry and Ron Sade; this helped me come up with culturally sensitive, yet timely and relevant questions for my interview schedule.

**Interview Questions:**
1. Name, age, where do you live?

2. Are you a student? If so, where? If not, what do you do?

3. Did you grow up in Israel? What was it like? Can you give me an example?

4. If not, when did you move to Israel? What is your impression of the country since being here?

5. What is your favorite memory of living in Israel?

6. Would you ever consider living anywhere besides Israel? Why or why not?

7. What are the biggest challenges you face as a young adult living in Israeli society?

8. How did you initially become involved with the tent city and protests?

9. What was the point in your life where you said, “Enough is enough, something has to change.”?

10. What do you hope that the tent cities and rallies will accomplish either politically or socially?

11. What do you think is going to happen with these protests? (get bigger, disappear, become violent, etc.)

12. In your opinion, what do you want to see happen because of the protests?

13. How much do you consider Judaism an important part of who you are?

14. How did serving in the IDF affect your life and outlook on the world?

15. What do you know about American groups like Peace Now and J-Street?

16. Do you think that the work these groups are doing is having either a negative or positive effect on the conflict? How?

17. Many Arab countries are seeing the protests in Israel as inspired by “Arab Spring.” What do you think are the similarities between the protests? What are the differences?
18. How do you feel about the President of the United States, Obama, saying that Israel needs to negotiate land around the 1967 borders?

19. Do you feel the United States should be involved with Israeli politics? Why or why not?

20. Do you think American Jews pay enough attention to what’s happening in Israel? Why or why not?

21. Do you think there is a global Jewish identity? Do all Jews, no matter where they come from, have a lot in common? If so, what?

22. Can you share a personal story about working in/living in a conflict zone in Israel?

23. Is there anything you’d like to add that I haven’t asked you about?

**Equipment:**

The recording device I used for my interviews was a Samsung Zoom H2 recorder. The programs I used for sound editing are Audacity and Garage Band, both on my home computer. The still/video cameras I used were a Canon PowerShot A570 IS (a 'point and shoot') and a Canon EOS Digital Rebel T3i (a DSLR). The programs I have been using for photo editing (global color correction, dodging and burning, and cropping) are iPhoto and Adobe Lightroom. The video editing software that I’ve been using is Windows Live Movie Maker in conjunction with Sony Vegas Pro 11.0 and Final Cut Pro.

The main documentary is 22 minutes long. The sound-slides presentation for The Jewish Journal is 3.5 minutes long. The additional Tel Aviv footage is just over 1 minute long. Each of my participants will receive a final copy of the DVD, as well as be kept up to date with the ongoing project until completion.

**Limitations of Interviews**
I am both American and Jewish, and have been to Israel. I have a number of friends in Israel as well as distant family. Although I attempted (as is my journalistic duty) to remain neutral throughout this thesis project, that ideology of neutrality in and of itself is a subjective position. By attempting to show multiple narratives, I was only able to present a small number of the infinite opinions regarding Judaism, Israel, and Middle East politics. I attempted to find interview subjects not on the basis that they agree with my personal ideology, but on the basis that they were well-spoken and able to communicate their own views clearly. I chose my sample with intention: I used informal contacts and personal networks to identify my interview subjects through the snowball effect. I understand that different levels of comfort with my presence affected the depth into which the interviewees were willing to go while answering the questions. I also interviewed a relatively small sample which affected the range of answers given by the subjects. I tried to avoid bringing the Palestinian nationhood debate into this documentary because the scope would have been too wide to cover adequately. The focus was meant to remain on the Israeli citizens and their own socio-economic problems—that being said, border conflict issues were impossible to ignore while covering this story.

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The fourth chapter of my thesis is a transcription of the final documentary and the published article and multimedia presentation for The Jewish Journal. The fifth and final chapter of my thesis is the conclusion and reflection of my experience doing this project.
CHAPTER FOUR: TRANSCRIPTION OF MULTIMEDIA/TEXT OF ARTICLE

**Israeli Spring Script:**

Sound FX: Israeli National Military Band playing Hatikvah

Sound FX: Hatikvah at Be’er Sheva Rally

Sound FX: “The people want social equality” chant in Hebrew

Sound FX: Kobi Oz speech/layered with English translation

Translation V/O: I want to say that the middle class, we, the middle class, we are not going to give up and we’re intertwined with the impoverished. If we get further along or make progress, the poor also progress with us. We won’t stop and let the tycoons leave us behind. We’re taking with us the weak class, and the weakened class. We will take care of the orphan, the widow, the foreign citizen, the poor, and all the ones who are having a hard time.

V/O: During the summer of 2011, hundreds of thousands of Israelis hit the streets in protest. Ten thousand tents sprung up on Sderot Rothschild, a main promenade in Tel Aviv. It seemed as though every town had a tent city—what quickly became the ubiquitous emblem of the cause.

Sound FX: Music

V/O: The price of rent had gone up astronomically in the cities, leaving people no choice but to commute. But the price of gas was nearly unaffordable as well. Even the staple of the Israeli diet, cottage cheese, something once considered the food of the masses was an expensive and rare treat.
College students, many fresh out of the army, were finding it nearly impossible to afford school—between tuition, food, and rent, something had to give. Some chose not to go to college and dive into the work force right away. Leaving the country, something highly stigmatized, was becoming a valid option for many young adults seeking employment opportunities. Others chose to attend school in zones of intense conflict—the rocket and mortar fire were a compromise they were willing to make for an affordable education.

Sound FX: music

V/O: The summer and fall of 2011 saw the largest protests in Israeli history—and surprisingly, not a single person was hurt at any of the rallies—the largest with nearly half a million participants. However, the news coverage of this historic time was largely limited to Israeli news outlets. The rallies were overshadowed in the international arena by the violent revolutions occurring all around Israel.

Many young Israelis wondered whether their neighbors were, in fact, more effective at bringing about change because of the violence. Many started to feel that no major social reforms could come to fruition until Israeli citizens died. Not just a few, but enough to shake the government out of its coma. This morbid maxim was uttered by Hawks, Doves, and Anarchists alike.

Although the theme of hope was ever-apparent in the protest activities, it was tinged with the fatalistic notion that if this didn't accomplish the social and economic reforms that the protesters set out to accomplish, there was no realistic dream for a better future in Israel. The rallies symbolized the last bastion of hope among the Israeli youth.
Text Slide: “You see the terrorists still exist here. Terror always flies above our heads whether we want it or not. Even the spirit of terror. It’s a magical thing, like a myth. It’s always in the air.” –Amiram E.

Sound FX: Tseva adom/rocket attack

InfoLiveTV Clip: An Israeli college student in his twenties was killed and several other students wounded when a qassam rocket hit the Sapir College near Sderot on Wednesday afternoon.

Russia Today Clip: By the way, there’s that Sapir College there. It’s a very prestigious college. It may be another reason for their missile attacks on Sderot. They not only attack Sderot, but nearby enterprises and the Sapir College in particular, where there are about one thousand students from across the country including Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and other cities of Israel.

Nana Ch. 10 Clip: During the summer vacation, over 25 million shekels were invested in protection against rockets on campus.

InfoLive TV Clip: A bodyguard for internal security minister, Avi Dichter, was hit by shrapnel near Sapir College today. He had been scouting out the area for an appearance by Dichter later in the day.

Nana Ch. 10 clip: Have you ever heard of rocket protection on an academic campus?

Ilana: My name is Ilana Kishko, I’m 26. I live in Kibbutz Erez which is near Sderot. I’m just finishing my first degree at Sapir college. I’m studying communications and journalism.

Nick: I’m Nick, I’m 26 years old. I live here in Sderot and I’m studying at the college here, Sapir college.
Reuma: My name is Reuma Mantzur. I’ve lived at Kibbutz Bror Hayil for the last year and I work in Sapir college.

Uri: Uri Shchory, I’m 28 years old. I live in Baryokav which is in the center of Israel. I study here at Sapir.

Paz: I go to school at Sapir college which is right near Kibbutz Gevim.

V/O: There are a multitude of reasons students choose to attend college in the town of Sderot—for some, it’s the most cost effective way they can receive a college education. For others, the beauty, diversity, and remoteness of the area outweigh the missile attacks. Because of the popularity of Sapir college, Sderot is predominantly a town of young adults—often times their parents can’t understand why they’d choose to live there.

Paz: My parents were like to panic and go there and , “How did you think to study there? and it’s not safe! and it’s so close to Gaza.” And I told them, “Listen, it’s not a lot of time” and actually, two weeks afterwards, they attacked—the grad attack was near Ashdod and Gan Yavne, where my parents live. So I just told them, “You see? Doesn’t matter. It will get there. And eventually, it will get to Tel Aviv too. It’s only a matter of when it will get to Tel Aviv. This is when they will do something about it.”

V/O: There is a definite siege mentality among those attending school at Sapir. They understand the risks, and although angry about the perpetual conflict, aren’t planning on leaving anytime soon. The attacks are an acceptable part of life.

Paz: And you know, the people of Sderot got used to it. And this is ridiculous coz they got used to rocket attacks. And we knew it. We knew where we come in. We knew it was dangerous. It was also, you know, it came with good parts. The studies was like 50% cheaper. And the housing is cheaper. It’s not living in Tel Aviv and study there, the houses
are bigger, the environment is cool, even though it’s under war. And the thing is that after Cast Lead, it was a completely different story. I mean it was almost like it is now. And so you’re here for two weeks. And you, touch wood, haven’t heard a tseva adom.

Text Slide: I woke up to an alert at Kibbutz Gevim that night at 4:10am

Paz: You haven’t heard sirens. You haven’t heard attacks.

V/O: In fact, that morning, there had been a deadly terrorist attack on a tourist bus in Eilat. The next day we could feel the rumble and vibrations of retaliatory bombs being dropped on Gaza by the Israeli army. That weekend saw the largest increase in violent conflict between Gaza and the south in months. However, for the residents of the area, a little emotional detachment was necessary if they were to live with some level of internal peace.

Ilana: This is a beautiful area, and people are so strong living in this reality of missiles and conflict. One of my favorite spots is actually called the 'missiles hill' because during the war, all the media would go there and just look at how they throw missiles at us, so it's quite interesting. You see the whole strip from there. The whole Gaza strip. That's one of my favorite places.

V/O: It seemed that the students also felt a sense of duty in supporting their adopted home—trying to show the world, and their community, that life can be made better despite the conflict.

Ilana: I love the way my college is involved in this area, because it's underdeveloped area. A lot of people here are immigrants from different places, and it's not a very strong city, let's say, Sderot? Of course, the missiles didn't really contribute to it, so the college is very, very involved. We do loads of social projects here. I love everything here.
V/O: Enrollment at Sapir College hasn’t been affected by it’s proximity to the Gaza strip. It is the internal social and political conflict that has affects the students more than any outside agitation. If anything is driving young adults from Israel, it’s the lack of economic opportunities—and fear that no matter how hard they work, and how much education they receive, they won’t be able to afford to move to the next stage of life: having a family and children.

V/O: It is the ultimate goal of many Jews worldwide to eventually make “aliyah” or the ascension to Israel, the return to the biblical homeland. However, for many Sabras, Israeli-born nationals, they feel like they must leave the country behind to live the lives they had imagined for themselves.

To leave Israel is to do “yeridah” which means to descend from Israel. The stigma attached to doing yeridah is one of negativity and selfishness. According to Paz Edry, those who do yeridah are seen as individuals who don't care about Israel or their Judaism, and prefer their own good over the overall health of society. They’re seen as choosing the easy way out, but, Edry pointed out the there is something intrinsically cruel about accusing those people of being selfish, especially when the government and society continue to fail to provide opportunities for those citizens who have done their army service, and are trying to move to the next stage of life.

Time after time, I heard young men and women alike speaking of how no matter how hard they work, they are merely surviving with no possibility of thriving. Ideals of nationalism can only go so far when it’s nearly impossible to afford rent and food.

Ron: I’m trying to move to the United States, as you know. And why? I don’t know…there’s more opportunities. I’ve been here all the years, done my hard army
service, and if you ask me why not, people would not move from here, it’s like people are
good here. But yeah, the United States is pretty much were my goal is.

V/O: These young adults aren’t seeking luxury, just basic needs.

Ron: People really can’t rent a house. It’s pretty shitty. They have to live in their
parent’s (house) when they’re forty. It’s not good. I don’t want to pay two thousand
shekels for an apartment, but I can’t eat. I want to eat.

Reuma: I think, to find an occupation, and something to, and to live, to be able to live
from the salary, and of course to find myself a home, a house. I can't see it happening—
both things right now. First, to buy a house it costs so much that I just can't. I can't. I can't
build my house from mud, you know. And because I'm working in--I'm doing the thing
that I like to do, there's not too much money. And I like to live in the south, the south is
even less; you get even less and most of the things are cost higher than the center.

Paz: You have a financial challenge which you need to---you need to like, get a job, get a
degree, and actually, you get a bit of help from your parents and if your parents are
financially okay, they’ll either pay for your school or your household. Still you have to
pay taxes and pay all the things here, and when you’re a student it’s really hard because
after you get out of the army, you just need a year of rest or a year of journey or vacation
or whatever, or living in Tel Aviv like I did, and then you’re coming back to school and
it’s different. you have to adjust and come back to school, and you know, get a degree,
and keep your living conditions while doing this. Our parent’s like gave birth to us when
they were our age and now we can’t afford it like bringing new life to here. Coz, we are
having trouble to ending up the month. This is what the protest is all about—the middle
age, that like the ages of 20-40—they are having a real problem to take care of
themselves and their children. And to begin a new home, and you know, have kids and stuff.

V/O: These young adults often feel abandoned by their communities and their country.

Uri: I want to live in a state I couldn't perceive leaving behind. And I don't feel like that about Israel. It annoys me and I feel bad about it, and I don't...I would move to the states in one instant, if it wasn't that my wife wasn't very connected here, and to me. So I can't...I won't, because she is connected to them. But if I was, if I lived alone, if I was a bachelor, I would move to the US and find an assistant coach job at like Duke, or something, or even a little college; I would move in an instant and it annoys me. And I don't want it. I want to feel connected. I want to feel community.

V/O: For some, moving from Israel is the only logical way to pursue their careers—even if it’s just for the short term.

Or: I'm moving on Sunday to Greece. That’s where I found the job. Technical support. I'm going to work there for six months. Mostly, just to see how it is and make some money for another trip in Europe. That's the only reason for it. if I could do the same in Israel, I'd do it.

Paz: I was thinking about moving out a few times, not in the...before that I was really patriotic, but after a few years here, I was really thinking about you know, working as my job as a video editor or as opposed to editor and I don’t know if the market in Israel just needs so much editors. So in case I won’t find a job here, a decent job with a decent salary, I just try Europe I guess, or something.

Shai: When I think about my future after the academy, I look at the conditions people do get in the US and Germany, and I do think it’s better conditions if I'm going to be a doctor...
someday, or a lecturer, conditions abroad are way better. So I do think about it.

V/O: For all the disappointment in the opportunities available to them, this generation of young adults truly wants to live in a better Israel. It is their home. It is where there family and friends live. The protests are a cry to the government to save the population, because there’s a sense of desperation seeping through the middle class.

Reuma: I would really like to move out from Israel cause I feel this country goes from a place better than it is now. But I don't really see myself anywhere else. I'm too attached to this place.

Ilana: We feel like this is the last battle. If we don't fight it now, we don't have a future in this country. And we're not gonna stay.

VO: Perhaps the darkest realization I happened upon while searching for the answer as to what could rally millions of people together without violence, was that really nothing could rally and unify millions of people together without violence.

Tragedy, fear, and violence tend to produce, as a sort of after effect, feelings of national pride and camaraderie, especially when the tragedies are felt on a large scale: the mourning after a terror attack, the fear of getting on a bus, the sheer joy when a prisoner of war is returned home, alive, after many dark years of wondering.

Where I thought I'd see pride in the lack of violence, I instead saw disappointment that unlike their Arab neighbors, Israel was not about to undergo a major sea-change. There were small victories: doctors were finally getting paid a fairer wage. But the victories continue, to this day, to be overshadowed by the lack of true societal change.

Ilana Kishko: Maybe when we'll have some broken heads, something will move. I don't know. Maybe it's that.
Ron Sade: I think in the end, someone will come, and like, make things a little better, but in my opinion it's not gonna work as we want. Sad to say, but only violence will work. Really sad.

Ilana Kishko: Unfortunately, sometimes you have to fight to make peace. I believe that someday it will happen here, but unfortunately, a lot of people will die before it happens.

Paz Edry: I think civil war may be an important thing. Even though it's a conflict, it's giving a result, and it's uniting two voices to one.

Nick Rudick: The price is very high.

V/O: Hope is a powerful concept--people can survive the most brutal conditions if they have hope, if they believe in a better future. However, there is a darker side to hope—when people become disillusioned and hope slowly fades into obscurity, what is left behind is something much more sinister. When you have nothing to lose, nothing is out of the question. Perhaps this frustration marks another exodus—one out of Israel and into more promising lands.

**Script for TRIBE Magazine Published Video:**

Sound FX: Hatikvah at rally fades in

Sound FX: Fades into "The people want social equality" chant in Hebrew

Sound FX: Fades into natural sound (Sderot)

V/O: At the height of the protests in Israel this summer, half a million Israeli citizens rallied in the streets for social reform. One of the most remarkable aspects of the protests
was that there appeared to be no violence: no police brutality, no outside agitators, no political arguments turned into fist-fights. In contrast to the Arab Spring and London Riots, it seemed like Israelis from all walks of life were gathered in solidarity--ready to make dreams of social reforms become a reality. The tools they were using were non-violent protest and peaceful discussions. Kobi Oz, a famous Israeli singer summarized this sentiment at a rally in the southern city of Be'er Sheva: a rally that drew approximately 25,000 people.

Sound FX: Kobi Oz speech/layered with English translation

Translation V/O: I want to say that the middle class, we, the middle class, we are not going to give up and we’re intertwined with the impoverished. If we get further along or make progress, the poor also progress with us. We won’t stop and let the tycoons leave us behind. We’re taking with us the weak class, and the weakened class. We will take care of the orphan, the widow, the foreign citizen, the poor, and all the ones who are having a hard time.

Sound FX: Cheers

Sound FX: Fade to nat. sound

V/O: Soon, I sadly realized that this apparent solidarity was merely a facade--one that tried to push aside the growing disillusionment of many Israeli citizens. Peaceful rallies were not going to bring around an age of equality and enlightenment--there were quite a few who believed that only violence could have a profound effect on the situation.
Ilana Kishko: Maybe when we'll have some broken heads, something will move. I don't know. Maybe it's that.

Ron Sade: I think in the end, someone will come, and like, make things a little better, but in my opinion it's not gonna work as we want. Sad to say, but only violence will work. Really sad.

Ilana Kishko: Unfortunately, sometimes you have to fight to make peace. I believe that someday it will happen here, but unfortunately, a lot of people will die before it happens.

Paz Edry: I think civil war may be an important thing. Even though it's a conflict, it's giving a result, and it's uniting two voices to one.

Nick Rudick: The price is very high.

Sound FX: nat. sound

V/O: Hope is a powerful concept--people can survive the most brutal conditions if they have hope, if they believe in a better future. However, there is a darker side to hope—when people became disillusioned and hope slowly fades into obscurity, what is left behind is something much more sinister. When you have nothing to lose, nothing is out of the question. This is Julie Bien for TRIBE Magazine online.

**TRIBE Magazine Text of Article:**

Israeli Summer: Hoping for Change, Calling for Violence

“Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable,” John F. Kennedy wisely put forth in a 1962 speech. As I write this, the
Occupy Wall Street movement is in full swing, and I can’t help but be reminded of my summer covering the social and economic protests in Israel.

I arrived in the southern Israeli town of Sderot at the beginning of August to begin working on a documentary following the “Israeli Summer” social movement. I was blown away by the hundreds of thousands of people actively rallying against the economic and political status quo. It seemed as though every town I traveled through had a tent city—the ubiquitous emblem of the cause. These weren’t just Ashkenazim from the wealthy, developed center, but an ethnic, religious, and political chop suey of people from all sorts of backgrounds.

When I arrived in Israel, I was naively idealistic. It took me less than one week to realize that despite the fervent but peaceful way in which Israeli citizens protested the economic status quo and lack of social equality, the only overarching consensus was that no major social reforms could come to fruition until Israeli citizens died. Not just a few, but enough to shake the government out of its coma, was the expressed sentiment.

I was horrified to repeatedly hear this morbid maxim uttered by Hawks, Doves, and Anarchists alike. Solidarity meant nothing other than the illusion of a unified Israel, when in the minds of many Israelis, they were just as divided as ever—the only unifying theme among the protestors was the belief that violence was the only true avenue for change.

The first time I heard this expressed was as my friend and I were walking down the semi-deserted streets in Be’er Sheva after the August 13th rally—a rally that drew
approximately 25,000 people, and ended at midnight with a heartfelt crowd-wide rendition of “Hatikvah.”

I innocently asked my friend if he thought the protests would change anything, and without missing a beat, he said, “Honestly? Nothing will change until someone dies, or a lot of people die. It takes death for the government to act. That’s how it has always been, and I think that this is no different.”

Wait. What? Weren’t these rallies so peaceful because they were supposed to stand out in stark contrast to the violent Arab Spring erupting all around Israel? Was all of this talk of solidarity and community a farce?

No, it wasn’t. But the movement wasn’t coming strictly from a place of unbridled hope and altruism either.

The undercurrent of negativity also became clear when I interviewed young adults at the Sderot tent city, who turned out to be working journalists and media and marketing students.

I was led to a folding chair, and was instantly made the makeshift moderator of a debate between approximately a dozen protestors. It was an unusual first interview, but it allowed me to hear the discussion at large, rather than from one person at a time, and it gave me a greater understanding of the movement.

I was impressed by the restraint everyone showed when they disagreed with each other, and the real surprise was just how much they disagreed about important things. Like what the protest was about. To this day, there is no consensus on exactly what
people were rallying together for other than the amorphous “economic and social problem.”

Sounds familiar to Americans now, doesn’t it?

Although hope was ever-apparent in the protest activities in Israel this summer, that sentiment was frequently tinged with the fatalistic notion that peaceful protests could never make enough of an impact to actually change society.

There is a scene in the musical, “Les Miserables,” the morning after a student uprising is extinguished. The women who are left behind sadly sing:

“Nothing changes, nothing ever will…”

I hope that something good does comes out of this movement—the only other alternative, one that resembles the Arab Spring—is much too sinister to imagine.

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The fifth and final chapter of my thesis is the conclusion and reflection of my experience doing this project.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND REFLECTION

Conclusion:

When I first arrived in Israel, I expected the young, politically active adults that I encountered to sing the praises of their non-violent uprising. All over Africa, The Middle East, and even parts of Europe, citizens were being injured and killed, and cities burned in the name of political equality and freedom. In Israel, they were setting up tents and having rallies. I was surprised and dismayed to learn that many young adults thought that the only way Israel could be saved would be via violence.

This sentiment, coming from citizens of a country all too familiar with terrorism and war, struck me as bizarre. How could these people believe in the power of violence? I’m still not sure if I can properly answer that question.

Another theme that struck me was the lack of zionism in Israelis; something that is so ingrained in American Jewry. Perhaps American Jews have incorrectly painted a glorified picture of another nation’s patriotism. So many young Israelis could imagine leaving Israel permanently--the country that had been founded less than one century before by a terrorized minority.

The initial concept for the state of Israel involved a Diaspora community brought together by the universality of their religion and demonization. In reality, the citizens of Israel are as divided along ethnic, socio-economic, and religious lines as any other country. There is no universal connection among the Jews living there, just as there is no unspoken connection among all Jews living in the United States. The young Israeli adults recognized this and have come to terms with the fact that they may need to eventually emigrate from the country created for them, because it is no longer serving them.
The ongoing rallies and protests that began in earnest in July 2011 seem, in retrospect, like a last push towards the society the young adults had been told their homeland should be; a haven for them—a place where food, medical care, and employment were part of the understood agreement with the government that makes military service mandatory for all citizens. I cannot say if these protests will have marked the beginning of a new era for Israel, or a new Diaspora—but I can’t imagine anything will remain the same as it was before the movement.

**Reflection:**

When I first toyed with the idea of doing a thesis documentary about Israeli citizens and Judaism, I was unsure of how I would manage to tackle such a large subject. In fact, my initial project, as my literature review reflects, was about how the Israeli-sponsored Birthright trips changed Israeli and American ideas of Jewish identity. I was interested in how Birthright triggered engagement among Americans in Israel and Israeli politics, and how Israelis felt about this newfound American participation.

In the weeks preceding my flight to Israel, I, like anyone going to a sometimes conflict-ridden nation, was keeping a close eye on the news. It was obvious that the rumblings of a political movement were underway, but I did not choose to let that affect my journey nor my thesis.

That changed when I landed. The chair of my committee suggested that I scrap my initial thesis plan, and instead cover the uprising and protests. I was a journalist in the midst of a social revolution—there was no choice but to cover it.

This documentary, the article, and the sound-slides published for TRIBE Media Corp. are the product of this last-minute shift in the subject of my thesis. Although I am
happy with the material that I have created, I feel I would have been much better
prepared to make a video documentary (my initial project was a radio documentary) if I
had known in advance that I would be covering a social revolution rather than issues of
identity.

The largest issue I ran into was one of filming—a rather large issue in a
documentary. My camera, although capable of taking high-definition video, was not
capable of taking any video in hot weather. Considering that I was in southern Israel in
August, with temperatures rarely dipping below 80 degrees Fahrenheit (and very often
well-above that), my camera struggled to take more than 10-30 seconds of video at a
time. For this reason, almost all of my interviews were only usable for audio (recorded
separately.) This led me to rely more heavily on still photography and found--footage
than I would have liked.

This project has been the largest ongoing piece of work that I have ever
completed. I plan to continue to follow the movement, and to revisit my subjects and re-
interview them regarding these topics in five years to see if the protests catalyzed any
long-term changes. I don’t believe there will be any great leaps forward either socially or
economically until there has been a major shift in governmental power. I also believe that
further research is required to understand if the lack of a constitution in Israel has any
tremendous influence on how their democracy works.
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APPENDIX

Journal/TRIBE Magazine website

68
Force?

No, it wasn't. But the movement wasn't coming strictly from a place of unbridled hope and altruism either.

The undercurrent of optimism also became clear when I interviewed young adults at the Sidro tent city, who turned out to be working journalists and media and marketing students.

I was led to a folding chair, and was instantly made the makeshift moderator of a debate between approximately a dozen protesters. It was an unusual interview, but it allowed me to hear the discussion at large, rather than from one person at a time, and it gave me a greater understanding of the movement.

I was impressed by the restraint everyone showed when they disagreed with each other; and the real surprise was just how much they disagreed about important things. Like what the protest was about. To this day, there is no consensus on exactly what people were hoping for—other than the overwhelmingly "economic and social problem."

Sounds familiar to Americans now, doesn't it?

Although hope was ever-present in the protest activities in Israel this summer, that sentiment was frequently tinged with the fatalistic notion that peaceful protests could never make enough of an impact to actually change society.

There is a scene in the musical "Les Misérables," the morning after a student uprising is extinguished.

"Nothing changes, nothing ever will..."

I hope that something good comes out of this movement—the only other alternative, one that resembles the Arab Spring—is much too sinister to imagine.

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