



The Argov Center for the Study
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Between Legitimate Protest and 'Price Tag' Violence: Religious-Zionist Attitudes to a Potential Large-scale Evacuation of West Bank Settlements

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Executive Summary

The Significance of the Issue

The international community and the consensus among the Israeli public supports a two state solution; that is the eventual establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, alongside a Jewish and democratic State of Israel. While there is little optimism about the imminence of a breakthrough in the peace process, it is widely understood that a two-state solution means that many settlements will fall outside the boundaries of the State of Israel and that therefore they will either come under Palestinian sovereignty or be dismantled. Settlements outside the major settlement blocs are the most likely candidates for evacuation and they are populated mainly by ideological-motivated settlers who are religious-Zionists. Religious-Zionists comprise about 15% of all Israeli Jews. They are the strongest supporters of the settlements, having been at the forefront of the settler movement from the beginning. They played the dominant role in opposing previous withdrawals, and they are likely to do so again in the event of a future withdrawal. Consequently, it is crucial for both mainstream Israeli policy-makers and the international community to understand how religious-Zionists in general and religious-Zionist settlers in particular, look at the prospect of a future Israeli withdrawal from a significant part of the West Bank that would require the evacuation of tens of thousands of settlers.

Core Aims and Key Questions

The aim of this study is to examine both the current attitudes and the likely responses of religious-Zionists, on both sides of the Green Line, towards a possible mass evacuation of settlements in Judea and Samaria¹ in the future. The paper itself does not take a position in favor or against such a withdrawal. Rather its aim is to assess the subjective attitudes of religious-Zionists towards this possibility. The first key question examined is this: how far would they be willing to go in

¹ The Biblical Hebrew name for the West Bank.

resisting a mass evacuation of West Bank settlements? Will their struggle follow the moderate and peaceful precedent set by the Disengagement from Gaza in 2005, when 8000 settlers were evacuated? Or given the failure of that struggle, will most religious-Zionist settlers simply abandon the settlements without a struggle? On the other hand, could the failure of that struggle to prevent the Disengagement, drive religious-Zionists to a more radical struggle including a mass campaign of insubordination and civil disobedience? Moreover, there is also the possibility of an even more extreme struggle characterized by violence and perhaps even the use of lethal force. In this context, 'Price Tag' vandalism, sabotage and violence represents a very worrying trend.

The second key issue examined is how religious-Zionist responses to a mass evacuation are likely to be affected by the nature of both the plan itself and the decision-making process leading to withdrawal. Does it make any difference if a withdrawal is part of a peace agreement or whether it is carried out unilaterally? Would the option of allowing settlers to remain in their homes under Palestinian sovereignty ease the process? Does it make a difference if a referendum is held over the issue? Would the size of a majority in favor of an evacuation, either in the Knesset or in a referendum, make a significant difference to likely reactions? Finally, how will the tone adopted by government, media and civil society proponents of a withdrawal affect the likely behavior of religious-Zionists on both sides of the Green Line?

Due to the complexity and sensitivity of the subject, anonymous personal interviews with religious-Zionist elites was chosen as the primary method of research. A wide range of religious-Zionists views are represented by the interviewees. At the same time, the interview transcripts have been weighted in proportion to the relative size of the denomination that the interviewee represents of the religious public.

Likely Responses to a Future Mass Evacuation

The Disengagement set in motion centrifugal forces within the religious-Zionist community in two senses. First, attitudes towards a future evacuation have polarized. Moderates have become more moderate or at least more pragmatic, while radicals have become more radical. Second, the religious and lay leadership of the religious-Zionist community, especially in the settlements, is less united than in 2005 and less able to constrain radical actions, as it did successfully in 2005. In addition, there is an increasing sense of alienation from state institutions, liberal elites, the legal establishment and 'the media' within the religious-Zionist community. This is a result of a widespread subjective belief that the Disengagement was carried out in a manipulative, undemocratic manner, which delegitimized the settlers and religious-Zionists per se and failed to provide a decent humanitarian solution for the evacuees. These attitudes are more prevalent among the younger generation, particularly among the more religiously and ideologically extreme *Hardal*² minority among religious-Zionists. The *Hardal* sector make up 20-25% of religious-Zionists, but constitute a larger proportion of those living in settlements outside the main blocs, which are most likely to be evacuated.

In contrast to the *Hardal* sector, the attitudes of most of the 'middle class', who make up over three-quarters of all religious-Zionists, are not primarily driven by the territorially maximalist ideology of the 'Whole Land of Israel'. Political realities imposed since the beginning of the peace process in the 1990s have left their mark, inducing a greater sense of realism that has resigned many to accept that those realities cannot be rolled back. However, the remaining West Bank settlements continue to be important because they are a key part of the fabric of life for the religious-Zionist community on both sides of the Green Line - far more so than the settlements dismantled in Gaza in

² *Hardal* -A Hebrew acronym for Haredi Leumi – Ultra-Orthodox Nationalists. They are religious-Zionists with a relatively negative approach to modernity, combined with stringent religious observance and an extreme right-wing version of religious nationalism.

2005. Uprooting them will therefore be far more traumatic for the community than the Gaza evacuation.

As religious-Zionists see it, the Disengagement demonstrated that a moderate struggle cannot prevent a withdrawal once the government has made a decision. Nonetheless, the overwhelming majority remain unwilling to support the use of hard violence (i.e. beyond pushing and shoving police at demonstrations) against the institutions of the state charged with implementing an evacuation. Consequently, more are likely to abandon the settlements than in 2005, and many others, especially within the Green Line, will stay at home and not get directly involved. A majority of the 'middle class' in the settlements are likely to opt for a struggle along the lines pursued in 2005, if only to demonstrate symbolic opposition to the move. Passive support for insubordination by religious-Zionist soldiers charged with implementing an evacuation is high and on the increase, especially among the younger generation. However, among the 'middle class', support is confined to individual acts of subordination based on conscience; opposition to a collective organized campaign of insubordination continues to be very strong. There remains strong opposition to challenging the legitimate authority of the state per se. This is because 'middle class' religious-Zionists' adherence to a right-wing ideology and theology is counter-balanced by a religiously based commitment to the authority of the Jewish State – *Mamlachtiut*³, and by their deep-seated desire to remain part of mainstream Jewish-Israeli society. In other words, it is this *normative-theological balance*, their religious and culturally rooted commitment to national solidarity and sovereignty, which serves as the main restraint on their behavior in the event of a future evacuation. This also remains true for about half of the more extreme *Hardal* sector within religious-Zionism.

³ *Mamlachtiut* - Religiously grounded loyalty to the State of Israel combined with a commitment to promoting its welfare. This is an essential element of religious-Zionism, which sanctifies Jewish sovereignty.

Nonetheless, at the same time, among the other half of the *Hardal* sector, there has been a weakening in their religious commitment to the State of Israel - *Mamlachtiut*, due to the state's failure to pursue their ideological agenda. Moreover, it is among *Hardal* youth, that the increasing sense of alienation from mainstream Israeli-Jewish society since 2005 has been most pronounced. *Hardal* youth are also increasingly unwilling to accept the authority of the mainstream religious-Zionist settler leadership that led the moderate struggle against the Disengagement in 2005. In other words, the foundations of religious-Zionist constraint are weakening within the *Hardal* sector. Among this minority of a few thousand, there is consequently a greater willingness to engage in a more aggressive struggle against an evacuation than that pursued in 2005. This includes support for organized collective insubordination and sabotaging the equipment of those charged with implementing an evacuation. Clearly then, this group is willing to challenge the legitimate authority of the state per se. Still, the biggest danger comes from several hundred youth, who refuse to accept the authority of any religious or lay leadership. They have no boundaries and can only be dealt with outside the bounds of the religious-Zionist community. Overall, while civil war between the State and religious-Zionist community is very unlikely, there is nevertheless a reasonable likelihood that there will be violent clashes, and that in isolated instances, these could involve live fire.

The Impact of the Nature of the Plan

Among political elites, support is growing for a further unilateral withdrawal, this time from large swathes of the West Bank. The goal is to protect Israel's identity as a Jewish and democratic state. The settlements are deemed to threaten this goal in terms of demography and international legitimacy. From the point of view of religious-Zionist settlers, a unilateral withdrawal will have less legitimacy than one that forms part of a peace agreement. From their perspective, they would be losing their homes, while having the fabric of their lives ripped to pieces for nothing. At least with an agreement, even if they think the deal unwise and unjust, Israel would get something in return.

Second, a withdrawal that takes place due to international pressure, or to avoid such pressure, will also have less legitimacy in the eyes of religious-Zionist settlers than an evacuation that results from an agreement. They tend to see such pressure as largely the result of the indirect lobbying of left-wing Israeli NGOs and politicians calling on the international community to 'save Israel from itself'. They believe that the government can and should stand up to that pressure.

Third, the idea of allowing settlements to remain in place under Palestinian sovereignty is not taken seriously by the overwhelming majority of religious-Zionist settlers. They believe it is a ploy to increase the legitimacy of a withdrawal. In any case, the overwhelming majority would reject it, both because living in the Jewish nation-state is more important to them than living in the heartland of the Land of Israel under Palestinian rule, and because they are absolutely certain that the security situation in such an eventuality would be completely intolerable. At the fringe, a very small minority of the most dovish and the most radical would be willing to stay behind.

The Impact of the Decision-making Process

The more religious-Zionist settlers are engaged during the process, the greater the legitimacy for the end-product will be. The more they feel that they are able to make their case against a planned withdrawal, the more room that is made for acts of legitimate protest, again the greater the legitimacy for any eventual evacuation. Such principles sound easy enough to implement, but the subjective perceptions of religious-Zionist settlers as to what constitutes legitimacy, makes this more challenging to implement in practice.

From the subjective point of view of religious-Zionist settlers, the dismantling of settlements requires a higher level of support than other Israeli government decisions. Supporters of a withdrawal might point out that this is unfair. After all, no special majority was required to establish the settlements. Indeed many were established against the will of the elected

government. Still, the subjective perception of religious-Zionists is likely to persist given that it is the whole fabric of life of religious-Zionist settlers that is at stake.

Against this background, the consensus among the interviewees was to support a referendum in which withdrawal required more than a simple majority in order to pass. Specifically, they support the idea that a referendum should require a majority among Israeli Jews, because they tend to view the 20% of Arab citizens of Israel as a fifth column, especially when it comes to decisions that support the Palestinian cause. Since the interviews were conducted, the Knesset passed legislation that would require a referendum in order for Israel to withdraw from Jerusalem, the Golan or other sovereign Israeli territory. Although this law does not apply to the West Bank, the fact that it requires only a regular majority of Israelis to approve a withdrawal, sets a precedent that is unlikely to be reversed. So the real question is how religious-Zionists would interpret the result of a referendum or Knesset vote. Here the answer is clear, the larger the majority, especially in a referendum, the greater the legitimacy. A narrow vote in favor of withdrawal, which is dependent in Israeli-Arab votes to gain an overall majority, will not be viewed as decisive and may even decrease the legitimacy of a withdrawal by calling into question 'Jewish' sovereignty. This in turn would widen the rift with many other Israelis who would view such claims as a challenge to Israeli democracy per se. In other words, a referendum far from preventing a legitimation crisis may actually deepen one. On the other hand, a Jewish majority in favor of withdrawal would have widespread legitimacy, dramatically reducing the willingness of religious-Zionists to struggle against the plan.

Recommendations

Two of the main drivers of radicalization on part of the religious-Zionist community have been a) the failure to find a humanitarian solution for the Gaza evacuees and b) the subjective belief that the government, the media and liberal elites fought a dirty campaign against the settlers in 2005, one in which they were delegitimized and demonized en masse. It is

critically important to roll-back this trend, or at least prevent it gaining greater traction.

First, a mechanism must be established to find a solution for evacuees. Failure to have this in place in advance will lead some religious-Zionist settlers to despair, and people with nothing to lose will be open to mobilization by the most radical elements.

Second, the *tone* used by the government and elites supporting a withdrawal is critical. The key constraint on right-wing religious-Zionists translating radical sentiments and statements into radical actions is their identification with, and religious sanctification of, the State of Israel. This is combined with their sense of solidarity and belonging with mainstream Jewish-Israeli society. Among supporters of withdrawal, there will be a temptation to paint all religious ideological settlers as radical extremists, in order to mobilize support for withdrawal. This would be a fateful and tragic mistake that could translate into a self-fulfilling prophecy. It is critical to understand that the overwhelming majority of religious-Zionists oppose violence and oppose challenging the legitimate authority of the state. There is a world of difference between their willingness to support individual insubordination on the basis of conscience and the radical minority's willingness to challenge state authority with a campaign of organized collective insubordination. Recognizing and articulating that distinction will be critically important in isolating radicals. More generally, the government must clearly and broadly define the parameters of legitimate struggle against an evacuation. It must have a broad sense of what constitutes a tolerable opposition, with which it can live. This is likely to require great restraint in the face of possible provocations. But behavioral and rhetorical restraint is worthwhile if the end result is to isolate the small minority of really dangerous extremists, who cannot be engaged by the government or constrained by religious-Zionist leaders.

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Introduction

The Aim of the Study: Looking Forward

The international community, and the consensus among the Israeli public, supports a two state solution; that is the eventual establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, alongside a Jewish and democratic State of Israel. Three secular Prime Ministers rooted in the right-wing Likud party, which traditionally opposed withdrawal from the West Bank, have adopted this position since 2000: Ariel Sharon, Ehud Olmert and Benjamin Netanyahu. According to the various plans put forward for a permanent status peace agreement or for a further unilateral withdrawal, the large settlement blocs, where most of the settlers live, will be annexed to Israel. Nonetheless, tens of thousands of settlers would still fall outside Israel's new border and these settlements would therefore have to be dismantled or come under Palestinian sovereignty. Many of the settlers who live in the settlement blocs were primarily motivated to live there by economic factors: property there has tended to be cheaper than in pre-1967 Israel. However, in the more outlying settlements, which are unlikely to be annexed to Israel, live the most ideologically motivated settlers and the overwhelming majority of them are religious-Zionists. These religious-Zionist settlers do not exist in a vacuum; rather they play an important role in religious-Zionist society throughout Israel, particularly in its educational institutions. Consequently, it is absolutely crucial for both mainstream Israeli policy-makers and the international community to understand how religious-Zionists in general, and religious-Zionist settlers in particular, look at the prospect of a possible future Israeli withdrawal from a significant part the West Bank, that would require the evacuation of a large number of settlers, anything from 10,000-80,000.

It is important to emphasize that the aim of this study is not to provide an 'objective' account of a potential withdrawal and its consequences, but rather to describe the subjective perceptions of religious-Zionists in general and the religious-Zionist

residents of the settlements in particular. It will also examine the potential impact of these attitudes on their behavior during a possible future evacuation. Specifically, this study focuses on the following questions regarding the attitudes and likely behavior of religious-Zionists on both sides of the Green Line:

What are their attitudes concerning a potential mass evacuation of West Bank settlements?

How have these attitudes been affected by the experience of the 2005 Disengagement from Gaza?

What is their likely level of resistance to a major evacuation?

What level of legitimacy will there be for different types of resistance to evacuation, ranging from civil disobedience and individual acts of insubordination, to low-level violence in demonstrations, all the way to high-level violence, including the use of lethal weapons?

How will their attitudes towards, and active engagement in, resistance be affected by the way a decision to evacuate is made? Specifically, how would the size of a majority in favor of evacuation in the Knesset or in a referendum affect the legitimacy of an evacuation?

What are their attitudes to Jewish settlements remaining in place under Palestinian sovereignty following an Israeli withdrawal?

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the potential for conflict over this issue that could affect Israel in the future. This paper is not intended to stake out an ideological position. We do not wish to express any support or disapproval of decisions to evacuate of areas in the West Bank. Rather, our aim is to point out the trends which currently characterize the stances of various groups among the religious-Zionist public towards these issues. Due to the centrality of this issue to the wellbeing of Israeli society and the Middle East more broadly, it is crucial that the discussion of this issue be based on a realistic assessment.

Methodology and Sources of Information

The most important original source of information in this study is thirty-seven in-depth personal interviews conducted with community rabbis, educators and heads of educational institutions, such as *Hesder* (army-service) *yeshivas*,¹ women's seminaries of higher religious learning, *Yeshiva* high schools for boys and *ulpanot* for religious girls, members of the *Yesha Council*,² as well as sociologists and psychologists involved with the religious Zionist community in both the settlements in Judea and Samaria and in major cities within the Green Line. These 37 interviewees represent a broad range of opinion. They come from different sectors of the religious-Zionist community, ranging all the way from the dovish *Eretz Shalom* movement to the 'Hilltop Youth' who have taken the lead in setting up illegal (according to Israel law) settlement outposts in recent years. Nevertheless, most of the interviewees espoused positions representative of the religious-Zionist mainstream. While the participants in these interviews were given opportunity to express their personal views, the primary focus was on their assessment of the behavior anticipated from the religious-Zionist public they serve as educators or leaders, based on their intimate knowledge of the parties and their own personal and professional experience.

The conclusions of the report are based on our weighing of all interview transcripts in proportion to the relative size of the denomination amongst the religious public that the interviewee represents. Citations which appear in the text maintain the anonymity of the respondents who are identified only by the first letter of their name and brief descriptions of their role and place of residence. These quotes reflect the personal opinions of the interviewees and are presented here to illustrate and emphasize the assessments that appear in this report.

Anonymous personal interviews were chosen as the primary method of research for two main reasons. First, the religious-Zionist public does not deny the feasibility of an extensive evacuation of settlements in the future, but it is reticent to discuss the matter. In its own sectorial media there is wide

discussion of the many problems and struggles facing the settlements, regarding issues such as the outposts, construction in the settlements, the 'Price Tag' campaign, and the image of the settlement movement in broader Israeli society. However, there is no real discussion in the religious-Zionist media concerning the possibility of a large-scale evacuation and the strategies needed to cope with such a situation. Second, potential reactions to an evacuation are complex and thus difficult to predict. Research based on questionnaires with widespread distribution requires the formulation of general and clear statements with a limited scope. With such a format it is impossible to grasp the nuances so fundamental to understanding the situation. The sensitive and complex nature of this issue requires time and thought dedicated to internal processing of the issues. Furthermore, the ideological and political sensitivity of the situation, might also negatively impact on the level of responsiveness of the public as well as the level of frankness with which the participants are willing to answer survey questions. Indeed, the sensitive nature of the issues addressed in this study demanded that we guarantee full anonymity to the respondents in return for constructive cooperation on their part.

Of the thirty-seven interviewees in this study, six live within the Green Line, and are numbered among the centrist religious-Zionist camp, that is termed here 'middle-class'. Four of these six are community rabbis from Petach Tikva, Ra'anana and Modi'in. Thirteen additional interviewees also identify with the 'middle-class' camp, but live in the settlements. Among this group, four hold positions in the *Yesha* Council or in local councils within the West Bank and five work in education. Nine interviewees identify with the *Hardal* camp, all of whom live in Judea and Samaria. Of these nine, four can be characterized as nationalist and five as post-*Mamlachti*. Five of the nine belonging to the *Hardal* sector are rabbis in settlements or rabbis in yeshivas, and two are activists in political organizations. Three of the interviewees belong to the radical post-*Mamlachti* sector. One of them is a well-known rabbinical figure within settler circles, and two are residents of outposts.

Three interviewees live in settlements and have a religious-Zionist outlook, but cannot be clearly identified with any of the above camps. Three additional interviewees do not identify in any noticeable manner with religious-Zionism, but are in frequent contact with it in the course of their occupational framework.

Aside from these interviews, this paper also draws on discussions conducted on internet forums associated with religious-Zionist groups and residents of Judea and Samaria; published public opinion polls from 2006 to the present; Religious-Zionist ideological publications, such as books, newspaper articles, internet articles etc.

Finally, in writing the report account was taken of the fact that there is a fundamental difference between the attitudes and expected behavior of the population living in Judea and Samaria and the national-religious public living inside the Green Line. This is so despite the fact that national-religious Jews within the Green Line, referred to here as 'the religious middle class', generally hold right-wing political positions and feel a strong bond and identification with the settlements in Judea and Samaria, especially when compared with the positions held by other sectors of Israeli society. Despite the overlap between the attitudes of these two sectors, the conclusions of the report therefore relates to them separately.

However, before we examine contemporary religious-Zionist attitudes towards a potential evacuation of West Bank settlements, it is necessary to understand the nature of religious-Zionism and the development of its approach to the issue of territorial compromise, the 'whole Land of Israel' and settlements.

Religious-Zionism and the 'Whole Land of Israel'

Although the Zionist movement began life as a predominantly secular movement, Orthodox religious groups and organizations have always been a part of it. While the Ultra-Orthodox (*Haredim*) were hostile to modernity and either anti-Zionist or

non-Zionist, religious-Zionists have generally had a more positive approach to modernity coupled with support for Zionism. For all religious-Zionists the return of the Jewish people to its ancient homeland is of religious significance. For some, especially the followers of Israel's first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi, Abraham Isaac Kook of the *Yishuv*³, and his son Zvi Yehuda Kook, Zionism is central to their theology because it signals the beginning of a messianic process leading to redemption. On the other hand, some, perhaps a majority, also supported Zionism for the same prosaic reasons as did secular Zionists, for example, as a refuge for the Jewish people from anti-Semitism or to engage in pioneering agricultural labor on a Kibbutz. Indeed, the founding religious-Zionist organization, *Mizrachi*, actually voted for the Uganda Plan⁴ at the 1903 Zionist Congress. At that time, it apparently deemed finding a sovereign refuge from anti-Semitism for the Jewish People as a more pressing concern than returning to the ancient homeland – the Land of Israel.

After the foundation of the State of Israel in 1948, religious-Zionists formed the National Religious Party (NRP), which was a junior coalition partner of every Labor-led government until Labor lost power in 1977. Subsequently, religious-Zionists have also been referred to as the 'national-religious'. We shall use both terms interchangeably. In any case, from 1948 until the Yom Kippur War, the NRP focused on domestic politics - securing the rights and interests of Israel's religious minority. It left macro-economic policy and foreign and defense policy to the Labor party. Nonetheless, when the party did express an opinion through its longest serving leader in that era, Moshe Chaim Shapira, it was usually a dovish opinion. All this changed in the wake of the Six Day War when the messianic theology of Zvi Yehuda Kook and his followers began to dominate religious Zionism, leading to the setting up of the settler movement *Gush Emunim* in 1974, which actively and successfully challenged the Labor government's ban on Jewish settlement in Samaria at Sabastia in the northern part of the West Bank. Although religious-Zionists were always very much a minority among Israeli Jews, their political salience rose dramatically in the

wake of Sabastia. Since then they have been the dominant ideological and political force behind the settlements.⁵ Symbolically, the NRP joined the first Likud-led government in 1977 and since then religious-Zionist politics has been predominantly right-wing on the issue of land for peace, though a significant minority has more a centrist outlook.

In the 1978 Camp David Accords, Israel agreed to return the Sinai Peninsula to Egyptian sovereignty in return for peace. Subsequently, in 1982, the Israeli residents of the *Yamit* settlement in Sinai were evacuated. It was the first instance in which the Israeli government dismantled a major Jewish settlement in the territory captured by Israel in the Six Day War. The religious-Zionist movement, especially *Gush Emunim*, took a leading role in the struggle against that withdrawal; despite the fact that most of the residents of *Yamit* were not themselves religious-Zionists. Since then, religious-Zionists, especially those who live in Judea and Samaria, have been at the forefront of the struggle against further Israeli withdrawals from this area. These struggles often involve the refusal to obey the decisions made by the legitimate Israeli authorities, civil and military.⁶

The biggest shock came in 1995 when an Orthodox Israeli Jew assassinated Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on the basis of his opposition to the Oslo peace process. Religious-Zionists strongly and overwhelmingly condemned the murder, nonetheless, it was widely reported that a few extremists Rabbis had given theoretical religious sanction to such an act. This led a significant number of secular figures to perceive religious-Zionism as a threat to Israeli democracy. The test came in 2005 with the Sharon government's plan to unilaterally withdraw from Gaza and all its settlements, plus an additional four settlements in the West Bank. Religious-Zionists were at the forefront of the campaign to prevent the withdrawal, which involved the evacuation of 8000 people from their homes. Despite their vigorous opposition, the withdrawal was carried out peacefully in a matter of weeks, without any major incidence of violence and without any mass organized refusal by religious-Zionist soldiers to carry out their orders to implement the evacuation.

Nonetheless, since the Disengagement, acts of vandalism and violence against Palestinians, as well as Israeli institutions including the IDF, have been carried out by a radical fringe of young settlers. These acts are termed 'price-tag' attacks, the objective being to impose a cost on attempts to constraint settlement expansion in an effort to prevent a repeat of the Disengagement.

Normative-Theological Balance

According to Hellinger and Hershkovitz⁷, from the foundation of *Gush Emunim* in 1974 until 2012, religious-Zionist struggles against withdrawal have generally been conducted in a restrained manner that mostly conformed to the law. They argue that the unwillingness to breach the boundaries of normative conduct acceptable in Israeli society, even when the ideological struggle was at its peak, stems from a state of 'normative-theological balance' at the core of religious-Zionism.

On the one hand, the dominant theological approach among religious-Zionists is anchored in a commitment to 'the whole land of Israel' known in Hebrew as *Eretz Yisrael HaShlemah*. God promised the Land of Israel to the Jewish People; therefore Judea and Samaria – the heartland of Holy Land - should be incorporated into the modern-day State of Israel. Actively settling these areas advances this objective and is thus praiseworthy or is even seen as a religious duty. In theological terms, many, especially those influenced by the thought of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook and his son Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, view these activities as assisting in the advance of a messianic process of redemption. This theology has engendered a willingness to confront Israeli governments that have opposed settlements and advocated withdrawals.

On the other hand, for religious-Zionists, it is not only the Land of Israel which has religious significance, but also the State of Israel. The fact that after 2000 years in exile the Jewish people have achieved national self-determination and established a state is also perceived of immense religious and national significance. For this reason religious-Zionists celebrated the establishment of

as the State of Israel in 1948, despite the fact that it did not include Judea, Samaria, the Old City of Jerusalem, and the Western Wall. Nor were they major advocates of territorial expansion 1948-1967. In any case, because Jewish sovereignty is perceived as being of great religious, and even messianic, significance, loyalty to the State of Israel is an essential element in theological outlook of the religious-Zionist. Consequently, rejection of the state and opposition to its laws and its government is perceived as a rejection of God's will. In other words, commitment to settling the 'Land of Israel' is balanced by a commitment to the 'State of Israel'. In religious-Zionist circles this orientation is known as *Mamlachtiut*⁸. *Mamlachtiut* is often translated as 'statism', but this does not capture its meaning. Rather *Mamlachtiut* connotes a religiously informed patriotic commitment to promoting the welfare of a sovereign state endowed with religious significance, coupled with a deep-seated respect for its institutions. In recent years *Mamlachtiut* has found expression in the massive increase in the number of religious-Zionists serving as officers in the IDF. In 1990 the religious made up 2.5% of infantry officers, by 2007 it was over 30% - a tenfold increase, far exceeding their share of the Jewish population of Israel.⁹

As a result of this theological balance, religious belief, which has the potential to serve as a force of sedition with regard to the issue of Israeli sovereignty beyond the Green Line, becomes a moderating force. This balance is a central factor underlying the relative restraint of the religious-Zionist camp in terms of disobedience to the law, as well as their avoidance of allowing radical statements to become practical behavior. Another central factor restraining religious-Zionists is the community's very strong sense of belonging to, and solidarity with, mainstream non-religious Jewish-Israeli society. This flows from strong nationalist sentiments, a sense of Jewish peoplehood which transcends religiosity. It also flows from their extensive social ties with non-religious Israelis. Unlike the Ultra-Orthodox, they serve in the army and work with non-religious Jews. Indeed, members of their own families may well be non-religious as well. Finally, much of the religious-Zionist community is

characterized by relative conservatism and conformity, which also incline them against challenging legitimate authority.

The constraints imposed by *Mamlachtiut*, national solidarity and conformity, hold true for the vast majority of religious-Zionists within the Green Line and in the major settlement blocs, but not for everyone. Given the potential importance of these orientations to the question of how religious-Zionists would respond to a major evacuation of West Bank settlements, it is necessary to map out different sub-groups approaches to this issue.

Contemporary Religious-Zionism: Two Main Camps

Religious-Zionists make up about 15% of Israeli Jews.¹⁰ Broadly speaking, the religious-Zionist community can be divided into two main camps: the 'middle-class' camp, and the Nationalist Ultra-Orthodox [*Haredi-Leumi*] camp known in Hebrew by the acronym *Hardal*; which we shall use here. The distinctions between these two camps are usually manifest over religious issues, and their attitudes towards modernity. However, there are significant differences between them over political issues as well. Both belong to the Israeli Right; however, the 'middle-class' holds more moderate right-wing political positions¹¹.

The *Hardal* sector espouses a deep-seated messianic theology which bequeaths a dimension of holiness to the State of Israel. However, the *Hardal* sector itself is divided along theological and political lines. First, there is the *Hardal-Mamlachti* camp which bestows sanctity upon the institutions of the State of Israel in almost every situation. Second, there is the *Hardal* 'moderate post-*Mamlachti*' camp which perceives state institutions to be devoid of sanctity when they work against the process of messianic redemption, according to their understanding. Third, on the margins of the *Hardal* camp, there has recently developed a group of radical post-*Mamlachti* who reject key elements of the messianic theology associated with the school of Rabbi Kook. This group questions the attribution of sanctity to the State of Israel *per se*. The views of this group

regarding the constraints on a struggle against the evacuation of settlements lie at the extreme right end of the spectrum of opinion among religious-Zionists.

The exact size of these camps and sub-groups is hard to assess, but estimates by various researchers are consensual. According to these estimates, the 'middle class' make-up about 75-80% of the religious-Zionist public; while the *Hardal* camp comprises 20-25%; though the latter are heavily over-represented in educational institutions and in outlying settlements. Within the *Hardal* camp, the *Mamlachti* and *post-Mamlachti* camps are of roughly equal size; though the radical *post-Mamlachti* group comprises of only a few thousand people.¹²

1

Religious-Zionists within the Green Line

1.1 Attitudes towards a future withdrawal in the wake of Disengagement

Within the Green Line the overwhelming majority of religious-Zionists are 'middle-class' rather than *Hardal*. Still, from the mid-1970s until the Disengagement, the goal of incorporating Judea and Samaria into the State of Israel was the number one item on the political agenda of religious-Zionism per se. This is no longer the case.

The overwhelming majority of the national religious community has made peace with the possibility that the Israeli government may in future relinquish large portions of the West Bank. This is because it is perceived as likely to occur at some point, in part due to the internalization of the difficult international situation in which Israel finds itself due to its control over the Palestinians. The vision of the 'Whole Land of Israel' has been turned into, at best, a dream to be realized only in a distant unforeseeable future. In fact, the 'whole land of Israel' has not been viewed as the most pressing question on the agenda of the national-religious community for some time. Rather, attention has shifted to social issues and education.

As Y., a community rabbi in Petach Tikva put it:

"Our community has reached a stage of political maturity. We recognize the fact that further gains in the matter of the land of Israel are out of reach. In my assessment, if an agreement was proposed to freeze the current situation in terms of settlements and to establish a Palestinian state without any further evacuations most of our community would accept it... Our community no longer sees the land

of Israel as the most important issue it faces. Social issues, education, family and parental authority are what keep our community busy."

Y., another community rabbi in Petach Tikva, offered the following assessment: "It is not that I agree with relinquishing portions of Judea and Samaria. The issue is that it has already occurred. One does not argue with reality." Moderation and the acceptance of reality are also noticeable in the words of M., a community rabbi in Ra'anana: "My position and that of others on this matter is complex, not one-dimensional as it is portrayed in the media. On the one hand, it is clear to me that it is forbidden to touch the settlements. On the other hand, I am not willing to tolerate a situation in which we hold onto a Palestinian population without rights for an indefinite period." M., a journalist from Jerusalem offered a similar statement: "The notion that the settlement project has problematic aspects has become increasingly acceptable among the members of our community. That it is impossible to force Israel and Israeli society to accept settlements that it does not desire."

However, this resignation and relative moderation comes to an abrupt halt when it comes to the evacuation of settlements. There is even some radicalization of the opposition to the removal of settlements. There are two main reasons for this. First, an evacuation would shatter the fabric of life for many religious-Zionists inside the Green Line. As such evacuation is not conceived of primarily in ideological terms as foregoing rights to 'the whole land of Israel'. In fact, for the most part, their rhetorical opposition to evacuation focuses more on human rights, and less on the messianic rhetoric of more extreme right-wing elements.¹³ Indeed, rhetorical arguments used by the settlers such as "we grew up here," "this is our home," "we have lived here for over thirty years", have a high degree of resonance within the religious-Zionist community living within the Green Line, because the settlements in Judea and Samaria are inseparable part of their life experience. Many key educational institutions of religious-Zionism are located in

the settlements and family members and friends live there. This creates a reality in which visits to the other side of the Green Line and the connection with the settlements is completely routinized. Against this background, evacuation is understood by many as a cauterization of the living tissue of their lives and identities.

Concern to preserve the fabric of life would be more open to amelioration, were it not for the experience of the Disengagement from Gaza in 2005. During the Disengagement, religious-Zionists felt that the media and the elites delegitimized both the settlers and the religious-Zionist public in general. Moreover, the failure to rehabilitate the settlers evacuated during the Disengagement from Gaza – by providing decent housing etc. - has had a lasting impact. Indeed, there is the fear that a mass evacuation of settlers from the West Bank will be accompanied by a similar failure, only this time the suffering will be of a much greater magnitude, given that a much larger numbers of evacuees are likely to result.

As Rabbi Y. from Petach Tikva stated:

"The evacuation of settlements, especially after what occurred in Gush Katif, is treated as if it was a war crime, and the opposition to such a process will be fierce."

1.2 Attitudes towards Resisting Evacuation

As a general rule, middle-class religious-Zionists will continue the routine of their lives even during a large-scale evacuation, though they will support resistance initiated by the settlers in the form of civil disobedience.

M., a graduate of the Hesder Yeshiva in Petach Tikva expressed this well:

"They ascribe to us a far greater amount of idealism and militancy than is accurate. There is no way we could abandon everything and fight the army, the

police and the state. We have work, family, lives to lead. When it came to Gush Katif, it was mainly youth that participated [in the resistance]. Adults barely even attended the demonstrations."

Rabbi Y. from Petach Tikva also noted the relative indifference of the religious-Zionist middle class:

"How will the community in Petach Tikva react? The majority will restrain their reactions, and respond relatively calmly. Many will be angry, but in the end they'll stay at home on their sofas, watching TV, using their computers. Those who come will mostly be youth. Not even all of the youth, mainly those from high school yeshivas and ulpanot."

It is worth noting that Petach Tikva is the city in which the largest middle class religious community resides. Petach Tikva is also a central community due to its proximity to many settlers living in western Samaria. There are also large middle class religious-Zionist communities in Ra'anana and Modi'in.

Rabbi H. from Modi'in, relates to the community living in his city, noting that their professional army background prevents them from participating in extremist actions:

"The community in Modi'in is very patriotic and many have careers in the army. They cannot come out against the state, they will not support soldiers' refusal to carry out orders and they will certainly not take part in violent activities."

M. the rabbi of the Ra'anana community that stood out in its intense activism and stormy protests against the Oslo Accords and the Disengagement, claims that indifference is the norm in his city as well:

"Here, in Ra'anana, we do not have total indifference, but most residents will stay home. Clashes with police and soldiers do not suit our community. Even during the protests against the Oslo Accords and the Disengagement most of the public stayed home, and it was mostly youth who went to Gush Katif. The activists were led by the English-speaking community in Ra'anana, who are far more active and militant than native-born Israelis. Among these native Israelis (and in this group I include myself) I note a certain despair of the ability to change political processes through civil organization."

Nonetheless, interviewees living within the Green Line emphasized that along with the relative passivity that characterizes the middle class's approach, this sector will offer moral support to settler acts of resistance, so long as it does not become violent. Gender and age do not seem to be factors in opposition to hard violence. The differences are mainly related to religious orientation.¹⁴¹⁵ Thus Rabbi Y. of Petach Tikva states: "It seems to me, that the community will grant broad legitimacy to acts of opposition, certainly to the refusal of military orders."

1.3 Attitudes to Insubordination – refusal to obey military orders

The statistics first published in Mozes' doctorate¹⁶ showing that 50 per cent of middle class religious-Zionists support insubordination to military orders has been affirmed in subsequent surveys. These statistics were also reflected in the estimates provided by the interviewees. Current data even shows a rise in support for insubordination reaching around 60 per cent within the community.¹⁷ However, this figure does not refer to an ideological form of insubordination, one that is declared publicly and is organized collectively, but rather to a more personal form of disobedience. We might term this "gray"

insubordination, in which refusal to obey an evacuation order is not presented as stemming from reasons of conscience, but, rather for example, due to alleged illness on the day.

Some interviewees explicitly said they resolutely objected to refusing evacuation orders of Gush Katif in Gaza and even signed petitions denouncing disobeying orders. However, their opposition has softened mainly due to the governmental negligence accorded the evacuees. Again, their justification for insubordination stems from their perception of human rights and not from right-wing ideology or from obedience to religious rulings by Rabbis.

This trend is exhibited in statements issued by moderate rabbis who in the past were opposed to those refusing military orders. For instance, in a conference about the Gush Katif evacuees, R. Yuval Cherlow, one of the most noteworthy public figures to oppose insubordination in the struggle against the Disengagement said: "Had I known that five years after the expulsion, the residents of Gush Katif would still not have found permanent homes, I would have called for a refusal to obey orders."¹⁸

Statements issued by Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Rimon, the community rabbi in the settlement of Alon Shvut South, and a rabbinic educator at a moderate Hesder Yeshiva, also reflect this view. Rabbi Rimon concerned himself with the economic rehabilitation of the Gush Katif evacuees, for which he was awarded the President's Volunteer Award for 2008. In an article about the evacuation from Gush Katif, Rabbi Rimon shared the following: "I heard from an important rabbi that at first he didn't want to use the word 'expulsion', for this word is usually reserved for an act committed against Jews by Gentiles, typically in the context of pogroms stripping Jews of their possessions. However, today, after he witnessed the dire situation faced by the residents of Gush Katif, many of whom still lack a proper place to live and work, he has begun to call the Disengagement an 'expulsion'"¹⁹.

This trend was also clearly expressed by our interviewees. The following are a few representative examples:

"Refusal of a military order is a serious matter. It is a destruction of the state. Most serious are those radicals whom I hear saying that in the next round, they will refuse orders. There is no room here for personal considerations. Those holding radical opinions must rise above their own personal feelings. On the other hand, frankly speaking, there is some legitimacy for this discussion." (A., poet, Gush Etzion).

"Personally, I am still opposed to refusing orders. But it is a far less simple matter after everything that happened in Gush Katif" (M., community rabbi in Ra'anana).

"My feelings after the Disengagement were horrific. The treatment of those who had been displaced was shocking. I cannot cooperate with this. I am not expressing a Halachic stance. Despite my strong identification with the state, it is impossible for me to support this. It was a dangerous step, destructive and with intolerable psychological implications" (Y. community rabbi in Petach Tikva).

"In Gush Katif I was certain that refusing a military order was inappropriate. In retrospect, after the expulsion, and looking back over the last five years, I would refuse orders as an officer" (D. reserve officer, resident of Samaria).

"Refusing an order will not destroy the army. There is a feeling that this is becoming a more accepted stance among the religious-Zionist community" (S., a resident of Samaria, principal of a girls' seminary and member of the *Yesha* Council).

Critically however, the justification for this shift in opinion is grounded by the interviewees in their personal conscience. Indeed, it is important to emphasize that, in contrast to the received wisdom, the high level of support in the religious-Zionist community for refusing military orders is not motivated by obedience to the so-called *Da'at Torah*,²⁰ or to religious rulings issued by rabbis. Indeed, some of the interviewees explicitly declared that they will refuse military orders despite the fact that they expect that their rabbis will call on them *not* to refuse such orders. In other words, notwithstanding the received wisdom, rabbinic leaders in the religious-Zionist movement serve mostly as a moderating force. The weakened status of rabbinic leadership following the failure of the struggle against the Gush Katif evacuation has had profound implications on the possible nature of a future struggle against the evacuation of settlements in the West Bank.

Indeed, some respondents stated explicitly that they support insubordination, specifically when the motive is based on individual conscience. However, they oppose insubordination when it is based on obedience to the authority of rabbis and Halachic rulings. This stance is apparent in the following statements:

P. (educator, from Gush Etzion): "I give full legitimacy to refusal, as long as it is the result of personal choice. When it comes from rabbis, from *Da'at Torah* it is really not acceptable to me. This is a sign of our community becoming *Hardal*, and I completely oppose it."

Rabbi H. (Modi'in): "During the Disengagement only a small minority supported insubordination, but today support is far greater. Personally, I strongly object to refusal of military orders, then and now, but only when insubordination is a means towards political struggle. A request to be released from a military duty on the basis of personal conscience, without an attempt to impact political decisions, is completely legitimate in my opinion."

A. (resident of Samaria and member of *Yesha* council): "Refusal to obey a military order must be the result of a personal decision, when a red line in that person's life has been crossed. This type of insubordination is one that I accept and respect. But I have a problem with ideological insubordination, and even more of a problem with insubordination resulting from a religious motivation. This is not a religious matter at all, may the Rabbis pardon me."

D. (Rabbi, resident of Binyamin, U.S. immigrant): "There is room for conscientious objection accompanied by a willingness to pay the price and go to prison. But I do not accept insubordination when it is done for religious reasons. This is not an issue of obedience to rabbis versus obedience to a military commander."

Overall then, while there is substantial and growing support for insubordination, it is for 'gray' insubordination conducted by individuals on the basis of their own personal conscience. There is no significant support, nor a significant growth in support, for organized collective insubordination out of obedience to rabbis that would directly challenge the state's authority per se. Supporters of organized insubordination have retained their strength, gaining little or no further support. This conclusion is based on the fact that every interviewee not connected to the *Hardal* sector completely ruled out refusal that is a result of a Rabbinic ruling, even though many of them supported conscientious insubordination by individuals.

The small rise in support for insubordination out of obedience to religious authorities is a result of demographic changes in the religious-Zionist community, in which the size of the *Hardal* sector has increased, though it still constitutes a clear minority of no more than a quarter of religious-Zionists overall, and a smaller percentage among religious-Zionists within the Green Line who we are dealing with here. All *Hardal* interviewees who justified insubordination; did so based, at least partially, on *Halacha* and their adherence to *Da'at Torah*. For instance, E.

(*Hardal* rabbi) said: "First of all, it is a Halachic obligation. Moreover, the left-wing also believes in refusing orders, but their refusal is accepted with apologies." Even more explicitly, Rabbi A. said: "The main lesson I drew from what happened in Gush Katif is the necessity to obey great Torah scholars who rule that one must refuse a military order. Today, the community understands this better and is more prepared to do so."

The rationale behind the combination of broad support for insubordination and broad opposition to violence is the unwillingness of even very right-wing members of the religious-Zionist middle class to sever their ties with other elements of Israeli society. They will not accept a struggle that will turn the religious-Zionist community into pariahs.

1.4 Perceptions of the Legitimacy of an Evacuation: A Jewish Majority²¹

A decision passed by only a narrow majority in the Knesset or in a referendum will not be treated as legitimate by the religious-Zionist community and will not lessen their level of opposition. This is even more the case should Israel unilaterally withdraw from the West Bank. The religious-Zionist public explicitly rejects the notion that even a majority of one is still a majority for all intents and purposes. Similarly, the community does not accord sanctity to the formal democratic process. Religious-Zionists expect that a process as critical and painful as the evacuation of thousands of residents from their homes will be enacted only with a broad consensus and will not come about as a result of a 'manipulative and questionable' political process.

Opposition to an agreement achieved without a Jewish majority is a result, at least among the middle class sector, of suspicions concerning the loyalty of Arab Israelis to the State of Israel. Large portions of the religious-Zionist community perceive Israeli Arabs as a "fifth column". As Rabbi H. put it: "Legitimacy will not be accorded to a decision made by a narrow majority, one that is not Jewish."

Similarly Rabbi Y. expressed this view thus:

"I can't see our community accepting a decision reached without a Jewish majority, neither one made by the Knesset nor in a referendum. This is not because of racism. Simply put, the Arabs are perceived as a community whose interests do not overlap with the interests of the State of Israel."

Opposition to a majority decision relying on Arab support is deeply rooted and considered a given among a large part of the religious-Zionist community, as can be sensed from the response of Rabbi M.: "A referendum or Knesset decision without a Jewish majority? Illegitimate. Period. Why? That's just the way it is. It doesn't even need to be explained."

On the other hand, all interviewees noted that a decision to evacuate based on a large majority in a referendum would significantly lower their opposition to an evacuation and their support for refusing military orders. Indeed, in practice, such a majority would probably nullify their opposition almost completely. This is largely true even for the settlers themselves.

According to Rabbi Y:

"A genuine democratic process involving a referendum will significantly soften opposition. With all other options you mentioned, there is no potential for this to occur."

Rabbi M. agrees, as does Rabbi H. who stated:

"Broad support [for an evacuation] in a referendum will be largely accepted by our community. This is the only scenario that can prevent a majority of our community from strongly opposing evacuation... A conclusive decision achieved through a referendum will have a great influence over religious-Zionists. In reality, it would limit those who engage in the struggle to the hilltop youth."

2

Religious-Zionist Settlers in Judea & Samaria

2.1 The Impact of the Disengagement

Conclusions reached in the wake of the Disengagement

A Future Evacuation is a real possibility

There were five basic assumptions regarding the settlements that were broadly shared over the years by the Jewish residents of Judea and Samaria, all of which led to the perception that a wide scale evacuation of settlements could not occur.

1. From a security perspective it would be foolish to withdraw from the West Bank, and consequently in the end, despite all the talks and plans, such a withdrawal will not occur.
2. Arab refusal to compromise will prevent any Israeli government from withdrawing or evacuating settlements.
3. Popular support for the settlers (with the exception of the left-wing media, and the cultural and economic elite) will prevent an evacuation.
4. The political power of the settlers is strong enough to prevent an evacuation.
5. The State of Israel is in the midst of a process of messianic redemption, the destruction of the settlements is thus not theologically possible. God will not allow such a process to occur.

These assumptions were detailed in an article published by Rabbi Azriel Ariel, Rabbi of the Ateret settlement in 2010.²² As Rabbi Ariel notes in the article, the reality experienced over the

last few years has proven that all of these assumptions are mistaken. Due to the significance of his words, we will cite at length from the article.

With regard to the first assumption:

"Reality struck us directly in the face. As it became clearer and clearer that removal of settlements from the Gaza Strip and northern Samaria was foolish, and as it became clear how faulty the foundations and preparations for this process were, we increasingly understood how impossible it is to rely on healthy logical thinking and common sense to prevent Israel from forging ahead with such destructive steps."

With regard to the second assumption:

"This assumption twice proved insufficient. First, during the Oslo Accords process, when by 'agreeing not to agree' on every issue, the parties came to an interim agreement. The second time was when Sharon decided to act unilaterally, without waiting for a positive response from the Arabs."

With regard to the third assumption:

"This assumption also did not withstand the test of reality. Public opinion has moved to the left over the past two decades. Even those who still support the settlement movement lack the motivation to act on its behalf. This change was partially a result of cultural processes that forged an ideological change, partially a result of our community being marginalized within Israeli society, and partially a result of political processes in which we found ourselves almost completely removed from the corridors of influence—the courts, academic institutions, art and media. As a result, the campaign

for Gush Katif was run by us alone, or almost us alone - the religious and the settlers. The rest of the public supported the process led by the government, was indifferent, or supported us silently from the sidelines."

With regard to the fourth assumption:

"It became clear that the fear we tried to sow over the past decades, the nightmare scenarios we presented as to what we would do to prevent the uprooting of settlements, was nothing more than a paper tiger. Whether it was ideological considerations, practical ones or tactical errors, we let it happen. Even though at times we almost succeeded, the unusual creativity of our leadership in fighting against these political processes was ultimately to no avail. We let it happen." ²³

Finally, with regard to the fifth assumption:

"Lo and behold, we saw with our own eyes that God let this happen. We don't know why. We don't know whether we should see the destruction of Gush Katif as a 'minor historical misfortune' that was a result of one of our sins or some other lack God found in us. Perhaps it is proof that our faith in the success in our project is baseless."

A future evacuation cannot be prevented by Disengagement-style moderate resistance

Religious-Zionist settlers have reached the conclusion that they cannot thwart the evacuation of settlements by means of a popular, democratic and non-violent struggle, such as was conducted for the most part over Gush Katif.

As D., head of a regional council in Samaria, put it:

"Something died among those that fought against that governmental decision [the disengagement]. The disappointment was great. There is no longer any motivation to struggle in the way we did for Gush Katif. It is hard to get people out; this is becoming a less effective means of protest. Legitimate protest moves no one. What did Tzippi Livni say about our protests against the Disengagement? 'A protest meant to let off steam.' People no longer want to let off steam. On the other hand, an illegitimate form of protest is still outside my and most of the community's boundaries. But it is not outside of everyone's. A not insignificant group has detached itself from the state."

Y. who served in a leadership role in a religious-Zionist youth movement concludes thus: "If we internalized any message from the Disengagement it is that we will not win with love."

The lack of effectiveness of the type of struggle that occurred over Gush Katif has already changed the political strategy of religious-Zionist settlers and their semi-official leadership. There is already realization that a political struggle to prevent a decision to evacuate must occur before such a decision is made. The belief that a struggle held after such a decision is ultimately a hopeless rearguard action has already permeated the *Yesha* Council. The limited resources of the settler leadership are no longer directed to mass protests. Rather, the *Yesha* Council currently operates in two main channels. The first is through lobbyists, especially those working within the Likud party, a tactic which proved its effectiveness in halting the proposed second settlement building freeze in 2010. The second is propaganda aimed at closing the identity gap between the settlers and the rest of Israeli society.²⁴ These activities include tours of the West Bank for opinion makers and the general public, and the initiation of advocacy projects on the internet (*My Israel*). Statements heard from various people about the need to "influence from the inside," to penetrate the academic

and media elite are beginning to proliferate. Legal organizations such as *Regavim* have been established to mimic the operations of the left-wing human rights organizations. Multiple initiatives towards this end have proliferated in the media, often emphasizing investigative journalism into the proper functioning of the legal system.

In the political sphere there is a significant trend towards increased penetration of the mainstream center-right, continuing the strategy pursued by Moshe Feiglin's *Jewish Leadership* faction in the Likud party. Nevertheless, there is a key difference: Whereas Feiglin initiated the *Jewish Leadership* movement as a separate wing within the Likud; the current aim is for full integration into Likud. This is to be accomplished through the promulgation of positions that do not deviate sharply from the Likud platform, combined with an attempt to find a legitimate place on the hawkish side of the party.

Growing Alienation from the Government and the State

From the vantage point of the settlers, the Disengagement created a deep crisis concerning the democratic functioning of the state. In the wake of the Disengagement, the government was perceived to be a cynical and manipulative body that was not truly democratic. Many now despair of the possibility to influence the system through democratic means. From the perspective of the settlers, the preparations for, and the execution of, the evacuation represented a total mobilization of state authority, backed by the media, for a war against settlements and the settlers. This war was perceived by the settlers as being conducted through exclusion, ridicule and the delegitimization of the entire sector.

Thus for instance Rabbi G., a resident of Samaria, who serves in a senior position in an academic institution remarked:

"During the Disengagement, an entire community, mostly supportive of the state, fought a democratic campaign and learned that democracy is a manipulative tool of power which serves only

political interests. The public has lost any hope of exerting its influence in a democratic manner."

S., a journalist living in Samaria perceives himself to be a patriot, among the elite who serve of the state. He describes the community's feelings of betrayal:

"The sense of fracture after the Disengagement was a result of the state's enlistment of its power to engage in an all-out war against the settlers. Before, it had been clear to us that we were part of the state. Then they made us into an enemy of the state. All the country's troubles were blamed on us....Politics is an arena of narrow and personal interests. Today there is a strongly critical approach towards statements made by politicians. The feeling is that the more faithful you are to the state the less they take you into consideration... The media is to blame for a large portion of the hatred of the settlers. It twists things up, blowing everything out of proportion."

H., from Binyamin, emphasizes the crisis in faith experienced by the second generation of settlers:

"Especially in the younger generation, belief in the state has heavily eroded. I see a high degree of hostility to government institutions; there is complete distrust of the legal system, great disdain for the Knesset and all the politicians. Among the older population, there has also been erosion, but it is far more moderate."

The harsh punishments handed out for blocking roads, breaching checkpoints, and other forms of protest were perceived by settlers as the enlistment of the legal system for a state-led war against the settlers. Their greatest anger was directed at the

media, which portrayed them as completely conscripted for the advance and success of the Disengagement plan. This was manifest in the protection offered to Ariel Sharon in the media,²⁵ by their perceived willingness to ignore claims that Sharon had been involved in criminal act, and by the media ignoring, what the settlers perceive as the lack of proper democratic procedure that accompanied the approval of the plan. With this the media created a negative, and even at times demonic, image of the residents of Gush Katif despite the moderate character of their struggle.

This experience marginalized the Gush Katif settlers and their supporters and had a profound effect on their attitudes toward the state and its agencies. For example P. a resident of Gush Etzion who belongs to the moderate wing of the settlers states: "The expulsion was a moral crime. Even if there was a reason for it, they should have examined things more carefully. The main questions were never even asked...The most serious critique I have is not against the government but against the legal system and the media. The media did not raise even the most basic questions."

Another central conclusion drawn by the settlers from the Disengagement relates to the failure in the treatment of the evacuees. The slogan "there is a solution for every settler" is now viewed as having been cynical and hollow propaganda. The settlers claim that in retrospect it became clear that even those who cooperated with the Disengagement Authority were not rewarded with satisfactory solutions. For instance G., from Samaria said: "It turned out that there was no solution for any settler. In fact, those who signed contracts with the authorities and were 'good boys' received the harshest conditions." The overwhelming gap between the rapid and smooth implementation of the evacuation and the red tape and chain of failures that accompanied the evacuees' rehabilitation process was considered proof that the main motivation underlying the process was to humiliate the settlers, to 'put them in their proper place'.

Growing Disillusionment with Liberal elites and the media

Disillusionment with the lack of public support for the settlements and the indifference Israeli society exhibited towards the Disengagement process was extensively described by Rabbi Azriel Ariel above. Another point raised by interviewees holding relatively moderate positions is the growth in the perception of conflict with the Israeli left as well as, elite academic, cultural, media and legal institutions. They claim that the Disengagement proved that the Israeli left is willing to take extreme steps in its struggle to eliminate the settlements and that it is willing to cross "red lines" in doing so. For example, when Judge Claude Klein²⁶ called for a temporary 'constitutional dictatorship' to implement the Disengagement. Although Ariel Sharon initiated the process, in the view of the settlers, the extensive support and legitimacy granted to ensure the operation's success was made possible by an elite with leftist-secular-liberal orientations. All of these indicated to a large portion of the religious-Zionist community that the left was willing to go to any means to evacuate the settlements. This concept was promoted mainly by the *Jewish Leadership* faction within the Likud.

The following quotes demonstrate how widespread such conceptions are. For instance, Y., a well-known rabbi from the settlements who lives in Gush Etzion and teaches at an elite and moderate religious institution, states:

"The Disengagement is the left's revenge on religious Zionism. It is their payback for the murder of Rabin. Had it not been for our restraint, the process would have led to bloodshed. On the eve of the Disengagement, in the Israel National Defense College a lecture was given on the United States Civil War. The lecture was given without any mention of the 620,000 casualties. Key public figures spoke of the *Altalena*²⁷ incident. Sharon anticipated that there would be one or two casualties and then the whole protest movement would fall

apart. This is why Rabbi Shapira vetoed breaking down the fences of Kfar Maimon.²⁸ One of the most difficult insights that I learned from the Disengagement was that the left is ready to let their argument with us lead to bloodshed."

Y., a journalist with the high-brow right-wing newspaper *Makor Rishon* and resident of Binyamin, highlights his sharpened perception of conflict with Israeli society after the Disengagement: "My belief in the deep solidarity between the various branches of Israeli society has completely eroded. There are forces in Israeli society whose goals, values and aspirations are completely different from those of religious-Zionism and I relate to them as a bitter enemy." E., a *Hardal* rabbi and also a resident of Binyamin, conjures up the Biblical image of Joseph and his brothers in order to describe his feelings towards the left: "Their (the left's) opposition to our community is not merely ideological. We are the modern Joseph. The left wants to eliminate the settlements and the settlers, as a community of course, not yet as individuals."

According to the testimony of interviewees, the right has shed its 'inferiority complex' vis a vis the Israeli left. The left is increasingly perceived to be self-serving, cruel and hypocritical in relation to the values of human rights and humanism which it claims to advocate.

For instance, B., an educational psychologist and resident of Gush Etzion states:

"I have stopped believing the left. I once considered them to be good people, unwilling to cause suffering to others. Today I see them as an elitist group that fears and hates the alternative elite that threaten them. In order to do battle with us, they are willing to trample any democratic rule. All their speeches about democratic values are nothing more than hypocrisy."

M., an educator from Samaria offers a similar view: "We had a moral inferiority complex in relation to the left. They are activists in human rights organizations, they work under the humanistic ideology of love of others, values that we wish were more pronounced in our own communities. But then the Disengagement came and proved that this was all a bluff. Are we not human beings? It's all political interests. For them we are the enemy."

On the whole the settlers' perception of the Israeli public and Israeli politics has become, following the Disengagement and its aftermath, more critical and suspicious, even occasionally sensing a conspiracy forming against them.

Attitudes towards a potential future evacuation: Polarization

Ideological sources of Polarization

There has been an increase in the moderation of positions among those religious-Zionist settlers, whose positions were moderate in the first place. This moderation stems in part from a political assessment that the chances of further Israeli withdrawals from the West Bank in the future are quite high. The Disengagement demonstrated that the state is ready and willing to evacuate settlers and the moderates judge that there is little that can be done to prevent this, without crossing red lines, which they are unwilling to cross. Some moderates have also internalized the logic of some of the arguments made by those opposing the settlements. In any case they are strongly resolved not to exist in acute conflict with Israeli society as a whole, hence their willingness to ultimately accept further withdrawals, albeit reluctantly and with sadness.

At the same time, there has also been rightward shift among those that were already on the far-right. This has occurred among the *Hardal* sector and is primarily a function of their growing ideological alienation from the state. Although, they constitute only about 20 per cent of the total population of the

religious-Zionists in Israel, they form a large percentage of religious-Zionist settlers and they constitute a majority in a few, mainly ideological, settlements such as Bet-El Bet, Har Bracha and Elon Moreh. Their ideological alienation from the state took-off following the failure to prevent the evacuation of the Yamit settlement in Sinai following the peace with Egypt. This outlook is exemplified in the writings of the leading *Hardal* thinker, Rabbi Tzvi Tau. Rabbi Tau developed a program to prevent further evacuations in which he called for educating a *Hardal* avant-garde elite to provide an alternative leadership to the Western, liberal, and secular elites which he viewed as corrupting a morally weakened Israeli society.²⁹

Among the *Hardal* sector, since the disengagement, there has been a significant shift away from the sanctification of the institutions of the state and opposition to the use of violence against them. This constitutes a shift towards a moderate post-*Mamlachti* stance which views the institutions of the state in religiously neutral terms. Those espousing this approach are prepared to undertake a bitter struggle against state authorities wishing to evacuate settlements. In addition, there has been a numerically small but potentially politically significant move towards more radical post-*Mamlachti* conceptions, which negate any notion of sanctity accorded to the state. In other words, radicalization is characterized by a weakening of the ideological infrastructure supporting state authority, which was in any case shaky among this population in the first place. The radicalization of extremists has implications that go beyond their limited numbers, for reasons we will discuss in detail later on.

Psychological Change among the Younger Generation

Members of the national-religious community were educated to towards conformity, obeying legitimate authority such as government agencies, remaining in one's proper place, and dedication to the community. Above all, their internal normative-theological balance prevents them from adopting a more radical attitude against the authority of the State of Israel. Yet there are clear signs that the profile of the responsible and obedient religious-Zionist has eroded, mainly among the

younger generation. One of the causes of this was attributed by the interviewees to the shedding of their inferiority complex vis-a-vis the Israeli left. This inferiority complex reflected the admiration the entire religious-Zionist community had towards secular Zionism, its symbols, values and achievements in the pre-state era and during the early years of statehood. The esteem in which they held the values of classical secular Zionism and their identification with them, so prominent among the members of *Gush Emunim*, has eroded among the younger generation, especially in the *Hardal* sector. This admiration was replaced by a deeply held negative attitude toward secular-liberal values which sometimes went as far as contempt and disgust for those holding such values.

Following the Disengagement and the violence that ensued during the evacuation of the illegal (under Israeli law) settlement outpost Amona in 2006, there has been mounting suspicion and distrust of government authorities which are believed to be automatically biased in favor of the values and interests of the secular-liberal left. Among the older generation of settlers the responsible, state-oriented psychological profile was deeply rooted; the ideological rift with the left was not strong enough to significantly undermine it. This is not true the younger generation. The symptoms of religious-Zionist "hooliganism" and the anarchism of the 'Price Tag' campaign are a result of the shattering of trust in the Israeli political system and the delegitimization of the state's authority.

The differences between the severity of the psychological processes experienced by the younger generation and those experienced by the older generation were repeatedly noted by the interviewees.

B., a psychologist and resident of Gush Etzion diagnoses the situation thus:

"The second generation of settlers experienced the failures of the leadership of their parents' generation. In previous struggles and during the Disengagement

they were restrained by adults... Their current feeling is of betrayal; their violence has not found an outlet. There is a feeling among second generation settlers that they cannot trust the older generation. **They are *less ideological* than their parents, and therefore have *less ideological barriers preventing them from responding with violence in the event of an evacuation*.** Politics interests them less, but they are more politically extreme. Settlement in the West Bank is a natural reality for them; it is 'indigenous.' Some of them suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. The older generation is more moderate, more sober, it did not abandon the ideology of statehood, but it too has a serious problem with authority."

Y., a journalist from Binyamin, points to cracks in the sense of belonging to the state and society among second generation settlers:

"The well-off religious middle class opposes revolution and anarchism. This group is not willing to be an outsider in Israeli society; it needs to feel an integral part of it. But for some of the younger generation in the settlements that barrier has been breached. Their partnership with Israeli society has become 'conditional.' Israeli society no longer dictates their attitudes and behavior according to its norms and boundaries. They are psychologically prepared to be outsiders."

This psychological change impacts patterns of behavior more profoundly and fundamentally than does any ideological transformation. It has far-reaching effects on the nature of the relationship between religious-Zionism and secular-Zionism as well as on future patterns of struggle in the event of evacuation of settlements.³⁰

2.2

Approaches to a Potential Large-scale Evacuation from Judea & Samaria

The Significance of Differences with the Disengagement from Gaza

The first difference between Gush Katif and the West Bank that was mentioned by the interviewees is that Gush Katif was led by a moderate and cohesive leadership that enjoyed broad legitimacy and consensus. The rabbinic leadership of Gush Katif was led by Rabbi Yigal Kaminetzky, who had educated all the rabbis of the Gush Katif settlements, and whose leadership was accepted by the general community. The residents of Gush Katif opposed an aggressive struggle in principle. This restrained the radicals, as they were convinced that the presentation of a united front of the settlers and their supporters would contribute to the success of the struggle. In contrast, the settlers of the West Bank are far more heterogeneous than were the settlers of Gush Katif, in terms of their religious and political views. Unlike the united rabbinic leadership that existed in Gush Katif, in the West Bank there exists a multiplicity of local leaderships and opinionated leaders who dictate different and opposing courses of action.

Second, during the struggle against the disengagement, the political and religious leadership of the religious-Zionist settlers was strong and authoritative; a fact which allowed it to serve as a moderating force. At that time, the leadership of the *Yesha* Council was broadly accepted, and until the evacuation itself, there was even an aura of invincibility surrounding it. The power of the *Yesha* Council during the struggle for Gush Katif was manifested mainly in its ability to almost completely restrain radical streams and its ability to force them to accept the authority of the mainstream settlement movement. The *Yesha* Council's power was also manifested in its ability to dictate the contours of the struggle. However, according to the interviewees, the power and authority of the *Yesha* Council

leadership was severely damaged by the Disengagement. While the Council has been able to partially restore its leadership, it has failed to completely restore the prestige and authority it enjoyed prior to the Disengagement. There are various assessments regarding the extent of the erosion of the *Yesha* Council's power, ranging from almost total collapse, to a moderate decline. In any case, the common denominator among all interviewees is the assertion that after the Disengagement, the *Yesha* Council lost its authority and enforcement capacity among the extreme elements in the settlements.

For instance, A., a member of the *Yesha* Council, claims that the council succeeded in rehabilitating its status among the settler community: "Following Gush Katif, the prestige of the Council was at a low, but it recovered afterwards. We received a large amount of negative feedback; the community saw us as a partner to the expulsion. Today there is an understanding that the Council is doing the right things in the public arena, and people are beginning to understand that the *Yesha* Council was not in fact to blame for the expulsion. But there is one thing with which I agree. We lost the extremists." Y., who holds a senior position in the new Council, offered a similar statement: "The Council's position deteriorated immediately after the expulsion, but it is now in the process of rehabilitation. I'm sure that should a great drama occur, the settlement community will gather around our leadership. What I do understand is the argument that extremist elements no longer listen to our leadership. They have alternative leadership. With *Komemiyut* we have partial cooperation, a kind of division of labor; with the 'hilltop youth' – nothing."

Interviewees not connected with the *Yesha* Council, offered a more negative assessment. For instance, Rabbi E. claimed: "The *Yesha* Council lost trust and its ability to lead already after Kfar Maimon. They said one thing and did another. They defrauded the community and broke their trust. The new *Yesha* Council had a chance to restore faith in it, but the real decision makers were still the old leadership. The Council has no connection with the community." He concludes, "The *Yesha* Council in its

current status does not have the legitimacy to broker compromises. It will be forced to either tow the extremist line or lead only the moderates."

B., from Gush Etzion claims, "The moderate leadership which tried to fight a fair and democratic struggle was shattered and no longer exists. The *Yesha* Council partially restored its stature in some areas, but it no longer has the power to dominate the extreme elements in our camp." H. from Binyamin tends to agree with the above two opinions, and offers another reason for the erosion of the *Yesha* Council's power: "The status of the *Yesha* Council has been severely damaged. This is not only a result of their failure during the Disengagement, but also of internal politics. There was a lot of dirty politics in the Council, and people are tired of it."

What is agreed upon by all of these interviewees is that the deterioration in the authority of the *Yesha* Council is most pronounced and relevant with regard to their ability to restrain extremist elements and to dictate to them the parameters of future struggles. For instance, Sh. states:

"In Gush Katif the leadership locked the extremists in the closet, and the process [of resistance] failed. The leadership invested significant resources in restraining and hiding the radicals. During the next round, should it occur, they will have no control over the extremists."

A similar loss of authority is apparent among the Rabbinical leadership. Contrary to conventional wisdom, the authority of even *Hardal* rabbis has always been far from absolute. Nonetheless, **in religious-Zionist settler circles and especially among the youth, the leadership and rabbinical authority has eroded, especially among the *Mamlachti* camp of the *Hardal* leadership which had served as a restraining factor during Disengagement.** The authority of these rabbis eroded when they failed to succeed in preventing the Disengagement.

Erosion was also due to the criticism leveled at them by extremists³¹. These critiques have been deeply internalized by *Hardal* youth.

Overall, this will leave the Israeli government trying to implement an evacuation of West Bank settlements without any organized and agreed upon negotiation partner among the settler community. The *Yesha* Council will lose its authority over radical groups, and the coordinated leadership that existed during the Disengagement will no longer exist. In the best case scenario, we can expect a two-pronged leadership: on the one side, the moderate, state-oriented sectors led by the *Yesha* Council, and an alternative radical leadership led by the *Komemiyut* movement on the other. In the worst case (and more likely) scenario, there will be many 'leaderships', small, sporadic and local, some of whom will adopt a stance more radical than even *Komemiyut*.³² In any case, the state will be left with no single address with which to engage in dialogue.

A third difference between the two cases is that the relationship between the residents of the Gush Katif settlements, the army and the security forces was nearly ideal, which led to almost zero clashes during the evacuation. In Judea and Samaria the relationship between the settlement community and the military is more charged. West Bank settlers have already experienced more than a few clashes with security forces during the evacuation of outposts, and the frequency and intensity of these clashes has been steadily increasing in recent years.

Fourth, the settlers' strategy for conducting the struggle in Gush Katif always took into consideration the 'day after': out of concern for the future of the settlements in the West Bank. This strategy dictated moderate and considered conduct that took into account the image of the settlements. In a future evacuation of Judea and Samaria, there will be no 'day after' making such considerations largely irrelevant. Indeed, the struggle may cause certain circles to become desperate, feeling as if their backs are up against the wall, and therefore willing to risk everything. In

any case, consideration for the image of the settlers with mainstream Israeli public opinion will be set aside.

Fifth, the Gush Katif settlements were at the geographical and psychological periphery of Israeli society in general and the religious-Zionist community in particular. In contrast, building the settlements of Judea and Samaria has been at the heart of religious-Zionism for almost forty years. Many middle class religious Jews have deep psychological connection, familial and social ties with the settlements; which are part of the fabric of their lives. While most religious-Zionists live within the Green Line, the spiritual leadership of the movement, and many of its educational institutions are concentrated in Judea and Samaria (including 20 Hesder yeshivas, 20 high school yeshivas, 11 pre-army preparatory programs, 9 post-high school yeshivas, and 9 girls' seminaries). Thus, unlike Disengagement from Gaza, the evacuation of Judea and Samaria will threaten the key religious-Zionist symbols and institutions.

Sixth, a large scale evacuation could threaten the economic strength of the entire religious-Zionist sector.³³ Following the Disengagement there is a strong concern for the "refugees" and the economic consequences of a future evacuation. This concern is a result both of the failure to treat the Gush Katif evacuees properly and the far larger number of potential evacuees in the West Bank. The economic crisis and the lack of legitimacy that the international community gives to the settlements greatly lessen the likelihood that there will be foreign aid for the rehabilitation of the evacuees. The social protests that rose in the summer of 2011 and the public opinion left in their wake will make it difficult for budgets to be allocated to the evacuee community. These factors make the likelihood of an economic crash subsequent to an evacuation more likely and should such a crash occur, it will likely be more intense.

Overall, the different circumstances mean that a future evacuation makes it unlikely to resemble the campaign against the Disengagement. If in the future a plan for a mass evacuation of settlers from the West Bank is proposed by the Israeli

government, the response of the religious-Zionist settlers will be more diverse and diffuse than it was in 2005. On the one hand, close to the date of the planned evacuation there could well be widespread despair and abandonment. At the same time, radical groups could well engage in a more militant struggle than they did against the Disengagement. The religious-Zionist settler mainstream which advocates a moderate and legitimate struggle will be considerably weakened. Most of this moderate wing will not be willing to cooperate with those engaged in radical struggle and they will leave their homes out of lack of any choice. A small portion of this population could well join the extremists, partly out of fear for personal economic disaster. Those who choose to struggle in a more moderate fashion will do so mainly for symbolic and psychological reasons. They will not hold out much hope that their actions will influence the situation.

In order to understand these predications in greater depth, below the likely reactions of religious-Zionist settlers are broken down into six sub-groups differentiated by their ideology, by their attitudes regarding the proper response to an evacuation, and by their expected behavior should such an evacuation occur. The vast majority of the religious-Zionist settlers in Judea and Samaria identify with the first four groups. To them we have to add two fringe groups who together constitute only a few thousand people; or in the case of the most radical 'Price Tag' group – a few hundred. Despite their small numerical weight, they may play a major and crucial role in a future evacuation of settlements and may push the situation in unexpected directions.

1. The Middle Class with low ideological commitment to the Settlements

This group consists of middle class, religious-Zionists who live in the settlements mainly for reasons of convenience and quality of life but have a weak ideological commitment to them. They reside mainly in settlements near the Green Line, most of which are included in the "settlement blocs" that are likely to remain under Israeli sovereignty even in left-wing plans for the

establishment of a Palestinian state. The relative weight of this group in more ideological settlements is limited. This group generally holds right-wing positions on the peace process, but its main identity consists of a sense of belonging to Israeli society in general, and not just to settlers sector. Therefore, its opinions concerning a future evacuation correlate with the middle class living within the Green Line i.e. opposition to acts of violence along with a relatively high degree of support for the refusal to obey military orders based on individual conscience, as long as it is done without a public declaration.

Should an evacuation occur, it is expected that this group will, for the most part, leave the settlements without a fight, and instead focus on an effort to restore the standard of living to which it is accustomed. The chance that this group will take part in a mild struggle such as occurred during the Disengagement is small, since circumstances will make it difficult for this type of struggle to develop.

But more severe reactions may occur if an evacuation is accompanied by an economic collapse of individual households. Such a case could affect a union between those in economic despair and ideological extremists.³⁴ Thus, for example, S., a sociologist living in Binyamin who specializes in rehabilitation and community care, predicts that the experience of the Disengagement will have decisive influence on those with weaker ideologies: "The Disengagement greatly increased the threat of the economic collapse of families. Strong ideological connections and substantial feelings of belonging to a community allow settlers to muster the emotional strength needed for struggle, even under conditions of economic uncertainty. When these motives are missing, and usually there is high correlation between them, there is no motivation to fight and there are no emotional resources to fight. Therefore such people will simply leave as soon as possible."

Rabbi E. offers a similar appraisal of this group's potential behavior:

"In my estimation, from the moment decisions are made, many of the settlers will look for ways to save their own skin. In non-ideological communities there will be a trickle out. Those who leave first will be those who are the strongest financially and weakest ideologically. Those looking for ways to leave but who fail to find appropriate solutions will be left with their backs up against the wall and with sharp bitterness. They will have nothing to lose and they will join a militant struggle. "

2. The Middle Class with high ideological commitment to the Settlements

This group resides in settlements, for reasons of convenience, quality of life and community affiliation, but the ideological component of their choice to live in Judea and Samaria is also significant. These settlers form the backbone of many communities in the West Bank, including "ideological" settlements located outside of the settlement blocs. The group includes many of the earliest settlers in places such as Ofra, Kedumim and Karnai Shomron. The ideology of this group has indeed shifted to the right after the Disengagement, but not so far as to completely undermine the ideological positions they previously considered acceptable. Rather, it has experienced a more moderate and nuanced shift. Support for refusing a military order based on personal conscience has greatly increased in this group. But support for violence and the psychological readiness to carry it out has increased slightly since the Disengagement, and it remains at a low level due to their continued ideological commitment to *Mamlachtiut*, as well as a realistic political evaluation as to the futility of such steps, which are perceived to be more damaging than beneficial.

For instance S., a member of the *Yesha* Council says:

"I am in favor of passive resistance but no more. We must be careful not to come close to a civil war. There is also the day after."

In principle, a struggle against evacuation such as occurred over Gush Katif is the style of struggle that best accords with the ideology and psychology of this group. In practice, the failure of the struggle against the Disengagement, and the different circumstances in which an evacuation of the West Bank could occur, will have a decisive effect on their future behavior. The relative homogeneity of the ideological middle class may collapse and disperse moving in contradictory directions. This process will be significantly impacted by the following factors: the manner in which the decision to evacuate is made, the attitude of the Israeli public to the settlers during the evacuation, the dynamics that develop in the field, and the status and functioning of the official leadership of the settlements - the *Yesha* Council. The complexity of the situation makes any prediction about the expected behavior of this group particularly difficult, but the general impression from the interviews and other research suggests four main directions.

a) A large part of this group will abandon the settlements out of a lack of choice. Their assessment will be that moderate and legitimate struggle is hopeless, but they will still not join a struggle lead by extremist groups. So for example, says P. an educator, part of the moderate wing of the settler community: "To me it is personally very important to fight if God forbid it happens. But if Yaakov Katz³⁵ and his crazy followers take over the fight, I will just get up and leave."

H. who lives in Gush Etzion, teaches in an academic religious institution and defines herself as modern Orthodox. She clearly defines the boundaries of the struggle of the moderate settler community:

"Our position is primarily a result of a heavy sense of responsibility. When a conflict occurs between ideology and maintaining the fabric of the state and the integrity of society, we overwhelmingly favor the integrity of society over our opposition to the removal of settlements. The middle class modern

Orthodox community will not be willing to break up its relationship with Israeli society. We have decided to be connected and not oppositional. There is no way that they will drag us into an aggressive conflict. If this happens, we will not be there."³⁶

The option of abandonment was also mentioned by Rabbi G.:

"The option of despair, abandonment and escape from the collapse will be much stronger precisely because of the militancy of some groups which itself is a result of lack of cohesive leadership."

b) Another part of this group community will try to play out the pattern of the struggle that occurred in Gush Katif, despite their general agreement as to its ineffectiveness. This sector will choose this path for symbolic and psychological reasons. If the *Yesha* Council leads this type of struggle, it will be accepted as an authority. Thus says, for instance A., one of the veteran settlers in Binyamin: "I do not see a significant shift in the general public concerning the boundaries of acceptable struggle. If there is such a shift, it has occurred only among the youth. The veteran population has not changed its position."

A. a member of the *Yesha* Council similarly assesses the level of expected opposition among the mainstream settlers, attributing it mainly to their psychological profile:

"Our image in the media is very different from the reality on the ground. After all that it has suffered and continues to suffer, our community is still 'nerdy'; even those who think they need to fight more aggressively usually suffice with issuing declarations. There is something deeply psychological that prevents them from acting upon these statements at the moment of truth. At the most, they will be more forgiving of extreme actions. The

only ones who break out of this Zionist 'squareness' are the hilltop youth, but they are a small minority."

Rabbi E., rabbi of a settlement in Samaria, also predicts that most of the community will prefer a moderate struggle, but also points out the difficulties of such a struggle: "Mainstream settlers would rather engage in a moderate struggle like Gush Katif, but they will encounter a problem. They will be trapped between the wild extremist groups on the one side and the hostility of Israeli public opinion on the other, which will place everyone in the same boat and ascribe equal responsibility to all settlers."

A similar assessment was sounded by Rabbi G.:

"There is radicalization of the extremists, but moderates remained moderate... In my opinion, the majority of the community will oppose the machinations for evacuation-compensation initiated by the center-left, but in the end, they will behave similar to the way they did in Gush Katif."

E., from Gush Etzion and a figure who maintains frequent contact with settlement youth, claims that the dynamics which characterize current processes in the settlements are complicated and are not limited to radicalization:

"There is extremism, but it is not total. The processes occurring are much more complex. At work I meet many teenagers and along with the radicalization I see a great deal of moderation and skepticism, even among extremist circles. In places like Ma'ale Levonah, for example, I came across an authentic openness and skepticism that does not characterize even the moderate circles of religious-Zionists."

c) A minority, whose size is not clear, will join the more extreme struggle led by a leadership alternative to the *Yesha* Council. In this struggle it is expected that the boundaries of aggressive civil protest will be stretched to their limits. It is anticipated that this group will engage in disturbances, obstructions and attempt to cause damage to military and police property. However, there will still be a clear red line between aggressive civil protest and actual civil war involving the use of lethal weapons. This line will not be crossed by those belonging to this group. Sh., a resident of Samaria and a member of the *Yesha* Council argues that the possibility of a split in both directions occurs repeatedly in professional assessments heard in the Council discussions: "The strategic script being spoken about in professional forums leads towards the extreme in both directions - despair and abandonment on the one side, a militant struggle and loss of legitimacy (for the state) on the other."

Some of the interviewees expressed their explicit support for militancy and a redefining of "red lines": "I'm in favor of an aggressive battle; even very aggressive. This is a situation of rape, and a rape victim is permitted and required to defend oneself. My red lines are preservation of life. A man may not fire a weapon at his brother" (E., one of the first settlers, former senior member of the *Yesha* Council).

S., a journalist from Samaria, ascribes his willingness to escalate the conflict to the lessons learned from the Disengagement: "I feel that we need to run an equivalent form of resistance. The same level which they operate against us [we shall respond to them], up to but not including response with live fire. The price we pay in our image does not interest to me. Sympathy in the eyes of the public doesn't make a difference. The moderate settlers of Gush Katif were stranded for six years in caravans. Anyone who doesn't take aggressive action will receive nothing." D., an American immigrant, also supports aggressive responses but with some limitations, preferring civil disobedience: "We will not fight against Jews. That's my red line. I am in favor of organized civil disobedience. Protests don't accomplish anything. It is impossible to struggle if one is not

willing to go to prison. The problem is that there is no tradition in Israel of civil disobedience."

This opinion is likely to gain support particularly from religious-Zionist immigrants from English speaking³⁷ countries accustomed to a political culture that bequeaths a relatively high level of legitimacy to fierce civilian struggle against governmental authority, as well as from the academic elite that is deeply involved in political activity on behalf of the settlements. The numerical weight of these elite in the settlements of Judea and Samaria is small, but their prestige and influence are high.

d) Individuals in this group are likely to respond in an extreme and unpredictable fashion, not as a result of their ideology, but due to the possibility of economic ruin and the destruction of the lives they built in the settlements. As H., one of the first settlers in the Binyamin region explained: "I can assure you, in every well-established settlement there is a small core of people who will be unwilling to leave under any circumstances. Settlement is their life's achievement. They will use all means. I have a deep fear that blood will be shed if they try to evacuate settlements such as Kedumim, Ofra and Beit El."

3: *Hardal* with a pro-*Mamlachti* orientation

This group is spread out in many West Bank settlements, but is especially concentrated in the ideological settlements located outside of the settlement blocs. A large concentration is found in close proximity to educational institutions reflective of their ideological outlook (for instance: the pre-army educational institution in Eli). This group espouses a coherent and consistent ideology concerning the sanctity of the state and its institutions, and despite its resolute right-wing political positions, it opposes violence against state authorities. During the Disengagement, the rabbis of this stream strongly opposed violent protests and also opposed across-the-board openly declared disobedience to military orders. However, many of them supported "gray" refusal based on personal conscience and instructed their students to do what they could within the framework of the law

and military regulations to avoid the carrying out the evacuation.³⁸

Immediately following the Disengagement, the power of this group dissipated considerably. However, it seems that since then it has been able to restore its position. One of the indicators of this is the increase in registration in state-oriented *Hardal* yeshivas following the Second Lebanon War, which had fallen significantly during and immediately following the Disengagement. The main reasons for the reinvigoration of the state-oriented *Hardal* sector are political developments which brought the national religious community closer to the Israeli consensus (the Second Lebanon War 2006 and Operation Cast Lead 2008/9), as well as the prestige of many of its rabbis (Rabbi Tzvi Tau, Rabbi Shlomo Aviner, Rabbi Elisha Wisheltski, Rabbi Eli Sadan and others).

In the event of a future large-scale evacuation in Judea and Samaria, it is likely that the status of this group will be weakened more than before. The behavior of this group in an evacuation is the easiest to predict. A return to the type of struggle that characterized "Gush Katif" will be enacted along with more vociferous measures, and there will be an almost complete mobilization of this stream for such a struggle. However, should a radical struggle sweep the field leaving no room for moderate alternatives, this group will prefer to leave the settlements without a fight.

Thus Rabbi E. offers the following assessment:

"Those who support the ideology of the 'state' will not be there if a violent struggle develops. They will just get up and go."

Rabbi A., a *Hardal* rabbi who resides in Samaria, and teaches in a yeshiva openly declares: "There is no need to hug the soldiers, but to act violently against IDF soldiers is an act of destruction, just like destroying a settlement. I hope that all of the students

who graduate from this yeshiva have internalized this message deeply."

Rabbi Z., also from Samaria, says explicitly:

"Besides our principle that violence against soldiers is completely illegitimate, I also resent the arrogance to think that one can beat the state. I do not even want to beat the state, it's a Pyrrhic victory. This is victory that is in reality destruction. There must of course be protest. It is important to protest and it is a commandment to protest but if the atmosphere spills over into violence and militancy and it will become impossible to protest the way we believe appropriate, it is better to walk away and not be part of this desecration of God's name."

E., rabbi and resident of Binyamin, whose adherence to the state-oriented *Hardal* stream is less pronounced, describes the dilemma of the double allegiance and the decision that he predicts will in the end be made: "We are in a real bind. On the one hand we are pushovers. They do to our community what they would not risk doing to any other group. On the other hand, getting out of this status would force us to pay a price that is impossible to pay. Our dual loyalty, to the State of Israel and to the land of Israel is completely constrictive. That's why in the case of a future conflict we will not cross our red lines. At the most we will push them forward a bit, but no more than that."

Despite the lower socio-economic status of this group in comparison with the two previous groups (a result of large families, a large financial investment in education and the choice of less financially rewarding professions), research conducted by Hellinger and Londin³⁹ suggests that the economic difficulties they face do not impact their political positions. Accordingly, it is possible to predict with a high degree of probability that even economic collapse will not lead to extreme reactions of individuals within the state-oriented *Hardal* sector.

This is due to their solid ideological commitment to state-orientated national values as well as their willingness to live in at a lower socio-economic level.

4 *Hardal* with a post-*Mamlachti* orientation

The characteristics and ideological roots of this group are similar to those of the previous group. However, unlike them (and largely following the Disengagement) they do not attribute sanctity to governmental institutions and state authorities, when they deem that the state is leading the country away from the 'process of redemption' as they perceive it. Therefore, the most appropriate ideological definition of this group is "moderate post-*Mamlachti*." The rabbinic leadership of this group is based on the activist wing of the students of Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Kook, most prominently Rabbi Zalman Melamed, Rabbi Eliezer Melamed, Rabbi Dov Lior and Rabbi Elyakim Levanon. The *Komemiyut* movement, which was established towards the end of the Disengagement, and for the most part the newspaper *BaSheva* are noteworthy representatives of this group.

After the Disengagement, this group became dominant within the *Hardal* sector and their relative weight has grown significantly in many of the ideological communities in Judea and Samaria, those further removed from the Green Line, especially among the younger generation. Normally, there is partial cooperation and a 'division of labor' between the *Komemiyut* movement and more moderate organizations in the settlements led by the *Yesha* Council. However, it is likely that in an emergency situation such as an evacuation of settlements, the ideological differences between these groups will be exacerbated and the cooperation that exists now will become exceedingly difficult to maintain.

The behavior anticipated from this group in case of an evacuation is more radical than that expected of the other groups mentioned so far. Of course, here too we must consider how mentally and psychologically prepared the individual is to participate in fierce and aggressive struggles. Such aggression is not suitable for all personality types, even to those who support

aggressive protest in principle. As was noted in the study of Hellinger and Hershkovitz⁴⁰, this stream leads the initiative to refuse military orders in a openly declared, collective and organized fashion, and in mustering broad support for aggressive actions against evacuation.

It is possible to predict with a high degree of probability that an alternative leadership (or several local alternative leaderships) to the *Yesha* Council will sprout up from this group. This leadership will lead a vigorous protest movement that will include active forms of resistance such as riots, roadblocks, attempting to damage to military and police property, and at times even physical violence against the evacuators. Still, in relation to harder form of violence, even this group has clear red lines. The boundaries of legitimate struggle for the nucleus of the second group (the ideological middle class) are largely valid in relation to this group as well. Here, too, clear red lines will be maintained between aggressive and even physically violent civil protest, and the deterioration of the situation into a civil war.

For example, Rabbi A., a Rosh Yeshiva in a high school yeshiva says:

"We will not be pushovers and go like sheep to the slaughter. Our community is moving from a passive struggle to an active one. We will respond with violence but we will not initiate it. At the outset, we need to resist passively without violence, but if violence is committed against us, it is justified to commit violence back. I personally think that if God forbid they shoot at the settlers, it is justified to return fire, but I represent only myself on this point. For the rest of the community, shooting at soldiers is a red line."

Rabbi E., whose sons learn at the yeshiva headed by Rabbi A., responds:

"I am familiar with the statements made by Rabbi A. He won't really do what he says he will. His rhetoric is radical and proves that a gap exists in our community between words and deeds. He influences the youth, but there is no need to exaggerate his influence. He is not an *Admor* (Hasidic rabbi/guru). The youth is influenced more by other things."

B., one of the heads of *Komemiyut*, expresses support for an aggressive struggle, mainly as a counter-response to aggression, but draws a clear red line:

"Our leadership will lead a militant struggle, but it will not allow for the initiation of a strike against IDF soldiers. If they initiate, we will respond. I want to remind you that in *Amona*, the struggle was for the most part passive. Children who suffered deathly blows sat in their homes and did nothing."

Other factors will also have a decisive influence upon the status and behavior of the rabbinic leadership of this group. Typically, the rabbinic leadership in the religious-Zionist community including the settlements serves as a moderating force in times of emergency, even if at other times its rhetoric is militant. Moreover, even rabbis considered in Israeli public discourse to be more extreme, such as Rabbi Dudi Dudkevitz from *Yitzhar*, temper the behavior and reactions of their students and more radical followers. Therefore, the more that the rabbinical leadership of the moderate post-*Mamlachti* group demonstrates authority and responsibility, the more the struggle will follow a moderate pattern, and vice versa. The problem is that the authority of these leading Rabbis has been significantly diminished by the 'privatization' of rabbinical authority. For example, a young member of the *Hardal* sector who is denied legitimacy to engage in violent conduct by the official Rabbinical leadership of this section will, in many cases, turn to a more radical Rabbi for sanction, even if the more radical Rabbi's stature is lower than that of the conventional

leadership. Thus, Rabbi A. relates: "In Gush Katif the youth tried to lead a more vigorous struggle. They tried to block gates, puncture tires. Rabbi Aviner would come and end it all. Next time, I'm telling you, he will not be able to do that."

Among a small minority of this group there is 'understanding' for the 'Price Tag' phenomena. This is based on the notion that the conduct of the authorities against the settlers prevents any possibility of engaging in a legitimate struggle. For instance, Sh., a resident of Samaria says: "The Price Tag campaign is not effective, it was not legal, it was not moral, it was against Halacha, but when democratic processes to enact a change fail, the result is a turn to violence." This 'understanding' stands in direct opposition with those rabbis who absolutely reject the 'Price Tag' activities, as for instance was stated by Tz. (a resident of Binyamin), 'Price Tag' is a moral outrage."

5. Radical, post-*Mamlachti*

This small group challenges the fundamental ideology of religious-Zionism and embraces an alternative theology, which draws from the school of *Chabad*⁴¹, and especially the teachings of Rabbi Yitzhak Ginsberg. Geographically, this group is found mostly in northern Samaria (the communities surrounding Nablus/Shechem) including the adjacent hill-top outposts. Many of these people are heavily invested in building the hilltop settlements and outposts that they consider to be their life's work. Destruction of the settlements may spell their own personal and economic destruction. This group includes the supporters and followers of Rabbi Meir Kahane.

The members of this group are individualistic in character and in behavior and they don't have any agreed upon rabbinical leadership. While this group bequeaths a high level of legitimacy to a bitter struggle in the event of an evacuation, it too has red lines it will not cross when it comes to violence and the potential for the situation to devolve into civil war.⁴² These red lines are nearly identical to those from the moderate post-*Mamlachti* camp.

This group provides a not insignificant amount of legitimacy to activities such as the 'Price Tag' campaign as a means to prevent or delay evacuation, but the support is for the most part theoretical and not practical. Their considerations with regard to the initiation of violence are practical and calculated. In case of an evacuation, the most likely scenario is that they will join the moderate post-*Mamlachti*, or will battle independently employing measures similar to those that will develop among the fourth group. However, it is impossible to rule out the possibility of individuals and small groups adopting more extreme responses.

Rabbi D., a resident of Samaria and identified with this group, emphasizes that there are red lines he will not cross in the event of an evacuation, but also that he has no desire or ability to force these red lines on others in the community:

"My red lines have remained where they were, but I will make them known only to those who want to hear them. I have no intention to enforce them on others."

6. Anarchists: The 'Price Tag' Youth

This group forms the sociological fringes of religious-Zionism in general, and the West Bank settlements in particular. A decade ago Sheleg⁴³ pointed out how problematic this sector can be. Since that time the problem has only gotten worse. This marginal group consists mainly of teenagers who have dropped out of their educational frameworks, some with psychological problems, and others who experienced deep personal crises after the Disengagement. This group is not subject to any authority, rabbinical or otherwise, and they have no red lines that they won't cross when it comes to attacks on Palestinians and Israeli security forces. This was stated by the interviewees when commenting on this group.

Rabbi E. said: "For some of the 'hilltop youth' there are no red lines. These are youth with learning

disabilities, mental and emotional problems. There are several hundred of them that simply can't be controlled."

M., an educator and resident of Samaria stated:

"Many of them have lost any sense of solidarity with the rest of Israel. There are no lines they won't cross. Their psychological functioning has been disrupted. I would say even screwed up. They form a dangerous fringe that can produce provocations that might demolish the settlements."

H., a resident of Binyamin, offered a similar assessment:

"No one has any control over them. There is no authority that can moderate them or hold them back."

The only interviewee to criticize the radical wing of the old leadership and place on them partial blame for the rise of these anarchists is D., the head of a local council in Samaria: "There are irresponsible people that encourage the 'hilltop youth.' They will tell you that they oppose violence and anarchy but they close their eyes, pretending not to see the grave acts committed right under their noses. Instead, they speak about our wonderful and brave youth, our soldiers in the struggle."

This group is repudiated and feared among all sectors within the religious-Zionist community, even among the more radical wing of the settlers. This can be seen from statements made by M.: "Even in Yitzhar they understand this. The mother of a student from Yitzhar, who knows the hilltop youth well, said this to me in these words: 'This is a small group of disturbed individuals who tarnish the reputation of our settlement and we can't stop them.'" The actions of this group may cause an evacuation to deteriorate into unexpected, uncontrollable and disastrous results that will be experienced by the settlements, religious-Zionism and all of Israeli society.

In understanding this group, it is important to emphasize the loss of absolute authority which it experienced in relation to political and rabbinical leadership in the religious-Zionist community and in the settlements. This point was raised repeatedly in interviews with key religious-Zionist educators, and by rabbis considered the most extreme in Israeli discourse. These figures specifically stated that in the past they had a certain amount of influence on the 'Price Tag' youth, but that influence has been completely lost.

Thus for example, says Rabbi D. in relation to the 'Price Tag' phenomenon:

"They point their fingers at the Rabbis, but we have no influence whatsoever on the phenomenon."

Restraining and rehabilitating these youth cannot therefore take place in the regular educational framework, only through other frameworks and means.

2.3

The Decision-Making Process and Perceptions of Legitimacy

The interviews conducted for this study reveal that the way in which the decision to evacuate occurs may have a significant impact on the levels of resistance and the types of struggle adopted. There are ways in which a decision could be made which would significantly reduce the overall resistance level and move a large portion of the radical wing settlers toward the moderate wing, but the opposite is equally true. Respondents were presented six scenarios:

Scenarios

1. A decision to evacuate is supported by a large majority of the Knesset (a 'large majority' is usually understood as meaning a majority of Jewish Knesset members).
2. A decision made by a large (i.e. Jewish) majority in a referendum.
3. A decision made by a narrow majority of the Knesset, relying on votes from members of Arab parties.
4. A decision made by a narrow majority in a referendum, without a Jewish majority.

All of these scenarios relate to an evacuation decided upon and executed as part of a broad political agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

5. A unilateral withdrawal from the West Bank in a manner similar to the Disengagement from Gaza.

6. A unilateral withdrawal undertaken due to heavy pressure, threats and sanctions placed upon Israel by the international community, including the United States.

Respondents tended not to delve too deeply into the different responses they would have to varying scenarios. As M, sarcastically put it: "It's like asking a condemned man how he prefers to die, by stoning, by fire or by hanging." Significant differences between the pattern of expected responses showed up mainly in relation to the two polar opposites: a decision made by a large/Jewish majority in a referendum on the one hand, and a decision reached by a small majority in a referendum or by the Knesset, on the other.

The scenario with the greatest potential to evoke a relatively peaceful reaction is a referendum passed by a majority of Israeli citizens large enough that it neutralizes the electoral power of the Arab vote. In this case, for most of the four main groups described in the previous section, there will be no justification for aggressive action against the evacuation. Legitimacy will be given only to symbolic and non-violent protest. The radical camp will be greatly reduced and concentrated in the two smallest groups. For instance, Y., from the *Yesha* Council says:

"If they go with a referendum, we have to remember that the government has an enormous advantage in the preparation of the referendum. But at least we will have a fair shot at convincing the voters. We will approach such a challenge seriously and with the utmost professionalism. All the characteristics of fair play will be there. With all of the other options you presented, these qualities do not exist. They will greatly intensify the level of resistance and sense of betrayal."

Rabbi Y. (Gush Etzion) agrees that a large majority in a referendum will moderate the vitality of the opposition: "If there is a clear Jewish majority in the Knesset or in a referendum, we will still not modify our strategy of struggle, but it will be far

more moderate." In the same vein, Rabbi D. says, "If a decision is reached by a large majority in a referendum, public opposition will be of a different character, but the ideological hard core will still not forego a struggle."

In contrast, suspicion and lack of faith in a national referendum are recognizable in the words of A.: "The government can execute its decisions in any case. Even if there is only a small majority and even if it loses a referendum. They will just keep having more referendums until they win. I have little faith in the entire system."

A decision reached by a large majority in the Knesset will, on the other hand, have less of a restraining effect on the opposition for two main reasons. The first reason is the understanding of parliamentary representation which the settler public holds in relation to their direct political representatives, the right wing parties including, Likud, Yisrael Beiteinu and the religious parties. In the mind of the religious-Zionist public, an MK is considered to be a **delegate**. What flows from this concept of "agency" is that if the delegate's opinion differs from the opinion of his constituency. The conventional wisdom among the settlers is that he must go back to the voters and receive their vote of confidence for his change of mind. This is a completely different notion than that accepted in modern, liberal democratic thought, which conceives of the MK as a parliamentary **representative** not as an "delegate" free to act on the basis of what he perceives to be right and proper, even if his voters think otherwise. It is difficult to exaggerate how important this difference is.⁴⁴

The second reason is the suspicion, lack of confidence and belief in conspiracy in relation to government authorities, especially with regard to their handling of the settlements and settlers. For this reason, the manner in which the decision-makers achieve a parliamentary majority will have a great impact on the degree of legitimacy it receives from the settlers.⁴⁵ In any event, sharp criticism will be meted out to members of the religious and right-wing parties who vote in favor of evacuation. Large parts

of the settler community will denounce them as traitors who betrayed the trust of their constituents.

A similar reaction is likely to occur should a referendum pass by a small majority, meaning that the majority of Jews in Israel do not vote in favor of evacuation, or should a decision be made by a small majority in the Knesset. In both of these scenarios the settler community will delegitimize the decision, and the potential for radicalization in the struggle against the evacuation will increase exponentially. This was clear in statements made by the interviewees.

For instance, Rabbi Y. (Gush Etzion): "A majority decision that is dependent on Arab votes has no moral weight. There will be a high level of legitimacy for a bitter struggle should such a decision be reached."

Rabbi Tz. (Binyamin): "I can accept, with great sorrow, a decision to hand over parts of the land of Israel only if the majority of the people (Israeli Jews) agree to such a step."

B. (Komemiyut movement) asserts: "If the decision is made by a small majority, not a Jewish one, the delegitimization of the entire establishment will increase tremendously."

H., who identifies with the moderate wing of the settler movement, views a decision achieved by a small majority as, "A very painful decision, but still legitimate. That's democracy." However, she agrees that, "large parts of our community will have a much tougher time accepting this."⁴⁶

While the demand that a 'Jewish majority' support a decision to evacuate settlements is shared by the middle class and *Hardal* sectors of religious-Zionism, the consequences of a decision to evacuate made without such a majority may be felt most intensely by the third group, the "nationalist, state-oriented *Hardal*." The state-oriented messianism which they espouse is rooted in a concept of the state as a concrete representation of "the community of Israel," the mystical and holy embodiment of

"the soul of Israel," an abstract entity endowed with divine qualities beyond place and time. When the Israeli government relies on an "Arab majority," it loses, according to this conception, the source of its legitimacy. Under such circumstances, sanctity can no longer be ascribed to the actions of the Jewish state.⁴⁷ For these reasons, should a decision be made either in the Knesset or through a referendum without a Jewish majority, a large portion of the *Hardal* camp will join the fourth group, the post-*Mamlachti Hardal* sector, and will become partners in an active struggle against the evacuation. We should however note that it is not expected that the rabbis of this group will give their consent to violence against the evacuating forces.

The fifth possibility, an evacuation without a political agreement, such as occurred during the Disengagement, was not examined in all of its variations. The overall picture that emerges from the interviewees' is that it is far more likely that a unilateral plan will be delegitimized than a decision to evacuate taken in the framework of a political settlement. We can assume that responses to a decision made outside of the framework of a political agreement will be similar responses to a decision to evacuate made as part of a political settlement. A decision passed by a large majority in a referendum will have the greatest potential to dampen resistance. The same is true for the opposite scenario—a decision to evacuate made without a 'Jewish majority' will be met with the greatest amount of resistance. In any case, a unilateral decision to evacuate taken in any of these variations will be met with greater resistance than a parallel scenario in which such a decision is part of a political agreement.

With regard to the sixth scenario, an evacuation resulting from heavy international pressure on the Israeli government, these interviews and other research show that such a scenario will not have a moderating effect on the level of opposition. This is mainly because the settler community expects the Israeli government to withstand international pressure. As Rabbi D. says: "This will be the true test of the

government. Do we have a puppet government or an autonomous one? Is the government continuing the heritage of Ben-Gurion who proved that what is important is not what the Gentiles will say, but what the Jews will do. Or will they adopt the defeatist attitudes of the Diaspora."⁴⁸ Rabbi Z. of the *Hardal* camp emphasizes the danger of caving in to international pressure: "In such a case, we will have to explain the importance of standing up against international pressure as a basic element of national independence. There is no end to this! Today they will pressure us to dismantle settlements, tomorrow they will force us to give up Jerusalem, and the next day to agree to the right of return." This opinion reflects a broad tendency in the religious-Zionist camp, who despise the 'realpolitik' justifications offered by politicians, by the military and by academics concerning the danger which awaits Israel should its position in the international community deteriorate. At the foundation of this stance we can also sense a certain degree of scorn for the 'goyim' [gentiles], perceived of as the eternal Esau, always hating Jacob (who represents the Jews).

Moreover, the settler community tends to be deeply suspicious of conspiracies. Settlers often do not trust government authorities, particularly their left-wing political rivals. International pressure is perceived among the settlers as being instigated by Israeli leftist organizations. In the eyes of many settlers, the left presents itself as aiming to "save Israel from itself", but their real political aim is the undemocratic elimination of the settlement movement by the instigation of external intervention in Israeli affairs. Therefore, the success that international pressure might have in forcing the government's hand may increase right-wing anger at the left and add to their lack of trust in the 'democratic game'. We can assume that the more that international pressure is perceived as an external response to the initiative of Israeli left-wing organizations, the more radical the attitudes of the settlers will become. Thus for example S., a resident of Samaria says: "The Europeans and Americans have no great love for the settlements, but they have more pressing issues to deal with. Those really instigating all of the boycotts of Israel are Peace

Now and other left-wing organizations. All means are acceptable in their eyes to get us out of here. If they succeed, our anger at them will only increase."

Another reason why international pressure will not soften the settlers' opposition to evacuation is the influence elite right-wing academia has on the settler public. This elite consists of professors who espouse right-wing positions, some belonging to the Professors for a Strong Israel and others who teach at the University College in Ariel, or at the College for Jewish Policy.⁴⁹ They argue that the Israeli government indeed has the political, diplomatic and legal tools to enable it to withstand international pressure, and that it can be aided by powerful interest groups in countries friendly to Israel (especially in the U.S. and among evangelical Christians). These analytical assertions will give weight to the settlers' demand that the Israeli government stand up to international pressure. This type of analysis was offered by S., from the *Yesha* Council: "We (the *Yesha* Council) heard an illuminating lecture by Yoram Ettinger. He presented solid evidence that Israel has the strength to withstand international pressure. That every Israeli prime minister who withstood pressure from an American president may have lost in the short term, but in the long run was successful. Israel receives prestige and international sympathy specifically when it is seen as strong, as triumphant. The things that Yoram showed, we will have to explain to the general public."

Another interviewee, E., who holds a senior position in a right-wing legal forum, claims:

"International pressure already exists. It is based on the notion that the settlements are illegal and it receives a boost from the traitorous activities of various left-wing organizations. But there are ways to deal with these claims. Jurists like Haim Misgav and Eliav Shochetman are experts in international law and they have clear responses to the argument of illegality. Not just the historical and religious claims

in which I wholeheartedly believe, but solid legal arguments. I expect the government to finally state these matters clearly and not to be afraid of its own shadow."

Among more marginal groups in the settlements, heavy international pressure may be perceived as apocalyptic, an 'End of Days' scenario or Armageddon. The possible consequences of such a perspective are not clear, but there is a probability that it could be a catalyst for radical actions and voices. The adoption of such a perspective may be facilitated and intensified by the unstable global situation which seems to be emerging at the beginning of the second decade of the century.

The scenarios discussed so far are all political, related to how the decision of evacuation might be made. **Interviews and other research make it clear that for all the importance and impact the decision-making process will have on the attitudes and behavior of the settlers, the public atmosphere that will prevail during an evacuation will have a far more significant and decisive influence.**

For instance, Rabbi D. said: "What will determine the level of opposition is not so much the manner in which the decision is made, but the level of aggression and cruelty leveled at our people. Over the last few years security forces have become far more aggressive, and aggression evokes a counter-reaction."

Thus, psychological insight is more important than ideology in predicting the behavior patterns of the settler public in emergency situations. We shall narrow these down to three psychological effects presented below.⁵⁰

First, the more the settlers and their supporters sense that an evacuation is not only a specific process for achieving a political settlement, but is part of the state and the left-wing's overall war against religious-Zionism, the greater the swing towards the radicalism will be. Their perceptions in this regard will be

greatly influenced by the statements and actions of decision-makers in the political and legal realms, by statements made by those who oppose the settlements, by media coverage and by the general public atmosphere close to and during the evacuation.

Second, the decision makers' attitude to the opposition will be critical. If the opposition is treated as legitimate protest, the chance that the opposition will remain generally moderate will increase. On the other hand, if opposition is treated as rebellion against state authority per se, the chance that the protest will turn in the radical direction of a rebellion will also increase.⁵¹ In this context, the nature of the activities of the security forces has great weight. The more brutal their activity, the greater the likelihood that there will be a more violent response including the use of firearms by the most radical isolated individuals on the margins.

Third, the greater the role the settlers are given in determining their own future in an evacuation process, the more likely they will cooperate. Relating to the settlers as an object that has no place in the decision making process, will increase their feelings of anger and bitterness and exacerbate the intensity of their resistance and struggle.

From the answers to the first four questions asked in this study we can delineate the most extreme scenario, the most violent and dangerous, but still imaginable scenario involving the evacuation settlements. We cannot and do not claim that this is the scenario for which preparations should be made. What we do claim is that it is important to consider the possibility of such an extreme scenario, if only to act in advance to prevent the deterioration that could lead to it. The following is an outline of such a scenario.

Around the time of a decision on evacuation or the date of its implementation, anarchic violence initiated by the 'Price Tag' youth will begin. These activities will be extensively covered in Israeli and foreign media and will set off a wave of denunciation and delegitimization of the settlements and

their struggle against evacuation led mainly by the Israeli media. In this hostile and highly charged atmosphere, there will be heavy pressure among decision makers to act with a strong hand against the settlements and settlers and to complete the evacuation process efficiently, quickly and with force.⁵²

The hostility that will be projected from the public and the media, and the harsh policy that will be enforced by government authorities, will trigger a counter-radicalization among the settler community. The *Yesha* Council and other parties who will try to lead a more moderate and legitimate struggle will lose their remaining authority and the central leadership will be split into fragmentary local sources of leadership, sporadic and militant. Those settlers emotionally unprepared for and in principle unwilling to participate in such a militant struggle will desert their communities without a fight and will later pay the heavy psychological price for their abandonment. The minority that remains and the evacuating forces will engage in a desperate violent clash. In an extreme case, there will be mutual exchange of live fire and casualties suffered by both sides. The brutal evacuation that will be swiftly executed will leave 'scorched earth' and a deep rift, not easily mended, will be created in the relationship between right-wing religious-Zionists and other parts of Israeli society, especially the secular liberal left.

2.4

Attitudes to Settlements Remaining - under Palestinian Rule

On November, 25, 2011, in a speech in front of the United States Congress, Prime Minister Netanyahu hinted at the possibility of leaving settlements in Judea and Samaria outside of Israeli control. Yair Sheleg also mentioned this as a "default option" - an intermediary stage of a more complete evacuation.⁵³

In the wake of Sheleg's suggestion and parallel to it, from time to time concerns have been raised among the settlers that the Israeli government will decide upon a strategy of abandonment if decision makers conclude that the cost of initiating and organizing an evacuation is too heavy for the state to bear.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, despite significant discussion of such a scenario on the left and right wing margins of the settler movement, it is barely discussed among the mainstream. When the question arose about the option of remaining in the territory of a Palestinian state or of an evacuation similar to the Algerian model, a large portion of the respondents refused to answer in principle. Many of those who did respond did so in only a vague and general way. This principled refusal to relate to these options was particularly evident among members of the existing leadership, whereas the willingness to refer to this situation was more characteristic of respondents from marginalized groups within religious-Zionism and the settlements. Apparently, the lack of clarity in the details concerning such a potential situation, the near absence of its discussion in public discourse, in the media and in academia, the explicit refusal of the Palestinians to allow Jewish settlements to remain in the areas of their future state, and the perception that this is an imaginary situation and not a realistic one, all serve for the moment at least to push the discussion to the side and prevent the settlers from seriously considering it. Therefore, the answers to the fifth question were partial, vague and ambiguous.

Should an Algerian model of evacuation such as suggested by Yair Sheleg occur (with advance notice of IDF withdrawal to the settlers, but with military forces temporarily remaining to protect those who initially choose not to leave of their own volition), we can predict that local initiatives to persuade residents to remain will develop. **The assumption among the religious-Zionist community will be that the threat of abandonment by the IDF is an empty threat, and that no Israeli government could have the legitimacy to leave behind tens of thousands of settlers unprotected by the Israeli army. This will create a game of "chicken" in which each side will expect the other to back down.** When it comes to remaining in Judea and Samaria, outside of the boundaries of Israeli sovereignty as a result of political settlement, we can make a distinction between relating to this in principle, and relating to it as a realistic possibility. In principle, there may develop a fascinating ideological debate about the meaning of Zionism and the process of a return of Jews to Zion: Can the essence of this process be boiled down to the establishment of Jewish sovereignty on portions of the historic land of Israel, or is its main objective the return to the land of Israel, even without Jewish sovereignty? In interviews conducted during our research, there was a clear correlation between faithfulness to the concept of "statehood," meaning the concept that sovereignty is a main element in the "return to Zion", and principled opposition to leaving settlements behind in a Palestinian "diaspora."

The following are a few statements concerning this made by the interviewees:

"This is a demotion of the State of Israel to the Land of Israel. As I understand it, it would be better to live in Tel Aviv under Israeli sovereignty than in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem under Palestinian sovereignty (Y., community rabbi in Petach Tikva)."

"I am not willing to be stuck in the Diaspora. Period"
(H., resident of Gush Etzion).

"This is anathema. We did not establish the state of Israel for this. It was not for this that so much blood was spilled" (P., Gush Etzion).

This fundamental opposition softens only slightly when the situation described includes maintaining Israeli citizenship and a continuous connection between the settlements and Israel such that it would be possible, for example, to drive daily to a workplace within Israel.

Therefore, we can predict (with the above reservations in mind) that a negligible percentage of people belonging to the first group (middle class with low degree of connection with the settlements) and the third group (*Hardal* with nationalist orientation) and only a small percentage from the second group (middle class with strong connection to settlements), would be prepared in principle to remain in the West Bank under Palestinian sovereignty. When the possibility was raised with the fourth group, the moderate post-*Mamlachti Hardal* group, the number willing in principle to remain under foreign sovereignty rose significantly, and in the fifth group, the radical post-*Mamlachti*, the proportion of those willing to remain was highest. Such an assessment was offered by A., a veteran right wing settler from the middle class: "In my assessment there are those who will be willing to remain under Palestinian authority. This was a dilemma that existed already in 1947 when discussions took place in settlements that were supposed to remain under Arab sovereignty. In such a scenario we would need to rely on the State of Israel to defend us. This is like partial life insurance."

In contrast, Rabbi A., who belongs to the post-*Mamlachti* sector of *Hardal*, agrees in principle to separate from the State of Israel, but offers an alternative possibility, one which is also frequently discussed: "I support remaining under all

circumstances. There is no great tragedy in the existence of a State of Judah alongside the State of Israel. I believe that there could be peace between these two states." The correlation between the strength of one's nationalism and the willingness to remain in Judea and Samaria under Palestinian rule is challenged by the "leftist" movement, Eretz Shalom, founded by the students of R. Menachem Froman. The goal of this group has been to foster coexistence between Jewish settlers and the Palestinians of the West Bank. The movement has no clear political agenda, but among some of its supporters statements are heard concerning their readiness to remain in Judea and Samaria under Palestinian sovereignty.⁵⁵

When it comes to the practicality/reality of such a scenario, there is almost complete consensus that such a scenario is unlikely, and that the security arrangements that settlers living under Palestinian sovereignty would require would be intolerable. Almost all respondents (except for the few members of Eretz Shalom) have no confidence in the goodwill of Palestinian security forces to defend the settlements, or that these forces could actually prevent the massacre of Jewish settlers by the Palestinian population. Such doubts extended to the very possibility of Jewish settlements living under Palestinian sovereignty.

Thus for instance, Y. (Petach Tikva) said: "I can't even conceive of remaining under Palestinian sovereignty. This would be an invitation for a massacre. If this happens, that's the end of Jewish solidarity. If they do this, then there is no justification for a Jewish state."

The following remark is similar: "This is a tactical proposal. The Palestinian leadership is not really willing to accept it" (Y., a resident of Binyamin and a member of the *Yesha* Council). Or the following: "When it comes down to it, this is delusional. Not practical on any count. This would be making a deal with a radical Islamic society. They live in a tribal society, not a modern civilization. It is impossible to live modern, normal lives

under their rule" (Y., a resident of Binyamin, and a journalist with Makor Rishon).

The option of remaining in the settlements under foreign sovereignty seems for the moment unrealistic and improbable. However, if it does arise as a possibility on the national agenda, cooperation with the settlers in the process of making decisions which define their future will be especially crucial. Absence of cooperation will make conducting the process in an organized and stable fashion extremely difficult. Lack of such cooperation would lead on the one hand to a high probability of a mass exodus from the settlements, and on the other hand, to initiatives led by extremist elements with the goal of agitating and inflaming the field.

Conclusion

Aside from the international and regional significance of a large-scale evacuation of West Banks settlements, such a move has profound implications inside Israel itself, with the danger being internecine violence, and the fracturing of Israeli society. It is against this background, without advocating for or against such a policy, that this paper has examined the likely reactions of the religious-Zionist community to such an eventuality.

The overwhelming majority of religious-Zionists strongly identify with the State of Israel, and with mainstream Israeli society. The Disengagement left them embittered, especially by the failure to provide a proper solution for the evacuees; but it has not caused a fundamental shift in these attitudes. They are highly unlikely to take part in, or support acts of, violence against the army or police charged with implementing an evacuation. Support for insubordination in the event of an evacuation is on the rise, but it is largely confined to support for individual acts of refusing orders based on conscience. Among the overwhelming majority, opposition to organized collective insubordination that challenges the legitimate authority of the state remains solid.

Nonetheless, since 2005, the potential for deterioration in relations between elements of the religious-Zionist settlers and state institutions and security forces has increased. *Mamlachtiut* has weakened substantially in the *Hardal* sector, with radicalism rising in parallel, especially among the younger generation. *Hardal* youth are also increasingly unwilling to accept the authority of the mainstream religious-Zionist settler leadership that led the moderate struggle against the Disengagement in 2005. As a result, the theological and institutional foundations of religious-Zionist constraint have weakened within the *Hardal* sector. In the event of a withdrawal, this does not bode well for a smooth and productive dialogue between the state and its

representatives, and portions of the settler population. While a large scale civil war still seems unlikely, there is nevertheless a reasonable likelihood that there will be many violent clashes, and that in isolated cases these could involve live fire.

The most extreme elements of religious-Zionist settlers that would consider using any means to try to prevent an evacuation number no more than a few hundred. They are outside of the control of both the religious and lay leadership of religious-Zionism. They therefore cannot be dealt with by a strategy of engagement. However, the same is not true for the overwhelming bulk of the religious-Zionist community – here a strategy of engagement is of critical significance. The more religious-Zionist settlers are engaged during the process, the greater will be the legitimacy for the end-product. The more they feel that they are able to make their case against a planned withdrawal, the more room that is made for acts of legitimate protest, again the greater the legitimacy for any eventual evacuation. Still, it is not clear that a referendum would necessarily enhance the legitimacy an evacuation. A narrow vote in favor of withdrawal, which is dependent in Israeli-Arab votes to gain an overall majority, will not be viewed as decisive and may even decrease the legitimacy of a withdrawal by calling into question 'Jewish' sovereignty. This in turn would widen the rift with many other Israelis who would view such claims as a challenge to Israeli democracy per se. In other words, far from preventing a legitimization crisis, a referendum may actually deepen one. On the other hand, a Jewish majority in favor of withdrawal would have widespread legitimacy, reducing dramatically the willingness of religious-Zionists to struggle against the plan.

The key constraint on right-wing religious-Zionists translating radical sentiments and statements into radical actions is their identification with, and religious sanctification of, the State of Israel combined with their sense of belonging to mainstream Jewish-Israeli society. Among supporters of withdrawal, there will be a temptation to paint all religious ideological settlers as radical extremists, in order to mobilize support for withdrawal.

This would be a fateful and tragic mistake that could translate into a self-fulfilling prophecy. It is critical to understand that the overwhelming majority of religious-Zionists oppose violence and oppose challenging the legitimate authority of the state. There is a world of difference between their willingness to support individual insubordination on the basis of conscience and the radical minority's willingness to challenge state authority with a campaign of organized collective insubordination. Recognizing and articulating that distinction will be crucial for isolating radicals. More generally, the government must define clearly and broadly the parameters of legitimate struggle against an evacuation. It must also have a broad sense of what constitutes a tolerable opposition, with which it can live. This is likely to require great restraint in the face of possible provocations. But behavioral and rhetorical restraint is worthwhile if the end result is to isolate the small minority of really dangerous extremists, who cannot be engaged by the government or constrained by religious-Zionist leaders.

Finally it is vitally important to establish a mechanism to find a solution for evacuees in advance. Failure to do so will lead some religious-Zionist settlers to despair and people with nothing to lose will be open to mobilization by the most radical elements.

Glossary

Da'at Torah - The notion that a rabbi's opinion on any matter should be regarded as authoritative, even one not generally considered a strictly religious matter. This notion is the norm among the Ultra-Orthodox, but not among middle-class religious-Zionists.

Gush Emunim – The settler movement founded by religious-Zionists in 1974

Hardal – A Hebrew acronym for Haredi Leumi – Ultra-Orthodox Nationalists. This refers to a minority of religious-Zionists who adopt a more negative approach to modernity that is close to that of Ultra-Orthodox, combined with a more extreme version of religious nationalism.

Halacha- Jewish religious law as adjudicated by Rabbis

Mamlachti/Mamlachtiut - Religiously grounded loyalty to the State of Israel combined with a patriotic commitment to promoting its welfare, as well as a deep-seated respect for its institutions. This is an essential element of the religious-Zionist worldview which views Jewish sovereignty, embodied in the State of Israel, as of great religious significance. Consequently, rejection of the state, opposition to its laws and its government are perceived as a rejection of God's will.

Ulpana/ot – A religious girls' high school

Yesha Council –This is an umbrella organization of municipal councils of Jewish settlements in the West Bank (and formerly in the Gaza Strip), known by the Hebrew acronym *Yesha*, as in – Yehuda, Shomron, Aza.

Yeshiva – A seminary of higher Jewish Studies for men.

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Notes

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- ¹ Institutes of higher religious learning for men.
- ² This is an umbrella organization of municipal councils of Jewish settlements in the West Bank (and formerly in the Gaza Strip), known by the Hebrew acronym *Yesha*, as in – Yehuda, Shomron, Aza.
- ³ The pre-state Jewish community in Palestine that immigrated from 1880 onwards.
- ⁴ The British government offered the Zionist movement Uganda as a Jewish homeland, which the movement's leader Herzl supported, but the movement rejected the plan decisively.
- ⁵ On religious approaches to the Palestinian question in Israel see Jonathan Rynhold, 'Religion, Postmodernization & Israeli Approaches to the Conflict with the Palestinians' *Terrorism & Political Violence* 17 (3) 2005, pp. 371-389.
- ⁶ Hellinger and Hershkovitz, 2012 [Hebrew].
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ Not to be confused with the secular version of *Mamlachtiut* promoted by David Ben-Gurion.
- ⁹ Amos Harel, 'Sharp rise in number of religious IDF officers,' *Ha'aretz* 15 September 2010.
- ¹⁰ *A Portrait of Israeli Jews Beliefs, Observance, and Values of Israeli Jews, 2009* (Jerusalem: Israel Democracy Institute, 2012). Approximately, fourth-fifths of Israelis identify as Jewish.
- ¹¹ And in the liberal wings of this sector there is a strong presence of centrist and even left-wing political positions.
- ¹² See for example Moses 2005: 9-30 [Hebrew]; ibid 2009; Cherlow, 2007: 334-354 [Hebrew].
- ¹³ These findings reinforce the conclusions drawn by Hellinger and Hershkovitz (2012) [Hebrew] concerning religious-Zionist rhetoric over the last decade.
- ¹⁴ This position was accepted by many leaders in the *Hardal* community during the Disengagement, even though formally speaking they opposed insubordination per se, see Hellinger and Hershkovitz 2012: ch. 5 [Hebrew].
- ¹⁵ Except for the English speaking religious-Zionist community. In this sector, the relationship between location on the religious spectrum and support for refusal and active resistance against evacuation is not significant. This finding also correlates with the emphasis on liberal

democratic values as the basis for opposition to the evacuation of settlements, since this population, mostly American, was socialized during its youth in a liberal/democratic direction.

¹⁶ Moses 2009: 312-313 [Hebrew].

¹⁷ See: <http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-404122,00.html> [Hebrew].

¹⁸ Cherlow, 2010 [Hebrew]; Hellinger and Hershkowitz, 2012, ch. 5 [Hebrew].

¹⁹ Rimon, 2006: 40 [Hebrew].

²⁰ . The notion that a rabbi's opinion on any matter, even one not generally considered a strictly religious matter, should be regarded as authoritative. This notion is the norm among the Ultra-Orthodox, but not among middle-class religious-Zionists.

²¹ For an argument as to why a referendum would be unwise in this case precisely because there is no agreement in Israel over what constitutes a legitimate majority, see Asher Cohen and Jonathan Rynhold, 'Envisaging a Peace Referendum in Israel: Lessons from Northern Ireland' *Civil Wars* 6 (1) 2003

²² "A View to the Future in Light of Lessons from the Past."

<http://www.binyamin.org.il/?CategoryID=664&ArticleID=1821&page=1> [Hebrew].

²³ Similarly, H. a resident of Binyamin, a well-known figure in the settlement movement and among the earliest settlers and D., the head of a council in Samaria, offered similar statements: "There is no more 'this cannot happen.' The government can evacuate even 100,000 residents. We can no longer rely on the size of the number. Our naiveté is over. We cannot stop processes that the state has decided to initiate".

²⁴ In the words of the settlers, "removing the horns" from the settlements.

²⁵ Amnon Abramovitz, a television commentator on channel two, stated that the media needed to protect Ariel Sharon against claims of corruption as a Jew would protect his *etrog* (citron used on the holiday of Sukkot) in a padded box.

²⁶ See Sanjaro, 2007: 238-239 [Hebrew]. In this article there are other quotes issued by senior members of the legal system concretizing how the legal community delegitimized the protests against the Disengagement. For instance Yitzchak Zamir, legal adviser to the government and former Chief Justice, who regarded protest as "a rebellion against the rule of law" requesting that special means be used against it (p. 236). The article similarly contains rulings that

inflamed the national religious community, such as extended arrest of children the ages of thirteen-fourteen.

²⁷ The Altelena was ship carrying weapons for the Irgun in the War of Independence. When the Irgun refused to hand over the weapons to the newly constituted Israeli government, Ben-Gurion ordered that the army fire upon the ship, which they duly did. In symbolic terms it refers here to using the required level of force to ensure respect for the sovereign authority of the state.

²⁸ The largest mass demonstration against the Disengagement took place on this religious *moshav* close to the border with Gaza border.

²⁹ Tau, 1994, 2000 [Hebrew]; Don Yehiya, 1994; Schwartz, 2001: 92-110 [Hebrew]; Hellinger, 2008 [Hebrew].

³⁰ On the moods of settlement youth after the Disengagement see Shahori and Laufer, 2008: 239-252 [Hebrew]; *ibid*, 2009: 431-453 [Hebrew].

³¹ Including character assassination, see for instance http://www.aviner.net/tguva_elran.php, "The whole truth about Rabbi Aviner" [Hebrew].

³² A situation of total anarchy is less likely, for in crisis situations people tend unite behind leaders. See Claire, 2009.

³³ It is not uncommon to find well-off religious families living within the Green Line who have two or more kids with their own families living in West Bank settlements. The potential economic impact of an evacuation on families such as these is drastic.

³⁴ This assertion is also relevant with regard to secular settlements in the West Bank having similar characteristics.

³⁵ One of the political heads of the Hardal sector.

³⁶ The reason that most of the women interviewed tended to express attitudes relatively moderate compared with the men, was primarily due to the means of selecting respondents. Larger meaning should not be ascribed to this phenomenon. Quantitative studies have proven that the correlation which exists in general Israeli society between gender and moderate political positions does not exist in the religious-Zionist sector. Rabbis and educators in religious-Zionist institutions (high school yeshivas and ulpanot) also claimed in interviews that when it comes to teenagers, the girls actually exhibit a greater tendency than the boys towards extremism and fanaticism.

³⁷ It is possible that immigrants from Latin and South American countries belong to this group, but it mainly consists of immigrants from the United States.

³⁸ Hellinger and Hershkowitz, ch. 4 [Hebrew].

³⁹ Hellinger and Londin 2012 [Hebrew].

⁴⁰ Hellinger and Hershkovitz 2012: ch. 5 [Hebrew].

⁴¹ The Lubavitch Hassidic sect.

⁴² There is direct opposition to civil war and bloodshed in the writings of Rabbi Ginsberg. See for example: Ginsberg, 2006: 28.

⁴³ Sheleg 2004.

⁴⁴ On the contrast within religious-Zionist thought between the notion of "Democratic Judaism," influenced by Western thought and "Jewish democracy," a form with certain special characteristics and less democratic from a Western point of view, see Hellinger, 2002 [Hebrew].

⁴⁵ The decision in favor of the Disengagement passed the Knesset by a clear majority of 67 in favor versus 45 opposed. Nevertheless, it was bitterly delegitimized by the settlers and their supporters because of the failures of democracy and the political manipulation required to achieve this majority, and because they perceived the Likud MK's who supported the resolution as betrayers of the public trust they were elected to represent. It is also worth remembering the delegitimization of the Rabin government decisions made during the Oslo process, which relied on Arab votes. Rabin's government was accused of "stealing Knesset members" from the right by offering material gains in return for support.

⁴⁶ In a statistical study conducted in 2007 during Moses' doctoral work the following question was asked: "Will a Knesset decision concerning the future of Israel (peace agreements, evacuation of settlements, etc.) based on Arab votes be legitimate in your eyes?" The respondents' answers were classified based on their sector within the settler community. The results showed an extremely high degree of delegitimization in the *Hardal* wing, in which 96 per cent of the respondents selected the option of delegitimization, and among them 86 per cent chose the most radical option: "completely illegitimate." In the middle class wing, the largest among the religious-Zionist community, 13 per cent chose the option "certainly legitimate" or "legitimate" whereas 73 per cent chose one of various degrees of delegitimization. In the modern Orthodox sector, which forms the most left wing group in religious Zionism and to which the interviewee H. belongs, 51 per cent chose legitimate and 37 per cent, illegitimate.

⁴⁷ See Hellinger, 2002, chapter three [Hebrew] concerning the notion of "Jewish democracy" one far removed from the western liberal

concept of democracy. See also Moses, 2009: 113 [Hebrew]; Kook: 2001, 43-45 [Hebrew]; Melamed, 1995: 73-77 [Hebrew].

⁴⁸ The rhetoric concerning Ben-Gurion is, of course, not historically accurate. When there was American-Soviet pressure on Ben-Gurion to evacuate the entire Sinai after its conquest in 1956, Ben-Gurion withdrew.

⁴⁹ The members of the *Professors for a Strong Israel* are mostly academics specializing in the sciences, while in the College for Jewish Policy there are professors who specialize in the humanities. The declared goal of this college is to foster an elite academic core with nationalist and neo-conservative political positions. This core will serve, so it is hoped, as a counter-balance for the liberal, universalist left that dominates Israeli intellectual circles.

⁵⁰ The psychological impact of these effects came up in the interview the sociologist, S.

⁵¹ See Roitman, 1989: 124-129 [Hebrew].

⁵² There is also a possibility that there will be pressure to significantly reduce the financial compensation offered to evacuees.

⁵³ Sheleg, 2010,

http://www.idi.org.il/breakingnews/pages/opinions_r.aspx.

⁵⁴ See for instance Dr. Nitza Kahana's speech at the opening conference for the Jewish broadcasting channel:

<http://www.Youtube.com/watch?v=GmujakHtjAw> .

⁵⁵ There were two hundred people, mostly young people under the age of thirty, present at the movement's founding conference held in Ofra on September 1, 2011.



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