

Contact-Zone En-Route;

Nationalism and Ethnicity on a Voyage to Israel

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I. Introduction

"Exodus" is a four-day sea voyage, serving as a starter program for organized trips to Israel.

"Exodus" aims at teaching history and enhancing Jewish identity of American teenagers by simulating illegal-immigration to Israel¹. The uniqueness of this program is its structure of in-between: already not "America", but not yet "Israel". The program is happening on board a medium size cruise ship sailing from Europe to Israel. "Exodus", I'd like to suggest, is a complicated field of Jewish-Zionist tourism.

This presentation aims at deciphering relationship between Jewishness and Zionism on board "Exodus". Organized by "The Jewish-Zionist Agency"², which is an Israeli based institution, and American youth organizations³ - "Exodus" is subjected to different interpretations. These interpretations and strategies of positioning and transmission are the focus of my work.

Observations are based on five summers of ethnographic fieldwork amongst the community of "diaspora Jewish education", at the period of 1996-2000. The fieldwork entailed visits to Israeli and American staff training, conversations with Israel-program professionals, preparation and concluding meetings of Simulation Staff. "Simulation staff" is the core Jewish agency staff, in charge of 1948 simulation elements. During that time I participated-observed ten voyages, as a member of the "Exodus" Simulation Staff. Due to the focus on official narratives, and my location within the staff of this program - I limit my discussion to the level of staff. Their formal work and informal encounters shape the meaning of "Exodus".

¹ Exodus is operated also for other Jewish communities (mainly from France, Great Britain and South America). This paper refers only to the "American" voyages, as they are central for this operation, and fieldwork was carried only on such programs.

² Due to many structural changes in the "Jewish-Zionist Agency for Israel", the professional body operating "Exodus" changed names and statuses several times. Today it is a privatized company. However the personnel haven't change, nor did the agenda of "Israel Experience" in general or "Exodus" in particular. Hence, and in favor of smoother presentation I will refer to all these bodies in the generalized short form: "The Jewish Agency" or "the Agency".

³ Here too I use a generalization and refer to "American youth organizations". Three main organizations participated in "Exodus" Between 1995-2000: the reform "National Federation of temple Youth", The conservative "United Synagogue Youth" (USY), and the Zionist "Young Judaea" (YJ).

My main argument is that tourism is a junction of space perceptions, based on wider frames of interpretations. In the specific case of "Exodus" - tourism is a junction of Zionist and Jewish perceptions, stemming from national and diasporic (non-national) frameworks. Each group's perceive the voyage in a different way, depending on its understanding of ethnicity, nationalism and territoriality. At large - Zionism associate ethnicity-nationalism-territoriality, diasporic approach dissociate them⁴. In the case of "Exodus" each is not a monolithic voice, and - as will be shown later - there are counter inclinations in both. Contact between "Zionists" and "Jews" creates an ambivalent zone of entrenchment and friendships, tensions and harmony. Tourism may arrest tensions within its confines, and become a closed non-negotiable environment. Tourism also may influence its original context, including its basic frames of interpretations. Organized Jewish tourism offers suspension of mundane life and controlled return home - these combine to create a safe environment that allows such a change to happen.

Before I go into more detail of this argument, I'd like to open with a description of two ceremonial events: "Freedom Holiday" and "Sailing to Freedom". In their structure, content and relation to each other, these two events hold the essence of most observations I will later on offer. The first constructs a Jewish Freedom, the second - a Zionist one.

The "Holiday of Freedom" was invented and celebrated once, at the summer of 1997, by the Reform Jewish-American Youth movement (NFTY). This movement is the only one capable of recruiting enough teenagers to fill up one or two ships every summer (each with approximately five hundred participants). Hence the Reforms also have more control over programming, which is usually the terrain of the Israeli "Jewish Agency". The Holiday was

⁴ See appendix for initial Zionist and Jewish approaches.

celebrated in a traditional manner, resembling the Jewish Passover. The ceremony was named "order", *Seder*, like the Passover night ceremony. A *Haggada* (ceremonial text) was written especially for the holiday's evening ceremony. The Rabbi who wrote the text, led the audience in its' responsive reading. Each participant received a plate with few ceremonial objects: crackers, plastic cups for seawater and wine, candles, pita-breads, honey and pieces of broken pottery. According to the holiday text these symbolize misery at concentration camps in Europe, difficulties of the road to Israel, lights from Israeli shores, freedom and promise of return to sweeter times. The broken pottery, said to originate in an archeological dig in Israel, symbolized the connection with the past, science and Israel. Participants were asked to take them home to the United States and back to Israel every time they will come visiting. Some participants kept their pottery piece, but many pieces were left on the floor. I heard a participant warning others not to step on them, without much success. The ceremony ended with some Israeli folk dancing and a light meal.

In the following evening - all participated in "Sailing to Freedom". This big event is preformed every voyage of "Exodus", guided by professional Israeli staff of the creative arts. The event is designed as a theatrical show, and involves many teenagers with the art of their choice. Decoration-committee hung up silhouettes of ships in stormy waters, and hid behind ample brown paper - blue and white decorations to be opened during the show, at the symbolic arrival to Israel. The show starts with "wandering Jews" at the end of World War II, looking for relatives and debating where to go. It continues with arrival of lonely individuals to Israel and ends up with a theatrical encounter between a veteran of the real "Exodus" and a participant of the simulated "Exodus". This encounter leaves the question of participants' route open. Accompanying dances illustrated the drama with themes like "Where to go", "Suitcases" and "Pillar of fire". Four songs were prepared by the musicians, to convey the ideas: "Towards the light", "a place in the heart", "I will eventually have what I wish for

myself" and "One people- one heart". About a third of the teenagers took part in presentations and were very excited to see themselves and friends on stage. The evening ended with few Israeli dances and with an abrupt but planned announcement of the simulated "captain" of "Exodus" about some problems, that needed to be taken care of in the original groups. This announcement changed at once the time frame of reference from current to simulated (1948) time.

II. Theoretical frameworks: tourism, spatial imagination and cultural contact-zone

In order to understand "What is going on here", I suggest three theoretical frameworks: tourism, spatial imagination and cultural contact-zone.

IIA. Tourism

In its structure - Tourism entails mobility between "home" and "other places". This physical mobility enables tourists to temporarily step out of their typical roles and suspend their mundane life in favor of rest, search of excitement and non-committed play (Cohen, E. 1979; Graburn, 1983; Rojek, 1997; Smith, V. 1989). Tourism is also a triangular structure, a third-space (Soja, 1996) between "here" and "there", "us" and "them". As such tourism tempted theorists for an interpretation of "rites of passage" (Cohen, E. 1992; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1994; Turner, 1969; Turner and Turner, 1978). Indeed tourism may be said to transform individual statuses, and this is certainly the hope of organizers of "Israel trips". They wish to see participants turning into committed Jews, Zionists and community leaders. But the planned passage may not work out. The third, liminal element of the travel may actualize as a "symbolic type" (Grathoff, 1970; Handelman, 1985). An inconsistent, non-negotiable entity, that is liminal but fixed and not transformable. "Symbolic types", are much like George Simmel's third element, which turns a binary structure into a triangular one (Simmel, 1950). A

third element, may mediate between contradictory elements in a social structure, but may also contribute to disorder. This is the reason liminal stages of rituals are subjected to heavy social control. But just what "elements" are evident in "Exodus"? What is actually at stake here?

The act of tourism is described in current literature as imagination laden. The interpretations of sites, for example, are constructed by "indexing and dragging" elements of meaning out of "files" of stereotypical cultural-meanings (Rojek, 1997). Tourism is seen as part of invention and re-invention of tradition, production and consumption of myths (Selwyn, 1996a; 1996b; Urry, 1990), and as capitalist, industrial commodification of history (Enzensberger, 1996; Urry 1995). These analyses indicate that tourism is a project of meaning making. It may serve one cultural logic or another, or it may serve a multi-vocal culture. But what it reflects and may shape is the meaning of space.

"Exodus", structured as a tourist route, is no exception. "Exodus" is a site for pronunciation and socialization for Zionist and Jewish cultures. The differentiation of these "two worlds of Judaism" is well established and documented (Bar-Shalom, 1998; Bekerman and Silverman, Submitted; Ezrachi, 1994; 1997; Liebman and Cohen, S. 1990). The question then is what metaphoric space and route does each construct, and how do they interact?

IIB. Spatial Imagination

Destinations, routes and meanings of tourism depend on spatial imagination that shapes them. Spatial imagination answers questions like: how is the world divided, what are its basic units, what social categories are defined by these basic units, and what ought to be the relation within and between these social categories (Shields, 1991). The same imagination guides the constant social construction of space (ibid.), and contributes to processes of imagined communities (Anderson, 1991).

The logic of Nationalism provides dominant and absolute spatial imagination. The spatial imagination of Nationalism determines the world to be divided on ethnic bases, to nation-states, within which citizens of the dominant (if not only) nation enjoy being at "home". Outside of nation-states are "Others", and if they are in "their place" then they too are entitled for full citizenship in a nation-state, which is their legitimate and only "Home". Yet others, who are not in their nation-state, are sad cases of displacement or bad luck. Counter to this logic is the liberal logic of citizenship and universal-state. The imagination generated here is of states that are nation-less by definition, and that are composed of citizens of multi-ethnic origins, who are free to choose and change countries of citizenship and enjoy in each equality and citizenship rights. This is also a logic of radical diasporization as no one ethnic group is imagined to control any specific state, including the one associated in the group's ethnic memory as "homeland". Ethnicity is irrelevant to the identity of the state or rights of citizens. In terms of national imagination - in the citizen's state - one is in diaspora even in his-own country. This last point is problematic for Zionist as well as for Jewish American Imagination (Bekerman and Silverman, Submitted).

IIC. Cultural contact-zone

"Exodus" is a site of contact between Jewish spatial imaginations: National-Israeli and Diasporic-American. These are distinct not only in their geographical locations, but also in their answer to: where should a Jew feel most at "home"?

Cultural contacts are discussed extensively in the post-colonial literature. In this context, Mary Pratt-Louise develops the concept of "Contact Zone" (Pratt, 1992). Her concept describes contact of two cultures with clear hierarchy, and subjugation relationship. This is not our case. But, Pratt refers to a space where people who are usually separated

geographically - meet, create and establish regular relationships. Her perspective stresses the interaction dimension and the manner by which subjects are defined in and by their relationship with others. And this is very relevant to the dynamics of "Exodus". Classic colonial contexts limit the analytic scope of "contact-zone". If we will stress the cultures or spatial imaginations that interact - we will receive symbolic spaces that are not necessarily physical - or colonial in the territorial sense. This modification of Pratt's contact-zone directs us in looking for "Zionist space", "Jewish space" and contact between them. This contact may not depend on concrete common ground, it may be found in interactions about meanings and in personal encounters. Cultural contact-zones may indeed be colonial. Space - physical or metaphoric - may be contested wherever it is constructed.

III. The "making of Exodus"

I now turn to analyze the construction of the Zionist and Jewish routes and their contacts.

IIIA. The Zionist route

The Jewish Agency constructs a one way route to Israel. This is evident even from the era they chose to re-enact. Illegal immigration to Israel in the pre-state era, is a heroic chapter in Zionist History. One interpretation I heard, for choosing this theme, concerns a high officer in the Agency. This officer is said to have initiated "Exodus" as a way to avoid direct discussion of Palestinian rights. Whether this is true or not, it makes sense for the people of Jewish-Zionist education.

Although Zionist-National ideology is tamed and stylized in consideration of American Jewish sensitivities, no one aboard Exodus mistakes "real intentions" of the agency. However, there is much criticism about it left and right. Peripheral staff, like testimonial veterans, are not well versed in the sophistication of the program, and are not allowed to talk about

immigration to Israel. They say the Jewish agency does not stress enough Zionism and the belonging of Jews in Israel. But, It is the core staff's attitudes that are more interesting. They all acknowledge the main message of the Agency as Zionistic, and they work hard on transmitting it diplomatically. Yet, for many of them it is too Zionistic. Simulation staff, for example, constantly feels the gap between the official Zionistic project of the agency, and their own liberal views. They solve this tension by constructing a closed private sphere in which they employ reflexive humor and cynicism about their roles in "Exodus". Others, who work directly with participants, and are also not well versed in the sophistication of the program - try to instill their ideas in the dictated program. Group leaders, for example, may talk about the complicated relationship between Jewishness and democracy at discussions of Israel's declaration of independence. Yet others may "play the game" when they need to. This is the case of a professional from the department of "Teaching and Leadership Development" (*Hadracha uPituach Manhigot*). She personally does not agree with what she perceives as the Agency's formal goals, but "when I need to transmit "big" messages of the Jewish Agency, I can do it, this is not really a problem". Even staff members who see themselves as Zionistic tend to have reservations about the Agency's message. This is what such a group leader told me:

"I didn't have much problem with it, I grew as an Israeli who got educated exactly on this Zionist Ideology. In this country we are educated to believe that Israel is the only place to live in, and whoever lives elsewhere is a complete idiot... Today I think less like this... but I had no problem with this approach of Zionist ideology. ... I don't know if I agree with all this Zionist ideology, literally a Zionist brainwash. ... I think that we need to give more space for the youth movements in this program than to the Agency..."

This group leader is a student of social sciences. Influenced by Israeli politics and her studies - she can't but develop criticism to any monolithic narrative, even if it is the one she grew up on. She might be somewhat confused, but she is developing a liberal approach.

On the public sphere, the simulation staff is leading the dominant symbolic space. This is done by designing time and space, and ceremonial conduction of the voyage to Israel. All workspaces on the ship are given Hebrew names, by a logic imaging Israel: northern Galilee at the bow, Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem in the center, and Eilat at the stern. Time is a powerful tool too: it is forked into "simulation time" (1948) and current time. The ample entrances and exits to and from the "simulation time" promote comparison between the illegal immigrants and the American youngsters. The many ceremonies conducted during the voyage are arranged in a structure of a route: farewell ceremonies construct Europe as the dark place, and the voyage as an uncertain road to the unknown. Then few ceremonies of unity and communal solidarity - lead by American youth movements. The series of final ceremonies are led by the Agency again: they reiterate the whole route (in the "sailing to freedom" event, mentioned before), reenact the declaration of independence and celebrate arrival to "our free homeland". Upon arrival simulation time and current time meticulously unite - as the story line of the "Exodus" ends with the free independent and sovereign Israel. This enables an occasional missile boat of the Israeli navy to salute the "Exodus", and on shore - dances and flowers welcome the tourists warmly. Such dramatization of arrival is impossible if the story line adheres to the illegal immigration theme.

IIIB. The Jewish Route

The Jewish route is an ethnic communal one, striving to lead the teenagers through Israel and Zionism back to the States. This is accomplished mainly by re-contextualization of the Zionist story and modeling time and space. Most these efforts are enveloping the Zionist route without direct contestation. Away from the "Exodus", in Israel and in the States, and with less direct involvement of Jewish Agency staff - the symbolic space is easier to control. On the ship, educators are working to give the voyage a Jewish meaning. Special activities are dedicated by organizations to promotion of organizational solidarity, clarifications of Jewish

values, and reinterpretation of illegal immigration in a Jewish context. Reinterpretation is one function of the invented "freedom holiday" mentioned before. The holiday's ceremonial text echoes the Passover customs. In that there is a return to the mythical beginning of the Jewish people. The holiday text pours the Zionist story into a wider Jewish context. Thus the Zionist story is kept on the cyclical mythical time, where it may be a metaphoric "Big Place" (Gurevitz, and Aran, 1991) of nostalgia and ethnic Identity. As such "place" - it is authorized as a pilgrimage site, a base of renewal and return.

Time and place in the Jewish-American modeling are as flexible as the Zionist ones. A senior youth movement educator parallels between diaspora and Jewish ignorance, and between Zion and Jewish consciousness. Expected to be enlightened by the "Israel Experience", they will not be in their diasporic ignorance anymore, no matter where they are physically. The act of "return" expected is metaphoric. This educator also sees workdays as diaspora and Shabbat as Zion (Israel/Jerusalem) - what makes Shabbat in Israel a very powerful Jewish Experience of unification between metaphoric and physical Zion. A group leader from another movement explains his group: "Israel and Shabbat and Jerusalem are portable, ... and they'll still exist for our group if we'll make a point of remembering them". Concrete time and place turn into a metaphoric inner space of conscience; territoriality is turned into total a-territoriality.

III.C. Contact-zone

"Exodus" as a whole is a contact-zone. On its public sphere there is much compartmentalization. Zionist and Jewish spaces are constructed with seemingly no direct contact, other than addressing the same audience. In this public sphere Zionists and Jews do not confront each other, nor do they negotiate or acknowledge their differences. Even joking about differences is not aloud. An Israeli staff member used to tease participants on the deck. He would say: "Your grandfather is from Poland, and so is mine. How come you live in the

U.S and I live in Israel?" These interactions caused much embarrassment and were stopped at once when higher professional of the Jewish Agency heard of them.

This situation takes a turn at private spheres, at interactions between equal ranking staff. I learned this at a conversation I witnessed between a youth movement official, and an official of the Jewish Agency, both involved in shaping not only this but many other "Israel programs". The American opens: "For me Israel, Jewish... even though they're not - they're synonymous. The same thing. ... I know this is not simple, but I need it that way. I make it simple..." Later, the Israeli, insists on something that bothers him. "Between the both of us", he says, "... we invest so much energy, so much money ... how many percents... how many kids get some taste..." The American and other Israelis present say: "*gurnisht, gurnisht mit gurnisht*" (Yiddish for nothing with nothing) the Israeli continues: "the question is... at the end - does it worth it?" The American reply: "This is something I ask myself all the time". A discussion develops. The discussion ends with a slippage into social updates about mutual acquaintances. This whole interaction is intimate, rich with personal stories of joy and sadness, extraordinary and mundane life. Origin of this intimacy is prosaic: these officials know each other for more than a decade. They meet annually in projects of Jewish-Zionist education and relate to each other as colleagues and friends. These relationships are not limited to the decks of "Exodus". Hence they may not be analyzed in traditional concepts of tourism, like "communitas" and "antistructure" of "Rites de passage" (Turner, 1969; Turner and Turner, 1978). These concepts may explain an ad-hoc intimacy with no continuation beyond the tourist experience. On the border between Jewish Nationalism and Jewish Ethnicity, exists an intensive social world, with colleagues-friends who are willing to take off professional roles, and expose their strategies, weaknesses and doubts. "Exodus" is but one site of this social world. It is here, at the space of the contact-zone, that new identities and relations are formed, and from here may be distributed elsewhere.

IV. Conclusion: Nationality and post-nationality In Jewish Zionist tourism

This work observed Jewish route stories, and attempted at their understanding. "Exodus" provides ample codes, symbols and ceremonies that keep its staff members and ethnographers busy. But analysis should not remain within the borders of this contact-zone. It is easy to get trapped in perceiving "Exodus" as sailing in an empty space. In empty space it seems possible to re-build everything anew: identity, solidarity, community - Jewish and Zionist dreams. But the sailing ship is connected strongly to its coastal contexts. Israelis are coming from Israel, where Israel-Diaspora relations are a remote corner of the Jewish culture. In the Jewish-Israeli culture - national security and Palestinian rights are more burning issues, that shape political conscience of Israeli staff. Americans are aware of their location in America, and ask themselves existential questions as well. They support Israel, but are not planning immigration to her.

The public sphere of "Exodus" is trapped in a complex of stubborn national-Zionism, and Jewish-ethnicity that refuses to comply with nationalization attempts of this Zionism. Jewish-ethnicity, on one hand, have long separated itself from aspiration of physical return to Zion, but doesn't venture undermining Zionism which serves the project of reconstructing Jewish-diasporic Identity. Zionism, on the other hand, inspects itself from within, and copes with post-Zionism at its heart. Post-Zionism and diasporism may combine and serve the same liberal concerns. As of now, they seem not to connect. However this tendency - unwanted or utopian - may not be avoidable. Tourism, I'd like to suggest, enables mobility not only in physical space, but also - in imagined spaces that may influence wider frames of interpretation. These, in turn determine relationships not only between Jewish cultures, but also between Jews and their neighbors.

Appendix: Initial Zionist and Jewish approaches

In official Jewish-Agency's documents - Israel sometimes is presented as the preferred legitimate pronouncement of Judaism, and as *the* place for Jews. This stand is seldom presented forthrightly to participants of "Exodus", but is to be found at sites detached from direct contact with them, and in perceptions of staff members that work directly with participants. The desired centralization of Israel to the Jewish world is salient in the way Jewish Agency senior officers write. For example, in the Internet site of the Jewish-Agency, the next description is available⁵:

The Youth and HeChalotz department⁶ has dedicated itself to the enhancement of Jewish identification among young people in the Diaspora and to bringing them the message of the centrality of Zionism and Israel...

The very act of bringing young Jews to Israel is of course, one of the main objectives of the Zionist movement as a whole...

For many young Jewish youth from the Diaspora, the educational programs offered by the Youth and HeChalotz department represent the initiation of their contact with Israel and possibly the first step to Aliya.

These "Israel Experience" programs become the cornerstones in the development of their Jewish, Israeli and Zionist identity⁷.

According to this the Jewish Agency is interested in enhancing Jewish identification by conveying the message of the centrality of Israel and Zionism.

Another example is closer to "Exodus": towards the summer of 1995, an impressive booklet was produced and distributed by the Jewish-Agency to all "Exodus" participants. It was titled:

⁵ Other Internet pages presenting the "Israel Experience" specifically, are more obscured, and enables Jewish and Zionists interpretations as well as others. Dani Mor, Director of "Israel Experience", refers to implications of Israel programs on participants, at his introduction to "The Israel Experience": "...At the very least, they are inspired to think about their future roles as Jews; at best, they are challenged to act!" (<http://www.jazo-ed.org.il/iex/1/ilexper.html> - 25.1.99; 13.11.01). This vague phrasing of success may be welcomed by organizations with different definitions of targeted "action" whether Jewish or Zionist.

⁶ The department that at the time was responsible for youth programming (HeChalotz is Hebrew for "the pioneer").

⁷ http://www.youth.org.il/no_intro.htm (25.1.99)

"Exodus 1995: The Road to Eretz Yisrael". Shlomo Gravets, then the head of the Youth and HeChalutz department, addressed the prospective participants in the first page:

Zionism is an honorable idea, born of recognition that only in their own sovereign state can Jews thrive as a proud and independent people. ... We hope you will come to actively participate in the dreams and contribute to the reality of a strong and dynamic Jewish nation...

The booklet concludes with the words of Dani Mor, the director of "Israel Experience":

Together we shall try to gain a sense of the historical experience of the struggle for the establishment of the state of Israel. ... You will learn and experience what motivated tens of thousands to endure suffering, danger, and even death, in order to reach the Land of Israel, which was governed by foreigners.

These words, of Gravets and Mor, emphasize and validate the booklet's name: "Exodus 1995: The Road to Eretz Yisrael". Now, that Israel is not governed by foreigners, the title more than hints that the 1995 road of "Exodus" may not only be a re-enactment of historic road that "tens of thousands" have taken, but an actual option for "Exodus" young Jewish participants. This approach combines nicely with the root metaphor of the Jewish Agency for the program, which is "*Haapala*" - a one way road of ascending to Israel.

Bekerman and Silverman show that liberal-American Jews, as well as Liberal-Israeli Jews are trapped in the philosophical and moral impossibility of a triangular combination: Jewish culture, liberal democracy, and nation-state (Bekerman and Silverman, Submitted). These formal attitudes of the Jewish Agency do not reflect this tension, but this is not to say individuals working for the Agency are not trapped within it. However, Jewish-American organizations involved in "Exodus" hesitantly pronounce another voice. This is an independent voice that does not totally comply with the logic of Nation-state Zionism, and practically separates ethnicity and nationalism; Judaism and Israel. Practically, Jewish Americans start to offer an approach that might be described as "New Ethnicity" (Hall, 1990;

1996a; 1996b; Selwyn, 1996a; 1996b). This approach acknowledges ethnic past, interested in studying it and cherish it's traditions. But it does not comply with its dictation of future aspirations, and does not strive for a renewal or return to its "golden age". New ethnicity is a self-assured ethnicity, separating ethnic origin from nationalism and from ancestral territory. In the Jewish context, this entails a belief that "Jewish place" is were Jews live, and that Israel - unique as it is - is but one such place.

Most American writers about Israel and "The Israel Experience" see Israel as part of a larger route to Jewish identity, Jewish continuity and stronger Jewish community - at the home communities of participants (Breakstone, 1993; Chazan, 1994; London and Hirshfeld, 1989; Reisman and Chazan, 1978). Jewish organizations promote "Israel Experience" with the help of the circular root metaphor of Tourism or Pilgrimage, as is conveyed in the various "American" titles accompanying Israel programs: *"Great summer escape"*, *"Destination Israel"* and *"Israel Pilgrimage"*.

American youth organizations market the Israel trip, usually as a tool, like in the following NFTY text, on the cover of recruiting videotape:

...Israel offers a wonder filled environment for exiting and unforgettable Jewish Identity building. Our teens return home feeling a personal bond with the land and history of Israel. Our teens return from Israel feeling proud of themselves and their people.

It is known that NFTY programs promote Reform NFTY culture in Israel, which serves as an environment for developing Jewish Identity (Goldberg, 1994). Young Judaea, which is known to be more Zionistic uses "Israel as a background" (Heilman, 1994), and so is also USY⁸, considered to be the most "Jewish" of the three. These three Youth organizations were the main "Exodus" partners during the time of research.

While the "Zionist" and "Jewish" communities are aware of their duality, each is sensitive enough to ensure common operations, and hold common symbols in tact. They also develop mechanisms to convey each their messages and values not only with no direct confrontation, but also with appearance of unity and partnership. The way this is done on "Exodus" is the empirical focus of this research.

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⁸ A high professional of USY defines what he expects of "Israel Experience" participants: "I want them to be Jewish, to be better Jews. I want Jewish continuity, and I want less intermarriage" (personal conversation 20.12.99). These words seem to capture the desire of all Jewish-American partners of this project.

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