



Who is “the average Israeli”?

Lexington KY Havurah’s Cinematic Study Weekend

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From **MAKING ISRAEL (2007)**—Collected articles edited by Benny Morris

“Israeli Historiography and the Ethnic Problem”

by Yaron Tsur

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Israel’s Jewish ethnic problem—like the national conflict with the Arabs and the secular-religious Jewish cultural divide—poses one of its greatest challenges. While Israeli researchers may dispute its causes, they all nevertheless agree that in religious and national terms it is an internal, Jewish problem involving two ethnic groups from different parts of the world: broadly speaking, Europe on the one hand and Asia and Africa on the other...

Toward the close of the nineteenth century, just before the Zionist movement got off the ground, the vast majority of Jews lived in Europe, particularly Eastern Europe. The Jewish minorities in Asia and Africa comprised about 6 percent of world Jewry, a ratio that rose to about 10 to 12 percent after the destruction of European Jewry in the Holocaust... In the Yishuv, where indigenous Sephardi Jews had traditionally enjoyed political and demographic hegemony, the scales already began to tip toward European Jewry, the great majority of Jewish immigrants to Palestine hailing from Eastern Europe...

That pre-Zionist Old Yishuv spawned the designations for the two Jewish groups that were later to be ranged on different sides of the ethnic divide: **Sephardi** and **Ashkenazi**. Originally, Sephardi referred to Jews expelled from the Iberian Peninsula who had settled mainly in the heart of the Ottoman Empire, with a small segment making their way from there to the Land of Israel...

Among the non-Europeans, increased immigration modified the proportion of the veteran Sephardi component in the population, gradually giving way to a more complex ethnic terminology... After the State of Israel was established and Jews from Arab lands made up the greater share of non-Ashkenazim, the term **Mizrachim** began to rival the Sephardi denomination... (Page 231)



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Jan's Mosaic from Recent Movies

DEAR MR. WALDMAN	2006	D: Hanan Peled	DVD Chapter 2
More films about Holocaust survivors &/or their children: HA ASHKENAZIM + AVIYA'S SUMMER; HA ASHKENAZIM; METALLIC BLUES; WALK ON WATER			
COLOMBIAN LOVE	2004	D: Shay Kanot	DVD Chapter 8
More films about cross-cultural tzuris: THE SCHWARTZ DYNASTY + BROKEN WINGS; CAMPFIRE; LOVE & DANCE; SALLAH SHABATI			
PAPER DOLLS	2006	D: Tomer Heymann	DVD Chapter 3
More films about "Guest Workers" living in Israel: JANEM, JANEM + JAMES' JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM; JELLYFISH; NOODLE			
BEAUFORT	2007	D: Joseph Cedar	DVD Chapter 7
More films about Israelis in the military &/or at war: WALTZ WITH BASHIR + CLOSE TO HOME; CUP FINAL; KIPPUR; STRANGERS; YOSI & JAGGER			

More Israeli films on DVD:

<p>Some films about Kibbutzniks: CHILDREN OF THE SUN; KIBBUTZ; NO LONGER 17; SWEET MUD</p>
<p>Some films about Mizrachi families: AVIVA MY LOVE, BONJOUR MONSIEUR SHLOMI; LATE MARRIAGE; TURN LEFT AT THE END OF THE WORLD</p>
<p>Some films about Frum/Haredi/UltraOrthodox families: KADOSH; MY FATHER MY LORD; THE SECRETS; TIME OF FAVOR; USHPIZIN + Films from Ma'ale</p>
<p>Some films about Non-Jewish Israelis (Bedouin/ Druzim/Palestinian): THE BUBBLE; FREE ZONE; GOD'S SANDBOX; LADY KUL EL ARAB; THE SYRIAN BRIDE; YELLOW ASPHALT</p>

FOR MORE BACKGROUND, CHECK OUT THESE TWO GREAT RESOURCES:

DIVERGENT JEWISH CULTURES: ISRAEL AND AMERICA (2001)
Collection of articles edited by Deborah Dash Moore & S. Ilan Troen

IDENTITY POLITICS ON THE ISRAELI SCREEN (2001)
Written by Yosefa Loshitzky

ALSO FASCINATING, BUT MORE MILITANT & CONTROVERSIAL:

TABOO MEMORIES, DIASPORIC VOICES (2006)
Collection of essays written by Ella Shohat