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From Religion to Pragmatism: Habayit Hayehudi's Attitude toward Judea and Samaria

Abstract: Judea and Samaria became a really important element in Israeli right-wing and religious debate following the Six Day War, because the State of Israel began to control it militarily and politically and started settling in this area. Nonetheless, Judea and Samaria had a deeper meaning within Religious Zionist ideology and its main representative Mafdal (NRP). After 1967 Religious Zionists were also influenced by the Messianic ideology, thus biblical territories accelerate Redemption. Hence, the NRP insisted on creating and developing Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria, both in leftist and rightist governments. The situation has changed since the Oslo Accords and Sharon's disengagement from Gaza. Both were shocking for the Religious Zionism camp, the state was no longer a steady defender of Jewish settlements. In 2008 the Mafdal was absorbed by the newly created Habayit Hayehudi (the Jewish Home) which was treated as a hope for Religious Zionism to restore its former glory. The head of the Jewish Home – Naftali Bennett – called his party a real right-wing camp. He is thought to be a representative of settlers but he also tries to widen his electorate with secular citizens. Habayit Hayehudi is the best example of a party which wants to achieve ideas of Religious Zionism in the new political reality after Oslo. The article will analyze the attitude of the Jewish Home party towards Judea and Samaria and party's ideological course.

Keywords: *Judea and Samaria; Religious Zionism; political right; Naftali Bennett; Israeli right; Mafdal; Jewish Home*

Introduction

The case of right-wing parties and their attitudes toward Judea and Samaria following the Oslo Accords are interesting and complex. The three main of them are in the current Knesset: Likud, Israel Beitenu and Habayit Hayehudi. Their leaders and politicians have different visions of the future of the peace process, settlement policy and perceptions of Judea and Samaria. All of it is determined by the Oslo Accords which created the new political reality in Israel. Likud, as the main right-wing party, imposed security measures and a counter-terrorism policy as dominating elements in the political discourse (Shindler 2011, p.274–280).

There is not much written in Israel Beitenu's programs concerning settlement policy. The party rejects Israel on both sides of Jordan and postulates political separation of the Gaza Strip with Judea and Samaria (The Vision of Yisrael Beitenu – Israel Our Home; Our Policies in Brief). Lieberman supports territorial exchanges between Arabs and Jewish settlers but sometimes he speaks in favor of expanding settlements and annexing some parts of Judea and Samaria. He also claimed that creation of a “viable” Palestinian state is still possible (Lieberman: I Support Creation of a Viable Palestinian State).

The Oslo Accords were also the new reality for the Mafdal¹, whose main ideological base was religion and messianism. The political struggle around Oslo, the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the massacre perpetrated by Baruch Goldstein challenged it effectively. The Israel Democracy Institute (IDI) claims that in the 2000s the party was anxious about its weak political support. Thus, the National-Religious Party formed a joint list with the National Union in 2006 (the National Religious Party). It shows that the party which was running elections independently since 1959 was aware of losing position in politics. Because of what happened in the 90s, the trust for Religious Zionism was reduced.

In 2008 the Jewish Home was founded. The NRP's leader – Zevulun Orlev – claimed that the new formation will unite the camp of Religious Zionism on the one list. The new rightist party was formed out of the merging of Mafdal, Tkuma and Moledet. It was seen as the end of consistent splits among national-religious politicians following Oslo (Meranda, 03.11.2008). It was a hope to adapt national-religious ideology to the new reality. Thus, I have chosen to analyze Habayit Hayehudi, as being a descendant of the NRP. The aim of this article is to present the Jewish Home's attitude toward Judea and Samaria 23 years after the Oslo Accords. The main question is how much of this attitude is taken from the NRP's ideology and how much is proposed by the new leader? Does Naftali Bennett rely on the old political platform or does he try the new ways to reach wider electorate? I will analyze political programs of Habayit Hayehudi from 2009, 2013 and 2015 elections to the Knesset to check what they consist of concerning Judea and Samaria. Another useful source used in the article are statements of its politicians, especially proposals for the annexation of Judea and Samaria or legislative ideas towards it. So another question is what are the differences between the party's programs and its statements? Are both sources identical or different in their meaning?

National-religious groups, parties and their impact on the State of Israel and Israeli society have been the subjects of academic research. It was examined by Ami Pedahzur (*The Triumph of Israel's Radical Right*), Aviezer Ravitzky (*Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism*), Israel Shahak & Norton Mezvinsky (*Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel*) and Uri Huppert (*Izrael w cieniu fundamentalizmów*).

¹ The Mafdal (Hebrew מַפְדָּל ‘מפדל’) is Hebrew acronym of Miflaga Datit-Leumit (מפלגה דתית-לאומית) – National Religious Party.

It is important to underline the meaning of the national-religious segment of society inside Israeli society. Oz Almog points out that the identity borders of this community are flexible. Therefore, orthodox religious, conservative or even secular persons may belong to it. Nevertheless, Almog in his research, determined the number of national-religious Jews in the range of 570,000–600,000 (Almog, 2011, p. 72–76). In turn, the Israel Democracy Institute carried out research in the country; it stated that the national-religious Jews constitute up to 20% of the Israeli population (Herman, 2014, p 39). Some of the representatives of this group are also settlers living in the Judea and Samaria. In this case, the IDI reports that 51% of the residents of Judea and Samaria identify themselves with the national-religious community (p. 3). Here, Peace Now organization's report should also be mentioned. According to it, during the 2013 elections all settlers were able to elect five Members of Knesset (The Voting Patterns of the Settlers –2013 Knesset Elections, 2013, p. 1). It shows that the national-religious segment is influential and provides wide electoral basis.

The article will show the impact of political discourse after Oslo when ideology and religion were slowly replaced by pragmatism and security measures. To analyze mentioned issues will be helpful behaviorism and constructivism. The first method analyzes political actions of groups or individuals in the case of political reality. It is also useful to describe political struggles in the prism of people's actions. Constructivism portrays politics based on the constructing of identities, surroundings, reality and explaining ideological backgrounds of politicians or voters. These factors have a direct impact on decisions, programs, statements and worldviews (Chodubski, 2004, p. 128–129; Czapotowicz, 2007, p. 306–310)².

The National Religious Party and Judea and Samaria

For the purposes of this article it is necessary to recall what the status of Judea and Samaria was in the ideology and political programs of the Mafdal, the antecedent of the Jewish Home party. The position of the National Religious Party and national-religious circles toward territorial issues was motivated mainly by Judaism. Tanakh was selectively used for justification of Israeli control over gained in 1967 Sinai, Gaza and Judea and Samaria. Especially, the last one was crucial because of the important places for religion (e.g. Hebron or Jericho). Judea and Samaria were of course part of the promise by God Eretz Israel. So the Land of Israel and the People of Israel became significant elements in Religious Zionist ideology.

As Artur Skorek claims, this situation facilitated that, at the end of 1960s and at the beginning of 1970s, young members of the Mafdal, who were attracted by Gush Emunim³,

² This article is a part of author's research into Israeli right-wing parties and their attitudes toward internal politics following the Oslo Accords. All Hebrew names and words in the article will be written in English transliteration.

³ Gush Emunim (English: Block of Faithful) was a movement of religious, right-wing and messianic

started to gain control over the party. “The Youth” caused the NRP to start to shift to the right and the new party’s line was based on the historical and religious rights of Jews to Judea and Samaria. Despite there being no official alliance between Mafdal and Gush Emunim, politicians of the National Religious Party still had contacts with the movement (Skorek 2015, p. 136–137; 157–161). Changes made by “The Youth” were irreversible. The NRP was more vulnerable to right-wing demands and the opinions of national-religious rabbis⁴. Thus, the party didn’t accept an idea of “peace for land” and didn’t accept territorial concessions. Moreover, the Mafdal was sceptical of the peace process with Jordan in 1970’s (Shindler 2011, p. 166).

It is necessary to underline that changes were also visible on the party’s lists. There were more politicians, activists and rabbis linked with the settlement movement such as Chanan Porat, rabbi Chaim Drukman and rabbi Yitzhak Levy⁵. Nonetheless, territorial issues were not the main part of the political platform of the National Religious Party. The political program in the 1988 elections didn’t mention so much about Judea and Samaria. There were standard demands like the historical and religious rights of Jewish People to the whole Eretz Israel treated as a source of Jewish existence. The Mafdal was also reluctant to giving away any part of Israel and stopping settlement in Judea and Samaria. The program stated that there is only the State of Israel between Mediterranean Sea and Jordan. However, there was more information in the program about education, state-religion relations, the status of the Jewish family, social issues and religious legislation (Ikarei matsa le-Knesset ha-12, p. 1–3). With the passing of time the Mafdal became more divided internally. There were struggles between the radical, hawkish, maximalist group and the more moderate, compliant politicians. Those struggles were seen when the Mafdal was in a coalition during the reaching of a peace agreement with Egypt, the Oslo Accords and the Wye River Memorandum⁶. In the latter the NRP was also in the Netanyahu government. Because of internal conflicts and incomprehension, as Skorek claims, the party was losing its political support and position. For more radical circles the Mafdal became too moderate and its demands were not maximalist enough. Thus, the NRP lost its voters at the end of 1990s to

activists whose main aim was to establish and develop Jewish settlements in Judea, Samaria and Gaza.

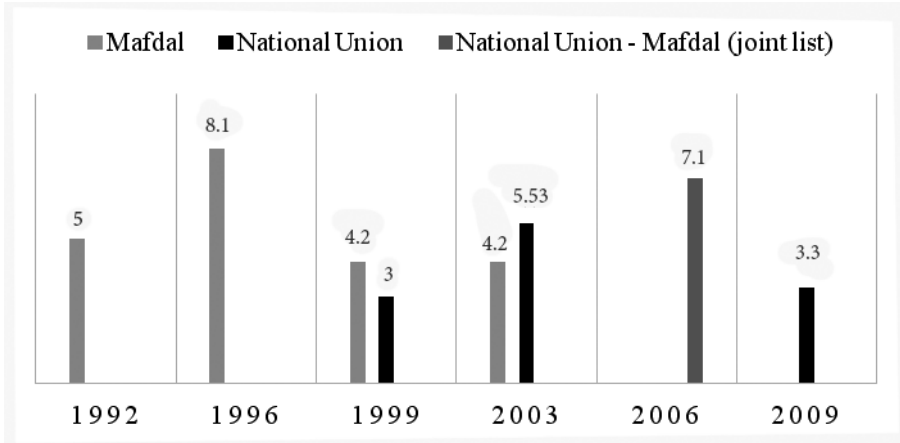
⁴ More about influence of rabbis on the party’s decisions in: Bick E. (2007), “A Clash of Authority: Lay Leaders and Rabbis in the National Religious Party”, *Israel Affairs*, vol. 13, no. 2, p. 401–417.

⁵ More of candidates can be found on the Knesset’s website: https://www.knesset.gov.il/faction/eng/FactionPage_eng.asp?PG=3 (03.12.2017) and The Israel Democracy Institute’s website: <https://en.idi.org.il/israeli-elections-and-parties/parties/national-religious-party/> (03.12.2017).

⁶ On the ground of an agreement with Egypt (1979) Israel withdrew settlements from Sinai and returned it to Egypt. The Oslo Accords (1993, 1995) recognized Palestinian political rights to self-determination and divided the West Bank to three areas: A (Palestinian civil and security control), B (Palestinian civil control and Israeli security control) and C (Israeli civil and security control). The Wye River Memorandum (1998) created a timeline of territorial redeployments from Area C to A and B.

other nationalistic parties such as the National Union – Ichud Leumi – or more radical like Tkuma, both had a more determined standpoint in case of relations with the Palestinians and Judea and Samaria (Skorek 2015, p. 202–205).

Table 1. Elections results of the Mafdal, National Union and their joint list (%)



Source: National Union, *The Israel Democracy Institute*, <https://en.idi.org.il/israeli-elections-and-parties/parties/national-union/> (03.12.2017); National Religious Party, *The Israel Democracy Institute*, <https://en.idi.org.il/israeli-elections-and-parties/parties/national-religious-party/> (03.12.2017).

The foregoing analysis shows that the Mafdal suffered a lack of ideological unity and stability. The party was changing its statements depending on political coalitions, public opinions and the current shape of relations with Arab states. Conflicts inside the party were also an element in weakening its support. Protests linked with the Oslo Accords, the assassination of Rabin and terrorist attacks also had an impact on the position of the Mafdal. These factors caused other splits inside the camp of Religious Zionism. Idith Zertal and Akiva Eldar described the reactions of national-religious Jews after the 2nd Oslo Agreement. Rabbis linked with this ideology prohibited soldiers from evacuating military bases. Chanan Porat called for disobedience in case of any evacuation. After the assassination, the Yesha settler Council and national-religious parties organized a special event. Both condemned the murder but also claimed that the only victims of this situation are Religious Zionists. Left-wing parties, they said, falsely accused national-religious Jews. PM Rabin was presented as a traitor or a member of the Nazi SS by furious participants of anti-Oslo rallies (Zertal & Eldar, 2007, p. 151–156). Motti Inbari presented responses of national-religious rabbis linked with Mercaz Harav Yeshiva and called it “the mainstream”. All of them perceived Oslo as an obstacle on the path toward redemption which is a long and complex process. Rabbi Shlomo Aviner viewed it as the test of Jewish faith and called for strengthening settlements. Another rabbi, Zvi Tau, promoted intensification of educational efforts which can repair

damages made by the state. They stated that all obstacles should be challenged by fervent faith and the spreading of Torah teachings (Inbari, 2012, p. 59–71).

The unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip made by Ariel Sharon in 2005 was more severe for Religious Zionism. Sharon was treated as a father of the settlements in 1980s. In his autobiography, co-written by David Chanoff, *Warrior: An Autobiography*, he asserted that he was committed to setting up Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria and all this effort was not possible without: “people who were willing to make sacrifices necessary to live on those barren hills and ridges amidst a hostile local population” (Sharon & Chanoff, 2005, p. 361). For the whole settler community such a decision made by the politician who was defending them was a blow. Rabbi Yitzhak Ginsburg⁷ claimed that giving away any part of the Land of Israel is a sin, “a slap in the face of the Giver [God – author’s note]” (Ginsburgh, 2003, p. 59). He convinced that the wholeness of the Promised Land is a right according to the Torah, Kabbalah and Mishnah. The Torah, the Land of Israel and the Jewish People are a spiritual unity. Moreover, only unity of the land (shlemut ha-aretz) in Jewish hands can provide fulfilment of God’s teachings. He claims that the Torah forbids non-Jews to live in the entire Eretz Israel (p. 60–63). Again, the Mafdal was internally divided in that case. Struggles linked with supporting or not supporting Sharon’s decision and remaining or not remaining in government weakened the party and its position. It also caused a shift of political support to Ichud Leumi (Skorek, 2015, p. 202–203). Divisions inside the Mafdal were the reflection of wider divisions among Religious Zionists. The National-religious camp lost its unity. Inbari presented the most visible rifts. The most extreme postulates replacing the state by a Torah state or theocracy. The second responds to calls for the strengthening of the educational campaign because of religious and spiritual weakness of Jews. Another stance postulates retreat from public or political life and taking up the Haredi lifestyle with limited connections with the state (Inbari, 2012, p. 107–132).

The Jewish Home: the end of Religious Zionism’s platform?

As was mentioned above, Habayit Hayehudi was established in 2008. It absorbed the Mafdal but surprisingly didn’t refer to itself as a national-religious party or a part of the Religious Zionist camp. The Jewish Home party and the chosen new leader Naftali Bennett announced in 2012 that it will create the new quality, “New Era for the Israeli right” (Ben Sasson, 23.12.2012). Indeed, in Bennett’s biography on the Knesset’s website it is written that he is a religious person after yeshiva but that he has also succeeded in the secular world. He served in Sayeret Matkal and later in Sayeret Maglan during The Second Lebanon War.

⁷ Rabbi Yitzhak Ginsburg is an authority in Jewish Kabbalah. He is linked with Chabad and he is an author of books on Halakha, restoring monarchy in Israel, the religious justification of settling the whole Land of Israel. He opposes removing or stopping settlement in Judea and Samaria and he is reluctant to accept non-Jews in Israel.

He also co-founded a company which specializes in internet security (Member of Knesset Naftali Bennett). Anat Roth claims that Bennett was aware of Religious Zionism's past; all of the struggles and internal conflicts. He wanted to break with the sectarian character of the party to avoid another problem with unity. The new vision was to establish a party which will gather all citizens who are interested in Jewish identity, Zionism, Jewish values in politics and who want to take responsibility for the state. Bennett wanted to match the inherited political group to the new reality after Oslo and the Gaza Disengagement and to open it up to the new electorate (Roth, 2015, p. 219–220). The question now is, are those changes visible especially in the Judea and Samaria context? What has changed in the Jewish Home's attitude on the level of political programs?

One of the main key points of the political platform in 2009 elections are “No to freezing the settlement” and “Rejection of the Oslo Accords” (Matsa “Habayit Hayehudi-Mafdal Chadash” le-Knesset ha-18, p. 1). Mafdal made similar statements and the same points are in programs of the right-wing parties in Israel which oppose the Oslo Accords. The Jewish Home party underlines ties with Religious Zionism and its values, such as the Land of Israel for the People of Israel by Torah of Israel. The party also believes that, according to Torah, achieving peace with their Arab neighbors, even with the Palestinian Authority, is important for Jews but it must respect Israeli security needs linked with the war against terror. This political program also states that there is no place between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea for the Palestinian state. The party claims that 75% of the Jordanian population is Palestinian so it should be the state of Arabs living in Gaza and Judea and Samaria. Additionally, peace with Arab states should ensure that the Jewish settlement provides Israeli control over Eretz Israel and it has to remain in Israeli area of responsibility. In exchange for this the State of Israel will respect the minority right of Arabs living in Judea and Samaria (p. 11–12). Habayit Hayehudi promises to establish a national referendum which will be useful in the case when the state will want to make another unilateral withdrawal from the Land of Israel or the settlements (p. 12).

The settlement policy is seen as God's plan and the visions of the Prophets, but in further parts of the program there is no religious justification of Jewish presence in Judea and Samaria. The party treats this area as a part of the State of Israel like the Negev, the Jordan Valley, the Golan Heights and Galilee. Settlement in these regions will strengthen the Israeli administration, economy, tourism and transportation. Thus, the party will be against any freezing of the settlement process, regardless of international reactions (p. 18–19). Habayit Hayehudi's program in the 2013 elections was similar. However, religion is not mentioned in the context of Judea and Samaria. The party was against any form of the Palestinian state and against annexing all Judea and Samaria with two million Arabs. This second option would be dangerous for the security of Israel and its demography. Rather than this the Jewish Home offered developing and promoting settlements in all parts of the Land of Israel. In that way Israel will be a state of all Jews not only a “State of Tel Aviv” (The Bayit Yehudi – Because Israel is our Jewish home).

The third program, during the 2015 elections, underlined again that a vision of the Palestinian state will endanger the future of Israel and its priorities. Annexing of all Judea and Samaria with Arab inhabitants will be a threat to the Jewish demography and the state's character. Settlement should become a national priority to strengthen all parts of the Land of Israel (Habayit Hayehudi, p. 3–4). In all programs of the Jewish Home the party settlement is not called “hitnachalut” (Hebrew: תּוֹלְדוֹת) but rather “hitiashvut” (Hebrew: תּוֹבֵשׁוּת). The first term in Israel refers to communities established behind the Green Line in Judea and Samaria after the Six Day War. Most of them exist in Area C which consists of approximately 60% of the West Bank. The second refers to the Jewish settlements established in Palestine before 1948 such as Tel Aviv, Rehovot or Herzliya. Therefore, an interesting thing is that the party does not use the controversial “hitnachalut” and prefers to use the term linked with establishing of a Jewish presence in Palestine which was a basis for the creation of the State of Israel. All mentioned programs treat settlement as a tool to strengthen the Israeli administration and presence in all parts of the state. The described documents additionally show an impact of the security discourse in Israel. Decisions linked with Judea and Samaria are described in the context of threats to the demography, state, citizens, law and economy. Religious or ideological issues were not exposed in favor of legislation, Arabs' minority rights⁸, state's priorities and security.

Statements of the Jewish Home's politicians on the Judea and Samaria

Another level of analysis are provided by the statements of the party's leader and Minister of Justice – Ayelet Shaked. Are those factors identical to the political programs? I will try to show the relationship between them. Since Bennett was chosen as a chairman in 2012 he started a determined campaign regarding Judea and Samaria. In 2014 when he was an Economy Minister in the Netanyahu government he offered to annex 60% of the West Bank. He claimed that this step would be realistic. The rest of Judea and Samaria would serve as an “autonomy on asteroids” in which Palestinians would be able to create self-governance. Bennett said that Israel had made the annexation twice in the past, so another one would not be a problem for the government. In summary he said: “I know it is not as sexy as the perfect two-state solution but this is realistic” (Bennett calls to annex 60 percent of the West Bank, 27.04.2014). Minister Bennett also asserted that annexing about 440 000 settlers with only 10 000 Palestinians would be safe for Israeli demography (Newman, 09.04.2014).

When in 2015 the Prime Minister Netanyahu released convicted Palestinians and said that he would accept an idea of the Palestinian state Bennett quickly made a response. He said that Israel should not make any territorial concessions, even if the international community were to penalize it. He claimed that Israel should be independent and: “Israel

⁸ Programs written in Hebrew do not consist term “Palestinian” in reference to Judea and Samaria inhabitants.

needs to do what is right for it, what is right for its people, what is right for its long-term survival” (Heller, 17.02.2015). In the same year Bennett insisted that Israel couldn’t leave Judea and Samaria for Palestinians. They would transform it into a Hamas state. It would be dangerous for the State of Israel, so the government should apply its sovereignty on it. Areas A and B couldn’t be abandoned (Heilman, 03.12.2015).

In 2016, during a memorial event for Chanan Porat, Bennett pushed for the annexation and sacrifices to realize this dream. He mentioned Porat’s opinions that there is no right to divide the state (Bennett: Israel must make ‘sacrifices’ to annex the West Bank, 07.10.2016). During the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations in Jerusalem, in 2017, Bennett stated that Palestinians have two states in Jordan and Gaza, so another on the West Bank will be the beginning of Israel’s end. He also reiterated President’s Reuven Rivlin idea about annexing Judea and Samaria with all its Arab citizens with the right to citizenship as a threat to the state. His solution to the conflict would be to annex Area C of the West Bank (Aharon, 20.02.2017).

The last analyzed proposition linked with Judea and Samaria is Ayelet Shaked’s idea to apply Israeli civil law to the settlements. The new law will exchange military administration for civil administration. She claimed that military law discriminates against settlers. The new law would grant them the same status as in Israel and it would grant them more security (Pileggi, 02.05.2016).

Analysis made above shows differences between the level of statements and the level of political programs. It seems obvious that politicians say something other than what they write due to the current situation in the state. Nonetheless, the position of Judea and Samaria is interesting. In programs this area is treated as a part of Israel, the same as the Golan Heights, the Negev or Galilee. It is not mentioned that the West Bank is divided into three areas with different administrative status. The State of Israel is shown as a monolith. Presented statements showed something different. Bennett describes Judea and Samaria as a separate entity. There are Jewish settlers, there are regional councils; settlers can vote in elections but Israel needs to annex it. He wants to make it, especially Area C, a formal part of the state like was done with the Golan Heights and Jerusalem. It also shows another difference. Bennett talks in a firm tone; he is very categorical and adamant. The longer he is in politics and in the government, the more often he pushes for annexation and decided steps toward Palestinians. He firmly tries to leverage Netanyahu’s governments. Political programs are general. There is no Bennett rhetoric, no firm tone except rejection of the Oslo Accords. It looks like programs are “written for everyone” to show the moderate and open character of the party. The last difference is the background of statements and programs. In both of them there is no religious justification. Although Bennett is modern orthodox he does not use Judaism in creating an image of the party. Sometimes the Jewish Home has unorthodox statements (e.g. recognition of non-orthodox conversions, conscription of orthodox Jews, women as ministers). More often Bennett uses security, economic, social or demography arguments regarding to Judea and Samaria.

Conclusions

The article shows that despite Habayit Hayehudi being a successor of Mafdal, it does not completely continue the NRP's ideological line. It still has strong support in the settler movement. In the 2013 elections, 64% of the national-religious settlements voted for Bennett. More interesting is the fact that in the secular or mixed settlements Bennett gained 34% and 27,1% in the secular settlements in the Jordan Valley (sometimes the latter are described as left-wing) (The Voting Patterns of the Settlers – 2013 Knesset Elections, 2013, p. 3, 5–6). In the 2015 elections Habayit Hayehudi was the dominant power in Judea and Samaria, it won in 59 settlements (Geography and Politics in Israel). It shows that not only national-religious voters support Bennett's party which is opening to the secular part of Israeli society. It remained the voice of the settlers at the same time as gaining new support. Alongside the settler demands Habayit Hayehudi offers educational, economic, social and legislative solutions. The Jewish Home does not use ideology directly in its programs and rhetoric; it is translated into pragmatic elements. Israeli presence in Judea and Samaria is justified by the security of the state and its future needs, strategy, defending Israeli demography and fighting terrorism. All seems to be bound up with everyday life's reality. Shaked's idea also underlines legal measures, legislation, civil and minority rights. It is something more than what Mafdal offered.

The new party's message is constructed to reach traditional national-religious and secular right, non-settler voters. It also shows the impact of the Oslo Accords. There is no place in Israel politics for direct and expansive ideology. But it does not totally exclude national-religious ideology from the political scene of Israel. Moreover, there are still parties or organizations linking nationalism with Judaism or referring to the Kahanism, e.g. Lehava, Eli Yishai's Yahad, Otzma Yehudit (formerly known as Otzma LeYisrael). However, national-religious ideology was weakened by Rabin's assassination, Baruch Goldstein and the radical settler movement. It was validated by the 1999, 2003 and 2006 elections and the NRP's fall. The Jewish Home tries to be a modern right-wing party linking religion, tradition and modernity to avoid connections with sectarianism. Permanently being in ruling coalitions with the Likud helps to present Habayit Hayehudi as a moderate national-religious party with an impact on Israeli internal policy. The foregoing analysis showed that Bennett learned by what has happened with Mafdal and tries to build own position on more stable basis and a wider electorate. He tries to link the legacy of Mafdal with the new image of his party.

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