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DAVID MAKOVSKY: EXPLORING THE TWO-STATE SOLUTION

Joshua Holo: Welcome to the College Commons Podcast, passionate perspectives from Judaism's leading thinkers, brought to you by the Hebrew Union College, Jewish Institute of Religion, America's first Jewish institution of higher learning. My name is Joshua Holo, Dean of HUC's Jack H. Skirball Campus in Los Angeles, and your host. You're listening to a special episode recorded at Symposium 2, a conference held in Los Angeles at Stephen Wise Temple in November of 2018.

It's my great pleasure to welcome Mr. David Makovsky to the College Commons Podcast. David Makovsky is a Senior Fellow and Director of the Project on the Middle East Peace Process at the Washington Institute. He's also an adjunct lecturer in Middle Eastern Studies at Johns Hopkins University's Paul H Nitze School of Advanced International Studies. He served as senior advisor in the Office of the Secretary of State in 2013 and '14, working with the envoy for Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. David Makovsky, it's such a pleasure to have you. Thank you for joining us.

David Makovsky: So glad to be with you.

JH: The first question I wanna ask is one of the primary topics of your work, which is the two-state solution. Depending on what I'm reading from your writings, sometimes I get the sense that your support for the two-state solution boils down to a sense that it's the least infeasible option. Is that unfair of me, is that accurate or partially fair?

DM: I mean, I like to say there's just too much history and too little geography. [chuckle] These parties live almost on top of each other. It's not like the Israel-Egypt peace, where there was 200 kilometers of desert between Israel and... The Sinai between Israel and Egypt. The whole area between the Mediterranean and Jordan River is like 50 miles wide. And the question is what is the demographics, and how do you make the geography and demography to go together? I'm not a believer that you could solve this problem tomorrow. I'm coming out with a new book in 2019 with Dennis Ross, it'll be our second book together, on leaders who took historic decisions. But it's basically also a call for saying that there is a decision not yet taken here, which is to deal with the fact of ensuring that Israel is both a Jewish state with equal rights for all its citizens and also a democratic state. And so, that kind of leaves... Constrains you in terms of what are your options. If you wanna maintain the duality of Zionism.

JH: The crux of the duality being?

DM: Both as... What I call the designer's proverbial airplane, which is that both... One wing is like, it's a Jewish state, of course, with equal rights for all citizens and that it's a democratic state.

And that means also figuring out where do people actually live, and then try to have borders reflect that in a certain way. So I came out with this new website, which we hope people access, called 'Settlements and Solutions'. Where do the settlers actually live? How does that intersect with peace plans? And it leaves you... Basically, you realize that 85% of the Israelis who live over what we call the green line, that... The post-1967 line, 85% live in 8% of the land, largely adjacent to Israeli urban areas.

DM: So the question is, is there a way to say, "Alright, you keep some of that. And then... But you give us... We call swaps, a territorial exchange." So what was once inside Israel '67 gets gerrymandered into a Palestinian entity. And, therefore, once you find out where does demography meet geography in the West Bank, then you see that this is something where you have to strive to, doesn't mean you could do it tomorrow. I like baseball metaphors. And baseball, we try, in the United States, to hit the home run ball, three times. Bill Clinton, 2000, Condoleezza Rice's effort in 2007 and '08, Anapolis, and all the follow-on meetings between Abbas and Omar. And then the effort I was a part of with Kerry, Secretary of State job, Kerry said... 2013, '14.

DM: I think these were noble efforts. I admit I might not be objective about the third one, but I think these were efforts to try to solve the conflict. But in baseball, whenever you swing for the fences, there's a chance you're gonna strike out. And so, I'm... Become more of an advocate of the solid singles, given that the Venn diagram between these two leaders, Netanyahu and Abbas are just... Do not overlap. And it comes down to five core issues. The issues are not exactly the same issues they were years ago. Things like water, for example, thank God, for technology, that is not a zero-sum issue, so it's not in the top five anymore. So that's easier now than it was.

But, of the top five, there's the borders, there's the security arrangements, there's Jerusalem, there's refugees and there's, "Do you accept the character of the other side's entity?" I call that mutual recognition. Those are the five. And these three efforts, where I thought they swing for the fences, was an effort to solve all five of those core issues. And the leaders each were willing to do one big thing, but they basically wanted four things in return for their big thing. So, if Abbas is of the belief that the refugee issue in Israel is not gonna just open its gates to the refugees because there is gonna be a Palestinian state, and that's why we're doing this, for that, partly, no small measure.

DM: So he understood that. Netanyahu understood that, more than he gets credit for in the American Jewish community, I would say, that on the land issue, it would be closer to what President Obama actually said. The problem was is that for each of that one kind of ace card that they thought they were putting on the table, they wanted the four other things to go their way. And that's where the Venn diagram just didn't overlap. And I felt we tried the front door, the side door, the back door, the window, the basement, even the chimney. And my view was that these leaders, on those five for five, just weren't there. And it wasn't just Netanyahu, it was Abbas too. And so, going back to the baseball metaphor, my view is let's try to hit the solid single. Let's try to do something that would be meaningful and give us... Put us in a direction, even if we don't reach the destination. But it would at least convince the publics on both sides that this is a real process, and it's not just kind of a talking process that people are just paying lip service to. That is really, I think, for me, what it was about, was trying to find a way to get the publics re-

engaged. And, to me, the way to do that...

JH: With a win.

DM: With a win, with something that they could say, "Okay, this is hard, but if the other guy does their part, okay. I'll do my part if they do their part." And I think each one of those... And I have some definite thoughts what the solid single is. But I think it's a way of trying to convince each public that you're dealing with their Kishkes, you're dealing with their guts, you're dealing with their gut fears, their visceral fears of the other side. So I think in the case of what Israelis are worried about, it's terrorism, it's incitement, it's a whole kind of peace culture, what are you teaching in the schools? And I think a way to address that is to say Palestinian authority is no longer gonna pay relatives of suicide bombers or people who perpetrate violence, not gonna pay them a stipend anymore, that was running at three times the national average, and was basically tenured salary for life.

DM: Because the message there is, "If you pay to slay, you're not a peace partner. You're not in this to solve a problem, you're in it to perpetuate a problem." And I think that's an important message. And I had some very difficult conversations in Ramallah, 'cause I go there a lot. And I said this is not something Americans can support. So I think that's a big one. I think on the Israelis... For Palestinians, their gut fear is the land, is that, "If we negotiate the pizza while you're eating the pizza, what is there gonna be left to talk about?" And if indeed 85% live in 8% of the land, inside the security barrier, what Israelis call a fence and Palestinians call a wall, what about saying, "You're not gonna add any new people outside that wall?"

DM: And this way, you might not be able to implement a two-state solution tomorrow morning, but you are maintaining the viability of an idea, in a real way, to say, "That's it. Yes, within these, what we call settlement blocs, it's one thing. And there'll have to be swaps for that. But outside, no new people." I think that would at least send a message that you're keeping hope alive. So, for me, the solid single is the best way to try to reach the two states, 'cause I don't think, it's not like we haven't tried... Swung for offenses, we've tried three times. I don't think the leaders can do it. I'd rather do it in pieces, but in a credible way, that deals with the gut fears of both sides and, in my view, would energize the public on both sides that this is a real process, and they should get off the bleachers and onto the playing field because this is genuine.

JH: It's to avoid the perfect being the enemy of the good.

DM: Exactly.

JH: So I get that. I get not only the rationale, I get the reasonableness of the broad strokes that you're talking about. Here's the problem I encounter in... Non-scientifically, at the social level, in my more conservative Jewish-American circles and my more conservative Israeli-American circles, Israeli-Jewish American circles, and it's the following, it's encapsulated in the word occupation. The two-state solution is, on paper, still the official position of all parties, if I'm not mistaken, you can correct me on that, but in the last less than half decade, I wanna say, it has become part of the standard rhetoric of American right-wing conversations about Israel, to cast dispersions on the word occupied, and to start creating a narrative whereby the whole idea of an

occupied territory is a falsity. You and I probably... It sounds like we probably agree on the facts. I'm more concerned about the fact of the attitudes, because those attitudes are spreading, they're gaining steam in numbers and in sincerity of belief. So that the new narrative is getting written, and it is a narrative that opposes not the feasibility of your proposal, but the desirability of your proposal.

DM: You make a very important point. And I don't disagree with you about certain trends. I'll also say there's also an interesting counter-trend, and I've had these conversations with several, with Naftali Bennett, the Jewish home party. I don't always agree with Naftali, but we do have a friendship. He's view is, "I'm not like the right-wing of the '90s." That, basically, he doesn't believe there should be a Palestinian authority. It's a fact, there's no rolling it back.

JH: This is Bennett speaking?

DM: This is Bennett speaking. But he believes it could be contained to what we call A plus B, meaning the cities, the Palestinian cities and the environs of those... Around those cities. Now, that is 40% of the West Bank. So, his view is, "I don't wanna go in there, it's theirs. I'm not touching it."

JH: Doesn't want the headache.

DM: No, don't want the headache. Let them run their own system. I don't wanna get in there. When you say, "How are these cities gonna link up?" "We could work that out." But he... So, one hand, he will say, in a certain way, that the spectrum has kind of shrunk in a certain way, where, in the '90s, it was all, "There's no such thing as Palestinians, there's no Palestinian authority. I wanna just get rid of this whole thing. I wanna just roll it back." He'll say, "I'm not that... I'm not the '90s. That I've come more to the reality that this is here to stay." My belief is that if 40% of the West Bank, this Palestinian authority is not gonna have a lot of legs...

JH: Right, either politically or in fact.

DM: Exactly. Because even though a large majority of the Palestinians live in that 40%, 'cause they live either in the urban areas or in the environs, this may be only 100,000 or 200,000 people outside there, and some of these are spill over areas right at the border areas. I don't wanna get jargony with you, the A is the cities, the B is the environs. The big argument is over C, over the C area, which is neither the cities nor the environs but the rest of the West Bank. And this area, C, has become the new kind of point of argumentation, where the Israeli position, which, in a similar way, you could understand at a certain point, is to say, "Why give slices of C until we have a grand deal?"

DM: I could accept that if Israel applied the same logic to itself, which is to say, "Inside the barrier, where the settlement blocs are, but the 92%, we're gonna leave that open for negotiations." Again, my point is that the... So, what's happening is, in a certain way, you could say, "Actually, maybe there's a narrowing of difference, in that the Palestinians are coming around to see that these settlement blocs or clusters inside the barrier, near, adjacent to Israeli urban areas, they might not say it on a podcast that that's all gonna be Israel, and maybe not all

eight will be, but a good percent of that will be. So, on one hand, there's a recognition of the concept that these blocs, (*Hebrew*) and there's some places that many of your listeners have never seen or heard about or visited, but my point is to say, it would be more credible that you really wanna negotiate if you say, "You're not building outside of that area." So, on one hand, the Palestinians realize the blocs are here to stay, and the Israeli right is saying that the A plus B is here to stay.

JH: Is here to stay. There's some...

DM: There's more of a narrowing than the public discourse in American Jews or the Israeli right acknowledges publicly. The issue is really this area, C area, outside the barrier. That's the real crux. What some of us have been saying is, "Look, maybe there should be more economic access to some of these areas, area C." But part of the issue is that each side is more aware that the other is here to stay. And that does calculate in, but somehow it is not percolating into a wider discourse which tends to be more black and white, occupation, not occupation. And the area... The argument is about the area C, and if there was a grand deal, great. The problem is my incremental view is that we're not near a grand deal right now.

JH: Yeah, indeed.

DM: Now, the president might put forward his plan in 2019. I tend to believe, unlike what the media says, I think... 'Cause every few months, he says, "Oh, it's coming, it's coming." I tend to think it will be after the Israeli election, 'cause I think he sees...

JH: See who he is working with.

DM: He wants to see if he is working with any... And he also doesn't wanna hurt Netanyahu because some of the stuff... I think he may surprise some of the more liberal Americans that he would say on East Jerusalem, he feels he's gotten a certain rap because of the embassy issue. So I think he wants to reverse some of that, but I don't think he wants to do it before an Israeli election. So he's gonna raise some of this. I just have a doubt that any grand deal with these two leaders is gonna work, 'cause I think the gaps are just too wide. And I think, on some of these issues, he's also taking positions that I don't think have a chance to succeed.

JH: Unless he's doing it in a Machiavellian way, I don't mean that a totally negative way. I just mean in a calculated... Appropriately, politically, calculating way to then pull back, precisely as you're saying. It's a...

DM: But the problem is that he is... He tends to see it's like this, "The ultimate deal. I don't wanna play small ball here, and..." It just... If you've been at this for a while, you gotta kind of differentiate between what is attainable now, and what isn't attainable now, and I just worry whenever it's all or nothing in the Mid East, it's nothing.

JH: Yeah. [chuckle]

DM: And I feel that that is detrimental because it perpetuates stalemate, and that stalemate could

lead to greater polarization and, I worry, to violence.

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JH: Before we return to the podcast, we wanna let you know about digital learning on the College Commons platform. Beyond this podcast, which is available to the public at large, check out the online courses at collegecommons.huc.edu for in-depth learning, digital syllabi, assignments, inspiration for teaching, and one of our most influential courses called 'Making Prayer Real'. Subscribe with your synagogue for all this and more. Just click sign up at collegecommons.huc.edu. Oh, and one more thing, help us out, and rate us on iTunes. But whatever you do, do not give us five stars unless we deserve it. Now back to our podcast.

JH: When it comes to the negotiations, there's a lot we never know, and I think there's a lot any party never knows, but there's a sense, in a given period, some days we feel like the greatest challenges are internal to the two sides, and sometimes we feel like the greatest challenges are between the two sides. Do you have a generalizable feeling on that, or is it episodic, based on the conditions?

DM: Look, the parties have really not sat together since 2010 in a realistic way, where they're face-to-face, and during the Kerry period, we were basically meeting with each side separately, although there were some joint meetings but not at the leadership level. Though we had the negotiator level, but none of the leaders... Haven't really met since 2010, that's a long time. And now it's each side has dug in, and so, as I was trying to say about the five for five, some of these issue differences are very disdained, and that's why I'm so skeptical of a grand deal. But, yeah... But there's also internal questions as well, and they're not mutually exclusive. Look, when you look at the polling day, let's put it this way, about half of each public, it might be a little larger on the Israeli side, say, "Do you want a two-state solution?" They'll say, "Yes."

JH: Yes.

DM: And then they ask the same question, "But does the other side want it?" "Oh, them? No!"

JH: Right.

DM: So will it happen? No, never. So there's an element here of disbelief that I think this culture of disbelief, and that's why I'm for the solid single because I think we have to break it, and I worry, again, where it's all or nothing, it's nothing. There's also different other factors going on when you raise the internal issue. To your question, there's an issue here where people would say, "Yeah, look, ideally, we would want there to be two separate entities. But for the Jews, it's good enough, the status quo, and that..."

JH: Right, status quo is sustainable for some.

DM: It's sustainable because you see the economics, where Israel is thriving... Their God in many ways, it's economy, it's infrastructure, outreach. Countries might vote against Israel at the UN, but China and India, and even the Gulf Arabs are involved in this. So that gives a certain

message that it is very sustainable. And the US has been saying, since 1967, it's sustainable. See? It's sustainable. But the point that might not be sustainable, I think, is when people don't have a right to vote in a certain area, that is going to... You don't wanna make them Israelis or else you're gonna have a binational state, and binational states are not the solutions. If you look around the Middle East, look at the countries that are multi-ethnic states are the ones that have the civil wars.

JH: Right, well.

DM: Lebanon.

JH: Lebanon as...

DM: Syria.

JH: Syria.

DM: Iraq. Those three...

JH: And even binational states like... What's a binational state? Belgium.

DM: Right.

JH: Belgium's a binational state...

DM: Right, but there they speak... Okay, maybe they speak Flemish but they don't have the history, the recent history, they've all kind of bought into the idea there...

JH: But even there, I'm agreeing with you, they're not thriving as a country.

DM: No, no, no.

JH: And they're...

DM: But Belgium, on that spectrum, is...

JH: Would be a success, yes.

DM: Would be a great success. Basically, I think, in the Middle East, the part of the issue is that the primordial loyalties of these people are largely to their religion and their ethnic group.

JH: Sure.

DM: And when you tell me we could bring Pakistan and India back together, give me a call, you know what I mean? Then I'll talk about that we're beyond ethnic states. I don't see it in that part of the world. I see that this idea that you could paper over these ethnic... Deep ethnic differences,

it doesn't work, they might have a flag, they might have a soccer team, but that doesn't mean they have a system of citizenship that makes them believe that they are Iraqis before they're Shia or Sunni, or that they're Lebanese before they're Shia, Sunni, Christian. And here, you've got an overlay of terrorism, you've got an overlay of... You wanna call occupation or you wanna control, whatever word you wanna use. Hebrew, Arabic, they don't have any shared experiences for any part of the day.

I mean, it just... It strains the mind to think that somehow you could just subordinate all this. It's just fascinating to me that journalists will use the phrase. And each side meets 180 degree different. They'll say, "Oh, the each side... Is there for one state. You say, wait a second, what do they mean by, "One state"? The settlers, when they say one state, they mean Israel controls everything, right? When the Palestinians say one state, that means there's no Israel. It means that it's... The word Gaddafi, Isratin... Israel, Palestine. The term is a misnomer because they mean 180 degrees in the opposite direction.

JH: Right, right, that's... You're failing to distinguish where there's a real difference. And the... That part I get... And that applies to the Arab and the Israeli non-intersection. However, there's the internal Jewish...

DM: Yeah.

JH: Non-intersection of the term of one state and two state. Because when the right-wing says one state, they mean one thing. And when the left-wing in Israel, Jews...

DM: Yeah.

JH: Say one state, they mean another thing, which you were alluding to, the binational state versus... And I don't know exactly what the right-wing version of a single state would look like. I can't imagine that the right wing would assume the same sustainability that they currently assume, and if they fully annexed Arab majority populations, because surely that would disrupt stability and diminish sustainability much... Even...

DM: That's my argument with Naftali Bennett, is that... Basically, he will say, "Look, A plus B, 40% of West Bank is theirs. We're not going in."

JH: 40% of the West Bank, territorially, but what percentage of population demographic?

DM: It's a large percentage. That part, he's right. But, first of all, you gotta link these cities.

JH: Yeah, right.

DM: If every time the guy has to go through the checkpoint...

JH: And there's the political slap in the face.

DM: And then the idea that any authority that has no chance to have, I think, the West Bank as a

basis is sustainable, I think is to be charitable. A very open question. I mean, the people who have looked at the PA, they are people that they're gonna be able to get the large majority of the West Bank. If that is not doable, I don't know if the PA could survive.

JH: So I guess a lot hinges on the upcoming elections which will take place when? Do we know?

DM: We don't know yet, and Israel... We think the prime minister wants to move it up, because he's doing well in the polls. Some people talk about the spring, it could be early summer before Israelis scatter, 'cause they often... Many go to Europe, so you can't really do it in the heart of the summer, then you have the Jewish holidays. Otherwise, it's been... The time is November. We tend to think... I tend to think he would like it before March, before the... Which is what I'm told when... By a very senior person that police would announce certain indictment issues.

JH: Ah, right. So that brings us to another major topic, and one that we hear a lot from the left, both in Israel and among American Jews, which is the rule of law, the status of jurisprudence in the judiciary, I should say, in Israel. Do you see the erosion that... I don't know if centrists and right-wingers feel this, but the left, central-left certainly does.

DM: Look, there's no doubt that I think... To go back to my airplane and about the proverbial wings of Zionism, it was even true to a degree in the second and third rounds, they call it Netanyahu 2.0 and 3.0, when he had center-left parties inside his government. He liked being the pilot where there was people to his right... Wing to his right, and wing to his left, and he could navigate the airplane, but he was losing the 2015 election, and a week before, his advisors came to him, and said, "Listen, you're going down. You could maybe convince people that you've got the solution to lower housing prices in the greater Tel Aviv area, which was Kaffa, which was one of his rivals, but you've been in power for six years, unlikely that's gonna happen.

Or, you've gotta cannibalize the hard right and get their voters. And the only way to do that is to persuade them that you will not do Netanyahu 2.0 and 3.0, where you have left of center parties. He followed that advice. It was advice that was crucial for him to win, but I would say it crippled him as a leader to actually govern, because he was handcuffed. He couldn't have...

JH: That equilibrium.

DM: That equilibrium, exactly. And the cost of this is playing out right now, and that, I think, it's a mistake. And when I...

JH: And so you're referring to the power of the far right parties, including religious parties that are imposing their agendas, which are very different, but he has to bow to them.

DM: Right. Look, I am personally Modern Orthodox, but I know that without a vibrant reform movement, a vibrant conservative movement, the whole big tent approach that has been fantastically successful in the Israel-Diaspora relationship cannot repeat itself, by definition, going forward. It can't. It won't work. We need the big tent thinking, that big tent.

JH: Because of the constitution of the Jewish people, that we're constituted of a variety that

needs to be attended to for the sake of the viability of the state.

DM: Right. This is not just an Israel-Diaspora issue, I would argue, this is a national security issue for Israel. If you lose big chunks of the Diaspora, does anyone think you're gonna get \$38 billion MOU, Memorandum of Understanding, that Israel just got under President Obama for the next 10 years? It was that partnership which on the Soviet Jewry Movement, I think one of the great successes of the Jewish people in their history, where you had American Jews united around a Jewish human rights issue and made it part of the superpower equation, and detente, and all different phases of the superpower relationship that led to over a million Jews getting out of the Soviet Union and largely settling in Israel. These are fantastic successes, and largely since post-'67. And it's the Golden Age, in many ways, of the Israel-Diaspora relations. And my fear is if this shrinks to just, I don't know, Orthodox evangelicals, this is horrible.

JH: We all lose.

DM: Everyone loses. Israel loses. Look, one of the great successes of Israel has been that there's been bipartisan support for the State of Israel. Democrats and Republicans can't agree if it's light outside or dark outside, but they have been able to agree...

JH: Agree on this.

DM: In support for Israel. If you don't have a big tent with more liberal-minded people, then you're not gonna have a bipartisan support, and I worry about that. And look, look at the US-Saudi relationship today, which is basically just in the Republican party, for the most part. If you go to their dinners or anything, it's just Republicans. And you don't want the US-Israel relationship to look like this in 20 years.

JH: We all lose. Yeah.

DM: Everyone loses. And the truth is, if you talk to Israeli national security people, they will tell you quietly, not publicly, this is a bigger issue for them than the Iran nuclear question. I know that sounds hard to believe, but they will say this to you privately, this has been the formula for success, is broad support in the United States. Netanyahu is a very bright guy, you can like him, not like him. And Israelis think he's navigated, for the most part, if they look at the economic success, infrastructure, staying out of the Syrian civil war, and a lot of different pieces, they think he's been successful, for the most part. They question him on the Palestinians, a lot of people do, some like what he's done and some don't.

My point, though, is that this coalition with the ultra-Orthodox, at the expense of kind of going back to the proverbial Zionist airplane of the parties to the left of center and the right of center sitting together plays out immediately in the United States because it alienates large swaths of American Jewry. And it's a mistake. It's a mistake for Israel, not just for Israel-Diaspora, which I believe, in itself, is something that you should care about deeply, but it's for all of Israel's own national security.

JH: On its own merits.

DM: On its own merit.

JH: Alright, I want to get personal. You go to Israel, where is the place that you referred to Kishkes? Where in Israel does it touch you, does it give you the goosebumps, do you go and you feel that powerful connectedness?

DM: It's... I think, for every Jew, when you go to the Western Wall and pray there, you kind of feel you're in the great presence of Jewish history. I'm writing a book now with Dennis Ross on four leaders who took courageous decisions in Israel's history, 'cause we want people to believe... People think the problems are too big, and the leaders are too small. I'm not getting into specific names, but there were people who rose to the occasion. And there were some dramatic moments in Jewish history that have been in our lifetime. And I remember, when I was 8 years old, a year after the Six-Day War, going to the wall, and... Then, it wasn't that big plaza, like it is today, it was much smaller.

JH: Right, it was cramped.

DM: It was cramped and everything. But you had a... Even, as a kid, you felt like this was a great privilege to be in the presence of something that has this resonance. So, I mean, I think that, for me, that's clearly a place that... Even when you see the Knesset for all the screaming and all the parties, and people could get very depressed, but to know that there is such a thing as a democratic deliberative body where Jews and Arabs sit together, maybe they yell a lot at each other, but they make decisions. And I tell you, I was in Poland this summer for the first time. I'd never been to Poland, I was always with trepidation, I've been all over the world, one country I deliberately didn't go to 'cause I felt that like if you go to that country, you really gotta have someone who knows his stuff, could take you around, because it's a ghost land for Jews, where over there were 3 million, and now there's virtually none, it's a very small remnant.

DM: And I realized that when you're there, you really see the idea that the powerless Jew was the defenseless Jew and that was how this horrible Holocaust occurred. And you say thank God there is an Israel today that could take in a million Jews from the Soviet Union. I had taken the first member of Knesset to Ethiopia when I was the head of the World Union Jewish Students and there's a thriving Ethiopian Jewish community. All these communities that were persecuted, they now have a home. And I realize Israel's not just a haven, but it's supposed to be a homeland. But if you're at all... Or even a casual reader of Jewish history, you're kind of... Feel you're in the presence of something that is truly profound, to see a society that, for all of its difficulties, had had less than 700,000 people in 1948. I was just re-reading the transcript from my Ben-Gurion chapter of what Yigael Yadin, who was the Chief of Staff in 1948, they were debating whether to delay statehood, and he says to Ben-Gurion, he says, "Do you know 30 to 40% of our troops don't even have any weapons?" 30 to 40%! No weapons! Not a pistol even, nothing! So when you think how far this state has come in a short time.

JH: Very short.

DM: And now they're just under 9 million people, over... Way over 6 million Jews, and there's

Arabs and there's others, and then they... It's a remarkable, remarkable moment, how far the state has come in a short time. So I always say the resilience of the people, when you see what the state has achieved and with all its enemies, Jihadis, all types, ultimately, I'm optimistic, that I think Israel's will to live is greater than its enemies' will to die. And I think, in the more literal sense... (*foreign language*)

JH: Well, here's to Israel living up to its promise then, and to all of us being a part of a shared success in the Middle East and in Diaspora. Thank you, David Makovsky for taking your time. It was such a pleasure to talk to you.

DM: Alright.

37:04 JH: We hope you've enjoyed this episode of The College Commons Podcast available wherever you listen to your podcasts, or at the College Commons' website, collegetcommons.huc.edu, where you can also stay tuned for future episodes.

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