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Taglit Birthright Israel: Intrinsic and Extrinsic Goals

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Sarah Castellanos

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## ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to critically analyze the goals of Taglit-Birthright Israel and how the program works to achieve those goals. The political atmosphere in the last two years (2016-2018) has provided a wider pool of sources from which to analyze the success of such a program and shows that there are more than just direct goals the program tries to achieve. In fact, this paper will show how the region's history, the program founders, its donors, its sponsors, its itinerary, and even its tour guides cater to a set of intrinsic goals that show a set of ulterior motives. The American government's clear allegiance with Israel makes it so a program like this flourishes, and even helps move along the goals of the program, which are arguably Zionist. This paper delves into the history of Zionism, how it was supported by Western powers, and indeed how it has become problematic due to its relation to colonialism.

Taglit Birthright Israel was founded by Zionists, is donated to, sponsored by, and organized by Zionist organizations and individuals. One of the goals of this paper was to see if the program was biased in the way it presents Israel as a nation, and how these presentations affect its participants. It ultimately finds that young participants are clueing in to the one-sided way in which the program has depicted Israel, which deliberately excludes the way in which Palestine and its people are talked about. This caters to a larger problem – one of peace. When young generations of students are learning about Israeli history in a limiting way, the process of peace is further complicated. Generational pain and trauma is passed down and makes it difficult for peace to be achieved. This paper provides the stage and background for further research on this by looking at a very small operation in the grand scheme. Taglit Birthright Israel is undoubtedly aiding the state of Israel in limiting the peace process and the following research will demonstrate how.

## ZUSAMMENFASSUNG AUF DEUTSCH

In dieser Master-Arbeit werden die Ziele von Taglit-Birthright Israel und die Funktionsweise des Programms zur Erreichung dieser Ziele kritisch analysiert. Die politische Atmosphäre der letzten zwei Jahre (2016–2018) hat den Quellen-Corpus verbreitert, auf dessen Basis der Erfolg dieses Programms untersucht werden kann. Es konnte gezeigt werden, dass das Programm mehr als nur direkte Ziele verfolgt. Tatsächlich manipulieren die Initiatoren von Taglit, die SpenderInnen, SponsorInnen und TeilnehmerInnen gleichermaßen, weil sie mit der Wahl der Reiseroute und der Reiseleiter eine Reihe intrinsischer Ziele verfolgen, wobei das Ausblenden der Palästinenser-Frage wohl das schwerwiegendste ist. Weil die amerikanische Regierung gute Beziehungen zu Israel unterhält, wird dieses Programm begünstigt und kann florieren. Mit Blick auf die Entwicklung des Zionismus und der Rolle der Verbündeten Israels im Laufe dessen Bestehens, muss der Zionismus mit dem Vorwurf des Kolonialismus konfrontiert werden.

Taglit Birthright Israel wurde von Zionisten gegründet und wird von zionistischen Organisationen und Einzelpersonen mit Spenden unterstützt und durchgeführt. Eines der Ziele dieser Arbeit war es zu zeigen, inwiefern das Programm voreingenommen Israel als Nation darstellt und wie sich diese Selbstdarstellung auf die Teilnehmer auswirkt. Es konnte gezeigt werden, dass die TeilnehmerInnen einseitig informiert, eigentlich getäuscht werden, weil im Verlauf der Exkursionen die Palästinafrage ausgeblendet bleibt. Damit erfahren die jungen AmerikanerInnen auch nichts über die jahrzehntelangen Konflikte und Friedensbemühungen in der Region. Wenn aber den neuen Studentengenerationen die israelische Geschichte ohne diesen Aspekt vermittelt wird, begünstigt das Programm keinesfalls den Friedensprozess. Somit ignoriert Taglit auch die Traumata, die bereits mehrere Generationen mit sich tragen. Diese Arbeit ist ein Baustein in einem weiten Feld ähnlicher, internationaler Bemühungen. Das Ergebnis dieser Studie lautet eindeutig, dass Taglit Erstgeburtsrecht den Staat Israel tatkräftig dabei unterstützt, die Palästinenserfrage zu ignorieren.

## INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to use Taglit Birthright Israel as a lens from which to look at the Israeli nation's monopoly of power and influence, aided by American allegiance and support. Analysis of the program provides a narrow but clear way to uncover a network of influence guiding young American Jewish people towards one way of looking at the Israeli nation. Many have argued that Taglit Birthright Israel has clear goals and has nothing to hide. However, a closer look at the program's donors, founders, and supporters demonstrates that those goals are more complicated than at first glance. There is a conglomerate group of people in power supporting certain goals in very specific ways, all very clearly connected to one another. These connections are the parts that this paper is trying to uncover. Taglit Birthright Israel was created by, is funded by, and sponsored by individuals and organizations working to further the goals of Zionism (one of the intrinsic goals of the program and not directly declared in their mission statement).

In order to understand why Zionism is problematic, this paper will provide historical background regarding the region and demonstrate how Western powers aided in the creation of the state of Israel using a debatably colonialist model. Looking through this history, we will find organizations that have changed names, but kept their goals intact, and which now fund programs like Taglit Birthright Israel. Taglit Birthright Israel educates young American Jewish people about Israel and creates a seemingly genuine experience that plays on the emotions of those touring the country, thereby creating a limiting way of looking at issues such as the growth of Palestinian refugee camps, the Israeli monopoly of electricity and water over Palestinian territory, and the continued expansion of Israeli settlements.

During a three month stay in Jerusalem, it was easy to identify which groups of tourists belonged to Taglit Birthright Israel – students were often loud, disorderly, and inconsiderate of their surroundings. As an individual visitor, access to Palestine is generally unlimited, meaning one can see far more than the groups of students on Taglit Birthright Israel trips could ever see. My time in Palestine is the direct drive behind exploring the questions this paper tries to answer

– the perception of Israel is so easily manipulated in media, in politics, and amongst my peers. It is only recently that there has been an influx of greater accounts showing the realities faced by Palestinians at the hands of the Israelis – often shocking, nerve-wrecking, heart breaking, and inhumane experiences. Students on Taglit Birthright Israel are not told the history of Zionism and its ties to colonialism. They are not allowed into Palestine to see the state in which roads, water availability, or electrical grids are. They do not see the evacuation orders or the razing down of children’s schools.

Unfortunately, these realities are not just limited to very specific personal experiences, but are also limited in academia and in the resources available to explore this topic further. While my personal experiences directly pushed me to write about this, I made it my goal to be as unbiased as possible. In fact, due to the lack of available academic articles, it was necessary to rely on sources such as the Taglit Birthright Israel website, which would very likely be biased. Nonetheless, websites such as these were very informative. Current day articles were also relevant due to the contemporary nature of the topic as well as the recent changes in policies and reactions to the program itself.

Nonetheless, the history that predates these current day issues is extremely important to understanding the state of the art. This means that the paper takes the time to analyze the historical intricacies that shaped the founders and donors for Taglit Birthright Israel, specifically looking at Zionism. The theoretical groundwork used to analyze this paper was mostly on ethnographies of travel, focusing on theorists like John Urry, Pierre Bourdieu, Alain de Botton, and Dean MacCannell, as well as Edward Saïd and Gayatri Spivak in order to theoretically understand the roots of Zionism. This theoretical lens is also important in looking at the historical foundations for the program because it provides a clear and unbiased picture on how there are so many links between founders, donors, and supporters.

Despite the limitations in academic resources, this paper will deconstruct the rose-colored glasses with which the program looks at Israel and demonstrate how it manipulates the way

young generations then see the Israeli nation by using religion, travel, and communion with locals to paint Israel in a positive light. To be clear, this paper's goal is not then to paint Israel in a negative light, but merely to show how organizations which fund Taglit Birthright Israel, as well as the program itself, is being unjust and dishonest by limiting the way in which it presents Israel. In essence, the program does not allow young people to decide for themselves how they might feel about the issues mentioned above, or about Israel itself. Indeed, what does it say about the program when it does not trust young people to decide for themselves how they feel about Israel?



## PART I – What is the goal of this program?

Taglit Birthright Israel has never shied away from expressing the goals or the mission of their programs:

“Taglit seeks to ensure the future of the Jewish people by strengthening Jewish identity, Jewish communities, and connection with Israel via a trip to Israel for the majority of Jewish young adults from around the world. Our hope is that our trips motivate young people to maintain long-lasting connections with the Israelis they meet on their trip. We encourage our alumni to take active roles in Jewish identity and support for Israel and maintain long-lasting connections with the Israelis they meet on their trip. We encourage our alumni to take active roles in Jewish organizations and to participate in follow-up activities worldwide.”<sup>1</sup>

The controversy and the reason for which these goals are researched are the history in which they have been and the process by which they are currently achieved. Prior to the existence of Taglit Birthright Israel (though Israeli self-promotion is of course not limited to this program), Israel had other methods in which they promoted their nation. Historically, we must dig back to the Palestine Mandate, the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the Hussein McMahon Correspondence, and to the time of the Shoah (Hebrew for the “catastrophe” and referring to the Holocaust).

### 1.1 Zionism and History

It comes as no surprise that the disruptions in the Middle East are largely due to the West’s involvement in regions they wanted to use for their economic growth and hegemonic influence. Western views of the Middle East or of “the other” (a term frequently read in Said’s

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<sup>1</sup> “Taglit Birthright Israel - Goals.”

book on *Orientalism*) are relevant in understanding how Zionism developed in Europe.<sup>2</sup> Before we delve into discussing the role of Orientalism in Zionism, we should first look at the Jewish Virtual Library's definition on Zionism:

The term "Zionism" was coined in 1890 by Nathan Birnbaum. Its general definition means the national movement for the return of the Jewish people to their homeland and the resumption of Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel. Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, Zionism has come to include the movement for the development of the State of Israel and the protection of the Jewish nation in Israel through support for the Israel Defense Forces.<sup>3</sup>

Now that this is clear, we can look at the role that orientalism plays in Zionist history. The relationship between the "Oriental" and the "Orientalist" develop in a self-defining way, almost as if one cannot be defined without the other: "The vastly expanded American political and economic role in the Near East (the Middle East) makes great claims on our understanding of that Orient."<sup>4</sup> In fact, the United States' economic involvement in the Middle East, specifically in Israel and Palestine, will be an important part of Taglit Birthright Israel's analysis, but before we reach that, we must begin in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. A series of events led Britain and France to set their eyes on the Palestinian region and neighboring area; two powers and their rivalry brought Egypt and Syria at the forefront of international conflicts. We begin by looking at the late 18<sup>th</sup> century at a time in which Napoleon's ambitions were foiled by an Ottoman-British alliance preventing him from keeping Egypt under control. This was when Napoleon discovered the strategic importance of the Suez canal; the path to India.<sup>5</sup> In his piece about the Yamani Island of Kamaran during the Napoleonic Wars, John Baldry describes

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<sup>2</sup> Said, *Orientalism*.

<sup>3</sup> "A Definition of Zionism."

<sup>4</sup> Said, *Orientalism*.

<sup>5</sup> Baldry, "The Yamani Island of Kamaran during the Napoleonic Wars." 250.

not only the building of the Suez Canal, but also its relevance for strategic power between England and France. Napoleon knew that the Suez Canal would be his best opening towards reaching India, where England's East India Company had already established prominent roots in Bengal; for Napoleon, India was the goldmine and he needed to reach it.<sup>6</sup> Understanding these early 19th century events, sets the stage for what came next.

Ragaei El Mallakh and Carl McGuire argue that Egyptian nationalization and control over the Suez Canal was showing success, and that releasing the reigns of the Suez Canal Authority under Egyptian watchfulness allowed it to flourish best.<sup>7</sup> The economic prominence of the Suez Canal is important because it shows that it did not need the control of foreign powers to succeed. However, it was precisely there that the Great War became the catalyst for what was to happen to Palestine and what would later become Israel.

The fumbling of the French and the British left Palestinian territory, and much more, under Ottoman Rule. At the same time and in the midst of the early Zionist movement, Theodor Herzl (1860-1904), often considered the father of Zionism, attempted to propose the idea of a Jewish state in Palestine to Ottoman authority and returned home after failing.<sup>8</sup> The Jewish community spread across all of Europe and were treated disproportionately depending on where they were. It was in fact the treatment of Russian Jews – outright murder and discrimination – that inspired Zionism and eventually its practice as a migration.<sup>9</sup> Following Herzl as a leader of the Zionist movement, Chaim Weitzmann (1874-1952) vigorously criticized the agreement for an East African (modern day Uganda) territory that would have potentially saved thousands of Jews from what was to come. Adamant in what the Zionist Executive wanted - a Zion for the

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<sup>6</sup> Baldry.

<sup>7</sup> El Mallakh and McGuire, "The Economics of the Suez Canal under UAR Management." 137.

<sup>8</sup> Rowley and Taylor, "The Israel and Palestine Land Settlement Problem." 45.

<sup>9</sup> Rowley and Taylor.

Zionist movement - the agreement was rescinded. In their journal, “The Israel and Palestine Land Settlement Problem: An Analytical History, 400 B.C.E - 1948 C.E.,” Charles Rowley and Jennis Taylor say the following:

“Weitzmann foresaw a British mandate over Palestine after World War I. This would afford Britain a land base from which they could safeguard their Suez and overland lifelines to India. Such a mandate would also afford the Zionists a friendly climate in which to foster Jewish settlement. He lobbied the British government strongly to support the Zionist cause. He garnered support among many Christians who believed that the relocation the Jews in Palestine would bring about the Second Coming. Such was the elitist nature of the wartime British government that the relationship between Weitzmann, the Church, and leading British politicians culminated, without recourse to any polling of the British electorate, in a centrally important policy initiative by Britain in support of the Zionist cause.”<sup>10</sup>

It is with Rowley and Taylor’s words that that we get some clarity on Zionist origins and how the idea of “the other” plays its role. The origin of Palestine, and eventually of Israel, does not begin exactly when Western powers were fighting over a piece of land just below them, or when a movement began to have the region in its cross hairs. This paper will argue that perception of both “the other” and of Israel today play a major role on the development of Israel as a nation. The alliance of stronger, wealthier powers (whether those powers are made up of individuals, communities, or nations), have ultimately shaped the way Israel can and does present itself to the world, to its citizens, and to the Jewish diaspora that visit it.

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<sup>10</sup> Rowley and Taylor.

## 1.2 History Leading to the Creation of the Program

Regardless of how the public views the legitimacy of Israel as a nation today, it can be agreed that the creation of the Israeli state was indeed controversial. Taglit Birthright Israel becomes such an important program precisely because it exposes diaspora and many non-Israelis to the nation itself – meaning that for many participants, Taglit Birthright Israel is the first and only platform through which they access Israel. This in turn, shapes the way in which they speak of the state, its policies, and its actions when they return home. This section will deal with the history of the program but will first look at the history of Israel as a state because understanding the formation of the Israeli, and further back the Palestinian state, is key to understanding why Taglit Birthright Israel needed to be founded in the first place. We have touched on foreign interests in the region due to the Suez Canal, the path to India, but have yet to look at three key historical events that cannot go unmentioned in a paper dealing with this territory: the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence, the Sykes-Picot Agreement, and the Balfour Declaration. The reason we must include these into the history of the program is to understand the premise on which Taglit Birthright Israel was created – a nation that needed to be legitimized, and historically always was at war with legitimacy.

The promise of an Arab independent state is delineated in the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence.<sup>11</sup> In 1916, Lieutenant Colonel Sir Henry McMahon was engaged in communication with Shariff Hussein bin-Ali, who was requesting both material goods and an alliance with Britain. In the face of a war against the Turkish Ottoman Empire, helping the Sharif was a convenient plan of action for the British; the Sharif would provide a steady ally and a foot at the door of the Middle East, therefore protecting Egypt and the ever-sought-after path to India. An essay by Avi Shlaim, part of Raja Shehadeh and Penny Johnson’s collection in “Shifting Sands: The Unravelling of the Old Order in the Middle East,” gives clarity to what was at stake

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<sup>11</sup> “The Hussein-McMahon Correspondence (July 1915-August 1916).”

for the Sharif: “Conspiring with infidels against a Muslim overlord was quite a risky undertaking for the conservative Sharif, hence the need for secrecy.”<sup>12</sup> The letters themselves, of course, show the Sharif requesting McMahon to maintain the utmost secrecy, thereby making their legitimacy dubious and shrouded. The Sharif himself complains about the British response in his second letter to McMahon. “The British promise was vaguely worded, imprecise about borders and failed to make clear whether Palestine was to be included in the Arab kingdom. Vague as they were, Britain’s assurances led to the outbreak of the Arab revolt against the Turks in 1916...Britain financed the Arab Revolt as well as supplying arms, provisions, artillery support and experts in desert warfare...”<sup>13</sup> The Arab Revolt had ensured British interest in cutting the Ottomans out from underneath and through the Arab World.<sup>14</sup> The premise for the Israeli nation’s territory began on a bed of miscommunications, vague promises, and eventually a lie – a territory was promised and never given. One of the most important aspects of a British alliance would have been the legitimacy it would have provided the Arab Kingdom under Sharif Hussein, but as this eventually never came to be, legitimacy for territories in the Middle East are often found in other ways. The use of the word “legitimacy” here refers to the comparison between the Western powers (the Orientalists) and the Middle East (the Orientals); a clear hierarchy of power and hegemony exists in the world and even a powerful nation like Israel today needs to perpetuate its power in creative ways.<sup>15</sup>

The second conflicting step towards the rocky path on which Israel was built comes in the form of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, yet another example of hegemonic powers undermining Middle Eastern legitimacy and choosing their interests before the interests of “the other.” The last letter between Henry McMahon and Sharif Hussein was received on March 10, 1916. Less than three months later, May 1916, the Sykes-Picot agreement was signed, right in the middle of

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<sup>12</sup> Shehadeh and Johnson, *Shifting Sands: The Unraveling of the Old Order in the Middle East*.

<sup>13</sup> Shehadeh and Johnson.

<sup>14</sup> Castellanos, “British Self-Interest and Palestinian State Formation.”

<sup>15</sup> Said, *Orientalism*.

the worst war the world had ever seen at the time. Avi Shlaim says it best: “Selfishness is in the DNA of colonial powers.” Without the Sykes-Picot Agreement, World War I’s Entente alliance could have fractured – both needed control of the area for their own benefit. At this point, the French had done the majority of the fighting and the British were nervous about an Ottoman call for jihad; a vast number of Muslim subjects would be duty bound to follow suit instead of rebelling against the Ottomans as the British wanted.<sup>16</sup> This meant that the Sykes-Picot Agreement was not built on the steadiest of relationships or environments or times. Britain was clearing its path to India and France wanted in. A couple of decades before, the Anglo-French rivalry had reached such a perilous level that the French had attempted to block the Nile, thereby ruining Egyptian prospects of survival.<sup>17</sup> In retaliation, Britain had reclaimed Sudan. Just a few years before the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the two nations had almost gone to war in the same exact region. In the midst of a precarious and necessary alliance during the Great War, the two persisted “... in the belief that control of Egypt in particular was a prerequisite for domination of the real prize: India.”<sup>18</sup> The McMahon-Hussein Correspondence shows McMahon careful not to mention specifics, making it easier for Francois Georges Picot and Mark Sykes to draw out the lines of what would become the Middle East almost as we know it today, and which would directly affect the territory of Israel as we know it today.

The final step, and the one that finally established Israel came in the form of the Balfour Declaration, written by Arthur James Balfour and tucked away inside a letter to Lord Walter Rothschild. This final step is perhaps the most important and relevant to the history of Taglit Birthright Israel. This incredibly short text was the basis on which the Zionist movement was to establish their national home: “His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate

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<sup>16</sup> Shehadeh and Johnson, *Shifting Sands: The Unraveling of the Old Order in the Middle East*. 36.

<sup>17</sup> Castellanos, “British Self-Interest and Palestinian State Formation.”

<sup>18</sup> Shehadeh and Johnson, *Shifting Sands: The Unraveling of the Old Order in the Middle East*. 37

the achievement of this object...”<sup>19</sup> Naturally, there is no clarification if what the text means by “national home” is equivalent to a national state. This has, of course, become an object of severe debate among scholars and even prompted questions from Mark Sykes’ son himself, Christopher Sykes.<sup>20</sup> In his paper, “The Balfour Declaration: A Case of Mistaken Identity,” Mark Levene explores the anti-Semitic feeling toward assimilating Jews and sympathy towards Zionist Jews, again posing questions behind the reasoning of the Balfour Declaration’s existence in the first place. While the question of why and how Britain was to benefit from this is interesting, it cannot be fully explored in this paper, as those questions are merely the stage on which we find Taglit Birthright Israel founded a century later; a program eager to present the state of Israel in the best light despite the hotly debated controversies behind its origins.

In that century, the British took over Palestine, obtained a British Mandate, and the Jewish people faced their worst tribulation yet: the Shoah. Two years after the end of the war and the end of the Holocaust, Resolution 181 presented the future of Israel with a violent beginning – the first of many Arab-Israeli War, and ultimately the expulsion of thousands of Palestinians along with the annexation of what remained of Palestine to Jordan and Egypt.<sup>21</sup> With this tempestuous pre-history, Israel lost no time in enforcing its Jewish presence in former Palestine; The Law of Return was established in 1950. Judith T. Shuval writes:

“As a subject of research in Israel, immigration has not escaped the strong value connotations associated with it in the broader social and political context of the society. One of the central goals of the society since its inception has been to encourage and facilitate immigration of Jews and make possible their full integration into the society. The Law of Return expressed this by stating that Jews have a “natural right” to return to

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<sup>19</sup> “Balfour Declaration November 2, 1917.”

<sup>20</sup> Levene, “The Balfour Declaration.”

<sup>21</sup> “United Nations Resolution 181 | Map & Summary.”



their historic homeland; thus every Jew has the right to settle in Israel and automatically acquires Israeli citizenship upon arrival.”<sup>22</sup>

The Law of Return has since been amended, out of fear that Israeli borders were limiting the influx of new citizens. Since 1970, it now includes family members, spouses, and even non-Jewish children of Jewish people can be considered *oleh* as they have made *aliyah* to Israel, or the immigration of a diasporic Jew to Eretz Israel.<sup>23</sup> The Law of Return falls directly into Taglit Birthright Israel’s orbit because its goals are linked to bringing diasporic Jews back to what they consider home. We will be discussing the ideas behind “home” and the creation of a “home” to Jewish diaspora who have never visited Israel in Part II of this paper. Nonetheless, this principle is something on which Taglit Birthright Israel was implicitly founded on.

In fact, in 1999, Charles Bronfman and Michael Steinhardt founded Taglit Birthright Israel with the following statement:

“TAGLIT began with a bold idea—offering a free, life-changing trip to Israel to young Jewish adults between the ages of 18 and 26 and, in doing so, transforming the Jewish future. Our mission is to give every Jewish young adult around the world, especially the unaffiliated, the opportunity to visit Israel...TAGLIT aims to strengthen Jewish identity, Jewish communities, and connection with Israel and its people. The gift of a TAGLIT trip is made possible thanks to the generous support of many sources, including the State of Israel, the program’s founders and other philanthropists, the Jewish Federation system and Keren Hayesod, the Jewish Agency for Israel, parents of trip participants, alumni of the program, and thousands of individuals donors from around the world who believe in our mission.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Shuval, “Migration To Israel.”

<sup>23</sup> “The Law of Return.”

<sup>24</sup> “Taglit Birthright Israel - Our Story.”

Immediately, the idea of “transforming the Jewish future” begins to make more sense given the history of Israeli foundation, which is controversial as best. Add to that the fact that Israel made it its goal to bring in more Israeli citizens into their vaguely delineated territory after two years of independence, which has been vaguely hinted at by scholars and often termed the “One Million Plan.”<sup>25</sup> Of course, this was not done by the Israeli government itself, which at the time of the One Million Plan, did not yet even exist as a nation itself and had yet to gain legitimacy and independence from the British Mandate. However, it was created by the “Jewish Agency for Israel” which today is the biggest Jewish non-profit organization in the world, one whose mission directly involved and continues to involve connecting young Jewish people around the world with Israel.<sup>26</sup>

This idea of connecting young Jewish diaspora and Israel for the pursuit of strengthening Jewish communities, identities and a connection with Israel is one embodied by more than just Taglit Birthright Israel. But as we are only analyzing this particular program, we will limit the path of this paper by looking at the founders and the support they received from important organizations in the Jewish community. Charles Bronfman (\*1931), which today is worth 2.4 billion United States dollars, was the CEO of Koor Industries during the time that Taglit Birthright Israel was founded in 1999.<sup>27</sup> The International Directory of Company Histories section on Koor Industries says:

“Koor's predecessor was Solel Boneh Construction, founded in British Palestine in 1924 by the Histadrut (the General Federation of Labor) to construct roads and buildings. Through Solel Boneh, the Histadrut provided a livelihood for settlers in an attempt to found a Jewish state in Palestine.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Shenhav, *The Arab Jews: A Postcolonial Reading of Nationalism, Religion, and Ethnicity*. 31.

<sup>26</sup> “The Jewish Agency 2017 Performance Report,” 3.

<sup>27</sup> “International Directory of Company Histories.”

<sup>28</sup> “International Directory of Company Histories.”

Koor Industries was an industrial arm of Solel Boneh, with the purpose of constructing roads and buildings in a region where infrastructure directly affects the politics and rights of the people that live there. The significance of the 1990s for Taglit Birthright Israel also goes back to the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993, a time in which the world thought the end of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict had finally arrived.<sup>29</sup> Some may argue that the steps Israel has taken since those Accords, as the most powerful and advantageous of the two, has shown its insincerity towards peace. A recent article published on Reuters by Stephen Ferrel and Jeffrey Heller explore the quarter century anniversary of these signings and all that has happened since then. They note that just two years after the accords were originally signed, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (1922-1995) was assassinated by extreme nationalist Israelis against the peace talks, and that 29 Palestinian worshippers had already been massacred by a Jewish settler in the Palestinian city of Hebron.<sup>30</sup> What is the link between Oslo and Koor Industries? Well, the key is knowing that while there was a process towards peace, there were also steps being taken, debatably more by one side than the other, that were preventing peace. The CEO of such a company, with ties towards creating an Israeli nation in a place where that nation did not yet even exist, then founding an organization encouraging young Jewish people to see Israel and fall in love with Israel brings about concerns to say the least. “The handshake and the Oslo process thus directly represented a contribution – welcome by some, highly unwelcome by others – to the debate over the Israeli identity...it also signaled a watershed moment when Israel confronted itself, who it was, and who it was to become.”<sup>31</sup> The goal of this paper is to unravel the links behind the founding, the funding, and the process of the trips within Taglit Birthright Israel to try and show a hidden agenda, that while recognized by some now-a-days, does not always show

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<sup>29</sup> Falk, *Palestine's Horizon Toward a Just Peace*, 10.

<sup>30</sup>“Twenty-Five Years on, Oslo Accords Peace Hopes a Fading Memory.”

<sup>31</sup> Barnett, “Culture, Strategy and Foreign Policy Change,” 3.

itself very clearly. My hope is not that this analysis reads as a conspiracy theory but merely that it reveals obvious connections hidden in front of us all along.

An analysis and uncovering of Michael Steinhardt's life brings about an important pillar of Taglit Birthright Israel's goals: Zionism. Michael Steinhardt is a self-proclaimed atheist and Zionist. In an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in 2017, he talks about the importance of the last 300 years for the Jewish people, claiming the superiority of Jewish technological, financial, and intellectual advances, and how they should be recognized as such in Jewish education.<sup>32</sup> Part of the reason why this paper makes such a point to include important historical events and documentations in its analysis is so that these documentations can be used to explain the hidden agenda behind some of the people involved with Taglit Birthright Israel. For instance, Richard Falk devotes a section of his book, *Palestine's Horizon: Toward a Just Peace*, discussing the Zionist nature behind the Balfour Declaration and how Jewish Zionism is rooted in colonial imperialist behavior:

“The Balfour Declaration was without a doubt a colonial initiative that collided with competing nationalist ideas associated with every people's right of self-determination to be exercised in their place of geographic habitat. In this regard, and arguably ever since, the West has given support to the Zionist project without ever either taking into account these colonialist origins or making any effort to assess the preferences and views of the indigenous population as it existed in 1917... The establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 went beyond the explicit endorsement of Zionist goals in the Balfour Declaration, disclosing an expansionist pattern that persists up to the present. In other words, the Zionist project is dynamic, expanding its goals to take advantage of increased capabilities and opportunities.”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> “Michael Steinhardt Thinks American Jews Need to Stop Focusing on Religion.”

<sup>33</sup> Falk, *Palestine's Horizon Toward a Just Peace*, 3.

Michael Steinhardt's interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency also reveals his beliefs that Zionism saves Jewish people from terrible places by turning them into Israeli citizens, that high intermarriage rates between Jews and non-Jews is an issue that needs to be dealt with, and that Taglit Birthright Israel is a solution to a lot of these issues as it has saved a generation.<sup>34</sup> It is important to understand the links and connections of the founders of Taglit Birthright Israel in order to understand the programs objectives, and those objectives are after all the main analysis in this paper. They cannot be analyzed thoroughly without understanding the history behind the formation of the state of British Palestine, *or* without reviewing the peace attempts during the Israeli-Palestinian conflict after Israel gained its independence within former Palestine. Knowing that these events have been linked with the founders of Taglit Birthright Israel helps present a clear picture of some of the ideals on which it was based, and perhaps some of the hidden agendas it might have. To get an even clearer picture, we will also look at its donors and sources of funding, and what their goals may be with encouraging this form of visitation to Israel amidst the Youth.

### 1.3 The Donors

It would be impossible to successfully directly analyze every single donor of Taglit Birthright Israel, but we will look at five key donors instead: the **Adelson Foundation** and its history; **Lynn Schusterman** and her contributions in education; the **Jewish Federations of North America**, which became the umbrella organization of several Jewish organizations from the 20<sup>th</sup> century; **Keren Hayesod**, a registered corporation of the State of Israel; and **The Jewish Agency for Israel** and its mission. All five of these key donors represent different links to Taglit Birthright Israel and prove that the program may not be as unbiased and transparent as it is often

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<sup>34</sup> "Michael Steinhardt Thinks American Jews Need to Stop Focusing on Religion."

presented to be. The first of these donors is the Adelson Foundation and one of the most controversial, particularly recently.

The Adelson Foundation has donated a total of \$140 million to Taglit Birthright Israel since the foundation's inception in 2007 and gives \$200 million yearly to Jewish-Israeli causes and programs, which is more than any other private foundation ever.<sup>35</sup> The main premise behind the Adelson Foundation is to "strengthen the State of Israel and the Jewish people," by providing grants and funding to charitable organizations that are located within the United States and/or Israel, with the intent to support: Holocaust and Anti-Semitism Awareness, Israel Advocacy, Israel Programs, Jewish and Zionist Identity and Education, Social Services and Health, and Welfare.<sup>36</sup> Sheldon Adelson and his wife, Dr. Miriam Adelson created the organization with the aim to support Jewish philanthropic causes. Mr. Adelson's speculated net worth is \$26 billion and has acquired his wealth primarily from the casino business in Las Vegas, owning some of the most famous casinos in the world – The Venetian Resort Hotel Casino in Las Vegas, the Marina Bay Sands in Singapore, and the Sands Expo and Convention Center also in Las Vegas.<sup>37</sup> In recent news, Sheldon Adelson has come under fire by Taglit Birthright Israel participants for his donations to current U.S. President Donald Trump's campaign. Once again, this is relevant to the history previously included on this paper precisely because Resolution 181 left Jerusalem under international status due to the fact that both Israel and Palestine claim it as capital; internationally West Jerusalem is generally considered Israel's capital while East Jerusalem is considered Palestine's.<sup>38</sup>

The issue of Jerusalem is a serious one and has left most international actors weary of placing their embassies in Jerusalem, preferring to place them in the outskirts of Tel Aviv. President Donald Trump officially recognized Jerusalem (both East and West) as the capital of

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<sup>35</sup> "Adelson Foundation History."

<sup>36</sup> "Adelson Family Foundation - Guidelines."

<sup>37</sup> "Sheldon Adelson Profile - CNN.Com."

<sup>38</sup> "United Nations Resolution 181 | Map & Summary."

Israel on December 6, 2017, causing a massive international outcry, worldwide protests, and eventually the deaths of hundreds of demonstrators due to what the international community has deemed as excessive force on behalf of Israel.<sup>39</sup> The embassy was officially opened on May 14, 2018 (the anniversary of Israeli independence) on the West side of Jerusalem. Palestinians launched a “Great March of Return” protest beginning on March 30<sup>th</sup> that would lead up to May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018, the Nakba’s anniversary (“the catastrophe” or the Palestinian exodus from Israel). On May 14<sup>th</sup>, the death toll for Palestinians had reached 64; since then, the protests have continued and the death toll reached 214 on November 12, 2018 with an added 18,000 or more injured Palestinians.<sup>40</sup> President Donald Trump is the first international leader to deliberately move an embassy to Jerusalem since 2006, while very few had remained on and off between then and the 1980’s when Israel declared Jerusalem its “complete and united” capital under its “Basic Law: Jerusalem, Capital of Israel.”<sup>41</sup> The only other nation since that has moved their full embassy to Jerusalem has been Guatemala, though others have publicly announced they will soon follow suit.

This is important to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict because the Camp David Accords (both parts) neglect dealing with the issue of Jerusalem, which has always been a key point of controversy between the two parties.<sup>42</sup> How does this tie into Sheldon Adelson? To begin, Adelson has donated to the Congressional and Senate Leadership Funds, Granite State Solutions, and Future45 (a pro-Trump Super PAC); racking up a total of \$25 million to Donald Trump’s campaign, and another \$55 million to Republican Party PACs and support groups in 2016.<sup>43</sup> This made him the biggest single donor to either party in the 2016 elections. He donated another \$30 million to the Republican Party’s midterm elections as of June 2018.<sup>44</sup> Interestingly enough,

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<sup>39</sup> “Gaza Deaths.”

<sup>40</sup> “Gaza Protests.”

<sup>41</sup> “Basic Law: Jerusalem, Capital of Israel.”

<sup>42</sup> “The Avalon Project : Camp David Accords; September 17, 1978.”

<sup>43</sup> Balcerzak, “Richest Billionaires Are Also Top Political Spenders.”

<sup>44</sup> McGreal, “Sheldon Adelson.”

some of Sheldon Adelson's passionate stances on the Middle East have recently become a part of U.S. foreign policy, from backing out of the Iran Nuclear Deal that was negotiated and signed by former President Obama, establishing the U.S. embassy in Jerusalem as was extensively discussed, and encouraging the appointment of John Bolton as the U.S. National Security Advisor to the President.<sup>45</sup> Reports even showed that Adelson was seen in a private meeting at the White House the day before the announcement of the Iran Nuclear Deal, strongly supported by John Bolton and other advisors now surrounding Trump.<sup>46</sup> The Adelson Foundation has spent \$100 Million on funding trips to Israel for youth at this point.<sup>47</sup> Adelson remains close with Bolton and in turn with the Trump administration. The latest in the link between Donald Trump, his administration's backing of pro-Israeli policies, and the Adelson's is the announcement that Dr. Miriam Adelson will be receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom for her philanthropy and dedication to human rights.<sup>48</sup> The Adelson's strongly believe in funding Jewish causes, and particularly focus on educational trips for their philanthropy. The idea that youth can transform the future is certainly not new to the people behind the funding of a program like Taglit Birthright Israel.

Lynn Schusterman is a well-known advocate for Jewish education and the promotion of Jewish values through education. One of her greatest contributions to the Jewish diaspora community in the United States has been to centers of study dedicated to Israel and Jewish culture. Some of these centers include the Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies at University of Texas, the Schusterman Center Campus in Tulsa, Oklahoma where she was raised, and most importantly the Schusterman Center for Israel Studies in Brandeis University, one of the most Jewish-affiliated universities on the North-East coast despite its non-sectarian claims. Brandeis University, named after the first ever Jewish Supreme Court judge, Louis Dembitz Brandeis, and

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<sup>45</sup> McGreal.

<sup>46</sup> Vogel, "Meet the Members of the 'Shadow N.S.C.' Advising John Bolton."

<sup>47</sup> McGreal, "Sheldon Adelson."

<sup>48</sup> Forgey, "Wife of GOP Megadonor to Receive Presidential Medal of Freedom."



the school's Jewish roots are specifically focused on the Jewish culture of learning and curiosity.<sup>49</sup> This mission with which the school is founded on is incorporated into the Schusterman Center for Israel Studies and is directly connected to Taglit Birthright Israel trips sending students to Israel to visit cultural sites and heritage sites.<sup>50</sup> The Charles and Lynn Schusterman Foundation dedicate one third of their donations to Jewish causes and pro-Israel causes particularly in education. One of the programs that they provide major funding for is Hillel International, which has recently come under attack for their refusal to include speakers from the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) Movement in their events.<sup>51</sup> One of the concerns about educational programs like Hillel International and movements like BDS is that it provides political parties with an issue that can be torn apart by partisanship.<sup>52</sup> Considering how difficult it is not to politicize the question of Israel and Palestine, it is not surprising that educational centers have a tendency to opt for one bias or another. A thorough investigation into the BDS Movement by Nathan Thrall from The Guardian comes to the conclusion that what BDS wants (and those it represents – disenfranchised Palestinians within the conflict and abroad) is for the liberal West to stop encouraging the suppression of Palestinians in the form of supporting Israel, rather than requesting an armed conflict alliance.<sup>53</sup> Donors like Schusterman are not nearly as involved in politics as someone like Sheldon Adelson, but contribute to the fracturing of peace in Israel and Palestine when they encourage a limiting view of Israel and the Jewish ideals. This is why she is included on this list. The Ryerson University Report on Experiential Learning notes that learning through experience benefits the student in changing their perspective on academia.<sup>54</sup> The trips incorporated into Schusterman's Center at Brandeis or Texas or Oklahoma are creating opportunities for students to not just experience Israel, but to

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<sup>49</sup> "Brandeis University - Our Story."

<sup>50</sup> "Summer Institute for Israel Studies."

<sup>51</sup> Krieger, "Hillel International's Shameful Retreat Behind the Barricades on Israel and Palestine."

<sup>52</sup> Thrall, "BDS."

<sup>53</sup> Thrall.

<sup>54</sup> Schwartz, "Looking Through the Lenses of an Experiential Learning Model."

study it and sympathize with it. Through experiential learning they get an experience that will entirely define their opinion from thereafter regarding the nation, and at the end of the day, these out of ordinary experiences have shown an increase in Jewish identification, according to a study by Scott Turberg Aaron.<sup>55</sup> The second part of the paper will further discuss how these trips are meant to create lasting effects on the perspectives of Jewish diaspora.

The Jewish Federations of North America are an umbrella organization representing 147 different smaller local federations around North America and 300 network communities.<sup>56</sup> The organization contributes over \$2 billion every year to promote the protection and enhancement of Jewish well-being and community world-wide through: “the values of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), *tzedakah* (charity and social justice) and *Torah* (Jewish learning).”<sup>57</sup> They make no effort to hide their efforts in supporting Israel. Sections on their website including their work in Washington D.C., and their 2017 Annual Report, as well as their report on Israel Policy Priorities include their agenda on opposing the “delegitimization” of Israel and creating “transformative” trips to Israel for young Jewish diaspora.<sup>58</sup> In addition to these obvious goals, the Jewish Federations of North America were involved in a controversy regarding their decennial survey, the National Jewish Population Survey. The survey had only been officially released two times; once in 1990/1991, and the second in 2000/2001. By the second release, which had already been delayed in coming out, the organization seemed to realize it was riddled with mistakes, starting with the fact that entirely different methodologies were used in the two, thereby making it impossible to compare the two decades’ differences.<sup>59</sup> By 2011, they released the following statement:

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<sup>55</sup> Aaron, “A Grounded Theory of How Jewish Experiential Education Impacts the Identity Development of Jewish Emerging Adults,” 95.

<sup>56</sup> “About JFNA | The Jewish Federations of North America.”

<sup>57</sup> “About JFNA | The Jewish Federations of North America.”

<sup>58</sup> “Jewish Federations Israel Policy Priorities 2018,” 2.

<sup>59</sup> “Is the Era of National Surveys of American Jews at an End?”

“We decided not to be the lead agency on a new study, but we haven’t ruled out partnering or sitting at the table with others who are leading a study under the right circumstances. NJPS was very useful for the Jewish community at large, but given limited resources we decided to focus on research that would directly benefit federations.”<sup>60</sup>

It is no doubt that the information in such surveys for the decade of 2000-2010 would have been very useful for the purpose of this paper but obtaining the information through the Jewish Federations is obviously not possible. The Jewish Databank provides insights on both surveys and demonstrates a decrease in American Jews from 5.5 million in 1990 to 5.2 million in 2000.<sup>61</sup> Of particular note in the 1990 survey was the information regarding inter-faith marriage and how many children in a family with at least one Jewish parent identify as Jewish also.<sup>62</sup> It is, in fact, curious that inter-faith marriage is listed as one of the subjects of research, as Michael Steinhardt had noted this as an issue that needed solving in his interview with The Jewish Telegraphic Agency mentioned earlier.<sup>63</sup> The Jewish Federation of North America also became the ruling organization of a merge between The United Jewish Appeal, the Council of Jewish Federations, and the United Israel Appeal. Curiously, or rather unsurprisingly, the United Jewish Appeal had a volunteer chairman – Charles Bronfman; one of the founders along with Steinhardt of Taglit Birthright Israel. He also became the founding chair of United Jewish Communities (which is now literally the United Jewish Federations of North America) in 1999 – the same year that Taglit Birthright Israel was founded.<sup>64</sup> Many can argue that Taglit Birthright Israel makes no attempts to hide its goals, but reaching back to donors, founders, and supporters shows a much

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<sup>60</sup> “Is the Era of National Surveys of American Jews at an End?”

<sup>61</sup> “2000-2001 National Jewish Population Survey.”

<sup>62</sup> “1990 Profile of American Jewry: Insights from the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey.”

<sup>63</sup> “Michael Steinhardt Thinks American Jews Need to Stop Focusing on Religion.”

<sup>64</sup> “Charles R Bronfman.” As noted by 21/64, an organization which has evolved from the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies organization.

more complicated story – there is a conglomerate group of people in power making these things happen in very specific ways, all connected to one another. These connections are the parts that this paper is trying to uncover.

The next donor we will look at is Keren Hayesod, literally meaning “The Foundation Fund,” and perhaps one of the most powerful in this list:

“Founded in 1920 as the fundraising arm of the Zionist movement, Keren Hayesod played a decisive role in marshalling the resources needed to establish an independent, sovereign state and helped lay the foundation for the state-on-the-way. With the help of donations from throughout the world, KH brought tens of thousands of Jews fleeing Europe to Eretz Israel, helped absorb them and started over 900 urban and rural settlements. It provided the newcomers with homes and jobs, and developed the economic, educational, and cultural framework of the Yishuv. Today Keren Hayesod-UIA is registered in Israel as a public benefit company, and enjoys status as a non-profit organization. In partnership with the global Jewish community and Friends of Israel in over 45 countries worldwide, Keren Hayesod-UIA helps further the national priorities of the State of Israel. Foremost is rescuing Jews from places where their lives are in peril, encouraging aliyah and absorbing new immigrants.”<sup>65</sup>

Their organization provides easily accessible information regarding their history and foundation. The principles in which they were founded on after the 1917 Balfour Declaration, were unequivocally to establish a nation in Israel. This is not disputed. What is concerning, however, is that the organization was moving on the ground in former Palestine, in a form akin to colonialism. We have seen Richard Falk strongly opine on the connections between Zionism and colonialism in his book, but yet another book compiled of interviews, *On Palestine*, by

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<sup>65</sup> “About Keren Hayesod - United Israel Appeal or Who We Are?”

Frank Barat, Noam Chomsky, and Ilan Pappé where it is explained that direct translations of *le-hitnahel* or *le-hityashev* to English literally mean “to colonize” or “to settle.”<sup>66</sup> These words were openly used prior to World War II, when colonialism was no longer deemed acceptable. Chomsky writes: “Even if the Zionist movement and later the state of Israel did not regard the expropriation of Palestine’s land, quite often accompanied by dispossession of the natives, as an act of colonizing, everyone else did.”<sup>67</sup> Organizations like Keren Hayesod have undeniable political goals, and not just Jewish goals. It has been noted before that it is impossible not to politicize anything to do with Israel and Palestine’s ongoing conflict. Discussing Keren Hayesod’s involvement in political history (after all, Zionism was a revival and continues to be a nationalist movement) is necessary to this paper because it allows us to understand the context of Taglit Birthright Israel and to make the historical connections on which it was founded.

Finally, though certainly not least important, we look at the Jewish Agency for Israel, currently the biggest nonprofit organization in the world, according to them.<sup>68</sup> This organization also has its origins in the time right after the Balfour Declaration. The Jewish Agency for Israel was established in 1929 with the purpose of expanding the Israeli state, prior, of course, to the birth of the actual Israeli state. As stated by the organization:

“We were instrumental in founding and building the State of Israel and continue to serve as the main link between the Jewish state and Jewish communities everywhere. This global partnership has enabled us to address the Jewish People’s greatest challenges in every generation. Today, we connect the global Jewish family, bringing Jews to Israel, and Israel to Jews, by providing meaningful Israel engagement and facilitating Aliyah. We build a better society in Israel - and beyond - energizing young Israelis and their worldwide peers to rediscover a collective sense of Jewish purpose.”<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Chomsky, Pappé, and Barat, *On Palestine*, 21.

<sup>67</sup> Chomsky, Pappé, and Barat, *On Palestine*.

<sup>68</sup> “The Jewish Agency for Israel | LinkedIn.”

<sup>69</sup> “Jewish Agency for Israel - About Us.”

Taglit Birthright Israel is only one of the very many organizations that the Jewish Agency for Israel donates to in order to create experience for Jewish diaspora to Israel. The organization categorizes its funding donations into four different sections: “Experience Israel” (programs to visit Israel), “Israel in your Community” (pro-Israeli programs that bring Israeli emissaries to local communities to promote Israel as a nation), “Jewish Social Action” (helping local Israeli populations), and “*Aliyah*” (facilitating the process of Jewish diaspora moving and becoming citizens of Israel). The Jewish Agency for Israel was created as a functioning part of the World Zionist organization which was inspired by Theodor Herzl (mentioned earlier in this paper). It was through the Jewish Agency, then called the “Palestine Office” that Jewish land was first purchased in Palestine and continued to be purchased past World War I and into British Mandated Palestine.<sup>70</sup> The Zionist Commission, led by Chaim Weizmann merged and took over the Palestine Office, to continue directing the organization’s efforts in creating an Israeli state. This was reinforced by Article 4 of the Palestine Mandate through the League of Nations during its time in existence, which states:

“An appropriate Jewish agency shall be recognised as a public body for the purpose of advising and co-operating with the Administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish national home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine, and, subject always to the control of the Administration to assist and take part in the development of the country. The Zionist organization, so long as its organization and constitution are in the opinion of the Mandatory appropriate, shall be recognised as such agency. It shall take steps in consultation with His Britannic Majesty's Government to secure the co-operation of all Jews who are willing to assist in the establishment of the Jewish national home.”<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> “The Jewish Agency for Israel Timeline | The Jewish Agency.”

<sup>71</sup> The Council of the League of Nations, “The Palestine Mandate.”

The Zionist Commission, which later then became the Zionist Executive and the agency in charge of the requests in Article 4, was under Chaim Weitzmann at the same time as the World Zionist Organization, thereby facilitating the process of Aliyah before Israel was established and continuing to do so after its establishment. This meant that there were close ties between the two organizations and that policies flowed from the World Zionist Organization though it was not in the official Article 4 power. In fact, some members were either chosen by the World Zionist Organization or literally just made up a part of the Jewish Agency's board; this was established by the Zionist Congress itself.<sup>72</sup> This was all happening during the 1920's after World War II, and prior to the establishment of Israel as a state. After the Balfour Declaration, Britain was in charge of Mandate Palestine and working on figuring out Arab grievances. They did this through the Peel Commission which had originally recommend a small Jewish state in 1936, which should have only taken up 4% of Palestine.<sup>73</sup> Essentially, the commission split Palestine in half and recommended Arabs move to one side and Jews move to the other, expecting this to somehow alleviate the riots that had begun when local Arabs saw such a large increase in Jewish migration and land purchases. David Ben-Gurion (1886-1973) who on May 14, 1948 had declared the independence of Israel and went on to become the first prime minister of the official state of Israel was also the chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel from 1935 until the creation of the state. From 1946 until 1956, he was also the president of the World Zionist Organization. Israel was officially established in 1948. So, all three had the same leadership and were led with the same goal – Zionism. It is difficult to assume that the organizations now supported by the Jewish Agency for Israel do not follow the same principles it has embodied since its inception.

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<sup>72</sup> World Zionist Organization, "Resolutions of the 16th Zionist Congress With a Summary Report of the Proceeding."

<sup>73</sup> Shaul Bartal, "The Peel Commission Report of 1937 and the Origins of the Partition Concept."

In order to form a clearer picture of the Jewish Agency’s funding goals, we will take a look at four of the Board of Governors Plenary Resolutions. The first and earliest we will look at is the resolution titled, “Jewish Agency Support for Birthright Israel” published on February 4, 2005. The Board of Governors decided they would increase their funding for Taglit Birthright Israel from \$2.5 million to \$5 million annual.<sup>74</sup> The resolution also declares that Taglit Birthright Israel “strongly encourage” participants to donate their \$250 deposits, and that the Jewish Agency have access to information on graduates from the trip program.<sup>75</sup> There have been no new resolutions regarding Taglit Birthright Israel, meaning we should assume their budget for the program and their requirements for these donations has not changed in the last decade. The second resolution of interest to this paper was established on June 8, 2008 and titled, “Debt Forgiveness in Settlements Surround Gaza,” which declares a debt forgiveness for individuals living in the settlements near Gaza, as they were once done in 2005 before; debts amount to 26.5 million NIS.<sup>76</sup> Naturally, the Jewish Agency has no interest in hiding their Zionist goals, but it is important to note that in 2005 during the disengagement of Gaza, all of the settlements actually located on the strip were abandoned. This means that in both 2005 and 2008 the settlements that remained surrounding Gaza were freed from financial burdens, so they could remain occupying whatever territory they were already present in, even if they were right on the front line – the resolution above mentions freeing these settlements from loan repayments precisely because of the hardships they lived while remaining on this turbulent border itself.<sup>77</sup> Israeli occupation of Gaza was forced to end, but that would not mean that the territory right outside would be freed or that the restrictions surrounding Gaza would be made any easier.

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<sup>74</sup> The Jewish Agency for Israel, “Resolution Jewish Agency Support for Birthright Israel 2005.”

<sup>75</sup> The Jewish Agency for Israel.

<sup>76</sup> The Jewish Agency for Israel, “Resolution Debt Forgiveness in Settlements Surrounding Gaza 2008.”

<sup>77</sup> The Jewish Agency for Israel.



The third resolution to note in this paper is the “Aliyah Resolution” decided on February 5, 2015, in which the Jewish Agency pledges to work with the government of Israel to bring in “hundreds of thousands of new *Olim*” for Aliyah and klitah.<sup>78</sup> This means that the Jewish Agency of Israel has been lobbying for the expansion and continuing growth of Israel as a territory and as a population, despite the fact that a two-state solution has been on the table since negotiations began, and despite the fact that an increase in Israeli settlers and citizens might make this two-state solution more complicated. This resolution aims to make it even easier for *olim*, or immigrants making *Aliyah* (the process of migrating to Israel), to successfully complete the process.<sup>79</sup> As always, the means by which to do this is through acquiring extra funds from the government. The final resolution of note, which is very much related to the third, is the resolution for “Aliyah Promotion Activities,” decided on February 2, 2016. Aliyah Promotion Activities is a seeming reinforcement of the Aliyah Resolution; it aims to promote Aliyah amidst possible *olim*.<sup>80</sup> Once again, this resolution aims to increase the amount of migrants to Israel by creating more promotional activities; the aim is simply to increase numbers of absorbed new citizens.<sup>81</sup> The vagueness and briefness of the text leaves it open to interpretation and the forms in which these promotional activities will be enacted is not clear. The Jewish Agency for Israel has been donating to Taglit Birthright Israel since the program’s foundation in 1999, and is listed as one of the major donors to the program on their online documentation.

Of the major donors listed above, we know that their interests are founded on Zionism, on the expansion of the Israeli state, on encouraging the Jewish community to support the Israeli state, and/or on using experiential education to fulfill these goals. The reason it is relevant to this paper specifically is because we are looking at more than just the goals that Taglit Birthright Israel explicitly discusses, but the ones that are implicit. What might those goals be? What means

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<sup>78</sup> The Jewish Agency for Israel, “Aliyah Resolution 2015.”

<sup>79</sup> The Jewish Agency for Israel.

<sup>80</sup> The Jewish Agency for Israel, “Resolution Aliyah Promotion Activities 2016.”

<sup>81</sup> The Jewish Agency for Israel.

are being used to further them? How are Taglit Birthright Israel's sponsors and donors affecting these goals? What do donors' missions and goals say about the programs (such as Taglit) and initiatives that they support? Hopefully, the historical review in the last few pages has given some insight on implicit goals and on donors' correlations to them. In the next section, we will explore the explicit experience of the Taglit Birthright Israel trip and mission.

## PART II – How does it work?

Taglit Birthright Israel, a not-for-profit educational organization, was founded in 1999 with the purpose of giving the less connected Jewish diaspora an “educational trip,” that aims to increase connections with Israel.<sup>82</sup> In this section we will take the time to see how educational the trip actually is for young Jewish people, where they go, what they do, and what they are told. We will complete this part of the paper by looking at arguments made by people in support of these trips and those against, as well as looking at the headline-making controversies that have risen regarding Birthright, its donors, and goals in the last year. We will attempt to uncover the links between the explicit and implicit goals behind the trip, and to see whether or not these goals have been feasible.

### 2.1 The Program

The program Taglit Birthright Israel was first developed with the intention of solving a growing gap between Jewish diaspora and the Israeli state as well as the Jewish community; the program claims it has been successful in this endeavor.<sup>83</sup> The program has worked directly with the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University, where Lynn Schusterman (mentioned as one of our key donors) has donated massive amounts of money. Their work together provide the following statistics: 54% of participants say it is important to marry someone Jewish, participants are 40% more likely to have friends who are Jewish, 30% of participants return to Israel, 85% of participants consider Taglit Birthright Israel a life-changing experience, participants are 36% more likely to get involved in their community, participants are 30% more likely to donate to Jewish or Israeli causes, and finally, 74% of participants feel a connection to Israel and they are 40% more likely to feel this way than non-participants.<sup>84</sup> How

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<sup>82</sup> “Taglit Birthright Israel - Goals.”

<sup>83</sup> “Taglit Birthright Israel - Our Achievements.”

<sup>84</sup> “Birthright Israel Foundation - It’s All in the Numbers.”

does Taglit Birthright Israel do this? The program works on incorporating three different kinds of features into the trip: Jewish history, modern Jewish life, and interaction with Israeli Jews. By hiring different tour guides and operators, all trained in providing these three features, they successfully push forward the Taglit Birthright Israel agenda, while also creating engaging and different themed trips. Some of these trips include: Active, Professional, Culinary, Spiritual, Arts and Culture, and LGBTQ.<sup>85</sup> Out of these six categories there are several different kinds of experiences – river rafting and hiking in Active trips, exploring the entertainment industry within a Professional capacity, vegan and vegetarian explorations within the Culinary option, yoga retreats within Israel for the spiritual experience, exploration of the Israeli music and modern life for Arts and Culture, and finally the opportunity attend Gay Pride Parade in Telaviv for those who select an LGBTQ themed trip. Each trip lasts from seven to ten days and takes participants in groups of similar ages. The trips were normally offered for 18 to 26-year old’s, but a more recent option now provides trips for 27 to 32-year old’s who were not able to go when they are younger. Some of the more specific offers provide trips departing from the same city so that friends and colleagues can attend together and all of these trips cater to different interests while incorporating these three key features:

“While trips are operated by different Trip Organizers such that each trip differs slightly, all trips focus on three core educational areas: **Narratives of the Jewish People** – Participants visit a Jewish heritage site, a Zionist heritage site, a contemporary national heritage site, a “natural” heritage site, and a Shoah (Holocaust) heritage and learning site. **Contemporary Israel** – Through visits to different organizations, institutions, and businesses, participants explore Israeli geopolitics, society, and statehood; arts and culture; and innovation, entrepreneurship, and technology. **Ideas and Values of the Jewish People** – Group members celebrate Shabbat together, form a Kehilah

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<sup>85</sup> “Taglit Birthright Israel - Themed Trips.”

(community) with mutual responsibility, and engage with Talmud-Torah and Beit Midrash and Hebrew as a living language.”<sup>86</sup>

Students apply to Taglit Birthright Israel by signing up on the official website with all personal information. Applicants are then offered possible travel dates that lead to up to four months in advance. This eliminated a small section of available trips, but then leads an applicant to choose from a series of departure destinations from New York, Los Angeles, Boston, Chicago, Miami, San Francisco, Atlanta, and Washington in the United States.<sup>87</sup> Next, a page of different themed trips becomes available, ranging from adventure styled trips to specific community style trips (meaning participants from all the same city go together and attend the experience together) and numerous other options than can possibly be listed. Applicants who have finally selected their specific themed trip are then led to a confirmation page showing what they have selected and are then offered two more options: “Extend Your Israel Trip” and “Business/Tech Internship.”<sup>88</sup> Before an applicant has the opportunity to even complete an application, they are offered extensions which can last from up to a few days more to ten whole weeks (all expenses paid).

Following this offer, applicants will input their own personal information personal information so that Taglit Birthright Israel can message personal phone numbers or e-mails reminding applicants to complete their applications. The website will ask about university information, specifically requesting if the university is affiliated with a Jewish organization or provides a Jewish organization. The next part is key – parental information. Here, Taglit Birthright requests information regarding Jewish birth and Jewish conversion of both parents, before moving on to ask about Jewish Education programs and the kind of participation an

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<sup>86</sup> “Taglit Birthright Israel - Our Educational Core.”

<sup>87</sup> “Taglit Birthright Israel - Application.”

<sup>88</sup> “Taglit Birthright Israel - Application.”

applicant may have had in summer camps, day school, or Hebrew school.<sup>89</sup> It then asks if students have participated in one of the following Jewish youth groups: B'nai B'rith Youth Organization (BBYO – a fraternity and sorority group for high school students, which in the last decade works on campaigning for Israeli support), the Reform Jewish Youth Movement (known as NFTY – a progressive Zionist youth movement that provides Jewish community for students from grades six to twelve in North America), the National Conference of Synagogue Youth (NCSY – founded by the Orthodox Union, which supports religious Zionism and provides kosher certification; connecting young Jewish people and providing trips and programs), the United Synagogue Youth (USY – a conservative Jewish organization encouraging young Jewish engagement, community, and support of Israel), Bnei Akiva (the largest religious Zionist youth movement in the world), or Young Judaea (a peer-led Zionist youth movement).<sup>90</sup> There is also the option to choose none of the aforementioned youth movements, before moving on to inputting prior Israel experience.

The Taglit Birthright Israel program used to not allow participants who had already been to Israel on a free trip before their eighteenth birthday to attend the program. The program still requires information about possible participants being Israeli citizens, having lived in Israel, or having visited Israel from the ages of twelve to seventeen or after their eighteenth birthday either. Making false claims about this could lead to a full trip charge, the forfeiting of the ticket home, and the possibility to not participate. The application asks why the participant wants to attend Taglit Birthright Israel before requesting a \$250 deposit and travel information.<sup>91</sup> At the end of this section, it includes a special offer from El Al, Israel's leading airline and the airline that took Israel's first president on its famous first accidental flight from Geneva, Switzerland to Israel.<sup>92</sup> The special offer touts El Al as a supporter of Israel and Israeli efforts as a

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<sup>89</sup> "Taglit Birthright Israel - Application."

<sup>90</sup> "Taglit Birthright Israel - Application."

<sup>91</sup> "Taglit Birthright Israel - Application."

<sup>92</sup> "EL AL Airlines - History."

recommendation to become a member with the airline, and to support the continuation of more Birthright trips. Finally, the completed application provides the applicant with a personal code so that they can share it with friends and go together; the code can be automatically shared on various social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google Plus, WhatsApp, and e-mail.

Once all of this is completed, an applicant will receive information from one of the Trip Organizers, such as Shorashim, Sachlav Israel on the House, Mayanot Israel, Israel Outdoors, Yael Adventures, Israel Experts – Beyond the Obvious, Hillel International, Ezra World, Amazing Israel, and OU – Israel Free Spirit. Each organization is in charge of creating the Israel experience, an expert in delivering tours with a program’s specific requests in an itinerary, and a direct partner of Taglit Birthright Israel working to customize their trips according the categories mentioned above. Shorashim, for example, is particularly interested in creating interactions between Jewish Israeli citizens and North American visitors, citing this “human landscape” as part of the “cross-cultural” environment they are invested in providing.<sup>93</sup> While having started as a program providing trips on its own, Shorashim grew to include Taglit Birthright Israel as one of its partners and focuses on the *mifgash* aspect of Taglit.<sup>94</sup> *Mifgash* is “encounter” in Hebrew and refers to “the multi-day peer-to-peer meeting between young adult Jews from abroad and from Israel” – it has become such a crucial part of the ten day trip that more than 80% of participants describe it as the most important part of their trip.<sup>95</sup> Although all the Trip Organizers will incorporate this into their trips at some point, some organizers provide more thrill in their itineraries. A good example is Yael Adventures. Yael Adventures has had 30 years of experience with local Israelis which means they have had the opportunity to explore “off the beaten track” and can take its participants on trips around less visited parts of Israel.<sup>96</sup> It includes options

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<sup>93</sup> “Shorashim - About Us.”

<sup>94</sup> “Shorashim - History.”

<sup>95</sup> “Taglit Birthright Israel - The Mifgash.”

<sup>96</sup> “Yael Adventures - Free Birthright Israel Trips.”

called “High Gear” which include trekking, climbing, hiking, bouldering, river rafting, and much more. The company believes that the best way to incorporate Jewish diaspora into a Jewish community and expand Israeli support is by providing them with on the ground experiences that are unforgettable.<sup>97</sup> Some of the information regarding the trips provided by Yael Adventures also incorporate an added level of intention – a section on safety and security informs possible participants that they will not be passing by the Gaza Strip or East Jerusalem (both controlled by Palestinians or East Jerusalemites that were once officially Palestinians), and also affirms the involvement of Israeli security escorts and a GPS locator so that authorities will follow groups around no matter where they are.<sup>98</sup>

One last interesting example of implicit goal reaching through Trip Organizers is the information provided by Hillel International. Hillel International specifically seeks out college students, targeting them in over 550 campuses, and using funds from the Charles and Lynn Schusterman International Center to connect Jewish communities with Israel.<sup>99</sup> This organizer focuses specifically on education and on targeting students. It takes students to powerful and impressionable sites like Masada, the Dead Sea, the Western Wall, camel riding in the desert, ‘jeeping’ in the Golans, and sleeping in Bedouin tents.<sup>100</sup> Israeli soldiers travel with Hillel International trips the entire time, once again providing the important aspect of the trip – *mifgash*. Each trip organizer has distinctive goals and ways of reaching them, each is funded by different donors, and uses different tactics to succeed in their aims. The fact of the matter is that applicants have a majorly diverse selection from which to choose; Taglit Birthright Israel makes sure to cater to different interests, needs, experiences, religious interest, and cultural interests so applicants do not lack variety.

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<sup>97</sup> “Yael Adventures - Birthright Israel Trip Organizer.”

<sup>98</sup> “Yael Adventures - Birthright Israel Safety and Security.”

<sup>99</sup> “Hillel International - Birthright Israel Trip Organizer.”

<sup>100</sup> “Hillel International - Birthright Israel Trip Organizer.”



Taglit Birthright Israel touts its impressive success rates – of the 650,000 participants that have experienced the trips, 100,000 of them are now Israeli citizens; this means they succeed in bringing over 15% of participants to migrate to Israel.<sup>101</sup> If the donors are interested in expanding Israel, or increasing support of Israel, then they have certainly succeeded in doing so by funding Taglit Birthright Israel. In an interview with the Birthright Israel Foundation, the organization in charge of Taglit Birthright Israel, Michael Steinhardt said, “Birthright Israel is without a doubt the most impactful program in the last quarter century in the Jewish world, but it’s not over yet, and we have a long way to go.”<sup>102</sup> The impact the program has had is clear in the numbers from the Cohen Center and from the statistics gathered by Taglit Birthright Israel. We have now walked through the full process of applying to Birthright and can move on to analyzing the theories and aspects of travel ethnographies that make it such a life-changing trip for so many. Why is it that this program has worked so well and has clearly succeeded in both its explicit goals of creating a greater Jewish identity and its implicit goals of expanding Israel and the support of the nation itself?

## 2.2 Does it achieve its goals? How?

Taglit Birthright Israel has clear explicit goals of creating a Jewish identity, decreasing the gap between Israeli Jews and diaspora in North America (for the purposes of this paper), as well as providing an unforgettable experience for young people. The programs implicit goals considering its donors, funding, supporters, and those the program supports itself seem to show an alternative, yet obvious agenda, of expanding the state of Israel and of increasing support for the Israeli state as well. It very clearly is succeeding in bringing youth across North America to Israel on a yearly basis and has even succeeded in bringing at least one tenth of its participants

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<sup>101</sup> “Taglit Birthright Israel - Our Achievements.”

<sup>102</sup> “Birthright Israel Foundation - Our Mission and Vision.”

into the country as actual citizens.<sup>103</sup> In the above pages we have the facts – the history, the truth behind the donors, the program, the coordinators, the funding, etc. We must look at the theories in order to pick apart these facts and uncover what it is that these realities mean for the participants its involving. Without creating a theoretical lens through which to look at the program and the history on which it was built, it is impossible to see the controversies behind it objectively and therefore impossible to analyze it thoroughly.

Ethnographies of travel reveal that the realities behind travel have a very peculiar way of shaping our perspectives on a place and region. In fact, the studies of tourism can be quite introspective; it can change how people represent themselves and even their identity politics. In addition, there are a lot of factors that can play into both our successful and failed experiences abroad, such as the warmth and coldness of people, our own emotional state, the psychological effects of travel, and/or topologizing people (or generalizing them depending on where they are from). Some other factors to keep in mind is the visitation of nature or natural spaces and whether or not we culturize nature or if it is that we are naturalizing cultural sites. One thing to keep in mind about experiences like Taglit Birthright Israel is that commodifying a region, or nation, or culture happens very often in today’s tourist industry. How do locals represent their places? This is an important aspect of *mifgash* which we have discussed throughout this paper. For the sake of tourism, locals, for instance, might turn back to cultural attire in order to appease tourists, presenting themselves with ethnicity markers that can be sold as a commodity as part of the experience itself. In reading and learning about ethnographies of travel as a lens through which to analyze the trips we are studying in this paper, we have to keep in mind the concepts of “others” brought up by scholars like Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak; it is important to ask ourselves if traveling is a form of colonialism and what kinds of trips are actually “tourism” as part of an industry historically rooted in migrations and pilgrimage. Is tourism a western

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<sup>103</sup> “Birthright Israel Foundation - It’s All in the Numbers.”

concept? Is it part of the history of European travelers or is it tradition? We will keep these concepts and questions in mind as we deconstruct these ideas and relate them to Taglit Birthright Israel.

An interesting chapter (“On Anticipation”) in Alain de Bottom’s book, titled *The Art of Travel*, discusses a lot of the concepts mentioned above. De Bottom says that we can blame art for simplifying things into one image – a brochure’s picture, a website video, a testimonial, etc. – and that this makes it easy to long for a vacation, or escape, where in reality we are not leaving behind our problems or psychological issues or difficulties, but we take them with us.<sup>104</sup> One of the most interesting and relevant concepts de Bottom talks about is that of *eudaimonia*, a Greek term referring to human growth and human flourishing and one which a lot of tourists, travelers, bloggers, and vacationers may or may not seek out.<sup>105</sup> De Bottom argues that this Greek philosophy is not something with which a lot of people travel in mind. However, one can argue that the Taglit Birthright Israel trips are precisely created with the intention of creating an *eudaimonia*-like experience. They themselves were built with the goal of creating a “life-changing” trip for all their participants.<sup>106</sup> In creating Jewish narratives and presenting them to diaspora, they are creating an experience that is staged in what Dean MacCannell would call the “front,” while in the “back” there are hidden agendas and goals.<sup>107</sup> MacCannell talks about this staged authenticity as a form of mystification and explains it best himself:

“Mystification, then, can be the conscious product of an individual effort to manipulate a social appearance... It can also be found where there is no conscious individual-level manipulation. Social structure itself is involved in the construction of mystifications that support social reality. Examples are found in avoidance behavior surrounding back regions. The possibility that a stranger might penetrate a back region is one major source

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<sup>104</sup> de Bottom, “On Anticipation,” 13.

<sup>105</sup> de Bottom, 4.

<sup>106</sup> “Taglit Birthright Israel - Goals.”

<sup>107</sup> MacCannell, “Staged Authenticity,” 590.

of social concern in everyday life, as much a concern to the strangers who might do the violating as to the violated.”<sup>108</sup>

An instance in which this happened – the penetration of the back region, so to say, has become one of the biggest controversies in the history of Taglit Birthright Israel’s existence. The Birthright Walk Outs first became famous in the summer of 2018 when some of the participants that went on a trip were also working with the IfNotNow organization. In order to understand the origin of this we must go back four years to Operation Protective Edge, during which the kidnapping of three settlement Jewish boys by Hamas triggered a seven week armed conflict between the Israeli Defense Force and the Gazans. 2,000 Palestinians died of which more than 500 were children, and at least 10,000 Palestinians were injured; 6 Israelis died, one of which was also a child.<sup>109</sup> IfNotNow was created in the following way:

“Moved to act by moral anguish and inspired by Hillel’s three questions, they organized Mourner’s Kaddish actions in nearly a dozen cities across the country and lamented the loss of both Israeli and Palestinian life. They had three demands: Stop the War on Gaza, End the Occupation, and Freedom and Dignity for All. The demand for American Jewish institutions to end their support for the occupation has only grown more urgent and clear since that summer. While the out-of-touch establishment claims to speak for our community, we know that American Jewry is eager for change. We are building a vibrant and inclusive movement within the American Jewish community, across generations and organizational affiliations. This movement is open to any who seek to shift the American Jewish public away from the status quo that upholds the occupation.”<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> MacCannell, 591.

<sup>109</sup> “Gaza.”

<sup>110</sup> “IfNotNow - About Us.”

This organization presents a perfect example of backdoor unveiling as discussed in MacCannell's journal. In 2018, young American Jews walked out on the Taglit Birthright Israel trips and chose to spend time in Palestine instead.<sup>111</sup> We will discuss this thoroughly in the next section and analyze why these controversies have become more popular now. Taglit Birthright Israel has successfully been operating under this mystification of a region, producing a homeland ideal and encouraging young Jewish diaspora's fascination with Israel. MacCannell also discusses the negative connotations of the word "tourist" – visitors to new countries want to involve themselves in the culture and traditions of the regions they visit but are never quite capable of doing it.

"Touristic experience is circumscribed by the structural tendencies described here. Sightseers are motivated by a desire to see life as it is really lived, even to get in with the natives, and, at the same time, they are deprecated for always failing to achieve these goals. The term "tourist" is increasingly used as a derisive label for someone who seems content with his obviously inauthentic experiences."<sup>112</sup>

Taglit Birthright Israel makes it so that their participants will not feel this way; the *mifgash* experience envelops them into a sense of community and creates a collective identity in which they feel like they are a part of something greater than themselves.<sup>113</sup> John Urry talks about similar concepts in his book, *The Tourist Gaze*, where he describes how visitors can sometimes participate in heritage tourism in a way in which a set of expectations is placed on locals to behave in a certain way; often, this has to do with the commodifying of cultures.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Wagner, "GUEST OPINION."

<sup>112</sup> MacCannell, "Staged Authenticity," 592.

<sup>113</sup> "Taglit Birthright Israel - The Mifgash."

<sup>114</sup> John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*, 2.

Could it be that Taglit Birthright Israel commodifies the Israeli culture? Due to the fact that these trips are free, it can be argued that a different kind of selling is happening – the selling of ideas and nationalism. Without a doubt, due to the history, funding, foundation, donors, and explicit goals of the program, Taglit Birthright wants to present Israel in a positive light for its participants. In this way, they are directing the Jewish diasporic gaze at the front region towards wonder and amazement, while in the back region they are eager to garner support for the nation itself, and therefore commodifying Israeli culture. In turning it into something that can be sold and that can be used to manipulate participants, Taglit Birthright Israel is selling Israeli culture to its students. John Urry talks about nine important characteristics of the “tourist gaze” and of tourism which will be listed here:

“(1) Tourism is a leisure activity which presupposes its opposite, namely regulated and organized work... (2) Tourist relationships arise from a movement of people to, and their stay in, various destinations... (3) The journey and stay are to, and in, sites which are outside the normal places of residence and work... (4) The places gazed upon are for purposes which are not directly connected with paid work and normally they offer some distinctive contrasts with work... (5) A substantial proportion of modern societies engages in such tourist practices... (6) Places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is an anticipation, especially through daydreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasures, either on a different scale or involving different senses from those customarily encountered... (7) The tourist gaze is directed to features of landscape and townscape which separate them off from everyday experience... (8) The gaze is constructed through signs, and tourism involved in the collection of signs... (9) An array of tourist professionals develop who attempt to reproduce ever-new objects of the tourist gaze.”<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> John Urry, 2–3.

Urry's nine characteristics produce several new lenses through which to look at the program in that characteristics 1 through 4 are often presented by Taglit Birthright in that they title their trips as an "alternative break," particularly during the spring time when young students are going on Spring Break (customary in the United States among higher middle-class students). It creates a contrast with what young students are usually accustomed to, and the trips are therefore created with the idea of moving groups of people together to sites that are unlike anything they have ever seen. This is why until recently, students that had been to Israel on an organized trip for free were no longer eligible to apply for Taglit Birthright Israel; this is no longer the case.<sup>116</sup> Students are encouraged to disconnect from a world they are accustomed to in order to expose themselves to a new community and in order to experience a new culture – which will eventually, and ideally, become theirs. In addition to these new experiences, trips like Taglit Birthright Israel includes natural and historically relevant sites for students to see. They are taken to the desert and places like Masada which hold major historical significance to the Jewish community.<sup>117</sup> Traveling itself confronts ideas about modernism by putting at the forefront the idea of closing gaps, literally and figuratively. Taglit Birthright Israel is literally closing gaps between Jewish diaspora – this is what its original goal was and why it was founded. It is also literally shortening distances between diaspora and people relevant to the Jewish community and culture and making it possible to see physical sites relevant to Jewish history. These sites are then used as signs throughout the program – the picture perfect image of a group of students at the top of Masada at sunrise, the Israeli flag blowing in the desert, etc. These pictures are real and are used throughout Taglit Birthright Israel's website. In fact, several of Urry's tourism characteristics are consistently used throughout the advertising for the trip and throughout the trip itself. These characteristics, signs, and memories are then created into something that can be sold to future audiences. Urry discusses concerns about consumerism and

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<sup>116</sup> "Taglit Birthright Israel - Application."

<sup>117</sup> "Hillel International - Birthright Israel Trip Organizer."

tourism by expanding Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of cultural capital; Urry says that it goes beyond taste or lack of taste in travel, but it really is about feeling a sense of belonging and inclusion.<sup>118</sup> These rights to travel and the rights to citizenship that allows people to travel create distinctions that Pierre Bourdieu touches on, and these concepts in turn bring to light ideas about modernity – nation building, borders, rights, political economy, class, status, etc.<sup>119</sup> Taglit Birthright Israel creates an environment where economic status is not necessarily as relevant for abroad travel than it would be under different circumstances. Young students making a similar trip without the organization's help would need to be self-funded or funded by parents, which would create a major lack of diversity amongst participants. Taglit Birthright Israel does diversity of participants and trips very well; this is an objective fact. It offers numerous different kinds of trips during multiple times of the year, as well as offers trips to students of different ages, all for free. So Urry's concerns about capital as social signifiers may not necessarily apply though they do help us see how Taglit Birthright Israel continues to bring in so many student participants.

In addition to the characteristics of tourism that John Urry presents, we should also focus our attention on the take-aways that participants can get. Elizabeth Edwards, for instance, talks about photography in tourism and taking pictures. She brings up the example of postcards and how these may be an effect of a consumptive reality, meaning that places and people are often presented in one way while their literal reality might be very different.<sup>120</sup> She also contrasts this with the fact that picture taking can also rob locals of privacy – mothers nursing children in tribes, native local men in certain positions wearing certain traditional ornaments and jewelry, etc.<sup>121</sup> Perhaps these are not the types of pictures a Taglit Birthright Israel participant may encounter, but the ideas behind this consumption driven photography is very real. The pictures previously mentioned – students hiking Masada at sunrise, an Israeli flag blowing in the desert,

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<sup>118</sup> John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*, 56.

<sup>119</sup> John Urry, 57.

<sup>120</sup> Edwards, "On Souvenirs and Metonymy: Narratives of Memory, Metaphor, and Materiality," 201.

<sup>121</sup> Edwards, 205.



or even a Shabbat dinner, a close-up of hummus, an orthodox child or couple walking in Jerusalem's street, a pose in front of the Wailing Wall – these are all perfect example of consumerist picture taking. The reason it is relevant is directly related to Taglit Birthright Israel's mission. When participants take these pictures, they do what Alain de Bottom warns us of – they stereotype, fantasize, and idealize a location.<sup>122</sup> These pictures are then sent home, shared with friends, and either carry on generationally or are spread around social groups with possible participants of the same age that will then encourage their friends to come with them.

Added to the factors of consumption, it is important to think about the origins of tourism through secular rituals and heritage. Nelson Graburn argues that people's movement was multitiered and that while today they leave home looking for something different and looking for changes (supported by Urry and de Bottom's works), people would once travel for festivities or for annual traditions or even because of weather and climates.<sup>123</sup> People may have used celebratory events as calendars and to measure the passage of time, meaning that trips could be seasonal or annual.<sup>124</sup> However, he argues that life is not cyclical but progressive and linear in such a way where they are marked by events, but are similarly structured through rites of passage.<sup>125</sup> He means that people must prepare for going on a picnic, or changes, or for travel, or for movement – there is an entry and an exit to the tourist experience. Participants on Taglit Birthright Israel are given the option to choose the theme of their trips, and then are sent itineraries, booklets of information, etc. They must prepare for the experience, for the changes, and then will have to prepare for the end of the experience. A sample itinerary created by Taglit Birthright Israel even includes a section for the last day where the participants are given time to “reflect on [their] 10-day journey.”<sup>126</sup> Graburn is correct when he says that tourism is a manifestation of a need for change – whether students are going to experience an alternative

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<sup>122</sup> de Bottom, “On Anticipation.”

<sup>123</sup> Graburn, “Secular Ritual: A General Theory of Tourism,” 44.

<sup>124</sup> Graburn, 45.

<sup>125</sup> Graburn, 47.

<sup>126</sup> Taglit Birthright Israel, “Taglit Birthright Israel Sample Itinerary.”

vacation, or to feel more connected to their Jewish roots, or simple to see a new place, the fact of the matter is that they are seeking something different than what they are used to.<sup>127</sup> Graburn also says that what we are searching for is the past but somewhere other than at home with routines, and that travel today is catering to modernity's nostalgia for the premodern, and that in turn the tourism industry is aware of this nostalgic need and will therefore cater to it.<sup>128</sup> We can see how this applies to a lot of the trips produced by Taglit Birthright Israel. A lot of these trips are created with the intent of seeking roots – seeking the past – and Taglit caters precisely to those needs, to this idea of escaping the monotony of what they are already familiar with, and instead exposing them to something new and that they can adopt into their lives forever. In his book, *Emotion in Motion: Tourism, Affect and Transformation*, Mike Robinson argues that there is another layer to traveling that history tends to ignore – emotion. It was through Greek philosophy that emotion gained importance and was acknowledged as necessary for experience; the antithesis to reason but the center of analysis to understand tourist practices and experiences while also understanding the tourist himself.<sup>129</sup> Robinson suggests that though emotions vary from person to person, experiences might be socially constructed; we feel emotion when we are in front of beautiful places and learn to build certain emotions of enjoyment and pleasure, but these ideas are perceived through collective imagination through flyers, tourist offices, or websites.<sup>130</sup> Robinson even suggests that UNESCO might play a role in this by defining these places as extraordinary or sublime or heritage because it presents places with standardized meaning so that people might feel immersed when they go visit them; Masada is an example of this, and of course, included in nearly every trip that Taglit Birthright Israel offers.<sup>131</sup>

Some final thoughts on the history of tourism and how it pertains to Taglit Birthright Israel will have to include some infamous psychological syndromes related to traveling and

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<sup>127</sup> Graburn, "Secular Ritual: A General Theory of Tourism," 49.

<sup>128</sup> Graburn, 46.

<sup>129</sup> Robinson, "The Emotional Tourist," 23.

<sup>130</sup> Robinson, 30.

<sup>131</sup> Robinson, 35.

tourism: Stendhal Syndrome, Paris Syndrome, and Jerusalem Syndrome. The U.S. National Library of Medicine (as part of the National Institutes of Health) reports that Stendhal Syndrome is a sort of cultural overload.<sup>132</sup> It is named after French artist Stendhal but is also known as “Florence Syndrome” due to the artist’s first symptoms showing themselves after his visit to Florence. In his book, *Rome, Naples and Florence* Stendhal writes:

“I was in a sort of ecstasy, from the idea of being in Florence, close to the great men whose tombs I had seen. Absorbed in the contemplation of sublime beauty ... I reached the point where one encounters celestial sensations ... Everything spoke so vividly to my soul. Ah, if I could only forget. I had palpitations of the heart, what in Berlin they call 'nerves'. Life was drained from me. I walked with the fear of falling.”<sup>133</sup>

Once again, we encounter this idea of sublime beauty and what it means to be overwhelmed with emotion in the face of something so new, so different, and of course, so beautiful. While this phenomenon is an actual medical syndrome, it does give insight about emotions and how they affect the way people look at the places they travel to. On Taglit Birthright Israel, students can often be so overwhelmed by what they experience that they are forever changed. Some of Taglit Birthright Israel’s video testimonials show this:

“Brooke's Jewish journey didn't end when she returned home, it was just starting... [Lili] describes her Birthright Israel trip as a gift and feels lucky enough to have experienced such a life-changing journey... [Doron] thought he knew everything about Judaism, but Birthright Israel taught him so much more... The day Sarah and David found out Birthright Israel was piloting a program for 27-32-years-olds they immediately got on the computer and signed up. The couple has a young son they never thought they'd leave, but

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<sup>132</sup> Nicholson, Pariente, and McLoughlin, “Stendhal Syndrome.”

<sup>133</sup> Stendhal, *Rome, Naples and Florence*.

once they got to Israel, they knew they would carry this experience with them for a lifetime and pass down everything they learned to him.”<sup>134</sup>

None of these participants presented medical symptoms of note regarding their trip, but they speak of their experiences with passion and conviction, which is ultimately why it is relevant to include Stendhal Syndrome in this analysis. There are lasting emotional and mental effects on people when they travel and both Stendhal’s experience along with research regarding his experience prove this.<sup>135</sup> In addition to Stendhal Syndrome, there are also Paris Syndrome and Jerusalem Syndrome which we will include next.

In 2006, the Japanese embassy had to repatriate at least four Japanese visitors in Paris, France due to Paris Syndrome – a syndrome caused by the extreme disappointment and culture shock that Japanese tourists feel upon visiting Paris.<sup>136</sup> Heightened expectations can cause severe side effects such as psychiatric breakdown, intense dizziness, sweating, increased heart rate, derealization, while some have even been hospitalized due to the condition.<sup>137</sup> The Japanese embassy even has a twenty-four-hour service available for Japanese tourists that end up suffering from the syndrome.<sup>138</sup> While the differences between North American culture and Israeli culture may not be as severe as the differences between Parisian culture and Japanese culture, this syndrome is included in this paper as a demonstration that the effects of travel can have severe consequences – not always positive, and not always negative. The point to try and understand is that the differences in cultural and regional understanding will affect people in many different ways.

A final syndrome, and particularly relevant, that will be mentioned in this paper is Jerusalem Syndrome, known for its symptoms of religiously themed delusions and obsessions.

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<sup>134</sup> “Video Testimonials.”

<sup>135</sup> Nicholson, Pariente, and McLoughlin, “Stendhal Syndrome.”

<sup>136</sup> “‘Paris Syndrome’ Strikes Japanese.”

<sup>137</sup> “‘Paris Syndrome’ Leaves Japanese Tourists in Shock.”

<sup>138</sup> “‘Paris Syndrome’ Strikes Japanese.”

According to book, *Unusual and Rare Psychological Disorders: A Handbook for Clinical Practice and Research*, Jerusalem Syndrome was so named due to the psychosis symptoms appearing after a visit to Jerusalem, always related to a religious nature, and always easily cured by the removal to a place far from Jerusalem.<sup>139</sup> The case of Jerusalem Syndrome is a hotly debated one, as seen on Bar-El et al's paper, "Jerusalem Syndrome," and Kalian and Witzum's paper, "The Jerusalem Syndrome: Fantasy and Reality, a survey of accounts from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries." Bar-El et al is severely criticized by Kalian and Witzum on account of lacking sufficient sources, cases, and the commonality of psychosis in visiting new cities; meaning the symptoms of Jerusalem Syndrome can be experienced in other places such as Mecca or even Rome.<sup>140 141</sup> Bar-El et al also includes different types of Jerusalem Syndrome, all three which are also criticized by Kalian and Witzum: (1) Jerusalem Syndrome appears on an already existing psychotic illness, (2) Jerusalem Syndrome appears and is layered over psychosis-like ideas, and the best known type, (3) Jerusalem Syndrome as an new form of psychosis unrelated to any kind of psychological issues present before.<sup>142</sup> Kalian and Witzum suggest Bar-El et al is reaching, and that these different types of Syndrome have no backing, often making the point that there are not enough resources, cases, or proof. Taglit Birthright Israel reports that there is an increase in Jewish Identity and connection to the Jewish religion after their trips, which brings interesting new information to light.<sup>143</sup> Though these statistics do not prove anything regarding psychosis or obsession with religion and/or with Jerusalem, what they do prove is that participants are affected by the trips enough to change their lives, their views, and their beliefs.

These curious and bizarre psychological phenomena, though briefly researched, prove one fact – traveling undoubtedly affects a person psychologically. How it does so is a matter of

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<sup>139</sup> Witztum and Kalian, "Jerusalem Syndrome and Paris Syndrome: Two Extraordinary Disorders," 209.

<sup>140</sup> Kalian and Witzum, "The Jerusalem Syndrome: Fantasy and Reality a Survey of Accounts from the 19th and 20th Centuries," 176.

<sup>141</sup> Bar-el et al., "The Jerusalem Syndrome," 86.

<sup>142</sup> Bar-el et al., "The Jerusalem Syndrome."

<sup>143</sup> "Birthright Israel Foundation - It's All in the Numbers."

debate and an area of research that this paper cannot cover as thoroughly without access to more time, studies, and funding. We do, however, acknowledge that traveling can affect human beings in many different ways and that the theories previously mentioned in this section support this statement. In addition to this, we have seen that the methods used by Taglit Birthright Israel are direct practices of these theories and cause changes in the lives of the people they are including.

### 2.3 Controversies

This paper would not be complete without mentioning the extensive controversies behind the Taglit Birthright Israel program and how the recent discussions that have surrounded Israel as a country, corruption within the Israeli government (addressed by Netanyahu himself), policies regarding how to speak about Israel within the United States, and the Taglit Birthright Israel program itself.<sup>144</sup> Recent accusations of antisemitism within the United States government's current presidential administration have brought to light a lot of issues regarding Judaism in diaspora and have, in turn, brought Israel to the forefront of the news cycles. In fact, the leading concern is addressing rising Neo-Nazism in the U.S., and the attack on the Pittsburgh synagogue in October of 2018.<sup>145</sup> It is due to these sorts of undeniable claims that it can be difficult to write about controversies surrounding Israel. There is a tendency to connect criticisms of the Israeli government with antisemitism and this was particularly clear in the United States congressional elections of November 2018 due to the amount of anti-Israel agendas on behalf of a rising new class of representatives. In the New York Times article written after House Representatives Rashida Tlaib and Ilahn Omar came out in support of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, Michelle Goldberg writes:

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<sup>144</sup> Cardin, "S.720 - 115th Congress (2017-2018)"; Roskam, "H.R.1697 - 115th Congress (2017-2018)."

<sup>145</sup> Bachega, "The Threat of Rising Anti-Semitism."

“The conflation of anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism is a bit of rhetorical sleight-of-hand that depends on treating Israel as the embodiment of the Jewish people everywhere. Certainly, some criticism of Israel is anti-Semitic, but it’s entirely possible to oppose Jewish ethno-nationalism without being a bigot. Indeed, it’s increasingly absurd to treat the Israeli state as a stand-in for Jews writ large, given the way the current Israeli government has aligned itself with far-right European movements that have anti-Semitic roots.”<sup>146</sup>

Meanwhile Democratic senators such as Bernie Sanders and Dianne Feinstein have directly stood against the BDS movement, despite the fact that they released statements against what used to be known as “H.R.1697 – Israel Anti-Boycott Act” and is now known as “S.720 – Israel Anti-Boycott Act,” which is considered unconstitutional by Federal District Courts in Kansas and Arizona.<sup>147</sup> The reason why these pieces of legislation are so important in the face of the recent Birthright Trip Walk-Outs led by a series of students asking questions about Taglit Birthright Israel’s hidden political agenda due to inaccurate maps and trips including controversial sites such as the Davidson Center.<sup>148</sup> The organization IfNotNow has supported a lot of these walk-outs and though it seems that Taglit Birthright Israel has tried to minimize the protests since the summer of 2018 by changing their contract with participants, another series of walkouts occurred less than a month after the first ones.<sup>149</sup>

Given the political climate in the United States and the presence of representatives now actively supporting movements such as BDS while others stand against the Senate Bill, S.720, it comes as no surprise that young people are catching on to a different American ideology, one in

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<sup>146</sup> “Opinion | Anti-Zionism Isn’t the Same as Anti-Semitism - The New York Times.”

<sup>147</sup> “Sanders, Feinstein Oppose Inclusion of Israel Anti-Boycott Act in Appropriations Bill”; Roskam, “H.R.1697 - 115th Congress (2017-2018)”; Cardin, “S.720 - 115th Congress (2017-2018).”

<sup>148</sup> Nagel, “Why I Walked Off My Birthright Israel Trip”; Wagner, “GUEST OPINION.”

<sup>149</sup> Magid, “8 Left-Wing Activists Stage 2nd Birthright Walkout in Less than a Month”; Hasson, “For Second Time in Two Weeks.” <https://www.notjustafreetrip.com>

which loyalty towards Israel and its many organizations was never questioned. This is clear that this new generation is not only more invested and interested in politics (we have voted in the youngest woman in history to congress, for instance), but they are willing to do the research to figure out their stances on numerous issues.<sup>150</sup> This, of course, does not mean that participants everywhere are going to continue the walk outs, but rather that the fact that these walk outs have happened, represent a growing minority of differing opinions from the status quo. Nonetheless, it would not be a fair or sufficient analysis if the opinion of pro-Birthright Trip writers were not included. Journalist Gil Troy writes in a letter addressing young Jewish people through the Jewish Week newspaper:

“Reducing every conversation about Israel to the Palestinian problem, only blaming Israel for that problem and only seeing Israel through a conflict-oriented lens is unfair to you, not just to the country and its reality. Seeing the world only through a political filter is like choosing to see the world only in black and white.”<sup>151</sup>

He is not wrong. Reducing every conversation about Israel to the problem of Palestine is limiting but ignoring the problem of Palestine in a conversation about Israel is, by the same logic, also limiting and unfair. And in his own words, Zionism has politicized the nation in nearly all of its issues: “True, Zionism politicized Jewish identity, emphasizing that Judaism is not just a religion, that Jews are a people with legitimate national rights for a state.”<sup>152</sup> From its origins, as we have reviewed in this paper at its beginning, Zionism has presented itself as an unjust and post-colonial form of nation formation which has exploited and disenfranchised the Palestinians that originally lived there.

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<sup>150</sup> “All about Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Youngest Woman Elected to Congress - Business Insider Germany.”

<sup>151</sup> Troy, “The Case For Going On Birthright.”

<sup>152</sup> Troy.



An opposing article by Noah Byck Mlyn from *Forward News* gives an alternative view to the notion of birthright and, in turn, to Zionist ideology:

“The biggest issue with Birthright is not the curriculum, but challenging the underlying logic that we, as American Jews, have a ‘birthright’ to a state founded upon the displacement and continued subjugation of Palestinians... Palestinian refugees, and their descendants, who were driven from their homes during the 1948 Nakba, the 1967 War, and the waves of Israeli settlement activity since then, should have the right to return, to visit, and to live in the places their families lived in for centuries. With the passing of UN Resolution 194 in December 1948, the United Nations quickly recognized this right of Palestinians to return. But Israel rejected this right from the outset, and instead passed the Law of Return in 1950, which granted automatic citizenship to any Jew around the world who wished to live in Israel. Since then, commonsense Zionist logic has dictated that the return of Palestinian refugees would endanger Israeli Jews.”<sup>153</sup>

So why indeed is the right of return only given to Jewish identifying people and not to Palestinian citizens whose homes have been either torn down or taken over by strangers? Why are they forced to live under the Civil Administration of Israel which threatens to tear down their homes (and has) numerous times?<sup>154</sup> And why does Taglit Birthright Israel refuse to show the other side of the conflict with honesty, with clear maps, without turning Bedouin camps into a site for tourist day dreaming and instead showing the realities they face?

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<sup>153</sup> “Why I Refuse To Go On Birthright — And You Should, Too.”

<sup>154</sup> Nagel, “Why I Walked Off My Birthright Israel Trip.”

### PART III – Final Analysis

In this paper we have thoroughly analyzed the extrinsic and intrinsic goals of Taglit Birthright Israel by looking at the creation of Zionism and its effects on the history that led to the creation of the program. We have also looked at the influence and ties that its donors had on the program's development. It is clear that Western powers (i.e. France and Britain) had interests in the region that influenced and set the stage for Zionism as a movement which eventually led to Israeli state formation. Though this paper does not specifically look at the consequences these events have had on the Palestinian people, it is clear that the program's goals could arguably have had an effect on what is happening to them. A generation of young people has been exposed to Israel in an innovative way since the 1990s. Thirty years later, legislation like the S.720 has made its way into Congress.

This paper is no way concluding that there is a direct correlation between Taglit Birthright Israel and support for legislation that can be considered biased, unconstitutional, and one-sided. However, it is showing that there has been a change (superficially, at the very least) since the now infamous picture of Arafat and Rabin's handshake while Bill Clinton looked on. It provides the background and stage for further research showing that the United States of America's direct allegiance lies with Israel, rather than with peace. Bold as that may sound, the recent movement of the embassy to Jerusalem cements this hypothesis as fact, seeing as barely a handful of United Nations recognized countries have supported this move, and that the UN has never recognized Jerusalem as a national capital. This indicates an atmosphere in which the international community is clearly hesitant about stirring the pot when it comes to Israel and Palestine seeing as the issue of Jerusalem is a controversial one. So, why would the U.S. then do it? This question is particularly relevant considering the previous administration was beginning to stand up against Israeli settlement activity, and that the Trump administration has been

adamant about contradicting most of Obama's remaining legacies.<sup>155</sup> The fact that this news shocked media outlets demonstrates a defiant moment in the U.S.'s standard behavior regarding Israel.

Taglit Birthright Israel's goals are to create a greater Jewish identity and increase connections and relationship with Israel. This paper shows that it has certainly been successful. However, the dramatic changes in the current American administration have seemingly revolutionized young people. More than ever before, young students are seeking out political enlightenment and educating themselves in order to form their own political opinions. This is clear in the recent walk-outs by participants of Taglit Birthright Israel. It is clear that the program wants to present a specific type of Israel, one that is not guilty of internationally illegal settlement activity, one that is beautiful and exotic, a beacon of democracy, etc. Young people are questioning this perspective, and Taglit Birthright Israel has caught on. With updated policies after several walk outs in the summer of 2018, they are providing proof that they want to present Israel in one way, and that they want to avoid the possibility to question the state's activity and behavior towards Palestinians.

This proves that Taglit Birthright Israel, as was hypothesized, has intrinsic goals that are not readily declared, despite the fact that they can be blaringly obvious when we look at the founders, donors, sponsors, tours, and itineraries they provide. This paper also creates a stage for further research on organizations that have similar goals or manipulate the political views young people might grow to have in the future. One of the best ways to impact the future and the policies young people will be voting for is through targeted hands-on and educational programs; Taglit Birthright Israel is just one example of how that is done blatantly and successfully.

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<sup>155</sup> Rupp, "FULL SPEECH."

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