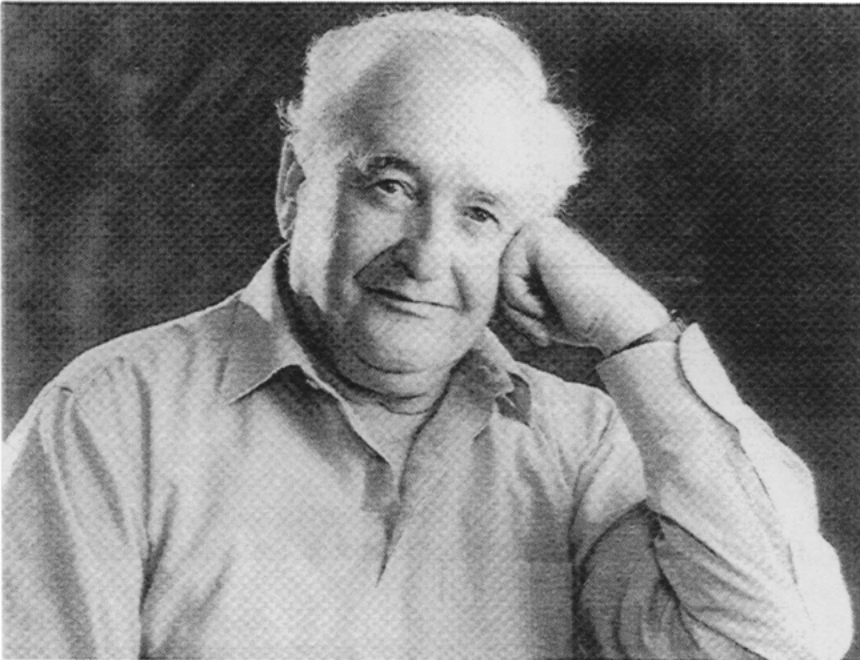


THE LONG WALK III — PASTORAL NOMADS AND ANTHROPOLOGY: AN INTERVIEW WITH EMANUEL MARX

Aref Abu-Rabia

As the author and editor of ten books and over sixty papers, and the recipient of three prestigious awards (*President Ben-Zvi Prize, Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain, Israel Prize*), Emanuel Marx needs no introduction to scholars of nomadic pastoralism or to those interested in the contemporary societies of the Arab world. Born in Munich, Germany, in 1927, he studied first at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where he took his M.A., and then went on to do his Ph.D. at the University of Manchester. In terms of professional experience, Emanuel is a cosmopolitan, having lectured and researched at the universities of Manchester, Tel-Aviv, Berkeley, Brandeis, Cape Town, Oxford, Copenhagen and at the Institute for Desert Research of the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and finally at the Israeli Academic Center in Cairo

This interview took place at the Marx home in Ramat-Hasharon, Israel on March 14, 2000.



AAR – First of all, I am very happy to do this interview with you.

EM – And I am very happy that *you* are doing it.

A – Let's first talk about the most important things. How many children do you have?

M – We have three children, one daughter and two sons. Dina is the eldest. She works in a nature reserve. The eldest of her three children is now graduating from high school and is about to do her military service. She swims in competitions, and I hope she will not become a professional sportswoman. The second one is thirteen, and is determined to become a dancer. The third one is nine years old and, like every other child nowadays, he is interested in computers.

Our second child, Yuval, is a psychologist who is especially concerned with mental retardation. He works in a home for retarded youths and also in the Holon schools (Holon is a city in the Tel Aviv conurbation). He has recently moved into a new apartment in Modi'in, a rapidly growing new town, and intends to set up a private practice.

The third one, Alon, is a computer engineer in one of these fabulous start-up companies. He loves his job, and for all I know he is developing a video-conferencing programme. He has two daughters, a four-year-old and an eight-months-old.

A – You see how time is flying, because if you had asked me I would have told you that he only married two years ago. Now we are coming to Dalia, your wife. What was the role of Dalia in your academic career and also during your Ph.D. fieldwork?

M – Dalia has been a full partner in my academic career. When the anthropological upheaval in our lives began I was assistant to the Israeli Prime Minister's Advisor on Arab Affairs, and Dalia was working as a schoolteacher. When I went to Manchester to study social anthropology we both left secure and satisfying jobs. For several years we had to live on scholarships, which meant a great deal of insecurity. Nor did we have any idea what was going to happen after I completed my studies. While I did not want to go back to work for the government, it was clear that I would not get a job in an Israeli university because anthropology was quite peripheral to the sociology taught there. I had an enticing job offer in Cambridge, but Dalia was adamant that we should return to Israel. Not that she herself had a job to come back to. She simply thought that we should not cut ourselves off from our social environment. I realised then, and still believe, that she was right.

A – I am sure that you appreciate that very much.

M — I do. I would like to emphasise that we made this and other decisions jointly. The return to Israel worked out far better than expected. For, in 1963, two totally unanticipated events happened: first, I was invited by the newly established Faculty of Social Science at Tel Aviv University to set up an anthropology department; and second, the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Manchester received a tempting offer to study new immigrants to Israel. This was to become the Bernstein Israel Research project, which eventually produced ten Ph.D.s in anthropology and resulted in twelve books and numerous articles. It was instrumental in the rapid growth of social anthropology in Israel. So I had both a tenured academic appointment – the first one given to an anthropologist in an Israeli university – and funding for research which would eventually yield qualified staff for the new department. You will see that Dalia has influenced my career at various other critical junctures.

A — You seem to refer to Sede-Boker. How many years did you spend there?

M — Twelve good years.

A — What did you do there?

M — In 1976 the Ben-Gurion University invited me to set up a Social Studies Unit at the Desert Research Institute in its Sede-Boker campus. It became a small social anthropological research department, which focussed on the study of Bedouin and other pastoral societies. All the members of that group are now respected and creative scholars, and all but one moved on to other places. Frank Stewart now teaches in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Nigel Rapport in Saint Andrews University, Scotland, Aref Abu-Rabia in Ben-Gurion University, and Gideon Kressel stays on in Sede-Boker and keeps the fort. Over the years my work there became so absorbing and the research group was developing so well, that I considered leaving Tel Aviv University and taking up a full-time position in Sede-Boker. At that time I also had many disagreements with my department in Tel Aviv, but Dalia declined to move to Sede-Boker, so that I stayed on at Tel Aviv and for twelve years shuttled between the two locations. It took me a while to realise that once again she had been right. Although the Institute at Sede-Boker permitted me to make academic appointments and to offer scholarships in anthropology, my students were registered at Tel Aviv, for the Institute did not engage in teaching and did not then award doctorates. The administrative duties were arduous and the quest for research funds time-consuming. After a while, the situation in my Tel Aviv department also improved. While I loved the working atmosphere in Sede-Boker, and the climate and landscape, I gradually reduced my obligations there.

A — Why did you become an anthropologist?

M — This is a complicated story. It shows how naive young persons can be. During the war around the establishment of Israel in 1948 I had seen a great deal of fighting. I had come out with a heavy conscience, and a wish to make amends. I thought that a study of Sociology and Oriental Studies (in my case, Arabic, History of the Modern Middle East and Middle Eastern Economics) would provide a good foundation for a better understanding of Arab society. Orientalism was not in bad repute at that time, as Edward Said's provocative but misleading study had not yet been written. I still cannot understand why he singled out Orientalism for critique, when capitalism, colonialism and eurocentrism affected, and still affect, every branch of science, including English and Comparative Literature. Anyway, I thought that the two areas of study I had chosen complemented each other. So when the time came to write an M.A. thesis, I decided that a field-study of Bedouin society would integrate my studies. I had opted for the study of Bedouin society because it seemed to me to be relatively simple. I had read the available literature and was prepared to find that the Bedouin were relatively segregated from the rest of society, that Bedouin society was made up of tribes with a segmentary political organisation, and that nomadism was driven by ecological conditions. My preparation for fieldwork was a five-year course in Parsonian functionalism, which had ready-made answers for every problem, so I felt that fieldwork would pose no severe difficulties. My supervisor, S.N. Eisenstadt, even got me some funding.

A — To do the research?

M — Yes. That was in 1955. I spent three months with the 'Azazma tribe in the Negev. I lived in the sheikh's tent and worked under his guidance. It was an exciting experience and my notebooks filled up rapidly, but I soon found myself at a loss. For I realised that the sociology I knew was quite useless when it came to explaining the observed reality. The Bedouin were not isolated from the wider society, the tribe was not an overarching organisation but just one of many social groups in which Bedouin participated, and the economy and the pastoral movements were not so much determined by the ecology as by the dictates of a harsh military administration. Altogether the Bedouin were undergoing rapid and traumatic changes. Between the two World Wars they had settled in towns and villages and had engaged in many different occupations. Israel had imposed military rule, expelled many Bedouin and concentrated the remaining Bedouin in a reservation, and did not allow them to live or work outside it. The restrictions had turned them into seemingly archetypal Bedouin, who engaged in a combination of pastoralism and cereal farming. However, there was an immediate divergence from the ideal type; the prevailing conditions divided the Bedouin into two social classes, the landowning 'Bedouin' and the almost landless 'peasants'. All this was very confusing.

I scanned the literature for a more congenial theoretical approach. In an article

by Meyer Fortes I found a reference to the work of Emrys Peters, a Manchester anthropologist who had worked with Libyan Bedouin. I wrote to him and some months later he replied that he was working on a series of articles and would soon send me offprints. Thus started a correspondence, that eventually brought me to study with him in Manchester.

A — How many years did you spend in Manchester? Did you start your Ph.D. studies there?

M — We lived about six years in Manchester, each time a year or two, followed by a period in Israel. First I did my Ph.D. in Manchester, then I spent another three years there. We also spent a year in Oxford; that makes altogether seven years in England.

A — Which of your teachers impressed you most?

M — I had quite a few impressive teachers. First of all, there was my supervisor, Emrys Peters. He was keenly interested in my work and also became a good friend. He tried to guide me gently and informally. Did I ever tell you the story about the seminar he never gave?

A — Could you tell us about it?

M — I arrived in Manchester in 1959 and met Peters for the first time. He told me to attend his Wednesday seminar on Middle Eastern anthropology. At the first session of the seminar I realised that I was the only student. Peters arrived on time and told me that he was very busy and could not give the seminar, but he added: 'Let's have some coffee first and then I must get back to work'. So we went to a transport café and sat there for three hours or more, and talked about anything that came to our minds. That included stories about his field experience, discussions of theoretical issues such as feuding, genealogies and corporate groups, and also a lot of anthropological gossip. In the following weeks Peters repeated the same ritual. It took me some time to understand that he was trying to train me without arousing any resistance. He created an informal situation in which we were just 'talking'. As a result I learned so thoroughly that by the end of the year my whole sociological outlook had been transformed. It was the best seminar I have ever taken.

Max Gluckman was another major influence. I took several courses with him, but did not get much out of them. Again, I learned a great deal from him in informal interaction, at the obligatory Manchester United matches, at staff seminars where the discussions often became quite heated, and at the more relaxed pub sessions that followed seminars. After I finished my Ph.D. he asked me to work with him on the Israeli research project, and our collaboration continued for twelve years, until his death in 1975. Gluckman always claimed that he was an autocrat, but I found

him very easy to work with. He was open-minded and deeply involved in the Israeli research project which, he hoped, would repeat 'the excitement I enjoyed when I was a member of the group of not so much younger researchers based on the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute . . . in Central Africa'. He was especially incisive when discussing papers; he would always start from an internal perspective, go straight to the core of the argument and then develop it further.

The third teacher was Victor Turner. Four students attended his fieldwork seminar, which dealt mostly with life in the field and little with research methods. We admired him as anthropologist and teacher, but during that time his thinking changed radically. He came up with ideas and concepts we had never given much thought to, such as symbolic behaviour, liminality and pilgrimage. We attributed the new ideas to his recent conversion to Catholicism, and felt that he had been side tracked by his faith. In fact, he was adding a new dimension to anthropology, and I was not clever enough to realise it. That experience taught me to become more tolerant to new ideas. Now, if an idea surprises me, sounds illogical or wrong-minded, I remind myself not to dismiss it straightaway. Better to think about it once more and digest it before passing judgement.

A — Do you consider yourself as one of the established anthropologists of the old generation?

M — Well, I am certainly of the old generation, and established, but that does not mean that my thinking is established, conservative. As long as we anthropologists engage in fieldwork we think critically and are safe from smugness, but when we leave the field anything may happen.

A — Were you the first anthropologist in Israel?

M — No. There were many anthropologists before me. I could chart a genealogy of anthropologists, starting with Tewfik Canaan and Hilma Granqvist, continuing with Touvia Ashkenazi, Erich Brauer and Raphael Patai, and leading on to Percy Cohen, Phyllis Palgi, Henry Rosenfeld, Melford Spiro, Alex Weingrod and Dorothy Willner. All these anthropologists had done fieldwork in Israel before me, and I had taken classes with Henry Rosenfeld at the Hebrew University. There was no continuity, and few intellectual links, between the three generations. What these scholars did have in common was that none of them got an academic appointment in the country. Many left for greener pastures, but maintained a life-long link with the country. Those who lived in Palestine and Israel, namely Canaan, Ashkenazi, Brauer, Palgi and Rosenfeld, had considerable influence on the development of a local anthropology.

A — How did you manage to set up and maintain a department of anthropology in Israel?

M — I came at the right time. I had just finished my Ph.D. and was preparing to return to Israel, when I received an invitation from the dean of the new faculty of Social Sciences at Tel Aviv University, the economist Z.Y. Hershlag, to set up a Department of Anthropology. This faculty did not depend on the Hebrew University, which had until then guided all new academic institutions. Therefore, it could introduce new disciplines and approaches, such as social anthropology.

A — Who worked with you from among the Israeli anthropologists?

M — There were no anthropologists available at that time and our own students (Jay Abarbanel, Mike Aronoff, Elaine Baldwin, Shlomo Deshen, Terry Evens, Don Handelman, Len Mars, Israel Shepher and Moshe Shokeid) were either studying in Manchester or doing fieldwork. Five of them eventually took jobs in Israel, the others returned to England and the USA. All of them have become respected scholars.

During the first two years at Tel Aviv I tried in vain to enlist anthropologists, for universities all over the world were undergoing a period of expansion. In the first year I had to do all the teaching on my own, at a time when I was also doing fieldwork in Maaloth. The following year Deshen and Shokeid assisted in teaching.

A — What are your objectives in research and teaching anthropology at Israeli universities?

M — I believe that social anthropology, because of its emphasis on fieldwork and its dialectic fashioning of facts and theory, is one of the most direct and efficient ways of learning about society. It is capable of describing and analysing the variety and complexity of human behaviour, and of rapidly translating new findings into concrete and detailed theories. While I am very sceptical about applied anthropology (in the sense of research commissioned by governments and development agencies) and believe that anthropologists who act as advocates for minorities usurp their power and do not necessarily serve their best interests, I am convinced that anthropology has immense practical value; it expands our knowledge of self and others and, in contrast to other social sciences, anthropological texts are usually easy to understand. Thus, they empower anyone willing to look at the texts we produce, (which should therefore be freely accessible).

Officials are usually the least willing to learn, as they know best what is good for people. For instance, during my fieldwork in the Negev, my Bedouin friends took great pains to show me that agnation (*qaraba*) was quite distinct from kinship. They did not even have a term equivalent to our concept of kinship. Instead, they argued that agnates were close to them and kinsmen distant. The agnatic group (*khamis*) was a corporate egalitarian organisation of males strictly

concerned with protecting members, whereas kin ties were an ego-centred series of multiplex dyadic links of varying intensity including men and women. While some anthropologists have taken up this insight, to this day Israeli bureaucrats treat the *khams* as a group of kinsmen. Therefore, I believe that anthropology is potentially important for a rapidly evolving society of immigrants, such as Israel, but that its lessons are rarely applied. Even if they were applied, the bureaucratic process would rapidly dissipate their utility.

Israeli society has been, or might have been, very important for anthropological theory. As soon as we entered the field we realised that the functionalist closed systems approach was of no use, for we did not find primitive or simple societies. Instead, we saw how various bureaucracies intervened in the daily lives of citizens, many of whom were immigrants, destroying their cultural heritage in the process. We knew that all we saw was modern, in the sense of happening today and not rooted in the past. For us, Israel was a rapidly changing, complex and etatist society, in which everything and everybody had to be modern.

The study of Bedouin society is a good example. Had we treated the Bedouin tribes as isolated from the rest of society we would have got everything wrong. The same applies to other groups. Israeli politicians and the man in the street, as well as the sociologists and certain anthropologists, tended to classify people according to their presumed ethnic origins. They would interpret the behaviour of Moroccans, Romanians, Sephardis and Ashkenazis and so on, in terms of their cultural attributes. While we did not ignore cultural traditions, our main task was to examine the social forces impinging on people's lives. In other words, we studied people in social context, and as we did so the imagined cultural boundaries became almost irrelevant. So we produced a kind of anthropology that was slightly different from that practised in England at the time. Besides, the British anthropologists who were our reference group did not consider Israel (or even the Middle East in general) a region worth studying; they were still focused on Africa and only beginning to study their own society. The outcome was that our work, however interesting and innovative, for a long time had no impact on what was then mainstream anthropology. Today there is no longer a mainstream; anthropology is fragmented into a large number of coteries and specialities.

A — Do you think that in the departments of anthropology in Israel we prepare our students for studying nomadic or semi-nomadic populations in the Middle East or in Africa?

M — We have been quite successful in training students; too successful our critics would argue. They complain that we and other anthropologists have paid too much attention to nomadic peoples who, after all, are only a small proportion of the inhabitants of the Middle East, maybe two or three percent. Is there really a surfeit of writings about Bedouin? Well, when I started out there were very few

anthropological studies on nomadic peoples of the Middle East. Since then, interest in the pastoral Bedouin has grown due to the pioneering work of Evans-Pritchard, Barth and Peters. Still, only a handful of detailed ethnographies have been published, among them several studies on Israeli Bedouin. I wish this interest in Bedouin continues and, furthermore, I challenge my colleagues to overstudy other subjects as well. Only the determined effort of a dedicated group of scholars can advance knowledge.

The training we provide is incomplete. While the anthropological grounding is adequate, especially in theory and fieldwork methods, we do not offer the necessary linguistic skills and specialised knowledge in such areas as animal husbandry, farming techniques and Bedouin law. You are the exception that proves the argument.

A — Altogether you did a lot of research on nomadic people.

M — That is right and I have no regrets. If other sectors of society are neglected this is not my fault. No one should be blamed for specialising in one particular area. Anybody is free to study other problems and social entities. As you know, nomadic peoples are not the only subject I am interested in. I did study other aspects of society, such as bureaucratic behaviour and violence in a new town in Galilee, and the development of Palestinian refugee camps in Gaza and the West Bank into regular urban quarters. My studies on labour migration among the South Sinai Bedouin, and the urbanisation of the Negev Bedouin, raise issues that are relevant to a wide range of societies.

A — Do you think that the discipline of anthropology today can offer interesting research problems and career prospects for students?

M — I believe it does. Admittedly, anthropology is still reeling from the take over bids of comparative literature and culture studies. Yet it is once more expanding and asking new questions. For instance, it gently subverts the dominance of economics. The fact is that all our graduates, i.e., students who completed their Ph.D., are employed. Some find it difficult to get established, but eventually most of them get academic jobs. Teaching is not the only thing we should be doing; there is room for researchers outside the universities, in market research, management studies, communications, town planning, etc. Government agencies employ some anthropologists, but we have not been able to convince industrial organisations that they also need anthropologists.

A — In certain Departments of Anthropology and Sociology in Israel, I have the feeling that the anthropologists are a minority. In some departments the sociologists or the psychologists are the rulers and the anthropologists are oppressed minorities.

M — Yes, this is a serious problem in Israeli universities. In a way, I am the one to blame. When I arrived in Tel Aviv there was no one to help me. I was the only anthropologist and however hard I tried to recruit anthropologists I failed. I thought that for some years we should join forces with the sociologists, and then establish a separate department. All the other Israeli universities followed suit and set up joint departments of sociology and anthropology. We were no longer able to part ways with the sociologists, and thus lost the capacity to train fully-fledged anthropologists.

A — Is the situation in the Jerusalem, Haifa, Tel Aviv and Bar-Ilan universities the same?

M — No. The situation in Jerusalem has changed; anthropology is thriving there. The department has appointed several talented and energetic young scholars and now probably has the leading group of anthropologists in the country. Haifa and Beersheva have also hired several younger anthropologists. In Bar-Ilan and Tel Aviv the replacement of the older anthropologists has not yet got under way. However, this can change very rapidly, for one critical appointment can revitalise (or ruin) a department. All the universities have also appointed anthropologists to other departments. Another interesting trend is the sprouting up of colleges all over the country, many of which offer courses in anthropology.

A — In most American and in some English universities there is a matching between anthropology and archaeology. We do not have this situation in Israel. Do you think that anthropologists need archaeological qualifications?

M — There is a lot to be said for collaboration between anthropology and archaeology, but only for anthropologically oriented archaeology, the way it is taught in America. But Israeli archaeology developed in another direction. For many years it was politically very powerful and had a lot of research money, while anthropology was very small. A close link with Israeli archaeology in those times would have put an end to anthropology as a subject and would have had no impact on archaeology.

Today the situation is different: archaeology has lost its political standing, and the state puts less money into archaeological research and more into preserving selected sites. Academic archaeology no longer underpins Israel's claims to the Holy Land and does not have to prove the Bible to be true. The winds of change are blowing in archaeological excavations and classrooms. The time has come for anthropology and archaeology to collaborate. I think this is happening in two fields. First, in the recent development of an archaeology of pastoral nomads, in which anthropologically trained Israeli archaeologists have had a significant share, and second, in prehistory, which has, from the outset, been close to anthropology. In both fields there is ongoing cooperation between the two disciplines.

A — Do you think that anthropological studies of pastoralism are more empirical than the rest of anthropology?

M — It depends on what you mean by empirical. If it means to collect quantitative data and to believe in their validity, then we do not engage in empirical research, for the positivist strain in our thinking has been discredited. If it refers to the rigorous pursuit of fieldwork then we are no better and no worse than anthropologists studying any other society. We are deeply interested in research methods, because the study of nomads raises some special problems, such as how to observe the constant movement of people and herds. We also like to emphasise the demographic and economic conditions of pastoral production, consumption and marketing and thus often collect quantitative information. So perhaps we are empirical.

A — What do you think about medical anthropology here in Israel? Do you think it is an important field of study?

M — I think it is very important. First, medicine is a very important part of our lives and we consider medicine not only as a treatment of a bodily or mental illness, but also as a kind of civil religion. Many people believe in medicine to such an extent that whenever they have a problem it becomes a medical problem. Because of that, medicine has become a huge and powerful organisation that determines how people are born and how they die, and how they conduct their lives. It is not a coincidence that Lars von Trier, the great Danish filmmaker, called his epic on a hospital *The Kingdom* (1994-97), because that is exactly what it is. It is the most powerful total organisation you can imagine, an area that must be explored. Hospitals are just one of the bureaucratic formations that run our lives; schools, banks, industries and military organisations are also sadly understudied.

A — Do you think there is enough emphasis on medical anthropology in Israel?

M — We badly need this specialisation, but it has been slow to develop. There was, of course, a Department of Behavioural Science at Tel Aviv's School of Medicine. It was run by anthropologists, first Phyllis Palgi and then Haim Hazan, and could have become a growth centre for medical anthropology. However, the school was only interested in teaching medical students basic courses in the social sciences, and not in turning out medical anthropologists who might study the medical establishment, the hospital and the interaction of medical staff and patients. This specialisation can best develop in departments of anthropology, and quite a few people have produced very good work in medical anthropology. I am thinking of you, Henry Abramovitch, Orit Brawer, Ben-David, Hava Golander and Meira Weiss. Other work can also be highly relevant to medical anthropology, such as the outstanding studies on ageing and the aged by Don Handelman and

Haim Hazan. We ought to make a real effort to increase the role and status of medical anthropology.

A — What was your fieldwork in South Africa about?

M — In 1980–81 we spent six months in South Africa, during which I taught at the University of Cape Town. I did not do fieldwork, not in the usual sense, but we spent most of the time visiting people and places. We had rented a house from a Mr. Malan, a liberal Afrikaaner who opposed apartheid. He introduced us to his family and friends, thus giving us an unusual opportunity to look at conditions in South Africa. I thought at the time that South Africa provided a preview of developments likely to occur in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel. Of course, that was not a good idea, because South Africa soon entered a period of radical reform, while Israel first stepped up its repression of the Palestinians and then reversed it in a piecemeal fashion.

In South Africa, I learned that racial segregation does not simply divide people into blacks and whites. It was a total phenomenon that entered into every crevice of society. First, it graded people on a colour scale. The first thing that happened in any situation was that the participants categorised one another by colour, even when they were all ‘white’ or all ‘black’. The various imagined shades of white, coloured and black stood for social ranking. Second, the State invested large resources in maintaining the segregation, and established a repressive system of laws implemented by a violent and omnipotent police force. Racial repression was augmented by the provision of inferior schools, health and other social services for the black majority. All these efforts were designed to maintain a system in which black men provided cheap contract labour for the gold and diamond mines and the large agricultural estates. They were constrained first to go out to work and then to return to their families in the tribal reserves. What the system really managed to do was to harness a country with enormous natural resources to primary production, and thus keep it poor and backward. During its final stages, apartheid ran entirely out of control: the State established Bantustans without any economic base, just in order to get the blacks out of the way. It thus undermined the system of cheap labour underlying apartheid, and brought about its own downfall. During my stay I could see that the country was moving towards disaster. In fact, there was already an unannounced civil war going on. Black guerillas were attacking trains, cutting telegraph wires and planting bombs in commercial centres, but the newspapers were not allowed to report the incidents. The government wished to create the impression that they were in complete control and that all was well. I was appalled not only by what I saw, but also by the implications for our future.

A — Do you still enjoy fieldwork?

M — I still do fieldwork of a kind and enjoy it. I participate in a town planning

team for the Bedouin city of Rahat. The plan was commissioned by the Ministry of the Interior and the Rahat City Council, so that, in a sense, the Bedouin employ me. The project has been going on for five years and allows me to keep in touch with Bedouin.

A — Could you tell us a little about Rahat, the first Bedouin town to become a city?

M — It is the largest Bedouin town, and the only one that attained city status. It has 30,000 inhabitants, which is a quite respectable size, and is still growing fast, but if you look at it closely, you find that it is not a city but a suburb. Every family lives in a big house on its own plot of land, and every tribe or agnatic group has its own quarter. The city is spread over a large area, yet there is never enough land to satisfy the demand for the heavily subsidised building sites. The city has few businesses and no commercial or industrial area, and no real town centre. Infrastructures and services are limited and there are almost no local employment opportunities. This is the city that was designed to become the hub of the Negev Bedouin! As planners, we sought for ways to turn this huge suburb into a real city. The new city plan is to turn the existing city quarters into suburbs of a new city to be built right to the south of it. The new part will double the land area of the city, will have a commercial centre in a densely built up area and an industrial area on the outskirts, and should provide employment for many of the city's inhabitants. The plan is now complete, but I have my doubts whether it will be implemented. There is a lot of opposition by the City Council and also by the neighbouring Jewish settlements. The former hope that by selling more building plots to townspeople they can sway the forthcoming elections to the City Council in their favour. The latter want to take over the industrial area, and generally keep the place as small as possible; they think that if they keep the Bedouin weak they will reduce competition for land and state funds. The Bedouin are thus kept almost unproductive, although they could make an important contribution to the Israeli economy. This situation needs to be remedied.

A — You served as the Director of the Israeli Academic Center in Cairo. How long did you stay in Cairo?

M — Three very happy and satisfying years. It was a wonderful job. The Center was to bring together Israeli and Egyptian universities and scholars. We did manage to organise some joint research projects in the sciences, but most of the links with the Egyptian Universities were with the departments of Semitic languages, which teach both Biblical and modern Hebrew, and also carry out studies of Hebrew literature and Israeli society. In other fields it was very hard to establish academic cooperation, partly because Egyptian government policy was to restrict links with Israel, and partly because Israeli scholars were reluctant to

engage in joint research with Egyptian colleagues who had limited access to international funding and publication. This is tragic, because without intensive, long-term grassroots relations between people in the two countries peace is an empty shell.

A — Let's return to the Bedouin. How do you see the future of the nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples in the Middle East?

M — It is very hard to tell. I do not think the nomadic peoples are going to disappear. For at least a hundred years, scholars and travellers have written about the impending end of the nomads (as indicated in the titles of such books as Cronin's *The Last Migration*, 1957 and Asher's *The Last of the Bedu*, 1996), but they are still with us and doing a very important job in society, for they continue to be very efficient producers of meat and meat products for urban markets. Yet the states of the region act on the belief that Bedouin produce mainly for home consumption and not so much for the market, and that they engage in illegal activities, such as smuggling. They try to settle them in order to turn them into productive law-abiding citizens and thus disrupt their lives and livelihood. I believe that the main reason for this aversion to Bedouin is the fact that they range over large areas of land but are not strong enough to control it effectively. Thus they tempt the state, and everyone else interested, to take large slices of their land. In Israel we have the added paradox that the government has a monopoly on the import of meat, and therefore does not want to develop pastoralism, neither among Jews nor among Arabs. While most branches of agriculture enjoy state subsidies, pastoralists receive no state aid and face various bureaucratic obstructions. If the monopoly on the import of meat were taken out of the state's hands, it would begin to subsidise animal husbandry, but probably leaving out the Bedouin.

A — What is the situation in some of the Arab countries like Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia in this field?

M — There seems to be a general lack of understanding in government circles of the economic contribution of the pastoralists. All Middle Eastern states have worked out large scale plans to settle Bedouin in farming communities, mostly in ecologically marginal regions. No wonder that these projects have met with limited success. The exceptions are Oman, where Bedouin are involved in the establishment of a national park, and the Gulf Countries and Israel, where Bedouin have generally become urbanised.

A — In most states the Bedouin are weak and marginal. Governments everywhere, and not only in Israel, force them off their lands, with the ostensible aim of improving their economic lot. How can we involve the pastoralists and semi-

pastoralists in the Middle East in decisions about their future, whether they should settle in towns or villages, and whether they should continue to raise animals?

M — The Bedouin could become more powerful by diversifying their economy, by becoming doctors, lawyers, engineers and so forth. Then they would be strong enough to revive pastoralism as an element in a multi-resource economy. Some members of the society may then even choose to specialise in large-scale pastoralism. Bedouin also need more power in any case, in order to get the education, health services and infrastructures they deserve.

A — How do our Jordanian neighbours treat the Bedouin? How do they compare to Israel in issues like land, settlement, etc.?

M — Conditions in Jordan differ in two ways from those in the Negev. First, from the 1860s onward the Bedouin in Jordan settled in relatively permanent locations. At that time the big tribes registered most of their land in the name of the tribal chiefs. These men became powerful landowners, and the tribesmen became their sharecroppers and clients. In Palestine, the Bedouin settled down in the 1940s, three generations later. Second, the Bedouin of Jordan have privileged access to military service. Many thousands make careers in the Army, in which they can attain all ranks. The soldiers' families often remain in the villages of origin and maintain farms. This dual economy provides the Bedouin with extra security before, and, even more so, after they retire. In Palestine only a handful of Bedouin from the leading families served in the Police force, mainly as camel-mounted policemen. In Israel today, the Army recruits several hundred Bedouin trackers for terms of service of up to ten years. That hardly allows them to build up an army career.

A — Do you think that anthropologists during or after completing fieldwork should take sides with their informants? Where are the limits, what are the advantages or disadvantages of advocacy? I know you have some experience in this.

M — I have my doubts about advocacy. For a long time I believed that I was obliged to help people I had worked with. That was a bad mistake, for the word 'help' is practically identical with 'control'. To help people is to adopt an arrogant attitude toward them: you think that you are more influential, that you know what is best for them. What you really do is to usurp their power. If you really want to be useful to the people you work with, you fulfil missions they entrust you with, provided you agree with their viewpoint. If they instruct you to see a government official on their behalf that is alright, but you should never go beyond your brief.

In 1980/81 I took a year off the university in order to intervene in the dispute between the Zullam Bedouin and the state regarding the establishment of a

military airport on their land. In the wake of the 1977 peace treaty with Egypt and the withdrawal from Sinai, the Negev was once again to be densely settled, and army bases and airports to be relocated. The military airport was to be built in the eastern Beersheva Plain and the authorities just decided to move the Bedouin living in the area. Friends from Abu Jwe'id tribe, where I had done fieldwork in the early 1960s, asked me to help them protect their land. Then a group of regional planners whom the Ministry of Interior had appointed to draw up a new master plan for the Negev asked me to join them and deal with the 'Bedouin problem'. I joined the planning group in the hope to be useful to the Bedouin. We worked out a plan that reduced the area of the airport, recognised the Bedouin's rights of ownership of their land, and offered them full compensation for expropriated land and property, either in money or in building sites and irrigated land. Most importantly, the plan was coordinated with the representatives of the Bedouin and received their blessing, as they assumed that it would serve as a blueprint for settling the land claims of all the Bedouin. We managed to overcome the opposition of various bureaucracies and to steer it through the Israeli Parliament, as 'Law for the Acquisition of Land in the Negev (Peace Treaty with Egypt), 1980'. It is true we managed to improve the situation, but not for long. All the achievements were swept away, for when the airport was completed a year later the government stopped its funding for compensation payments. Those Bedouin who had managed to present their claims in time got a good deal, the others were left to wait indefinitely.

Several years later I examined my own behaviour during that period and realised that I had rapidly moved away from anthropology and behaved like a politician. I had not made use of my anthropological training. Today I feel that, with the best of intentions, I may have been less useful to the Bedouin than I thought.

A — Do you think that the universities in Israel make the necessary effort to employ Arab scholars?

M — No, they certainly do not. They have done little to examine their prejudices regarding the academic qualifications of minority groups. They discriminate against women, against Arabs, against Jews from Arab countries and against scientists trained in Russia. If you add up all these minorities, you find that they comprise more than the country's total population. Members of each minority category wage a lonely struggle for recognition in the university system. This means that a very limited group of powerful men of Euro-American descent restricts the entry of the rest of the population to higher academic positions. Minorities face such obstacles wherever they turn, but sometimes they organise and fight against them. The reaction of the Bedouin to discrimination, however, has been different: instead of putting up organised resistance to discrimination, they have turned against their own kind. The men have made women a segregated

internal minority and have barred their access to higher and professional education and to gainful employment. This situation contrasts sharply with the important role of women in pastoral production in recent times, when they shared the pastoral work and ownership of the flocks with the men. The situation today is the direct outcome of the lack of jobs in Bedouin towns: it forces the men to become migrant labourers and thus forces the women to remain at home where again there are no jobs. Men, of course, go out to work, because in unskilled jobs they earn higher wages than women. Although many Bedouin construe the segregation of women as a traditional practice, they are not really to blame for the exclusion of women from gainful employment: it is Israeli politics and the male-dominated market that are at fault.

The best remedy to this situation would be to provide employment opportunities for men and women in the towns, and to offer the Bedouin better educational facilities. The Bedouin ought to allow all women to get a proper education, urge them to train for various occupations and to go out and work. As soon as local employment becomes available in the Bedouin towns, the segregation of women will rapidly recede. This could augment Bedouin power quite considerably.

A — You conducted a well-known study of violence in an Israeli town in Galilee. I believe you were the first Israeli anthropologist to carry out fieldwork on this subject.

M — My study of Maaloth was part of the Bernstein Research Project, which was to examine the adaptation of immigrants in Israel. I never intended to study violence. Several months after I had left the field I rashly agreed to participate in a symposium on violence. Only when I got to work on my lecture I discovered that while violence ('aggression') was the daily bread of psychologists, very few anthropologists had written about the subject, and even fewer had observed it. Then I recalled that my fieldnotes included a number of violent encounters and decided simply to draw on this material for the paper. That was the beginning of an absorbing interest in violent behaviour, out of which emerged my book *The Social Context of Violent Behaviour* (1976). The crux of my argument was that the violence I had observed was a form of power, and that people used it in a premeditated and controlled manner, together with other forms of power. This kind of violence is quite distinct from murder, rape and suicide, which break and destroy social bonds; it is used in order to achieve approved social objectives in ways that are usually supported by the public. It may be very useful for citizens dealing with powerful and overbearing bureaucrats.

A — From year to year there are more murders of women and children and more instances of brutality. Do you consider Israeli society as violent? Is violence a characteristic of modern society?

M — Well, murders occur in all societies. People everywhere kill one another in war and in quarrels. I do not think Israel is especially violent. In fact, I think there is less violence in Israel than in many European countries or in America. What we are witnessing now is simply a temporary concern with a rash of murders of women and children. According to the statistics the rates are quite low, compared to other countries. If, for instance, twelve women and five children are murdered in a year we consider that a serious social problem, but in a population of 5 millions this is a very small number. Each murder is terrible and unforgivable and, what is worse, most of the cases could have been prevented by the timely intervention of relatives or the Police. However, if we treat murder as a ‘social problem’ that afflicts the whole society, we may create a huge bureaucratic machine that will prevent individual treatment. The data show that about fifty murders are perpetrated every year and some twenty-five soldiers are killed in border incidents, but that over four-hundred persons are killed in road accidents. Yet the attention paid to murders, terror killings and soldiers falling in battle is enormous compared to the public’s complacent attitude to road accidents. Here we do face a problem of real magnitude, yet one that could be solved. The lack of interest must then be ascribed to the difficulty of allocating responsibility. By building safer roads, by providing fast public transportation, by training drivers to observe simple rules and courtesies, by including driving lessons in the school curriculum so that a driving licence no longer proves that one has become an adult, by revising tax regulations which induce firms to provide company cars to employees, by these and other means accidents could be reduced. Such reforms would require the participation of numerous agencies of the state. Where responsibility is shared by so many agencies, none of them is in the end responsible. Only organised public opinion could persuade the various agencies to coordinate their activities. As matters stand, public opinion cannot identify a chief culprit and organise against him.

I should add at this point that my work on violence, like some other writings of mine, might have practical applications, but so far it has had very little impact on either academic circles, or on practitioners. Perhaps I should be thankful for the latter.

A — Coming back to the Palestinians, you have conducted more than one study of Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. What are your main conclusions, and can you suggest ways to ease or to solve the problem?

M — The late Yoram Ben-Porath, Shimon Shamir and I first studied Jalazon, a Palestinian refugee camp in the West Bank, in 1968. This study and follow-up visits to other camps showed that the refugee camps, which had been set up in the vicinity of cities such as Gaza, Ramalla and Nablus, had gradually become working-class suburbs. Housing conditions and social services in the camps were superior to those in many other city quarters. Most of the inhabitants worked in the

lower-paid occupations or were employed by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). They had built up the 100 square metre site allocated to each family and considered it their property. Those camp-dwellers whose economic situation had improved tended to move out and sell their homes to others. As people originating from the same village tended to cluster together and to intermarry, these transactions were often made among relatives, who were not necessarily refugees. The refugees had fully rehabilitated themselves and were leading respectable lives in a socially secure environment, so the idea of destroying the refugee camps and moving their inhabitants to other areas appeared to us misconceived. This would be another upheaval in their lives and cause them untold suffering. It would also be a terrible waste of scarce housing. Instead, everything should be done to improve conditions in the refugee camps: proper infrastructures should be installed and municipal and State services, especially education, should be expanded. We also suggested that the employees of UNRWA should join the civil service. Our message fell on deaf ears. The Israeli authorities insisted that the refugee problem should be dealt with in the context of peace treaties with Arab countries, which then seemed a most unlikely event. They believed, without good reason, that the camps were the core of Palestinian resistance to Israel and took many repressive measures against the camps. In the early 1970s, the Israeli army even razed parts of the camps in the Gaza Strip. In order to make up for the damage caused they later tried to resettle the inhabitants of these camps in urban housing schemes.

In recent years I have also visited refugee camps in Lebanon and Jordan. There, too, they have become city quarters and the inhabitants have been integrated in the economy. Their children and grandchildren grew up in these places and have become part of the local society. While all the people I spoke with considered the 'Return' to their homes in Palestine (*al-'auda*) as a basic right, most of them felt that they had taken root in the new environment. They did, however, complain that they had never been compensated for the loss of their homes, property and life chances. I believe that if we do not compensate the refugees and their descendants then the trauma of the expulsion will remain an open wound. That such wounds do not heal with the passage of time can be seen in the case of the Greek-Turkish population transfer of 1922/23: the refugees on both sides were never compensated and now, seventy years later, their descendants still consider themselves refugees, who wait for justice to be done.

Compensation can be made in many ways. Israel should concede the Right of Return as a first principle, and there is no reason why refugees should not return to their former homes. People should be able to reclaim their properties or receive fair compensation. They also ought to be given formal legal titles to their homes in the refugee camps, because in fact they do own them. This would enhance the value of the houses and at the same time partially compensate the occupants for their losses. However, most of the compensation claims will inevitably be settled by payments of money. It is essential that payment should be made directly to the

victims and their descendants, and not to their self-appointed representatives, such as states. The often reiterated Israeli claim that the number of Jews who emigrated from the Arab countries since 1948 and that of Palestinian refugees was almost equal and that they left behind property of almost the same value so that the debts cancelled each other out, is quite ridiculous, for it means that the State of Israel simply sacrifices the wealth left behind by its own citizens who, needless to say, never appointed it as proxy, and at the same time makes the Palestinian Authority responsible for property acquired by other Arab states. The governments of Egypt and Iraq took over most Jewish property, while the government of Israel took over Palestinian property. We thus deal with two totally separate entities.

A — Who will be paying?

M — Officially, Israel is going to be responsible for settling this problem, the biggest remaining issue between the Palestinians and Israel. It will not be able to carry the whole load and will need the help of wealthy Middle Eastern, European and American governments. The fact that Israel has avoided the discussion of this issue for fifty years does not augur well for the forthcoming negotiations.

A — Do you think that a Palestinian state will ease this problem, solve it or leave it as an open wound?

M — The Palestinian state already exists and only has to be formally ratified, but so far it has only insisted on the refugees' innate 'Right of Return' and not raised the issue of compensation. It may, of course, consider compensation as a second line of retreat. What is clear is that as long as the issue is not solved, it will prevent the establishment of peaceful relations between Palestine and Israel. In the short run this may not be so important, because the Palestinian State must raise barriers in order to protect its fledgling economy. The Israeli economy is so powerful that if it is not contained it could stifle the budding Palestinian economy. A more mature Palestinian economy could trade with Israel on equal terms, provided that the issue of compensation is solved by then. The issue will assume even greater importance in coming years, when the two economies are absorbed in a joint Palestinian–Jordanian–Israeli economy, which may perhaps grow into a regional economic bloc. For the region needs a large economy with open borders, in order to trade and compete successfully with Europe and America. This is why I believe that the indemnification of the refugees is the most critical outstanding issue between Palestine and Israel.

A — Emanuel, I would like to ask a personal question. You are the first, and only, anthropologist to receive the Israel Prize. How do you feel about that?

M — It is a kind of recognition by fellow academics in Israel of anthropology as

a legitimate discipline. While the prizes are awarded by the state, the recipients are chosen by relatively autonomous committees of academics. Because of that, the prize enjoys prestige. It is wonderful to get the prize, and to realise that the discipline is thriving and that other anthropologists will receive it in coming years.

A — My last question is a very personal question for both of us. In the early 1960s you arrived in the Negev, to do fieldwork among the Abu-Jwe'id and Abu-Rabi'a Bedouin tribes. One of the boys you met in the field became your Ph.D. student twenty-five years later. Now he is interviewing you. How do you feel about that?

M — I will answer the question indirectly. You know how relations between parents and children change over time: first the children completely depend on the parents, later on they become equals, and eventually the parents depend on the children. We academics also move through these life stages. At the moment we are colleagues who trust and respect each other, but you will continue to grow and develop while I shall watch your achievements with great pride. I am really delighted that the editors of *Nomadic Peoples* chose you to interview me. We have been friends for so many years that I am very much at ease with you. I am also very grateful for your thoughtful questions; they made me think about my work and also evoked a stream of memories.

A — I want to say something very personal. I spent two years at London University, before I decided to do a doctoral thesis. My supervisor there told me: 'If you want to write a Ph.D. about the Bedouin, I am sorry I cannot advise you, but you have Marx in Israel, at Tel Aviv University. Go there and he will be your advisor.' So I came back from London and I am happy that we worked together. You guided and encouraged me throughout the years of study.

You may remember that during the writing of my Ph.D. I had a big personal problem that had to do with building my house. At that time I suffered a lot. I think that besides my family I received no moral support except from you. I will not forget that for the rest of my life. It is a pleasure for me that we are doing this interview today. It is a token of my appreciation for the help that you have given me in the past. I hope that we will remain colleagues and friends. Thank you very much.

M — *Shukran, rabbina yikhallik* (Thanks, may God give you long life).

<p>Aref Abu-Rabia is at the Department of Middle East Studies, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beer-Sheva, 841105 Israel. E-mail: aref@bgumail.bgu.ac.il</p>
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