

Michel Chiha, Isaiah Berlin... reflections on Palestine.

By John Hayden *

ABSTRACT: A literary-historical reflection on the prominent liberal Lebanese public intellectual Michel Chiha compared to the great British historian of ideas, Isaiah Berlin—with particular interest in the question of Palestine. The author also explores their liberalism critically in terms of symbolic geographies, concepts of liberty and nationalism and pluralism.

* John Hayden is a MA Candidate in the Department of Political Studies and Public Administration (PSPA) at the American University of Beirut, and a graduate of History at the University of Toronto. He has written pieces for the *MIT Electronic Journal of Middle East Studies* and the University of Toronto's *Trinity Journal*.

I.

“Ce que nous voulons exalter, c’est la dignité de l’homme.” // that which we would exalt is the dignity of man. // ~Michel Chiha, “*Sur la liberté*,” *Essais*, v. 1, p. 213.

The Palestinian resistance will continue no matter what we write about it. In the summer of 2005, I had the opportunity to study at Birzeit University near Ramallah in Israel’s Occupied Palestinian Territories. Of course, I was horrified by the construction of the wall, the annexation of land, the checkpoints, the daily, sometimes hourly harassment of innocent people by the Israeli army, the constant surveillance—the dehumanizing ‘matrix of control’ Israel exerts in order to ensure the dominance of an expansionist regime of some three hundred thousand illegal settlers in the West Bank. But more than this common outrage, I also left with an unmistakable impression of the entrenched, inspiring, imperfect, relentless dignity of the Palestinian people. That being said, *geographical* Palestine is fast disappearing—like the evaporating inkblots on the inset of Elyas Khoury’s *Gate of the Sun*—and with it, the last hope of the two-state solution.

This summer, a conference at York University in Canada will attempt to revisit the question of partition. To support their vision, the conference organizers invoked the liberal outlook of humanist Jewish intellectuals such as Martin Buber and Judah Leon Magnes as proponents of a one-state solution. Perhaps this was also part of a strategy to negotiate the conference’s public legitimacy in a politically volatile and polarized academic environment, fraught as it is with endless accusations of anti-Semitism and ideological bias.¹ Here, the haunting of present-day politics by the ghosts of the past reminds us of “the sites of trauma, memory, remediation, and the fracturing of temporality”² that is increasingly part of our attempts to understand and reckon with the question of Palestine. From our vantage here in Lebanon, at the American University of Beirut, I suppose we have some of our own liberal ghosts to deal with. In true Anglo-American style, as a history of ideas, and because both of their positions regarding Palestine are problematic in their own way, I propose that we now confront the specters of Michel Chiha and Isaiah Berlin.

II.

The reasons that would compel us to compare Michel Chiha to Isaiah Berlin are surprisingly numerous. Both men are widely seen as liberal intellectuals tied inextricably to the public conversations and politics of their time. They both wrote essays on liberty. They loved poetry, culture and rational conversation, reveled in cosmopolitan *milieus*, and inspired those who knew them by their captivating intelligence. Both were born into socially conservative, minority communities (Orthodox-Jewish Latvian and Chaldean-Christian Lebanese, respectively) to wealthy families active in commercial trade.³ When the late Edward Said writes of the *exilic imagination* produced by the displacement of intellectuals,⁴ we might also recall that Michel Chiha evaded Ottoman conscription during the First World War by re-locating to the relative safety of British colonial Egypt—with Bchara el-Khoury, Yousef el-Sawda and the *grand liban* national architects in exile.⁵ Meanwhile, Isaiah Berlin had fled Latvia with his parents, in the early years of the Russian revolution, to settle in London. There, he eventually attained a storied donship and professorship at Oxford, consorted with the likes of Bertrand Russell, W. H. Auden and T.S. Eliott and built his reputation as a brilliant historian of ideas renowned for his encyclopedic knowledge.

Samir Khalaf tells us, in his introduction to the English translations of Michel Chiha's *Le Jour* editorials (1945-1954) that Chiha also had occasion to study in England. The sense he gained there of the "resilience of the unwritten British constitution," Khalaf argues, would come to inform his participation in the drafting of the Lebanese constitution of 1926.⁶ His collected writings indicate how closely Chiha followed British politics, with particular attention to the matter of Jewish settlement in mandatory Palestine. His knowledge of prominent Oxford lecturers and historians such as Cyril Falls suggests that Chiha might have heard of Isaiah Berlin, one of the young rising stars of *All Souls* College.⁷

There were also many differences between the two. Chiha was the picture of perfect Francophile *politesse*, Berlin, the "patron saint of untidiness."⁸ On issues such as free trade, the family, and law and order, Chiha represented the 'conservative' Burkean side of liberalism, while Berlin embodied more of the modern, left-leaning liberal outlook which "tended to vote Labour and supported Roosevelt's New Deal."⁹

Berlin was knighted by the Queen in 1957 for his services to conversation,¹⁰ but in Lebanon, Chiha was no less a national treasure who “filled the whole country with his strong personality.”¹¹ “Our relief,” wrote Charles Helou, the fourth President of Lebanon, “was to be able to compare this Lebanese, for his spirit and character, to the greatest of this world and of our times...”¹² And so it would certainly follow in the spirit of Helou’s words to compare Michel Chiha and Isaiah Berlin. Most importantly for our present purposes, their diverging opinions about the question of Palestine should encourage us to draw a critical distinction between professed liberal values and real politics, which I shall attempt to explore in the latter part of this essay. But let us first begin with dialogue on geographies and on liberty and nationalism, in order to set the stage, as it were, as Hamlet enjoins the Ghost; “come let us go together.”¹³



On geographies

At age twenty-five, Isaiah Berlin made a brief visit to Lebanon in the summer of 1934. It was two years before the Arab revolt in Palestine when a forty-three year-old Michel Chiha launched the opposition journal, *Le Jour*,¹⁴ which would go on to print so many of his editorials.¹⁵ Like the great American poet, Robert Frost, Berlin “was fascinated by human variety far more than he was moved by natural beauty”¹⁶—and yet Henry Hardy’s collection of Berlin’s correspondence reveals one notable exception:

...Baalbeck & Beirut & the great road South, with the magnificent green slopes of the Lebanon on the left & the Sea on the right—it really is so beautiful that even I who have no eyes was absolutely amazed & stopped talking...¹⁷

The symbolic geographies of the Mountain and the Sea lie at the heart of Michel Chiha’s political philosophy.¹⁸ Even if his reading of port cities suggests a radically different conception of democracy and the *mediterrannie*, Rancière also insisted that representational politics persist in the landscapes that encompass them.¹⁹ Chiha explains his endless draft sketches of the nation’s symbolic geography in his *Visage et Presence du Liban*,²⁰ an exhibition of ‘becoming’ which parallels Henri Bergson’s metaphor of Paris in infinite photographs, or the urban fragments of Venice in Italo Calvino’s enigmatic novella, *Invisible Cities*. Berlin believed profoundly in the power of ideas to shape the course of human history,²¹ and so would have been interested in Chiha’s representations—which always sought out a common national language amidst a plurality of

Lebanese cultural idioms. Still, Berlin would not have accepted a particular essentializing mode that equated the West with civilization, the sun and the sea, and the East with barbarism, the mountain and the desert.²²



On Liberty and Nationalism

It was the sun of a Beirut summer that inspired Chiha to pen his essay on liberty.²³ *Sur la Liberté* is an exposition on what Isaiah Berlin identified as ‘positive liberty’ in his now widely read 1958 inaugural lecture.²⁴ Chiha writes,

“Ainsi la liberté et la morale, la liberté et la loi, la liberté et la sagesse, la liberté et la justice se rejoignent et s’équilibrent.”²⁵

Liberty, for Chiha, is found in the law, as justice is found in order, wisdom in restraint and morality in discipline. As Berlin often pointed out, ‘positive liberty’ in this sense of self-mastery, at the group level, can easily lead to political modalities of control, discipline and uniformity, which is perhaps why we see it in Chiha’s articulation of Lebanese nationalism. What Berlin called ‘negative liberty’, though, also appears in Chiha’s work. In *Plains-Chants*, it is,

“Cette liberté qui est l’honneur de l’espèce et qui permet le bien et le mal... qui donne à l’être raisonnable un pouvoir souverain...”²⁶

This passage is reminiscent of J.S. Mill’s injunction that the individual should do as he thinks best, free from the intervention of the state or the tyranny of the majority. I think it is useful to think of Michel Chiha as a champion first of ‘positive liberty’, and Isaiah Berlin as a champion first of ‘negative liberty’—although each understood and recognized the implications of both modes of human freedom

Isaiah Berlin’s philosophy rests upon ideas and human agency in history as well as the complexity and tentativeness of human existence—in a lack of fundamental moral certainty. Values are plural; no one utopian moral theory can account for all essentially distinctive desires. Thus a ‘tragedy of choice’ exists between multiple incommensurable goods. Liberty, then, must always be given priority to allow for the necessary deliberations of rational conscience.

How can we reconcile Berlin’s liberalism with his position on Jewish nationalism? Liberals are traditionally averse to nationalism because it seems to restrict the political space of toleration²⁷

for those excluded by definition from the national project—read; the Palestinians. Stephen Lukes²⁸ and Kenan Malik²⁹ have both reminded us of how Berlin’s value pluralism “encourages people to search for differences between them, rather than frame their identities around what they might have in common.”³⁰

This moves us closer to what Michel Chiha referred to as “the desire to live together” with all of the tension and conflict of incorporation that this desire entails.³¹ In classical fashion, Chiha attempted to give this drive substance through a philosophy of civic nationalism that closely mirrored Ernest Renan’s “*plébiscite de tous les jours*,”³² or Jawad Boulos’ “*pacte tacite*.”³³ Representatives of Lebanon’s religiously demarcated communities would come together in the national assembly not principally as legislators but as a community of notables.³⁴ Chiha saw Lebanon as a haven for minorities fleeing persecution (a theme Berlin would have been sympathetic to) but the executive powers granted to the Christian President of the Republic through the 1926 constitution reflected a desire to place “final control of policy in Christian hands.”³⁵ Chiha saw the Christians (in an oligarchic power-sharing relationship with Sunni business elites) as the benign guarantors of a Lebanese ‘market state’.³⁶ It is thus the inherent dignity³⁷ of *economic* man that finds common expression in Chiha’s civic ideology, rather than liberty conceived in the mode of Berlinian humanism—it is, in fact, the classical liberty of *laissez-faire* capitalism.

III.

On ghosts

“If I am getting ready to speak about ghosts... it is in the name of justice.”

~Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, EXORDIUM, p. xviii

Imagine Chiha and Berlin sitting down to pheasant *Provençal* under glass, with a bottle of that exquisite 1929 *Chateau Lafite Rothschild*, cigars and newspapers of course, and an evening full of discussion in the opulent surrounds of Chiha’s villa in *Yarzeh*.³⁸ As Lyotard said, “it is impossible to think or write without some facade of a house at least rising up, a phantom, to receive and to

make a work of our peregrinations.”³⁹ Lately I have been imagining such ghostly salon affairs. As Derrida said, the appearance of ghosts of the past reminds us of “what is no longer present.”⁴⁰ But who could abide such visitations? I am sure, for instance, that the ‘Specter of Berlin’ would not scare Elyas Khoury. The sudden appearance of the ghost of Hannah Arendt, however, would most certainly cause Tzipi Livni a great deal of discomfort. And if the brutal targeting of civilians in wartime by a Jewish army does not sit well with the legacy of Adorno or Benjamin, nor would the humanistic ghosts of Magnes or Buber find many friends left amongst the “suburban squires” of the new Jerusalem... and all of this is to say that Edward Said was right when he proclaimed the audacious truth that he was the last Jewish intellectual.⁴¹



Michel Chiha, Isaiah Berlin... reflections on Palestine

“On the whole,” writes Berlin’s official biographer, Michael Ignatieff, “[Berlin] fought the sentimental undertow of identification with Palestine all his life. He was a Zionist—but already he was troubled by the Zionist myth of Palestine as a land without people given to a people without land.” As an analyst employed by the Foreign Office in WW2, Berlin’s Zionism came into conflict with official British policy (most notably the White Paper ban on Jewish immigration in 1941)⁴² recalling Chiha’s acerbic remark, “...ne voit-on pas qu’il devient difficile de rester un bon juif et un bon anglais en même temps?”⁴³

Ultimately, Berlin declined Chaim Weizmann’s invitation to live in Israel after 1948, and settled down at Oxford where he became a fixture of British public life. From then on he would defend the right of Jews to live in a country where they no longer faced the pressures of assimilation or exclusion, but “...he knew he could never be fully at home in Israel.”⁴⁴ Indeed, Berlin seldom wrote about Zionism directly, claiming that it wasn’t the role of Diaspora Jews to comment on Israeli affairs.⁴⁵

Just as Chiha’s cosmopolitanism “stretch[ed] his Lebanese nationalism to the breaking point,”⁴⁶ Berlin’s own liberal values had made his ardent Zionism problematic—as revealed in the comments of his close friend, the Croatian pianist, Alfred Brendel.⁴⁷ If Berlin could castigate T.S. Eliott for imagining the Jews placed outside of the borders of the city,⁴⁸ then how could he condone the exile and eviction of Palestinians from their homes in 1948? As the years went on,

and the situation proved intractable, Berlin continued to place his hope for a peaceful resolution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in liberal Zionism, and *Peace Now*. Unfortunately, as Gideon Levy recently pronounced in *Ha'aretz*, nothing is left of the peace movement in Israel.⁴⁹

On the other hand, I believe that Chiha's prescient analysis—and his stand with the Palestinians against their dispossessors—will prove to be the version ultimately vindicated by history. Chiha called for the internationalization of Jerusalem, he believed in the territorial integrity of Palestine, and even accepted limited Jewish immigration as a cultural and economic boon to the region. He accurately predicted that the creation of the state of Israel would not only harm the Palestinians, but would usher in an era of destabilizing violence, extremism and persecution with dire consequences for Lebanon as well; “we are the immediate neighbors of this ambition and power,” he wrote in an October 1947 editorial in *le Jour*. “Jewish intentions can only take their hoped-for course by trampling over us.”⁵⁰ Still, one question remains: why did Chiha support Palestine when so many of the pro-Western bankers, adepts of free trade, poets, nationalists and purveyors Phoenician myths were—like Emile Eddé—*actively colluding with the Jewish Agency* in an effort to establish a formal Zionist-Lebanese treaty?⁵¹

Perhaps Chiha feared that Tel Aviv would come to eclipse Beirut economically and take its place as intermediary between the West and its nascent commercial interests in the Middle East.⁵² Or, he might have been simply pandering to the “dominant view of the Arab-Israeli conflict developed among Arab ruling classes” of his time, which he had in large part produced through his own influential writings.⁵³ Whether he hoped to endear himself to the sources of Palestinian intellectual and financial capital displaced by the Zionist project, or whether his feelings were actually inspired by a genuine sense of social justice, Chiha relied so heavily on the polemical phantasm of a crypto-Marxist conspiracy of wealthy Jews pulling the strings of world governments,⁵⁴ that a sympathetic liberal-humanist reading of his *Palestine* strains credulity.⁵⁵ At least Isaiah Berlin would have held him to task for this if they had met in Beirut. At the same time, Berlin might have learned directly from the eloquent Michel Chiha, of the “disaster on its way”⁵⁶ if the Jewish state was to antagonize Islamic constituencies, disrupt the coastal political economy, and in so doing threaten the stability of Chiha's Lebanese constitutional order.



Among the dead cities

Where does a liberal stand in the aftermath of the latest IDF military assault on Gaza? Here, liberal philosophy has given way to real politics; the unchecked militarism of a “rogue state,” as Avi Shlaim made clear in his January 2009 *Guardian* op-ed, continues to oppress its occupied population and threaten regional and global stability.⁵⁷ At the domestic level, the resurgence of Benjamin Netanyahu and his Jabotinskian vision of the ‘iron wall’, the power of Avigdor Lieberman and his neo-fascist *Israel Beiteinu*, the utter collapse of the Israeli peace movement, and the development of an ever more brutal Israeli technological machinery of war brought to bear against the divided Palestinian people... all of this heralds the endgame of the disaster Chiha foretold sixty years ago. The ‘bent twig’ of Zionism now more closely parallels that “pathological nationalism” that Berlin described in a 1972 *Thames Television* discussion with Stuart Hampshire⁵⁸—but would never admit could be true of Jewish nationalism.⁵⁹ And yet his warning resonates, that “all divisions in a sense carry with them potential dangers of collision of an irrational kind,” and while nationalism, according to Berlin, is yet one more “ordinary” aspect of human diversity and variety, it so often leads to violent confrontation, to fanaticism, to “death [and] suffering...”⁶⁰ And so, where A.C. Grayling encourages us to consider the morality of bombing civilians in wartime from the vantage of fire-ravaged Dresden in his *Among the Dead Cities*, or Raimond Gaita from Hiroshima and Nagasaki,⁶¹ reading Michel Chiha’s *Palestine* should leave us now walking in the wreckage of the crowded slums of Gaza, in the aftermath of Israel’s latest campaign of barbarism against the Palestinian people in 2008. At least we know that there can be no liberty, no flourishing of the individual who is subject to colonial settlement⁶² and ethnic cleansing.⁶³ What liberal values are possible then, which do not recognize the rights of the Palestinians?

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

Works Cited

- AVINERI, Shlomo. "A Jew and a Gentleman," *The One and the Many: reading Isaiah Berlin*, ed. Crowder & Hardy, (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2007), pp. 73-94.
- BERLIN, Isaiah, *Isaiah Berlin Letters: 1928-1946*, ed. Hardy, H., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
- *Liberty*, ed. Hardy, H., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
 - "The Origins of Israel," *The Power of Ideas*, ed. Hardy, H., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
- BOULOS, Jawwad, *Les Fondements Réels du Liban Contemporain*, (Beirut: Fondation J. Boulos - Dar Aouad, 1983).
- CALVINO, Italo, *Invisible Cities*, transl. Weaver, W., (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974).
- BERGSON, Henri, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 2nd ed., Transl. T.E. Hulme, (USA: The Liberal Arts Press, 1955).
- CHIHA, Michel, *Essais*, vol. 1, (Beirut: Fondation Chiha Beyrouth, 1950).
- *Palestine: Political Reflections 1945-54*, (London: Stacey International, 2008).
 - *Plain-Chant*, (Beirut: Editions du Trident, 1954).
 - *Visage et présence du Liban* (Beirut: Éditions de Trident/Fondation Chiha, 1994).
- DERRIDA, Jacques, *Specters of Marx*, (New York: Routledge, 2006).
- EISENBERG, Laura Z., *My enemy's enemy: Lebanon in the early Zionist imagination, 1900-1948*, (Detroit : Wayne State University Press, 1994).
- GAITA, Raimond, *Good and Evil: an absolute conception*, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 2004).
- GRAYLING, A. C., *Among the dead cities: was the Allied bombing of civilians in WWII a necessity or a crime?* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006).
- FIRRO, Kais M., "Lebanese Nationalism versus Arabism: From Bulus Nujaym to Michel Chiha" *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 40, no. 5, (2004), pp. 1-27.
- HARTMAN, Michelle and OLSARETTI, Alessandro, "The First Boat and the First Oar': Inventions of Lebanon in the Writings of Michel Chiha ," *Radical History Review*, vol. 86, (2003) pp. 37-65.
- HADDAD, William H., "The Christian Arab Press and the Palestine Question: A Case Study of Michel Chiha of Bayrut's Le Jour," *The Muslim World*, vol. 65, no. 2 (1975) pp. 119-131.
- HOURANI, Albert, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age: 1789-1939* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962).
- IGNATIEFF, Michael, *Isaiah Berlin: A Life*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1998).
- KAUFMAN, Asher, *Reviving Phoenicia: The search for identity in Lebanon* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004).
- KOCHHAR-LINDGREN, Gray. "The Haunting of the University: Phantomenology and the House of Learning," *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture*, vol. 9, no. 1, (Duke University Press, 2009), pp. 3-12.
- KHOURY, Elyas, *Gate of the Sun*, transl. Davies, H., (Brooklyn, NY : Archipelago Books, 2005).
- MILLER, David, "Crooked Timbre or Bent Twig? Berlin's Nationalism" *The One and the Many: reading Isaiah Berlin*, ed. Crowder & Hardy, (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2007), pp. 181-206.
- MITCHELL, T. G., "Israeli Politics as Settler Politics," *The Journal of Conflict Studies*, vol. xxiv, no. 2, (2004).
- NASSIF, Albert, *Culture et Diplomatie*, (Beirut: Imprimerie Systeco, 1972).
- PAPPE, Ilan, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, (Oxford: One World Publications, 2006).
- RANCIÈRE, Jacques, *On the Shores of Politics*, (New York: Verso, 2007).
- RENAN, Ernest, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation ?* (Conférence faite à la Sorbonne, le 11 mars 1882).
- SAID, Edward. "My Right of Return" in conversation with Ari Shavit, (*Ha'aretz Magazine*, Tel Aviv, 2000) in *Power, Politics and Culture: Interviews with Edward W. Said*, ed. Viswanathan, G. (New York: Pantheon Books, 2001), pp. 443-458.

— “Intellectual Exile: Expatriates and Marginals,” *Representations of the Intellectual*, (New York, Vintage Books, 1996), pp. 47-64.

TILLEY, Virginia, *The One State Solution: A Breakthrough for Peace in the Israeli-Palestinian Deadlock*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005).

TRABULSI, Fawwaz, “Michel Chiha on Sectarianism,” *Unpublished Papers*, 1996.

— صلات بلا وصل – ميشال شيحا و الإيديولوجيا اللبنانية / *Connections without Borders: Michel Chiha and the Lebanese ideology*, (Beirut: Riad El-Rayyes Books, 1999).

ZERTAL, I. *Lords of the Land: the war over Israel's settlements in the occupied territories, 1967-2007*, (New York: Nation Books, 2007).

Endnotes

¹ See *Israel/Palestine: Mapping Models of Statehood and Paths to Peace*, York University, ‘Vision’ statement is retrievable at [http://www.yorku.ca/ipconf/vision_eng.html]. “In the 1930s and 1940s, prominent Jewish intellectuals such as Hannah Arendt, Martin Buber and Judah Magnes advocated the establishment of a single state for Jews and Arabs in Palestine. The idea of using a variety of power-sharing techniques and formulas to accommodate two competing nationalisms within one state faded with the adoption of the United Nations partition plan in 1947 and the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. After a half century of political and intellectual marginalization, the idea that a single democratic state, whether binational, multicultural or liberal, could provide the most secure homeland for Jews and Palestinians was once again revived by independent thinkers such as Edward Said, Tony Judt, Meron Benvenisti and Ali Abunimah.”

² Lochhar-Lindgren, G., *The Haunting of the University*, p. 10.

³ Isaiah’s father was a successful Riga timber merchant and Michel Chiha’s mother, Adma Pharaon, hailed from the highest echelons of the “Beirut merchant class.” Firro, K., *Lebanese Nationalism versus Arabism: From Bulus Nujaym to Michel Chiha*, p. 18.

⁴ Said, E., *Representations of the Intellectual*, pp. 47-48.

⁵ Trabulsi, F. *Michel Chiha and Sectarianism*, p. 5.

⁶ Chiha, M., *Palestine: Political reflections*, p. 10.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 50.

⁸ Henry Hardy in conversation with Nigel Warburton, “Podcast: Henry Hardy on Isaiah Berlin’s Pluralism,” *Philosophy Bites*, 25 November 2007.

⁹ *Ibid.* I would add, while both men were staunchly anti-Communist, for Berlin this was because of his opposition to all totalitarian regimes, but for Chiha, who “openly called for Lebanon’s adherence to the Western military pacts against communism,” (Trabulsi, 1996) it was more of an opportunistic political stand characteristic of Kamille Chamoun’s pro-Western ideology.

¹⁰ Berger, M. “Isaiah Berlin, 88, Philosopher and Historian of Ideas,” Obituary, *New York Times*, 10 November 1997. “Sir Isaiah was so beguiling a conversationalist that when Prime Minister Harold MacMillan nominated him in 1957 for the queen’s list he noted that the knighthood should be bestowed ‘for talking.’”

¹¹ Helou, Charles, “Obituary of Michel Chiha, *Le Jour*, 29 January 1954) as quoted in Trabulsi, F., *Michel Chiha on Sectarianism*, p. 1.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Shakespeare, W., *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene V. Another ghostly King (the shade of King Philippe-Auguste of France) turns in his grave at news of the outcome of the vote on the United Nations partition plan for Palestine, in Chiha’s *Le Jour* editorial of 27 November 1947.¹³

¹⁴ Haddad, W., *The Christian Arab Press and the Palestine Question*, p. 119.

¹⁵ It was also a notable year for the production of poetry; with Michel Corm’s *La Montaigne Inspirée*. I think Berlin would have been interested in Chiha’s remark that “there is no more government possible without poetry,” (Chiha, M., *Plain-Chant*, p. 308, my translation).

¹⁶ Henry Hardy in conversation with Nigel Warburton, “Podcast: Henry Hardy on Isaiah Berlin’s Pluralism,” *Philosophy Bites*, 25 November 2007.

¹⁷ Berlin, I., “Letter to Marion and Felix Frankfurter,” 8 December 1934, in *Isaiah Berlin Letters: 1928-1946*, ed. Hardy, p. 109. In his letters, Berlin describes his enthusiasm to meet with everyone from all political, religious and ethnic backgrounds—he met with George Antonius and hoped to see the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini. Berlin’s travels took him to Egypt, Syria, and Palestine E.I., where, travelling back from the Transjordan by donkey to Jerusalem on Friday, he was stoned by Orthodox Jews.

¹⁸ Trabulsi, F., *Michel Chiha and Sectarianism*, p. 10. Perhaps Berlin, too, sensed the importance of this geographic juxtaposition to the formation of emergent national and confessional identities.

¹⁹ Rancière, J., *On the Shores of Politics*, p. 1.

²⁰ “After so many statements, so many speeches, I can only pretend to cast a brighter light on this country, to bring out, from different angles, additional dimensions of its appearance and personality, to better accentuate the originality of its features and to share with you new outlooks on our horizon and new lives.” Chiha, M., *Visage et Presence du Liban*, p. 144 as quoted in translation in Trabulsi, F., *Michel Chiha and Sectarianism*, p. 11.

²¹ Berlin, I., *The Origins of Israel*, p. 161.

²² Trabulsi, p. 10.

²³ Chiha, M., "Sur la liberté," *Essais*, v. 1, p. 213. "Le soleil d'été, sur les sommets, éveille merveilleusement le goût de la liberté. Il élargit la conscience aux dimensions de l'horizon. Il projette, en multipliant sa hauteur, l'ombre de l'homme sur la montagne." It is interesting that the enlightening rays of the sun of civilization over the Sea cast a shadow back onto the Mountain...

²⁴ 'Negative liberty' is simply the liberty one has without the interference of the state, and 'positive liberty' is that which is permitted by the state through the imposition of necessary rules, regulations and laws which limit some freedoms in the interests of a greater liberty for all. Berlin saw both 'positive' and 'negative' liberty as requirements of a just society, although he was a principal exponent of 'negative liberty'.

²⁵ Chiha, M., "Sur la liberté," *Essais*, v. 1, p. 28. // *Thus liberty and morality, liberty and the law, liberty and wisdom, liberty and justice meet and balance each other.* // [my translation].

²⁶ *Ibid.*, *Plain-Chant*, p. 307. // *This liberty which is our right and privilege as human beings, which permits both good and bad... which gives rational existence its sovereign power.* // [my translation].

²⁷ See Miller, D., *Crooked Timber or Bent Twig?* pp. 181-206.

²⁸ Lukes, Stephen, *Isaiah Berlin: Tra la filosofia e la storia delle idee. Una conversazione con Steven Lukes*, (Florence: Ponte alle Grazie, 1994).

²⁹ Malik, Kenan, Review: "Michael Ignatieff, Isaiah Berlin," *The Independent on Sunday*, 25 October 1998, retrieved at: [http://www.kenanmalik.com/reviews/ignatieff_berlin.html]

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Hartman and Olsaretti, *The First Boat and the First Oar*, pp. 49-50. Chiha wrote in *Politique intérieure*, 1946; "In Lebanon, the Chamber of Deputies, a necessary meeting place, a symbol of the desire to live together as a group, is the very condition for peace and harmony."

³² Renan, E., *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation ?*, ch. III..

³³ Boulos, J., *Les Fondements Réels du Liban Contemporain*, p. 75.

³⁴ Trabulsi, F. *Michel Chiha on Sectarianism*, p. 6.

³⁵ Hourani, A., *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, p. 323.

³⁶ Chiha's political vision closely mirrors what Philip Bobbitt describes in his *Shield of Achilles* as the 'market state' (states driven by the goal of maximum individual enterprise). In this conception, democracy, voting and the influence of the people matter less and less, while governments must focus above all else on developing market-oriented policies and privatization strategies in response to the rapidly changing dynamics of the global economic system.

³⁷ Chiha, M., "Sur la liberté," *Essais*, v. 1, p. 213. "Ce que nous voulons exalter, c'est la dignité de l'homme."

³⁸ Yarzeh (جرزة) was the first of the 'gated communities' of modern Lebanon, situated on a wooded site on the approach to Aley.

³⁹ As quoted in Kochhar-Lindgren, G., *The Haunting of the University*, p. 3.

⁴⁰ Derrida, J., *Specters of Marx*, p. xviii.

⁴¹ Said, E. *Power, Politics and Culture*, p. 458.

⁴² Ignatieff, M., *Isaiah Berlin: A life*, p. 106. During which he sent his famous Washington dispatches to Winston Churchill.

⁴³ As quoted in Nassif, *Culture et Diplomatie*, p. 30. // *Does one not see that it becomes difficult to remain a good Jew and a good Englishman at the same time?* // [my translation].

⁴⁴ Ignatieff, M., *Isaiah Berlin: A life*, p. 223.

⁴⁵ Avineri S., *A Jew and a Gentleman*, p. 93. I would add that it is not entirely clear if a Berlinian liberal would simply support the conclusion that Zionism is simply one incommensurable good set against a plurality of other competing goods, or rather a catastrophic injustice perpetrated against the Palestinians which has sapped the liberal character of Israel as a supposed democracy. If empathy was, for Berlin, the core liberal aptitude, then what of his receptivity to the experience of the Palestinian loss and suffering? Berlin's solution was to support partition.

⁴⁶ Firro, K., *Lebanese Nationalism versus Arabism: From Bulus Nujaym to Michel Chiha*, p. 22.

⁴⁷ Ignatieff, M., *Isaiah Berlin: A Life*, p. 289. Alfred Brendel, who was growing up in Croatia during the Second World War when the fascist *Ustache* regime came to power, found "Berlin's willingness to speak positively about nationalism a mystifying bias, which he could only attribute to Berlin's Zionism."

⁴⁸ Ignatieff, M., *Isaiah Berlin: a life*, pp. 186-187.

⁴⁹ Levy, G., "Born in sin," *Ha'aretz*, 26 January 2009.

⁵⁰ Chiha, M., *Palestine*, p. 50. Editorial, *Le Jour*, 4 October 1947.

⁵¹ Eisenberg, L., *My Enemy's Enemy*, p. 31.

⁵² Hartman and Olsaretti, *Inventions of Lebanon in the writings of Michel Chiha*, p. 39. Kaufman comes to the same conclusion; "For Chiha, Zionism threatened to disorder his grandiose plans for Lebanon and its place in the political economy of the Arab Eastern Mediterranean." Kaufman, A., *Reviving Phoenicia*, p. 167.

⁵³ Trabulsi, F., *Michel Chiha on Sectarianism*, p. 2.

⁵⁴ Trabulsi, F. *صلوات بلا وصل*, p. 269.

⁵⁵ Despite the claim made by Chris Doyle of the *Council for Arab-British Understanding* that Michel Chiha "shows no malice" towards the Jews, Chiha repeatedly invokes the old chimera of the Jew as both arch-capitalist and communist, presumably in order to inflame public opinion. It is clear that Chiha would himself have drawn an intellectual distinction between 'Zionist' and 'Jew', but uncomfortable passages remain in *Palestine: Political reflections*—include the following, which the reader may consider for herself:

"Jerusalem in danger," 4 September 1948: "The universal racism of the Jews aspires to control the world in hidden ways." (p. 91)

“Temporary but lasting,” 5 July 1948: “Zionism is not the product of miserable Jews seeking refuge *but of a truly global power with networks encompassing the whole globe, whose avowed or secret aspirations transcend all else.*” (p. 81)

“It is not a dream,” 11 May 1948: “The undertaking is not without its dangers for the Jews either. There are potential reactions throughout the world which could become frightening. There is the historical phenomenon, of which Hitler’s deeds for example were one of the supreme and cruelest manifestations.” (p. 71)

This last example, where Chiha threatens Zionist Jews with the memory of Nazi persecution is particularly egregious—given that he was writing so soon after the end of the destruction of European Jewry in the Second World War. And yet at the same time, citing the right of freedom of private religious worship, Chiha also writes,

“Days of Wrath,” 12 February 1953: “Whilst Zionism remains a major threat in our eyes and one of the great aberrations of today’s world, we could in no way condone any moral or political justification for resurgent anti-Semitism.”

⁵⁶ Chiha, M., *Palestine*, p. 55.

⁵⁷ Shlaim, A., “How Israel brought Gaza to the brink of humanitarian catastrophe,” *The Guardian*, Wednesday 7 January 2009.

⁵⁸ Recorded on 6 November 1972; first transmitted on 30 November 1972 as no. 25 in the Series *Something to Say*, with Bryan Magee, *The Isaiah Berlin Literary Trust and the Estate of Stuart Hampshire*, transcript of a now lost recording available online at: [<http://berlin.wolf.ox.ac.uk/lists/nachlass/probnati.pdf>] (Posted 4 July 2006)

⁵⁹ “Whatever its pathos, romance, idealism, and depth of attached emotions,” writes Virginia Tilley, “the mission of Jewish ethnic statehood has walked the same doomed course as ethnic nationalisms everywhere. No matter how legitimate they might appear to be to their adherents, all ethnic nationalisms confront the intractable problem of managing the presence of ethnic others within the state territory.” Tilley, V., *The One State Solution*, p. 132.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Gaita, R. *Good and Evil: an absolute conception*, p. 315.

⁶² See Zertal, I., *Lords of the Land: the war over Israel's settlements in the occupied territories, 1967-2007*, (New York: Nation Books, 2007) and; Mitchell, T. G., “Israeli Politics as Settler Politics,” *The Journal of Conflict Studies*, vol. XXIV, No. 2, (Winter 2004).

⁶³ See Pappé, I., *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, (Oxford: One World Publications, 2006)