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Syahrul Hidayat
University of Indonesia, syahrul.hidayat@gmail.com

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National Identity without Intellectual Bases: Israel's Practical Zionism in Developing a State for the Jews

SYAHRUL HIDAYAT *

Department of Political Science University of Indonesia
FISIP B Building 2nd Floor, UI Campus, Depok, 16424
Indonesia
E-mail: syahrul.hidayat@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Israel as a state has been existing for almost 70 years. Despite of decades of its presence, the foundation and its struggle for survival and acknowledgement have been constantly challenged including from its own supposedly the backbone of its Israel national identity: intellectuals. This paper argues that the critics from some of Jewish intellectuals represent the fundamental problem of the effort to build a national identity. If nationalism, especially in European context as its birthplace, was usually supported by the intellectuals as the source of imagination of bounded group, the case of Israel shows different direction, at least problematic. Two prominent Jewish intellectuals, Martin Buber and Hannah Arendt, presented here are the examples of the challenge against Jewish domination on Israel nationalism. Although they did not wish to disconnect their identity as Jews and agreed with an authoritative political institution to protect the Jews both were against the idea of Jewish domination and annihilation of Palestinians. As their views were against the principles of pragmatism, lack of attention and support from the Zionist political leaders has made their intellectual ideas relatively isolated from the mass.

Keyword: nationalism, national identity, intellectual, Israel

ABSTRAK

Israel sebagai sebuah negara telah ada selama hampir 70 tahun. Meskipun kehadirannya telah berlangsung selama beberapa dekade, pendirian dan perjuangannya untuk bertahan dan mendapatkan pengakuan telah terus-menerus ditantang termasuk dari mereka yang seharusnya menjadi tulang punggung identitas nasional Israel yaitu kaum intelektual. Tulisan ini berpendapat bahwa kritik dari beberapa cendekiawan Yahudi merupakan masalah mendasar dari upaya untuk membangun identitas nasional. Jika nasionalisme, terutama dalam konteks Eropa yang menjadi tempat kelahirannya, biasanya didukung oleh intelektual sebagai sumber imajinasi untuk pengikat sebuah kelompok, kasus Israel menunjukkan arah yang berbeda, setidaknya bermasalah. Dua intelektual Yahudi terkemuka, Martin Buber dan Hannah Arendt, yang disajikan di didalam tulisan adalah contoh dari tantangan terhadap dominasi Yahudi di Israel nasionalisme. Meskipun mereka tidak ingin melepas identitas mereka sebagai orang Yahudi dan setuju dengan lembaga politik otoritatif untuk melindungi orang-orang

* The author is a lecturer at Department of Political Science, University of Indonesia. He is currently an Honorary Research Fellow at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter, UK.

Yahudi keduanya menentang gagasan dominasi Yahudi dan pemusnahan Palestina. Mengingat pandangan mereka yang menolak pragmatism politik, kurangnya perhatian dan dukungan dari para pemimpin politik Zionis telah membuat ide-ide intelektual mereka relatif terisolasi dari massa.

Kata kunci: *nationalisme, identitas national, intelektual, Israel*

INTRODUCTION

The question of Israel's national identity has been discussed since the beginning of Zionist's dream about creating a national state until its survival as a State of Israel. The peace process with the Palestinians and its neighbours contributes to the crisis of its national identity after nearly sixty years of the state (Urian and Karsh 1999: 1). The national war following its independence in 1948 and the following wars with its neighbours (mainly Egypt and Syria) are the reminder of challenges of the existence of Israel as a state. Recently, the Ali Khamenei, the spiritual leader of Iran, forecasted through twitter account that Israel will be lasted only for another 25 years (O'Grady 2015).

These are the challenges from outside which might be seen as the struggle for survival. However, its unique characteristic as a state for Zionist agenda produces more problematic circumstances to define it as a nation state. The main question in the crisis is the existence of the Jews as a majority in the secular and democratic state and defining the borders of the state itself. Is it a state for Jewish or for its citizen? It is complicated to define what the meaning of secular and democratic state is whilst at the same time it uses ethnicity, religiosity, and even race criteria to identify the member of the state of Israel. In fact, Israeliness was basically developed from the early stage as a combination of several symbols and myths for diasporic Jewish as part of the main project of Zionist international movement. Hence, due to the nature of the state, a member of Israeli state, following the logic of its founders (Theodore Herzl is the most known), should have a strong link with some aspects of Jewishness although the state project itself is deemed as non-religiously motivated and, therefore, practical (Prior 1999: 5).

Criticisms for this practical purpose for Zionist movement that led the project come from different elements of the Jewish community

itself which vary from different backgrounds such as religious leaders, members of middle class, and also intellectuals. Without aiming to undermine other criticisms on Zionism, intellectuals' role is more important in the context of Israel. As a new nation, it is important to develop a strong sentiment to bind people together in the form of nationalism which for Anderson is built as claimant (Anderson 1983). Therefore, it is vital that the process of defining national identity to be more justifiable claim upon common value of a group of people. The claim itself might be based on several factors such as history, territorial boundary, language, culture, or even blood.

What is most significant at this context is the role of intellectual in the process of nation building. In most nationalist movements, especially in Europe, intellectuals played significant role in discovering identities and made it useful for nationalist leaders to mobilise support for a common goal as a myth of a nation (Spencer & Wollman 2002: 74). This paper argues that Zionist 'national' movement was different compare to other nationalist movements in the context of the role of intellectuals. In the movement, intellectuals and independent thinkers were part of the Jews because they share similar identity, but they are not always in the position of supporting it. There are a number of them opposing the idea of Zionism held by Ben-Gurion and his associates when they led Zionist movement establishing the Jewish state, instead of supporting it (Porat in Silberstein 1991: 158).

Their positions and views clearly indicated fundamental problem of the Zionist idea to include Jewish imagination in order to attract diasporic Jews community in a secular state. A well-known Marxist thinker, Maxime Rodinson for instance clearly identifies the lack of intellectual bases for the Jewishness of the new state category by saying that all of historical interpretations of Jewish history, referred to the idealist Zionist interpretation, are ideological rather than a product of structure ideas of an identity (Rodinson 1983: 74). In other word, the Zionist's claim that the Israeli state should involve Jewish elements was baseless in many aspects.

The fact that there are many intellectuals who opposed the mainstream idea of Israeliness based on Jewish identity has shown an obvious dilemma of defining identity of Israeliness and being Israeli. This essay will discuss the main problems of national identity of Israel state before and after its independence on 14th of May 1948 by addressing Martin Buber (1878-1965) and Hannah Arendt's (1906-1975) criticisms on Jewish state held by mainstream Zionist. Both intellectuals are chosen to represent the lack of intellectual support to the Zionist movement whose project on Israel is deemed as deviation in the context of national building. They also represent the respectable Jewish scholars and most importantly they experience the situation before and after the Israel's independence.

INTELLECTUALS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL IDENTITY AND NATIONALISM

For national movements that strongly depend on nationalism as an idea, building a nation as an identity to binding people into a single community is essential. An effort of developing the same feeling as a group needs a presentation of certain factors as bases for being member of a particular group. There are many factors that can be used to cultivate the feeling such as language and blood as a bases in German tradition; ethnic compare to middle-class English; and French nationalism, cultural and a collective consciousness, or product of imagination that can 'manipulate' awareness of certain people. In that context, nationalist leaders mainly depend of the availability of the bases for unity as a nation and utilise them to mobilise people by putting the bases within the framework of defined boundaries under certain authorities. The success of a national project, then, depends on the ability of the leader to maximise them as symbol or even myth to uphold the idea of one nation as a legitimate source of a state.

However, the existence of national leader is not the only factor in cultivating them as the basis of identity. Formulating historical background of a group of people with a common identity also depends on the legitimate interpretation of those bases of identity. In this context,

political or national leaders face great difficulties in finding rational arguments of the source of identity. This is mainly the area for intellectuals who play great role in the nation-building project by conducting research on language and standardise it, writing relevant histories, and also defining boundaries of certain group in certain territory by finding material sources from the past (Spencer & Wollman 2002, p. 74). It can be said that intellectuals provide 'ready meat to be eaten by nationalist leaders as their meal' and in this relation they became the main sources of legitimate and rational ideologies of the project. In Ben Anderson's argument of nationalism based on the advance of lexicography, intellectuals who focused on grammar and literature played a major part of defining clear boundaries based on distinct language. The process of defining rational sources for identity is identified as the first phase of nationalism (Ibid, p. 74-75); a process that is followed by finding artefact as a proof of an existing location of a nation. In the second phase of the process, those rational and legitimate sources of an identity were taken by national movements as symbol to unify and mobilise people to join them.

However, the relation between intellectuals and national leaders can be in different way which is distinctive in term of domain of activities. This proposition also argues that the superiority of political forces has made intellectuals' works materialised for the mass. Hence, in other word, without any political intervention they and their ideas are irrelevant for the wider community. Kedourie (1993: 120) noted this imbalanced relation by saying that 'academic enquiries are used by conflicting interest to bolster claims, and their results prevail only to the extent that someone has the power to make them prevail.'

In fact, power and intellectualism form variation of relation other than subordination as previously mentioned. There were also records of combination between the two parties in term of upholding the commitment to the national self-consciousness, in the sense of national honour and glory, as well as incorporating themselves into nationalist political movement. German intellectuals were the main example of giving this kind of dedication to the national grandeur in the early

nineteenth century, followed by their integration into nationalist movement that produced the unification of Germany in 1871 (Spencer & Wollman 2002: 75).

To some extents, Martin Buber and Hannah Arendt also represent different pattern of relation between political leaders and intellectuals in the case of the state of Israel as a practical idea of Zionism. There is almost no dispute among them about the need and the must of a homeland for the Jews in some degrees. However, the definition of national identity of the homeland and the way of realizing it indicate separation rather than collaboration in the project of a Jewish state. Buber was much closer to the first phase of nationalism as intellectual who offered ideas for Israel nationalism. He was also part of the second type relation with political leaders as collaborative by giving a support for the idea of national state and further than that by joining the Zionist movement. However, knowing the fact that the movement offered non-humanistic project of national state by rejecting the Palestinians rights he then opposed the leader of the movement from the very beginning (Mendes-Flohr 1989: 155). Meanwhile, Arendt as a philosopher and lecturer in some American universities, tended to be more neutral and were not involved in the movement's political activities except the social ones, but she consistently criticised the Jewish domination of Israeli state. Therefore, both are in the position as opposition and critic to the Jewish element within the state of Israel in Palestine.

ISRAELINESS: BETWEEN SECULAR, ETHNIC, AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

The basic idea of the state of Israel is to build their own political authority that is able to protect the Jews from defenceless position in many countries as a result of Diaspora and anti-Semitism sentiment. One of the experiences they endured for years is in Eastern Europe when the riots and pogroms of 1881 and 1903-05 reinforced the determination of Zionist organisation to raise the idea of a having a state. That is the only possible answer for Jewish difficulties was to bring them to Palestine (Kimmerling 2001: 5). The Holocaust during World War II was per-

ceived as the major momentum for the existence of such state to settle survival from Europe in a 'secure' place. In this context, the root of Israel nation-state then is different from nationalism in Europe, which moves toward secular nation state, and can be categorized as ethnic diaspora nationalism which is parallel with Armenia and Greece (Smith 1971: 228-9). At this point, the nationalist movement of Israeli is then unique and debatable at the same time. It is debatable since the historical root of Israel's nation-state has no definite and legitimate territorial definition of the state's boundaries in Palestine. There were Jewish who lived in Palestine for generations, for sure, but they were regarded as unorganised Jewish minority rather than dominant dwellers (Shandler 1997: 671).

The situation turned into a different way when Zionist movement, founded by Theodore Herzl in 1897, used every possible symbol in order to build and then strengthen the myth of Israeliness. Having known the lack of demographic basis to claim the Palestine as a homeland he moved to radical religious-ethnic identity from the start in building the political concept of Israel. In doing so, he also exploited the anti-Semitism and Holocaust occurred during the Second World War. The movement proposed Zionism as an effort to bring defenceless Jewish people to a secure place and became the national ideology of the project itself. As an ideology, Zionism borrowed the symbols of nineteenth century European version of Jewish religion and ethnicity and combined it with the collective memory of an ancient holy land of Zion. This interpretation of religion, ethnicity and myth was intended as a forceful recruitment for Jews to immigrate to Palestine (Kimmerling 2001: 4) while at the same time the vast majority of Jews as individual or family intended to migrate to America rather than Palestine.

The use of Jewish state by Herzl as goal of the movement has confused many people and even the Jews themselves in defining the meaning of its national identity. The fact that there were thousands of Palestinians inhabitants who had been in the 'promise land' for centuries made it difficult to be applied to them. This distinctive identity of nationalism has offered two different scenarios for the Palestinians: make them leave forcefully or deliberately. Other than that, the claim

of the historical boundaries of the state itself is not clear. According to rightist Revisionists in the Zionist movement, which Jabotinsky is the main figure, the boundaries of Israel are part of *Eretz Israel* including Judea, Samaria in both west and east bank of Jordan River and also Gaza (Shindler 2006 and Peleg 1987). For critics, the idea of Palestine and its surround area as the Jews' homeland is a myth looking back at the fact of the insignificant number of the settlers prior to the Israel's establishment (Prior 1999: 181). Moreover, Jabotinsky's policy was to gain the land he dreamed by force and drew out all Arabs native by force which is in other means no difference with, as he clearly said, colonisation (Prior 1999: 182-183). His points of view is obviously confused many, including his fellow activists such as Yitzhak Epstein, a Russian Jews who came to Palestine in the late 19th century. He was confused with the ethnocentric behaviour of the Zionist pioneers as their vision toward the Arabs were increasingly agitated.

Another confusing definition of identity is the usage of King David star in the national flag which reflects the acute problem of identity. It is the symbol of Judaism as a religion, not a secular one and symbol for every citizen. On the other hand, Jewishness is also a cross cut identity as an ethnic with its specific religious belief, Judaism. However, defining Jews as ethnic group is also complicated due to the fact that there are many Jewish people who enjoy the integration with other ethnic group to live side by side and even assimilate with them by doing inter-marriage with other ethnic group (Orr 1994).

For Ben-Gurion, the leader of Zionist movement before and after the independence, the debate over identity was entirely useless Together with his associates in the movement he tried to avoid this debate that led to criticisms (Porat in Silberstein 1991: 155) of incorporation between Israel and Jewish identity which is a doubtful formula, based on simplistic interpretation (Elmessiri 1977: 29). What the Jews needed in the time of war and Holocaust was the establishment of the state and the ultimate strategy for it is survival. Ben-Gurion and the leadership of the movement needed to maximise every potential sources for the birth and survival of the state. The combination religious-ethnic symbols of

Judaism and Jewishness was then used as a mean of mobilising strong support from every Jews around the world.

Aiming to get international recognition for Israel permanent status of a nation-state, he accepted the Partition of Palestine in 1947 proposed by United Nations as part of that strategy. However, the acceptance itself ignited already long debates about the definition of state's boundaries. For the rightist, this partition was perceived as a betrayal of the idea of *Eretz Israel* based on historical interpretation 2,000 years ago where the kingdom of Israel had set up in Judea and Samaria (West Bank) on both side of Jordan River. In fact, the acceptance is the confirmation of the legacy of Herzl's pragmatic which has embedded as the political characteristic of Zionist movement. Herzl himself chose the Palestine as the future of site for the state based on material interpretation (El-messiri 1977: 8-9).

For the same reason, Ben-Gurion also had already undermined the idea of a pure Jewish state, even though still admitted it as an exclusive Jewish state. He planned to recognize the existence of sizeable Arab minority within the Jewish state. He said that, 'In our state there will be non-Jews as well – and all of them will be equal citizens, equal in everything without any exception' (Urian & Karsh 1999). In fact, the idea of making a Jewish state in its national ethos with its historical, cultural, and religious characters was challenged severely by the Arabs. The clashes between them with their Arab neighbours emerged the question of security of the new state and the state then must regularly deploy military forces and approaches to deal with the 'threat' for its existence. Based on this security approach to obtain 'peace' for Jewish people in the new state an idea of homogenous majority Jewish state, an ethnic cleansing or Arab inhabitants and the building of Jewish settlements were rational efforts.

The security problem as an external threat was also functioning as tool for a cohesive and integration of Jewish society at the very beginning of the state. Fear of the threat was used to develop such solidify society due to the fact of the fragmented society between immigrants and the Palestinian Jewish community. The government developed

three institutions to encounter the problem which were the state bureaucracy, the educational system and the military. Bureaucracy and educational system made the hegemonic culture of Israeliness was possible and they are driven by the state by recruiting veteran population to educate all segment of the society informally (Kimmerling 2001: 6). Military and policy of conscription has also major role in developing the new identity as a melting pot for the immigrants and others. The result of this framework and strategy of making identity was successful as the foundation of the consolidated Jewish immigrant settler state in the heartland of the Middle East.

In that context, it can be said that, as a movement, Zionism was led by professional politicians instead of intellectuals. They did not want to tackle the discourse of ideological difficulties of Zionism because they felt that it would 'undermine not only the self-confidence of the movement, but also the organic unity of the nation' (Sternhell 1998: 29). There was no writing of their ideas orderly and systematically to illustrate the meaning of the ideology. Documents that were available were collected from speeches, conversations, newspaper articles and memoirs. Many of their ideas and thought were left hidden and put away from the public awareness (Prior 1999: 183). Ben-Gurion himself was not considered as a leader with intellectual capacity that attracted people with his ideas. He could dominate the movement by developing political machine of Histadrut and applying political manoeuvre among several groups to build coalition. This characteristic of movement under socialist faction was not parallel with all socialist parties in Europe that their key positions were held by intellectuals and thinkers (Sternhell 1998: 30). They are professional in politics and understand the ultimate function of ideology in mobilising masses to support the movement's aims.

MARTIN BUBER AND HIS INTERPRETATION ON ISRAEL IDENTITY

The fact that majority of the Zionist movement was politicians with pragmatic approach has made the intellectuals with insignificant in-

fluence toward their policy. Martin Buber is one of the numbers of intellectuals who was initially enthusiastic with the idea of a state to protect the Jews and deliberately joined the movement. However, due the growing tendency of harsh pragmatism and unintended gesture to listen for intellectuals' ideas he turned his position from supporter to opposition.

Martin Buber is a theologian and also philosopher (Friedman 1954: 1) whose works focus on the meaning of human being according to the Judaic interpretation. He was recruited directly by Herzl to edit the main publication of Zionist party, called *Die Welt*. However, his involvement in the movement was mainly in 'democratic and cultural' wing which was led by Chaim Weizmann. He was not keen to the idea of political Zionism and entered the debates over cultural and political aspects of Zionism by publishing a journal, *Der Jude*, in 1916 (Zank 2014).

His most important work is *The Kingships of God* (1932), and the other foremost writing is *I and Thou* that explains the role of power in the Judaic society. In his interpretation of power, there is a shifting of sacred power under David's authority to the hereditary charismatic power of human king that noted the basic idea of separation of Jewish spirituality from the domain of political action and state power (Fisch 1978: 71). Based on this understanding of power, his interpretation of Zionism is distinctively different with the idea of using the entire symbol of Judaism as religion by the movement. He believed in the idea of the state as a place for everyone which is not, in other word, based under the hegemony of the Jews. His explanation of historical political crisis led him to the argument that a non-Jewish state is bound by secular human interest. Human being, according to him, has similar interest toward the need of a political authority. Therefore, any form of domination by a certain ethnic or religious group is unacceptable and will lead to failure as it is against the nature of human. He added that, a Hasidism model of community in Eastern Europe is more applicable to as the basis of Israel because of its characteristic as 'little communities bound together by brotherly love' (Fisch 1978: 73). This

is what he called as a genuine community whose members were bound together and ready to persistently ready to be a member of the group and develop positive relation with other members. According to him, the social construction preserved for generations in the form of *kibbutzim* is also part of this idealism (Scott no date). This interpretation of religion brought Buber to his other fundamental paradigm which is social humanity (Silberstein 1981: 213). His idea about Jewish existence was mainly based on the principles of humanity and it is related to his revisionist argument toward Judaism that was also part of his beliefs of the importance of inter-human relation (Silberstein 1990: 17-18).

Based on those two fundamental philosophies, Buber consistently disagreed with the idea of immigrating Jews to Palestine that affected the Palestinian inhabitants was immoral and would affect the developing identity of Israeliness to lose its humanistic character. This effort is against the principles of humanity and also injustice for non-Jewish people to maintain their rights to live. For Buber, compromise and negotiation with the Palestinians are the main objectives of Zionism (Buber in Mendes-Flohr 1983: 176), so the immigration of the Jews should be based on natural process rather than attracting them with manipulation of symbol and myth as well as imposition.

He also opposed the idea of making the Jewish state as 'our state' that consists of majority of the Jews. He did not agree with the concept of being 'majority' despite his term of 'many' which he meant as the concept rooted to the lives essential reality while the latter relates to the political concept (Buber in Mendes-Flohr 1983: 166-7). He agreed the demand of a National Home was obvious and could not be ignored as he presented his ideas in the meeting with members of Anglo-American Inquiry Committee in March 1946, but he ignored the idea of developing a Jewish state and Jewish majority and emphasized the need of cooperation between two sides (Buber in Mendes-Flohr 1983: 179-84). His position is a reflection of his constant attention toward Jewish concerns, however he is also critical toward any pragmatic and political agenda of Zionism.

He underlined the peril of the pragmatic and political approach. As a political concept used by Ben-Gurion, the future state would be using power relation and determining majority's demand over the majority. In turn, conflict and annihilation were inevitable. He insisted that the Jews and the Palestinians have equal position not to determine others destiny and humanity should be brought forward to undermine unnecessary conflict. If Zionism pursued the establishment of Jewish state and becoming the majority in it, the Israeli state would be a 'political surplus' because its aims were beyond that they needed, which lived in Palestine peacefully. Enforcing the Jewish identity as a national identity of Jewish majority represented the political ambition of the Zionist leaders resulted to triumph of power characteristic over human relation without any guidance of spirituality. He called it a tragic conflict.

Consistent with the idea of cooperation and compromise, Buber proposed the concept of bi-national state during the Biltmore Conference. This concept has historical foundations which rooted in the common ideas of the people (Jews and Palestinians) because they have closely related languages and common tradition and legacy inherited from their common father, Abraham. Another factor that could become the foundation of the bi-national state is the existence of love for their homeland not only for the Jews but also the Palestinians. Based on these factors he believed that a state could be established without any fear of other's oppression of majority and there was no need to manipulate symbols and myths to attract the Jews to immigrate. He believed that being a member of such state should be in voluntarily bases considering the economic ability of production of the state. Thus, annexation of more lands and cleansing Arab inhabitants were insufficient idea for this kind of state. Furthermore, Zionism led by Ben-Gurion before the independence and after should remove the only political motives of the movement and consider the possibility of spiritual and humanist aspects of Zionism, or Hebrew Humanism (Mendes-Flohr 1989: 159; Silberstein 1981: 221).

In these sense, Buber wanted to say that Israel had another chance to show its moral and humanistic characters after the war of independence

when the Israeli state finally survived. After the war, the government could ask for peace and open space for cooperation and compromise with its neighbours; something that was rejected by Ben-Gurion. When there was a chance to speak in front of him as Prime Minister in March 1949 in a meeting with intellectuals, Buber once again asked for the absence of a fundamental *raison d'être* of the State of Israel when the government did not initiate any moral behaviour or action toward the Arab refugees (Buber in Mendes-Flohr, 1983: 239). The state of Israel in Buber's point of view had been lacking its spirituality as a humanist Zionist state. This position was also held by him for many years after the independence of Israel to defend the rights for Palestinian as part of spiritual character of Judaism by sending Ben-Gurion in 1961 and 1962 and Levi Eshkol, Ben-Gurion's successor in 1964 letters to respect their rights when the government imposed policies on land and settlements.

ARENDT ON THE JEWISH QUESTION

Hannah Arendt was a well-known political theorist in the twentieth century. Her intellectual credentials were highly respected as reflection toward many central political episodes. Her classic book, *The Origin of Totalitarianism* published in 1951, was an effort to understand the rise of Nazi and Stalinist regimes which then became the pivotal debates on the source of totalitarianism in modern world. Along with several other writings on revolution, freedom, authority, modernity and authority throughout her intellectual career she pinched her position as one of the most influential philosopher (d'Entreves 2014).

It is difficult to position her philosophical tradition compare to others. Her ideas can be traced in different tradition of thoughts. She had a position to oppose some ideas of representation which is fundamental to liberalism. However, to say that she is not part of the liberal camp is also misleading as she admired the role of citizen in relation to any political authorities. The best possible explanation is to put her as republicanism within the tradition of liberal thought (d'Entreves 2014). What makes Arendt is closer to the ideas of Aristotle, Machiavelli, Montesquieu, to Jefferson and Tocqueville is her admiration toward the active citizen.

Citizen should engage with the society and the authority in order to get the common interests shape together. Active citizen meant that they exercise their power and develop the sense of political preferences with the agencies in a state.

Arendt herself never doubted her identity as a Jew. However, she accepted this as a fact as she did have any power to change. She developed a sense of being Jew by joining several humanitarian agencies to assist Jewish refugee mainly in central Europe before the World War Two. She had to leave Germany, her birthplace country, as Nazi grew and captured the political authority after years of engaging in intellectual life as doctorate student and graduate. So, she did not want to reject her identity as Jew; however, her background as academic has put her to put rationality beyond others. It may help to explain the reason why she was critical to political Zionism, even though she had more than sympathy to the Jews and understood their suffering.

Unlike Martin Buber who involved in political activity in Ihud, a faction within Zionist movement, Hannah Arendt joined with Zionism only in its social activity to support the movement from Paris and then America. Her decision not to join the movement for a long period was based on her conclusion that Zionism basically exploited the issue of anti-Semitism in order to develop the sentiment of Jewishness. She did not agree with the tendency of using anti-Semitism as a marker for Jewishness by saying that Zionist ideology had 'open acceptance of anti-Semitism as a fact..... to take propaganda advantage of anti-Jewish hostility' (Bernstein 1996: 48).

She showed her sympathy to the practical Zionist who tried to build the national state of Israel under Ben-Gurion and Weizmann. Her ideas of people's basis of revolutionary movement as shown by the Jews from Eastern Europe were more genuine as a reflection of people's willingness. Her sympathy to Zionism was also based on the condition of the Jews during the Second World War. She wrote her opinion about Zionism in 1945 in an article of 'Zionism Reconsidered' (Arendt 1978: 131-63) to express her sympathy to the movement as the answer for Nazi's treatment to the Jews in many concentration camps. Arendt's attention

toward this issue is imaginable based on her experience in helping the refugees and most importantly, it was also the time of writing her famous book of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.

Herzl's idea of a Jewish state in her opinion was only 'the political creed of intellectuals.' Therefore, there was no strong basis on intellectual discourses of Israeliness between secular and Jewish domination. Practical Zionism was not respectable in her point of view and behaved beyond its natural process. She referred this to the utterance of Weizmann who said that 'the up building of Palestine is our answer to anti-Semitism' (Bernstein 1996: 112). This statement for her was the manifestation of an exploitation of the Jews oppression under anti-Semitism campaign in Europe. Hence, although it was natural to give sympathy to them as the victim, building a bond for a group by using this sentiment was beyond the limit of natural process.

When the tension was so high between Jews Agency and Arab Higher League before the independence war, trust had been replaced by claim from both sides for a right to build a state based on their majority. At this moment Arendt tried to examine the situation by saying that both sides had lost their trusteeship and been dominated by irrationality. It was stated clearly in her article of "To Save the Jewish Homeland: There is still Time" published in May 1948 (Arendt 1978: 178-192). In the article she also underlined the opinion among Jewish people who were thinking only for one options to support the idea of a state for the Jews. For her this situation was a threat, 'a very ominous phenomenon', for setting up a space for thinking rationally and developing more peaceful approach. For her, this situation reflected an ugly form of Jewish nationalism (Bernstein 1996, 109).

Arendt always tried to use more rational examination in the issue of the state of Israel and the position she was aware of has been criticised by many people. One of the criticisms was that she had not been able to offer any concrete solution for the problem of Jewish oppression. In other chance, she was asked by her fellow intellectuals sceptically on her genuine position. For her, being a Jew was a fact that she couldn't get away from it. However, she offered to thinking rationally for the best

solution for Jewish people. The state of Israel is one possible solution among others, but she also wanted to think that what had been done by practical Zionism to develop a mono-culture Jewish state without considering the Palestinians and the Arab neighbours was also irrational. She admitted that, in the situation of war between Israel and Arab in 1948-9, Ihud's ideas of bi-national states 'are clearly the people most eligible for this purpose.' In more practical proposal, federated state endorsed by Judah Magnes and Martin Buber is 'much more realistic' to avoid the problem of majority-minority issue and develop a Jewish-Arab community councils as the basis for resolving the conflict in the communal level (Arendt 1978: 191).

She believed that the real goal for Jewish people is a Jewish homeland. However, this ultimate goal had been undermined by the 'pseudo-sovereignty of a Jewish state.' In imposing the latter project, practical Zionist leaders would sacrifice the possibility of building cooperation between the Jews and the Palestinians and forgot their responsibility of the fate of Yishuv, the old Jews community in Palestine. In a very clear statement, she proposed that 'local self-government and mixed Jewish-Arab municipal and rural councils, on a small scale and as numerous as possible, are the only realistic political measures that can eventually lead to the political emancipation of Palestine. It is still not too late' (Arendt 1978: 192).

CONCLUSION

It is quite obvious that a number of Jewish intellectuals have opposed Zionism, which sponsored the Israeli nation-state. The opposition indicates the lack of support for Zionist version of nationalism in term of intellectual bases for national identity. The confusion of the identity of the state itself is a result of pragmatic approach by the movement to maximise all means of symbol and myth that can endorse sentiment of Jewishness among Jewish people around the world to support and migrate to Israel in Palestine. This is the reason why structured and systematic ideas of Zionism is absence from the Zionist leaders because of the approach and made many intellectuals are reluctant to join the

movement, as shown by Hannah Arendt, or became an opponent from within as shown by Martin Buber.

Both represent the intellectuals within Jewish community who criticised the idea of developing Jewishness as the national basis of culture for their state. For them Israeliness that has developed Ben-Gurion and Weizmann faction of Histadrut in the Zionist movement represented the pragmatic vision of the leader denying humanism as an essential aspect of building a nation. The idea of Jewishness as a cultural basis for the Jewish state will harm the identity of the Palestinians within the state. The process of making the state itself is not reflecting the admiration to the right of the Palestinians because it is part of the imposition of the idea. Jewish state is not the ultimate goal of the Zionist by admitted that a Jewish homeland is the real goal. Their idea is basically based on humanist interpretation of Zionism and because of that they did not agree with the practical interpretation of the Zionist movement to do everything they need in realizing the dream of a Jewish state even it would be a ridiculous thing than ever. In Buber's interpretation, the spirit of Judaism has been replaced by human's attitude of domination toward authority. Thus, Zionism has lost its spiritual substance which in consequences has no right to represent Jewishness.

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