

Between Moral Diplomacy and Realpolitik

**Israel's diplomatic approach towards the Federal Republic of Germany
and the Spanish State between 1948 and 1955**



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Master Thesis: MA International Relations in Historical Perspective

Supervisor: Dr S.F.M. Massink

Date: 05.08.2023

Words: 15.337

Abstract

After the end of the Second World War, the young State of Israel had to decide how to approach the states of the former Axis Alliance in diplomatic affairs. While its approach towards Italy, Austria, and Japan was comparably lenient, Israel decided to completely reject any formal ties with the two German states and the State of Spain. This thesis analyses the similarities in the diplomatic approaches Israel chose for West Germany and Spain even though they were involved in the war and the Holocaust at varying levels and degrees. Herein, the research focusses on the cases of the Federal Republic of Germany and the State of Spain, leaving out the German Democratic Republic. It encompasses the period between 1948, when Israel declared its independence, and 1955, when the occupation of West Germany ended, and Spain was admitted to the United Nations. Through the analysis of a collection of primary sources created in Israel's Foreign Ministry, the Prime Minister's Office, and the consultation of relevant secondary sources, this thesis presents two diplomatic approaches; one based on moral considerations, and another based on pragmatic reasoning that Israel employed vis à-vis the two case studies. The findings are further applied to Yehudit Auerbach's theory of Turning Point Decisions (TPD) and Adam B. Lerner's theory of collective memory. In the case of West Germany, moral diplomacy has been successfully employed to engage in direct negotiations over reparations payments for the crimes committed by the Nazis during the Holocaust and eventually led to the ratification of the Luxembourg Agreement in 1953. Once the Israeli government recognised that moral diplomacy had reached its limits, it changed its West German foreign policy to an approach based on Realpolitik that aimed at deepening the established ties. In the Spanish case, moral diplomacy became a tool to uphold the memory of the Holocaust in the international sphere as Israel rejected any diplomatic relations with the Iberian state on the grounds of the regime's collaboration with the Nazis and the fact that, at the time, this regime was still in power. When the Jewish state realised that this approach did not lead to any benefits in the international arena anymore, it decided, through pragmatic considerations, to adapt its Spain policy in line with the approach of its Western allies.

Keywords: Moral diplomacy, Realpolitik, pragmatism, Holocaust memory, Luxembourg Agreement, Francoist Spain, FRG, Cold War, Middle East, United Nations, TPD

List of Abbreviations

ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDR	German Democratic Republic
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISA	Israel State Archives
JCC	Jewish Claims Conference
MAPAI	Mifleget Poalei Eretz Yisrael (Workers' Party of the Land of Israel)
TPD	Turning Point Decisions
U.N.	United Nations
U.S.	United States of America
U.S.S.R.	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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Introduction

After its establishment in the late 1940s, the young State of Israel was immediately plunged into a global order that was transitioning from the end of the Second World War to the beginning of the Cold War. While its Arab neighbours declared war on Israel on the very day of its declaration of independence on 14 May 1948,¹ the Jewish state also had to cope with the most recent and devastating tragedy of its community: the Holocaust. Countless scholars have studied the systematic persecution of Jews during World War II, as well as the establishment of Israel. In these early years, the Jewish state had to take numerous complex diplomatic decisions to find its place on the international stage and acquire allies. Israel intended to close diplomatic ties with as many states as possible and requested official state recognition from the countries of the world, with some noteworthy exceptions: East and West Germany and Spain.²

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Israel's foreign policy was characterised by two different diplomatic approaches: one was marked by moral considerations and the remembrance of the Holocaust, while the other was marked by pragmatic considerations that focused on Israel's contemporary domestic and international challenges. These two seemingly opposing approaches played an important role in Israel's establishment or rejection of diplomatic relations with the former Axis Allies and its partners. Meanwhile, the Cold War had taken precedence over any former global order and Israel had to navigate within a divided world between a Western Alliance, headed by the United States of America (U.S.), and an Eastern Alliance, headed by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.), which additionally impacted the diplomatic approach of Israel. Quickly after the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950, Israel joined the Western bloc, as did Italy, Austria, and Japan. As members of the same alliance, these former Axis allies and the State of Israel quickly recognised each other and began diplomatic relations, swiftly leaving behind the burden of the past. Even though these cases are certainly interesting, this research will focus on those diplomatic relations that Israel did not enter in connection with the memory of the Second World War. The thesis will study Israel's approach towards the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the State of Spain, which was strongly marked by moral considerations in the early

¹ Lorena De Vita, *Israelpolitik – German-Israeli relations 1949-1969* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2020): 12; Israel proclaimed the state of war against both East and West Germany on the same day as it declared its state independence.

² Juan Bautista Delgado, "From Ostracism to a Leading Role – Spain's Foreign Policy Towards the Middle East Since 1939," In *Palestine and International Law. Essays on Politics and Economics*, ed. Sanford R. Silverburg (Jefferson, NC, and London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2002): 305; Shmuel Hadas & Yvette Shumacher. "In the Shadow of Franco's Legacy: The Evolution of Israeli-Spanish Relations," *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 3, no. 2 (2009): 78.

years of the founding of the state, while gradually a more pragmatic position was adopted in connection to several important global turning points. This research wants to contribute to the broader debate on the impact of the Holocaust on Israel's diplomacy and help draw relevant conclusions on the role of historical memory as a tool to shape politics and policy, as well as the limits of this approach to political decision-making. More concretely, the thesis wants to trace Israel's balancing act between moral and pragmatic reasoning and answer the following research question: *In what ways did Israel apply moral diplomacy and Realpolitik in its approach of either refusing or establishing diplomatic ties with the Federal Republic of Germany and the Spanish State between 1948 and 1955?*

To answer this question, the thesis will address the following subsidiary questions in three chapters:

- *Which role did the memory of the Holocaust play in Israel's founding and state identity and how did Israel engage with Italy, Austria, and Japan in its early years?*
- *In what ways have moral diplomacy and Realpolitik influenced Israel's approach in refusing or establishing diplomatic ties with the FRG between 1948 and 1955?*
- *In what ways have moral diplomacy and Realpolitik influenced Israel's approach in refusing or establishing diplomatic ties with Spain between 1948 and 1955?*

The hypothesis for the main research question is that the Israeli government carefully evaluated the geopolitical circumstances in the early years of Israel's establishment and acted in the most advantageous way to achieve its domestic goals. This way, Israel's foreign policy became a moldable instrument, either through moral considerations or pragmatic decisions, to achieve national security and a stable economy. Israel had different expectations and goals towards West Germany and Spain, which resulted in different approaches vis-à-vis the two states. Furthermore, the memory of the Holocaust did constitute an important cornerstone of state identity and was used by Israel as leverage in international relations.

The research is relevant due to different aspects. Firstly, while it is historically well-documented how Israel became an internationally recognised state and how it closed diplomatic relations with various states, it is important to connect these decisions with how the young Jewish state commemorated the most collectively traumatic event of its community. Secondly, the fact that only two countries affiliated with the former Axis Alliance had been despised by the Jewish State so strongly while a conciliatory attitude was shown to the others is a decision that stands out in Israel's early foreign policy. Even more so given the

very different involvement of (East and West) Germany and Spain in the events of the Second World War. Thirdly, this research is placed within the context of the early Cold War and analyses Israel's unique history at the intersection of the Holocaust trauma, the establishment of Israel, and the new global paradigm. It, therefore, offers a valuable addition to the historiography on the impact of the Cold War in Europe and the Middle East. The question of why a seemingly similar diplomatic approach was applied to these two dissimilar cases and why Israel modified this approach over the years has been overlooked so far by the academic literature, and this thesis will try to fill this gap. The research will extend from 1948, the year of Israel's founding, until 1955, when Spain was admitted to the United Nations and the Allied occupation of West Germany ended.

Historiography and academic debate

The early years of Israel and how it positioned itself on the international stage have been studied by numerous scholars.³ In the academic literature, there is a debate about the importance of the Holocaust in the formation of Israel's state identity. Authors such as Melamud & Melamud argue that the Holocaust has always played a major role in the history of Israel and is enmeshed into the Jewish DNA.⁴ The article focuses, however, only on the reparations negotiations with the FRG and does not consider any emotional considerations of Israeli and Jewish people towards Spain in connection to the Holocaust. Other authors, such as Evyatar Friesel, say that the nearness in time between the Holocaust and the birth of Israel leads to the assumption that they are connected but that on, a historical-factual basis, these events were unconnected to the idea of a Jewish State.⁵ According to Friesel, Roni Stauber and Sam Sokol, the Holocaust was not reflected in the symbols and national myths in Israel of the 1950s and became part of Israel's historical memory and its state identity only in later decades.⁶

³ Laurence J. Silberstein, *New perspectives on Israeli history: the early years of the state* (New York: New York University Press, 1991); Boas Evron, *Jewish State or Israeli Nation?* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995); Benny Morris, *1948: A History of the first Arab-Israeli war* (New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press, 2008); Yeshayahu A. Jelinek, *Deutschland und Israel 1945-1965 – Ein neurotisches Verhältnis* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2004); to name a few.

⁴ Aviv Melamud & Mordechai Melamud, "'When Shall We not Forgive?' The Israeli-German Reparations Agreement: The Interface Between Negotiations and Reconciliation," in *Negotiating Reconciliation in Peacemaking*, ed. V. Rosoux and M. Anstey (Springer International Publishing AG, 2017): 257-275.

⁵ Evyatar Friesel, "On the Myth of the Connection Between the Holocaust and the Creation of Israel", *Israel Affairs* 13, no. 3 (2008): 446-466.

⁶ Roni Stauber, „Realpolitik and the Burden of the Past: Israeli Diplomacy and the 'Other Germany'“, *Israel Studies* 8, no. 3 (2003): 100-122; Sam Sokol, "The Tension between Historical Memory and Realpolitik in Israel's Foreign Policy, *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 12, no. 3 (2018): 311-324.

The academic literature has given, however, only moderate attention to Israel's balancing act between moral diplomacy and Realpolitik vis-à-vis those nations that had been involved in the destruction of a great part of the Jewish community during the war. Stauber analysed Israeli reactions to the wave of antisemitic incidents in West Germany in the late 1950s and early 1960s.⁷ These incidents were answered by a frequent appearance of the concept of the "other Germany" in the official correspondence of Israel's delegates and Foreign Office officials, especially by Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion.⁸ It was a way to contrast the FRG of the Adenauer era with the Germany of the Nazi Third Reich.⁹ Stauber concludes that the antisemitic incidents demonstrate the failure of West Germany to confront its past and that the Israeli leadership had already moved on to accept West Germany as a new, democratic state.¹⁰ Expanding on these conclusions, this thesis will provide the groundwork to understand how Israel's leaders came to see the FRG as a country that had left its Nazi past behind. Furthermore, very few articles are available on the relations between Spain and Israel during the Francoist era, which Shmuel Hadas describes as "a story of asymmetry, with one side expressing a desire for this relationship and the other side rejecting it."¹¹ Raanan Rein is the only author who intensively studied the absence of Spanish-Israeli relations during the period of this thesis. One of his publications lists several historical reasons as possible explanations for Israel's aversion against the Francoist regime and mentions both moral diplomacy and Realpolitik as drivers for foreign policy decision-making.¹² Rein, however, does not come to a clear conclusion and does not investigate why certain positions were adopted instead of others, which will be covered by this thesis.

While numerous articles on the diplomatic relations between Israel and other individual states can be found, articles comparing the different relations and approaches Israel took towards several states are rare. Only one academic article by Alperovitch and Shumacher¹³ connects the cases of Italy, Austria, and Spain to the context of moral diplomacy applied by Israel during its early years. The authors conclude that the main driver for Israel's

⁷ Stauber, „Realpolitik and the Burden of the Past,” 100-101.

⁸ David Ben-Gurion was Israel's first Prime Minister and Defence Minister between 1948 and 1953 and between 1955 and 1963. He proclaimed Israel's independence on 14 May 1948 and was one of, if not the most influential personality in the establishment of the Jewish state and greatly shaped the domestic and foreign policy of his country. He played a vital role in building the foundations of the relationship between Israel and the Federal Republic of Germany; Cornelia Lein, „Die Beziehungen beider deutscher Staaten zu Israel, 1949-1963,” PhD diss., (Technical University Dresden, 2006): 77.

⁹ Stauber, „Realpolitik and the Burden of the Past,” 101.

¹⁰ Ibid., 117.

¹¹ Hadas & Shumacher, „In the Shadow of Franco's Legacy,” 78.

¹² Some of these reasons were as the Spanish Inquisition, the Spanish Civil War, Spain's transition into a dictatorship, and the Holocaust; Raanan Rein, „Israel's Anti-Francoist Policy (1948-1953): Motives and Ideological Justifications,” *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 6, no. 2 (2007): 408-430.

¹³ Lior Alperovitch & Yvette Shumacher, „Moral Diplomacy: Post-War Austria, Italy, and Spain in Israeli Foreign Policy,” *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 7, no. 1 (2013): 147-156.

decision to ignore Italy's and Austria's affiliation with Nazi Germany was its willingness to subjugate its foreign policy to the overall interests of the Western Alliance for which the two European countries were important allies. Instead, resisting diplomatic ties with Spain was an affordable price to pay for Israel in exchange for Western support.¹⁴ This thesis will be able to dismiss this argument and prove that Israel's decisions were guided by other motives than loyalty to its Western partners. Some historians also discuss the frustration among Israeli politicians about how the government was handling Israel's foreign relations. Melamud & Melamud, for instance, recall the doubts of Knesset¹⁵ member Yizhar Harani on Israel's capacity to enter negotiations with the FRG while at the same time not signalling forgiveness of its crimes, asking during a debate in January 1952 "When shall we not forgive?".¹⁶ Raanan writes that only half a year earlier, Michael Amir¹⁷ expressed his incomprehension about the lack of diplomatic relations with Spain by asking the Foreign Ministry "What did Spain do to us? ... Not the Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella, but Franco's Spain".¹⁸ Michael Wolffsohn is the only author who connects the two cases of Spain and West Germany.¹⁹ He briefly analyses the considerations of the Israeli government before the UN vote of November 1950 on lifting the economic and political ban on Spain Wolffsohn terms this a watershed moment for Israel's diplomacy that began to compare its approach towards Spain to its approach towards West Germany. He argues that this brought to light a dilemma: Israel recognised that remembering the Holocaust in a political-historical manner was correct from a moral standpoint but was leading to noxious isolation in the international area.²⁰ This thesis will expand on the dilemma that Israel's diplomatic approach towards the FRG and the State of Spain was causing and elaborate on its causes.

Theories and analytical concepts

The two main concepts of the thesis are *moral diplomacy* and *Realpolitik*, which define the reasoning behind the decisions taken by Israel's leading politicians and diplomats during the studied period. Moral diplomacy can be defined as "inter-state conduct aimed at achieving interests while backing this up with moral reasoning relying on the selective use of

¹⁴ Alperovitch & Shumacher, "Moral Diplomacy," 154.

¹⁵ Israel's National Parliament

¹⁶ Melamud & Melamud, "'When Shall We not Forgive?'," 265; emphasised in the original.

¹⁷ Israeli Ambassador to Brussels

¹⁸ Rein, "Israel's Anti-Francoist Policy (1948-1953)," 417.

¹⁹ Michael Wolffsohn, "Die Spanienpolitik Israels, 1948-1963," *Orient – deutsche Zeitschrift für Politik, Wirtschaft und Kultur des Orients*, 31, no. 3 (1990): 415-429.

²⁰ Wolffsohn, "Die Spanienpolitik Israels, 1948-1963," 426.

historical events”.²¹ Realpolitik, on the other hand, is defined as “an approach to foreign policy in which preservation of the state and promotion of the national interest are the ultimate goals and power is the primary tool for achieving those ends”.²² Since the national interest is prioritised above all other ends and values, Realpolitik is sometimes held to be amoral, or even immoral.²³ Therefore, this thesis identifies Realpolitik as opposed to moral diplomacy.²⁴ The terms ‘pragmatism’ and ‘pragmatic’ will be used synonymously to Realpolitik throughout this thesis.

Two main theories further help to understand and analyse the historical context and reasoning of the Israeli government. The first theory is based on Yehudit Auerbach’s framework of Turning-Point-Decisions (TPD),²⁵ which she uses to explain the changes and breakthroughs in the relations between states and the normalisation of relations between enemy states. She argues that “the more severe the pre-decisional conflict, and the stronger the post-decisional dissonance, the greater the consequent change in attitude toward the ‘enemy’”.²⁶ Setton and Rein apply this theory to the Israeli-Spanish relations between 1956 and 1986 and focus on the perspective of the State of Spain.²⁷ They argue that TPD is generated by stimuli that come from situational changes in either the internal or external environment of the decision-makers, who need to feel discomfort with the present situation their state faces and who see that their present strategy is no longer adequate.²⁸ Through a critical source analysis, this thesis will apply this theory to Israel’s perspective on the application of moral or pragmatic diplomacy towards West Germany and Spain, as well as the situational changes that led to the favouring of one approach to the other.

The other theory is introduced by Adam B. Lerner and addresses the socio-political processing of mass violence through the lens of collective trauma²⁹ in which trauma is defined as “a delayed response to an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events”.³⁰ Lerner argues that the “narratives of mass violence’s legacy can collectivize trauma, making it

²¹ Alperovitch & Shumacher, “Moral Diplomacy,” 152.

²² A. R. C. Humphreys, „Realpolitik,” in *The Encyclopedia of Political Thought*, eds. M. T. Gibbons, D. Coole, E. Ellis, and K. Ferguson (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 1.

²³ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁴ Seen also in Alperovitch & Shumacher, “Moral Diplomacy,” or Stauber, „Realpolitik and the Burden of the Past.”

²⁵ Yehudit Auerbach, „Turning-Point Decisions: A Cognitive-Dissonance Analysis of Conflict Reduction in Israel-West German Relations,” *Political Psychology* 7, no 3 (1986): 533.

²⁶ Auerbach, „Turning-Point Decisions,” 545.

²⁷ Guy Setton & Raanan Rein, “Spanish-Israeli relations and systemic pressures, 1956-1986: The cases of GATT, NATO and the EEC,” *Historia y Política*, 37 (2017): 329-353.

²⁸ Setton & Rein, “Spanish-Israeli Relations and Systematic Pressures,” 332.

²⁹ Adam B. Lerner. *From the Ashes of History: Collective Trauma and the Making of International Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2022.

³⁰ Lerner, *From the Ashes of History*, 8.

relevant to groups and the institutions that represent them”.³¹ This narrative can shape how relevant actors interpret future risks and choices connected to the traumatic past and can constitute how notions of reconciliation, rehabilitation, and recovery are framed.³² This assessment is interesting for this thesis since the Israeli government took on the role of the legitimate representative of the Jewish people after World War II.³³ It can therefore be assumed that it grounded some of the tenets of its moral diplomacy vis-à-vis the former Axis Allies in the mass violence of the Holocaust. The thesis will analyse how the commemoration of the Holocaust was integrated into Israel’s diplomatic decision-making towards the FRG and the Spanish State.

Method and Sources

This research will compare the development of Israel’s diplomatic strategy towards the FRG to the strategy towards Spain. These two cases resemble each other in certain aspects, such as the fact that both states were (even though to a different degree) affiliated with the Axis Alliance and were both ostracised by the international community after the Second World War. Both West Germany and Spain, therefore, were striving for Israel’s goodwill to regain international standing. Further, both aligned with the Western powers during the Cold War, as did Israel.³⁴ The German Democratic Republic (GDR), which was occupied by the Soviet Union, was part of the Eastern Alliance. Contact between East Germany and Israel was minimal and both states never entered diplomatic ties,³⁵ which is why the GDR will not be covered in this thesis. The comparison between West Germany and Spain is especially intriguing due to some contradictions observable through developments until the mid-1950s: Even though Germany had been the main culpable in the Holocaust, Israel began to substantially engage diplomatically with the FRG already a few years after the end of the war and eventually signed an agreement with West Germany in 1953 on reparations payments for the crimes committed by the National Socialists: the Luxembourg Agreement. In contrast, any diplomatic relations with Spain, which had been only a junior Axis partner but was still ruled by dictator General Francisco Franco, were vehemently avoided by the Israeli authorities until the mid-1950s. After that, Israel’s attitude slowly

³¹ Ibid., 9.

³² Ibid., 5.

³³ David Witzthum, “David Ben-Gurion and Konrad Adenauer: Building a Bridge across the Abyss,” *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 13, no. 2 (2019), 229.

³⁴ De Vita, *Israelpolitik*, 21.

³⁵ Jelinek. *Deutschland und Israel 1945-1965*, 333-334.

changed when Spain was intensifying its relations with the Arab nations and regained international recognition.

The research question and subsidiary questions will be answered by employing the method of process tracing, which is defined as “the examination of intermediate steps in a process to make inferences about hypotheses on how that process took place and whether and how it generated the outcome of interest”.³⁶ This method pays close attention to the unfolding of events in time and the analysis of sequences and changes of the independent and dependent variables.³⁷ Process tracing is typically used by historians to find explanations for specific outcomes and provide detailed narratives through inductive reasoning.³⁸ This is achieved by mapping out events in a chronological way and tracing the nodal points in history that led to certain outcomes, developing in this way explanations of causal mechanisms.³⁹ Bennett’s and Checkel’s list of ten best practices⁴⁰ will be applied to guarantee a systematic, operational, and reproducible application of the method.

Since this research focuses on Israel’s perspective on the establishment or rejection of diplomatic relations, the primary source analysis is based on the first nine volumes of the Israel State Archives (ISA) collection “Documents on the Foreign Policy of Israel, 1947-1960”.⁴¹ This collection of almost 5000 primary sources contains the most relevant classified documents on political and diplomatic issues created in the Israeli Foreign Ministry and the Prime Minister’s Office. The ISA received government permission to declassify and publish them in a series of books which cover the early years of Israel’s history. This extensive documentation is available both in Hebrew and English, whereas only the English translations will be used for analysis purposes. Through an in-depth process of analogous keyword

³⁶Andrew Bennett, and Jeffrey T. Checkel, “Process tracing. From philosophical roots to best practices,” in *Process Tracing. From Metaphor to Analytic Tool*, eds. Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel (Cambridge University Press, 2014), 6.

³⁷ David Collier. “Understanding Process Tracing,” *Political Science and Politics* 44, no. 4 (2011): 824.

³⁸ Christine Trampusch and Bruno Palier, “Between X and Y: how process tracing contributes to opening the black box of causality,” *New Political Economy* 21, no. 5 (2016): 443.

³⁹ David Waldner. “What makes process tracing good?” in *Process Tracing. From Metaphor to Analytic Tool*, eds. Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel (Cambridge University Press, 2014), 126.

⁴⁰ These ten points are the following: 1. Cast the net widely for alternative explanations 2. Be equally tough on the alternative explanations 3. Consider the potential biases of evidentiary sources 4. Take into account whether the case is most or least likely for alternative explanations 5. Make a justifiable decision on when to start 6. Be relentless in gathering diverse and relevant evidence but make a justifiable decision on when to stop 7. Combine process tracing with case comparisons when useful for the research goal and feasible 8. Be open to inductive insights 9. Use deduction to ask “if my explanation is true, what will be the specific process leading to the outcome?” 10. Remember that conclusive process tracing is good, but not all good process tracing is conclusive; Bennett & Checkel, “Process tracing. From philosophical roots to best practices,” 21.

⁴¹ Israel State Archives, “Documents on the Foreign Policy of Israel”, List of Companion Volumes in English, 1947-1960”, last visited 29.07.2023, <https://catalog.archives.gov.il/en/publication/the-documents-on-the-foreign-policy-of-israel-series-1947-1960/>.

search,⁴² approximately 200 sources have been selected from the collection and analysed through process tracing. A vast set of secondary sources on Israel's diplomatic relations and the two main concepts and case studies further allow connecting the primary sources with a solid historiographical foundation and tracing Israel's application of moral diplomacy and Realpolitik, combining new conclusions with relevant scholarly insights.

Structure of the thesis

The first chapter of the thesis introduces the connection between the collective trauma of the Jewish community caused by the Holocaust and the formation of Israel's national identity, as well as its potential influence on diplomatic decision-making. Also, it will outline the diplomatic interactions of Israel with Italy, Austria, and Japan during the studied period and the motives behind Israel's respective approach. The second chapter analyses the rapprochement between Israel and West Germany by emphasizing the negotiations of the Luxembourg Agreement where diplomats of both states officially interacted for the first time. The third chapter studies the positioning of the Jewish State towards Francoist Spain until the mid-1950s, focusing especially on Spain's ties with the Arab nations and the gradual international rehabilitation as a reason for the shift in power dynamics. The thesis concludes with a summary of the findings and their meaning for the broader historical context.

⁴² Examples of keywords: West Germany, Federal Republic of Germany, Adenauer, Spain, Franco, Nazism, Nazi, United Nations, moral, moralistic, Realpolitik, pragmatic, Holocaust, memory, honour, rehabilitation.

1. Holocaust memory in the young State of Israel and the diplomatic ties with the “other” Axis allies

The establishment of the Jewish State in 1948 took place at a time of global transition from the Second World War paradigm to the new realities created by the Cold War. Before analysing the two case studies, this chapter will provide the necessary context to understand the motives behind Israel’s diplomatic choices. The first subchapter will outline the academic debate around the meaning of the Holocaust for the creation of Israel, and for the way in which the young state and its population identified themselves. This information will help contextualise Israel’s foreign policy decisions towards the states formerly affiliated with the Axis Alliance. The second subchapter will give a broader perspective on Israel’s Axis approach and shed light on its relations with Austria, Italy, and Japan during the studied period. This will help understand how the international context influenced the Jewish state and how these cases differ from the two cases chosen for this research.

1.1 *The connection between the Holocaust memory and the establishment and identity of the State of Israel*

Numerous scholars have reached different conclusions on the role of the Holocaust memory in the establishment of the Israeli State and its identity. After the Second World War, during which one-third of the worldwide Jewish community had been killed, the newly founded Jewish state was facing the task of populating the new homeland. While numerous Jews who were fleeing from persecution in Middle Eastern countries with a Muslim majority reached Israel,⁴³ Zionist leaders accepted the immigration of survivors of the Holocaust at first only hesitantly⁴⁴ but soon recognised it as a potential demographic boon and eventually welcomed more than two-thirds of all survivors⁴⁵. Some sources argue that the Holocaust is enmeshed into the Jewish DNA⁴⁶ and that it played a major, even catalytic, role in speeding

⁴³ De Vita, *Israelpolitik*, 13.

⁴⁴ Classical Zionism aimed at normalising the status of the Jews and becoming economically and politically independent, without dwelling in antagonisms and hostilities. Also, the stigmatisation of European Jews who were reproached of having gone to the gas chambers like “sheep to the slaughter” was very strong in the 1940s and 1950s in Israel and they were made to feel ashamed of surviving the Holocaust; Robert S. Wistrich, “Israel, the Diaspora and the Holocaust Trauma”. *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 4, no. 2 (1997): 191, 196. Among others, David Ben-Gurion expressed reservations to Holocaust survivors, arguing that those who had survived the atrocities in the German camps were broken in spirit and what they had been through had erased all remaining good qualities from them; Lerner, *From the Ashes of History*, 143.

⁴⁵ Lerner, *From the Ashes of History*, 143.

⁴⁶ Melamud & Melamud, ““When Shall We not Forgive?”” 258-259.

up the inception of the State of Israel,⁴⁷ and in the national identity of the young state.⁴⁸ However, other sources oppose this assessment. Whereas some argue that the destruction of European Jewry rendered the birth of Israel almost impossible,⁴⁹ others claim that the Holocaust was politicised to pursue Israel's governmental aims.⁵⁰ Hence, David Ben-Gurion and his MAPAI party⁵¹ followed an ideology of Statism which put the state on top of all priorities.⁵² The presumed vulnerability and passivity attributed to the Jews during the Holocaust⁵³ were contrasted by the image of the "new Jewish man", portrayed as a self-confident, free citizen of Israel, and the government tried to repress the history of the Holocaust as much as possible and focus exclusively on state-building.⁵⁴ An example is the 1948 War of Independence against a military coalition of Arab states,⁵⁵ the most formative war for Israel.⁵⁶ In the aftermath of this war, myths of heroism, comradeship, and sacrifice were internalised,⁵⁷ while there was little place for a Holocaust commemoration. Holocaust survivors, who had only very recently immigrated to Israel, constituted half of the Jewish fighting force in the Independence War.⁵⁸ However, they have been marginalised in the culture of war commemoration.⁵⁹ Only the heroism of the Jewish ghetto fighters⁶⁰ finds a brief and laconic mention in Israel's historiography.⁶¹ More generally, a widespread misunderstanding of the severity of the crimes committed during the Holocaust and a lack of sensitivity vis-à-vis the survivors prevailed in the young Jewish state.⁶²

In the political realm, the literature argues that the memory of the Holocaust was only addressed marginally and almost exclusively in connection to the justification of a Jewish

⁴⁷ Abraham Edelheit even argues that the Holocaust was a necessary element in Zionist diplomacy as "it furnished the Zionists with the powerful moral weapon of Jewish homelessness"; Abraham J. Edelheit, "The Holocaust and the Rise of Israel: A Reassessment Reassessed." *Jewish Political Studies Review* 12, no. 1 / 2 (2000): 103.

⁴⁸ Wistrich, "Israel, the Diaspora and the Holocaust Trauma," 192.

⁴⁹ Friesel, "On the Myth of the Connection," 462.

⁵⁰ Wistrich, "Israel, the Diaspora and the Holocaust Trauma," 192.

⁵¹ The acronym stands for *Mifletet Poalei Eretz Yisrael*, which can be translated as "Workers' Party of the Land of Israel".

⁵² Stauber, „Realpolitik and the Burden of the Past," 100.

⁵³ Wistrich, "Israel, the Diaspora and the Holocaust Trauma," 196.

⁵⁴ Yechiam Weitz, "Political dimensions of Holocaust memory in Israel during the 1950s." *Israel Affairs* 1, no. 3 (1995): 143; Lerner, *From the Ashes of History* 129, 136.

⁵⁵ This war is also known as the 1948 Arab-Israeli War between a coalition of Arab states and the newly founded State of Israel. It took place between 15 May 1948, one day after Israel's Declaration of Independence, and 10 March 1949. Israel emerged as victor and took control of the areas that the UN had proposed for the Jewish state in the 1947 United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine, as well as of about 60 % of the area proposed for the Arab state, and of West Jerusalem, which was meant to be part of an international zone.

⁵⁶ Hanna Yablonka, „Holocaust Survivors in the Israeli Army during the 1948 War: Documents and Memory," *Israel Affairs* 12, no. 3, 471.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 464.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 465.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 481.

⁶⁰ This refers to the Jewish resistance fighters during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of 1943 which was an effort to oppose the transport of the ghetto population to the extermination camps of the Nazis.

⁶¹ Hanna Yablonka, „Holocaust Survivors in the Israeli Army during the 1948 War," 471; Weitz, "Political dimensions of Holocaust memory in Israel during the 1950s," 131.

⁶² Hanna Yablonka, „Holocaust Survivors in the Israeli Army during the 1948 War," 471.

homeland. The Holocaust was seen as the final consequence of life without a land and therefore the absence of a Jewish State would unavoidably make Jewish survival impossible.⁶³ Ben-Gurion vaguely alluded to the collective trauma of the Holocaust during the 1948 Declaration of Independence, terming it “another clear demonstration of the urgency of solving the problem of [the Jewish people’s] homelessness by re-establishing [...] the Jewish State.”⁶⁴ On a different occasion, while reflecting on the historical and moral connection of Israel with the memory of the Jewish suffering during World War II, he argued that Israel was “the single fitting monument to those destroyed by the savage Nazi beast.”⁶⁵ The establishment of Israel was encapsulated in the mantra “from destruction to rebirth”⁶⁶ and Statism tried to cultivate and emphasise the memory of victories rather than defeats.⁶⁷ Despite the presence of many Holocaust survivors or their relatives in Israel, the government remained silent on how to process their trauma, express their memories and experiences and how to integrate them into a society in which non-European Jews had not been affected by the Nazi crimes. Even though the academic literature claims that the collective trauma was repressed in the official discourse of the state,⁶⁸ the primary sources studied for this research show that the Holocaust memory found its way into official correspondence and diplomatic decisions regarding the relations with the Spanish State and the Federal Republic of Germany. One example was the United Nations' vote in May 1949 on lifting the international ban imposed on Spain in 1946. Israel voted against the proposal, stating that the Spanish dictator, General Francisco Franco, who was still in power, had been an ally of Hitler and therefore “in his world [there was] no room not only for [a] Jewish state, but for [the] survival of [the] Jewish people.”⁶⁹ Another example was a letter to the U.S. government from 1951, in which the Israeli government presented its claims for material compensation and used very visual language to outline the suffering of the Jews during the Holocaust, reminding that all those who had died at the hands of the Nazis could never be brought back.⁷⁰

Within an international context, the events of the Holocaust received even less attention in connection to the creation of Israel. Plans to establish a Jewish homeland had already been set

⁶³ Wistrich, “Israel, the Diaspora and the Holocaust Trauma,” 196; Weitz, “Political dimensions of Holocaust memory in Israel during the 1950s,” 133.

⁶⁴ David Ben-Gurion. 1948. “The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel.” Transcript of speech delivered at the Tel Aviv Museum, Tel Aviv, Israel, 14 May 1948.

⁶⁵ Stauber, „Realpolitik and the Burden of the Past,” 100.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 100.

⁶⁷ Weitz, “Political dimensions of Holocaust memory in Israel during the 1950s,” 143.

⁶⁸ Lerner, *From the Ashes of History*, 136.

⁶⁹ M. Sharett to L. Kohn, “Israel's position preparatory to the forthcoming vote at the U.N. on the Spanish issue, 13 May 1949,” Vol. 4, no. 24.

⁷⁰ Note from the Government of Israel to the Government of the United States, “Reparations from Germany, 16 January 1951,” Vol. 6, no. 19.

in motion long before World War II⁷¹ and, in February 1947, the British government referred the problem of the partition of Palestine between Arab and Jewish groups to the United Nations (UN).⁷² While some of the UN delegates expressed awareness and understanding of the recent tragedy that had occurred to the European Jews,⁷³ the Holocaust was not used as the main argument for the establishment of a Jewish State during the deliberations. While the Zionists presented their case in mid-1947, the Holocaust was barely mentioned, and the hearings were limited to practical matters concerning the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.⁷⁴ Arguably, however, the Holocaust might have given the Zionists a sense of purpose and dedication to their goal that was not matched by the other involved parties in the conflict.⁷⁵ The political conflicts between Jews and Arabs taking place in Palestine in 1947 and the subsequent war in 1948 hence overshadowed the need to address the Holocaust in connection to a Jewish homeland⁷⁶ and, eventually, the UN decided to partition Palestine.⁷⁷ The lack of proof that the Holocaust carried any weight in this decision is astonishing yet rooted in the pragmatic functioning of UN procedures that focus more on potential future conflicts than on the memorialisation of the past.

Parts of the Jewish Diaspora considered the Holocaust a central reference point for their Jewish identity and its memory served to unite Jews in solidarity in the face of threat.⁷⁸ Certain members of the Jewish community connected the memory of the Holocaust with the straightforward idea of Jewish survivalism and they hoped that a strong Israeli State would further ensure this.⁷⁹ However, a broader public dialogue on Holocaust memory, including both those who had become victims of the Nazis and those who had not, remained unaddressed, and the Holocaust's main legacy was the reverberated insecurity and poverty

⁷¹ The establishment of a Jewish homeland had already been decided between British and Zionist leaders in the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and approved by the League of Nations' decision of 1922. Recurring tensions between Arabs and Jews in Palestine led in 1937 to the realisation that a partition of the territory between the two groups might be the most realistic solution to avoid a further escalation of the situation. However, the British White Paper published in 1939 diverged strongly from Zionist ideas who immediately rejected the Paper after its publication; Friesel, "On the Myth of the Connection," 447; Edelheit, "The Holocaust and the Rise of Israel," 100. The British government envisioned the creation of an independent Palestinian state without the partition of the Palestinian territory. According to the White Paper, a limited amount of Jewish immigrants were supposed to be allowed to settle in Palestine during the first five years after state establishment and then further rules on Jewish immigration should have been determined by the Arab majority in the region. The proposal was rejected both by Zionist and Arab representatives in Palestine.

⁷² Friesel, "On the Myth of the Connection," 452.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 453.

⁷⁴ Even though most Zionist leaders had lost family members in the Holocaust, they kept their feelings under control in this moment of international decision-making and abstained from talking about the recent tragedy; *Ibid.*, 453

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 460.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 460.

⁷⁷ Delgado, "From Ostracism to a Leading Role," 305.

⁷⁸ Wistrich, "Israel, the Diaspora and the Holocaust Trauma," 192.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 192.

that affected every sector of the young state.⁸⁰ While Israel tried to cement its independence internationally and transform the Zionist objective of a Jewish homeland finally into reality, the powerlessness and helplessness of the Jewish communities who had been destroyed during the Holocaust were not reflected in the national myths and symbols during the 1950s.⁸¹ Instead, myths from earlier periods of Jewish history, such as the time of the First Temple⁸² and other national celebrations, such as the Day of Independence, became the symbol of national pride and rebirth.⁸³ An awareness within Israeli society of the Holocaust and of the trauma only emerged from the late 1950s onwards⁸⁴ and found a firm place in Israel's national memory with the trial of Adolf Eichmann in 1961.⁸⁵ This trial gave new legitimacy to the stories of life and death of those who had suffered under the Nazi regime and loosened up the hold of Statism.⁸⁶ According to others, however, it led to a harnessing of collective trauma by the Israeli government to its strategic advantage regarding its Arab foreign policy agenda.⁸⁷

The studied sources reveal the marginalisation of the traumatic experiences of Israel's Jewish community that had survived the Holocaust in virtually all aspects of political and social life. Given that the idea of establishing a Jewish homeland had already emerged before the Second World War, as well as the fact that not all Israeli citizens had undergone the hardship of Nazi persecution, a collective Holocaust memory entered Israel's national consciousness only slowly.

1.2 Israel's diplomatic ties with Austria, Italy, and Japan until the mid-1950s

Whereas Israel decided to reject all forms of diplomatic ties with the FRG and Spain, this was not the case for the other states formerly affiliated with the Axis Alliance.

⁸⁰ Lerner, *From the Ashes of History*, 144.

⁸¹ Charles S. Liebman and Eliezer Don-Yehiya, 1983, in Stauber, „Realpolitik and the Burden of the Past,” 100-101.

⁸² Weitz, “Political dimensions of Holocaust memory in Israel during the 1950s,” 143.

⁸³ Stauber, „Realpolitik and the Burden of the Past,” 100.

⁸⁴ Sokol, “Tension between Historical Memory and Realpolitik,” 312.

⁸⁵ Adolf Eichmann was an official of the National Socialist Party and head of the department in charge of the persecution, expulsion, and deportation of Jewish People. He was responsible for the death of approximately six million people living in Germany and in European territories occupied by the Nazis. His trial was opened in Jerusalem on 11 April 1961 and was concluded on 15 December 1961. Eichmann was sentenced to death and was executed by hanging in 1962. During the trial, survivors of the Holocaust had, for the first time, the possibility to talk in their testimonies about their traumatic experience through a public platform. The trial marked a new attitude towards the Jews who had lived and died under the Nazi regime, disclosing their painful stories, and dispelling the long-standing belief that they had merely gone to their deaths like “sheep to the slaughter”; Weitz, “Political dimensions of Holocaust memory in Israel during the 1950s,” 140-142.

⁸⁶ Weitz, “Political dimensions of Holocaust memory in Israel during the 1950s,” 141-143.

⁸⁷ Lerner, *From the Ashes of History*, 137; During a Knesset debate in December 1951, Ben-Gurion argued that the ‘Nazis’ were not necessarily Germans but all those who tried to menace the Jewish State and called the Arab states “Nazi Arabs”, Witzthum, “David Ben-Gurion and Konrad Adenauer,” 227.

In the Moscow Declaration of 1943, the Allied Powers determined that Austria had been forcibly occupied by Nazi Germany and was therefore blameless for the crimes committed by the National Socialists.⁸⁸ The narrative that Austria had been Germany's first victim is, however, controversial as some argue that the country had welcomed the "Anschluss" to Germany in 1938.⁸⁹ The Allies' decision put Israel in a difficult position. The young state needed the recognition and friendship of as many states as possible, especially of the Great Powers. Therefore, it had to comply with the decision of the international community and was not able to treat Austria like a culpable state, even though the complicity of the Austrian state in the Nazi crimes had exceeded in many regards the one of Spain.⁹⁰ The Austrian government pressed for upgrading diplomatic relations⁹¹ but Israel was not interested in deepening relations⁹² and maintained a cool and distant attitude.⁹³ Eventually, Austria opened a consulate in Tel Aviv in 1950⁹⁴ which Israel mainly used for operations behind the Iron Curtain⁹⁵ and as a transit station for Jews wishing to escape from Eastern Bloc countries.⁹⁶ A major political issue was that, while all Jewish property in Austria had been confiscated during the Nazi occupation, the restoration of this property and the problem of heirless Jewish property had not been addressed by the Austrian government after the war.⁹⁷ Even though the Israeli government declared that it would not improve diplomatic relations unless this was resolved,⁹⁸ Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett⁹⁹ renounced in a controversial statement in 1952 any Israeli claims for reparations from Austria, accepting that the Austrian and the German case were different.¹⁰⁰ The Committee for Jewish Claims Against Austria, was, however, not willing to renounce the personal claims of the Austrian Jews and in June 1953, the Committee and the Austrian government entered formal negotiations.¹⁰¹ A period of crisis brought the negotiations to a halt in December 1953, raising questions among Israeli

⁸⁸ Ronald W. Zweig, "Jewish Issues in Israeli Foreign Policy: Israeli-Austrian Relations in the 1950s," *Israel Studies* 15, no. 3 (2010): 50.

⁸⁹ Zweig, "Israeli-Austrian Relations in the 1950s," 50; Alperovitch & Shumacher, "Moral Diplomacy," 153.

⁹⁰ Alperovitch & Shumacher, "Moral Diplomacy," 154.

⁹¹ Zweig, "Israeli-Austrian Relations in the 1950s," 51.

⁹² K. Levin to G. Hirsch, "Austria's recognition of Israel, 11 January 1949," Vol. 2, no. 314.

⁹³ G. Avner to D. Lewin, "Guiding lines for relations with Austria and Germany, 27 November 1949," Vol. 4, no. 437.

⁹⁴ Zweig, "Israeli-Austrian Relations in the 1950s," 51.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁹⁶ Alperovitch & Shumacher, "Moral Diplomacy," 148.

⁹⁷ Zweig, "Israeli-Austrian Relations in the 1950s," 52.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁹⁹ Moshe Sharett was Israel's first Foreign Minister and its second Prime Minister from 1953 to 1955 between David Ben-Gurion's two terms of office. He was strongly involved in the development of bilateral relations with the FRG, the question of Holocaust reparations payments, and signed the Luxembourg Agreement in 1952 alongside Konrad Adenauer; Lein, "Die Beziehungen beider deutscher Staaten zu Israel, 1949-1963," 78.

¹⁰⁰ Zweig, "Israeli-Austrian Relations in the 1950s," 56.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 56-57.

diplomats about the political and moral benefit of these talks for the Jewish state.¹⁰² Thanks to U.S. pressure on the Austrians, the negotiations were concluded in July 1955, even though the settlement represented only a fraction of the Committee's demands.¹⁰³ The agreement, nonetheless, sufficed the Israeli government and in 1956, the Austrian consulate in Tel Aviv was raised to a legation.¹⁰⁴ This was not received well by the West German government which had just recently signed an important reparations agreement with Israel. The Germans, who could not understand the distinction that Israel was making between Germany and Austria, were frustrated over the feeling that they could have gotten away with a much smaller sum like Austria¹⁰⁵ which never acknowledged any war guilt.¹⁰⁶

Israel's relations towards Italy were different. After Italy's liberation by the Allies in 1943, the country had been largely spared of any international ostracism after the war. Due to its proximity to the Balkans and its position within the Mediterranean, it became a strategic point for the Western Powers,¹⁰⁷ which tilted the Italo-Israeli power balance to Italy's side. From the second half of the 1940s onwards, the Italian peninsula cultivated close relations with the Arab nations and wanted to fulfil its self-ascribed role in the Mediterranean region.¹⁰⁸ These relations, however, led to a dependency on Arab markets and oil and significantly impacted Italy's ability to show overt sympathy towards Israel.¹⁰⁹ Italy remained cautious vis-à-vis its Arab partners, as well as the Vatican,¹¹⁰ but recognised Israel in early 1949.¹¹¹ When the Italian state offered to mediate between Israel and Egypt in the Arab conflict, as well as between the Vatican and Israel in the question of Jerusalem,¹¹² the Jewish government argued that Italy's intentions were not genuine but sought to further extend its influence in the Middle East.¹¹³ Nonetheless, Israel recognised Italy's value as a partner and tried to strengthen the

¹⁰² Ch. Yahil to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Meeting with the Austrian Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Kreisky: reparations and compensation from Austria, Israel-Austria relations, 18 February 1954," Vol. 9, no. 72.

¹⁰³ Zweig, "Israeli-Austrian Relations in the 1950s," 57-58.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 59; A. Eshel to W. Eytan, "Israel-Austria relations, 29 June 194," Vol. 9, no. 265, footnote 3.

¹⁰⁵ E. Najjar to the Israel Consul in Vienna, "Israel-Austria relations, reparations agreement with Germany, 2 June 1954," Vol. 9, no. 236.

¹⁰⁶ In the early 1950s, the Israeli government had expressed the wish for a gesture of penance by the Austrian government similar to Konrad Adenauer's statement to the Bundestag in September 1951 but the Austrian's refused to acknowledge their complicity in the crimes of the Third Reich; Zweig, "Israeli-Austrian Relations in the 1950s," 59.

¹⁰⁷ Alperovitch & Shumacher, "Moral Diplomacy," 153.

¹⁰⁸ Jacob Abadi, "Constraints and Adjustments in Italy's Policy towards Israel," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 38, no. 4 (2002): 64.

¹⁰⁹ Abadi, "Constraints and Adjustments in Italy's Policy towards Israel," 67.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 68; E. Epstein to M. Shertok, "Italian recognition of Israel; Vatican's attitude towards Israel, 3 June 1948," Vol. 1, no. 139. The relations between Israel and the Vatican were hostile due to the question of the internationalisation of the city of Jerusalem in which the two states had opposing views.

¹¹¹ A. Stern to M. Shertok, "Italian recognition of Israel, 28 May 1948," Vol. 1, no. 102; Alperovitch & Shumacher, "Moral Diplomacy," 149.

¹¹² S. Ginossar to W. Eytan, "Italian mediation between Israel and Egypt; the Vatican's stand on Jerusalem; Garreau's visit to Rome, 29 March 1950," Vol. 5, no. 29.

¹¹³ Abadi, "Constraints and Adjustments in Italy's Policy towards Israel," 71.

bilateral relations,¹¹⁴ but when Israel suggested a friendship treaty on closer economic and cultural cooperation in 1951, Italy rejected it.¹¹⁵ Besides its fear to alienate its Arab partners, Israel was not an interesting commercial partner for Italy either.¹¹⁶ The relations reached a low point when Italy did not invite Israel to the Palermo Conference on Mediterranean cooperation due to the Israeli-Arab rivalries.¹¹⁷ This moment showed where Italy put its priorities, not least because of the prospect of becoming a member of the United Nations with help from the Arabs.¹¹⁸ Even though Italy repeatedly affirmed its willingness to strengthen its ties with Israel,¹¹⁹ only in October 1955 the Italian and Israeli legations were upgraded to embassy level.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, the new global order and Italy's strategic friendship with the Arab nations never put Israel in a position of power vis-à-vis the Italian peninsula, or able to offer moral acquittal which Italy did not need for its international rehabilitation.

As for Japan, the Asian state had been part of the Axis Alliance but had never implemented any anti-Jewish policies and had even allowed thousands of Jewish refugees to pass through Japan on their way to a safe destination.¹²¹ Israel's decision to diplomatically engage with the Japanese state was thus not influenced by the Holocaust memory.¹²² The Japanese admitted their war guilt and restructured their state and society to abolish all imperial and fascist elements after the war. Thus, Israel decided to treat Japan like Italy and Austria, and not like Spain where fascism was still in place.¹²³ From 1950 onwards, Israel changed its position in international organisations from abstention to support for Japan¹²⁴ and when the Asian state and the UN signed a peace treaty in September 1951,¹²⁵ Israel focused on the timely establishment of friendly relations.¹²⁶ In February 1952, the American occupation of Japan ended and Israel and Japan established diplomatic ties by December of

¹¹⁴ M. Ishai to G. Avner, "Meeting with the Italian Prime Minister: Israel-Italy relations, 7 November 1951," Vol. 6, no. 471.

¹¹⁵ M. Ishai to G. Avner, "Conversation at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Strengthening of Israel-Italy relations, 23 November 1951," Vol. 6, no. 504.

¹¹⁶ Abadi, "Constraints and Adjustments in Italy's Policy towards Israel," 72.

¹¹⁷ E. Sasson to the Western Europe Division, "Conversation at the Italian foreign ministry: Regret and apology at Israel's exclusion from the Palermo conference, 11 March 1953," Vol. 8, no. 125; Abadi, "Constraints and Adjustments in Italy's Policy towards Israel," 73.

¹¹⁸ Abadi, "Constraints and Adjustments in Italy's Policy towards Israel," 73.

¹¹⁹ E. Sasson to E. Najar, "Relations between Italy and Israel, 7 August 1953," Vol. 8, no. 332; E. Sasson to E. Najar, "Israel-Italy relations, 4 November 1953," Vol. 8, no. 494; J. Tsur to W. Eytan, "Relations between Israel and Italy, 2 December 1953," Vol. 8, no. 555.

¹²⁰ Abadi, "Constraints and Adjustments in Italy's Policy towards Israel," 77.

¹²¹ Meron Medzini, "From Alienation to Partnership: Israel-Japan Relations," *Contemporary Review of the Middle East* 5, no. 3 (2018): 233.

¹²² Medzini, "From Alienation to Partnership: Israel-Japan Relations," 233.

¹²³ Y. Shimoni to W. Eytan, "Israel-Japan relations, 11 January 1950," Vol. 5, no. 20.

¹²⁴ Y. Shimoni to W. Eytan, "Israel-Japan relations, 11 January 1950," Vol. 5, no. 20; E. Zipori to the Israel Delegation at the United Nations, "Japan's admission to U.N. bodies, 20 June 1951," Vol. 6, no. 231.

¹²⁵ The peace treaty ended the state of war against Japan.

¹²⁶ W. Eytan to the Israel Missions Abroad, "Relations with Japanese representatives abroad, 19 October 1951," Vol. 6, no. 442.

the same year.¹²⁷ However, these relations were not easy; first, neither country had any experts knowledgeable about the culture, history, and civilization of the respective other,¹²⁸ second, trade relations were virtually non-existent,¹²⁹ and third, the Japanese Ministry of Finance did, for unknown reasons, not release any budget to open a diplomatic representation in Israel in the first few years of their diplomatic relations,¹³⁰ leading to indignation among Israeli officials. Israel had already opened a legation in Tokyo and could not understand why Japan was opening legations in other Middle Eastern states but not in Tel Aviv.¹³¹ Finally, in 1955, Japan appointed a resident minister to Israel.¹³²

Israel's relations with these former Axis powers were less hostile because of different factors. While in all cases the geopolitical climate favoured to move on from the Second World War paradigm, the influence of the Arab countries played a decisive role in the Italian case, leaving Israel with little leeway to influence the peninsular state. The absence of antisemitic legislation in fascist Japan and the restructuring of the state apparatus after the war led to a benevolent attitude towards the Asian state. The Austrian case is the most controversial one but since the Allied Powers had already established Austria's blamelessness in the Nazi crimes, Israel could not apply any moral pressure to improve its diplomatic position.

¹²⁷ Medzini, „From Alienation to Partnership: Israel-Japan Relations,” 233.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 233; Meeting: J. Linton-J. Tsuchiya, “Israel-Japan relations, 16 January 1953,” Vol. 8, no. 22.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 234.

¹³⁰ Meeting: J. Linton-J. Tsuchiya, “Israel-Japan relations, 16 January 1953,” Vol. 8, no. 22.

¹³¹ Meeting: J. Linton-K. Okumura, “Israel-Japan relations, 24 December 1953,” Vol. 8, no. 612.

¹³² Medzini, „From Alienation to Partnership: Israel-Japan Relations,” 234.

2. Diplomatic developments between Israel and the Federal Republic of Germany until 1955

The bridge that West Germany and Israel were able to build across the abyss of their shared past is an astonishing achievement of post-war history. The first subchapter will deal with Israel's early Germany policy and outline how moral considerations were used to justify Israel's reparations claims. The second subchapter will trace the negotiations of the Luxembourg Agreement between Israel and West Germany and the challenges connected to it. The third subchapter will highlight the limits of Israel's moral diplomatic approach and the influence of the Cold War on the ratification of the agreement. In the last subchapter, the findings will be interpreted, and the case applied to the theories outlined in the introduction.

2.1 Israel's early West Germany policy in a rapidly changing international environment

After the state's foundation in 1948, Israel's attitude towards East and West Germany was hostile and the Jewish State only interacted with the Allied Powers to manage the emigration of Jewish people from the occupied German territories to Israel.¹³³ Even though the Jewish state repressed the memory of the Holocaust in domestic politics, Germany was still seen as the successor state of the Nazi regime and guilty of the crimes committed against the Jews.¹³⁴ In late 1949, Israel adopted official guidelines according to which any diplomatic relations with both German states were to be avoided completely.¹³⁵ West Germany, in contrast, pursued a more conciliatory path and Chancellor Konrad Adenauer¹³⁶ expressed for the first time in October 1949 the willingness of the West German government to pay compensation for the crimes committed by the Nazis.¹³⁷ Even though Adenauer offered merely 10 million German marks and was legally not allowed to pursue an independent foreign policy for West Germany,¹³⁸ this step revealed his vision for a new Germany.

¹³³ M. Shertok to E. Epstein, "Restrictions on immigration from Germany, 19 August 1948," Vol. 1, no. 470; C. Hoffma to M. Shertok, "Immigration from American Zone in Germany, 21 September 1948," Vol. 1, no. 528.

¹³⁴ It is important to note that the Israeli foreign policy documents refer to Germany when they intend both West and East Germany and do not make a distinction between the two countries at this point in time since their policy does not stipulate any contact with either state and considers both states equally as guilty in the Holocaust.

¹³⁵ G. Avner to D. Lewin, "Guiding lines for relations with Austria and Germany, 27 November 1949," Vol. 4, no. 437.

¹³⁶ Konrad Adenauer was elected first West German Chancellor in 1949 by a narrow majority of just one vote but was able to remain in power until 1963 and also became first West German Foreign Minister between 1951 and 1955. He was substantially involved in the establishment of the young Federal Republic and the achievement of the 1952 Luxembourg Agreement on reparations to the State of Israel; De Vita, *Israelpolitik*, 15-16, Lein, „Die Beziehungen beider deutscher Staaten zu Israel, 1949-1963,” 48.

¹³⁷ De Vita, *Israelpolitik*, 14.

¹³⁸ The Allied powers were in charge of establishing the West and East German foreign policy, Lein, „Die Beziehungen beider deutscher Staaten zu Israel, 1949-1963,” 39-40.

In 1950, the Cold War pressure was mounting, and West Germany became increasingly important for the Western Allies due to its natural resources and industrial production capacities¹³⁹ This led to a gradual normalisation of relations between the West German occupation zones and the Western Alliance,¹⁴⁰ which created insecurities among Israel's elite. Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett argued that due to the "gigantic task undertaken by Israel in rehabilitating masses [of] Nazi victims and homeless Jews generally", it was imperative to receive compensation from Germany before the country regained moral and political standing.¹⁴¹ For this purpose, Israel proclaimed itself internationally as the sole representative of the Jewish people and thus the sole legitimate claimant.¹⁴² In August 1950, the Jewish Foreign Ministry realised several things: the West German economy was booming and the influence of the occupation powers was lessening; West Germany was rapidly rehabilitating internationally; Israel could play an instrumental role in West Germany's wish to overcome the stigma of Nazism; and a potential agreement on reparations and restitution of Jewish property could have significant historical meaning.¹⁴³ Only a month later, the Western Powers decided to soon end West Germany's occupation status and recognise the Federal Republic of Germany as a sovereign state.¹⁴⁴ Abba Eban¹⁴⁵ argued to immediately bring forward the Jewish claims for collective compensation before the Allied Powers before the occupation status lapsed,¹⁴⁶ as Israel was not willing to directly discuss these claims with the FRG.¹⁴⁷ The Israeli government worried that the political rehabilitation of West Germany would be accomplished without the moral assent of the Jewish people and that the chances to receive any compensation for the war crimes would shrivel. Gershon Avner,¹⁴⁸ however, suggested maintaining a hostile course, fearing opposition from the Israeli public to any modification and suggested that the Allies put pressure on the West German government to fulfil their moral duty of reparations payments.¹⁴⁹

¹³⁹ De Vita, *Israelpolitik*, 21.

¹⁴⁰ Memorandum by B. Guriel, "Israel-Germany relations, 12 June 1950," Vol. 5, no. 276.

¹⁴¹ M. Sharett to E. Elath, "Israel's claims on Germany, 21 May 1950," Vol. 5, no. 245.

¹⁴² Memorandum by B. Guriel, "Israel-Germany relations, 12 June 1950," Vol. 5, no. 276.

¹⁴³ Consultation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Israel's claims on Germany, 1 August 1950," Vol. 5, no. 328.

¹⁴⁴ Note by the British Legation, "Termination of the state of war with Germany, 23 October 1950," Vol. 5, no. 423.

¹⁴⁵ UN Ambassador to the United States

¹⁴⁶ A. Eban to M. Sharett, "Israel's claims on Germany, 8 September 1950," Vol. 5, no. 376.

¹⁴⁷ "Avner to Levin, 27 November 1949, Israel State Archives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs," in Lior Alperovitch, "Balancing Traditional Diplomacy and Jewish Norms: Foreign Policy toward Germany in Israel's Nascent Years," *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 11, no. 1 (2017): 68.

¹⁴⁸ Foreign Affairs official

¹⁴⁹ G. Avner to M. Fisher, "Israel's claims on Germany, 1 November 1950," Vol. 5, no. 438.

State officials and diplomats were divided over the matter, leading to conflicts between moral principles and practical considerations. Ambassador Shlomo Ginossar¹⁵⁰ argued that Israel further boycotting West Germany would lead to full isolation from its international partners.¹⁵¹ Whereas diplomat Eliashiv Ben-Horin believed that any policy change would “exact a heavy ethical price,”¹⁵² Michael Amir thought that continuing the boycott would be “admittedly proper, consistent, and ethical” but that negotiations shall begin while Germans were “still in need of rehabilitation for their misdeeds.” He claimed that the payments could be a considerable aid in building the Jewish state.¹⁵³ Consul Eliahu Livneh¹⁵⁴ called for a German acknowledgement of collective responsibility for the crimes committed during the war as a condition for any negotiations while understanding that the West German rehabilitation was imminent and that a partial reconciliation with the FRG was necessary to rescue Jewish property, receive monetary compensation, and avoid a growing intensification of ties between the FRG and the Arab nations.¹⁵⁵ All these statements show the inner turmoil in Israel’s higher ranks but also Israel’s awareness of the geopolitical situation and the short time span in which a compensation claim was feasible. Moral considerations blended with pragmatic thoughts as state officials recognised that the country had to enforce its claims before the influence of the Great Powers over West Germany faded.

The Israeli government still tried to convince the Western Powers in early 1951 to mediate the talks between Israel and West Germany.¹⁵⁶ On 12 March 1951, Israel formally requested in the name of the Jewish people \$1,5 billion from the four Occupying Allied Powers,¹⁵⁷ an unprecedented demand,¹⁵⁸ but clarified that no reparations payment would

¹⁵⁰ Ambassador to Italy

¹⁵¹ S. Ginossar to G. Avner, “Israel-Germany relations, 2 November 1950,” Vol. 5, no. 440; Editorial Note, “Consultation on the matter of Germany, 30 October 1950,” Vol. 5, p. 223.

¹⁵² E. Ben-Horin to G. Avner, “Israel-Germany relations, 6 November 1950,” Vol. 5, no. 446.

¹⁵³ M. Amir to the West European Division, “Israel-Germany relations, 13 November 1950,” Vol. 5, no. 460; By 1950, Israel was undergoing a severe economic crisis, facing austerity measures, a high inflation rate and growing black markets, and struggling to provide housing and work to the new immigrants, De Vita, *Israelpolitik*, 12.

¹⁵⁴ Consul in the Israeli consulate in Munich

¹⁵⁵ E. K. Livneh to the West European Division, “Israel-Germany relations, 22 November 1950,” Vol. 5, no. 476.

¹⁵⁶ Note from the Government of Israel to the Government of the United States, “Reparations from Germany, 16 January 1951,” Vol. 6, no. 19; Editorial Note, “Government discussion on relations with Germany, 8 February 1951,” Vol. 6, p. 44-45; Editorial Note, “Note from the Government of Israel to the Allied Powers on reparations from Germany, 12 March 1951,” Vol. 6, p. 78; Note from the Government of Israel to the Government of the United States, “Israel’s demand for reparations from Germany, 29 June 1951,” Vol. 6, no. 242.

¹⁵⁷ Lerner, *From the Ashes of History*, 145. This thesis only addresses the relations between Israel and West Germany. It is, however, important to consider that Israel tried to receive compensation payments from both German states but was unsuccessful in the case of East Germany. The sum demanded from West Germany totalled \$1 billion and the sum demanded from East Germany totalled \$500 million.

¹⁵⁸ Michael Wolffsohn, “Israel and Germany: From Former Foes to Distant Friends,” in *Israel and the World Powers: Diplomatic Alliances and International Relations Beyond the Middle East*, ed. Colin Shindler (London: I. B. Tauris & Company, Limited, 2014), 291; Melamud & Melamud, “‘When Shall We not Forgive?’,” 260.

exempt the Germans from their guilt.¹⁵⁹ Even though the Allied Powers showed sympathy for Israel's claims,¹⁶⁰ they all refused to get directly involved in potential negotiations and Washington advised Israel to directly negotiate with West Germany.¹⁶¹ This posed a dilemma for Israel, as numerous Knesset members, Israeli state officials and the public vehemently opposed the idea of facing German nationals in direct talks.¹⁶² Even though the resistance was strong, it was overshadowed by more pragmatic voices who argued that Israel had to act quickly given Germany's rapid rehabilitation¹⁶³ and the Allies' unwillingness to intervene.¹⁶⁴ Thereupon, the Jewish state decided to enter direct negotiations with the FRG.

2.2 *The bumpy road to direct negotiations and Israel's crisis of moral diplomacy*

West Germany and Israel had different expectations concerning a potential reparations agreement: West Germany hoped for Israel's acknowledgement of the FRG as the sole legitimate German state,¹⁶⁵ while Israel saw in West Germany a strong industrial state that had both the means and the will to provide economic relief to the Jewish state.¹⁶⁶ The historiography, however, leaves out the important role moral values played for both states. In April 1951, Konrad Adenauer and diplomat Maurice Fischer discussed during a secret meeting the suffering and hardship of the Jewish people caused by Nazi Germany and Fischer stressed the historical importance of a potential agreement between West Germany and Israel.¹⁶⁷ Whereas certain influential political figures in the FRG had already recognised the need to atone for the wrongs against the Jews,¹⁶⁸ Fischer demanded a grand gesture from the West German government in exchange for Israel's participation in the negotiations. The Chancellor had to publicly recognise Germany's war guilt and condemn all crimes committed

¹⁵⁹ Note from the Government of Israel to the Government of the United States, "Reparations from Germany, 16 January 1951," Vol. 6, no. 19; Lerner, *From the Ashes of History*, 145.

¹⁶⁰ A. Eban to the United States Division, "Eban and Horowitz's meeting with Byroade of the U.S. State Department: Reparations from Germany, 10 April 1951," Vol. 6, no. 121.

¹⁶¹ Editorial Note, "The Powers' note to Israel on reparations from Germany, 5 July 1951," Vol. 6, p. 188.

¹⁶² Melamud & Melamud, "'When Shall We not Forgive?'," 260; According to a poll published by the Israeli newspaper *Ma'ariv* in January 1952 public opposition was as high as 80 %, Lerner, *From the Ashes of History*, 146.

¹⁶³ Besides West Germany's booming economy that was accelerated by rising demands of industrial products after the outbreak of the Korean War, this was also able thanks to the aids it received from the Allies through the Marshall Plan introduced in 1948; De Vita, *Israelpolitik*, 13, 20.

¹⁶⁴ M. Keren to F. E. Shinnar, "German reparations, 14 August 1951," Vol. 6, no. 330.

¹⁶⁵ De Vita, *Israelpolitik*, 40.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 40; Melamud & Melamud, "'When Shall We not Forgive?'," 269; Wolffsohn, *Israel and Germany*, 289.

¹⁶⁷ G. Avner to M. Fischer (Top secret), "Preparatory briefing for Fischer's meeting with Adenauer, 6 April 1951," Vol. 6, no. 109. The historical importance of such an agreement was characterised especially by two factors: first, the West German government was to take on the responsibility for the Nazi crimes not only vis-à-vis the Allied Powers, but also vis-à-vis Israel, a state that had not existed at the time the crimes were committed and which became the sole claimant of representation of the Jewish war victims; and second, the notion of reparations for war crimes did not exist yet in international law and would introduce a precedent in international human rights law.

¹⁶⁸ E. Livneh to the West European Division, "German attitude to Israel's demand for reparations, 22 January," Vol. 6, no. 29.

against the Jews by the Germans,¹⁶⁹ to which Adenauer agreed.¹⁷⁰ This acknowledgement represented the balancing act of the Israeli government between building a morally acceptable foundation for entering direct talks with its foes and taking into account Realpolitik that did not permit Israel to uphold hostilities towards West Germany for much longer if it wanted to enforce its claims. Avner argued that “if the declaration provides the government with any straw it can grasp without losing its respect”, Israel should enter direct talks.¹⁷¹

Adenauer held a speech in front of the Bundestag¹⁷² on 27 September 1951 in which he condemned the crimes committed by the Nazi regime. While acknowledging that these crimes were committed in the name of the German people, however, he did not acknowledge the collective guilt of all Germans.¹⁷³ The Israeli government applauded West Germany’s “unreservedly acknowledgement”,¹⁷⁴ even though some historians question whether this statement did fulfil Israel’s preconditions.¹⁷⁵ Anyhow, Adenauer’s speech became a watershed moment for bilateral relations and great trust was placed in the Chancellor to keep his word. Whereas the Conference of Jewish Organisations stated that no payment could expiate the immense suffering inflicted on the Jewish people during the Holocaust,¹⁷⁶ Sharett argued that Israel would not relieve West Germany of its moral burden “unless they were ready to make adequate reparations” and that already the mere fact that Israel was willing to discuss reparation matters with West Germany would “come to them as a great moral boon.”¹⁷⁷ Israel also called the Allied Powers into moral responsibility by calling them “the trustees of the interests and conscience of the world community in all matters affecting German crimes and German obligations.”¹⁷⁸ Sharett’s conclusions, as well as Israel’s attempt to influence the Great Powers whose support was strongly needed show how Israel instrumentalised moral considerations to achieve the desired outcomes.

West Germany had reached several important milestones in 1951: the Western Powers lifted the state of war against the FRG, it received permission to establish a Foreign

¹⁶⁹ G. Avner to M. Fischer (Top secret), “Preparatory briefing for Fischer’s meeting with Adenauer, 6 April 1951,” Vol. 6, no. 109; De Vita, *Israelpolitik*, 24.

¹⁷⁰ M. Sharett to A. Eban, “Fischer and Horowitz’s meeting in Paris with Adenauer, 13 May 1951,” Vol. 6, no. 171.

¹⁷¹ G. Avner to E. Herlitz, “Reparations from Germany, 11 September 1951,” Vol. 6, no. 377.

¹⁷² The West German Parliament

¹⁷³ Editorial Note, “Translation of Adenauer’s speech to the Bundestag, 27 November 1951,” Vol. 6, p. 287-288; Witzthum, “David Ben-Gurion and Konrad Adenauer,” 224, 229; Melamud & Melamud, ““When Shall We not Forgive?,”” 266.

¹⁷⁴ Statement by the Spokesman of the Government of Israel, “Text of Israel’s response to Adenauer’s statement, 27 September 1951,” Vol. 6, no. 403.

¹⁷⁵ Melamud & Melamud, ““When Shall We not Forgive?,”” 266; Lerner, *From the Ashes of History*, 150.

¹⁷⁶ Editorial Note, “Conference of Jewish Organizations on German reparations, 25 and 26 October,” Vol. 6, p. 317-318.

¹⁷⁷ Meeting: M. Sharett-D. Acheson, “Reparations from Germany, 19 November 1951,” Vol. 6, no. 498.

¹⁷⁸ Note from the Government of Israel to the Government of the United States, “Reparations from Germany, 30 November 1951,” Vol. 6, no. 510.

Ministry,¹⁷⁹ became a member of the ECSC,¹⁸⁰ UNESCO and GATT,¹⁸¹ and joined the IMF¹⁸² and the World Bank all in the same year.¹⁸³ Nonetheless, at the end of 1951, Adenauer kept his promise and officially accepted the claims formulated by the Israeli government in March as a negotiation basis and declared them an “obligation of honour” for the Germans.¹⁸⁴ Adenauer affirmed his personal commitment to the reparations and his wish to take historical credit for an agreement with Israel.¹⁸⁵ This shows how the West German Chancellor and his moral values became a key factor in the reparations debate. Meanwhile, opposition within the Israeli population was very high when the Knesset officially agreed to direct negotiations with the FRG government in January 1952,¹⁸⁶ culminating in the storming of the Knesset on 9. January 1952¹⁸⁷. The Jewish government oscillated between moral and pragmatic considerations, as some parliamentarians called the potential reparations payments “blood money”,¹⁸⁸ while others argued that reparations would honour the memory of those who were murdered and prevent a repeat of such calamity¹⁸⁹ and substantially help build the national economy.¹⁹⁰

Negotiations between the delegations of West Germany, Israel, and the Jewish Claims Conference (JCC) began on 21 March 1952 in the Dutch city of Wassenaar.¹⁹¹ Already the first session created great distress, as the German delegation immediately linked the potential reparations payments to the outcome of the negotiations of the London Debt Conference¹⁹² taking place at the same time,¹⁹³ and refused to fix a sum before the Conference ended.¹⁹⁴ Israel’s decision-makers, who had always underlined the unique nature of Israel’s claims in comparison to other war debts, were indignant and lamented that Israel had overcome issues

¹⁷⁹ Up to this point, West Germany did not have the freedom to act on its own behalf in terms of foreign policy, but the United States, Great Britain, and France oversaw the domestic and foreign relations of the FRG; Lein, „Die Beziehungen beider deutscher Staaten zu Israel, 1949-1963,“ 39-40.

¹⁸⁰ European Coal and Steel Community

¹⁸¹ General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

¹⁸² International Monetary Fund

¹⁸³ De Vita, *Israelpolitik*, 22.

¹⁸⁴ K. Adenauer to N. Goldmann, „Invitation to discuss reparations from Germany, 6 December 1951,“ Vol. 6, no. 515.

¹⁸⁵ N. Barou to M. Sharett, “Goldmann's meeting with Adenauer, 19 February 1952,“ Vol. 7, no. 52.

¹⁸⁶ Melamud & Melamud, ““When Shall We not Forgive?”,” 265; N. Goldmann to M. Sharett, “Adverse public opinion in Israel concerning the reparations negotiations, 3 January 1952,“ Vol. 7, no. 3.

¹⁸⁷ De Vita, *Israelpolitik*, 25.

¹⁸⁸ Melamud & Melamud, ““When Shall We not Forgive?”,” 263.

¹⁸⁹ Moshe Sharrett, „The Reparations Agreement“, in Lerner, *From the Ashes of History*, 147.

¹⁹⁰ Melamud & Melamud, ““When Shall We not Forgive?”,” 263.

¹⁹¹ De Vita, *Israelpolitik*, 34.

¹⁹² The London Conference on Germany’s External Debts between West Germany and the Western Powers took place between February and August 1952 with the aim to restore West Germany’s international credit standing; Lein, „Die Beziehungen beider deutscher Staaten zu Israel, 1949-1963,“ 160.

¹⁹³ F. E. Shinnar and G. Josephthal to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Opening meeting of the reparations negotiations, 21 March 1952,“ Vol. 7, no. 72.

¹⁹⁴ Israel Delegation to the Reparations Negotiations to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Crisis in the reparations negotiations, 5 April 1952,“ Vol. 7, no. 96.

of conscience to enter direct talks with the former Nazi state, a step taken on U.S. advice.¹⁹⁵ While successful negotiations would signify a vindication of world Jewry, a failure would put Israel worse off than if negotiations had never taken place¹⁹⁶ and mark “one of the darkest events in the moral history of the human race.”¹⁹⁷ The situation got worse when West Germany began distinguishing between the debt acknowledgement towards Israel in principle, thus the moral debt, and the actual commitment to pay reparations to Israel, thus the practical debt.¹⁹⁸ This development shows how Israel’s moral approach was being played off against the Jewish state by the West German delegation. Since Israel's claims were gradually relegated to ordinary creditor status by the FRG, Israel decided to suspend the negotiations in April 1952 to “dramatize [the] situation”.¹⁹⁹

This crisis was the lowest point in Israel’s attempt to achieve a reparations agreement by applying moral diplomacy. While the Jewish state mentioned in each letter and communication with the U.S. government the moral significance of an agreement with the former perpetrators, the U.S. refused to intervene.²⁰⁰ JCC head Nahum Goldmann²⁰¹ tried to break the deadlock by holding Adenauer accountable for his 1951 Bundestag speech, asking him to put pressure on the German delegation to make “a firm, binding and reasonable offer” to resume talks.²⁰² Since neither the Western Powers nor the press and public were mobilising themselves in support of the Israeli delegation,²⁰³ the last straw was to remind the Chancellor of his promise to the Jewish people and threaten to fully break off the negotiations.²⁰⁴ Meanwhile, the Knesset passed a resolution to only resume talks if the FRG made an adequate and binding offer.²⁰⁵ The situation got out of hand for Israel as it could not offer West Germany anything than a “moral boon” to avoid a loss of face.²⁰⁶ Eventually, the U.S. urged

¹⁹⁵ A. Eban to D. Acheson, “Request for U.S. intervention in the reparations negotiations, 3 April 1952,” Vol. 7, no. 92.

¹⁹⁶ Meeting: A. Eban-G. Lewis, “U.S. intervention in the reparations negotiations, 4 April 1952,” Vol. 7, no. 94.

¹⁹⁷ De Vita, *Israelpolitik*, 38.

¹⁹⁸ Israel Delegation to the Reparations Negotiations to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “German reply regarding the final amount of reparations, 6 April 1952,” Vol. 7, no. 97.

¹⁹⁹ E. Herlitz and D. Ginsburg to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Recommendation to suspend the reparations negotiations, 7 April 1952,” Vol. 7, no. 99.

²⁰⁰ E. Herlitz to the United States Division, “U.S. State Department's reaction to Israel's request for intervention in the reparations negotiations, 12 April 1952,” Vol. 7, no. 105.

²⁰¹ Chairman of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany, also known as Jewish Claims Conference (JCC)

²⁰² F. E. Shinnar to M. Sharett, “Review of developments in the reparations negotiations, 25 April 1952,” Vol. 7, no. 122.

²⁰³ E. Herlitz and D. Ginsburg to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Recommendation to suspend the reparations negotiations, 7 April 1952,” Vol. 7, no. 99.

²⁰⁴ G. Josephthal to M. Sharett, “Review of developments in the reparations negotiations, 28 April 1952,” Vol. 7, no. 125.

²⁰⁵ G. Josephthal to F. E. Shinnar and G. Avner, “Knesset resolution not to renew reparations negotiations, 6 May 1952,” Vol. 7, no. 139; Lein, „Die Beziehungen beider deutscher Staaten zu Israel, 1949-1963,” 132.

²⁰⁶ Aide-Mémoire by the Government of Israel to the Government of the United Kingdom, “British intervention in the reparations negotiations, 7 May 1952,” Vol. 7, no. 141.

the German government to find a rapid and satisfactory settlement,²⁰⁷ and, in May, the German government offered a preposterously low sum.²⁰⁸ The indignation among the Israeli government and the Jewish Organisations grew.²⁰⁹ They interpreted the German proposal as an insult to Israel²¹⁰ and asked Adenauer to “guide these negotiations back to the high moral level upon which you have so far conceived them to proceed”.²¹¹ The trust in the ‘new Germany’ was shaken.²¹² The Jewish state believed that Adenauer was the only person within the German government genuinely interested in achieving a just agreement and tried to appeal to his moral compass, revealing Israel’s only means to influence the FRG.

2.3 The breaking of the deadlock and the Arab opposition to the Luxembourg Agreement

Only three days after the disappointing proposal, the West German government made a U-turn and promised a more appropriate proposal to the Israeli question.²¹³ Again two days later, West Germany proposed a sum similar to the one initially demanded by the Israeli government in March 1951, and the Jewish government agreed to resume the talks.²¹⁴ It is not clear what caused West Germany’s radical change of mind – whether it was the sharp critique of the Israeli government to the first proposal, the American pressure on the West Germans, or Adenauer’s intervention.²¹⁵ For Israel, this came almost as a miracle. Failed negotiations would have been devastating for the government and Jewish honour, and moral diplomacy had reached its limits. Delegation head Felix Shinnar²¹⁶ argued that “the agreement gives Israel practically everything it could have desired,²¹⁷ whereas Goldmann stated that the German payments would increase Israel’s credit stability and that the country “certainly got

²⁰⁷ A. Eban to M. Sharett and the Israel Delegation to the Reparations Negotiations, “U.S. intervention in the reparations negotiations, 12 May 1952,” Vol. 7, no. 149.

²⁰⁸ Israel Delegation to the Reparations Negotiations to A. Eban, “Advance knowledge about German suggestions to end the deadlock in the reparations negotiations, 19 May 1952,” Vol. 7, no. 156. This source mentions that the government suggested a payment of 25 million dollars a year without determining for how many years the payments should be made, while another source of the same day mentions a total payment of 100 million dollars for reparation payments; N. Goldmann to K. Adenauer, “The reparations crisis, 19 May 1952,” Vol. 7, no. 158.

²⁰⁹ Aide-Mémoire by the Ambassador of Israel in Washington, “The reparations negotiations, 20 May,” Vol. 7, no. 161.

²¹⁰ K. Adenauer to N. Goldmann, „Invitation to discuss reparations from Germany, 6 December 1951,” Vol. 6, no. 515.

²¹¹ N. Goldmann to K. Adenauer, „The reparations crisis, 19 May 1952,” Vol. 7, no. 158.

²¹² This concept refers to the narrative of David Ben-Gurion and Konrad Adenauer of a ‘new’ German state that, after the war, adhered to democratic values and assumed the moral responsibility towards world Jewry; Witzthum, “David Ben-Gurion and Konrad Adenauer,” 223-224.

²¹³ Israel Delegation to the Reparations Negotiations to W. Eytan, “Breakthrough in the reparations negotiations, 22 May 1952,” Vol. 7, no. 166.

²¹⁴ Israel Delegation to the Reparations Negotiations to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Goldmann's meeting with Böhm: Adenauer's suggestion to solve the reparations crisis, 24 May 1952,” Vol. 7, no. 170; The West German delegation offered an amount of 715 million dollars to be paid over a period of several years.

²¹⁵ Israel Delegation to the Reparations Negotiations to W. Eytan, “Breakthrough in the reparations negotiations, 22 May 1952,” Vol. 7, no. 166; De Vita, *Israelpolitik*, 39.

²¹⁶ Head of the Israeli delegation

²¹⁷ F. E. Shinnar to G. Avner, “Assessment of the reparations agreement, 3 September 1952,” Vol. 7, no. 337.

out more from [the FRG] than many of us thought possible”.²¹⁸ This discloses the additional aim of the negotiations to pursue the domestic growth of the young homeland.

The reparations agreement was signed on 10 September 1952 and became known as the Luxembourg Agreement. None other than Konrad Adenauer signed on behalf of the FRG, while Moshe Sharett signed it for Israel as a symbol of redeemed honour and political sovereignty of the young Jewish nation.²¹⁹ Sharett stated that this historical achievement was made possible first and foremost thanks to the personal commitment of Adenauer.²²⁰ This shows Adenauer’s key importance who was able to guide West Germany into a new era of *Wiedergutmachung*²²¹ despite the difficulties he met.²²² Notwithstanding, in late 1952, the government of Israel decided that the relations between Israeli and West German diplomats were to be avoided as usual, yet with less hostility.²²³ The agreement did, however, lead to the establishment of new institutions charged with implementing the reparations agreement²²⁴ and economic relations between the two states grew. The delivery of significant amounts of goods from the FRG stipulated by the agreement proved to be crucial for Israel’s economic stability and fundamentally impacted the West German industry²²⁵. The inflow of West German goods caused also a gradual change in Israel’s public opinion towards a more positive image of the FRG.²²⁶ Yet, the Israeli government insisted that the new economic relations did not constitute formal diplomatic relations²²⁷ and that it wanted to “contain the relationship”.²²⁸

The relations between Israel and the FRG were, however, also influenced by the Arab states, which vehemently objected to the ratification of the Luxembourg Agreement.²²⁹ Jordanian Prime Minister Tawfiq Abu al-Huda called the planned reparations to Israel “a sign

²¹⁸ N. Goldmann to D. Ben-Gurion, “Administrative framework of the reparations agreement, 18 June 1952,” Vol. 7, no. 204.

²¹⁹ M. Sharett to Sh. Rosenne, “Level of signatories on the reparations agreement, 2 September 1952,” Vol. 7, no. 332.

²²⁰ Information Division to Israel Missions Abroad, “Sharett’s assessment of the reparations agreement, 8 September 1952,” Vol. 7, no. 345.

²²¹ German word employed in the context of the reparations to the Jewish victims of National Socialism. Literal translation: “making good again”.

²²² Whereas Adenauer had remained faithful to his promise towards the Jewish people, he had met considerable resistance within the banking circles and the German Ministry of Finance. Also, the German population did not feel responsible for the crimes committed by the Nazis against the Jews and was more concerned about their own daily problems than with compensating the victims of the war; Jelinek, *Deutschland und Israel 1945-1965*, 35.

²²³ W. Eytan to the Israel Missions Abroad, “Relations with German diplomats abroad, 30 November 1952,” Vol. 7, no. 472.

²²⁴ In October 1952, the Israeli government set up a quasi-governmental reparations company and in April 1953, it set up a purchasing mission led by Felix Shinnar; Y. Ilsar to E. Najjar, “Relations with Germany, 4 August 1953,” Vol. 8, no. 324, footnote 4.

²²⁵ De Vita, *Israelpolitik*, 39, 66.

²²⁶ F.E. Shinnar to M. Sharett, “Conversation with Adenauer, 11 June 1953,” Vol. 8, no. 263.

²²⁷ Melamud & Melamud, ““When Shall We not Forgive?”,” 261.

²²⁸ Gardner Feldman, 1999, in Melamud & Melamud, ““When Shall We not Forgive?”,” 261; Israel did, for example, exclude West and East Germany from Israeli passports.

²²⁹ Lorena De Vita, “Overlapping rivalries: the two Germanys, Israel and the Cold War”, *Cold War History*, (2017): 1; Israel Delegation to the Reparations Negotiations to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Arab activity to obstruct the reparations agreement, 5 September 1952,” Vol. 7, no. 341. The Arab nations addressed the West German government in a memorandum that had in total 20 signatory parties and threatened to break off commercial ties with West Germany.

of inimical attitude against the Arab and Islamic states”²³⁰. German official Herbert Blankenhorn²³¹ assured Israel that the government was willing to accept the consequences of the Arab boycott and that this would not put in danger the ratification.²³² As it turned out, the German government was not as unfazed by the Arab involvement as assumed. To not lose its main trading partner in the Middle East,²³³ the West German government started negotiations for an economic agreement with Egypt to attain the end of the Arab opposition to the Luxembourg Agreement.²³⁴ The FRG wanted to submit the agreement for ratification to parliament once the German delegation had left for Cairo,²³⁵ linking the Luxembourg Agreement to the outcome of other negotiations, like earlier to the London Conference. Israel reacted with concern and argued that a further postponement would jeopardise the newly gained trust of world Jewry in the “new Germany”.²³⁶ Again, Shinnar’s last resort was to remind the German government of Adenauer’s 1951 speech,²³⁷ arguing that West Germany was breaching the Chancellor’s promise of German-Israeli reconciliation. Eventually, the negotiations between the FRG and Egypt failed²³⁸ and the Luxembourg Agreement was ratified in March 1953.²³⁹ Once more, this was a miracle for Israel which did not have any ace up its sleeves to influence the German government in its favour.

As soon as the agreement was ratified, Israel completely abandoned its moral diplomacy and policy of non-interaction with West Germany. This became clear in a letter by state official Chaim Yahlil,²⁴⁰ who proposed that, as of now, Israel was to be “guided by political realism” and shall develop a network of relations with West Germany which was becoming

²³⁰ De Vita, *Israelpolitik*, 44; The Arab states were convinced that through the reparations payments from West Germany, Israel was being favoured in the Israeli-Arab conflict as the payments would enhance the country’s economic and military capabilities.

²³¹ Director of the Political Department at the West German Foreign Ministry

²³² Ch. Yahlil to M. Sharett, “Meetings in Germany on Arab activity against the reparations agreement, 11 December 1952,” Vol. 7, no. 499. Indeed, the political committee of the Arab League had announced a total boycott of West German goods in case of a ratification of the agreement; De Vita, *Israelpolitik*, 49.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 48-49; Egypt had also been the first nation that had recognised the FRG after its establishment.

²³⁴ Ch. Yahlil to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Conversation with Blankenhorn: Apology and explanation of the delay in ratification of the reparations agreement, 13 January 1953,” vol. 8, no. 13.

²³⁵ Ch. Yahlil to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Conversation with Blankenhorn: Apology and explanation of the delay in ratification of the reparations agreement, 13 January 1953,” vol. 8, no. 13.

²³⁶ E. Elath to Lord Henderson, “Concern in Israel about the delay in the ratification of the reparations agreement, 21 January 1953,” Vol. 8, no. 26.

²³⁷ F.E. Shinnar to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Conversation with Hallstein and Blankenhorn: German clarifications about the delay in ratification of the reparations agreement; Shinnar’s reaction, 28 January 1953,” Vol. 8, no. 28.

²³⁸ The negotiations failed due to unrealistically high demands by Egypt and the fact that the Arab country placed a double game, trying to negotiate with the West German delegation while at the same time concluding a trade agreement with East Germany; F.E. Shinnar and Ch. Yahlil to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Positive steps in Germany towards ratification of the reparations agreement, 12 February 1953,” Vol. 8, no. 82; De Vita, *Israelpolitik*, 57.

²³⁹ Editorial Note, “Ratification of the reparations agreement with Germany, 22 March 1953,” Vol. 8, p. 127.

²⁴⁰ Head of the Information Department in the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs

the most important country in Europe.²⁴¹ Israel completely turned away from the norms that governed its West German policy so far. Yahil further wrote that Israel “cannot play the role of ‘debt collector’ forever” and that it needed to prove itself as a worthy partner. Whereas for years, Israel ostracised both German states, the letter stated that the Jewish state should proactively pursue the establishment of normal diplomatic relations with the FRG.²⁴² Amir argued that Israel shall stop its “ostrich-like policy,”²⁴³ whereas Sharett called for caution regarding the establishment of diplomatic ties as he argued that the public might perceive any impulsive action as a “moral desecration”.²⁴⁴ Generally, it seems that Israeli diplomats were realising that moral diplomacy was becoming obsolete and that the time for “understanding rather than forgetting” had arrived.²⁴⁵

In 1954, Israeli diplomats began drafting a strategy to create a lasting partnership between Israel and the FRG.²⁴⁶ An official of the FRG information service assured Yahil West Germany’s willingness to enter diplomatic relations, leaving it to the discretion of the Jewish government to decide when the moment for such a step would be right and showing sympathy for the psychological difficulties this could entail.²⁴⁷ He convinced Yahil that a strong Knesset majority in a few years was better than a small majority now. However, the Cold War rivalries between East and West Germany further affected FRG’s foreign policy in the Middle East²⁴⁸ and the Luxembourg Agreement with Israel restricted West Germany’s leeway in the area. In 1955, the Federal Republic became a sovereign state.²⁴⁹ Israel was ready to finally close official diplomatic relations, but West German concluded in April 1956 that “avoiding any further formalisation of West German–Israeli ties would be the least risky course of action for Bonn’s [Arab] foreign policy”.²⁵⁰ It is unclear whether the FRG information service purposefully gave Israel the false impression that the FRG government was ready for official relations, but these developments created great disappointment among Israeli officials.²⁵¹

²⁴¹ Ch. Yahil to M. Sharett, “Reflections on ratification of the reparations agreement with Germany and an examination of Israel-Germany relations, 22 March 1953,” Vol. 8, no. 141.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Memorandum by M. Amir, “Comments about Israel’s position vis-à-vis Germany, 2 April 1953,” Vol. 8, no. 153.

²⁴⁴ M. Sharett to F. E. Shinnar, “Reaction to Shinnar’s proposal to prepare for the establishment of diplomatic relations with Germany in 1954, 21 July 1953,” Vol. 8, no. 305.

²⁴⁵ Memorandum by M. Amir, “Comments about Israel’s position vis-à-vis Germany, 2 April 1953,” Vol. 8, no. 153.

²⁴⁶ Ch. Yahil to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Israel-Germany relations, 12 May 1954,” Vol. 9, no. 207.

²⁴⁷ Ch. Yahil to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Establishment of diplomatic relations with Germany, 27 December 1954,” Vol. 9, no. 571.

²⁴⁸ West Germany’s presence in the Arab countries served to position the country as the sole representative of the German people in the Middle East; De Vita, *Israelpolitik*, 67.

²⁴⁹ Lein, „Die Beziehungen beider deutscher Staaten zu Israel, 1949-1963,“ 211.

²⁵⁰ De Vita, *Israelpolitik*, 70; Witzthum, “David Ben-Gurion and Konrad Adenauer,” 234.

²⁵¹ De Vita, *Israelpolitik*, 70.

2.4 Interpretation of Israel's diplomatic approach towards the Federal Republic of Germany

As the analysis of the sources reveals, the early years of Israel's diplomacy towards West Germany were strongly marked by moral considerations that were based on the premise that both East and West Germany were the successor states of the Nazi regime and therefore directly responsible for the deeds committed to the Jewish people.²⁵² This led to a reflection within the Jewish government on how to receive compensation for the human and material losses from the two states. Germany's war crimes thus became the justification to engage with the FRG since otherwise, it would have been impossible to pursue reparations claims.²⁵³ While feelings of redemption and justice played a significant role for the Jewish government, two other factors were important as well. One was building and developing the newly founded Jewish homeland,²⁵⁴ which necessitated great economic resources for the construction of infrastructures and the integration of the numerous Jewish immigrants and refugees.²⁵⁵ The other was the Israeli war with its neighbouring Arab countries which required the immediate enhancement of military structures.²⁵⁶

Israel faced profound domestic and foreign policy challenges that necessitated a realpolitik approach, while at the same time, the Holocaust nourished its moral approach. As Israel's foreign policy sources show, in the first years of Israel's existence and during the negotiations of the Luxembourg Agreement, Israeli diplomats systematically used moral considerations to back their arguments in favour of their reparations claims. Further, the sources show that the Israeli Foreign Ministry had a distinct understanding of the geopolitical situation and the rapid West German rehabilitation, wherefore it realised it had to act quickly to achieve its goal.²⁵⁷ Even though pragmatic considerations played a role in the internal debates of Israel's government and the Knesset, Israel consistently employed moral diplomacy vis-à-vis the Allied Powers and the West German government which it reminded on numerous occasions of the human and material losses amongst world Jewry.²⁵⁸ Israel

²⁵² G. Avner to D. Lewin, "Guiding lines for relations with Austria and Germany, 27 November 1949," Vol. 4, no. 437.

²⁵³ W. Eytan and S. Rosenne to M. Sharett, "Israel-Germany relations, 8 December 1950," Vol. 5, no. 497.

²⁵⁴ M. Shertok to E. Bevin, "Notification of the establishment of Israel; request for recognition, 16 May 1948," Vol. 1, no. 12.

²⁵⁵ Jelinek, *Deutschland und Israel 1945-1965*, 17-18; Lein, „Die Beziehungen beider deutscher Staaten zu Israel, 1949-1963,“ 68.

²⁵⁶ Lein, „Die Beziehungen beider deutscher Staaten zu Israel, 1949-1963,“ 68.

²⁵⁷ Consultation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Israel's claims on Germany, 1 August 1950," Vol. 5, no. 328; G. Avner to W. Eytan, "Arguments in favour of direct negotiations with Germany, 26 February 1951," Vol. 6, no. 75.

²⁵⁸ M. Sharett to E. Elath, "Israel's claims on Germany, 21 May 1950," Vol. 5, no. 245; Note from the Government of Israel to the Government of the United States, "Reparations from Germany, 16 January 1951," Vol. 6, no. 19; M. Sharett to A. Eban, "Fischer and Horowitz's meeting in Paris with Adenauer, 13 May 1951," Vol. 6, no. 171.

positioned itself not only as the sole representative of the Jewish community but also as the nation that was able to rehabilitate the moral conscience of the “new Germany.”²⁵⁹

While the Israeli government justified the absence of diplomatic relations with the Spanish State with its allegiance to the Axis Powers,²⁶⁰ Germany’s war crimes became the justification to enter direct negotiations with the FRG since it would have been impossible to pursue Israel’s reparations claims otherwise.²⁶¹ This was made possible first and foremost by the statement of Konrad Adenauer in September 1951, in which he promised *Wiedergutmachung*. Unlike the Spanish regime, Adenauer acknowledged the responsibility for the war crimes committed in the name of all Germans and thereby laid the moral foundation necessary to build something new between West Germany and Israel. Due to him continuously steering the negotiations with Israel in a direction that would restore the honour of his country,²⁶² it remains open whether the Luxembourg Agreement would have been achieved if the FRG had had a different head of state. Furthermore, in both cases in which the West Germans linked the agreement to the outcome of another agreement,²⁶³ Israel was virtually powerless as it did not have any other leverage on the German government than reminding it of Adenauer’s statement.²⁶⁴ This shows that moral diplomacy had its limits and Israel eventually achieved its goals more by a lucky twist of fate than a strong negotiation position.

Even though Jewish representatives had clarified on several occasions that reparations payments would not acquit the Germans from their guilt, the Jewish government quickly changed its diplomatic strategy after the ratification. Israel recognised that West Germany was becoming one of the most powerful nations within the Western Alliance and had fully rehabilitated internationally in 1955. It became of primary importance to deepen the relations with the FRG in all possible spheres. Only one primary source connects Israel’s West German and Spanish approaches. Ambassador Ginossar realised in late 1950 that both the boycott of West Germany and of Spain were harmful to the Jewish State due to their growing international influence and that their wooing for Israel’s grace was not to last forever, urging

²⁵⁹ Witzthum, “David Ben-Gurion and Konrad Adenauer,” 224.

²⁶⁰ E. Elath to M. Sharett, “Israel’s relations with Spain, 15 February 1949,” Vol. 2, no. 389; Setton & Rein, “Spanish-Israeli Relations and Systematic Pressures,” 334.

²⁶¹ W. Eytan and S. Rosenne to M. Sharett, “Israel-Germany relations, 8 December 1950,” Vol. 5, no. 497.

²⁶² Ch. Yahil to M. Sharett, “Reflections on ratification of the reparations agreement with Germany and an examination of Israel-Germany relations, 22 March 1953,” Vol. 8, no. 141, Witzthum, “David Ben-Gurion and Konrad Adenauer,” 229.

²⁶³ In March 1952 they linked it to the outcome of the London Debt Conference and in January 1953 to the negotiations of a potential trade agreement with Egypt.

²⁶⁴ E. Herlitz and D. Ginsburg to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Recommendation to suspend the reparations negotiations, 7 April 1952,” Vol. 7, no. 99; E. Elath to Lord Henderson, “Concern in Israel about the delay in the ratification of the reparations agreement, 21 January 1953,” Vol. 8, no. 26.

towards a more pragmatic foreign policy.²⁶⁵ However, when Israel tried to approach the West German government for official diplomatic ties in the mid-1950s, the Cold War rivalries between the FRG and the GDR, as well as the rivalries between Israel and the Arab nations put a spoke in Israel's wheel.²⁶⁶ Two important facts that the academic literature mentions are, however, not mentioned in the primary source. Firstly, the widespread "continuity" within the West German government in which many branches were quickly refilled with former Nazi party members after the war.²⁶⁷ Secondly, the West German population's missing sense of responsibility for the crimes committed by the Nazi regime²⁶⁸ and the antisemitic incidents that still occurred regularly in the young FRG.²⁶⁹ It is thus unclear which role these factors played in Israel's decision to leave moral concerns behind in the mid-1950s.

When applying Yehudit Auerbach's framework to this case, two Turning Point Decisions (TPD) shifted Israel's diplomatic approach. The first TPD was the decision of the Western Powers in 1950 to lift the occupation status and recognise West Germany as a sovereign state.²⁷⁰ Even though this sovereignty was only attained in 1955, the government of Israel immediately decided not only to intensify efforts to further its reparations claim before West Germany's full international rehabilitation but also to enter direct negotiations with the West German delegation, a step that was long tried to be avoided. This becomes especially clear in a statement of Eliezer Livneh²⁷¹ who, shortly after the announcement of the imminent plans for West Germany, declared that "one has to come to terms with reality and to outline a new policy consistent with the changing situation".²⁷² Another TPD was the second offer the West German delegation made during the Luxembourg Agreement negotiations in May 1952 which approximated Israel's initial demand.²⁷³ While the first TPD might seem more evident, the second TPD came at a time when Israel's moral diplomacy had reached its boundaries. The Jewish government had faced great opposition from within the government, the Knesset and public opinion to enter negotiations in the first place and feared that unsuccessful negotiations would cause a humiliation of world Jewry for which Israel would be held accountable.²⁷⁴ Only thanks to West Germany's new offer was it possible for the Jewish state

²⁶⁵ S. Ginossar to G. Avner, „Israel-Germany relations, 2 November 1950,” Vol. 5, no. 440.

²⁶⁶ De Vita, *Israelpolitik*, 70; Witzthum, “David Ben-Gurion and Konrad Adenauer,” 234.

²⁶⁷ Witzthum, “David Ben-Gurion and Konrad Adenauer,” 229.

²⁶⁸ Jelinek, *Deutschland und Israel 1945-1965*, 35.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.

²⁷⁰ Note by the British Legation, “Termination of the state of war with Germany, 23 October 1950,” Vol. 5, no. 423.

²⁷¹ MAPAI party member in the Knesset

²⁷² E. K. Livneh to the West European Division, “Israel-Germany relations, 22 November 1950,” Vol. 5, no. 476.

²⁷³ Israel Delegation to the Reparations Negotiations to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Goldmann's meeting with Böhm: Adenauer's suggestion to solve the reparations crisis, 24 May 1952,” Vol. 7, no. 170.

²⁷⁴ Aide-Mémoire by the Ambassador of Israel in Washington, “The reparations negotiations, 20 May 1952,” Vol. 7, no. 161.

to resume talks and redeem the honour of the Jewish community. Without this TPD, the rapprochement between Israel and FRG would not have occurred, and Israel would have probably faced a severe governmental crisis.

Adam B. Lerner's theory of collective trauma²⁷⁵ applies to a certain extent. Several state sources mention the integration of Jewish immigrants into the Israeli economic and social system, however, they do not only refer to the rehabilitation of Holocaust survivors but more generally to all Jewish people who relocated to Israel and, more broadly, to the building of the Jewish homeland.²⁷⁶ Therefore, it can be argued that the Israeli government pursued reparations claims in the name of the Holocaust survivors but also that the government had a general interest in providing good living standards to all citizens, regardless of their traumatic past. The Holocaust and its devastating consequences for great parts of the Jewish population are, nonetheless, a recurring theme in Israel's moral approach, applied in conversations with its Western partners and the negotiations with the West German delegation.²⁷⁷ Therefore, the collective Holocaust trauma shaped the narrative through which the State of Israel shaped its claims for material compensation substantially and more broadly its foreign policy, while it was less prominent in domestic politics.

²⁷⁵ Lerner, *From the Ashes of History*.

²⁷⁶ M. Shertok to E. Bevin, "Notification of the establishment of Israel; request for recognition, 16 May 1948," Vol. 1, no. 12; Consultation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Israel's claims on Germany, 1 August 1950," Vol. 5, no. 328.

²⁷⁷ M. Sharett to E. Elath, "Israel's claims on Germany, 21 May 1950," Vol. 5, no. 245; Note from the Government of Israel to the Government of the United States, "Reparations from Germany, 16 January 1951," Vol. 6, no. 19; G. Avner to M. Fischer, "Preparatory briefing for his meeting with Adenauer, 6 April 1951," Vol. 6, no. 109.

3. Diplomatic developments between Israel and the Spanish State until 1955

Similar to the relations with the Federal Republic of Germany, the diplomatic ties between Israel and the Spanish State, which was still under the dictatorship of General Francisco Franco who had supported the Axis Alliance, were very restricted over the studied period. This chapter will outline Israel's diplomatic approach throughout the late 1940s until the mid-1950s against the background of relevant international developments. The first subchapter will cover the first years of Israel's statehood until the year 1953 and the reasoning behind its Spain policy. The second subchapter will outline the cracks in this policy due to several domestic and international developments. The third subchapter will recapitulate the gradual abandonment of moral diplomacy in favour of Realpolitik, draw comparisons to the relations with West Germany, and test the theories outlined in the introduction.

3.1 Israel maintains moral diplomacy towards the Spanish regime until the early 1950s

After the Second World War, Spain belonged to the countries that were ostracised by the international community due to their collaboration with Nazi Germany. In December 1946, the United Nations imposed a ban on the Iberian state, justified by the "origin, nature, structure, and general conduct" of the Spanish state, a "fascist regime patterned on, and established largely as a result of aid received from Hitler's Nazi Germany and Mussolini's Fascist Italy".²⁷⁸ The General Assembly debarred Spain from membership in all international agencies connected to the United Nations until the instalment of a democratic government and UN members closed their embassies in Madrid.²⁷⁹ Franco expressed his disappointment, arguing that Spain had never entered any official cooperation with the Axis powers²⁸⁰ and describing Spain's wartime neutrality as a necessary action for the rebuilding of his nation²⁸¹. Likewise, Israel pursued a hostile policy towards Spain. Even though Spain had already

²⁷⁸ United Nations, General Assembly. *Resolution 39 (I): Report of the fifty-fifth plenary meeting on the Relations of Members of the United Nations with Spain*. New York, NY: UN Headquarters, 1946, 63.

²⁷⁹ United Nations, General Assembly, 63-64.

²⁸⁰ Spain favoured the Axis Powers during the Second World War and was convinced in 1940, after the fall of France, that Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy would win the war. Spain changed its status from "neutrality" to "non-belligerency" that year but managed to stay mostly out of the battlefield during the whole war period. The only exception was during the Axis invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, when Spain sent the Blue Division, a volunteer army, to fight alongside the Germans on the Russian front, without, however, declaring war to the Soviet Union directly; Charles R. Halstead, "Spanish Foreign Policy, 1936-1978," in *Spain in the Twentieth-Century World: Essays on Spanish Diplomacy, 1898-1978*, ed. James W. Cortada (London: Aldwych Press, 1980), 67.

²⁸¹ James W. Cortada, "The United States," in *Spain in the Twentieth-Century World: Essays on Spanish Diplomacy, 1898-1978*, ed. James W. Cortada (London: Aldwych Press, 1980), 242; The Spanish economy was still crippled by the Civil War, and the Second World War increased the struggle for procurement of fuels, raw materials, and food. Against this background, the Spanish regime decided to prioritise the rebuilding of the nation instead of warfare and declared its neutrality in September 1939; Halstead, "Spanish Foreign Policy, 1936-1978," 62.

expressed its willingness to establish diplomatic relations with Israel after the partition of Palestine,²⁸² in 1948, Israel did not ask Spain for state recognition and refused to recognise Spain's sovereignty.²⁸³ In February 1949,²⁸⁴ Eliahu Elath²⁸⁵ informed Moshe Sharett that a Spanish envoy in Washington had asked for an informal meeting to discuss the establishment of relations between Spain and Israel, which Sharett declined, declaring contacts with Spanish representatives and diplomats undesired²⁸⁶

Meanwhile, the international ostracism forced Spain to look for partners outside of the Western alliance and it was able to cultivate relations with several Latin American and Arab states.²⁸⁷ Especially the relations with the Arabs, fostered by Spain's Muslim heritage,²⁸⁸ became one of the main pillars of Spain's post-war foreign policy.²⁸⁹ The visit of King Abdallah of Jordan to Spain in 1949, followed by many other Arab political figures,²⁹⁰ increased the legitimacy of the regime²⁹¹ and the lack of relations with Israel became an asset in the relations with the Arabs.²⁹² Franco's Latin American friends submitted a new proposal to the UN to lift the diplomatic ban imposed on Madrid in 1946 and in May 1949, the General Assembly cast its vote.²⁹³ Israel, who had only joined the UN five days earlier,²⁹⁴ voted against the proposal which failed by a margin of two votes.²⁹⁵ The young state was convinced that even an abstention would "increase Franco's prestige in the world,"²⁹⁶ and voted against

²⁸² Hadas & Shumacher, "In the Shadow of Franco's Legacy," 78.

²⁸³ This was in line with the 1946 UN resolution which stipulated that Franco's regime did not represent the Spanish people; United Nation, General Assembly, 1946, 63-64.

²⁸⁴ E. Elath to M. Sharett, "Israel's relations with Spain, 15 February 1949," Vol. 2, no. 389.

²⁸⁵ Ambassador to the United States

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, footnote 3.

²⁸⁷ Raanan Rein, "In pursuit of votes and economic treaties: Francoist Spain and the Arab world," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 13, no. 1-2 (1998), 195.

²⁸⁸ Between 711 and 1492, great parts of Spain, especially in the south of the country, were ruled by Muslim caliphates. At that time, the Islamic state was known as Al-Andalus. It disappeared after the Christian Reconquista of the peninsula by the end of the 15th century.

²⁸⁹ The partnership was mainly forged by the emerging new trade relations between Spain and the Middle East, shared animosity towards secular Western liberalism, and a strong aversion of Communism; Rein, "In pursuit of votes and economic treaties," 199-200; Jacob Abadi, "The road to Israeli-Spanish rapprochement," *Israel Affairs* 10, no. 1-2 (2004): 178; However, Franco's approach was marked by controversies as he tried, on the one hand, to capitalise on the achievements of the Jewish and Muslim cultures that had flourished in the Middle Ages in Spain and, on the other hand, to present Spain as a deeply Catholic country with strong ties to the Catholic church, holding on its colonial possessions in North Africa; Rein, "In pursuit of votes and economic treaties," 195-196.

²⁹⁰ Rein, "In pursuit of votes and economic treaties," 202-204; Halstead, "Spanish Foreign Policy, 1936-1978," 78.

²⁹¹ Delgado is one of the critical voices regarding the Spanish-Arab friendship as he argues that these relations "did not ever become more than an exchange of pompous official visits and mutually flattering but hollow declarations"; Delgado, "From Ostracism to a Leading Role," 319.

²⁹² Rein, "In pursuit of votes and economic treaties," 196; Delgado, "From Ostracism to a Leading Role," 304.

²⁹³ Abadi, "The road to Israeli-Spanish rapprochement," 180.

²⁹⁴ Wolffsohn, "Die Spanienpolitik Israels, 1948-1963," 417.

²⁹⁵ Editorial Note, "Israel and the U.N. debate on the Spanish issue, My 1949", Vol. 4, 19-20. Nonetheless, Spain had been able to mobilise its Latin American and Arab partners to vote in its support which was an important success for Franco. The Arabs, in fact, hoped that Spain could return the favour once a member of the international community and support them in their demand to lead the Palestinian refugees back to the territories under Israeli occupation; Rein, "In pursuit of votes and economic treaties," 200.

²⁹⁶ Wolffsohn, "Die Spanienpolitik Israels, 1948-1963," 422.

it out of “reasons of conscience”.²⁹⁷ While this clearly shows the application of moral diplomacy, the relevance of Israel’s vote is ambiguous. The Israeli delegation was convinced of the moral meaning and the implications it could have on the international treatment of Spain. Hence, Sharett said before the vote that an “abstention would cause outburst [and] indignation [in the] liberal world”.²⁹⁸ Some authors argue, however, that all states were already set on their decision and tried to influence Israel’s vote in their favour, instead.²⁹⁹ Sharett’s note also reveals that the Jewish community in Spanish Morocco did reach out to the Foreign Ministry, “imploring” Israel to vote for the proposal as they saw Franco as their “protector”³⁰⁰. The Spanish Foreign Ministry was, indeed, investing great effort in portraying the regime as a friend of the Jewish Diaspora.³⁰¹

Abba Eban³⁰² held a compelling speech at the General Assembly before the vote was cast and declared that the Franco regime had supported the prospect of Nazi supremacy in Europe. Had this supremacy been established, he argued, neither the Jewish state nor the United Nations would have come into being, and therefore Israel was bound both by conscience and responsibility to vote against the proposal.³⁰³ Eban’s critique of Francoist Spain was motivated by the collaboration with the Axis alliance and not by the dictatorial nature of the regime.³⁰⁴ Spain’s history as an Axis ally became a recurring theme in the following years to legitimise Israel’s Spain policy. After the UN decision, Eban informed Sharett that Israel’s attitude towards Franco was widely understood among UN leaders and that his statement on Israel’s position on the Spanish question was described by the national press as moving.³⁰⁵ This was important since Jewish representatives were convinced that the Jews in Israel and the Diaspora would undoubtedly oppose any change in Israel’s attitude towards Franco.³⁰⁶ While the academic literature understates the importance of Jewish public opinion, several primary sources show that it was indeed important for Israel’s decision-

²⁹⁷A. Eban to M. Sharett, 2 June 1949, in Editorial Note, „Israel and the U.N. debate on the Spanish issue, My 1949”, Vol. 4, 19-20.

²⁹⁸M. Sharett to L. Kohn, “Israel’s position preparatory to the forthcoming vote at the U.N. on the Spanish issue, 13 May 1949,” Vol. 4, no. 24.

²⁹⁹Wolffsohn, “Die Spanienpolitik Israels, 1948-1963,” 422.

³⁰⁰M. Sharett to L. Kohn, “Israel’s position preparatory to the forthcoming vote at the U.N. on the Spanish issue, 13 May 1949,” Vol. 4, no. 24.

³⁰¹Raanan Rein, *In the Shadow of the Holocaust and the Inquisition. Israel’s Relations with Francoist Spain* (London & New York: Routledge, 38).

³⁰²UN Ambassador to the United States

³⁰³Abadi, “The road to Israeli-Spanish rapprochement,” 181; Rein, “Israel’s Anti-Francoist Policy (1948-1953),” 409.

³⁰⁴Rein, “Israel’s Anti-Francoist Policy (1948-1953),” 410-411.

³⁰⁵A. Eban to M. Sharett, “Reactions to the Israeli vote on the Italian colonies and Spain, 20 May 1949,” Vol. 4, no. 30.

³⁰⁶Rein, “Israel’s Anti-Francoist Policy (1948-1953),” 421.

makers.³⁰⁷ Eban's note further contains the first and only mention of an actual implication that Israel's vote might have had on the Spanish government. He argues that, due to the vote, the U.S. refused to grant Spain a loan and thus Spanish business circles saw Franco increasingly as a liability.³⁰⁸ The studied literature does, however, not mention any decrease in national support for General Franco after the vote.³⁰⁹

Franco expressed his deprecation for Israel's vote³¹⁰ and argued that Spain should be lauded for its commitment to the rescuing of Jews during the Holocaust,³¹¹ a position that would later become a main argument in favour of entering relations with Spain.³¹² However, the extent to which Spain helped Jewish people, and whether this was the regime's policy or the personal initiative of some Spanish diplomats, is contested.³¹³ Nevertheless, even important Jewish personalities such as Abraham Drapkin³¹⁴ or the leader of the Sephardic community³¹⁵ Elia Eliachar tried to convince the Foreign Ministry in the late 1940s to establish ties with Spain due to its alleged support for Jews during the war.³¹⁶ Nonetheless, even after Israel's open rejection at the UN, the Iberian state did not relent in trying to establish ties with Israel. In a conversation with Jacob Tsur,³¹⁷ the Spanish Ambassador to Argentina argued that such ties would be politically and morally important for Spain due to the connections between the Spanish and Jewish cultures.³¹⁸ Even though Tsur argued that the Jewish people had not forgotten Spain's alliance with Hitler during the war, he agreed to cultural and trade relations as a first step in this direction.³¹⁹ This is surprising given that Spain's alliance with Hitler was Israel's main reason to reject any links with Spain, so far.

³⁰⁷ J. Tsur to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Meeting with the Spanish Ambassador to Buenos Aires: Spain-Israel relations; reasons behind Abdallah's visit to Franco, 21 September 1949," Vol. 4, no. 302; A. Drapkin to W. Eytan, "Israel's policy towards Spain, 3 April 1950," Vol. 5, no. 170.

³⁰⁸ A. Eban to M. Sharett, "Reactions to the Israeli vote on the Italian colonies and Spain, 20 May 1949," Vol. 4, no. 30.

³⁰⁹ Quite the other way around, the results of the UN vote caused great anger in Francoist Spain and led to several demonstrations organised with government encouragement against the UN decision and with an anti-Israel undertone. Media and press also remained loyal to the political leadership and criticised Israel's vote in anti-Semitic terms; Rein, *In the Shadow of the Holocaust and the Inquisition*, 38.

³¹⁰ Shannon Fleming, "North Africa and the Middle East," in *Spain in the Twentieth-Century World: Essays on Spanish Diplomacy, 1898-1978*, ed. James W. Cortada (London: Aldwych Press, 1980), 133-134.

³¹¹ Abadi, "The road to Israeli-Spanish rapprochement," 182

³¹² It should, however, be mentioned that, during the Second World War, the Spanish media had enthusiastically supported the German cause and that the Spanish government had lend support to German ships in Spanish ports and supported German soldiers at the eastern front by sending the "Blue Division", a voluntary military force to fight alongside the Germans; Rein, "Israel's Anti-Francoist Policy (1948-1953)," 410.

³¹³ Rein, "Israel's Anti-Francoist Policy (1948-1953)," 410; Hadas & Shumacher, "In the Shadow of Franco's Legacy," 77.

³¹⁴ Director General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry. He had already declared in April 1950 that the regime had always tolerated Jews and Jewish civil society organisations on its territory during the war, sheltered Jewish refugees or helped them to reach third countries; Wolffsohn, "Die Spanienpolitik Israels, 1948-1963," 420.

³¹⁵ The Sephardic community was a Jewish community to which most Jewish people living in Spain belonged to.

³¹⁶ Rein, "Israel's Anti-Francoist Policy (1948-1953)," 419.

³¹⁷ Israeli Ambassador to Argentina

³¹⁸ J. Tsur to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Meeting with the Spanish Ambassador to Buenos Aires: Spain-Israel relations; reasons behind Abdallah's visit to Franco, 21 September 1949," Vol. 4, no. 302; Probably, the Spanish Ambassador was alluding to the Jewish communities in Spanish Morocco and Barcelona.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*

The Israeli Ambassador also disclosed the unease of the Jewish government concerning the close relations between Spain and the Arab countries,³²⁰ a first indicator of the changing power balance between both states.

In 1950, a slight shift towards more pragmatic considerations can be perceived in the Foreign Ministry sources. In January, the Israeli UN delegation discussed a memorandum published by the Spanish Foreign Ministry which claimed that Franco helped Jewish people during the Second World War more than other nations³²¹ and was disappointed about Israel's rejection of diplomatic ties.³²² During this discussion, Jacob Robinson³²³ confirmed that Francoist Spain helped many Jews and that the regime was in many respects better than other regimes that Israel recognised, mentioning also the Jewish community in Spanish Morocco. The UN delegation began questioning the "moral consistency" of Israel's approach towards Spain. The fact that Robinson confirmed Franco's help to Jewish people during the war, something that some had seen as a mere propaganda measure,³²⁴ shows the weakness of the moral foundation of Israel's position which was fully based on Franco's collaboration with Hitler. Spain's continued rapprochement attempts motivated the young state to establish a clearer Spain policy. In a letter to Walter Eytan,³²⁵ Drapkin listed the advantages and disadvantages of closing relations with Spain.³²⁶ While the advantages were very practical, such as helping settle the Jerusalem question³²⁷ or securing a high living standard for the Sephardic Jews in Spain, the disadvantages related to possible negative reactions to a change of Israel's approach from the Knesset, the Israeli public, or allied states. Also, Drapkin worried that Israel's moral standing within the UN could be damaged. It becomes evident that keeping up the image of being the enemy of all remnants of Hitler was an interplay between Israel's Spain policy and the expectations that others connected to this policy.

The United Nations voted again on lifting the diplomatic boycott on Spain at the end of 1950,³²⁸ for which Drapkin suggested abstaining.³²⁹ Eytan, however, argued maintaining

³²⁰ Ibid.; While Tsur assumed that the visit of King Abdallah to Spain might be related to Israel's conflict in the Middle East and the internationalisation of Jerusalem, the Spanish Ambassador reassured Tsur that the visit only concerned matters related to Spanish Morocco and not the conflict in the Middle East.

³²¹ "Meeting of the Israel Delegation to the United Nations General Assembly, 13 January 1950," Vol. 5, no. 22; The memorandum even stated that Spain might have helped more Jewish people than Great Britain.

³²² Wolffsohn, "Die Spanienpolitik Israels, 1948-1963," 419.

³²³ Legal advisor of the delegation

³²⁴ Rein, *In the Shadow of the Holocaust and the Inquisition*, 44.

³²⁵ General Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

³²⁶ A. Drapkin to W. Eytan, "Israel's policy towards Spain, 3 April 1950," Vol. 5, no. 170.

³²⁷ Simplified, Israel wanted to avoid an internationalisation of the city and make it part of the Israeli state territory instead.

³²⁸ Rein, *In the Shadow of the Holocaust and the Inquisition*, 60.

³²⁹ A. Drapkin to W. Eytan, "Israel's policy towards Spain, 3 April 1950," Vol. 5, no. 170.

Israel's customary approach and instructed the delegation to vote against the proposal.³³⁰ Many MAPAI party members, such as Eytan himself, Abba Eban, or Avraham Darom,³³¹ had already been staunchly anti-Francoist during the Spanish Civil War³³². The two main reasons for opposition remained that Spain had not undergone a regime change and that an abandonment of Israel's position would "create a sensation".³³³ The Memorandum by the Division of International Organizations also stated: "If Israel is ready to forget and forgive, all the more reasons for others to follow suit." This statement is the epitome of the moral responsibility that was weighing on Israel's shoulders and suggests that Israel felt in charge of the memory of the Holocaust in the international arena. Since the memorandum also mentions that public opinion shall be prepared in case of an Israeli abstention, the expectations of the public regarding the Spain policy possibly caused additional pressure. This moral responsibility was further underlined by Sharett in a letter to Ben-Gurion a few weeks later.³³⁴

While the understanding among UN leaders for Israel's approach had been high in 1949, not much was left of it in November 1950, when the General Assembly lifted the international ban on Spain.³³⁵ The proposal was successful also thanks to the support of the Arab League and the Latin American partners of Franco.³³⁶ By 1951, most countries had again full diplomatic relations with Spain.³³⁷ The Western powers who voted in favour of lifting the ban were most certainly influenced by the intensification of the Cold War,³³⁸ as the consolidation of the Western bloc took precedence over the past.³³⁹ The fact that Israel did not react to Franco's friendly overtures run counter to the general Western foreign policy and

³³⁰ W. Eytan to J. Tsur, "Israel-Spain relations, 4 June 1950," Vol. 5, no. 269. While he recognised the possible negative effects this move might have on Israel's relations with Latin America, Eytan argued that Israel shall deal with the consequences.

³³¹ Head of the Latin American Division

³³² Rein, "Israel's Anti-Francoist Policy (1948-1953)," 413. In fact, MAPAI had even raised money for the Republicans during the Civil War and the fascist nature of Franco's government was in sharp contrast to its egalitarian socialist ideology; Abadi, "The road to Israeli-Spanish rapprochement," 184.

³³³ „Memorandum by the Division of International Organizations, 22 August 1950," Vol. 5, no. 348.

³³⁴ M. Sharett to D. Ben-Gurion, "Israel's position in the U.N. on the Spanish problem, 24 September 1950," Vol. 5, no. 293. In this letter, Sharett writes that "Franco is regarded as the incarnation of Hitler's evil genius in the postwar world", even though it remains unclear who exactly sees Franco as such.

³³⁵ M. Amir to the West European Division, "Israel-Spain relations, 3 June 1951," Vol. 6, no. 212, footnote 1.

³³⁶ Rein, „In pursuit of votes and economic treaties," 202.

³³⁷ Halstead, "Spanish Foreign Policy, 1936-1978," 78-79.

³³⁸ Rein, "Israel's Anti-Francoist Policy (1948-1953)," 408; Fleming, "North Africa and the Middle East," 133; Spain was at the time not a member of the UN, but Franco was known for his stark anti-communist stance, and it was clear that the regime would not side with the Eastern bloc; Abadi, "The road to Israeli-Spanish rapprochement," 179.

³³⁹ Many Western ambassadors who had left Madrid after the vote of 1946 returned to Spain, including those of the U.S., Great Britain, and France; Rein, "Israel's Anti-Francoist Policy (1948-1953)," 408.

Israel's attitude towards Spain quickly transformed into a hazard with the potential to lead to isolation from its partners.³⁴⁰

Thereupon, more high politicians began to question Israel's approach. In June 1951, Amir suggested that it was time to reexamine Israel's strategy towards Spain now that the country was gradually rehabilitating internationally.³⁴¹ Pragmatic considerations got the upper hand as Amir argued that Spain had never persecuted or deported Jews during World War II and should be treated as Austria and not as the German states. He also expressed the concern that Israel was leaving the field open to the Arabs to gain a foothold in the West. These arguments show how the geopolitical developments forced Israel to think in terms of its strategic alliance goals and rely less on the Holocaust memory. However, they seemingly fell on deaf ears since the Israeli government adhered to its policy line. In his reply, Avner admitted that logic was on the side of Amir, but the "psychological component" didn't permit Israel to change course,³⁴² a confession that the only justification behind Israel's Spain policy was moral values. Already in early 1950, Ambassador Elath had pointed out that the Spanish question was "fundamental."³⁴³

3.2 Spain's international rehabilitation and the reversal of power dynamics between Spain and Israel

In the early 1950s, Spain was able to deepen its relations with the Arab world and regain some standing among the Western powers. In April 1952, Martín Artajo³⁴⁴ went on a long diplomatic trip to the Middle East where he visited six Arab countries.³⁴⁵ Next to expressing Spain's gratitude for the support received at the UN, the visit intended to demonstrate Spain's rise from the ashes and to portray the state as the natural mediator between the Middle East and the West.³⁴⁶ Another important milestone for Spain was the conclusion of the political and military Pact of Madrid of 1953 with the United States³⁴⁷. This

³⁴⁰ Wolffsohn, "Die Spanienpolitik Israels, 1948-1963," 425; This fear became even more apparent during the following UN debate on the internationalisation of Jerusalem in late 1950, where Israel was faced with the concern that the Latin American States would vote in favour of the Arab nations since they resented Israel's vote against the lifting of the ban on Spain, see *Ibid.*, 426.

³⁴¹ M. Amir to the West European Division, "Israel-Spain relations, 3 June 1951," Vol. 6, no. 212.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, footnote 2.

³⁴³ Wolffsohn, "Die Spanienpolitik Israels, 1948-1963," 419.

³⁴⁴ Spanish Foreign Minister

³⁴⁵ Rein, „In pursuit of votes and economic treaties," 131.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 131.

³⁴⁷ The pact provided Spain with much needed economic and military assistance in exchange for the stationing of U.S. air and naval bases on its territory, a position of geopolitical importance between Europe, Africa, and America; Halstead, "Spanish Foreign Policy, 1936-1978," 79.

pact linked Spain to the Western defence alliance and meant a *de facto* acceptability of the Franco regime. The regime tried to further assuage the Jewish communities and gave several synagogues in Spain permission to open.³⁴⁸ Israel, however, refused to adapt its Spain strategy even though vigilant voices had called for it already in 1950 and 1951.³⁴⁹

In 1953, in the middle of a national financial crisis,³⁵⁰ a serious debate began within the Foreign Ministry about Israel's approach.³⁵¹ Increasing numbers of officials favoured a change,³⁵² as they were convinced that Israel needed friendly ties with as many states as possible.³⁵³ Among these was Avraham Darom who, back in June 1951, had argued that the time was not ripe for a change in the Spain policy.³⁵⁴ By January 1953, he listed numerous pragmatic reasons in support of a quick policy change, suggesting Israel should take the first steps to normalise relations and arguing that the Jewish public would welcome this step.³⁵⁵ Sharett disagreed and insisted that Spain was an enemy of Israel since it had not changed its regime after the war.³⁵⁶ He argued that no international benefits would come from a policy change and that the Diaspora was not ready for this step. While the first argument reiterates Israel's main argument for moral diplomacy vis-à-vis Spain since 1948, the other two reasons reveal a more pragmatic approach to maintaining domestic and international order. Nevertheless, Sharett's disagreement shows that, even though the lower diplomatic echelons were ready for change, high state officials were able to undercut all attempts of rapprochement towards Spain.

Only in early 1954 was the Spanish question discussed again. During a consultation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in January, the idea of opening a consulate in Barcelona for commercial and maritime relations with Spain was discussed, whereas only pragmatic considerations, such as the city's ideal trade location or Barcelona's Jewish community, were

³⁴⁸ Delgado, "From Ostracism to a Leading Role," 304.

³⁴⁹ In 1950, Spain was admitted to the Food and Agriculture Organisation and in 1951 to the UNESCO; José Luis Neila Hernández, "The Foreign Policy Administration of Franco's Spain: From Isolation to International Realignment (1945-1957)," in *Spain in an International Context, 1936-1959*, ed. Christian Leitz & David J. Dunthorn (New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1999), 280.

³⁵⁰ The hardening financial crisis in Israel that began earlier in 1952 further influenced the wish for a policy change among state officials; M. Sharett to D. Goitein, "Financial crisis in Israel, 17 April 1952," Vol. 7, no. 106.

³⁵¹ Rein, "Israel's Anti-Francoist Policy (1948-1953)," 426; Abadi, "The road to Israeli-Spanish rapprochement," 183.

³⁵² Rein, "Israel's Anti-Francoist Policy (1948-1953)," 413-414.

³⁵³ Abadi, "The road to Israeli-Spanish rapprochement," 177-178.

³⁵⁴ Darom to Eytan, 13 June 1951, in M. Amir to the West European Division, "Israel-Spain relations, 3 June 1951," Vol. 6, no. 212, footnote 4.

³⁵⁵ Spain entering the family of nations; Israel should not swim against the current; Israel's change of attitude towards Japan, Austria, and Germany; Israel's interest in the Mediterranean due to consolidation of Arab-Muslim bloc in the south-Mediterranean; Spain having provided asylum and help to Jewish refugees during war; facilitation of establishment of relations with Portugal if already done so with Spain; development of further commercial ties with Spain; M. Sharett to W. Eytan, "Relations between Israel and Spain, 21 January 1953," Vol. 8, no. 27.

³⁵⁶ M. Sharett to W. Eytan, "Relations between Israel and Spain, 21 January 1953," Vol. 8, no. 27, footnote 2.

discussed,³⁵⁷ leaving aside any moral concerns. This consultation was arguably the demise of moral diplomacy, giving way to a new diplomatic era between Israel and Spain. The participants of the consultation saw the opening of a consulate in Barcelona as a political step to profit from Spain's influence in Latin America and the Arab world. The assessment that "international relations could not take into account the nature of the internal regimes of countries concerned" gives the discussion a clear shift towards realpolitik considerations. Never had it been acknowledged so clearly that the animosities towards the Franco regime needed to be neglected in Israel's foreign policy approach. The matter was brought to Sharett's attention who finally approved the opening of a consulate.³⁵⁸ These developments reflect well the literature which outlines that throughout the early 1950s up until 1954, even the most obstinate opponents of Franco had to abandon their approach based on moral convictions in response to the changing international climate.³⁵⁹ The increasingly threatening situations for Jews in French Morocco, caused by the imminent independence of the protectorate and the Arab-Nationalist Muslim majority in the area,³⁶⁰ forced Israel to help this community who hoped that Spain would allow the transit through their Nord African enclaves, Ceuta and Melilla.³⁶¹ Jakob Tsur³⁶² argued in October 1955 that diplomatic relations with Spain were of utmost importance in this situation but doubted the Franco regime would help Israel.³⁶³ Yet Spain helped without hesitation nor the involvement of third parties.³⁶⁴ Arguably, the reason why Spain was willing to help was that Arab nationalism was a threat not only to the Jews in Morocco but also to Spain's remaining colonial possessions in the country,³⁶⁵ even though this cooperation took place covertly to neither alienate the French, Israel's partners, nor the Arabs, Spain's partners³⁶⁶

In a long letter to Ivor Joseph Linton,³⁶⁷ Eytan³⁶⁸ summarized Israel's Spain approach since the establishment of the Jewish state.³⁶⁹ He explained his incapacity to see anything else

³⁵⁷ „Resumé of a Consultation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 27 January 1954,” Vol. 9, no. 44.

³⁵⁸ Sharett's note on Shek's memorandum, 18 January 1954, in „Resumé of a Consultation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 27 January 1954,” Vol. 9, no. 44, footnote 3. Due to budgetary reasons, however, the consulate was not opened in the following year, see W. Eytan to I. J. Linton, “Question of Israel's relations with Spain, 18 February 1954,” Vol. 9, no. 76.

³⁵⁹ Rein, “Israel's Anti-Francoist Policy (1948-1953),” 414.

³⁶⁰ Wolffsohn, “Die Spanienpolitik Israels, 1948-1963,” 427.

³⁶¹ Both Spain and France occupied parts of Morocco as their respective national protectorates. Pressures in both protectorates due to nationalist movements forced Spain and France to adapt their Morocco policy in the mid-1950s; Halstead, “Spanish Foreign Policy, 1936-1978,” 81. Israel hoped that the transit would be possible because the Franco regime had always been tolerant, if not even supportive of its own Jewish community in Spanish Morocco and Spain.

³⁶² The Israeli Ambassador to France

³⁶³ Wolffsohn, “Die Spanienpolitik Israels, 1948-1963,” 427.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 427.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 427-428.

³⁶⁶ Hadas & Shumacher, 2009, 77.

³⁶⁷ Israeli Ambassador to Japan

in Franco than a man who had come to power with the help of Hitler and Mussolini yet understood that, since Spain had been growing in importance for the Western alliance and since Israel opened itself to West Germany, resistance to relations with Spain became difficult. Eytan processed the fact that the legitimacy of moral diplomacy towards Spain was dwindling due to the growing cultural and economic ties that the countries shared, and the depleting opposition to the regime among the Jewish community. This letter can thus be interpreted as the abandonment of moral diplomacy which, due to international and domestic developments, became outdated and untenable. By the end of 1955, things had significantly changed for the Franco regime. In December of that year, Spain was admitted to the United Nations.³⁷⁰ This time, Israel voted in favour of Spain's admission.³⁷¹ Thanks to this development, as well as the strategic alliance concluded with the U.S. two years prior and the strong relations with Latin America and the Arab world,³⁷² Spain had achieved partial readmission into the family of nations and mostly restored its international standing. Israel, for its part, had missed several occasions to adapt its Spain policy to one in line with its Western partners and uniform to the one towards the other former Axis allies. Spain did not need Israel's moral stamp anymore since all other states had adapted to the new Cold War paradigm and the Jewish State, who was the main opponent of Spain's allies in the Middle East, did not have anything in exchange for Spain's friendship anymore.

3.3 Interpretation of Israel's diplomatic approach towards the Spanish State in comparison to the approach towards the FRG

The analysis of primary and secondary sources shows that Israel's approach towards Francoist Spain was strongly shaped by moral considerations which were put into question and revised only slowly over the studied period. From 1948 until 1953, the Israeli government based its animosities towards the regime first and foremost on the country's alliance with Nazi Germany and, unlike the other states involved in Hitler's alliance, had not undergone a regime change. This is a recurring theme throughout all the analysed primary sources where no other reason explaining the strict adherence to moral diplomacy is as clearly expressed as

³⁶⁸ Eytan has always been one of the most vocal opponents of entering any sort of relations with Spain. Already during the Spanish Civil War, Eytan publicly supported the Republican side and saw Franco rise to power thanks to the support of his fascist allies.

³⁶⁹ W. Eytan to I. J. Linton, "Question of Israel's relations with Spain, 18 February 1954," Vol. 9, no. 76.

³⁷⁰ Rein, "Israel's Anti-Francoist Policy (1948-1953)," 426; Halstead, "Spanish Foreign Policy, 1936-1978," 80.

³⁷¹ Delgado, "From Ostracism to a Leading Role," 306.

³⁷² Ibid., 306; The relations with the Arab nations would become known as the "traditional friendship" between Spain and the Middle East; Hadas & Shumacher, "In the Shadow of Franco's Legacy," 79.

this one. This leads to the assumption that it was arguably the only motive behind Israel's diplomatic decision-making. The literature reveals that numerous senior officials within the Foreign Ministry already supported the resistance movement against the fascists during the Spanish Civil War from 1936 until 1939 and were therefore staunch opponents of Franco.³⁷³ The only source that reveals that this was indeed a motive behind Israel's moralistic approach is Eytan's 1954 letter.³⁷⁴ It can thus be assumed that personal resentments towards the Spanish leadership also played a role in Israel's policy, yet still underline the moral nature of the approach. Rather neglected by the academic literature, but recurrently appearing in the primary sources was the role of the public opinion. State officials and diplomats referred multiple times to it. However, public opinion seemed to be seen as a circumstance to circumvent or influence, or even as an obstacle.³⁷⁵ Further, public opinion sometimes became an additional point of pressure in upholding the moral responsibility connected with Israel's stance against the Franco regime.³⁷⁶ The assumption that the memory of the Spanish Inquisition and the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492 also had an impact on Israel's diplomatic approach³⁷⁷ is neither confirmed in the literature³⁷⁸ nor the primary sources.

From a Cold War perspective, the absence of Spain-Israel relations constituted an anomaly since the main Israeli foreign policy objective in the early 1950s was to reach out to all countries of the Western alliance.³⁷⁹ With the outbreak of the Korean War, former hostilities had to be put aside and new alliances had to be forged on each side of the Iron Curtain. Even the Great Powers had to redefine their priorities and political cooperation with the Franco regime became less controversial. While Israel had been lauded for its moral position at the United Nations in 1949,³⁸⁰ at the latest after the conclusion of the Pact of Madrid in 1953, Israel's position did not reflect the international approach towards Spain anymore, isolating the Jewish state in the "Spanish question".³⁸¹ Whereas the Pact between the U.S. and Spain has been the most important external turning point in international relations vis-à-vis the Iberian state, an internal turning point for Israel's international politics has been the conclusion of the Luxembourg Agreement with the FRG, ratified in 1953. The decision to enter direct negotiations with the FRG and the resulting agreement changed

³⁷³ Rein, „In pursuit of votes and economic treaties,” 66.

³⁷⁴ W. Eytan to I. J. Linton, “Question of Israel's relations with Spain, 18 February 1954,” Vol. 9, no. 76.

³⁷⁵ „Memorandum by the Division of International Organizations, 22 August 1950,” Vol. 5, no. 348; A. Drapkin to W. Eytan, “Israel's policy towards Spain, 3 April 1950,” Vol. 5, no. 170.

³⁷⁶ M. Sharett to D. Ben-Gurion, “Israel's position in the U.N. on the Spanish problem, 24 September 1950,” Vol. 5, no. 293.

³⁷⁷ Wolffsohn, “Die Spanienpolitik Israels, 1948-1963,” 415-416.

³⁷⁸ Rein, “Israel's Anti-Francoist Policy (1948-1953),” 416; Wolffsohn, “Die Spanienpolitik Israels, 1948-1963,” 417.

³⁷⁹ Abadi, “The road to Israeli-Spanish rapprochement,” 198.

³⁸⁰ A. Eban to M. Sharett, “Reactions to the Israeli vote on the Italian colonies and Spain, 20 May 1949,” Vol. 4, no. 30.

³⁸¹ Wolffsohn, “Die Spanienpolitik Israels, 1948-1963,” 425.

substantially the relations between Israel and West Germany. The fact that the Jewish state began rekindling with the main perpetrator of the Holocaust made it difficult to uphold continued resistance to diplomatic relations with Spain, which had not participated in the mass destruction of Jewish life. It arguably even had, to a certain extent, sheltered Jewish people or helped them reach third countries.³⁸²

Regarding Auerbach's framework on Turning Point Decisions (TPD),³⁸³ her theory does not stand the test of this case study. The primary sources reveal an evolution of Israel's Spain policy as moral diplomacy was gradually losing its legitimacy and had to give way to pragmatic considerations, such as the growing importance of Spain internationally and especially in the Arab world. Nevertheless, the two big turning points in the studied period do not seem to have shattered the foundation on which Israel's approach was based. Up until 1953, high officials such as Moshe Sharett emphasised that the persistent Franco regime justified Israel's resistance to diplomatic ties.³⁸⁴ Successively, more and more state officials abandon this view and while important international developments³⁸⁵ certainly attenuated Israel's opposition, the sources do not account for any sudden change in Israel's diplomatic attitude. The hostilities towards Spain stopped in 1955,³⁸⁶ when Israel gradually established cultural and economic relations with the Franco regime, hoping to normalise the relations also politically. However, due to Spain's partially regained international standing³⁸⁷ and its decreasing interest in Israel's goodwill, diplomatic ties were not concluded until the mid-1980s. Lerner's theory of the relevance of collective trauma in decision-making at the institutional level³⁸⁸ is indeed significant for this case. The memory of the Holocaust and the pain inflicted on the Jewish community by the Axis Alliance during the war became the main reason for Israel's diplomatic approach towards Spain and was maintained even when Israel's Western allies began engaging politically with the Franco regime once the Cold War paradigm requires it.

The hostilities towards Spain on moral grounds remained in place even when direct negotiations between the West German and the Israeli delegation were already underway in

³⁸² Ibid.; Rein, *In the Shadow of the Holocaust and the Inquisition*; "Meeting of the Israel Delegation to the United Nations General Assembly, 13 January 1950," Vol. 5, no. 22.

³⁸³ Auerbach, „Turning-Point Decisions.”

³⁸⁴ M. Sharett to W. Eytan, „Relations between Israel and Spain, 21 January 1953,” Vol. 8, no. 27, footnote 2.

³⁸⁵ The Reparations Agreement with West Germany, the Pact of Madrid, and Spain's admission as U.N. member in 1955.

³⁸⁶ Delgado, "From Ostracism to a Leading Role," 306.

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 306.

³⁸⁸ Lerner, *From the Ashes of History*.

1952.³⁸⁹ Whereas moral diplomacy was mostly a successful tool in the relations with the FRG, helping Israel to reinforce its national pride and boost its domestic economy,³⁹⁰ moral diplomacy towards Francoist Spain became the flagship of the Holocaust memory that Israel tried to perpetuate while the international community was about to leave the past behind. This shows that this diplomatic approach was moldable, and Israel adapted it to the domestic and international goals it tried to achieve. While Abadi argues that the Israel-Spain relations were largely determined by moral considerations driven by emotions,³⁹¹ Rein assumes they were conditioned by Realpolitik and mainly aimed to achieve national security³⁹². He states that entering relations with West Germany gave Israel obvious advantages, whereas the price of ostracising the Iberian State was low in comparison to the prestige that Israel gained vis-à-vis its partners.³⁹³ The studied sources, however, show that Israel was facing the risk of becoming isolated among its partners as it kept opposing diplomatic relations with Spain, yet decided to do so anyways to honour the memory of the Holocaust. Whereas the West German approach had the more straightforward aim to receive compensation to build up the new homeland, the Spanish approach was based on upholding moral principles.

³⁸⁹ F. E. Shinnar and G. Josephthal to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Opening meeting of the reparations negotiations, 21 March 1952," Vol. 7, no. 72.

³⁹⁰ N. Goldmann to D. Ben-Gurion, "Administrative framework of the reparations agreement, 18 June 1952," Vol. 7, no. 204; Friesel, "On the Myth of the Connection," 447.

³⁹¹ Abadi, "The road to Israeli-Spanish rapprochement," 198.

³⁹² Rein, "Israel's Anti-Francoist Policy (1948-1953)," 425.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, 425-426.

4. Conclusion

Throughout the analysis of approximately 200 primary sources from the Israel State Archives and the consultation of relevant secondary source material, this thesis has examined the considerations of Israel's government to either reject or engage in diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic of Germany and the State of Spain. Two approaches on which these decisions were based have been identified: a moral approach aiming to do justice to the memory of the Jewish community, and a pragmatic approach aiming to further the national interests of the young state. By examining the events from the founding of Israel in 1948 until the mid-1950s, this research has been able to trace the reasons and developments of Israel's diplomacy vis-à-vis West Germany and Spain. Through this process tracing, the thesis can answer the research question: *In what ways did Israel apply moral diplomacy and Realpolitik in its approach of either refusing or establishing diplomatic ties with the Federal Republic of Germany and the Spanish State between 1948 and 1955?*

The first chapter lays the basis for a broad understanding of the topic by introducing the connection between the establishment and identity of the State of Israel and the memory of the Holocaust. The studied literature disclosed a repression of this memory in relation to the Zionist pursuit of establishing a Jewish homeland, as well as in the national myths and symbols of the newly founded state and in the public sphere. Nevertheless, the primary sources reveal that the memory of the Holocaust became a central reference point for Israel to justify its foreign policy vis-à-vis the two cases studied in this thesis. Further, Israel's approach towards the other countries formerly affiliated with the Axis Alliance was outlined. Due to the new geopolitical paradigm, Israel was not able to apply any moral pressure based on the Holocaust memory on Italy, Austria, and Japan and quickly entered diplomatic relations with these states, following the approach of its Western partners.

The second chapter discusses the relations between Israel and the FRG. The Jewish state recognised moral diplomacy as a powerful tool to assert reparations claims. As the analysis has shown, Israel consistently backed its claims with arguments that appealed to the memorialisation of the Nazi crimes, the restoration of justice and honour for the Jewish people, and West Germany's moral integrity that could only be restored by making amends to the Holocaust victims. Konrad Adenauer's 1951 Bundestag speech became the anchor point for Israel's approach. Even though this diplomatic strategy reached its limits, it should still be acknowledged that moral diplomacy made the reparations negotiations possible in the first place as Israel recognised the value of its moral absolution and was able to skilfully seize the

moment. Once moral diplomacy had outlived its usefulness, Israel abandoned it in favour of Realpolitik and strived for the rapid establishment of diplomatic relations and closer economic cooperation with West Germany. The analysis also showed that Israel's decision-makers used moral arguments in their foreign policy communication, while arguments in favour of reparations based on pragmatic considerations, such as the benefit for the national economy, were mainly brought up in internal communications of the Foreign Ministry and Knesset debates. This shows that moral diplomacy was used as a foreign policy tool while domestic issues were discussed through the lens of Realpolitik and confirms the hypothesis that these two approaches were moldable to the needs of the Jewish state.

The relations between Israel and Spain are discussed in chapter three. Israel rejected any relations with the Iberian State due to the dictatorial regime of General Franco which had been an ally of Nazi Germany and was still in place. As the sources show, Israel did not give in to the changing climate in favour of Spain's rehabilitation from 1950 onwards and kept boycotting the country on moral grounds until 1953. However, the Luxembourg Agreement concluded with West Germany rendered it difficult to justify the absence of relations with Spain while those with the FRG were thriving. Israel abandoned moral diplomacy in the mid-1950s as it recognised that this approach did not lead to any international benefit. While in the early years of its inception, Israel felt the pressure to uphold the memory of the Holocaust by ostracising the Spanish State, it recognised that it needed to adapt its Spain policy if it wanted to keep in line with its Western allies.

This comparative case study leads to the conclusion that Israel used moral diplomacy as a mouldable tool that, in the West German case, served to achieve the very concrete goal of receiving reparations payments while in the Spanish case, safeguarding the Holocaust memory through its diplomacy was a matter of principle. In both cases, moral diplomacy gave way to a more pragmatic approach when the former had outlived its purpose. Whereas earlier research shows that the Holocaust memory did not constitute a factor in Israel's establishment nor its national identity, this research has shown that the memory laid the foundation for a diplomatic approach that the Jewish state was able to employ as a soft power in international relations. This is important since Israel had just been founded and was, through this approach, able to make its voice heard among states that were much more powerful than itself and enhance its national economy and security. Therefore, moral diplomacy should be seen as a powerful tool that, when astutely employed, can influence the international position of even small or young states. The research has further shown that Israel's diplomacy was subject to

geopolitical developments, most notably the Cold War paradigm that put the young state in the same alliance as the states formerly affiliated with the Axis. Only in the West German and Spanish cases was it expedient and feasible to apply moral pressure, which shows that moral diplomacy is an approach that can only be employed when a window of opportunity opens.

This research only reflects the position of Israel's government during its early years and could therefore be triangulated in future research by an analysis of West Germany's and Spain's diplomatic strategy towards Israel to get a more holistic picture of the findings. Moreover, future studies could assess whether Israel employed moral diplomacy as a strategic tool in other foreign relations. Lastly, the scope of this research could be further expanded by studying the potential value of moral diplomacy for other newly founded or small states. This could, for instance, be applied to the foreign relations of formerly colonised states who gained independence and provide insight into how these states potentially used moral diplomacy vis-à-vis their former colonizers and in international relations.

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Pictures

Marc, Franz. *Reconciliation*, 1912. Painting. National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

Acknowledgements

I hereby want to thank first and foremost my supervisor, Dr. Stefanie Massink, for her invaluable guidance, support, and patience which have helped me turn an idea into a Master's thesis. Moreover, I want to thank Dr. Lorena De Vita whose intriguing research inspired me to follow the topic of my thesis. Further, I want to thank my parents who have always supported me in all my endeavours and believed in me even when the road was bumpy. Without their trust in me, I would not have come so far. Last but certainly not least, I want to thank my partner Jackson, who stood by me during all the highs and lows of this journey and continuously provided me with food for thought in our stimulating conversations. It was all the little things that made a big difference.



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