

# **POLITICS AND SOCIETY IN ISRAEL**

**IRE215**

**SPRING 2019**

**Session 11**



**Maya Hadar**

# On The Agenda For Today



2

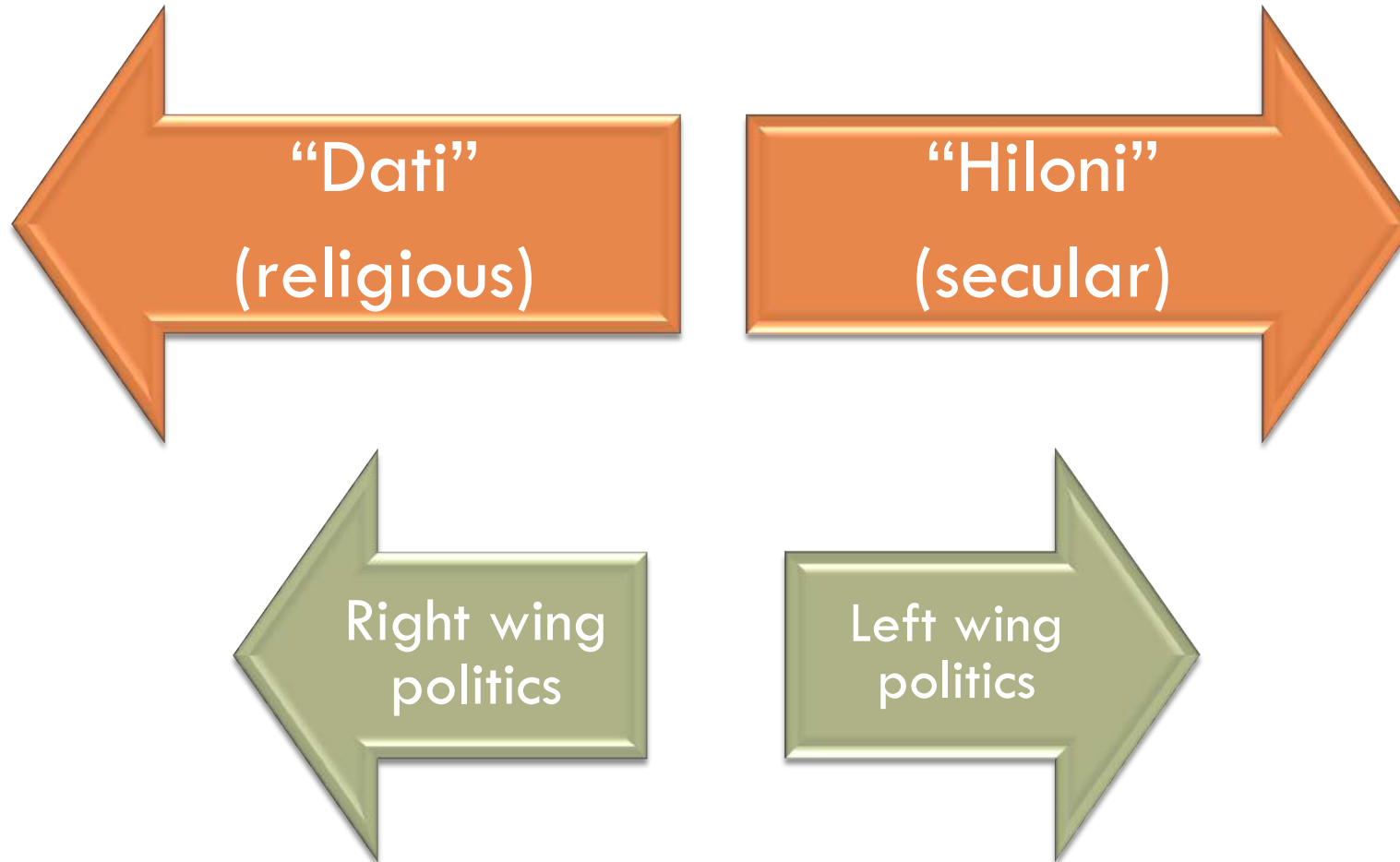
## ■ **Religious diversity in Israel**

- The political-religious connection
- Historical landmarks of religion in Israel
- The theological roots of the main religious groups to Zionism
- Focus on Ultra Orthodox sector: characteristics and contemporary trends

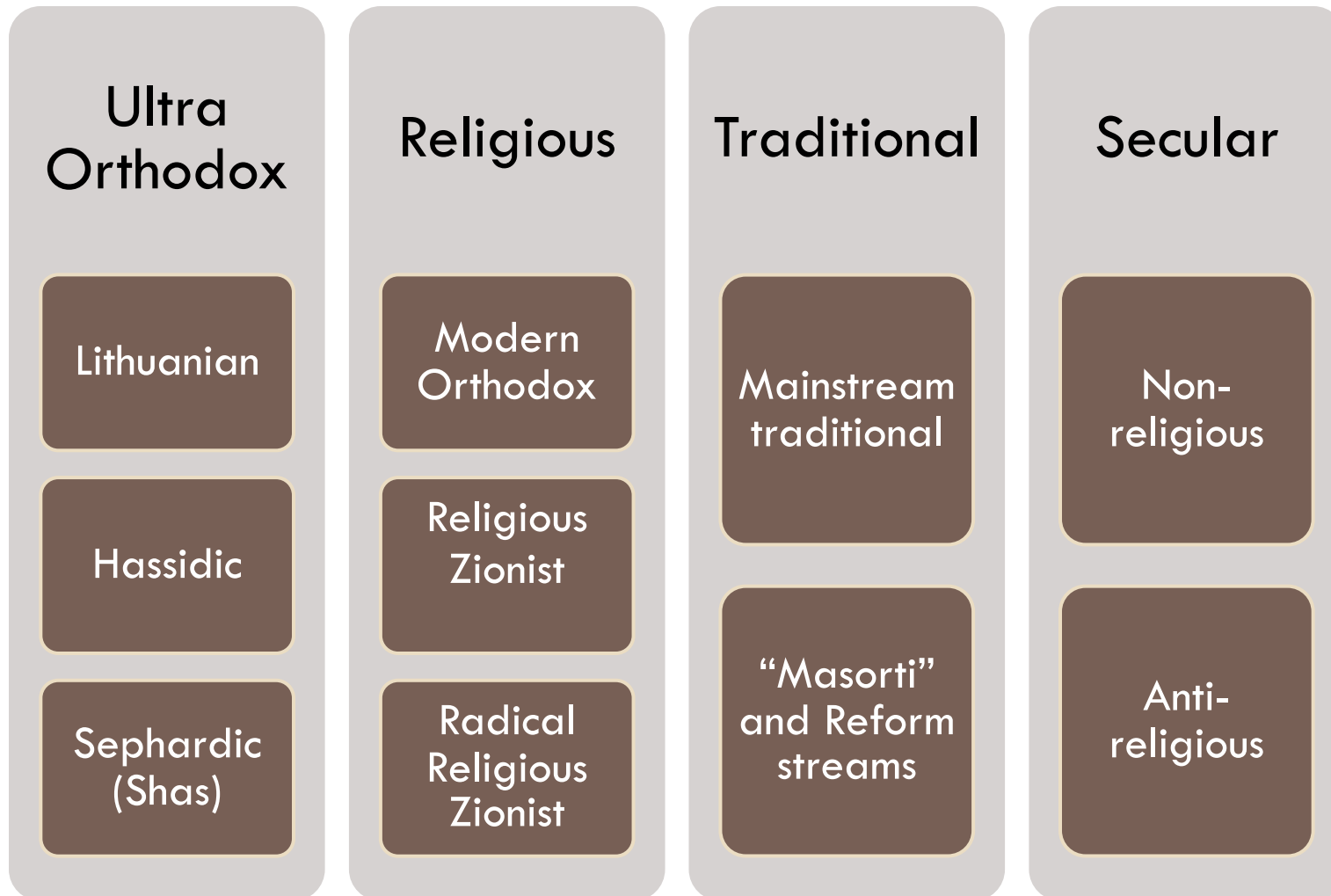
## ■ **The Israeli Defense Forces**

# The Jewish communities of Israel

**The commonly perceived religious/political dichotomy:**



# The Jewish communities of Israel



# Demographics of Jewish Population in Israel:

- 40-45% secular (5% anti-religious)
- 35% - 40% “mesorati” (traditional)
  - 27% non religious “mesorati”
  - 12% religious “mesorati”
- 9%- 12% Orthodox
- 5-10% Ultra-Orthodox

# Ultra-Orthodox Jewish Growth

- Total Fertility Rate of 6.49 in 1980-82, increasing to 7.61 in 1990-96; Other Israeli Jews decline 2.61 to 2.27
- Proportion set to more than double, to 17% by 2020
- No indication of major outflows
- Majority of Israeli Jews after 2050?

# Jewish Faith and praxis

## ISRAELI JEWISH RELIGIOUS BELIEF

"To what extent do you believe or not believe in each of the following?"	Believe Completely	Not Sure	Do Not Believe
There is a God	63%	24%	13%
There is a supreme power guiding the world	57%	29%	14%
Torah given to Moses on Mount Sinai	55%	31%	14%
Good deeds are rewarded	52%	33%	14%
The Jewish people was chosen among peoples	50%	29%	20%
A watch from above is kept over everyone	49%	32%	19%
The Torah and mitzvot are God's commands	47%	29%	24%
Prayer can help one get out of a bad situation	45%	35%	20%
Bad deeds are punished	44%	38%	18%
The coming of the Messiah	39%	29%	32%
There is a next world	35%	35%	30%
Those who don't adhere to mitzvot are punished	27%	36%	37%
Non-observing Jew endangers the Jewish people	21%	29%	50%

# Jewish Faith and praxis

## ISRAELI JEWISH RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

Religious Practice	Always	Sometimes	Never
Light Shabbat candles	56%	22%	20%
Recite Kiddush (Friday night)	46%	21%	32%
Synagogue Saturday morning	23%	22%	56%
Don't work [in public] on Sabbath	42%	19%	39%
Participate in Passover Seder	78%	17%	5%
Light Hanukkah candles	71%	20%	9%
Fast on Yom Kippur	70%	11%	19%
Bless Lulav (Sukkot)	26%	15%	59%
Observe Kashrut at home	69%	18%	14%
No pork, shellfish, etc.	63%	16%	21%
Brit Milah	92%		
Bar Mitzvah	83%		
Wedding	87%		
Burial/Shiva/Kaddish	88-91%		
Mezuzah on front door	98%		
Contribute to charity	74%		





# Israel's Religiously Divided Society

Pew Research Center

# Religious Jews and the State of Israel

- 1945: Only a few UO survive the Holocaust
- 1947: Ben Gurion's "Status quo" with Agudas Israel (a political movement of ultra orthodox Jews)
  - Before the question of the establishment of a Jewish state was brought before the United Nations General Assembly, the Zionists were determined to reach some sort of compromise with the Agudah
  - The "status quo" agreement (summer of 1947), establishing a framework of coexistence



# Religious Jews and the State of Israel

- The Jewish Agency wanted political unity but not a religious state
- Agudas Israel insisted on a Jewish entity that would maintain a basic halachic framework for Jewish continuity
- 1949: “**Unified religious front**” as part of Israel’s first government (includes Haredim/ultra orthodox)
- 1950’s: First conflicts: Aguda leaves government over women soldiers
- 1962: Who is a Jew? Brother Daniel’s legal case

# The Case of Brother Daniel

1962 =>

- In the struggle over definitions of Israeli and Jewish identity, Oswald Rufeisen, aka '**Brother Daniel**', was a pivotal figure
- Rufeisen (1922-1998 ) brought the question of "**Who is a Jew?**" to the high court of justice + **public attention**
- The court was asked to decide whether Rufeisen should be granted citizenship under the Law of Return



# The Case of Brother Daniel

1962 =>

- Rufeisen was a Polish Jew who converted to Catholicism during World War II
  - Saved many Jews during the war
- Rufeisen served for many years as a Catholic priest
- Court's ruling: In a four to one decision, the High Court ruled against Rufeisen, on the grounds that by joining another religion, he had forfeited his right to fast-tracked citizenship in the Jewish state

# Religious Jews and the State of Israel

- 1977: Religious parties caused downfall of government over desecration of Sabbath
  - Background: rising inflation triggered a serious recession, many senior officials, most of them affiliated with the establishment, were under accusations of corruption and the public was growing increasingly disgruntled
  - Clear that Rabin's government was about to fall so he called for early elections
  - Ministers from the **Mafdal** (National Religious Party) abstained from the vote of no-confidence on the grounds of desecration of the Sabbath
  - Rabin saw their abstention as resignation and called a cabinet meeting and announced the resignation of the government
- Gradually, increased power, more political parties



# Religious Jews and the State of Israel

- 2000: 'Tal Law' – attempt to regulate and minimize UO exemption from IDF service



# OA's Attitudes to Redemption, Messianism & Zionism

1. Extreme rejection of Zionism
2. Rejection of secular character of the State

**Radical UO** => Deterministic messianism

- Leads them to reject the state of Israel, its law, and pragmatic politics

**Moderate UO** =>

- Committed to Jewish Israeli peoplehood
- Try to direct Israel to a more religious path



# OA's Attitudes to Redemption, Messianism & Zionism

Main disagreements with **mainstream Zionism** =>

- The mere question of **Zionism**
- Stance towards **modernity**
- Stance towards the **secular**
- Stance towards **army service**, state civil religion and “common narrative”

# The UO sector: Basic Characteristics

- Enclaved community
- Comprehensive: religious norms govern all areas of life
- Hierarchical
- Overtly, still a-zionist (most) or anti-zionist (minority).
  - However, many identify with Israeli public; participate in Zionist political system
- Very poor population (56% below poverty line, earn on average 1/2 of Israeli population's salary)
- Strong gender segregation
- High rate of childbirth (n=6.5)
- Anti-modernity values, but not technology
- Gradually changing in both radical and modern directions

# The UO sector: Recent Trends

- “Mehadrin” bus lines



# The UO sector: Recent Trends

- Extreme modesty In beit shemesh



# The UO sector: Recent Trends

- Computers are becoming more common

The danger of the computer. Recently new destructive focres that we never imagined have caused many of us to bring into our homes through computers poison that kills, God forbid, and threatens to destroy the entire sanctity of the Jewish home”

מפעם כ"ק מרן הגאב"ד שליט"א והגאון"צ הביד"צ שליט"א

## סכנת המחשב

לאחרונה נתחדשו אמצעים חדשים שלא שיערום אבותינו ודעה"ד בא להכניס לבתנו בולת אחרית - באמצעות המחשב - רעל ממית המאיים ח"ו להחריב את כל קדושת הבית וההוד, את עתידנו ואת עתיד ילדינו - ומחובת כל אחד ואחד לעשות כל שביכולתו לבער נגע זה מקרבנו, כי המחשב כולל בתוכו כמה סכנות נוראות:

א. האיינטרנט אסור אפילו לצורך פרנסה - ולא יראה ולא ימצא לא בבתי ישראל ולא בבתי מסחר, והוא מכיל רעל ממית אשר כל באיה לא ישובון, וכל המשתמש בו מכניס עצמו לנסיונות עצומים. וגם שלא בכונה אפשר להכשל בבראות שחץ, וכבר נחרבו ונהרסו בתים האיינטרנט לצרכי מסחר, ולא עמדו בנסיון.

ב. החרם החמור - חרם עלום - שהכריזו כל גדולי ישראל על מחריבי האנושות - הטלוויזיה. חל בכל תקופה על המחשב שמתקנת בו אפשרות של צפיה בטלביזיה.

ג. וכמ"כ האיסור החמור על הווידאו שאסרו כל גדולי ישראל חל בכל תקופה על סרטים או קטעי סרטים ואפילו מבוקרים ומצונזרים (שרואים בתקליטורים במחשב, וחובה על התורים והמחנכים להזהיר שכל סרט שהיא (אפילו באידיש) הוא טריפה ומקצה מחמת מיאוס.

ד. כל התקליטורים - כולל תוכנות מדעיות. לימודיות. אנציקלופדיות. אוסף תמונות וגרפיקה. גם הם מהינם סכנה ונראה. כי הם מכילים תמונות של פריצות. ועניני ע"ז. כפירה. שפיכות דמים ואבירייה.

ה. במשחקי מחשב רבים - ישנם דברים רבים המזיקים ושורפים כתבערת אש, והגם שאנשים באיציטל חרדית העידו עליהם שהם מצונזרים או מבוקרים - נמצאו בהם תמונות מכוערות, קטעי סרטים, אלימות ודברים גרועים אחרים - ולכן אסור להכניס בבתי ישראל.

הנסיון הוכיח שגם משחקי מחשב נקיים שלא היו בהם דברים שליליים - הביאו להתמכרות ונטמסות המוח. וגרמו להרס חינוכי. מלבד שהם הוו פתח למשחקים ותקליטורים פסולים - וע"כ חובת ההורים להשגיח מאד על ילדיהם ולהזהירם. שאסור להכנס לבית שמשחקים במחשב.

ועל כל מי שביכולתו שלא להכניס כלל מחשב לביתו, יציל בכך את עצמו ובני ביתו מנסיונות, ספחתיים ומטכשולים חמורים, וגם יטיע לו לגדל את ילדיו לתורה וליראת שמים על טהרת הקודש

הושפעים לדבירו ואזהרותיו ישכנו בנח וימברכו. וה"ש הביד"צ ופניה"ק ת"ו אור ליריד טרחשו תש"ס

נאם ישראל יעקב פישר רבני נאם בנימין ראבנאוויץ נאם אברהם דוד הורוויץ נאם מעשה שטרנבוך נאם מעשה הלברשטאם נאם מאיר בראדסדארבנער

ת"ו ע"ד סגנת המחשב שהורו הנאה"צ הביד"צ בכל האזור לע"י. הגי' מספרף לאוהרנ. בתוה שיהיה בית ישראל ולא ישכנו במחב' הרבים הנוראים ח"ו. ותשרה שכניה בבתי ישראל ועסקיהם. ויזו לגדל ורווח על טהרת הקודש המעמיר ומצפה לישועה כ"י ומהרמן בביאת נא"צ נב"א

נאם ישראל מעשה דושינסקי רב ואב"ד בעיה"ק ת"ו



# IDF Haredi units



# Materialism and consumerism increase



# Recent efforts to involve haredim in workforce succeeding





# Education and Diversity

**Israel's educational system** reflects Israel's religious and ethnic diversity =>

- There are many different school systems catering to different populations
  - A school system for the **Arab population**, the language of instruction is Arabic
  - A school system for the **ultra-Orthodox**, the language of instruction is Yiddish and at times modern Hebrew
  - A school system for the **modern Orthodox**, the language of instruction is Hebrew and religious studies are included in the curriculum
  - A school system that caters to **secular Israelis** where Hebrew is the language of instruction and Jewish studies—including Bible—are studied in a cultural rather than a religious framework

# Education and Diversity

**Israel's educational system** reflects Israel's religious and ethnic diversity =>

- In addition, an alternative school system (**'Tali Schools'**) strikes a middle-ground between the state-secular and state-religious schools
- **Experimental schools** bring secular and religious Israeli Jews—as well as Arabs and Jews—together
- After completing their high school studies, **Israeli Jews, male Israeli Druze,** and some **male Israeli Bedouin** serve **two to three years** of compulsory service in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF)

# Israel as an Army Nation

## The Israeli Defence Forces =>

- The IDF, founded in 1948, ranks among the **most battle-tested armed forces in the world**, having had to defend the country in six major wars
- The IDF's security **objectives** are:
  - To defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the State of Israel
  - To deter all enemies
  - To curb all forms of terrorism that threaten daily life
- Its main tasks include reinforcing the peace arrangements, ensuring overall security in the West Bank in coordination with the Palestinian Authority, lead the war against terrorism (both inside Israel and across its borders) and maintaining a deterrent capability to prevent the outbreak of hostilities

# Israel as an Army Nation

## The Israeli Defence Forces =>

- To ensure its success, the IDF's doctrine at the strategic level is **defensive**, while its tactics are **offensive**
- Given the country's **lack of territorial depth**, the IDF must take the initiative when deemed necessary and, if attacked, quickly **transfer the battleground to the enemy's land**
- Though it has always been **outnumbered by its enemies**, the IDF maintains a **qualitative advantage** by deploying **advanced weapons systems**, many of which are developed and manufactured in Israel for its specific needs
- The IDF's main resource, however, is the high caliber of its soldiers

# Israel as an Army Nation

## The Israeli Defence Forces =>

- In preparing for defense, the IDF deploys a **small standing army** (made up of **conscripts** and **career personnel**) with early warning capability, and a regular air force and navy
- The majority of its forces is **reservists**, who are called up regularly for training and service and who, in time of war or crisis, are **quickly mobilized** into their units from all parts of the country



# Israel as an Army Nation

## The Israeli Defence Forces =>

- The IDF's three service branches (ground forces, air force, and navy) function under a **unified command**, headed by the **Chief of the General Staff**, with the rank of lieutenant-general, who is responsible to the minister of defense
- The Chief of the General Staff is **appointed by the government**, on recommendation of the prime minister and minister of defense, for a **three-year term**, which is usually extended for an additional year.
- **Men and women soldiers of all ranks serve side by side** as technicians, communications and intelligence specialists, combat instructors, cartographers, administrative and ordnance personnel, computer operators, doctors, lawyers, and the like

# Israel as an Army Nation

## The Israeli Defence Forces =>

- More and more **women** are now serving in combat units as well
- The IDF is responsive to the **cultural and social needs of its soldiers**, providing **recreational and educational activities**, as well as **personal support services**
  - Recruits with **incomplete educational backgrounds** are given opportunities to upgrade their level of education
  - Career officers are encouraged to study at the IDF's expense during their service
  - The integration of new immigrant soldiers is facilitated through special Hebrew language instruction and other programs

# Israel as an Army Nation

## The Israeli Defence Forces =>

- Active in nation-building enterprises since its inception, the IDF also provides **remedial and supplementary education to civilian populations** and contributes to the **absorption of newcomers** among the population at large
- In times of national crisis or emergency, the IDF responds immediately with **appropriate action** and assigns trained personnel to fill essential jobs or carry out special tasks

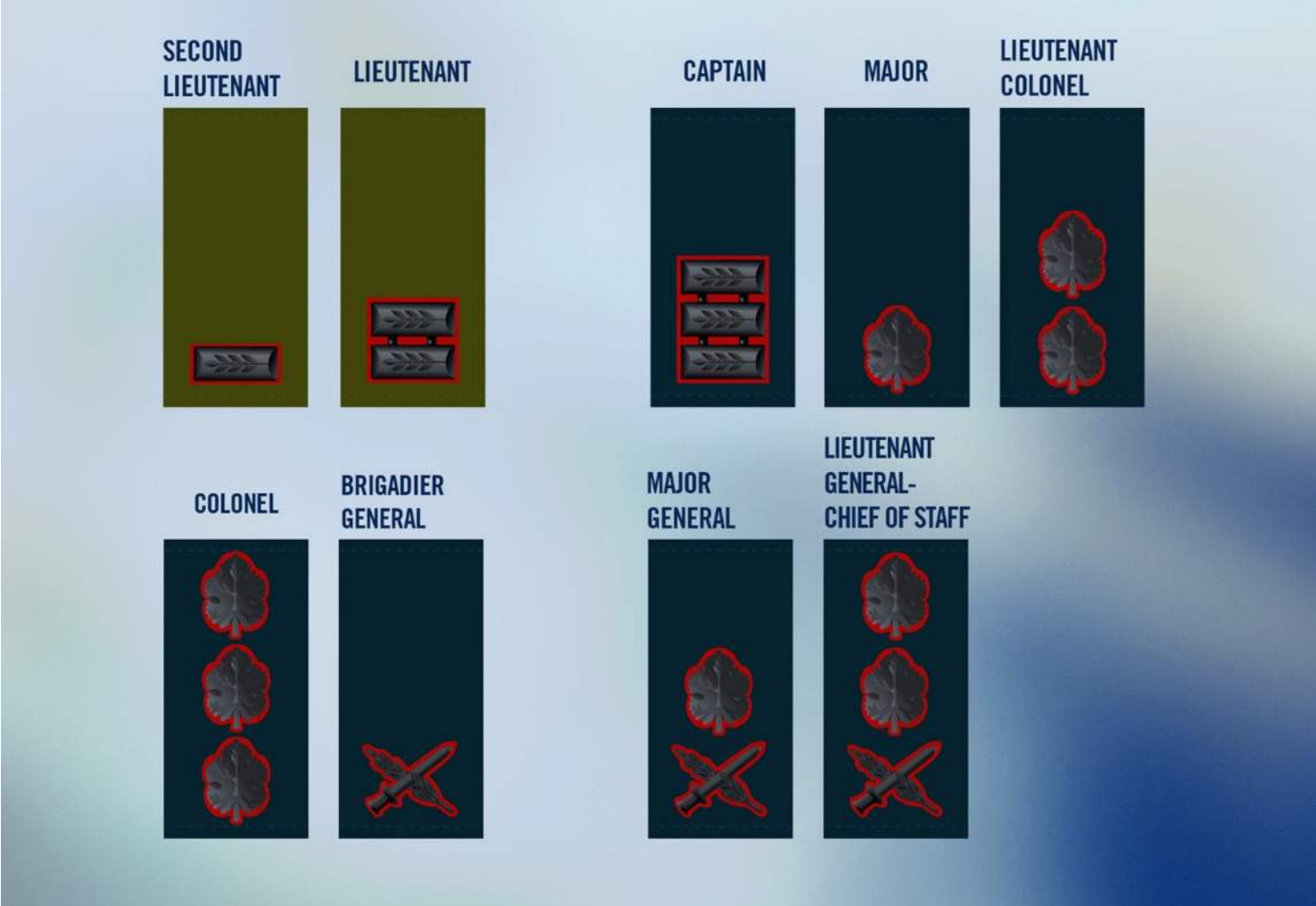


# Israel as an Army Nation

## Terms of Service in the IDF=>

- **Compulsory Service:** All eligible men and women are drafted at age 18 (Men serve for three years, women for two years)
  - **Deferments** may be granted to qualified students at institutions of higher education
  - **New immigrants** may be deferred or serve for shorter periods of time, depending on their age and personal status on entering the country
- **Reserve Duty:** Upon completion of compulsory service, each soldier is assigned to a reserve unit and may serve up to the age of 51
- **Career Military Service:** Veterans of compulsory service meeting current IDF needs may sign up as career officers. **The career service constitutes the command and administrative backbone of the IDF**

# Israel as an Army Nation



# Israel as an Army Nation

## IDF: equipment=>

- An element in Israel's strategy of overcoming the **quantitative gap** between itself and its potential enemies is the constant striving to achieve and keep a **qualitative edge in terms of equipment**
  - A most fragile issue, since it depends on the international situation and on financial possibilities, both of which have in the past favored the Arab side
- The Egyptian-Czech arms deal (1955) signaled the gradual opening up of the Soviet arsenal first to Egypt and subsequently also to Syria and to Iraq
- Huge arms deals between the oil-producing states (particularly Saudi Arabia - and the US) have resulted in a **flood of arms**, which Israel had to take into account, in spite of American assurances that they were not intended for use against Israel

# Israel as an Army Nation

## IDF: equipment=>

- France, which at one time had been Israel's **main supplier of military hardware**, has meanwhile sold equivalent, or more modern equipment, to certain Arab states including Iraq
- Aware of the critical importance of the IDF to Israel's survival, the relative share of the defense budget is **the highest in the Western world**, taking into account the sizable contribution in loans and grants from the US
  - In normal times, it has reached a level of about **one third of the total budget**
- In some cases the IDF decided to proceed with the development of its own hardware as a direct result of disappointment by a foreign source of supply

# Israel as an Army Nation

## IDF: equipment=>

- The **Merkava**, Israel's battle tank, came into being as a direct result of Britain backtracking on the purchase of its tanks



# Israel as an Army Nation

## IDF: equipment=>

- whilst the IDF is constantly on the lookout for the best equipment it can procure or produce, there has not been in the past, nor will there be in the future, any guarantee that the material advantage will always be on the Israeli side
- This enhances the importance of the **other factors** (human factor, 'small smart army')

# Next Session...

39



- Peace in the Middle East => final session!



**Thank You For Your Attention!**

**Questions???**