

Fellows



Yfaat Weiss

IFK_Senior Fellow

Duration of fellowship

01. March 2003 bis 30. June 2003

Yfaat Weiss

PROJECT-TITLE

Invisible Cities. Wadi Salib - an Israeli Political Metaphor

PROJECT-DESCRIPTION

Popular imagination looks at Haifa as one of the so-called "mixed cities", a model for coexistence with Arabs of Israeli citizenship. This population amounts to circa 8,5 percent of the total urban population of 268,000 living in Haifa. Living together creates an appearance of interethnic harmony, which in turn helped Haifa's Jewish residents to forget another dimensions of the entangled history of the city. This one concerns its Arab residents as their numbers fell between April and July 1948 from 70,000 to 3,500. The State of Israel did not permit them to return and it was of no concern whether they fled of their own volition or were expelled by force, still central and hotly debated questions in themselves. Around the same time, between May 1948 and March 1949, about 24,000 of all immigrants, many of them survivors of the Holocaust, were provided housing in the city and many of them were settled in the formerly abandoned Arab quarters. The point of departure for this project is the divergence of memories of catastrophe amongst those who live side by side in space but not in time.

The focus of Yfaat Weiss' project will be one particular neighborhood, Wadi Salib, which will make it possible to probe the picture in greater detail and accuracy. From the early 1950s, new tenants began to move into the Wadi, new penniless immigrants and refugees initially from Romania and later Morocco. In the consciousness of the Israeli public, these Moroccan Jews and their history are associated with Wadi Salib, not the original Arab inhabitants. The "riots of Wadi Salib", as they are called in popular parlance, those stormy days in 1959 when the neighborhood of Wadi Salib became the scene of a violent struggle against ethnic discrimination, awakened for the first time public awareness in Israel of the economic distress suffered by Jewish immigrants from the Arab countries. Although the "riots of Wadi Salib" occurred in the same urban area in which the war was fought 11 years earlier, they were inscribed in Israeli public consciousness and treated in the sociological literature completely separate from previous events. The project will challenge this reading by focusing on the powerful nexus between memory, property, entitlement and rights in so-called inter-communal relations in Wadi Salib.

CV

Head of the Bucerius Center for Contemporary German History and Society and Senior Lecturer at the Department of Jewish History, University of Haifa

Publications

U.a. Schicksalsgemeinschaft im Wandel. Jüdische Erziehung im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland 1933-1938 (Hamburg 1991); Staatsbürgerschaft und Ethnizität. Deutsche und polnische Juden am Vorabend des Holocaust (München 2000); with Michael Brenner (Eds.): Zionistische Utopie - israelische Realität. Religion und Politik in Israel (München 1999); with Daniel Levy (Eds.): Challenging Ethnic Citizenship: German and Israeli Perspective on Immigration (New York 2002)

