

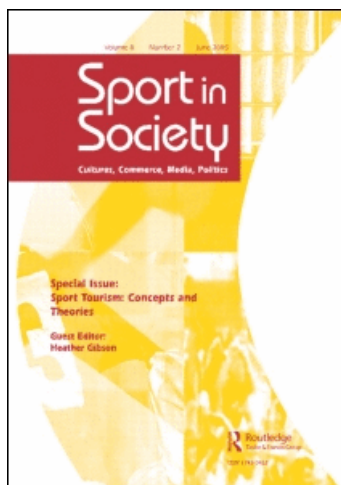
This article was downloaded by: [Sorek, Tamir]

On: 15 September 2009

Access details: Access Details: [subscription number 914992834]

Publisher Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Sport in Society

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713634841>

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Online Publication Date: 01 October 2009

To cite this Article Sorek, Tamir(2009)"The only place where an Arab can hit a Jew and get a medal for it': boxing and masculine pride among Arab citizens of Israel',Sport in Society,12:8,1065 — 1074

To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/17430430903076357

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17430430903076357>

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‘The only place where an Arab can hit a Jew and get a medal for it’: boxing and masculine pride among Arab citizens of Israel

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Hamze Yunes’ life story from Israeli boxing star to Palestinian guerrilla is highly interesting as a case study that challenges the conventional linkage between Arab sport and politics in Israel. Arab sport in Israel is publicly presented by its major actors as an integrative sphere, and Arab athletes usually distance themselves from nationalist overtones or political protest. Israeli boxing, which is dominated athletically and administratively by Arabs, is even an extreme example of this tendency. Hamze’s narrative, however, ties his attraction for boxing to the humiliation of Arab men under the Israeli Military Government (1948–66), implying that boxing was a combative practice more than a channel for integration. Based on Hamze’s memoirs published in 1999 and interviews with his family members, the essay contrasts these two diametrically opposed discourses and discusses the reasons for Hamze’s exceptionality.

In 1963 Hamze Yunes was a rising boxing star and represented his Israeli sports association, Beitar, in international competitions. Eight years later, in 1971, he was captured in the Mediterranean Sea while commanding a group of Palestinian naval guerrillas on their way to kidnap Israeli soldiers. In 1974 he became a Palestinian national hero after a legendary escape from an Israeli jail to Lebanon. Hamze’s fascinating life story from Israeli boxing star to Palestinian guerrilla is not only good material for a Hollywood blockbuster movie, but it is also highly interesting as a case study that challenges the conventional linkage between Arab sport and politics Israel.

Arab sport in Israel is publicly presented by its major actors as an integrative sphere, and Arab athletes usually distance themselves from nationalist overtones.¹ This is somewhat paradoxical since sports, and especially combative sports like boxing, provides members of national minorities, and especially men, the opportunity to boost their national and masculine pride. The common explanation for this lack of political protest is that, by emphasizing ethnically-blind forms of discourse, the sport sphere provides a rare opportunity for the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to suspend the dominance of the exclusionary ethnic discourse of citizenship which, by definition, privileges the Jewish citizen.² If this explanation is correct, a former boxer whose life took him very far from the daily existential dilemmas of the Palestinian citizens of Israel is expected to present a completely different discourse, since it is unlikely that he still hopes to translate his athletic excellence into a ticket of entrance to Israeli citizenship.

This essay, therefore, contrasts the dominant integrative discourse of Arab boxers and boxing functionaries in Israel with Hamze’s narrative, based on his own memoirs

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published in 1999 and interviews I conducted with his brothers. Beyond expanding the range of public interpretation of the political meaning of Arab presence in the Israel sports sphere, this contrast sheds light on the dilemmas and strategies of Arab male youth who lived under Israeli military rule.

The political dialectic of boxing

Modern sports is based on maintaining a delicate balance between the pleasurable 'de-controlling' of human feelings of excitement on the one hand and the maintenance of a set of checks and balances to keep those emotions under control.³ In ethno-national conflicts, and especially when these conflicts involve severe forms of discrimination or are embedded in colonial and post-colonial contexts, this dialectic of modern sports is translated into a tension between the potential of sports to serve as a platform for anti-colonial, ethnic or national pride and the pacifying potential of the ethnically blind discourse, which makes sports a potential sphere of integration and suspension of protest.

To bring this point home with some historical examples, European Jews' attraction to sports in the nineteenth and the early twentieth century was motivated by seemingly contradicting ambitions to assimilate in the non-Jewish society (mainly by the Jewish bourgeoisie) and re-invent the Jews as a nation (by the Zionist movements).⁴ In colonial contexts, British rulers used the sports they exported to the countries they conquered as a tool for co-opting local elites and inculcating 'British' as well as Christian values to the natives.⁵ In many cases, however, those same games were adopted by the local population and became, ironically enough, locales for the formulation of anti-colonialist nationalist sentiment. Such was the fate of cricket in India,⁶ and that of soccer in Egypt,⁷ Yemen,⁸ and Zimbabwe.⁹ The globalization of the games enabled their re-interpretation as first and foremost viable representations of modernity rather than as symbols of foreign rule.

Boxing is not different in this regard but along the possible spectrum of controlling/de-controlling violence, boxing is located on the edge, since it literally legitimizes punching the opponent in the face. This quality of boxing makes the public meaning of the empowerment of colonized groups in this sport particularly loaded, and the negotiation over this meaning especially tense. A famous example of this dialectic is 'The Rumble in the Jungle', the 1974 fight between Muhammad Ali and George Foreman that has been described as a fight between an agent of political protest and black pride (Ali), and a pacifying American patriotism (Foreman).¹⁰

As I illustrate in the next section, Arab boxers and boxing functionaries in Israel heavily inclined toward the integrative pacifying pole, and tend to downplay Palestinian identity or even to efface any traces of it.

Arab boxing in Israel

Boxing was popular among Palestinian Arabs even before 1948. Under the British occupation Arab-Palestinian sports was developed as part of the Arab-Palestinian national movement, and sports commentators tended to link the physical empowerment in the field of sport to the potential military national empowerment. Not surprisingly, as a combative sport, boxing received relatively generous attention by the Palestinian sports press.¹¹

The Arab sports infrastructure, including boxing, was almost completely destroyed in the 1948 war. After the war, approximately 160,000 Arabs who remained under Israeli rule were subjected to the Military Government, which was practically the only state organization that was responsible for the Arab population, replacing many of the functions fulfilled

by governmental ministries vis-à-vis the rest of the population. The Military Government imposed severe restrictions on movement, breadwinning and political organization.¹²

Under these circumstances, it is remarkable that within a decade Israel had Arab champions in some sports, mainly muscular, combative and warlike sports. As early as 1959, an Arab weightlifter, Ali Khudruj from Acre, was the first Arab athlete to win an Israeli national championship. In the subsequent years, Ali and his brothers Adnan and Muhsin, dominated Israeli weightlifting. The development in boxing was somewhat slower but in a similar direction, and the developments in soccer were especially remarkable.

This success seems incompatible with a consistent policy of exclusion and segregation. Indeed, the policy toward the Arab minority was both inconsistent and complex. Israeli political culture has been characterized by a continuous tension between three partly contradictory political goals and commitments: the colonial project of settling the country with a specific group of people, the ethno-national project of building a Jewish nation-state, and the liberal project of establishing a democracy.¹³ The tension between the first two commitments and the third commitment was partly solved by ensuring that most of the non-Jewish population remained beyond the state boundaries. The existence of the remaining Arabs, however, forced the political leadership to find creative solutions to reconcile the divergent commitments. Therefore, from the very first years of the state's existence, its apparatus implemented extensive and diverse practices toward the Arab-Palestinian minority to ensure a limited form of inclusion, one that simultaneously emphasized their liberal inclusion in the project of state building and excluded them from the project of nation building.

During the first decade of the state's existence, these contradictory goals were reflected in incoherent and inconsistent policies toward the Arab minority.¹⁴ The late 1950s and the early 1960s, however, witnessed two interrelated processes which significantly shaped this policy and made it somewhat more coherent. On the one hand those years were characterized by growing unrest among the Palestinian citizens, which was accompanied by significant attempts to become politically and nationally organized; on the other hand, among the Israeli authorities there was a growing awareness of the permanence of the situation, namely, that the Palestinian citizens were not going to leave the country and therefore there was a need to establish a long term and comprehensive policy toward them.¹⁵ From this period the practices of partial and limited integration were not merely a product of cross-pressures but were of a part pre-planned and organized policy.

It is not a coincidence that those same years were the crucial period when Israeli authorities were involved in monitoring the development of Arab sports clubs and sporting activities. The promotion of the athletic realm was considered an especially useful tool for constructing a partial citizenship, as well as disciplining and surveying a minority with potential separatist aspirations and identification with the enemy. On the one hand it mobilized people's bodies to a practice which conveys a universalistic promise and which cannot be identified as Jewish (and therefore exclusive), and on the other hand, it was frequently sponsored and organized by the state¹⁶ and therefore was identified with it and legitimized it.

The muscular empowerment of Arab youth was very cautiously encouraged by the authorities but its potentially combative connotation was a subject of concern. In April 1962, a discussion held in the office of the Advisor to the Prime Minister for Arab Affairs concluded that it is not recommended to encourage boxing (among other combative and warlike sports) among Arab youth.¹⁷ This concern was translated into close surveillance of Arab sport clubs and intervention in their activity in some cases.¹⁸

Under these circumstances, the only way for Arab boxing to survive was by blurring any nationalist connotation to its activity. Since the early 1960s Arab boxing clubs

flourished and Arab boxers were very successful, but the price was muting any voice which explicitly linked boxing to political protest or to Palestinian national pride. Therefore, the most successful Arab champion in the 1960s, Subhi Zo'bi, could never have become an 'Arab Muhammad Ali' who would use the platform of a boxing champion to protest against the discrimination of his people. Indeed, another successful boxer who represented Israel in international boxing, Ramzi 'Assali from Haifa, even volunteered for military service in the Israel Defense Forces.

With the removal of the Military Government in 1966, Arab boxers continued to avoid any explicit political use of the boxing ring. The integrative orientation of Arab boxing is best illustrated by the participation of Arab boxers in the Maccabia games (known as the 'Jewish Olympics'); two of them even won gold medals in 1977. Interestingly, after 1977 boxing has not been included in the Maccabia games, an exclusion which illustrated the withdrawal of Jews from the ring.

Starting in the 1980s, Arabs gained complete domination in boxing in terms of participation, achievements and representation in administrative positions. Following the massive immigration of Jews from the former Soviet Union since 1989, some recent immigrants became champions in boxing, but not to the extent of putting Arab domination of the sport in danger. Between the years 2001 and 2004, for example, 40 out of 52 (77%) championship titles for male seniors were won by Arab boxers (while Arabs constitute only 16% of Israeli citizens). The Israeli Boxing Association is the only sport association whose office is located in an Arab town, that usually organizes its major competitions in Arab towns, and which has an Arab as a chair and general director (William Shehada, the boxer who won a gold medal in the 1977 Maccabia).¹⁹

As an association of non-professional athletes, the IBA is supported modestly by the government, and its achievements are directly related to the amount of this financial support. The integrative orientation, therefore, is inevitable, as can be understood from Shehada's words: 'Boxing in this country has three master goals: The first is to distance youth from drugs, the second is to build a bridge of brotherhood between Jews and Arabs, and the third is to bring achievements, to bring pride to the state. This is why I am asking the state to help me.'²⁰ Shehada also insists on hanging the Israeli national flag in the annual Israel championship, and when the competition takes place in his home town, Kafr Yasif, he also insists on singing the Israeli national anthem, *Hatikva*.

Samir Arafat, an international boxing referee and a member of the boxing association board, provides the most blatant expression of the tendency to avoid any Palestinian nationalist connotation. His last name is identical to that of the late Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, whose symbolic status is no less than a personification of the Palestinian national movement. In boxing competitions, however, Samir Arafat usually asks the announcer to use his first name only. His son Fares, a boxer who was in the Israeli cadet squad, referred to his name in an interview: 'Arabs, Jews, everyone is like a brother to me. I practice and play with everyone, we are all human beings. With god's help, peace will come. There are about ten Arafats in the country, but we are not relatives of Yasser Arafat. I am Arafat, just another Arafat.'²¹

Hamze Yunes

If ties to Yasser Arafat are considered a badge of commitment to the Palestinian national cause, Hamze Yunes, who proudly mentioned in his memoirs his meeting with Arafat and his friendship with other legendary Palestinian leaders such as Abu Jihad, is located on the opposite pole to Samir and Fares Arafat. Their presentation of boxing as a bridge between

Arabs and Jews and the attempts to distance it from any nationalist connotation has dominated the public discourse about Arab boxing. It does not mean, however, that it represents the full range of feelings and motivations of Arab men who became boxers in Israel. True, various sports, including boxing, have provided rare opportunities for inter-ethnic integration through their universalistic and ethnically blind aspects. However, the over-representation of Arab men in muscular and warlike sports, which provide the opportunity for public performance of accentuated virility, implies that additional factors should be taken into consideration.

In an interview with the Hebrew daily *Ha'aretz*, Ghanem Mahrum, the coach of Golden Gloves Nazareth, the most successful Arab boxing club in Israel, joked that, 'The only place where an Arab can hit a Jew and get a medal for it is Israel's boxing championship'.²² But to what extent is there a grain of truth in this joke? Feminist studies posit that modern sports have emerged in Western countries as answers to the 'masculinity crisis' created by the rapid social and economic changes in the early twentieth century.²³ Sports emerged as an exclusive masculine sphere which is marked by an idealization of qualities associated with the extreme potential of the male body.²⁴ Another dimension to this crisis is added in colonial contexts, in which, frequently, the native's male body was described by the colonizer weak and undisciplined.²⁵

Indeed, for Palestinian men in Israel, the repeated Arab defeats in war and the subordination to Israeli military rule constituted a significant threat to their masculinity. Furthermore, by preventing political organization and neutralizing public protest, the military regime restricted the activity of Arab men in the public sphere, and reduced masculine roles to providing their families with livelihoods.²⁶ It makes sense that for Arab men in Israel, sports, and especially combative sports, became an important sphere for the rehabilitation of their undermined image of masculinity and national pride, where they could be part of a competitive muscular activity which does not involve the risk of confronting the authorities.

However, although the humiliating and intimidating nature of Arab lives under the Military Government in Israel are well documented, and although we have evidence for the popularity of boxing among Arab men in Israel at that time, rarely do we find an articulated narrative that links these two phenomenon. This is exactly what makes the story of Hamze Yunes so important.²⁷

Hamze was born in 1944 in Ara, a small Arab village that was annexed to Israel following the ceasefire agreement in 1949 between Israel and Jordan. As a 5-year-old child he witnessed the entrance of the Israeli forces to his village, and from his adolescent years he had strong memories of fear and humiliation. In his memoirs, he explained how these feelings propelled him to be a boxer:

Suddenly the withdrawal [of the Arab forces] happened and the strangers went in without fighting, and started humiliating the people. They built near the mosque of 'Ara a big arc and hung on it a foreign flag and ordered the village's men to stand in line and to pass underneath the arc. Some youngsters and men were able to hide, escaping from the surrender passing. But those who escaped did not dare to boast, [and did so] only quietly and without full confidence.

The Border Police Troops, who are more evil than the army, conducted campaigns of search, looting, and destruction, after they gathered the men of the village and ordered them to sit on the ground. Because of what I saw and heard about the actions of the Border Police I felt, for the first time, fear. How do the men sit on the ground? And how do they allow strangers to invade their homes? I understood that the metal pipes [i.e. the guns], not those who carry them, are the reason for the surrender that made me feel the fear. These feelings disturbed me very much, so I begun to think about learning how to defend myself.²⁸

At first glance, Hamze's rationalization for choosing to be a boxer resembles Loic Wacquant's explanation for how young men in a black ghetto in Chicago become boxers: 'Many gym members were thus "pretrained" in the street on the art of self-defense, if not by taste, then by necessity. In point of fact, a good number of them are former "street fighters reconverted to boxing".'²⁹ Namely, a physically unsafe social environment is a fertile ground for the attraction to fighting sports like boxing. However, it is noteworthy that when Hamze tells the reader his life story, the first foreshadowing of his boxing career is introduced by the description of the village's men forced to walk under Israeli flag in a literal *rite de passage* of surrender and to sit on the ground, unable to resist. More than being necessary for self-defence, boxing became an important sphere for rehabilitating an undermined image of masculinity.

In secondary school Hamze studied in *Ha-ma'apil*, a Jewish kibbutz, which Hamze insisted on mentioning was built on the ruins of Kakun, a village that was emptied and destroyed in the 1948 war. His reference to this period in his life is also telling, since it shows that Hamze, as other young men of his generation, did try to find their place among their Jewish peers, but felt rejected. He writes about some friends he found among the Jewish students, although he always felt that they were somewhat reserved and even racist in their treatment of the Arab students. But one incident received special attention in his memoirs.

At the age of 16, the Jewish students left for several days for paramilitary youth exercises (known as *gadna*). This is a regular occurrence aimed at preparing Jewish youth for their military service two years later. When his school-mates came back and were sitting with the Arab students, they talked about practicing shooting a gun, and these stories caused tension between the Jewish and Arab students.³⁰ Now, not only did Hamze face the helplessness of being subjected to Military Rule, he also had a frustrating point of reference and comparison – the Jewish male youth who had the opportunity to hold a gun and perform their masculinity as warriors.

And Hamze continues:

Anyway, the kibbutz members were covering their discrimination with a cover of rationality, and did not treat us as it was common in the Jewish street. For example, if an Arab argued with a Jew, immediately the latter would shout: 'an Arab, an Arab'. These words were like a call and a sign to other Jews that an unwanted person is among them and immediately some Jews gathered from everywhere to add kicking and beating. If they heard this call they would compete with one another in capturing the prey. Then, if an Arab's blood spilled on them, they would say to the police that the Arab should be blamed because he soiled the Jew's clothes!

This reality forced me to learn boxing to defend myself, and to avoid being an easy prey to fanatical aggressions. Quickly I was successful in boxing and after one year of continuous practicing I won the state's championship for youth. After one more year I became the best boxer and in 1963 I won the state championship in the Light Middleweight category.³¹

Here, Hamze gets closer to justifying his boxing career in the need for self-defence. It is important to remember, however, that Arab-Jewish fist fights of this kind were not a daily phenomenon. At the end of the day, Jews had the state apparatus, including the armed forces on their side, and being a boxer would have been very little help to an Arab citizen in most incidents of daily inter-ethnic conflict.

After finishing middle school Hamze went with his older brother to work in construction in Tel Aviv, where he had the opportunity to join a leading boxing club in Tel Aviv and be trained by one of the best coaches in the country. In 1963 he joined the Beitar Netanya club, following his beloved coach, Yazi Ya'acbowitz, who joined this club.

In Israel in the 1960s, sports were highly politicized and every sports association had a clear political identity. The two biggest associations were Hapoel which was linked to the Histadrut and the ruling Mapai party and Maccabi, which was identified with the civic non-socialist branch of Zionism. Much smaller than these two was Beitar which was linked to the extreme right-wing Herut party. In 1963, Hapoel decided to cancel its participation in boxing competitions, and Maccabi significantly shrunk it – leaving the stage for Beitar to be the leading association in boxing in Israel, and the main address for every boxer in Israel who wanted to join an official club.

The political identity of his club was insignificant for young Hamze. He mentioned in his memoirs that he was practicing in the same gyms that were used by the party members before 1948 to practice ‘killing Arabs’, but he saw these facts as related to the past only. As he explained, he was not aware of the history of the club.

‘I understand today very well’, he writes, ‘that those who were coaching me, or at least some of them, did not see any problem with me being a brilliant champion as long as they related me to Israel and it helped Israel for public relations purposes.’³² Here, while writing in the late 1990s when he was located in Jordan, Hamze expresses full awareness for the potential propagandist value that his athletic success gave Israel. Again, this argument is uncommon among Arab athletes and former athletes, like William Shehada, who usually prefer to present their success as a desirable model of integration.

Unlike old Hamze who is, retrospectively, critical of the political meaning of his success, young Hamze in 1963 did aspire to be accepted by the Jewish majority. He felt, however, that, as an Arab, ‘I am not accepted as a full citizen of this state. This feeling deepened when I noticed the scarcity of interest of the newspapers in me, and the unjust treatment of journalists and referees, even though my competitions were occasionally described as being among the most beautiful ones.’³³ Namely, Hamze wanted his achievements to be acknowledged by the Hebrew media. In 1963 he was part of the Beitar Israel squad in an international competition in Athens. It was an important event for Beitar and before they left the Chair of the Herut party, Menahem Begin, personally came to wish them success. Hamze was deeply offended when the Hebrew daily *Ma’ariv* ascribed his victory in that competition only to ‘our light middleweight boxer’, instead of mentioning him by name.³⁴ Interestingly, Hamze argues that at those times he used to read only the sports section in the newspapers, and was not interested in politics.³⁵ Paradoxically, it was partly his disappointment from the lack of attention he received in this section of the newspaper that shaped his political world view.

‘There is no doubt that denying my rights and the dishonest treatment of the press hurt me very much’, he writes. ‘But what was even more hurtful was the audience that attended my competitions. And it was not satisfied with the game itself, with victory, but was yelling throughout the round ‘blood, blood’ – as if they want my blood to shed.’³⁶

The metamorphosis

One evening in March 1964, Hamze and his cousin Makram were involved in a fistfight between Arab and Jewish youngsters in a gas station. According to Hamze, the trigger for the fight was Makram’s attempt to flirt with a Jewish girl, which was considered by some Jewish men as a provocation. On the following day they read in the newspapers that: ‘Anonymous people attacked a worker in a gas station named Victor while he was rushing to help a woman who was standing in the station. The worker was taken to the hospital. He was diagnosed with a brain concussion and his condition is severe.’³⁷ The two cousins were anxious that someone had been quick enough to write down their motorcycle

number. Afraid of the police, they decided to escape to the Gaza Strip, which then was under Egyptian rule.

From this point on the plot becomes highly complicated and partly obscured due to the involvement of the Egyptian and Israeli security services. It is likely that Egyptian intelligence recruited Hamze and Makram and sent them back to Israel on a mission, where they were immediately arrested. Unexpectedly, on 17 April they escaped from jail and crossed the border back to the Gaza Strip, where they were arrested again by the Egyptian forces who were suspicious about their escape story. After being convinced that the two were not Israeli agents, they were recruited to Egyptian intelligence as translators. Hamze was able to renew his boxing career, and his victories against Egyptian boxers made him very popular among the Palestinians in Gaza. During the 1967 War Hamze was severely injured in his leg but was able to flee to Egypt. Later he moved to Lebanon, where he joined the Fatah forces. After being caught in 1971 on a guerrilla mission, he was imprisoned in the Ramleh jail, from which he escaped to Lebanon in March 1974. Today he lives in Algeria.

Concluding remarks

Hamze's story illustrates that even if we see on the surface an almost homogenous discourse, this homogeneity might hide muted voices. It does not mean that when Arab boxers argue that through boxing they aspire to 'create a bridge between Jews and Arabs' they are insincere. What it does mean is that other motivations are also involved but not all are considered legitimated for an Israeli citizen.

Some talented and influential Palestinian citizens of Israel, like the famous late poet Mahmud Darwish and the scholar Sabri Jiryis, left the State and joined the Palestinian Liberation Organization. But Hamze Yunes might be the only sporting star which chose this path. Moreover, while some Palestinian poets and intellectuals inside Israel express firm nationalist views, it is very rare to find these voices among athletes. Sport has the power to tie the athletes to the state with bonds of commitments, hopes and aspirations which minimize the chance that a revolutionary national leader will ever come from their ranks. The extra-sensitivity of the State to combative sports like boxing might make them even less likely to become a sphere of national protest. It seems that in the case of boxing under the Military Government, Israeli authorities were successful in muting public expressions of an 'athletic protest'.

Nevertheless, young Hamze's world view was probably not unique among other Arab boxers of his generation. What retroactively shaped his boxing narrative in such a unique way are his decades as a member and warrior of the PLO, and its current social and physical location. Unlike Arab athletes of his generation, he is not concerned with the reactions of Jews in Israel to his opinions, and he gave up a long time ago on his integrative aspirations. He never had a chance to be a 'Palestinian Muhammad Ali' since this metamorphosis is a direct result of him being outside of the Israeli public sphere. Had he avoided the hasty decision to escape to Gaza in 1964, it is likely that he would have continued in the supervised and co-opted Israeli boxing framework and would have adopted its prevalent discourse.

Notes

¹ Sorek, *Arab Soccer in a Jewish State*.

² *Ibid.*

³ Elias and Scotson, *The Established and the Outsiders*, 49.

⁴ Eisen, 'Jewish History', 516.

- ⁵ Mahlmann, 'Sport as a Weapon of Colonialism'; Sugden and Bairner, *Sport, Sectarianism and Society*; Nauright, *Sport, Cultures and Identities*; Jacob, 'Working Out Egypt'.
- ⁶ Appadurai, 'Playing with Modernity'.
- ⁷ Di-Capua, 'Sports, Society and Revolution'.
- ⁸ Stevenson and Alaug, 'Football in Yemen'.
- ⁹ Stuart, 'Players, Workers, Protestors'.
- ¹⁰ Mailer, *The Fight*.
- ¹¹ Sorek, 'The Sports Column'.
- ¹² Jiryis, *The Arabs in Israel*; Lustick, *Arabs in the Jewish State*.
- ¹³ Shafir and Paled, *Being Israeli*.
- ¹⁴ Baumel, 'The Attitude of the Israeli Establishment'; Robinson, 'Occupied Citizens in a Liberal State'.
- ¹⁵ Baumel, 'The Attitude of the Israeli Establishment'.
- ¹⁶ Ben-Porat, *Soccer and Nationalism*.
- ¹⁷ It is noteworthy that shortly after the above mentioned discussion, the Hapoel sports association, which was the biggest sports association in the country and closely connected to the ruling party, Mapai, has decided to eliminate its boxing branch.
- ¹⁸ Baumel, 'The Attitude of the Israeli Establishment'; Sorek, *Arab Soccer in a Jewish State*.
- ¹⁹ Ironically, boxing is the only sport where Jewish, not Arab, athletes complain about feeling marginalized and discriminated against.
- ²⁰ Yahalom Nir, 'Continuing to Smell the Canvas'. *Ha'aretz*, August 13, 2000.
- ²¹ Nir Shualy, 'A Boxer in the Cadets Squad: "I do not have a Problem with my Name, I am Just Another Arafat'. *Ma'ariv*, March 31, 2002.
- ²² Avi Garfinkel, 'Tough Hand in Nazareth'. *Ha'aretz*, October 28, 2003.
- ²³ Messner and Sabo, *Sport, Men, and the Gender Order*.
- ²⁴ Messner, 'Sports and Male Domination'.
- ²⁵ Jacob, 'Working out Egypt', 122.
- ²⁶ Hawari, 'Men Under the Military Regime'.
- ²⁷ The historical plot presented here is based mainly on Hamze's subjective perspective. In most cases I did not verify the accuracy of the quotes from his book since my focus is merely on the way the political meaning of boxing is articulated.
- ²⁸ Yunes, *al-hurub min sijj al-ramla*, 9.
- ²⁹ Wacquant, *Body & Soul*, 26.
- ³⁰ Yunes, *al-hurub min sijj al-ramla*, 11.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 11–12.
- ³² *Ibid.*, 12.
- ³³ Yunes, *al-hurub min sijj al-ramla*, 12.
- ³⁴ Interview with Abu Sultan, Hamze's brother, August 3, 2008.
- ³⁵ Yunes, *al-hurub min sijj al-ramla*, 33.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 20.

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