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EDITORIAL

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We are honoured to present the new issue of our journal. This issue contains six insightful articles contributing to the existing literature by dealing with the significant dimensions of the Israeli politics, foreign policy and the Jewish culture. The plurality of themes and the questions asked by the authors shed lights on various aspects of the Israeli and Jewish studies. While the dynamic character of the national identity and its dilemmas are critically examined by the authors from different perspectives in the first two articles, the third and fourth articles touch upon certain cultural phenomena which increase readers' curiosity further. And the last two articles focus on Israel's relations with the global powers - Russia and China- under changing regional politics.

All six of the research articles in this issue are expanded and revised version of the studies presented at the most recent *International Conference on Israel and Judaism Studies- ICIJS'20* (7-10 December 2020) and whose

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abstract published in the *Proceeding and Abstract Book*. As co-editors, we would like to express our great appreciation to the co-chairs of ICIJS'20 Efrat AVIV, Kevser K. KARATAŞ, and all members of committees (organizing, scientific advisory and reward review).

In her article titled "A 'Jewish State' or a 'State for All Its Citizens?': Palestinian Demands for Redefining the Boundaries of the Israeli National Identity and the Jewish Response", Z. Aslı ELİTSOY timely elaborates a substantial question regarding the identity of the State of Israel and analyses Israeli elites' approaches towards Palestinian demands to define the state as a state for all its citizens rather than a purely Jewish state. This article contributes to the already burgeoning literature problematizing Israel's self-ascribed Jewish and democratic characters. Strengthening Jewish character of the state provokes the rise of identity insecurities of the non-Jewish constituents of the state and the vice versa. This dilemma has several aspects and the author rightly examines the trans-border dimension and analyses how Israeli Palestinians' trans-border ethnic, cultural and national ties with the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza and with the wider Arab world shape the perceptions of the Israeli elites and securitize the Palestinian participation in politics in the State of Israel.

In the second article of this issue titled "Ben Gurion's Dichotomy: The Creation of the Israel National Ethos", Melis ÖZDEMİR examines David Ben Gurion's changing discourse on the Jewish statehood and nationhood and the relations with the Arabs since his early career as a labour Zionist leader in pre-state period. Ben Gurion was not only a thinker who gave meaning to the Jewish national project but also a political activist who developed and even revised his ideas under changing practical conditions. From this side, the author depicts a dynamic figure by also illustrating the Zionist intellectual aura of this time.

In "Creation, Names and Life: Humanity and Femininity in the Female Golem Myth", Marissa HERZIG, presents a quiet interesting and unfamiliar topic by bringing a feminist critique to the Golem myth in the Jewish folklore. The author discusses the gender roles attributed to the female Golems as they were mainly defined by men. She also elaborates the feminist critiques of Alice Hoffman and Helene Wecker and by emphasizing their limitation, she underscores the necessity of a post-humanist thought for the success of such feminist intervention. By deconstructing a cultural phenomenon from gender perspective and questioning the limitations of the exiting critiques, the author provides an insightful contribution.

Suchibrata ROY's article titled "Israeli Experiences in Diaspora" sheds light on a popular trend of travelling to India among Israeli youth especially after the years of military service. From the particular selection of travel destination to

the understanding of the journey and the organization of several Jewish groups in India, the author provides an illustrative picture of this trend and examines the links between this abroad experience and the sense of Jewishness. The traveller interviewees' responses help readers to understand this phenomenon in Israel and its meaning for the Israeli youth.

In the fifth article titled 'Israel's Challenge of Stability in the Context of the BRI's East Mediterranean Policies', Selim Han YENİACUN examines the dynamics of the cross-regional relations in the Middle East by analysing China-Israel relations within the context of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) under changing power balances in the East Mediterranean. Despite the growing influence in the Middle East, China's potential engagement with the regional crises is yet to be revealed. For that reason, mapping the dimensions of China-Israel relations contributes to the understanding of China's greater integration with the region and the potential roles in crises, at least in Israel-Palestine conflict.

In his article titled 'Russia-Israel Relationship: In the Perspective of the Syrian Civil War', Aref BIJAN discusses the changing dynamics of Russia-Israel relations with respect to the Russian intervention to the civil war in 2015 to support the Syrian regime. The author analyses the impacts of such intervention to Russia's relations with other regional actors. In this regard, taking Israel as a case is quite illustrative as Israel was one of the countries that felt threatened by the regime changes in the region during the Arab Uprisings. Israel's security concerns derived from the collapse of state authority in Syria and the rising influence of Iran and other non-state actors in the region led Israel to develop closer relations with Russia. In the complex picture of the civil war and the plurality of actors, the author interprets Russia-Israel relations by focusing on several aspects of security interests of the countries.

We hope that this collection of articles will contribute to the Israeli and Jewish studies from different perspectives and help further debate. We thank all the authors for their valuable contributions in this issue and the readers of our journal in advance.