

DIALOGUE

**REVIEW FOR DISCUSSION BETWEEN
ARAB AND JEWISH ACTIVISTS OF PALESTINE
IN DEFENCE OF THE RIGHT OF RETURN, FOR ONE STATE SOLUTION
END OF TERM REPORT PUBLISHED IN ENGLISH, HEBREW AND FRENCH**

Interview with Loubna Qutami, General Coordinator of the PYM – Statement on the September 2011, Declaration of Statehood, by the Palestinian Youth Movement – Declaration of a Bantustan in Palestine, by Haidar Eid – State of recognition, by Joseph Massad – A Chronicle of advanced decomposition, by François Lazar – The Palestinian economic bubble, by Tareq Sadeq – Read and reread «The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine» a book by Ilan Pappé (2006), by Jacques Werstein – The Palestinian Reconciliation Agreement : between illusion and chimera, by Hanane Shehadeh.



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Presentation

This edition of DIALOGUE is published a little late as a result of the editor's decision to include elements of analysis and discussion generated by the demand for recognition of a "State of Palestine" presented to the UN General Assembly the 23rd September last. In the contributions published here it can be seen how this operation is part of the misnamed "peace process", already qualified as a "swindle", five years ago by Henry Siegman, former President of the American Jewish Congress and which burns down to a tightening of Israel's hold of the West Bank and a political marginalisation of Palestinian representation. Could it have been otherwise ?

The reconciliation agreement between Fatah and Hamas – the two main Palestinian organisations, essentially in conflict for the leadership of the Palestinian Authority - is the object of a contribution of one of our correspondents in Palestine, which shows in underlying fashion, the important role, played by the military apparatus that has governed Egypt since the fall of Mubarak. It is important to recall the particular role of the Egyptian government, which in complete disregard for the democratic aspirations of the Egyptian people, has promised the American State Department to respect past agreements. Can the exchange of prisoners which has just taken place following the agreement between Hamas and the Netanyahu government, be broached without taking into account this angle? We shall come back to this.

We also broach in this edition the "Israeli social and protest movement" which at the time of writing is not finished. Most of the analyses and media commentaries treat it as a thing in itself, as a "classical" national process. How is it possible not to see here an expression of the profound crisis which is affecting Zionism, based on the separation and the division of Palestine and the expulsion of the Palestinian people (recalled in the account of Ilan Pappé's book: *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, also published in this edition of DIALOGUE)?

Once more, there is only one conclusion: that of a complete dead end for all the peoples of the region, which is the product of a policy based on the social and racial segregation of the Palestinian people. Doesn't the only positive solution to the Palestinian drama include a single State with equal rights for the two components, Arab and Jewish ? We invite our readers to pursue this discussion.

The editors.

Interview with Loubna Qutami

General Coordinator of the PYM

September, 23, 2011.

- Could you introduce yourself to the readers of "Dialogue" ?

- The Palestinian Youth Movement ("PYM") is a transnational, independent, grassroots movement of young Palestinians in Palestine and in exile worldwide as a result of the on-going Zionist colonization and occupation of our homeland. Our belonging to Palestine and our aspirations for justice and liberation motivate us to assume an active role as a young generation in our national struggle for the liberation of our homeland and people.

Irrespective of our different political, cultural and social backgrounds, we strive to revive a tradition of pluralistic commitment toward our cause to ensure a better future, characterized by freedom and justice on a social and political level, for ourselves and subsequent generations.

- What is the attitude of the young people of Palestine today regarding the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian organizations in general?

-The debate about recognition of statehood in the United Nations has sparked an abundance of diverse sentiments, perspectives and attitudes amongst Palestinian youth of the world. While some Palestinians, who stand the chance to gain individual economic and political forms of power, support the statehood proposal according to their individual interests, we assume the majority of Palestinian youth who support the state declaration may see it as an opportunity, a last resort, for the Palestinian people to pull themselves out of the political predicament they have found themselves in as the result of almost

two decades of a faulty peace process and negotiations. The continued annexation of Palestinian lands by Israel, the denial of refugees returning to their lands, Israeli control of borders, land, airspace, the apartheid wall, checkpoints, and the stalemate of negotiations has generated a level of exhaustion and has wedged the Palestinians in between a rock and a hard place. The Palestinians do not have anything to negotiate with because systems and processes of negotiation does not recognize the power differentiation between the colonizer and the colonized. As a result, those in support of the proposal may see it as a process in which Israel becomes more accountable to the International community and the Palestinians can establish their sovereignty without approval by the oppressor. Furthermore, the statehood proposal capitalizes on the political momentum sweeping the region at large that is rapidly overturning neo-colonial tyrannical regimes and the Palestinian leadership does feel pressure to compensate for its failure over the last two decades of not being able to determine a final solution, better the lives of the Palestinians under occupation, and weakening their sense of legitimacy by their own people.

However, it is irresponsible and unethical to say that the majority of Palestinian youth support the statehood declaration recognition. The proposal is being presented by a Palestinian leadership that does not represent the majority of Palestinian youth in the world—namely those living as refugees and exiles. The statehood proposal negates the Palestinian right of return to all of historic Palestine because it solidifies borders based on June of 1967 which also does not represent the majority of Palestinian youth national aspirations. Furthermore, the statehood proposal does

not address the fundamental issues that are of the utmost importance for Palestinian youth today; Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, borders, exploitation of labor, and corruption by certain individuals and entities within Palestinian leadership. More importantly, the statehood recognition does not address what Palestinian youth inside Palestine and transnationally aspire and are demanding; a liberation movement that is transparent, ethical, involves all Palestinians (refugees, exiles, women, youth, poor, political prisoners) and that is anti-colonial in its premise. The statehood recognition does not address the division or corruption in Palestinian leadership, or the prospects to engage more youth and other disenfranchised Palestinians in the process towards negotiating the terms of freedom and homeland. In its simplest form, for PYM and many Palestinian youth of the world, statehood recognition does not equal nor preclude freedom, sovereignty, justice, and return. Rather, it distracts our people from being perilled by the sweeping revolutions of the Arab Spring to re-formulate and re-vitalize our own liberation movement. The proposal disempowers the Palestinian people inside Palestine and in exile by allowing the UN, US, Israel, to determine what characterizes Palestinian statehood rather than equipping the Palestinian people to construct a truly liberated, self-determined and democratic nation that secures justice and peace for its people and all in the region.

Fundamentally, the PYM sees the statehood recognition proposal as a produc-

tion that distracts the International Community from what is truly needed to end occupation and colonization; holding Israel accountable by means of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions. Furthermore, the proposal distracts Palestinians by once again putting forth a false and unethical promise of sovereignty (as had been done in the 1991 Madrid Talks and 1993 Oslo Accords) to distract and disempower the Palestinian and Arab youth at large from building grassroots, liberatory, consistent and sustainable political transformation.

- What are your projects for the immediate future?

-The PYM is currently working on strengthening the transnational bases of PYM chapters and empowering, inspiring, and preparing Palestinian youth of the world to assume their rights and responsibilities to revitalizing a transnational-justice centered-Palestinian based -youth based- liberation movement.

We will do this through the implementation of the "Until Return and Liberation" project which will be conducted and facilitated in various chapters across the world which includes various components including political education for our communities and allies, organizational development, and larger social transformation. PYM needs support from all who support these efforts. For more information on how to support the project, or to join please email pym@pal-youth.org. (www.pal-youth.org)

Statement on the September 2011 Declaration of Statehood

by the Palestinian Youth Movement

We, in the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM), stand steadfastly against the proposal for Palestinian statehood recognition based on 1967 borders that is to be presented to the United Nations this September by the Palestinian official leadership. We believe and affirm that the statehood declaration only seeks the completion of the normalization process, which began with faulty peace agreements. The initiative does not recognize nor address that our people continue to live within a settler colonial regime premised on the ethnic cleansing of our land and subordination and exploitation of our people.

This declaration serves as a mechanism for rescuing the faulty peace framework and depoliticizing the struggle for Palestine by removing the struggle from its historical colonial context. The attempts to impose a false peace with the normalizing of the colonial regime has only led us to surrender increasing amounts of our land, the rights of our people, and our aspirations by delegitimizing and marginalizing our people's struggle and deepening the fragmentation and division of our people. This declaration jeopardizes the rights and aspirations of over two-thirds of the Palestinian people who live as refugees in countries of refuge and in exile, to return to their original homes from which they were displaced in the 1948 Nakba (Catastrophe) and subsequently since then. It also jeopardizes the position of the Palestinians residing in the 1948 occupied territories who continue to resist daily against the ethnic cleansing and racial practices from inside the colonial regime. Furthermore, it corroborates and empowers its Palestinian and Arab partners to act as

the gatekeepers to the occupation and the colonization of the region within a neo-colonial framework.

The foundation of this process serves as nothing more than to ensure the continuity of negotiations, economic and social normalization, and security cooperation. The state declaration will solidify falsified borders on only a sliver of historic Palestine and still does not address the most fundamental issues: Jerusalem, settlements, refugees, political prisoners, occupation, borders and resource control. We believe such a state declaration will not ensure nor promote justice and freedom for Palestinians, which inherently means there will be no sustainable peace in the region.

Additionally, this state declaration initiative is being presented to the United Nations by a Palestinian leadership that is illegitimate and has not been elected to be in a position of representation of the Palestinian people in its totality through any democratic means by its people. This proposal is a political production designed by them to hide behind their failure to represent the needs and desires of their people. By claiming to fulfill the Palestinian will for self-determination, this leadership is misusing and exploiting the resistance and sacrifices of the Palestinian people, particularly our brothers and sisters in Gaza, and even hijacking the grassroots international solidarity work, such as Boycott Divestment and Sanctions efforts and the flotilla initiatives. This proposal only serves to squander all efforts made to isolate the colonial regime and hold it accountable.

Whether the proposal for statehood recognition is accepted or not, we call on Palestinians inside our occupied homeland and in countries of refuge and exile to

remain committed and convicted to the worthiness of our struggle and inspired by their rights and responsibilities to defend it. We call on the free people of the world and the Palestinian people's allies, to truly practice solidarity with the Palestinian anti-colonial struggle by not taking a position on the state declaration but

rather continuing to hold Israel accountable by means of Boycott in all forms economically, academically, and culturally, Divestment and Sanctions.

**Until Return and Liberation,
International Central Council
Palestinian Youth Movement**



بيان إعلان الدولة في أيلول 2011

نحن في حركة الشباب الفلسطيني، نقف بحزم ضد مقترح الاعتراف بدولة فلسطينية على حدود عام 1967 الذي سيتم عرضه على الأمم المتحدة في أيلول من قبل القيادة الفلسطينية الرسمية، مؤكداً أن إعلان قيام الدولة يسعى فقط لإتمام عملية التطبيع التي بدأت مع اتفاقيات السلام الباطلة. حيث إن هذه المبادرة لا تعترف ولا تركز على أن شعبنا ما زال واقفاً تحت احتلال استيطاني استعماري كولونيالي قائم على التطهير العرقي لأرضنا والتبعية والاستغلال لشعبنا.

إن هذا الإعلان هو بمثابة آلية إنفاذ لعملية السلام الباطلة و تجريد النضال من أجل فلسطين من إطاره السياسي وإخراجه من سياق الاستعماري التاريخي. كما أن محاولات فرض السلام الزائف و التطبيع مع النظام الاستعماري قد أدت بنا إلى التنازل المستمر عن أراضينا و حقوق شعبنا و تطلعاتنا وذلك من خلال نزع الشرعية ونهيميش نضال شعبنا وتعميق تجزئته وانقسامه. هذا الإعلان يعرض حقوق و تطلعات أكثر من ثلثي الشعب الفلسطيني الذي يعيش حالة لجوء في دول الشتات أو في المنافي للخطر المتمثل بإلغاء حقهم بالعودة إلى ديارهم الأصلية التي هجروا منها في نكبة عام 1948 و في وقت لاحق منذ ذلك الحين. كما أنه أيضا يهدد موقف الفلسطينيين المقيمين في الأراضي المحتلة عام 1948 اللذين ما زالوا يقاومون يوميا ضد التطهير العرقي والممارسات العنصرية من داخل النظام الاستعماري. وعلاوة على ذلك، فإنه يعزز و يمكن شركائه الفلسطينيين والعرب ليكثروا بمثابة حراس للاحتلال والاستعمار في المنطقة ضمن إطار استعماري جديد.

إن إعلان الدولة ما هو إلا ضمان استمرار لنهج المفاوضات والتطبيع الاقتصادي والاجتماعي، والتنسيق الأمني. كما أنه سيرسخ الحدود المزيفة على جزء من فلسطين التاريخية دون معالجة القضايا الأساسية: القدس، المستوطنات، اللاجئين، الأسرى والاحتلال، والحدود والسيطرة على الموارد. ونحن نؤمن أن مثل هذا الإعلان لن يضمن العدالة والخربة لشعبنا الفلسطيني مما يعني أنه لن يكون هناك سلام مستدام في المنطقة.

بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يتم تقديم هذه المبادرة لإعلان الدولة إلى الأمم المتحدة من قبل قيادة فلسطينية غير شرعية و لم يتم انتخابها من خلال وسائل ديمقراطية من قبل شعبنا لتكون في موقع تمثيل للشعب الفلسطيني بجملة. هذا الاقتراح هو نتاج سياسي صمم منهم بغرض الإحتواء وراء فنلهم في التمثيل لتطلعات ورغبات شعبيهم و من خلال إدعائهم تحقيق الإرادة الفلسطينية الشعبية في تقرير المصير حيث إن هذه القيادة تقوم باستغلال و استخدام مقاومة وتضحيات الشعب الفلسطيني، وخاصة إخواننا وأخواتنا في غزة، و اختطاف قواعد أعمال التضامن الدولي، مثل جهود حملة المقاطعة وسحب الاستثمارات والعقوبات، ومبادرات الأسطول البحري هذا الاقتراح لا يؤدي إلا إلى تشتيت جميع الجهود المبذولة لعزل النظام الاستعماري ومحاصلته.

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Declaration of a Bantustan in Palestine

By Haidar Eid, 13 Oct 2011

If the PLO's UN statehood bid succeeds, it will lead to increased Israeli control, not real independence.

The "induced euphoria" that characterises discussions within the mainstream media around the upcoming declaration of an independent Palestinian state in September ignores the stark realities on the ground and the warnings of critical commentators. Depicting such a declaration as a "breakthrough", and a "challenge" to the defunct "peace process" and the right-wing government of Israel, serves to obscure Israel's continued denial of Palestinian rights while reinforcing the international community's implicit endorsement of an apartheid state in the Middle East.

The drive for recognition is led by Salam Fayyad, the appointed prime minister of the Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority (PA). It is based on the decision made during the 1970s by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) to adopt the more flexible programme of a "two-state solution". This programme maintains that the Palestinian question, the essence of the Arab-Israeli conflict, can be resolved with the establishment of an "independent state" in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, with East Jerusalem as its capital. In this programme Palestinian refugees would return to the state of "Palestine" but not to their homes in Israel, which defines itself as "the state of Jews". Yet "independence" does not deal with this issue, nor does it heed calls made by the 1.2 million Palestinian citizens of Israel to transform the struggle into an anti-apartheid movement, since they are treated as third-class citizens.

All this is supposed to be implemented after the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the West Bank and Gaza. Or will it

merely be a redeployment of forces as witnessed during the Oslo period? Yet proponents of this strategy claim that independence guarantees that Israel will deal with the Palestinians of Gaza and the West Bank as one people, and that the Palestinian question can be resolved according to international law, thus satisfying the minimum political and national rights of the Palestinian people.

Forget about the fact that Israel has as many as 573 permanent barriers and checkpoints around the occupied West Bank, as well as an additional 69 "flying" checkpoints; and you might also want to ignore the fact that the existing "Jewish-only" colonies have annexed more than 54 per cent of the West Bank.

At the 1991 Madrid Conference, then Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's "hawkish" government did not even accept the Palestinian "right" to administrative autonomy. However, with the coming of the "dovish" Meretz/Labour government, led by Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, the PLO leadership escaped into behind-curtains negotiations in Norway. By signing the Oslo Accords, Israel was released of the heavy burden of administering Gaza and the seven crowded cities of the West Bank. The first intifada was ended by an official - and secret - PLO decision without achieving its interim national goals, namely "freedom and independence", and without the consent of the people the organisation purported to represent.

"Once declared, the future 'independent' Palestinian state will occupy less than 20 per cent of historic Palestine."

This same idea of "independence" was once rejected by the PLO, because it did not address the "minimum legitimate rights" of Palestinians and because it is the antithesis of the Palestinian struggle for liberation. What is proposed in place

of these rights is a state in name only. In other words, the Palestinians must accept full autonomy on a fraction of their land, and never think of sovereignty or control of borders, water reserves, and most importantly, the return of the refugees. That was the Oslo agreement and it is also the intended "Declaration of Independence". No wonder, then, that Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu makes it clear that he "might agree to a Palestinian state through negotiations".

Nor does this declaration promise to be in accordance with the 1947 UN partition plan, which granted the Palestinians only 47 per cent of historic Palestine even though they comprised over two-thirds of the population. Once declared, the future "independent" Palestinian state will occupy less than 20 per cent of historic Palestine. By creating a Bantustan and calling it a "viable state", Israel will get rid of the burden of 3.5 million Palestinians. The PA will rule over the maximum number of Palestinians on the minimum number of fragments of land - fragments that we can call "The State of Palestine". This "state" will be recognised by dozens of countries - South Africa's infamous Bantustan tribal chiefs must be very envious!

One can only assume that the much talked-about and celebrated "independence" will simply reinforce the same role that the PA played under Oslo. Namely providing policing and security measures designed to disarm the Palestinian resistance groups. These were the first demands made of the Palestinians at Oslo in 1993, Camp David in 2000, Annapolis in 2007 and Washington last year. Meanwhile, within this framework of negotiations and demands, no commitments or obligations are imposed on Israel. Just as the Oslo Accords signified the end of popular non-violent resistance of

the first intifada, this declaration of independence has a similar goal, namely ending the growing international support for the Palestinian cause since Israel's 2008-2009 winter onslaught on Gaza and its attack on the Freedom Flotilla last May. Yet it falls short of providing Palestinians with the minimal protection and security from any future Israeli attacks and atrocities. The invasion and siege of Gaza was a product of Oslo. Before the Oslo Accords were signed Israel never used its full arsenal of F-16s, phosphorous bombs, and DIME weapons to attack refugee camps in the Gaza and the West Bank. Over 1,200 Palestinians were killed from 1987-1993 during the first intifada. Israel eclipsed that number during its three-week invasion in 2009; it managed to brutally kill more than 1,443 in Gaza alone. This does not include the victims of Israel's siege in place since 2006, which has been marked by closures and repeated Israeli attacks before the invasion of Gaza and since.

Ultimately, what this intended "declaration of independence" offers the Palestinian people is a mirage, an "independent homeland" that is a Bantustan-in-disguise. Although it is recognised by so many friendly countries, it stops short of providing Palestinians freedom and liberation. Critical debate - as opposed to one that is biased and demagogic - requires scrutiny of the distortions of history through ideological misrepresentations. What needs to be addressed is an historical human vision of the Palestinian and Jewish questions, a vision that never denies the rights of a people, that guarantees complete equality, and abolishes apartheid - instead of recognising a new Bantustan 17 years after the fall of apartheid in South Africa.

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State of recognition

By Joseph Massad - 15 Sep 2011

Whether the UN grants the PA status as a state or refuses to do so, either outcome will be in Israel's interest.

What is at stake in Barack Obama's vehement refusal to recognise Palestine as a mini-state with a disfigured geography and no sovereignty, and his urging the world community not to recognise it while threatening the Palestinians with retribution? What is the relationship between Obama's refusal to recognise Palestine and his insistence on recognising Israel's right to be a "Jewish state" and his demand that the Palestinians and Arab countries follow suit?

It is important to stress at the outset that whether the UN grants the Palestinian Authority (PA) the government of a state under occupation and observer status as a state or refuses to do so, either outcome will be in the interest of Israel. For the only game in town has always been Israel's interests, and it is clear that whatever strategy garners international support, with or without US and Israeli approval, must guarantee Israeli interests a priori. The UN vote is a case in point.

Possible outcomes

Let us consider the two possible outcomes of the vote and how they will advance Israeli interests:

The ongoing Arab uprisings have raised Palestinian expectations about the necessity of ending the occupation and have challenged the modus vivendi the PA has with Israel. Furthermore, with the increase in Palestinian grass-roots activism to resist the Israeli occupation, the PA has decided to shift the Palestinian struggle from popular mobilisation it will not be able to control, and which it fears could topple it, to the international legal arena.

The PA hopes that this shift from the popular to the juridical will demobilise Palestinian political energies and displace them onto an arena that is less threatening to the survival of the PA itself.

The PA feels abandoned by the US which assigned it the role of collaborator with the Israeli occupation, and feels frozen in a "peace process" that does not seek an end goal. PA politicians opted for the UN vote to force the hand of the Americans and the Israelis, in the hope that a positive vote will grant the PA more political power and leverage to maximise its domination of the West Bank (but not East Jerusalem or Gaza, which neither Israel nor Hamas respectively are willing to concede to the PA). Were the UN to grant the PA its wish and admit it as a member state with observer status, then, the PA argues, it would be able to force Israel in international fora to cease its violations of the UN charter, the Geneva Conventions, and numerous international agreements. The PA could then challenge Israel internationally using legal instruments only available to member states to force it to grant it "independence". What worries the Israelis most is that, were Palestine to become a member state, it would be able to legally challenge Israel.

If the UN vote passes, the PLO will cease to represent the Palestinian people [EPA]

This logic is faulty, though, because the Palestinians have not historically lacked legal instruments to challenge Israel. On the contrary, international instruments have been activated against Israel since 1948 by the UN's numerous resolutions in the General Assembly as well as in the Security Council, not to mention the more recent use of the International Court of

Justice in the case of the Apartheid Wall. The problem has never been the Palestinians' ability or inability to marshal international law or legal instruments to their side. Instead, the problem is that the US blocks international law's jurisdiction from being applied to Israel through its veto power. The US uses threats and protective measures to shield the recalcitrant pariah state from being brought to justice. It has already used its veto power in the UN Security Council 41 times in defense of Israel and against Palestinian rights. How this would change if the PA became a UN member state with observer status is not clear.

True, the PA could bring more international legal pressure and sanctions to bear on Israel. It could have international bodies adjudicate Israel's violations of the rights of the Palestinian state. The PA could even make the international mobility of Israeli politicians more perilous as "war criminals". This would render Israel's international relations more difficult, but how would this ultimately weaken an Israel that the US would shield completely from such effects as it has always done?

Implications of the UN vote

This presumed addition of power the Palestinians will gain to bring Israel to justice will actually be carried out at enormous cost to the Palestinian people. If the UN votes for the PA statehood status, this would have several immediate implications:

- (1) The PLO will cease to represent the Palestinian people at the UN, and the PA will replace it as their presumed state.
- (2) The PLO, which represents all Palestinians (about 12 million people in historic Palestine and in the diaspora), and

was recognised as their "sole" representative at the UN in 1974, will be truncated to the PA, which represents only West Bank Palestinians (about 2 million people). Incidentally this was the vision presented by the infamous "Geneva Accords" that went nowhere.

(3) It will politically weaken Palestinian refugees' right to return to their homes and be compensated, as stipulated in UN resolutions. The PA does not represent the refugees, even though it claims to represent their "hopes" of establishing a Palestinian state at their expense. Indeed, some international legal experts fear it could even abrogate the Palestinians' right of return altogether. It will also forfeit the rights of Palestinian citizens of Israel who face institutional and legal racism in the Israeli state, as it presents them with a fait accompli of the existence of a Palestinian state (its phantasmatic nature notwithstanding). This will only give credence to Israeli claims that the Jews have a state and the Palestinians now have one too and if Palestinian citizens of Israel were unhappy, or even if they were happy, with their third-class status in Israel, they should move or can be forced to move to the Palestinian state at any rate.

(4) Israel could ostensibly come around soon after a UN vote in favour of Palestinian statehood and inform the PA that the territories it now controls (a small fraction of the West Bank) is all the territory Israel will concede and that this will be the territorial basis of the PA state. The Israelis do not tire of reminding the PA that the Palestinians will not have sovereignty, an army, control of their borders, control of their water resources, control over the number of refugees it could allow back, or even jurisdiction over Jewish colonial settlers. Indeed, the Israelis have already obtained UN assu-

rances about their right to "defend" themselves and to preserve their security with whatever means they think are necessary to achieve these goals. In short, the PA will have the exact same Bantustan state that Israel and the US have been promising to grant it for two decades!

(5) The US and Israel could also, through their many allies, inject a language of "compromise" in the projected UN recognition of the PA state, stipulating that such a state must exist peacefully side by side with the "Jewish State" of Israel. This would in turn exact a precious UN recognition of Israel's "right" to be a Jewish state, which the UN and the international community, the US excepted, have refused to recognize thus far. This will directly link the UN recognition of a phantasmatic non-existent Palestinian state to UN recognition of an actually existing state of Israel that discriminates legally and institutionally against non-Jews as a "Jewish state".

(6) The US and Israel will insist after a positive vote that, while the PA is right to make certain political demands as a member state, it would have to abrogate its recent reconciliation agreement with Hamas. Additionally, sanctions could befall the PA state itself for associating with Hamas, which the US and Israel consider a terrorist group. The US Congress has already threatened to punish the PA and will not hesitate to urge the Obama administration to add Palestine to its list of "State Sponsors of Terrorism" along with Cuba, Iran, Sudan and Syria.

All of these six outcomes will advance Israeli interests immeasurably, while the only inconvenience to Israel would be the ability of the PA to demand that international law and legal jurisdiction be applied to Israel so as to exact more concessions from that country. However,

at every turn the US will block and will shield Israel from its effects. In short, Israeli interests will be maximised at the cost of some serious but not detrimental inconvenience.

The second possible outcome, a US veto, and/or the ability of the US to pressure and twist the arms of tens of countries around the world to reject the bid of the PA in the General Assembly, resulting in failure to recognise PA statehood, will also be to the benefit of Israel. The unending "peace process" will continue with more stringent conditions and an angry US, upset at the PA challenge, will go back to exactly where the PA is today, if not to a weaker position. President Obama and future US administrations will continue to push for PA and Arab recognition of Israel as a "Jewish state" that has the right to discriminate by law against non-Jews in exchange for an ever-deferred recognition of a Palestinian Bantustan as an "economically viable" Palestinian state - a place where Palestinian neoliberal businessmen can make profits off international aid and investment.

Either outcome will keep the Palestinian people colonised, discriminated against, oppressed, and exiled. This entire brouhaha over the UN vote is ultimately about which of the two scenarios is better for Israeli interests. The Palestinian people and their interests are not even part of this equation.

The question on the table before the UN, then, is not whether the UN should recognise the right of the Palestinian people to a state in accordance with the 1947 UN Partition Plan, which would grant them 45 per cent of historic Palestine, nor of a Palestinian state within the June 5, 1967 borders along the Green Line, which would grant them 22 per cent of

historic Palestine. A UN recognition ultimately means the negation of the rights of the majority of the Palestinian people in Israel, in the diaspora, in East Jerusalem, and even in Gaza, and the recognition of the rights of some West Bank Palestinians to a Bantustan on a fraction of West Bank territory amounting to less

than 10 per cent of historic Palestine. Israel will be celebrating either outcome.

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A Chronicle of advanced decomposition

By François Lazar, october 10, 2011

The summer months of 2011 have been marked by an unprecedented social movement that has shaken the State of Israel. Over 150,000 people (mostly Jews) took to the streets in over ten cities on Saturday July 30th with the main slogan: “the people want social justice, not charity”. On September 3rd, when mobilisation had reached its highest point, there were 400,000 - one Israeli out of 10 – out marching demanding “more social justice”.

So many comments have been aired on the “Israeli Spring”!.... Some even compared the present movement to the “euphoria of the creation of the State of Israel”. Volleys of comparisons have been drawn between the Israeli movement and the revolutionary movement that brought down tyrant Ben Ali in Tunisia, that toppled Mubarak in Egypt, both representatives of hated regimes in the service – just like the Israeli State in a different way – of oil traders and weapon-mongers.

During the first days, the movement first took off against the price hikes of lodgings (a 64% increase in Tel Aviv in 3 years). It progressively expanded into a general protest against price increases, and against the consequences of public deficit reduction pushed by the Netanyahu government. The *Yediot Aharonot* Daily wrote: “Up to now, so many crowds of people have never swamped the streets on social issues”

If it was just any capitalist country, that information could have stopped there and be just an element in the long international chain of events that, from Wisconsin to Greece, from Tunisia to Ireland, testifies to the rejection of the dictatorship of the International Monetary Fund and of governments on the banks' payroll.

But can the State of Israel be coined a “country” like the others? How can the social demands of Jewish populations be mentioned without mentioning the deep segregation that victimises the Palestinian minority on the inside, without recalling the brutal, cruel colonising of the West Bank, the physical imprisonment of the Gaza Strip residents, the daily repression against Palestinians? Isn't there a relationship between all these phenomena ? In such a framework, the social demands of Jewish middle classes (since they are essentially the ones concerned) living in the State of Israel are apparently expressed “without taking realities into account”, rejecting anything that might recall the permanent state of war of a society founded on the expropriation of an entire people.

It is worth noting that, during the demonstrations and sit-ins, minority gatherings at times uttered slogans demanding equality. Placards and interviews denounced the subsidies handed to settlers and to colonies in the West Bank as misappropriation of public money, thus naively demanding an impossible self-reform of the State. Very probably, separate individuals - Zionists for instance – may not always be determined by what they think they are. **But whether they will or not, what is the “Israeli social movement” unless it is the movement of privileged colonists?** Does this not express the depth of the crisis in which Zionism is mired today, when it used to pretend it would offer “to the Jews of the whole world a land without people for a people without land”?

The crisis of the Israeli society is just an expression of the depth of the crisis of Zionism.

The poverty rate of Israel's people nearly stands at 24%, but 50% of those poor are

from the Arab population which numbers 1.5 million people out of a total 6.5 inhabitants. The rate of poverty reaches 70% of families originating from Ethiopia. The Palestinians from the inside largely boycotted the demonstrations, which they felt no interest in as most of them rejected the essential slogans for equal rights and the end of social and racial segregation.

In 2005, some 34% of Israelis, among whom the Palestinians from inside, earned minimum wages or less; nearly 50% of students dropped their education before graduating. About 40% of the young Israeli Jews live under poverty level. Among those, 70,000 are regular drug users. In the Israeli society, known for being intensely violent, over 25% of the homeless young are women; a great many of them resort to prostitution as their only source of income and survival. An information posted on website, IsraelValley (July 30th) informed that some categories of people, *“have to spend 40% of their wages in supermarkets. Bank cards with deferred payments are extensively used (.) No household is able to face unexpected expenses and has to run up debts.”* IsraelValley explains that the top layer of the middle class is the *“one that shoulders most duties towards society; compulsory military service, three years for boys, two years for girls. Further education that is far from being free of charge and to add to this yearly military periods - mostly one month or more, mainly for men. That is much too much. Frustration has reached the point of general rejection”*.

Alongside this phenomenon of social decomposition, the State of Israel ranks world top for military spending per inhabitant, i.e. some 10% of GDP. The reality of Zionism – once again, that is what it is in fact – drives more than one

million Israelis to live away from Israel with no intention of returning there in the near future.

[The figures are provided by the data published by Bituch Leumi – the equivalent of social welfare services in the State of Israel – by the Brookdate Institute, by the Israeli government and various institutes often quoted by the Israeli newspapers]

Meanwhile, the building continues on the Wall within the borders of the West Bank territory. On its way, it destroys Palestinian homes, crops, infrastructures... Billions are devoted to the colonisation of the West Bank, to security and repression agendas, which are the key to the dynamism of the Tel Aviv stock exchange.

All this is occurring against a backdrop of unprecedented disputes among the Israeli top officers. A significant number of them affirm that an attack against Iran would be *“a catastrophe for the security of the State”*, thus publicly opposing Netanyahu who regularly pushes those prospects to the top of his agenda.

But is an “Israeli-Palestinian” solution possible within the framework of so-called “international right”?

Zionism, its territorial expression in Palestine, its being prolonged by warfare for over 60 years, are the result of the determination of the most powerful imperialism, the US, whose vital interests in the region identify with the existence of the State of Israel. The resounding speeches whether ideological or mystical of US presidents on *“the unalienable right of the Jewish people”* are rooted in the fierce determination to control the Middle East and its resources. This control is ceaselessly challenged by the resistance

of all the peoples of the region, just as by the crisis which is fraying the US elites. It drives the US to constantly readjust its policies. The latest example of this is the fool's game which took place during the recent general assembly of the UN.

Mahmud Abbas, the head of the Palestinian Authority put in an official request for admission of "Palestine" as a member State to the UN General Assembly. As is shown by several surveys [*see the article by Hadar Eid and Joseph Massad published in this issue of Dialogue-Ed.N*], the request can only be met within the framework of the interests of the State of Israel ... and of the US political agenda in the Middle East.

The Palestinian people – 70% refugees – have all but completely lost their illusions in the ability of the UN to bring about any solution whatsoever. It takes just a little thought to realise that, in practise, the UN's part is to have the "sacro-sanct" international laws abided by when it fits in with US interests. Half the dozens of UN resolutions condemning the State of Israel would have been sufficient in any other case to trigger off the fire of "the world's peace keeper". A number of UN resolutions call for the creation of a Palestinian state: resolution 181 which explicitly provided for the institution of that pseudo state on 46% of Palestine's historical territory; resolution 465 adopted in 1980 asking the State of Israel to "*dismantle the existing colonies*" in the occupied territories after 1967, while stipulating – as quoted by Ali Abunimah in *Foreign Affairs* magazine - that all the measures taken by Israel to "*change the physical character, the composition, the institutional structure or the status of the Palestinian territories or other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem have no legal basis*" and are blatant violations of

international law. The Goldstone report should also be quoted. It establishes that the Israeli army committed war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Gaza Strip in January 2009. The decision of the International Court of Justice, declaring illegal the Wall which turns the West bank into an open air jail must also be quoted. The UN which permits "small nations" to have a voice next to the "large ones" is nothing other, through the Security Council which is its executive body, than the diplomatic version of the political agenda of the world's most powerful imperialism. Most observers have noticed the radically pro-Israeli speech by Barack Obama which gives the impression that it is Palestine which occupies Israel. Israeli pacifist Uri Avnery, himself a Zionist, said that the speech was "*the art of hypocrisy; nearly all the assertions in the speech concerning the Israello-Palestinian issue were lies*". On his side Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's Prime Minister, several times used the word "peace" in his own speech, in front of a half empty hall, while accusing the Palestinians of having consistently refused to negotiate. Hackneyed hot air. As for Abbas, true, he did say that he did not intend to "delegitimize Israel" but the occupation and the colonisation of the West Bank. However and this can be seen daily quite concretely (and not only since 1967, but since its foundation) can the Hebrew State be defined otherwise than as a colonial type state? During the same ceremony, Sarkozy was proposing that "Palestine" be recognised as an observer state (like the Vatican!).. on condition it did not seek to bring Israel to the International Court of Justice. That would be a risk then? They all mention resuming the misnamed "peace process" which has caused nothing other than war, killings, and the theft of Palestinian lands.

Mahmud Abbas, whose prisons are full and who places his operation within the framework of “Arab revolutions” has never had (nor ever wanted to have) the least leeway with the US State Department. It is worth noting that the Oslo Accords in 1993 never provided for the prospect of a Palestinian State but set up a Palestinian Authority and carved up the West Bank into 3 zones, one exclusively reserved for Israeli colonies. The role of the P.A. - instituted when the Israeli army could no longer cope with the Intifada (the people's uprising) – was to try and contain and then repress the Palestinian democratic demands. Ever since, the concentration of powers in Ramallah has brought about the impoverishment of the international body representing the Palestinian people, the PLO.

It was the “road map of George Bush and Sharon which, from the point of view of imperialism, raised the perspective of a “Palestinian State”, the strategy-makers of Washington considering that it was the only way to open up the prospect of a “Broader Middle East” in which the State of Israel would be integrated and recognised “normalisation”). Abbas, whose political existence is tied to this operation, can only maintain himself because he is able to pay the P.A.'s 160,000 civil servants and he gambles on his own existence and the existence of his fraction. Indeed, if the “Broader Middle East” in its former guise implied pressure on Israel, in exchange for willing or unwilling integration of Palestinian refugees and for forsaking the right to return while reinforcing the so-called moderate

Arab States, the resistance of peoples, the Tunisian revolution and above all the emergence of the Egyptian masses challenging the collaboration agreements, shake the entire scheme to its roots. Pressuring Israel is out of the question. The State of Israel now publicises itself as the only stable prop for imperialism in the region the more so as the Hebrew State is racked, as we have seen, by an unprecedented social collapse and domestic crisis.

Founded with the pretext of affording “a shelter for the Jews”, the State of Israel has become the last ghetto of history, where a racist apartheid policy towards the Palestinian people has turned the Israelis into prison wardens (mentally for themselves but very real for the Palestinians). This throws a widening strata of the “Jewish society” into uncertainty and decomposition.

The demands of the Palestinians from inside, for equal rights linked to the demands of Palestinians in refugee camps and across the world for the right to return, i.e. their right to land, their democratic rights, imply putting an end to the partition of Palestine. On a more general level, this orientation implies putting an end to the international order that, for 60 years has strained every nerve to keep and worsen the division contrived to separate peoples and populations, a division which is an element of its political stability. No emancipating solution for the Jewish populations can come into being within this framework.



The Palestinian economic bubble

By Tareq Sadeq, september 1st, 2011

I did not imagine I would one day see the Palestinian occupied territories within the 1967 borders reach an economic growth rate equivalent to that of China, with an announced progression of 8% for 2010. According to the economic forecasts of the World Bank it will reach 13% in 2013; to such an extent that I began to think that the territories under the control of the Palestinian Authority could be the “Singapore of the Middle East”, as the artisans of the Oslo agreement claimed in the 90s. It was soon proved that this has just been an illusion that could not withstand the fragile reality of the Palestinian Authority: the reality of a bubble that can burst at any moment. Only a few months were needed for the Palestinians to understand that their leadership is confronted with an economic crisis such, that the government is practically insolvent.

How can an economy showing a growth rate among the highest in the world, be confronted with an unprecedented financial crisis? Such a contradiction can only be explained from two hypotheses: either the figures are faked which is difficult to verify; or this is due to the very structure of the economy, where the increase in State expenditure leads to GDP progress but also to a budget deficit.

How can the policies Salam Fayyad has followed for four years (2007-2011) in the name of economic independence and sovereignty have resulted in such a fiasco? Fayyad has announced that his government has reduced by 35% over the last two years its dependence on foreign payments and has claimed that it was capable of paying six months of wages to its employees in the event of total cessation of these payments. Fayyad’s optimism is such that he has claimed he will be able to do without “foreign aid” as from the year 2013. All his declarations

collapsed from the moment the Israeli authorities announced they were ceasing to transfer to the Palestinian Authority its share of customs duty taxes. It has to be noted anyway that in spite of the economic growth rate announced, the rates of unemployment and of poverty have not fallen at all.

Without any doubt the first cause of the fragility of the Palestinian economy is the Israeli occupation and therefore in reality the Palestinian Authority: void of any authority, it is simply an organ for executing foreign policies.

The town of Ramallah — that the Palestinian Authority has proclaimed the “capital” — represents alone 40% of Palestinian GDP. However the dominant economic activity there is that of restaurants and bars. Note that the consumer growth rate in this field has increased in a significant manner between 2007 and 2010 going up to + 2.4% in 2008. This is an indicator of the dominant type of consuming among the Palestinian population. The Palestinian Authority is the number one employer on the Palestinian labour market where 20% of Palestinian workers are employed in the public sector. However since the main part of the Palestinian Authority’s resources come from “donating countries” its capacity for employing a fifth of the population depends on how docile the governments’ politics and economics are in relation to Western countries. A clear illustration of this, is what the Hamas government then the government of national unity had to go through in 2006. Or there again, the fact that the World Bank and donating countries intervene in the choice of the type and financing of all development projects.

What is astonishing is that the Finance Minister is also Salam Fayyad, the Prime

Minister. The only known precedents for such a situation are to be found in countries rotten with corruption where the head of the executive holds the power of decision and that of financing these same decisions. The absence of a legislative organ – because of the existing conflict between Hamas and Fatah – is good ground for favouring all forms of corruption. In any case, the deepening of the State budget deficit leading to a situation where the Palestinian Authority can no longer pay its employees or honour its debts to the private sector, a situation of cessation of payments, prove that “foreign aid” even if not discontinued - cannot be the basis of a durable solution for the Palestinian Authority. To-day's financial crisis is not due to a delay in payments from donating countries — fundamentally Arab countries — , as the Finance Minister claims. Foreign financing has constantly supported Fayyad's budget since 2008 and aid from the Arab countries represents only 20%. The main reason is that the Palestinian Authority has no authority anywhere, no more on the West Bank, in the towns of the A Zone than in Gaza. The structure of the Palestinian Authority itself is another of the causes: wages represent 58% of government expenditure – one of the highest rates in the world – as opposed to only 8% spent on development projects. It should be noted that 47% of these wages are spent on some 70 000 security employees, in the different branches of the sector and it is a question for them of ensuring security under a regime of occupation. Such a high percentage accorded to the security budget is aimed at conforming to the requirements of the US and the Israeli security services: it must be ensured that all mobilisation of the Palestinian masses is under control and fully mastered. At the same time expenditure for health or education does not exceed 5% of the budget.

This structure of the Palestinian Authority has led to making the Palestinian citizen, who lives in the occupied territories within the 1967 borders, a simple consumer of Israeli products, a hostage of the interests of the Israeli market, of foreign financing, of the appreciation of donating countries, a hostage of Israeli policies. It is not surprising that in these conditions the Palestinian Authority is confronted with a true financial crisis: it only serves to finance Palestinian consumers who produce nothing of their own.

What's more, corruption continues to be rife in Palestinian organs of power and Ministries, as much under the Fayyad government as that of Hamas, but in both cases in a different way to that of Arafat's time (then, widely criticised by Westerners). It is a question to-day of structured corruption entailing different forms of money laundering, as the recent accusations aimed at Mohamed Dahlan (former Minister and member of the Fatah Central Committee) showed, but which do not account for more than the infinitely small emerged tip of the iceberg.

It can moreover, appear paradoxical that the World Bank supports the capacity of the Palestinian Authority to set up a “State”, while one of its own indicators (the Indicator of the control of corruption) underlines the deterioration of the Palestinian Authority's struggle against corruption since 2008 i.e. from the first days of the Salam Fayyad government.

GDP growth cannot be considered as an indicator of economic development , since it is consumption that structures the economy. The growth rate can fall through the simple fact – for political reasons – of a delay in the payment of a donation. This economic structure im-

posed by Israel and donating countries is deliberately aimed at submitting the whole of Palestinian life and therefore the Palestinian economy to permanent political blackmail. To want the well being of the Palestinian people would mean allowing it to develop and consume its own production: on the other hand if the objective is to maintain it under foreign control, there is no need for a real economy with its own capacity of financing itself.

Israel has succeeded in creating the political framework for this situation via the different agreements that have been signed with the PLO or the PA. The Oslo Agreements and the Paris Economic Convention have greatly limited any possibility of changing the political course for the Palestinian Authority or of developing the means of counting on its own resources: the Palestinians, for example, do not have the right to fix different customs duty to that of the Israelis, they cannot either collect directly duty taxes but only wait on Israel's pleasure: Israel collects the taxes and then transfers - as it wishes - the part that is due to the PA, taxing it at 3% in doing so. The Palestinian Authority can mount no development project outside the zones placed under its control on the West Bank. It has no possibility of changing the percentage in its budget attributed to "security" - which is directly decided by Israel and donating countries.

The Palestinian Authority's policies, particularly over the last four years under Fayyad's leadership have resulted in no progress in the Palestinian economy towards its independence. On the contrary they have made the situation worse, because the economy has become more and

more centred round consumption alone and has been rendered more and more vulnerable to foreign pressure. This dependence on donations continuing, was visible in Mahmoud Abbas's insistence on Salam Fayyad being maintained at the head of the national union government with Hamas, so that foreign aid be not suspended. In short, the function of the Palestinian Authority is more than ever that of managing a situation which is conform to American and Israeli requirements.

No solution to to-day's economic crisis can be expected from government policy. If the Palestinian Authority wants to truly launch real economic growth, it must allow Palestinians to produce what, contrary to the economic and political needs of Palestinians, no step in this direction will be possible.

In a situation under occupation, it is natural to resist and combat occupation till it is ended, so that the people gain all political rights and civil equality for all citizens. As a result, the existence of an "autonomous" Authority in the shadow of occupation cannot be considered as normal, even less so with the "two States solution", which cannot guarantee at all, as most Palestinians are aware of, social justice and equality for the Palestinian people.

If Palestinian leaders are aware of the situation, they have to liberate the Palestinian people from the farce of the Oslo Agreements and from the Authority encharged with implementing them.

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Read and reread «The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine” a book by Ilan Pappé (2006)

By Jacques Werstein

Reading Ilan Pappé's book written in 2006, “*The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*”, is particularly topical today in order to understand what is at stake, in a situation where the Palestinian Authority, in the person of Mahmud Abbas, is putting its request to the UN for recognition of the Palestinian State, of which it intends to assume the leadership.

The UN is confronted, since its creation “with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict”. It has recognised and recognises among its members the State of Israel “*open to the immigration of Jews from all the countries where they are dispersed*” and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation” (PLO) a member with observance status representing all Palestinians who lived on Palestinian Mandate territory up till the partition of Palestine, adopted by the UN the 29th November 1947. They were chased out during the Nakba by Zionist, then Israeli armed forces. The PLO's first and foremost mandate is the demand to be able to return to their homes, the right for all to return, right that the UN recognised the 11th December 1948!

Taking this into account, it can reasonably be questioned whether Mahmud Abbas's demand is compatible with PLO representation and its mandate of continuing to defend in the UN, the right to return for Palestinian refugees. Besides, it is well known that several Zionist currents, with Lieberman, are demanding that the Palestinians who live in Israel (and have Israeli nationality) be expelled and sent to the pseudo Palestinian State. Mahmud Abbas's demand is a direct threat to this population. Should the Palestinians in the refugee camps and the diaspora abandon their right to return home?

Wouldn't that be making the Palestinian people pay a high price for UN recognition of the Palestinian rump state, in charge of keeping order alongside the State of Israel ? Do the Palestinians have to abandon for ever all perspective of a single democratic, secular, Palestinian State, with equal rights for its Jewish and Arab components, in the absence of which no return is conceivable ? Must it submit to barbarism?

The hue and cry of the media can be heard everywhere with their solution to the conflict : a return to the pre 1967 Palestine.

Partition, war and ethnic cleansing

Ilan Pappé's book, “*The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*”, has the great merit of reminding us that before the Zionist military occupation of the West bank and Gaza in 1967, the “Palestinian State” did not exist. Palestine, after the Ottoman occupation, was the Palestine Mandate, under the occupation of the British Empire. In 1967 it was already dislocated by Partition and the ethnic cleansing that this allowed, with the aim of setting up a Zionist State on the major part of its territory. Partition and ethnic cleansing are the pillars of the construction of the Israeli State and remain so, against the Palestinian people and the peoples of the Middle East.

Ilan Pappé organised his research round these pillars on which the Zionist movement has built its State and first of all on the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian inhabitants of Palestine, that is denied everywhere. His work corrects the Zionist version according to which, the “the war of independence of Israel” that defeated the invasion of the Arab armies, was to have been the founding act of the Jewish State that the State of Israel celebrates every year. He gives an answer to

this (P. xvi): “When it created its nation-state, the Zionist movement did not wage a war that ‘tragically but inevitably’ led to the expulsion of ‘parts of’ the indigenous population’... the main goal was the ethnic cleansing of all of Palestine, which the movement coveted for its new state.”. And he proves it.

Of course the Zionist movement did not create a “Nation State” in Palestine. No more than the French colonists did in Algeria. Ilan Pappé then no longer uses this term. He prefers (p. 253) the term of “White (western) fortress”, in a “black” (Arab) world that clearly situates the origins of this State in the Zionist movement, sponsored, armed, then transformed into a State by Imperialism.

To write this book, Ilan Pappé got together a considerable number of documents from archives, military reports, accounts from the minutes of official meetings of the Zionist movement and the Israeli State, from personal diaries and correspondence, but also from works undertaken by Israeli and Palestinian researchers, from the depositions of those having taken part in ethnic cleansing, officers and soldiers and their Palestinian victims. The repertory of these comprises 20 pages of substantiated notes. He confronts and compares them, analyses and reconstructs the development of the discussions, decisions and their implementation, “*The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*” has the makings of an historical investigation and indictment. He writes in his foreword (p. xvi), “*In many ways it is indeed my own J’Accuse against the politicians who devised, and the generals who perpetrated, the ethnic cleansing... because there is no other way for us to fully understand the roots of the contemporary Israeli-Palestinian conflict*”.

To-day, the official Zionist version of what the Nakba is, can be consulted on the web site of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs: “*The Zionist movement, then Israel never demanded the expulsion of Palestinians and when the Palestinians were chased from their homes, it was never done in a systematic or organised fashion. But the refugee problem has been created mainly and primarily by the leaders of the Arabs of Palestine, and the heads of Arab States encouraging them to go into exile while awaiting their return on the ruins of the Jewish State, crushed at birth ...*” Ilan Pappé recalls that Israeli school books go even further asserting: “*there was a Jewish attempt to persuade the Palestinians to remain.*”

This official Zionist version is adopted by all Western governments, for whom Israel is the only democratic State in the Middle East and everyone knows the considerable efforts these heads of State go to, to export and extend this democracy in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Libya.

They “*have never demanded the expulsion of the Palestinians ...*”

Ilan Pappé refers (p.23) to a letter from David Ben Gurion dated 1937, before the Holocaust then, when the founder of the Israeli State, of which he was to be Prime Minister explains to his son, “*‘the Arabs will have to go’ but one needs an opportune moment for making it happen, such as a war.*” The minutes of the Jewish Executive Agency give an account of the discussion engaged in June 1938 on the future of the population living in Palestine. Ben Gurion in order to dissipate hesitation came out with (p.xi): “*I am for compulsory transfer; I do not see anything immoral in it*”. In a Trade Union Assembly of the Zionist Confederation

Histadrut of which he was the leader, Ben Gurion strongly contradicted a speaker who had just said: “we are not fighting Palestinian peasants, but effendis” (Arab squires). This was his answer: “you are wrong, our enemies are Palestinian peasants”. As for Yossef Weitz who was the head of the Jewish National Fund in charge of the organisation of receiving and distributing to Jews, land bought off Squires, he was careful to make sure the land was first of all cleared of the Arab peasants that worked it. He never stopped insisting: “It is our right to transfer the Arabs. The Arabs must go.”

Ilan Pappé assembles piece by piece the elements of a dossier that clearly establishes, in contradiction with the assertions of Zionist propaganda, echoed by all Western governments, that there was never a voluntary exodus of Palestinians, in reply to the call from their leaders and the heads of Arab States, in reaction to the proclaiming of the State of Israel the 14th May 1948.

So, concerning the fact that the young Israeli State with its political and military leaders, “the heroes of the war of independence”, would never have organised systematic violence and exactions -the rare examples being regrettable but unavoidable acts of violence in any war - Ilan Pappé produces to contradict this, the minutes of Ben Gurion's “council committees”, when he was “defence minister” of the Zionist movement. He set up this personal “council committee” of eleven members, old Zionist leaders and young officers. It notes that as from the beginning of December 1947, (p. 87) “Ben Gurion and his close associates nonetheless understood perfectly (...) the ability of the Jewish forces to seize, even before British had left, many of the areas the UN Partition Resolution

had allocated to the Jewish state. ‘Seizing’ meaning only one thing: the massive expulsion of the Palestinians living there from their homes, businesses and land in both the cities and the rural areas”.

The 10th December 1947 the council committee took a stand in favour of “engaging an intimidation campaign”, that the army, the Haganah called “violent recognition operations” which entailed a demonstration of force against the villages. The village of Balad al-Cheikh was chosen, where lay the body of one of the most venerated and charismatic Palestinian leaders of the thirties, killed by the British in 1935. His assassination had sparked off a general strike and the setting up of strike committees for the independence of Palestine, against British occupation, for a stop to Jewish immigration and a ban on the sale of Palestinian land. The revolt begun in 1936 was crushed with much bloodshed three years later by the English army, side by side with the Zionist brigades, thanks to the betrayal of the effendis (squires). It marked the whole of the future history of Palestine. Crushing Balad al-Cheikh was supposed to show the villagers that any resistance to Zionist forces was useless. A local commander received the order (p.59) “to encircle the village, kill the largest possible number of men, damage property, but refrain from attacking women and children”. The attack took place the 31st December 1947. It resulted in more than 60 Palestinian deaths, not all men. During the following council committee meeting, the decision was taken for future operations, to abandon this distinction between men and women, that complicated things unnecessarily.

Urban space also came under attack; Haïfa, the biggest port of Palestine, its

refinery where Palestinian and Jewish workers had come out together on several strikes against the British occupier (p.58) “*this class conscienciousness was curbed in the 1920s and 1930s by both national leader-ships, in particular by the Jewish Trade Union movement, but it continued to motivate joint industrial action against employers of all kinds, and inspire mutual help at times of recession and scarcity*”. (p.58) “*From the morning after the UN Partition resolution was adopted, the 75 000 Palestinians in the city (Haifa) were subjected to a campaign of terror jointly instigated by the Irgun and the Hagana ... The Jewish troops rolled barrels full of explosives and huge steel balls down into the Arab residential areas, and poured oil mixed with fuel down the roads which then they ignited. The moment panic-stricken Palestinian residents came running out of their homes to try to extinguish these rivers of fire, they were sprayed by machine-gun fire ... The early eruption of violence put a sad end to a relatively long history of workers’ cooperation and solidarity in the mixed city of Haifa...*”

Zionist armed forces on the ground were called upon to take advantage everywhere and immediately of eventual angry reactions of Palestinians to the announcement of the UN decision to split Palestine, by turning them out of their homes and driving them forcibly to the border. Cleaning up brigades developed in number coordinating their action. Three months later, reports from the front were already considered so convincing by Ben Gurion, (200 towns and villages had been destroyed, 350 000 inhabitants had been driven out) that his “council committee” drew up and launched on all fronts the fourth cleansing plan of Palestine (Daleth). This plan did not limit its action to the territories attributed by the

UN to the Jewish State and coordinated all its forces in order to systematically accelerate up the ethnic purification of the occupied territories before the departure of the English planned for the 14th May 1948.

The months of the Nakba horror

Ilan Pappé retraces the months of the Nakba horror in these towns and villages. (p.93) “*The Jews wanted the port city but without the 75,000 Palestinians who lived there, and in April 1948 they achieved their objective*”. The British soldiers were due to leave a month later by boat from Haifa where their forces were in great number. They were contained in a “buffer zone” which was the only obstacle preventing Jewish forces from a direct assault on and takeover of, the Palestinian areas, where more than 50,000 people still resided.” They were still in charge of maintaining law and order. They were informed about what the Zionists were preparing. They could have intervened and stopped it.

Their general summoned the Jewish municipal officials and informed them that his soldiers were going to evacuate the “buffer zone” within two days. Two days later, the day planned for the Zionist attack, he received four improvised and exhausted Palestinian leaders, whom he advised to leave the town, where most of the families had lived since the middle of the 18th century. “*They understood that the British would not protect them, they were doomed to be expelled. They told (him) they wanted to leave in an organised manner. The Carmeli Brigade made sue they would leave in the midst of carnage and havoc*”. Mordechai Maklef, operations officer in the Carmeli brigade (who later became Chief of Staff of the Israeli army) gave his soldiers clear and simple orders: “*Kill any Arab you en-*

counter; torch all inflammable objects and force doors open with explosives.” The orders were faithfully executed and “the shock and terror were such that... people began leaving en masse. In panic they headed towards the port where they hoped to find a ship or a boat to take them away from the city”. Straight away “Jewish troops broke into and looted their houses.”

Loudspeakers howled inviting the crowd (p.95, 96) *“to gather in the old marketplace next to the port, and seek shelter until an orderly evacuation by sea could be organised.”... “The Carmeli brigade officers ... ordered their men to station three-inch mortars... and to bombard the gathering crowd below... When the shelling began this was the natural destination for the panic-stricken Palestinians... ‘Men stepped on their friends and women on their children. The boats in the port were soon filled with living cargo. The overcrowding in them was horrible. Many turned over and sank this all their passengers.”*

When the ethnic cleansing had reached its objective in the summer 1949, 531 towns and villages had been destroyed in 78% of the territory of ancient Palestine. The Zionist leaders, who had secretly negotiated from 1947 on, then during the “strange war” with Abdallah of Jordan (trusty ally of the British Empire) , the attribution of the West Bank to Jordan and Gaza to Egypt , had won and occupied for the Jewish State, 22% more territory, destined for the “Arab” State.

The partition voted by the UN attributed to the 66% of “Arab” Palestinians, 44% of the territory of Palestine that should have been peopled almost exclusively by “Arabs”. To the 30% of Jews of Palestine it had attributed 56% of the Palestine of 1947 where half Jews half Palestinians

were to live side by side. At the end of the forced cleansing of 800 000 Palestinians driven out of their homes to the border, there remained only 160 000 Palestinians in 78% of the territory of Palestine where the State of Israel had been proclaimed. Ilan Pappé remarks that, at no moment up till the present day have Western powers, condemned or recognised this crime against humanity at the origin of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, while they were very prompt in doing this in Yugoslavia.

The Defence Minister, Ben Gurion had built up the “Defence forces of Israel” merging the Hagana, the Stern group and the Likud into a single Zionist army of ethnic purification in order to systematically uproot the Palestinian population of Palestine. *“Thousands of Palestinians have been implacably and savagely killed by Israeli soldiers of all origins, all ranks and all ages. No one of these soldiers has ever been judged for war crimes, in spite of overwhelming proof.”* Writes Ilan Pappé. Over several months, the offensive accelerated up , became more systematic, strengthened by arms sent in by Stalin. The military Chief of Staff, Yigaël Yadin was exultant: *“Today we have all the weapons we need ...”*

The “war of independence” of the young State of Israel struggling for survival like a reckless David facing up to the powerful armies of the Arab Goliath , is just a fable. The massacre of Palestinians and their expulsion from Palestine, the ethnic cleansing began before any intervention of Arab States and continued after their retreat. Indeed, the only consequential armed force, Abdallah of Jordan’s Arab League, commanded by a British officer, had negotiated secretly with the State of Israel to occupy and to remain only on the territories that were planned to revert to it in the end.

The list of the massacres is frightening: in Beersheba, defended by volunteers, when the fighting was over, the soldiers taken prisoner and all the inhabitants of the town that the Israeli troops suspected of having taken up arms, were assembled and were shot down at random. In Tantura *“one of the largest of the coastal villages”* (P.133) *“the offensive came from all four flanks ... The Jewish troops found themselves with a very large number of villagers on their hands. They were herded at gunpoint down to the beach. The Jewish troops then separated the men from the women and children, and expelled the later to nearby Furaydis... The hundreds of men collected on the beach were ordered to sit down and await the arrival of an Israeli intelligence officer who lived in the nearby settlement of Givat Ada. He went along with a local collaborator, hooded as at Ayn al-Zaytun, and picked out individual men (from 10 – 50 years old) and took them out in small groups to a spot further away where they were executed. The men were selected according to a pre-prepared list drawn from Tantura’s village file, and included everybody who had participated in the 1936 Revolt, in attacks on Jewish traffic, who had contacts with the Mufti”*. But before these executions the village occupation unit had spread death in the houses and on the streets. And yet when the attack took place the villagers had already signified that they capitulated by waving a white flag. The order given to detachments was to rapidly empty town and villages of their populations. One very simple order among many others can be read: (p.141) *“Our mission: attack to occupy ... kill the men , destroy and set fire to Kabri, Umm al-Faraj and Nahr”*. A satisfied report; (p.132 bas) *“There were sixty-four villages within the area that stretched between Tel-Aviv and Haïfa ... Only two of these villages were spared in*

the end”. A letter full of enthusiasm from Ben Gurion himself, the 7th February 1948: (p.68) *“Ever since Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans - the city was not as Jewish as it is now... If we persist it is quite possible that in the next six or eight months ... there will be considerable changes in the demographic composition of the country.”* The bloody traces of the brigades led to a succession of massacres: Dawaimeh, kfar Kassem, Hula, Sahiha, Sa'sa, Lydda, Safsaf, Ein Zeitoun, Mi'ar, Bassa, deir Yassin, Balad al-Cheik, Haim Avinoam (this list is not complete) for which *“traces of direct orders for massacres cannot be found, nor total or true condemnation of those that took place. Sometimes local commanders were left the choice of “cleansing” and “destroying the villages of your district”*, observes the author on the basis of military reports.

But the State of Israel, *“the white Western fortress”* as Ilan Pappé calls it, is not the only one to refuse to recognise the ethnic cleansing of Palestine at the roots of the 800 000 Palestinian refugees and to refuse to give an answer to their demand for reparation, by implementing the right for the refugees to return.

The British Empire that up till the 14th May 1948 was mandated to ensure law and order in Palestine is responsible for having ordered its 75 000 soldiers to stay with grounded arms and not to intervene at any moment while the Zionist forces purified Palestine. What's more it stopped the UN intervening, what the UN will not do either after the departure of the English.

The United States , who organised the Palestine partition vote at the UN , with Stalin's support, and who pushed aside

the English to take their place in the region, were the first to recognise the State of Israel and congratulate Ben Gurion. Stalin supplied the arms and ensured military supremacy for the Zionists in order to eliminate the contingents from Arab States and cleanse the territories taken over from their Palestinian inhabitants.

The support of all of these stems from their agreement that at the gates of the Suez Canal and the oil fields a “*white Western fortress*” contributes to the maintaining of the order established by the agreements of Yalta and Postdam for the benefit of Imperialism.

Already, the role given the “National Jewish Foyer” by Balfour’s declaration in 1917 installed it within the territory in order to help the British dominate Palestine. This role was revealed to the eyes of the world particularly when *side by side English soldiers and Zionist brigades assassinated 5 000 Palestinians and imprisoned 9 000 others between 1936 and 1939* in order to crush the Palestinian revolt raising the independence flag of the Palestinian Nation against the British and Zionist occupation. The United States who took the place of the English then armed the State of Israel to the teeth on the rubble of Palestine.

Wipe out all trace of crime

The State of Israel has done everything to try and wipe out all trace of Palestinian presence before 1948: it has rewritten History and geography to accredit the version according to which the Jewish people had returned to rebuild the ancient kingdom of the Hebrews on its deserted land. It has torn up the olive trees whose fruit and oil are part of the Palestinian tradition and replaced them by pine trees and cypresses. It has meticu-

lously buried under buildings, public parks, forests, the ruins of houses, of former villages and Palestinian districts in the towns. It has wiped out Palestinian names and christened places with Hebrew names. Any contradiction of the Zionist version would be a mark of anti-Semitism.

So it was that the 21st March 2010, the Knesset adopted a Bill banning any celebration of the Nakba. The 15th May 2011, on the Golan plateau, at the Lebanese frontier, in the Gaza strip, on the West Bank, in Jerusalem all the Palestinian rallies commemorating the Nakba and demanding the right for refugees to return were strafed by Zionist forces killing eight demonstrators and wounding thousands of others. All memories of the crimes, of ethnic cleansing must be suppressed!

Ilan Pappé writes (p.253 haut) : “*unless Israel acknowledges the cardinal role it has played, and continues to play, in the dispossession of the Palestinian nation, and accepts the consequences this recognition of the ethnic cleansing implies, all attempts to solve the Israel-Palestine conflict are bound to fail*”.

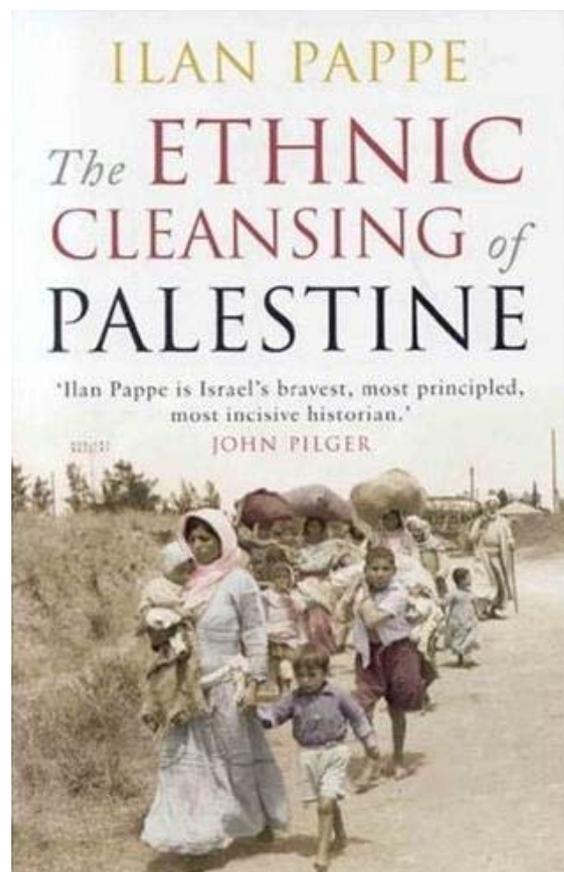
And he adds a little further: “*But the aim of the Zionist project has always been to construct and then defend a ‘white’ (Western) fortress in a ‘black’ (Arab) world ... (p.255) Level of social violence inside the Fortress are high, and the standard of living of the majority is constantly dropping ... Rejecting the Palestinian refugees’ Right of Return is a tantamount to making an unconditional pledge to the continuing defence of the ‘white’ enclave, and to upholding the Fortress*”.

Five years after writing this book, in September 2011, doesn’t the demand by

the Palestinian Authority of Mahmud Abbas for recognition of the State of Israel, acclaimed by certain and barred by the veto announced by the United States, express their apprehension of an explosion of the Palestinian population, delivered up to the exactions of Jewish settlers, helped by soldiers; a population that is suffocating in the terrifying dead end of the Bantustans, in which the "white Fortress" and its US Godfather, but also the Palestinian Authority, imprisons it ?

Could the recognition of the ethnic cleansing of Palestine and the concrete realisation of the right to return to Palestine for the refugees, be obtained in any other way than by the setting up of a sin-

gle Palestinian democratic and secular State with its Jewish and Arab components, within the frontiers of the Palestine Mandate? Isn't that what Ilan Pappé implies when he highlights his work (p.ix) *"this book ... it is written first and foremost for the Palestinian victims of the 1948 ethnic cleansing. Many of them are friends and comrades (...) since I learned about the Nakba. I have carried with me their suffering, their loss and their hopes. Only when they return will I feel that this chapter of the catastrophe has finally reached the closure we all covet, enabling all of us to live in peace and harmony in Palestine."*



The Palestinian Reconciliation Agreement : between illusion and chimera

By Hanane Shehadeh, august, 4th, 2011.

Some writers and journalists have described the reconciliation agreement between the two largest Palestinian organizations, Fatah and Hamas, as a revolution on a par with the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions.

In spite of the doubt and fear that prevailed in Palestinian streets as a result of the inability to translate this agreement into facts, Palestinians regarded it as a positive step that could reunite the Palestinian people, which explains why they took to the street, demonstrated and rejoiced about the event.

The pundits who specialize in the Palestinian question were caught unawares by this agreement, all the more so as the event contradicted all the aggressive statements issued by Fatah and Hamas a few days before it was signed. It is no doubt a great step in the right direction but more will be required to succeed in achieving the reconciliation and unity of the Palestinian people.

It is an exaggeration to call it a "revolution", because a revolution opens up a new page in history, breaks with the past and adopts a revolutionary project that can get the country out of the crisis, which has not happened in the case of Palestine.

In the aftermath of the agreement, writers turned their attention to the factors that incited Fatah and Hamas to agree on this reconciliation, in order to predict whether it would be a success or a failure in the future.

Of course the reasons that account for the reconciliation agreement between Fatah

and Hamas vary, depending on the analysis of the national and domestic situation made by each of the two organizations

For Fatah, the main factors are these :

The fact that the national project and the Fatah movement have reached a deadlock and that twenty years have been wasted on talks have led Fatah to be convinced that it cannot go on counting on the Americans and the Israeli to achieve progress in the talks. The main delegate of the PLO has been unable to obtain any improvement in the living conditions of Palestinians over the last two decades. On the contrary, Palestinians have entered a dark tunnel which has brought about division, especially within the Fatah movement. There has been a clash between those who support the continuation of talks and those who are opposed to it and the majority of the Palestinian people are convinced that those talks only serve the interests of a certain strata that from an economic point of view profits from of the existence of the Palestinian Authority. And this strata is going to do all it can to prolong that situation.

Fatah has lost its main allies. Following the fall of Mubarak, Fatah has become an orphan, especially as Saudi Arabia, its second most important ally, feels concerned about the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt. The Saudi ruling class is filled with fear, which the development of protest in Bahrain and Yemen has made worse. For the Saudis, the Palestinian cause is now of secondary importance.

Another factor that incited Fatah to sign the reconciliation agreement originates in the determination to give the interna-

tional community an image of unity before going to the United Nations in September to win recognition of the Palestinian state. The state of Israel has consistently used the division between the two organizations as a pretext to preempt any negotiation. The Israelis were asking: "Who are we going to negotiate with, Fatah or Hamas?" For Fatah, the agreement should remove that obstacle. Furthermore, Mahmud Abbas wishes to end his political career with the recognition of the Palestinian state.

Fatah is also aware that the embargo imposed on Gaza for a long time, the 2008-2009 war, the bombings and the international boycott have not succeeded in subduing Hamas and bringing down its government. In such a situation Fatah is conscious that its return to Gaza is not on the books;

For Hamas:

Of course the fall of Mubarak is one of the reasons that prompted Hamas to sign the reconciliation agreement. Hamas, strengthened by the support of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt as it signed the agreement, finds its interest in the improvement of its relations with Egypt and the reopening of the Rafah crossing so as to break the embargo. The Muslim Brothers, like the Ennahda movement in Tunisia, are likely to achieve impressive results in the coming elections. It is therefore difficult to understand the reaction and the new attitude of Hamas unless one also considers the changes that have taken place within the parent organization, namely the Muslim Brothers, who intend to exercise power... Of course all this comes at a cost.

Hamas is conscious that its political programme is not much different to Fatah's. Hamas has officially accepted the creation of a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders, a programme which Fatah adopted long ago. It is also necessary to point out that Hamas wants to conform to the positions of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt, in particular when the latter said that they would respect the agreements signed by Egypt, including the Camp David accords. Hamas even stated that it would accept any agreement with Israel on condition that it was approved by a Palestinian referendum. Such a position had for a long time been rejected by Hamas, which considered that Palestinian gains should not be put to the vote. It has even given a one-year deadline to Abbas for holding talks with Israel.

Another factor is the embargo imposed on Gaza. The uninterrupted bombings of Gaza, the very poor conditions of its inhabitants, Israel's permanent threat to start a new war, make the position of the movement difficult; which is compounded by Hamas's incapacity to provide subsidies on a regular basis.

The street protests in Syria, which are without precedent, and the fear that the Syrian regime, its first ally and protector in Damascus, might fall, encouraged Hamas to sign the agreement.

Hamas's determination to open up to the world and be removed from the list of terrorist organizations, its acceptance of a state based on the 1967 borders and its proposal of a referendum are just evidence of that approach. It is likely that, after the elections to be held in Egypt, Hamas will distance itself from Shia Iran, which it was forced to associate

with as a result of its isolation at international level, and will get closer to the Sunni Muslim Bothers.

Obviously one should also mention the demonstrations that swept through the West Bank and Gaza demanding the end of division. Last but not least, the USA and Europe want to further the peace process in their own way. They both understand that such a move cannot be undertaken if Hamas does not participate in the political process. It then becomes very hard for the USA and Europe to take a stand against the end of division, while at the same time declaring they respect the will of peoples and “support” the revolutions in the Arab world.

Concerns and challenges

There is no doubt that years of division have very nearly dismantled the fabric of Palestinian society, taken the Palestinian cause decades back and badly damaged the movement of international solidarity with the Palestinian people. But the challenges we have to face today stem from the fear that both movements might not be able or willing to implement the agreements that have been signed. A large number of questions have remained unsolved or have simply not been tackled, especially the problem of coordinating safety with the settlers, the problem of restructuring the Palestinian Liberation Organization, and the planning of new elections to the Palestinian National Council. In fact, three months after the reconciliation agreement was signed, the name of the person who is going to hold the office of Prime Minister, although it is only a minor problem compared to other problems, has not yet been chosen.

Supposing the two movements succeed in implementing the content of the agreement, the most important problem will then arise, i.e. the compatibility between the agreement and the future national political project. Is the “two-state” solution still going to be put forward although over the past twenty years it has proved to be a failure? Will this project be able to rebuild the unity of the Palestinian nation wherever Palestinians are found? Will the Oslo accords remain a reference for the Palestinian people?

Conclusions

The unity of the Palestinian people cannot be limited to the West Bank and Gaza. It means going back to a united national and political project, such as the one that had achieved its unity for decades, before the leaderships became involved in the Oslo accords, thereby legitimizing the separation and the “two-state” solution.

The real national unity that the Palestinian people demand during this delicate period means first of all putting an end to the marginalization of 60% of the Palestinian population, by allowing Palestinian refugees to take part in the building of their nation.

In the past few months, the mobilization of Palestinian refugees near the borders of historic Palestine has shown that they are able to play a key role in political life. Political unity also implies the end of the politics of division between Fatah and Hamas, as well as the participation of every section, of civil society, of every component of the Palestine people in order to resolve the questions they all have to face.

The real reconciliation process entails the official announcement that the Oslo accords are dead, because of the occupation policies that ensued.. The reconciliation process also means the destruction of this regime, which shifted away from a national liberation movement to an apparatus serving the interests of colonization. Everybody knows that Oslo is the reason for the division of Palestinians, the cause of carnage among Palestinians. Now comes the fight par excellence, the fight for power. Now is the ideal time to proclaim this truth with courage, so as to contemplate a better future for the Palestinian people who have been suffering for more than 60 years.

The present situation reminds us of the 1948 period, in other words the time of soul-searching, when the national project was in crisis, when Palestinian forces remained scattered up till as late as 1964. The creation of the PLO put an end to this fragmentation and united all Palestinians wherever they were, as the national charter was adopted in 1964, confirmed in 1968. Through this charter, the project of a single state was on the agenda. Shouldn't such a programme be rebuilt, as the only way to bridge our present gap? There is no other guarantee of securing the real unity of the Palestinian people not only in the West bank and Gaza but everywhere.



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