

# **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**

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# Presentation

**T**o mention Palestine and what's happening today in the State of Israel, to talk about or to write on the subject, using facts that are easily available and yet very largely obscured, leads each and every time back to the same observation: the living conditions of the Palestinian people are worsening ... and their will to survive is increasing.

Zionism, as has been demonstrated again and again here in our columns – as well as abundantly elsewhere – is a movement based on the negation of the very existence of the Palestinian people, of the negation of their rights and, therefore, of the leaning towards any direction that might result in establishing them. For these reasons, the mixing of Judaism, Zionism, Israel and “Jews” all in the same definition, means wiping out any perspective of equality between the different components living in this region, and is part and parcel of Zionist ideology itself.

Today Palestine is witnessing a march towards chaos, marked what's more by the deterioration of social relations among the Jewish population within the State of Israel, who in spite of having benefited from 60 years of the looting of Palestine, is incapable of speaking of the future without speaking of war. The Israeli journalist Gideon Levy, commenting an opinion poll on religious practice within the Israeli State, wrote the following the 29<sup>th</sup> January 2012: Israel is “not what you thought it is, not what the world thought, not what the Israelis imagine themselves to think. Israeli society is not secular, it is not liberal and it is not enlightened”, he says, but is more and more based on dire extremist religious principles... and, whatever Israelis themselves may think, let us emphasize that that is what Gideon Levy thinks.

For some the setting up of two States, i.e. the creation of a “Palestinian State” (that all plans show would be a State in name only) is necessary to save the State of Israel: that is the position defended by the Labour President Shimon Peres and Tzipi Livni, the President of the Kadima Party (split from the Likud). For others, it is a democratic necessity. However they all end up blocked at the same deadlock, because the creation of a so called Palestinian State could only be founded on the annihilation of the very identity of the Palestinian people, based on the right to return, on the voluntary or forced naturalisation of the refugees there, where they are. It is out of this political deadlock came that the recent proposal to officially turn the West Bank Wall into a border, (which, in reality, it already is).

There are Israeli university professors, politicians and journalists who assert that the two State solution is not only still on the agenda, but that the perspective of a single State “is not a solution but a recipe for institutionalised civil war”. As if this weren't already the case.

Can it then be said that the two State policy line is a sort of pseudo “humanist” facet of the vast and ongoing process of ethnic purification of Palestine, as has been echoed in several articles published here, a process that began with the foundation of the Israeli State, (this policy itself having been a pre-condition for the setting up of this State)?

Our review proposes to pursue discussion, not only on this key issue but also on the analysis of the situation and the drawing up of democratic perspectives.

The Editors.

# Ethnic Cleansing of Invented People

by Miko Peled  
December 20, 2011.

**M**ostafa Tamimi from Nabi Saleh, Bahjat Zaalan and his son Ramdan from Gaza died on my fiftieth birthday and just a few days after Newt Gingrich declared them an invented people. They were murdered by the Israeli terrorist organization, the IDF, an organization that is supported and funded by the US. One Israeli terrorist shot the invented Tamimi in the head with a tear gas canister, and another Israeli terrorist fired a rocket that murdered the invented Zaalan and his boy Ramadan. Both terrorists were educated and trained by Israel, and armed by the US. The Israeli terrorists are not invented but quite real, and they are safe, protected by the apartheid regime that trained and sent them on their missions, and the Israeli court system will make sure that they are never brought to justice. This is how Israel's well-oiled ethnic cleansing machine operates.

The Zionist ethnic cleansing of Palestine is not a thing of the past but an ongoing campaign that is executed by three arms of the State of Israel: The education system, a dedicated bureaucracy and the security forces. The education system is dedicated to indoctrinating and producing soldiers and bureaucrats who will execute and enforce the ethnic cleansing. The bureaucracy is charged with making rules that make life unlivable for Palestinians. Rules that restrict Palestinian access to their lands, and restrict their ability to travel freely to work and school. This same bureaucracy then demands that Palestinians pay for permits to be allowed do these very same basic things that they were denied. The security forces, the most obvious of which is the IDF, are charged with enforcing the restrictions, fighting off the resistance, armed or peaceful, and terrorizing the "invented" people of Palestine.

Since my father was a general and I served as a soldier in the IDF terrorist organization, people often ask me how is it that Israeli children who are raised in a Western style democracy become such monsters once they are in uniform? The detailed answer can be found in my book, *The General's Son* due out in February 2012, but the short answer is

this: Education – Racism requires a mindset that is fashioned by education. In order to rationalize and justify the ethnic cleansing the Israeli education system portrays Palestinians as culturally inferior, violent and bent on the annihilation of the Jews, and at the same time, void of a true national identity. Palestinian national identity is but a figment of some anti-Semitic imagination.

Israeli children are educated to see the Palestinians as a problem that must be solved and as a threat that must be eliminated. They can go through life, as I did growing up in Jerusalem, without ever meeting a Palestinian child. They know nothing of the life or culture of Palestinians who quite often live only several hundred meters from them.

Palestinians are portrayed as an existential threat through absurd comparisons like that of Yasser Arafat to Hitler, the Palestinians to Nazis, and the Palestinian resistance to Al Qaeda. Since Israeli kids never meet Palestinians what they learn in school, particularly in the school textbooks, is all that they know. In fact it is remarkable that even though they live so close to one another, much if not all of what Israelis know about their Palestinian neighbors comes from high school text books and popular racist stereotypes. Israelis don't know that Palestinians never had an army, that they do not possess a single tank, a single warship or fighter jet, that they don't have a single artillery battery and do not in fact pose a military threat at all. According to a new book by Dr. Nurit Peled-Elhanan, not a single photo of a person who is a Palestinian exists in Israeli textbooks and there are millions of Palestinians in and around Israel. Israelis don't learn about Palestinian doctors and teachers, engineers and writers. They don't learn Palestinian poetry or prose and they don't read the works of Palestinian historians.

At a recent lecture I mentioned the ethnic cleansing of Palestine and someone called out: "What ethnic cleansing?" People are unaware of the ethnic cleansing taking place in Palestine because Israel hides it well and the mainstream media doesn't care enough to

ask. In mainstream peace groups and dialogue groups that discuss Palestine/Israel, a basic Israeli condition is not to bring up issues like the ethnic cleansing because Israel doesn't like to talk about it.

But for the past 64 years ethnic cleansing of Palestine is what drives the Zionist policies towards Palestinians. All Zionist governments and all Zionist political parties left right and center support the ethnic cleansing. The Israeli judicial system lets the Israeli authorities get away with abuse, theft and murder as long as they are perpetuated against Palestinians. Had these same crimes been committed against Israeli Jews they would have been prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

Zionist supporters like to bring up the fact that on November 29, 1947 the United Nations voted to partition Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state. What is left out of the Zionist story is that within one year of the vote Israeli forces had managed to capture close to 80% of Palestine, destroy close to 500 Palestinian towns and villages, kill scores of unarmed civilians and force the exile of some 800,000 Palestinians.

Then, when the UN passed resolution 194 in December of 1948, calling for the refugees to be allowed to return to their homes, Israel proceeded to build cities and towns, parks and highways for the use of Jewish Israelis on Palestinian land. Then the Knesset began passing laws that prohibit the return of the refugees and allow the new state to confiscate their lands.

After the war was over, the Palestinians who remained within the newly created Jewish state were forced to become citizens of a state that despised them and saw them as a "problem" and a "threat." They were designated as "The Arabs of Israel" a designation that stripped them of a national identity and denied them any rights to the land and provided them very limited rights as citizens. From being the rightful owners of their lands and their country they now existed at the pleasure of the new owner of the land, the

state of Israel. Palestinian refugees were forced into concentration camps, conveniently called refugee camps, and those that tried to return were shot. A military unit was created for the purpose of punishing Palestinian refugee who "infiltrated" back into their homeland, now called Israel. It was called Unit 101, the notorious Ariel Sharon led it and it made a name for itself as a murderous gang with a license to kill Palestinians.

So regardless of the myth, now perpetuated by Newt Gingrich among others, that says there was no forced ethnic cleansing, we know today that the creation of Israel was made possible through a systematic campaign of ethnic cleansing, conducted by the Jewish militia, involving massacres, terrorism, and the wholesale looting of an entire nation.

Newt Gingrich, being the history buff that he is, might be interested in a story I mention in my book *The General's Son*, about my mother. She was born and raised in Jerusalem and she remembers the homes of Palestinians families in neighborhoods in West Jerusalem. She told me that when she was a child, on Saturday afternoons she would go for walks through these neighborhoods, admiring the beauty of the homes, watching families sit together in their beautiful gardens. In 1948 when the Palestinian families were forced out of West Jerusalem, my mother was offered one of those beautiful, spacious homes but she refused. At age 22, the wife of a young army officer with little means and with two small children, she refused a beautiful spacious home, offered to her completely free because she could not bear the thought of living in the home of a family that was forced out and now lives in a refugee camp. "The coffee was still warm on the tables as the soldiers came in and began the looting" she told me. "Can you imagine how much those families, those mothers must miss their homes." She would ask and she continued, "I remember seeing the truckloads of loot, taken by the Israeli soldiers from these homes. How were they not ashamed of themselves?" there are thousands upon thousands of homes in cities all over the country

that were taken.

Moving forward now to 1967 and the myth that Israel was fighting for its existence as it was attacked by Arab armies from all directions. Much was written about this but nothing is more revealing than the minutes of the meetings of the IDF general staff from June 1967, just prior to the war. According to the generals, one of whom was my father, Matti Peled, not only was there no existential threat but the generals clearly state that the Egyptian army needed at least a year and a half before it would be ready for war and therefore this was an opportune time to attack and destroy it. The army pressured the cabinet to authorize an attack and indeed the cabinet approved an attack against Egypt. The IDF destroyed the Egyptian army and then went on to attack Jordan and Syria. It took the IDF six days and 700 casualties to kill an estimated 15,000 Arab forces, take the West Bank, the Golan Heights and The Sinai Peninsula. One may like to think this was a miracle but it was a well-planned, well-executed attack against countries that had no viable military force. The Israeli army had thus fulfilled its goal of conquering the entire Land of Israel, and the De-Arabizing of Palestine could now proceed into the West Bank and Gaza.

Since the early days of the State of Israel the IDF made it its mission to be the most brutal bully in the region. Today the IDF has one purpose: to conduct an all out war against Palestinians by terrorizing Palestinian civilians, kidnapping children from their homes and using brutal force against protesters. We are reminded of the intensity of IDF cruelty every so often, the latest major display being the three-week bloodbath in Gaza that began on December 27, 2008. Hundreds of tons of bombs were dropped by Israeli pilots on Gaza, followed by a massive invasion of land forces. All this for the purpose of terrorizing a defenseless civilian population that includes 800,000 children.

Now that Israel has been in control of the West Bank for over four decades it had built and invested there heavily. But all of the investment and construction in the West

Bank was made to bring Jews into the West Bank. Palestinian lands are being taken at an alarming pace, their homes are destroyed and thousands are incarcerated, while industry, roads, malls, schools and gated communities with swimming pools are being built for Jews only. Water, which is the scarcest resource of all, is controlled and distributed by the Israeli water authority, as follows: Per capita, Israelis receive 300 cubic meters of water per year. In comparison, per capita Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza receive 35-85 cubic meters per year, while the World Health Organization recommends a minimum of 100 cubic meter of water per person per year. But what is even worse is that per capita, Israeli settlers in the West Bank are allocated 1500 cubic meters of water per year. Jews in the West Bank live with green lawns and swimming pools while Palestinians quite often get no water at all. Perhaps invented people have no need for water.

De-Arabizing the history of Palestine is another crucial element of the ethnic cleansing. 1500 years of Arab and Muslim rule and culture in Palestine are trivialized, evidence of its existence is being destroyed and all this is done to make the absurd connection between the ancient Hebrew civilization and today's Israel. The most glaring example of this today is in Silwan, (Wadi Hilwe) a town adjacent to the Old City of Jerusalem with some 50,000 residents. Israel is expelling families from Silwan and destroying their homes because it claims that king David built a city there some 3000 years ago. Thousands of families will be made homeless so that Israel can build a park to commemorate a king that may or may not have lived 3000 years ago. Not a shred of historical evidence exists that can prove King David ever lived yet Palestinian men, women, children and the elderly along with their schools and mosques, churches and ancient cemeteries and any evidence of their existence must be destroyed and then denied so that Zionist claims to exclusive rights to the land may be substantiated.

Once we connect the dots it is not hard to see that the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza is only a small part of the Israeli Palestinian issue. The greater issue is the ongoing

ethnic cleansing of Palestine by the Zionist state. The way forward for Israelis and Palestinians alike is to oppose the ethnic cleansing by opposing all its manifestations. This means supporting the movement to boycott, divest and place sanctions on Israel, or BDS for short, it means actively participating in the popular non-violent struggle in Palestine and it means challenging the racist laws that govern Israel by defying them. There has to be a clear and unequivocal call to recognize that the IDF is a terrorist organization and its officers are war criminals. Furthermore, the

reprehensible discrimination against Palestinians, whether they live in Israel/Palestine or not, practiced by the security officials at Ben Gurion airport and other points of entry to Israel/Palestine must be challenged. The struggle for a democracy in our shared homeland is no different than the struggle at Tahrir square and can in fact be seen as part of the Arab Spring

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# Does the Histadrut Really Want What Is Best for the Half-a-Million Jewish and Arab Workers Employed through the Intermediary of Temp Agencies?

by **Wahbeh Badarneh** (Arab Workers Union in Israel)  
November 2011.

**T**he Israeli workers' trade union - the Histadrut - has announced a labour conflict in the economic institutions of the country, as well as a call for a general strike for the improvement of working conditions and the reduction of the exploitation of hundreds of thousands of workers employed in slave-like conditions through the intermediary of temporary employment agencies. There are over 400,000 of these employees in the ministries, offices, governmental and private companies, in surveillance and in cleaning, and other in work in the service sector. For years and up to the present, the Histadrut, its current leader Ofer Eini and even its workers' commissions have not budged to better the slave-like working conditions of these workers.

They do not belong to any trade unions whatsoever and are spread out in work places where there are many Histadrut commissions, in airports, banks, ports, factories, government offices, and the railway company, who employs dozens of them through the temporary labour agency *Manpower*. In these work places, the numerous Histadrut workers' commissions stand by with folded arms, while they plainly see these workers being exposed to ferocious exploitation, contrary to all labour and human rights.

Faced with this dramatic situation, many questions are being asked and discussion is abundant in the trade union world on the position and the seriousness of the Histadrut and its president Ofer Eini, concerning the question of these workers and the threat of a general strike to improve the working conditions of this layer of workers.

During the past years, the Histadrut hasn't budged on the burning issues of society and life. In actual fact, it has been obstinately opposed to the big workers' committees of the electricity company, in the ports, airports and government offices. In all that concerns the reduction of funds for social security, as for unemployment benefits and income support, or for solidarity with the protest movement against the hiking of fuel oil and food prices, or the support to workers and to the

poor who are exposed to exploitation and whose rights are being trampled along the same lines as what happened in Wisconsin plan, the Histadrut has obstinately kept silent and remained neutral. In certain situations it has, to the contrary, even participated in the applying of Wisconsin-type policies by its representatives in Nazareth.

But the wind of the protest movement in Israel and the immense popularity of this movement in the middle class of the country have left the Histadrut union and its president Ofer Eini in a critical situation, where they are seeing the new young leadership pulling the rug out from under their feet and raising the flag of the defence of social rights in Histadrut's place. This is the reason why Ofer Eini, Histadrut's president, needed to take a big step forward to turn to the poor, as if he were defending the humiliated and the downtrodden.

This step that the Histadrut has taken in deciding for a general strike to back the contracted workers of the temporary employment companies and placing its president himself at the head of this affaire, as a labour leader, we - the trade union of Arab workers in Israel - cannot understand as being anything other than hypocrisy, smoke-and-mirrors, and derision, given the history of the Histadrut, the role that it itself played in the crushing of workers' rights, abandoning them as prey delivered up to the entrepreneurs and owners.

In 2008, a number of members of the Knesset - among them, Shelly Yahimovitch of the Labor Party and Dov Hanin of the Democratic Front for Peace, tabled a draft bill establishing the legal responsibility of the employer (industrial or banking) for the worker employed in his establishment through the intermediary of the entrepreneurs of temporary agencies, a bill that stipulated what was considered to be an employer (a hospital or a bank, for example) was an establishment that pays the salary and the social contributions to this layer of workers in the case where the entrepreneur of the temporary agency ceased, during a period of 21 days, paying these con-

tributions to the workers. This draft bill was approved at the first reading in the Knesset, but rejected because of another draft bill presented by the Histadrut, the Minister of Finance and the owners' union, which established the responsibility of the employer for the contributions due to the worker but at the same time gave a quantity of loop-holes for avoiding this responsibility. The Histadrut did not present a radical solution for ending the methodical and exhausting exploitation that the entrepreneurs of temporary employment companies practice towards these workers but, on the contrary, it opened the door wide to the increasing of this exploitation by the absence of any legal regulations aiming at limiting the exploitation of these workers and the contempt of their rights.

The affaire does not stop at the fact that the Histadrut has blocked and aborted any attempt at organizing this layer of workers and at giving these workers rights and dignity in their employment, as was the case in the ranks of many categories of workers in the airports, ports and major industrial sectors. Histadrut also appropriated a 0.7% fraction of the salary of these workers, as a "legal medical tax", which appears on the pay slips of some workers. These are workers who addressed the trade union of Arab workers, in search of assistance and legal aid, and indicated to us that they ignored the fact that the temp agencies took this sum off their monthly pay, to the benefit of the Histadrut.

The business of deducting from the salaries of the workers of temp agencies goes back to 1995, when the Histadrut suffered a major economic loss, due to the separation of sanitary insurance from the union apparatus. Actually, the offer of sanitary services by the health insurance of the Histadrut constituted the most effective weapon for enrolling workers in its ranks. But the new health law, in 1995, established that each region of the country could pay its healthcare through the Israeli national health foundation. Thus the Histadrut went into a profound financial crisis, suffering heavy losses which necessitated the selling off of a great deal of its property - such as the industrial group *Kor* - the closing

of the textile factory *Ata*, the group *Soltam*, the group *Hamat* - whose name was sold to the giant Israeli real estate company *Benoui Shikon*.

In order to survive this huge financial crisis which affected the Histadrut in 1995, the leadership of the union sought alternative sources of financing, such as the deducting of fractions of the temporary agency workers salaries, with the Histadrut's concluding of an agreement of a most particular nature with the owners, in January 1995. This agreement shamefully stipulated that the owners would deduct 0.9% of the workers' salaries, with no compensation, beginning their agreement thusly. Many of the workers we met during the years of our union work maintained that they totally ignored this deduction from their salaries to the benefit of the Histadrut, and that the latter had never rendered them any trade union type of services worthy of mention. According to an evaluation from an Israeli owners' organization, over 30 million shekels flowed into the Histadrut coffers, from the sums deducted from the salaries of temp agency workers and other workers included in the agreement made between the owners' organization and the Histadrut in 1995.

In parallel, in 1996, the Knesset approved the law concerning the temporary employment companies, obliging these companies to produce a special authorization for the Labour Ministry for the exercising of their business, along with the deposit of a financial guarantee with the Public Treasurer.

During this period, the big Israeli temporary employment companies, such as *Tejbour*, *Ortal*, *Meir Baor*, concluded collective agreements with the Histadrut, by virtue of which they obtained a reduction of 10 % of the financial guarantee that they paid the government and, in exchange for which, an end was put to the deduction of 0.7% of the salary that all workers working through the intermediary of the temporary agencies, and the Histadrut committed to maintaining "calm" in the work places. It should be noted that the deduction of 0.7% of the worker's

salary did not mean that the worker would benefit from legal protection on the work place, unless he paid 0.9% of his salary as belonging to the Histadrut union, on top of the 0.7% - and the worker did not know the reason for which this amount was being deducted, in the first place.

The Histadrut's cynicism does not stop there, in the trafficking of the rights of temporary employment companies' contracted workers. Another step in the trafficking done by the Histadrut at the expense of the workers was the agreement made between the Histadrut and the owners on the question of making the workers of entrepreneurs and of temporary agencies permanent after 7 months on the job. At this stage, the Histadrut again confirmed that it was on the side of the owners, selling the workers at a cheap price.

In 2007, an agreement was concluded between Ofer Eini, the president of the Histadrut, and Shraga Barush, representative of the owners' organization of Israel, according to which the length defining the making permanent in their work places of the workers of entrepreneurs and temporary employment companies would be 18 months and not 9, as the Histadrut had initially demanded. Thus Histadrut rallied to the view-point of the bosses according to which the cleaning worker, or the watchman at the entrance of a shopping centre, need prove their aptitude and their qualification over 18 months, before being made permanent in the job! In any case, this law has still not been enforced, due to pressure from the owners on the government and on the Ministry of Finance.

Thus the Histadrut once again capitulated to the temporary employment agencies and showed whose side - that of the workers or that of the companies and the blood-sucking owners – they were on.

In the face of the capitulations and the shameful agreements of the Israeli workers union, the Histadrut, and the owners and the government circles, and in the face of the marginalization of hundreds of thousands of poor Jewish and Arab workers, who work in conditions that are slave-like and degrading, the Histadrut has remained a spectator to their suffering, unconcerned by their disturbing fate, except for taking taxes off their monthly salaries without knowing anything in the least of the workers themselves. These workers have no alternative to their miserable lot but to join and belong to combative and progressive workers' unions, those seeking to improve their working conditions and their right to work in dignity, whether they be the union of Arab workers who are working to organize these workers in unions for their defence, or in progressive workers' unions who act in the workers' world and aim at defending their interests, facing up to the managers of the companies and the owners.

Histadrut's call to fight within the economic institutions and the call for a general strike for improving the working conditions of hundreds of thousands of the contracted workers of temporary employment companies is nothing but derision and smoke-and-mirrors, for the dissimulating of its positions and its scandalous agreements with the owners - which are a betrayal of the workers.



# « Palestine » admitted as a member State of UNESCO

by Sam Ayache

The first demand for admission as a Member State of UNESCO filed by Palestine was in 1989. Following that, Palestine, reduced to the Palestinian Authority (PA), was admitted to UNESCO with the rank of Observer, just like Lichtenstein or the Holy See, that do not sit as Member States of UNESCO.

UNESCO is part of the “United Nations system” but there is no “right to veto” there, as in the UN and admission as a Member State has more of a symbolic value than a real political one. At UNESCO, one can be a “Member State” without representing a nation. That is the case for Monaco and Andorre, that are not nations but simply “administrative entities” and yet they have the status of UNESCO Member States, but obviously this has no political, diplomatic or economic consequences.

It is not without interest to recall that the Palestinian Authority was set up by the Oslo Agreement in 1993 as an “administrative entity” for short term management – initially the Palestinian Authority mandate was fixed for 5 years - and its economic, legislative and regulation competences were voluntarily limited. For instance, there was never any prevision for the Palestinian Authority to have the right to dispose of a national currency – which would have symbolised the right to dispose of a certain economic independence.

The Oslo Agreement only envisaging the setting up of the Palestinian Authority as an interim solution while waiting for the hypothetical solution of “a two States” solution negotiated with the State of Israel, the Palestinian Authority remains up till this day a “subsidiary corps” according to international law.

Do the demands for recognition of Palestine filed in the different instances of the UN and the “United States system” aim at attempting to leave the framework of the 1993 Oslo Agreement?

That is the question that seems to raise, what is generally called the “Fayyad Plan”.

Formulated by Samuel Fayyad, the Palestinian Authority Prime Minister in name, these demands for the recognition of Palestine by the “international community” i.e. the big powers that sit in the UN Security Council, are aimed at pursuing the Oslo process for a “two State solution”, presented as “realistic” but which in reality solves none of the essential issues, such as the right to return for the 1948 refugees, the policy of expelling Palestinians and colonisation, the future of political prisoners, etc.

Within the occupied territories (in reality just on the West Bank), the “Fayyad Plan” has signified the attempt to set up administrative infrastructures especially of an economic nature but also the police. As far as the first point goes, Salam Fayyad was able to make the best of his former position as IMF delegate for the West bank and of his acquaintance with North American business affairs where he can count on a lot of friends.

Shimon Peres nicknamed Fayyad the “Palestinian Ben Gourion”, convinced he was ready to proclaim unilaterally a “Palestinian State” as Ben Gourion did the 14<sup>th</sup> May 1948 for the State of Israel. For the moment nothing of the sort has happened: Salam Fayyad seems to know the limits that should not be crossed. These limits are forced upon him by the State of Israel, that wants the Oslo Agreement interim situation to last as long as possible, as well as by the Palestinian people's unwillingness to accept that the main demands of the nation be abandoned in exchange for the proclaiming of a Palestinian State whose real powers would remain uncertain.

In effect, if the Fayyad Plan is the “State first of all”, the whole problem is to determine if it is a true State or if Fayyad is happy to make do with “pretending” to set up a State, while remaining within the limits authorised by the Israeli State, i.e. officially endorsing the present status quo without satisfying any of the people's demands.

The Palestinian people itself will sooner or later draw up the balance sheet on Salam

Fayyad's political action.

For the present moment, the only positive point in Salam Fayyad's diplomatic enterprises has been the UNESCO vote obtained the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2011.

By its importance (107 for, 14 against, and 52 no votes) this vote represents above all a setback for US diplomacy and that of its satellites, among which the Israeli State, that want to maintain at any price the subjected status of the Palestinian Authority, status that it has accepted up till now. This relative diplomatic success of the Palestinian Authority enables it to improve its picture seriously damaged in the Palestinian people's eyes by years of Palestinian Authority submission to the diktats of Imperialism.

The 31<sup>st</sup> October of this year, the usual allies of the United States, such as Norway, Austria, Belgium or France voted in favour of Palestine's admission and their vote was saluted by applause, a rare thing at UNESCO which is supposed "not to be political" and to be only interested in Science, Teaching and Culture. The French, German and Belgian governments have of course not broken away from US Imperialism. Their vote in favour of the admission of "Palestine" is still to be registered within the framework of the "two State solution" envisaged by the Oslo Agreement, implying the recognition of the partition of historic Palestine and therefore the legitimising of the expulsion of Palestinians since 1948.

The "Fayyad Plan" implies the recognition of the State of Israel, by a Palestinian State reduced to the limits of the 1967 "green line" and therefore the definitive division of historical Palestine. Mrs Irina Bokova, General Director of UNESCO clearly recalled this in her speech after the vote on the 31<sup>st</sup> October:

*"As Mr. Ban Ki-moon, UN General Secretary underlined, a two State solution, living in peace and security has long been awaited in the area. I welcome Palestine and I should like to take this occasion to recall that our*

*cooperation goes back many years now"*.

Just before the vote was cast, the Ambassadors of the Palestinian Authority and the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation also insisted on their desire to implement the "two State solution".

Nevertheless, Palestine's admission as a Member State could raise hopes of improvement in every day conditions for Palestinians: the education system could benefit more by UNESCO support programmes and above all restoration work on historic sites could be developed giving some work to labourers. It is only a question of some dozen jobs but that is not to be discounted in a region where unemployment reaches record levels. On the other hand, Palestine, not having been up till now a fully fledged Member State of UNESCO, these programmes of restoration and reorganisation of pilgrim sites, especially in Hébron and Naplouse, were dealt with by foreign governments, either friendly or hostile. From now on the Palestinian Authority will be able to control these programmes. However, the dispute that has been going on for years over the management of the restoration works in the Old Town in Jerusalem – in particular the North Africans' Ramp, an important work site – would not be solved by this because of the *de facto* annexation of East Jerusalem by the State of Israel. It is Jordan that still serves as intermediary on this issue, excluding Palestinians in the town that the latter have always claimed as capital.

But on the very evening of the vote the 31<sup>st</sup> October, these hopes of economic benefit were dashed by the US decision, ( followed shortly by that of the Israeli State and Canada) to suspend financial contributions to UNESCO as a measure of retaliation.

To begin with, the US State Department qualified the vote at UNESCO as "premature". Then the US referred to the existence of a law forbidding the US government to finance an international institution that recognised Palestine before the signature of a peace treaty.

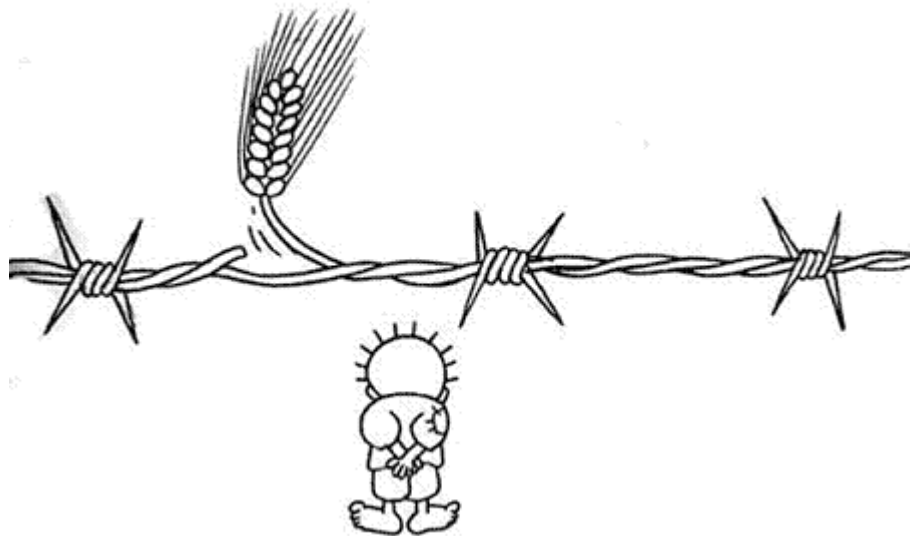
The contributions of the US, Israel and Canada represent nearly 25% of the UNESCO budget. The applause that greeted the admission of Palestine, even reduced to its smallest denominator the Palestinian Authority, has a fair chance of not being followed up and of turning into indignation and revolt at the odious blackmail the American government and its satellites have resorted to.

What's more and as an extra measure of re-tortion in protest against the vote cast at UNESCO, the State of Israel suspended for one month \* the transfer of a 100 million \$ (74 million Euros) of taxes and customs duty levied by Israel and normally transferred to

the Palestinian Authority. These funds are used, for instance, to pay teachers and Palestinian civil servants, to finance schools and hospitals.

If there is a first lesson to be drawn from this episode, it is that in the eyes of peoples all over the world, the American government and its allies have shown they despise Teaching, Science and Culture as soon as their political interests are threatened, even if in very symbolic fashion.

*\* The Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu has announced the funds are to be blocked, the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2011*



למען זכות השיבה  
של הפליטים הפלסטינים  
ולמען מדינה אחת על פני שטחה  
ההיסטורי של פלסטין כולה

من اجل حق عودة  
اللاجئين الفلسطينيين  
من اجل دولة واحدة على  
اراضي فلسطين التاريخية

IN DEFENCE OF THE PALESTINIAN  
REFUGEES' RIGHT OF RETURN  
FOR A SINGLE STATE  
ON THE WHOLE TERRITORY  
OF HISTORIC PALESTINE



# One-State.

## Historical debate with renewed relevance

by **Lora Gordon**

November, 2011

### The “Death” of the Two-State Solution

**A**s the Palestinian Authority pursues de facto recognition of the State of Palestine within 1967 borders and international enforcement of the two-state solution, many observers are wondering how feasible it is for two interconnected collectivities to draw separate national boundaries. Certainly, it is no small achievement that 122 countries have recognized the State of Palestine since the PLO first declared it in 1988, that the Palestinian Authority has 130 foreign embassies, and that 55 countries in the UN General Assembly and six of the nine needed in the Security Council have publicly confirmed their support for the Palestinian state. It appears to be a foregone conclusion that even in the likely event of a US veto in the Security Council against full statehood recognition, the General Assembly will still grant Palestine observer status, the same status enjoyed by the Vatican, which allows it limited privileges. But for as many articles celebrating the next big leap toward the long-awaited, hard-fought, two-state solution, all it takes is a quick Google search for “two-state solution death” to find no shortage of credible commentators predicting that solution’s impending demise. These writers advocate, warn or simply predict what a growing body of scholarship is also pointing to: that the only alternative to officially separating Israelis and Palestinians is to officially unify them. This alternative is popularly known as the one-state, or binational, solution. In this article, I will summarize the arguments posed against the two-state solution, the voices of binationalism over the past century, and the possible structures of a one-state solution.

### Fundamental Fissures in Two-State Boundary Drawing

The arguments against the two-state solution can be summarized as follows:

#### *The Illusion of the Green Line*

The most glaring contradiction to the two-state solution is that the Green Line is illu-

sory, running along a border that hasn’t existed since 1967. 1.5 million Palestinians hold Israeli citizenship (25% of its population and growing), while 300,000 Israeli settlers live illegally in the West Bank (11% of the population living on 40% of the land and expanding), and another 200,000 in East Jerusalem. 85% of the Segregation Wall is built on Palestinian land in the West Bank rather than the Green Line, effectively erasing 1967 borders. And if the Palestinian Authority and Hamas governments exert a certain amount of control over their population, the Israeli government exerts overwhelming power over the most basic levels of human organization in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), reducing the PA to a suzerain government. Israel controls Palestinian movement between cities, and its imports and exports. The Israeli military operates in the OPT with impunity. The idea that Palestinians and Israelis live under two separate governments is thus a fiction that goes hand in hand with the Green Line: even if the Israeli State legislates segregation and Apartheid policies differentiating Jew from Palestinian, it’s the same Israeli State operating throughout the entire Israeli-Palestinian space.

The idea of separating Palestinians from Israelis via internationally recognized boundaries is therefore a third fiction, and a dangerous one. Zionist support for the two-state solution has grown over the years by those who see it as a last-ditch effort to retain a “Jewish and democratic” Israel by avoiding mounting pressure to increase the status of OPT inhabitants from occupied subjects to voting citizens and provide a real answer for the refugees. Meanwhile, the Israeli right, with Benjamin Netanyahu and Avigdor Lieberman at the helm, has gained power and implemented a series of laws that marginalize Palestinian holders of Israeli citizenship. One extreme possibility that some have discussed illustrates the high demographic stakes involved: If the West Bank settlements are disbanded and the settlers repatriated in the current political climate, will Israel’s 1.5 million Palestinian citizens also be expected, or forced, to move to the new State of Palestine, an ethnic transfer of Darfurian propor-



tions that harkens back to the post-WWII era of population transfers? And if the settlements are not disbanded, can the State of Palestine be more than an archipelago of Bantustans? Israel's expansion of illegal settlements has finally accomplished what many have long predicted: it has in effect created a de facto single state. The challenges Palestinians and Israelis would face to impose contiguous, separate borders are gargantuan and highly unfeasible. Rather than repeating yet another mass population transfer, thereby inflicting yet more trauma onto an already volatile dynamic, doesn't it make more sense to simply de-zone, de-wall, and let people live where they wish?

#### *Excluding of Half of Palestinians*

Suppose the US decides not to veto the State of Palestine. Suppose that in an unprecedented act of good will, Israel disbands all its West Bank settlements, no questions asked. What is to become of the 4.7 million Palestinian refugees, stateless for generations, who cannot even visit their ancestral homeland? These refugees, and their Right of Return, are at the heart of why the two-state solution is unworkable.

It is difficult for historically-minded observers to miss the irony of Fateh's transformation. The party built its power base in the refugee camps in the 1950s, fresh on the heels of the 1947-9 expulsion of half of all Palestinians, rallying the masses around the populist cry for armed struggle and the Right of Return as enshrined in UN Resolution 194. Today, Fateh gives no more than lip-service to UNSCR 194, instead pushing for a very different 194, the State of Palestine as the UN's 194th recognized country, a bid that for all intents and purposes would nullify the refugees' claims.

In order for the two-state solution to exist, the State of Palestine must abandon its diaspora. All two-state solution proposals have either postponed the question of the refugees or reduced their return to symbolic numbers, a few tens of thousands who would leave

behind the population's "other half," the millions of refugees who are its most disenfranchised and in need of a political solution. The very premise of a two-state solution would generate, at best, a State of Palestine on 22% of historic Palestine. This tiny parcel of 5,860 square kilometers, economically and politically fragile, would by definition have no room for refugees. Simply, there would be no geographic or economic capacity to accommodate such a tremendous influx of tired, poor, and hungry.

Any real solution for the refugees would therefore have to allow them to live in what is now Israel. This would mean the likely dissolution of the already-threatened Jewish majority and with it the end of the idea of ethnically-based nation-states, which is the very essence of the "two states for two peoples" philosophy. Just as Israel cannot remain both Jewish and democratic, a political solution cannot both be based on two states and protect refugee rights.

#### *State-Building vs. Rights*

Historian Yezid Sayigh has called the tension between the state-building project and the call for human rights the "historic faultline within the Palestinian national movement." [1] A fifty-year obsession with parastatal structures, funded and diplomatically supported by the same genre of diplomats now assessing the UN statehood bid, has created a massive bureaucratic Palestinian machine. This obsession and its supporters have financed Ramallah's neoliberal real estate boom: chic high-rises, cafés and pubs that the New York Times hearts but that only the elites can access, a phenomenon once glibly described to me by a Palestinian NGO director as "liberation by office space." The implication was that offices and bars will not and cannot lift the most disenfranchised, the poor, the stateless, and the landless. Ramallah's "boom" is nothing more than bureaucracy proliferating bureaucracy, and elite buildings built for the elite.

As an alternative to expensive shiny things,

Mazin Qumsiyeh, Nasser Abufarha, Virginia Tilley, Ghada Karmi, Ali Abunimah, and many others over the past decade have articulated plans to build on the less sexy but more solid foundation of human rights, as enshrined in UN Resolutions and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and as modeled by the numerous countries that have overcome ethnic conflict and division, including Switzerland, Belgium, Denmark, Canada, Ireland, and South Africa (an admittedly problematic example considering the persistent and brutal economic exclusion of black South Africans). These are the most commonly cited countries, but in truth the tyranny of privileged minorities and unchecked majorities is so pervasive that the list could be expanded to include all 193 UN seats.

Rather than drawing more borders on a land that is already scarred with them, laying the ground for more ineffective and piecemeal governance, and threatening to further Balkanize the conflict; and rather than insisting on the highly unlikely disbanding of West Bank settlements, in a move that harks backwards to the post-WWII golden age of ethnic transfers, it's time we moved the conflict forward into the age of multiculturalism, integration, and civil and human rights. Instead of further entrenching the ethnic collectivities into geographical clusters, it's time for the inhabitants of the Israeli-Palestinian space to become a community of citizens.

### **One-State Advocates, Past and Present**

Some of the challenges to the two-state model discussed above are specific to the current political context. The past decade has seen the proliferation of works and citizen groups challenging the two-state construction, and with good reason. In 2000, the Second Intifada announced widespread disillusion with the Oslo Accords and peace negotiations that seemed unable to obtain a Palestinian state even as Israeli settlements doubled in number of inhabitants and geographi-

cal size. Since then, skepticism about the possibility of a brokered diplomatic solution for two ethno-states has generated conferences, manifestos, books, and a constant trickle of articles, blog posts, and op-eds advocating what Tony Judt called "the alternative."

But if the 2000s have brought new life and brainstorming to binationalism, the one-state movement is not as young as its latest advocates. Rather, its century-long history counts a varied cast of actors who, for different reasons and in different contexts, held a common vision, at times pragmatic and at others idealistic, of a single land shared by two collectivities. These historical examples of what almost happened many times take binationalism out of its pigeonhole of intellectual leftists and broaden to lend historical legitimacy that weighs in on the present. They show that the single state isn't new or innovative, or limited to disparate and marginal groups. Rather it has at many points in history been a real possibility put forward by major players and thinkers. Such twenty-twenty retrospect should serve to normalize the one-state formula and put it securely on the political table of possibilities for conflict resolution.

### *The Cultural Zionists and Early Zionism*

Like Palestinians who focus on human rights over state-building, Ahad Ha'am (né Asher Ginsburg) founded the philosophy of cultural Zionism, the idea that Jewish cultural and spiritual revival and self-reliance were more important than a state. A close associate of political Zionist Chaim Weizmann, Ha'am advocated a Jewish state with a Jewish majority inside Palestine, but insisted it couldn't come at the expense of the indigenous inhabitants, and must be a natural outgrowth of a Jewish renaissance.

His descendants were less equivocal about the philosophy's political implications. Martin Buber was one of the founders of Brit Shalom, founded in 1925, a group of around 100 Jewish intellectuals who advocated binationalism. In 1936, the Socialist League of

Palestine political party was formed, accepted Arab members, and advocated binationalism. Brit Shalom's founders, most prominently Buber and Judah Magnes (a Reform Rabbi, co-founder of the American Jewish Committee, and co-founder and later president of Hebrew University in Jerusalem), went on to found the small political party the Ihud ("Union") in 1942, which advocated a binationalist state within an Arab federation, and counted Albert Einstein among its supporters.

While the cultural Zionists are the most commonly cited example of binational advocates of their era, even Ben-Gurion believed in the early 20th century that binationalism, while not preferable, was inevitable since it was the model top British Mandate officials advocated. A pragmatist, he went along with the best offer he had. Only when Mandate officials changed their tune and started advocating partition did the pragmatic Ben-Gurion follow suit.

#### *British Mandate Officials*

Throughout the 1920s, the British approach was generally to establish a single Arab-Jewish state in Mandate Palestine. High Commissioner Arthur Wauchope, for one, sought a multinational political system that would remain under British control. Archer Cast proposed to treat Mandate Palestine and Trans-Jordan as a single unit with three cantons and a central, British-controlled, government, while Douglas Duff proposed two cantons, one Arab and one Jewish, in a single country that would be part of the League of Nations.

The canton approach was largely rooted in British preconceptions of ethnic groups as unable to live together. With the onset of the Arab Revolt in 1936, the crown intervened, sending the Peel Commission to assess the cause of the violence and what should be done about it. The commission, which was officially boycotted by Arabs but courted by Chaim Weizmann and other top Zionists, concluded that Palestinian claims of land

dispossession were bunk, and that Palestinians and Jews were unable to cohabit. The Commission threw out the canton approach in favour of partition and a population exchange that would have likely displaced 200,000 people, almost all of them Arab. While the transfer idea was briskly swept away by the Woodhead Commission the next year, the partition approach held fast and would henceforth dominate the mindset of international brokers.

*Jews and Palestinians in Mandate Palestine*  
During the Mandate period (1916-1947), there were also a number of ordinary Palestinians and Jews who may not have had the clout to implement a binational plan at the governmental level, but in many instances enacted it by supporting one another through the shared harsh circumstances of financial crisis, foreign occupation, and natural disasters. This is in part because the British Mandate governed the entire Israeli-Palestinian area, thereby creating "a space in which a basic human urge towards cohabitation and cooperation could exist."

In several instances, Arab and Jewish unions struck successfully against exploitative British labor practices. In 1931, for example, frustrated by high government taxation, a group of truck drivers organized a successful strike that "paralysed the country" and forced the Mandate government to lower taxes. However, the cooperative atmosphere didn't last. When the strikers' chair, Hasan Sidqi al-Dajani, expressed his wish to expand the strikes, the Histadrut (the Zionist labor union) withdrew its support. For their part, Palestinian notables (elites), "condemned" Palestinians who jointly participated in strikes with Jews. Only five years later, at the onset of the 1936 strikes, the same truck drivers who had jointly struck for common gain now "stood in the forefront of the clashes between the Zionists and Palestinians." [2]

#### *Woodrow Wilson and the King-Crane Commission*

At the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, as Al-

lied Powers set surrender terms for the Central Powers and divided the spoils of the defeated Ottoman Empire, US President Woodrow Wilson proposed as an alternative his Fourteen-Point Plan, advocating among other things the self-determination and independence of formerly occupied peoples of the newly dissolved empires. In this spirit, Wilson organized a commission to travel through Levant to investigate the desires of its inhabitants. Wilson's King-Crane Commission concluded that Middle Eastern people desired self-determination and independence, and that a Jewish state couldn't be established without the violent expulsion of the area's original inhabitants. While the commission did not oppose Jewish immigration, it advocated that Jewish immigrants live as immigrants rather than establishing a state. However, when the commission's findings were delivered Wilson was ill, the US Congress was pursuing isolationism, and as a result the report wasn't published until 1922, when Wilson was already out of office and Congress had already come out publicly in support of Zionism. The Commission's effect was thus solely informative. Its potential for political influence had missed its moment.[3]

#### *Palestinian Militant Groups*

After the 1947-9 War, the National Liberation League, founded in Mandate Palestine in 1944 after the Palestine Communist Party split along Arab-Jewish lines, actively advocated a binational solution.

Twenty years later, in the refugee camps of the late 1960s and 1970s, the communist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine adopted the goal of a single secular democratic and communist state. Although it has retained this position in principle, its actions since 1986 can appear contradictory. For example, in 1986 it grudgingly agreed, for the sake of national unity, to throw its weight behind the Fatah-dominated PLO approach that implicitly aimed for a two-state solution, and during the First Intifada it continued to participate in PLO activities even as the two-state model became the explicit goal. In

1993, however, it joined the oppositional Alliance of Palestinian Forces (APF) against the Camp David negotiations, after which it consistently opposed the Oslo Accords, and boycotted the PA elections in 1996. Then in 1998, founder George Habash and his successor Abu Ali Mustafa accepted the two-state model as an "interim solution"[4] toward the "strategic goal"[5] of a secular democratic state, a position that the organization upheld until the organization's current jailed leader, Ahmed Saadat, in 2010 reaffirmed the one-state solution as the only viable model.

The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), with Fatah at the helm, has also wavered between the two-state and one-state models. The influence of the PFLP and other secularists, along with changing realities following the 1967 war, pushed the PLO to adopt the goal of a secular democratic state from 1969 to 1973 (this was seen as a concession, a revision from the organization's prior goal of "total liberation" of historic Palestine and the repatriation of all Jewish immigrants after 1947 to their countries of origin). In 1974, this goal was demoted to a utopic ideal, and "the PLO embarked irrevocably on the road towards pragmatism that culminated in the November 1988 declaration of a Palestinian state in the occupied territories and the definitive acceptance of a two-state solution." [6] However, in recent years and in light of the failure to negotiate a two-state settlement, certain isolated statements coming from the PA leadership may point to the eventual renewed adoption of the one-state model.

#### **Contemporary Advocates**

##### *Post-Zionists and Anti-Zionists*

Beginning in the 1970s, deepening fractures within Israeli society, a growing awareness of the Occupation's moral corruption, and newly uncovered historical facts regarding Israel's role in the Arab-Israeli wars, all contributed to an increasing disillusionment

among certain Jewish academics and intellectuals regarding Zionism. Post-Zionism, the idea that the Zionist project was antiquated and irrelevant in a pluralistic world and a multicultural Israel that was occupying another people; and anti-Zionism, political opposition to any form of Zionism at any point in time and any context, are distinct terms that are often conflated. However, a person can adhere to both ideas.

The purveyors of post-Zionism from the margins to the mainstream are generally identified as the “New Historians”, a generation of Israeli revisionist historians who seized upon the declassification of archival documents relating to the 1947-9 war during the eighties to make public the less savory aspects of their country’s history that had been hitherto denied, justified, or glossed over. Among them are Ilan Pappé, Simha Flapan, Benny Morris, Avi Shlaim, and Tom Segev. The most significant revelation was new evidence confirming Palestinian claims of Israel’s organized expulsion of half of Palestinians, and destruction of over 400 of their villages. This new evidence raised questions about the morality of the very existence of Israel.

Around the same time, the Israeli Black Panther movement was a key voice in increasing demands by economically and politically marginalized Arab and African Jewish Israelis for social and economic equality. Some linked their movement to feminist and Palestinian claims within the Israeli-Palestinian space, thereby shifting the line of conflict from Israelis vs. Palestinians, to European Jewish men vs. everyone else, and reframing the narrative of the Israeli-Palestinian space from a conflict between Palestinians and Israelis to a broad manifestation of institutional racism.

Disillusionment with Zionism continues to grow, and currently represents a small but significant presence in Israel of people advocating the dissolution of the Jewish state in favor of a pluralist state with equal rights for all. Organizations like Anarchists Against the Wall and Zochrot are among the organizations representing this view, and some Israeli professors share it as well.

### *Palestinian Intellectuals and Politicians*

At the signing of the Oslo Accords, most Palestinians were hopeful for a new era. When the state failed to materialize but Jewish settlements expanded twofold, broad disillusion with the Palestinian Authority, peace talks, and eventually the two-state solution were, and are, increasingly alluded to. Even top PA officials like Saeb Erekat and PM Salam Fayyad, who have been wed to the two-state solution as it ensures them staying in power, have threatened that the possibility of it being realized is shrinking. Fayyad, for example, recently stated that if Palestinians didn’t get a state, they would demand voting rights in Israeli elections.

While such remarks from the PA generally read as threats aired for the purposes of pushing the two-state process along, a number of Palestinian intellectuals are more sincere. Professors and researchers Ghada Karmi, Rashid Khalidi, Ali Abunimah, Yezid Sayigh, Omar Barghouti, Ziyad Clot, Ahmad Moor, and Mazin Qumsiyeh are just a few of the growing number of influential writers articulating a vision for a single state. While their language largely remains broad and focused on arguing against the two-state solution rather than specifying the contours of the single state (Israeli commentator Noam Sheizaf has asserted that one-state discourse is currently in an early stage of development akin to where two-state discourse was in the seventies), think tanks, conferences, and a growing literature are slowly piecing that vision together.

### *The Israeli Right*

In the past several years, members of this unexpected new camp have emerged as advocates of the one-state approach. Moshe Arens of the right-wing extremist Betar movement, a Netanyahu supporter and former minister of defense and foreign affairs, as well as current Knesset Speaker Reuven Rivlin, both published editorials in Ha’aretz advocating full absorption and citizenship rights for all West Bank inhabitants and their territory. Likud legislator Tzipi Hotovely

held a conference in the Knesset entitled "Alternatives to Two States," a topic she has since continued to push for publicly. Settlers Uri Elitzur and Emily Amrousi, both former representatives of the settlements' Yesha Council, are now writing and speaking in support for granting full citizenship to West Bank residents.

Ha'aretz journalist Noam Sheizaf succinctly summed up these new burgeoning right-wing voices for peace last year in his article "Endgame." "They all reject totally... ethnic separation and recognize that political rights accrue to the Palestinians. They talk about a process... at the end of which the Palestinians will enjoy full personal rights, but in a country whose symbols and spirit will remain Jewish. It is at this point that the one-state right wing diverges from the binational left. The right is not talking about a neutral "state of all its citizens" with no identity, nor about "Israstine" with a flag showing a crescent and a Shield of David. As envisaged by the right wing, one state still means a sovereign Jewish state, but in a more complex reality, and inspired by the vision of a democratic Jewish state without an occupation and without apartheid, without fences and separations." [7]

Analyst Ali Abunimah has pointed out that the same right-wing party that established Apartheid in South Africa finally dismantled it. Could the same cynical clarity that drove Ze'ev Jabotinsky's realpolitik now drive the right to make a clearheaded push for a sustainable peace?

### **One-State Models**

The tension between an ethnicity based, negative/exclusivist conception of nation-building, and its citizenship based, positive/inclusive counterpart, has long preoccupied social scientists. Some argue that the nation is a purely theoretical *idée horizon* that is "never fully realized," a civic utopia with no empirical example, but only countries that are closer or further away. [8] Others argue the opposite, that the exclusivity, national-

ism, and protectionism are inevitable outgrowths of national construction because the democratic concept of popular sovereignty merges the spatial concept of the "people" with the temporal concept of the "nation," creating a breeding ground for xenophobia. [9]

Arend Lijphart, who theorized consociational democracy, the model followed by Switzerland, Belgium, and Canada, is one theorist thinking less in the civic/ethnic binary. Lijphart understood that these both inclusive and exclusive impulses compete within any state context, and thus require management. This management is a primary role of good government. [10] While consociational democracy is not the sole formula capable of resolving ethnic conflict within a single state, its management-based (rather than ascriptive) approach must inform the treatment of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In this section, I'd like to discuss three viable alternatives to partition: consociational democracy, federalism, and confederalism.

### *Consociational Democracy*

This model, based in geographically delineated cantons, "involves four features: cross-community executive power-sharing, proportional representation of groups throughout the state sector, ethnic autonomy in culture (especially in religion or language), and formal or informal minority-veto rights." [11] In laymen's terms, ethnic or religious collectivities are given autonomy and power that is not necessarily tied to geographic boundaries or to having a demographic majority. Specialists of ethnic conflict believe that when the theory of consociational democracy is fully or almost fully applied, it provides "a more fruitful strategy for dealing with conflict in plural societies" than secession or partition. [12] The problem is that its empirical form rarely mirrors theory. Rather, states adopt contextually unique power-sharing models established through brokered negotiations. Lesser forms of the consociational model can exacerbate rather than reduce ethnic tensions, as groups who feel excluded by

the outcome may resort to violence. Excluding certain groups from the negotiating table can derail peace negotiations as well in the lead-up to a power-sharing agreement, and even spur exacerbated violence, as Wendy Pearlman has chronicled, rather than alleviating it.[13] Furthermore, as long as political parties remain delimited by ethnicity in the consociational state, inter-ethnic conflict is likely to reemerge. Only when political parties become ethnically diverse does political stability become probable.

#### *Confederal Democracy*

In this model, à la European Union, two states would be established, Palestinian and Israeli, with a central government managing and mediating interdependence. While this model is not technically a single binational state, it deserves consideration by the advocates of binationalism because of the high level of cooperation and interdependence it entails, with a central governing body acting for the common good of both states. Supporters of this solution generally believe that the one-state solution is idealistic but naïve, and that a single state for both collectivities would result in a South Africa style dynamic – disenfranchisement with a kinder face, with Palestinians continuing to suffer from severe economic inequality.

The strength of this model is that it caters both to the state-builders and the human rights defenders. On the one hand, goes the argument, in a world where power resides in nation-states, the Palestinian movement must have a state to become an equal player at the table. Not only that, Palestinians have been disenfranchised for so long that the emotional need for a state cannot be underestimated. And in this mode, Jews can have their emotional need met for a homeland.

One big question in this model is immigration policy. Tel Aviv University professor Shlomo Sand believes that Israel's Law of Return, which allows any Jew in the world to automatically acquire Israeli citizenship, should be amended to allow only persecuted

and disenfranchised Jews to acquire citizenship.[14] Under this amendment, Russian Jews facing persecution would still have been able to immigrate, for example, as they did in the seventies. However, wealthy and/or politically safe Jews, such as American and Western European citizens who acquire Israeli citizenship out of emotional connection rather than political need, and who often don't continue to live in Israel because their lives are more comfortable in their places of origin, would no longer be able to immigrate. Parallel legislation regarding Palestinian Right to Return would have to be discussed, prioritizing the needs of the registered refugees. Management and protection of the sizeable minorities within each country would also have to be established, as would a sensible economic policy encouraging interdependence.

#### *Federal Democracy*

This model, practiced by the United States among others, consists of a "compound sovereign state, in which at least two governmental units, the federal and the regional, enjoy constitutionally separate competencies —although they may also have concurrent powers." [15] Other hallmarks of federalism include "a written constitution, bicameralism, equal or disproportionately strong representation of the smaller component units in the federal chamber, decentralized government, and the right of the component units to be involved in the process of amending the federal constitution but to change their own constitutions unilaterally." [16] Key to this structure is the system of checks and balances that keeps the tyranny of the majority at bay and aspires to prevent any single interest group or legislating body from passing discriminatory or unfair legislation.

Federalism describes a model of government that can be applied to any state, while consociationalism prescribes fair management of group representation. So a country can be simultaneously consociational and federative. This happens when collectivities are concentrated into geographic areas with easily-

drawn boundaries, as with the Swiss model. The Israeli-Palestinian space, with its relatively complete ethnic separation along the Segregation Wall that separates the state of Israel from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, could rather easily be a consociational federation. Within the state of Israel, where ethnic segregation occurs somewhat more informally, along the lines of American cities and regions, two rather large predominantly Palestinian areas can nonetheless be pointed to, specifically the southern part of the Negev Desert, which is home to forty Bedouin villages that are unrecognized by the Israeli government, and the motlet or “triangle” region in the northern half of the country. If consociational democracy were to be applied to Israel/Palestine, relatively autonomous cantons could be sectioned off according to demographics, local governments could be established, and a central government with limited power could operate in Jerusalem.

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Any of these three models probably contains more potential than partition does for democ-

racy, conflict resolution, sustainable peace and the restoration of equality to the Israeli-Palestinian space. However, this is just a sketch. A major contribution to the one-state discussion could be had if panels of experts in immigration law, architecture, constitutional law, conflict resolution, and so on, could meet to discuss the nitty gritty of these various options, and put forth tangible and specific proposals that could be assembled into a concrete overarching working plan. In this writer’s view, such a concrete proposal is the next major hurdle toward instituting universal suffrage, democratic participation, and a multiplicity of voices. If such a plan is implemented, perhaps the concept of concitoyenneté (shared citizenship) can include Israel and Palestine among the places where it is practiced.

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[2] This fascinating story is discussed in detail by Ilan Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 112.

[3] Harry Howard , *The King-Crane Commission: An American Inquiry Into The Middle East* (Beirut: Khayats, 1963); James L. Gelvin, "The Ironic Legacy of the King-Crane Commission," in David W. Lesch (ed.), *The Middle East and the United States* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999).

[4] Mahmoud Soueid with George Habash, "Taking Stock. An Interview with George Habash" (*Journal of Palestine Studies* 28(1), 1998), 86-101.

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[6] Muhammed Muslih, "Towards Coexistence: An Analysis of the Resolutions of the Palestine National Council" (*Journal of Palestine Studies* 19(4), 1990).

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# The Persistence of the Palestinian Question

## by Joseph A. Massad

by Sam Ayache

**J**oseph Andoni Massad, Associate Professor at Columbia University (New York State) and specialist in modern Arab policies and history of ideas, is an American historian of Palestinian origin.

Joseph Massad has written a lot on the role of Western intellectuals in legitimising the State of Israel and it is like a sort of refutation of "*Reflections on the Jewish Question*" published by Jean Paul Sartre in 1946 that Joseph Massad has given the title of "*The Persistence of the Palestinian Question*" to a series of essays and articles written between 1995 and 2005 on Zionism and the Palestinians.

There are two very different editions of this work and these editions do not have the same content. The French edition (La Fabrique – Paris 2009) only counts 104 pages and only assembles two texts whereas the English edition (Routledge – New York 2006) counts 218 pages and assembles 11 texts. Our review will therefore refer to the more numerous texts assembled in the English edition.

The main thesis developed by Joseph Massad consists in explaining that the "*Palestinian Question*" is nothing more than a prolongation of the "*Jewish Question*" transposed to the East in a colonial context and that the complete resolving of the "*Jewish Question*", now become "*The Palestinian Question*", can only be achieved by a radical questioning of Zionism and the State of Israel.

Joseph Massad adopts implicitly the point where Sartre's reflections start: the anti-Semite creates the Jew: "*if the Jew did not exist, the Anti-Semite would invent him*", but Massad observes that this Jew, invented by anti-Semitism is above all a "*Semite*", i.e. a "*Levantine*" in European imagery, a being supposed to be physically effeminate and intellectually degenerate an Easterner whose assimilation into the European population would be impossible according to the racist criteria invented by anti-Semitism.

Joseph Massad shows once again that the founders of historic Zionism, Theodor Herzl

and Max Nordau, as well as those called "*Zionist revisionists*" like Jabotinsky, took on board the whole of the European anti-Semitic discourse on the "*Levantine*" character of the Jew. In particular he recalls, quite justifiably, the theses of Max Nordau, co-founder of the World Zionist Congress with Herzl, on the supposed physical degeneracy of European Jews. But this demonstration showing how Zionism and anti-Semitism are affiliated (mainly Germanic, as Michael Selzer showed in his book "*The Aryanisation of the Jewish State*") is not new and many authors are acquainted in particular with the personal notes of Theodor Herzl about Edouard Drumont, Founding Father of modern anti-Semitism: "*But I owe to Drumont a great deal of the present freedom of my concepts, because he is an artist.*"

The originality of Joseph Massad resides in his drawing from this long established observation, a certain number of consequences that have been neglected or ignored by many observers. Joseph Massad, a disciple and follower of the historian of "*Orientalism*", Edward Saïd, declares that the Zionist discourse is above all a racist justification of European supremacy over the Orient.

For Massad, the dialectic of the Zionist discourse leads Theodor Herzl to invent an imaginary Orient, a "*New Old Land*" (in German "*Altneuland*") rid of its Arab reality and in which the "*Semitic*" Jew would become a European or more precisely a Prussian.

Joseph Massad sums up in one sentence this content of the Zionist project: "*If Jews were Asians in Europe, in Asia they would become Europeans*".

Remember that for Herzl the model for civilisation is the Prussian aristocratic State and he cannot imagine anything other than a European colony in Palestine, a sort of Prussian State, where everyone would be in uniform, where "*German would be the official language*" and where "*only children and old people would have the right to play.*"

But for Joseph Massad, Zionism, by trying to transform Jews into Europeans, set off a process which in turn, transformed Palestinian Arabs into Jews in “*a displaced geography of anti-Semitism*”.

For Joseph Massad “*in transforming the Jew into the anti-Semite (or into the « anti-Jew » as Israeli clinical psychologist Beit-Hallahmi posited) it became necessary to transform the Palestinian Arab into the disappearing European Jew*”.

And Massad reproduces the quotation from Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi : “*The Zionist settlers declared they were not settling in a new country, but that they were simply coming home after a long stay abroad: those thought to be natives of the country were in fact the real foreigners. They were just enacting repatriation*”.

This “*displaced Geography of anti-Semitism*” enables the author to explain the continuity of the Zionist policy of ethnic cleansing of Palestine, of all the human ,material, historical and cultural elements attesting the existence of the Palestinian people.

Joseph Massad recalls the now famous words of Moshe Dayan, reported in the newspaper *Haaretz* in 1969, explaining the toponymy of Palestine, reinvented by Zionism. “*Jewish villages were built in the place of Arab villages. You don't even know the names of these Arab villages, and I don't blame you, because these geography books no longer exist. Not only the books not exist, the Arab villages are not there either... There is not a single place built in this country that did not have a former Arab population.*”

The ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians , the physical elimination of the Palestinians, is not therefore an “error ” or unfortunate and regrettable “misconduct” on the part of the Israeli State but the very core of Zionism, the “raison d'être” of the Israeli State !

Don't the officers of the Israeli Armed Forces openly claim to resort to the Nazi methods of

extermination used in the Warsaw ghetto? Joseph Massad recalls the article published in the newspaper *Haaretz* in January 2002 on the Israeli army methods used against the Palestinians, that refer to those used to crush the Warsaw ghetto :

“*In order to prepare properly for the next campaign, one of the Israeli officers in the territory said not long ago, « it's justified and in fact essential to learn from every possible source. If the mission will be to seize a densely populated refugee camp, or to take over the Casbah in Nablus, and if the commander's obligation is to try to execute the mission without casualties on either side, then he must first analyze and internalize the lessons of earlier battles – even, however shocking it may sound, even how the German army fought in the Warsaw ghetto ».* The officer indeed succeeded in shocking others, not least because he is not alone in taking this approach. Many of his comrades agree that in order to save Israelis now, it is right to make use of knowledge that originated in that terrible war, whose victims were their kin”.

This “*displaced Geography of anti-Semitism*” enables Joseph Massad to explain the “*European*” Zionist discrimination of a racist character against their fellow Jews that they got to come from the Arab countries ; those called “*Misrahim*” in Hebrew, confusing them inappropriately with the Sephardic Jews. If anti-Semitism has fabricated the Jew, the “*European*” Zionist has in turn fabricated the oriental Jew, considered as sullied by “*Levantine*” civilisation and that must be “*Europeanised*”.

Joseph Massad recalls Ben Gurion's contempt for Moroccan Jews: “*Those [Jews] from Morocco had no education. Their traditions are those of Arabs...We do not want Israelis to become Arabs. We are in duty bound to fight against the spirit of the Levant, which corrupts individuals and societies, and preserve the authentic Jewish values as they crystallized in the [European] Diaspora.*”

The same contempt of Jews coming from Arab countries was shown as early as 1949 by Arye Gelblum, journalist with *Haaretz*: “*This is an immigration of a race we have not yet known in the country... We are dealing with people whose primitivism is at a peak, whose level of knowledge is one of virtually absolute ignorance, and worse who have little talent for understanding anything intellectual. Generally, they are only slightly better than the general level of the Arabs, Negroes and Berbers in the same regions.*”

In contrast with talk of this incendiary nature, Massad recalls the joy of Mrs Golda Meir welcoming the Jewish immigrants from the USSR: “*You are the real Jews. We have been waiting for you for 25 years. You speak Yiddish ! ... Every loyal Jew must speak Yiddish, for he who does not know Yiddish is not a Jew*”.

The French edition of the collection of Joseph Massad presents no document of this discrimination against Oriental Jews while the English edition publishes several documents among which a reminder of the Wadi al-Sahib uprising (1959) which gave birth to the Israeli “Black Panther” movement - founded by “*Misrahims*” at the end of the seventies.

This question of “*Misrahims*” clearly reveals Zionist discourse and enables us to understand that the aim of Zionism has been to ensure the European character of Israel and its non Asiatic character or, to use Zionist terms its “*non Levantine*” character. Joseph Massad adopts the thesis according to which the State of Israel is above all an “*Ashkenazi*” State that of European Jews speaking Yiddish, as opposed to Sephardic Jews and *Misrahims*.

Joseph Massad qualifies Zionism as a racist ideology and takes a stand against any recog-

nition of the State of Israel. The English edition of the *Persistence of the Palestinian Question* contains several documents in which Joseph Massad explains that he is firmly opposed to the Oslo Agreement that set up the Palestinian Authority. Joseph Massad has repeated his opposition to the disastrous consequences of the Oslo Agreement in many articles published in the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Ahram* on the “*Electronic Intifida*” blog. The French edition includes unfortunately only one text on this subject.

For Joseph Massad, the “*Palestinian Question*” cannot be resolved within the framework of the “*Peace Process*” contained in the Oslo Agreement that demands that Arab States recognise the State of Israel as a Jewish State “*that is a state that has the right to discriminate racially and religiously against its non-Jewish citizens*”. What Massad call the “*persistence*” of the Palestinian Question is the result of the non resolution of the “*Jewish Question*” transposed to the East. And it is because the Oslo Agreement does not enable that question to be solved that the “*Palestinian Question*” still persists and will continue to do so.

The solution proposed by Joseph Massad consists in “*de Europeanising*” the European Jews of Israel. The European Jews of Israel should become completely Asiatic, i.e. Orientals. They should no longer be Europeans in the Middle East but be part of the Middle East.

This might appear an Utopia but it is the message that Joseph Massad tries to convey with a lot of pertinent arguments.

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*The Pertinence of the Palestinian Question*  
by Joseph Massad, Routledge –  
New York 2006

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# **DIALOGUE**

**REVIEW FOR DISCUSSION BETWEEN  
ARAB AND JEWISH ACTIVISTS OF PALESTINE  
IN DEFENCE OF THE RIGHT OF RETURN, FOR ONE STATE SOLUTION  
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