

# **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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# “The Whole Palestinian Nation, Not Only a Section of It, Is Resisting”

From a correspondent of *Dialogue Review* in the West Bank  
December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Since the Israeli aggression against Gaza and the fierce resistance mounted by the Palestinian people against that barbarous attack, something has been changing in Palestine.

In particular, two recent surveys confirm that in the eyes of an increasing majority of Palestinians both the plan that consists in creating a Palestinian State next to the Israeli State and the so-called peace process - with its humiliating endless negotiations - lead to a deadlock.

*“The ‘Two-State Solution’ - Suddenly a Minority Position!”*. That is the conclusion of a public opinion survey conducted between June 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP) (1), an American institution which can on no account be suspected of having a pro-Palestinian bias. Another poll conducted at the end of August 2014 by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR) (2), a think tank of policy analysis and academic research, confirms the sea change in the Palestinian people’s state of mind

The results of the two surveys deserve our attention.

The poll commissioned by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP) reveals that only 27.3% of the Palestinians interviewed think that *“the main Palestinian national goal for the next five years should be to end the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza to achieve a two-state solution”* while 70.3 % believe that the goal *“should be to work for a one-state solution (...) from the [Jordan] river to the [Mediterranean] sea.”*

Barely one Palestinian in four, according to this

poll, supports the plan put forward by the Palestinian Authority as well as by Washington and the European Union, while nearly three Palestinians in four champion a one-state solution in the land of historic Palestine.

This flies in the face of all those who claim that there is no alternative other than the two-state solution and the recognition of a Palestinian State next to the Zionist State. The Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR) poll shows that half the Palestinians reject the two-state solution and 62% think that *“this solution is no longer practical, due to Israeli settlement expansion.”* The survey also gives the reasons for this rejection: an overwhelming majority of Palestinians (81%) *“are worried that they could be hurt by Israelis in their daily life or that their homes would be demolished and land confiscated”* and *“believe that Israel’s long term aspiration is to annex the land occupied in 1967 and expel its population or deny them their political rights.”*

Should such worry come as a surprise, when Israeli soldiers did not hesitate to kill Palestinian Minister Ziad Abu Eid, who was in charge of the issue of Israeli settlements, during a non-violent protest in the village of Turmusiya on December 10<sup>th</sup>? It takes the President of the Palestinian Authority himself several hours to travel from Ramallah to Amman in Jordan because, like any ordinary citizen, he has to stop at Israeli checkpoints in the West Bank. Similarly the Prime Minister, Rami Hamdallah, is searched and treated like dirt when travelling.

According to the same poll, which - let us not forget - was conducted in August 2014, when the Israeli forces were bombing Gaza, a majority

of Palestinians (53%) believe that *“armed confrontation is more effective than negotiations”* and 57% *“oppose disarming armed groups in the Gaza Strip”*, the latter being in fact an Israeli demand.

Should we still be surprised by what is expressed through this survey? The Palestinian Authority’s policy cannot even get the release of the prisoners who have been rotting in Israeli prisons for 30 years, while seizing an Israeli soldier in Gaza made it possible to win the release of 1,023 Palestinian prisoners.

The two-state “plan” proposed by Mahmoud Abbas, the Americans and the European Union, is sheer fiction! The confinement of Palestinians in scattered territories, the continued expansion of settlements, the extending occupation and ethnic cleansing, make it a pipe dream that has been rejected with increasing determination by the Palestinians.

Who can believe that Israel is going to withdraw from the settlements? It is the opposite that is happening. The Israeli army can reach the centre of Ramallah in ten minutes! Gaza is an overcrowded territory with no outlet to the sea or the air, sealed off by Israeli forces on one side and Egyptian forces on the other. It is an open-air prison.

When Palestinians demonstrate in the West Bank and the policemen of the Palestinian Authority charge at them, fire US-made tear-gas at them and arrest and torture activists, they know that this police suppression of their protest developed in the wake of the Oslo accords. Article VIII of the Declaration of Principles signed in Oslo in 1993 makes provisions for a “strong police force” for Palestinians, which the United States and the European Union provides with weapons and funds. It is controlled by the Israeli occupying forces and intervenes directly in zone A, in accordance with the Oslo agreement, and jointly with Israeli forces in zone B. The most obvious cooperation is to be found in the refugee camps of the West Bank, in Jenin for example. And in the same way as the Palestinian Authority tries to maintain order in the West Bank, Hamas tries to do so in Gaza.

After an Israeli soldier was stabbed in Tel-Aviv, Netanyahu said the Palestinian Authority should

be held responsible. His Minister of the Economy, Naftali Bennett, called the President of the Palestinian Authority a “terrorist in a suit”. Such words are part of the escalation ahead of the forthcoming elections in Israel. All that is just for show. Major General Aviv Kochavi, the head of Israel’s military intelligence, denounced the comment as inappropriate and stressed that since 2007 cooperation between the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli services has been at its highest level. Need we be reminded that Mahmoud Abbas has led the Palestinian Authority since January 2005? All these facts show that the goal of the Palestinian Authority is to protect Israel, stifle any opposition to the Zionist State. “Were it not for Mahmoud Abbas, there would be a third Intifada”, Israeli officials think.

Faced with this submission, corruption and repression, Palestinians consider that the Palestinian Authority is an instrument of the Zionist entity. Most of them reject the Palestinian Authority and its very existence. Recent opinion polls suggest more than half of them might wish it were dissolved and another 20% wish for the same, but wonder who would pay the salaries of civil servants.

The reason why Hamas is increasingly popular is that in the eyes of all Palestinians it has become quite clear that the negotiation policy brings no results, which is not true of armed resistance. The reconciliation deal stated that elections were to be held in December. It will not happen because Hamas might win a very large number of seats, and this throws the Palestinian Authority into a fright. That is the reason for the fuss and the smokescreen around the resolution at the United Nations.

But the revolt expressed today in the West Bank, in Jerusalem, in the refugee camps, has taken a new form. The situation is changing. On November 7<sup>th</sup>, demonstrations took place against the separation barrier and in support of the Al-Aqsa mosque, in Naalin, Bilin and Nabi Saleh, west of Ramallah in the West Bank. On November 14<sup>th</sup>, 150 demonstrators crossed the security barrier between Israel and the West Bank near Qalandia. They were protesting against the death of a young Palestinian the previous week in Kfar Qana, north of the occupied territories, and against the new planned settlements. Other demonstrations took place in

Kaf Qaddum and Umm al-Fahm, east of Hadera. On November 15<sup>th</sup>, clashes erupted in the al-Tur neighbourhood in East Jerusalem.

Skirmishes broke out in the region of Beit Amr and south of of Al-Khalil. 1,500 Palestinians living inside the 1948 borders demonstrated after a young man was shot and killed in Kfar Kana.

Those taking part in those demonstrations are the young or people who no longer accept the situation and act outside the control of apparatuses, which are discredited, rejected, and will be soon disappearing - Hamas included. The great mass of Palestinian people does not trust a single party.

This mobilisation can be seen everywhere, in the West Bank, in Gaza, among the Palestinians living inside the 1948 borders, in the camps. That is new. The first Intifada grew in the West bank and Gaza. Today the revolt has broken out everywhere. It is the whole Palestinian nation that is resisting, not only a section of it.

All western powers know that here the situation is escaping the control of the Palestinian Authority. That is why the Authority is seeking to side-step the issue at the diplomatic level. The resolutions adopted by European parliaments in favour of the recognition of a Palestinian State aim to prop it up in order to avoid its total collapse.

The only possible solution is the one-state solution, it is the only democratic, practical solution, the only one that has a future. We are not talking about the "Jewish National State" that Zionist leaders want to set up, but about a secular State, in which equal rights would be guaranteed for all and where all Palestinians could go back to their land, their villages, and live in peace.

This question crops up in every conversation. **A "Palestinian State" alongside a "Jewish State" is a dead solution. Because it entails, now and forever, borders, roadblocks, checkpoints and different rights.** We are tired of all this. Every time a new American President is elected, he trots out the prospect of a Palestinian State, and our situation keeps getting worse. On the other hand, one thing is certain: an Israeli State does exist, which oppresses us

and is an obstacle to any democracy in the region.

The solution of one secular and democratic State in the historic territory of Palestine is, with the right of return, the historic demand of the Palestinian national movement. The point should be emphasised at a time when everything confirms that this fundamental demand is being forcefully expressed. Democracy can exist only if it benefits everyone.

Results of the survey conducted between June 15 and June 17, 2014 by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP):

*"The main Palestinian national goal for the next five years should be:*

- *To work toward reclaiming all of historic Palestine from the [Jordan] river to the [Mediterranean] sea:*

**West Bank: 55.4%      Gaza: 68.4%**  
**Total: 60.3%**

- *To work for a one-state solution in all of the land: a state in which Arabs and Jews will have equal rights in one country, from the [Jordan] river to the [Mediterranean] sea:*

**West Bank: 11.2%      Gaza: 8.2%**  
**Total: 10.1%**

- *To end the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza to achieve a two-state solution:*

**West Bank: 30.6%      Gaza: 21.8%**  
**Total: 27.3%**

- *No opinion/Don't know:*

**West Bank: 2.8%      Gaza: 1.6%**  
**Total: 2.3%**

**Total for a one-state solution: 70.3%.**

Total for an end to the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza to achieve a two-state solution:  
**27.3%**

## Endnotes

(1) <https://www.flickr.com/photos/washingtoninstitute/14503134701/>  
[http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/other/PalestinianPollingReport\\_June2014.pdf](http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/other/PalestinianPollingReport_June2014.pdf)

(2) <http://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/492>

# About the Recognition of the Palestinian State

by François Lazar  
December 5<sup>th</sup> 2014

Last December 2<sup>nd</sup>, following in the footsteps of Sweden, the British parliament and the Spanish State, the French National Assembly voted a resolution to recognize a "Palestinian State" on the territories that were occupied in 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Those are presented as positive attempts at stabilising a chaotic situation. Is this, however, really the case?

Some may have considered these resolutions as victories. True, they came at the end of a 51-day long and especially barbaric offensive, against the Gaza people last summer. The offensive was characterised by the magnitude of destructions and the number of deaths, yet also by the stubborn resistance of the Palestinian people, and the growing rejection of the figure cut by the State of Israel in international public opinion. On November 18<sup>th</sup>, in the Spanish State, the Parliament decided to ask the government to recognize the Palestinian State at the moment it would consider most timely. Actually, the proposed "non bill" Act [i.e. which does not emanate from the executive and is not binding for the government], which was adopted asked the government "to seek every move for a coordinated action in collaboration with the international community, especially with the European Union, taking fully into account the legitimate preoccupations, interests and aspirations of the State of Israel". Meaning that the relation with the Palestinians is subordinated to the interests and aspirations of the leaders of the Israeli State, right at the moment when the Rajoy government has just lifted the embargo on weapon exports to Israel.

The parliamentary debates prior to the votes in these countries show several similarities.

First: insistence on recognizing a "*Palestinian State*" when nobody, not a single deputy is able to say what such a State would look like after the negotiations. This is quite telling on the meaning to the manoeuvre. Should this insistence be related to the unprecedented crisis, which is rocking the very bases of the Israeli State both internally as well as among its traditional endorsers.

During the summer, highly critical positions could be heard from Jewish circles, especially in North America. A recent opinion poll published on Friday December 5<sup>th</sup> by the Brookings Institution, along the same lines, affirms that the "*two state solution to the conflict enjoys growing support in the United States.*" Roughly two-thirds of the people in the polls have declared they are ready to support a single democratic State should a two state solution prove non-viable. The same opinion polls show that "*only 24% of the answers say they prefer the Jewish rather than democratic character of Israel*". The same poll shows that Americans increasingly (67%) oppose the settlements in the West bank. The report, very widely circulated in US media comes at the moment when the government coalition in Israel broke down last week due to the tensions caused by Prime Minister Netanyahu's determination to affirm the identity of the State of Israel as a "*Jewish State*". Let us now look closer at the debates in Parliament in France. It should first be noted that, though the text was voted by the "left" parties, i.e., the Socialist, Communist, Green and Radical (centre left) parties, the debate in Parliament showed a broad consensus on a crucial point summarised by François Asensi, the Left Front deputy: in the State of Israel "*hundreds of academics, senior military, peace activists have*



*understood that the creation of an independent and democratic Palestinian State was the safest warrant of security for Israel, which is something we hold dear*". This is a commonly held opinion. The Palestinian State is the best way to warrant the security of Israel in conformity with the "spirit" of the Oslo Accords which SP and CP leaders (just like right wing ones) declare they hold dear. It should be reminded that the Oslo Accords which brought about the creation of the Palestinian Authority, essentially aimed at forming a Palestinian administration and especially a Palestinian police corps acting as the subsidiary of the Israeli occupation forces working in close collaboration with them. Then, later on in the debate, the same deputy said that voting the text means "saying Yes to the right of peoples to self-determination, Yes to peace and negotiations founded on international laws"

How can one mention the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination without mentioning the present mobilisation of the Palestinians in all the territories of historical Palestine who, in each and every demonstration, have reaffirmed their unity chanting "we are one people"? SP deputy François Loncle gave the answer on December 2<sup>nd</sup> (the day of the vote), when he declared that the text that was to be voted: "tends to encourage Palestinians and Israeli to conclude a historical compromise". For the Palestinians, the required compromise was already an old tale. They would have to give up on over 80% of the historical territory of Palestine. The right to return is not a symbolic demand. It expresses the very identity of the Palestinian people, who are made up of refugees, a people where families were expelled from their lands and who were brutally separated over 60 years ago. Further in his arguments, François Loncle notes that a petition launched by "Elie Barnavi, the former Israeli ambassador in Paris, was endorsed by over 700 Israeli public figures. Elie Barnavi states that, unless a Palestinian state is created, the very future of Israel is at risk". Once again the focus is on the future of the State of Israel.

Defending the position of the UMP (right wing)

Christian Jacob, while criticising the joint initiative of the Socialist and French Communist parties states: "Yes to a Palestinian State, but never endangering the security of Israel that France has always considered as a non-negotiable pre-requisite".

For Green François de Rugy, "If the present resolution shows to the Palestinians that a political solution is possible, it cannot take their place to conduct the needed evolutions". In clear speech, Palestinians are requested to give up their defence against the brutalities of the occupying power. As if the military occupation of Palestine, the confiscation of lands, the continued expulsions were not the root causes of the present situation.

As she went into the detailed meaning of the resolution, Elisabeth Guigou, SP chairperson of the Foreign Affairs committee said: "Our country was one of the first and most ardent defenders of the entry of Israel into the community of nations. France has never spared its efforts for the right of Israel to exist in security." Today, as we have seen, and as it is faced with unprecedented crisis because its traditional endorsers in "public opinion" are one after the other caving in, everything must be done to rescue the State of Israel which is the guarantee of order in the Middle East, even against itself, even against the democratic aspirations of the Jewish populations which are preferred in the role of oppressors. Behind the declarations, the reality on the ground cannot fit with such demagoguery. French-Israeli journalist Charles Enderlin interviewed on November 25<sup>th</sup>, in the French weekly *Telerama* said: "When I meet Palestinian leaders, I ask them: 'do you think you will have a State with 380,000 settlers?' (...) They answer: 'we are quite well aware that we will have no state at all, the West Bank has become a series of spots and dots, it is no longer possible to create a State with territorial continuity' (...) I cannot imagine that the experts in embassies, in Europe or even in the USA are not aware that 380,000 or even 10,000 settlers can be evacuated. The idea of two States is done and finished."

**Unless the point is to establish a State in patches of territory administered by the Palestinian Authority and controlled by its police funded and armed by the major powers.**

Much is said about the “*right of the Palestinian people to a State*”, but: what is *the Palestinian people*?

The Palestinian people bereft of their lands since 1947-1948 is divided into four main entities: the Palestinians from inside, officially called Israeli Arabs; the refugees scattered in dozens of refugee camps in several Arab countries but also in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip; the inhabitants of the territories occupied since 1967, and the Diaspora Palestinians. What State could represent such a group? A State made up of patches of land linked together by tunnels? Unless the National Assembly considers that the Palestinian people as we have just depicted them are not the same people. Could one expect anything else from Elizabeth Guigou or Laurent Fabius, the most pro-Israeli representative of the French government (i.e. who has given unconditional support to every repressive attack against the Palestinian population, not forgetting last summer’s slaughter) during the whole history of the Fifth Republic? What people are we talking about when speaking of the “*right of the Palestinian people to self-determination*”? The two-State solution has long been a framework enabling Israel’s governments to blame Palestinians for the failure of “*negotiations*”. Also, in the “*spirit of the Oslo accords*”, it is a framework meant to break the unity of the Palestinian people, shackle them, stamp out any possibility of democratic evolution which would necessarily put established order at risk. Fighting for equal rights for all the populations living between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River is incompatible with the restricting and prison-like framework of the “*Palestinian State*”.

Today, Laurent Fabius relays the US leaders and announces “*a new impetus given to peace negotiations between Israeli and Palestinians, with a view to reaching a final agreement within two years*”, with the preparation of a new international conference. In 2003 already, George Bush had given himself 2 years to finalise negotiations on a status. In 2010, Barack Obama announced the creation of a Palestinian State within two years. The plan outlined by Fabius takes up the 2002 Saudi peace initiative, which proposed the normalisations of relations between the State of Israel and the Arab League countries in exchange for the withdrawal of Israel from the territories conquered in 1967 and a “*fair solution*” to the problems of the refugees. Former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak (who boasted he was the Israeli person with the largest amount of Palestinian blood on his hands), a member of the Socialist International like Fabius, has just explained that this plan should be considered “*despite the likely difficulties in negotiations with the Palestinians*”. Barak explains that he thinks “*the going will not be smooth – Palestinians are not easy to talk to, as I well know. Step-by step agreements may be needed and even unilateral stages, in coordination with the United States and the Quartet*”. Once again, as usual, the conclusions are dictated even before new negotiations start: “*Palestinians are not easy to talk to*”.

One remark before I conclude. Throughout the debate in Parliament in France, not a single deputy ever so much as mentioned the issue of lifting the blockade of Gaza where some 2 million women, children and men are, according to United Nations agencies, undergoing a humanitarian catastrophe of unprecedented magnitude. Which is the better option: passing a non-binding resolution recognizing a Palestinian State which will never come into being and which one can easily condone, or – concretely - the demand for the lifting of the Gaza blockade? Does this issue not concern the whole labour and democratic movement?

# Some Questions for a Palestinian Militant in the 1948 Territories

Interview of 26 November 2014

The government of the State of Israel has just adopted a draft bill, which will shortly be submitted to the Israeli Parliament, the Knesset. In the lead paragraph, it is stated that this law aims at constitutionally going from a "*Jewish and democratic*" State to a "*National State of the Jewish people*". The aforementioned democracy was merely very formal, as the Palestinians residing within the State borders - the 1948 territories - after having been subjected to military power up until 1966, today are submitted to terrible racial discrimination similar to apartheid. We questioned one of our correspondents living inside the Israeli State, to have his appraisal of the situation. The announcement of the dissolving of the Knesset and the early convening of legislative elections were announced shortly after this interview;

**Could you tell us briefly about the draft bill being submitted to the Knesset?**

Yes. The government has just adopted a draft bill that modifies the text of the constitution of the State of Israel. In the 1948 text, it was said that Israel is a Jewish State but the non-Jewish citizens have equal rights. The new law erases any reference to equal rights. Obviously, there was a form of apartheid, but the text was there, and equality was written into the law. It could thus be used as a basis in the courts, for example. But now there only remains reference to the Jewish State. It is an opening to ethnic cleansing. More and more frequently, the authorities threaten Arab militants in the 1948 territories with deportation to Gaza, which proves, moreover, that Gaza is indeed a prison. But it is also a form of ethnic cleansing, which this law will legalize... And that is not the only consequence of the draft

bill that has been adopted. In fact, now all the Palestinians of the 1948 territories will directly undergo the consequences that will have an impact on the slightest details of daily life. One of the consequences will be a tightening of surveillance and the monitoring of each Palestinian and of all Arab organisations, since any living person is now subject to the reinforcing of the Zionist character of the State.

**What will be the consequences for the Arab workers' trade union, the organisation that has carried on the combat of Sawt el-Amel?**

As its name states, it is not a Zionist organisation so, according to the law, this trade union is not on the same level as other organisations. This is also the case for all the other Arab organisations, NGOs, etc. It has already been announced that there will be surveillance and reinforced monitoring of Arab organisations.

**So this is a project of major importance, happening in a situation marked by numerous confrontations?**

Exactly; the confrontations are on-going here and there, between the youth and the police, in the villages and without mentioning East-Jerusalem, which is in a state of insurrection. You have seen what happened at Ashkelon, where the mayor has forbidden Arab workers from working in the schools. I'm telling it as I see it: They can take all these discriminatory measures, they can make these laws and forbid people to work, but they won't manage to silence the Palestinian people. They will not overcome the Palestinian people, be it here, in Jerusalem, in Ashkelon or in Gaza.

# Interview with Doctor Dominique Le Nen French University and Hospitals surgeon and professor, back from a mission in the Gaza Strip

*Interviewed by Roger Calvez,*  
Brest  
1 December 2014

Dr. Dominique Le Nen has just returned from a mission in Gaza with the French volunteer doctors association Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF -“Doctors without Borders”). Dr. Le Nen is a professor and a surgeon at the Brest CHRU (the Regional University Hospital Centre) and is a specialist in orthopaedic, traumatology and reparative surgery.

The second edition of his book *De Gaza à Jénine : au cœur de la Palestine* (“*From Gaza to Jenin, in the Heart of Palestine*”), published by Harmattan, came out in July 2014. In this version, which includes two new chapters and an album of colour photos, homage is paid to the children. On the cover, their looks question the readers and invite them to enter into a “story” that allows no concession. In his introduction, Dr. Le Nen writes: “*Throughout these pages, in the light of the facts, memories and witness are meshed with my thoughts and my impressions of the land, from the beginning of my surgical missions to Gaza in 2002.*”

## **- What are the reasons for this book?**

I am not a political person, but I am sharing my feelings on the situation in Palestine. I thus wanted to testify to what I have seen since my first mission in 2002, in the middle of the second Intifada. I have just made my 19<sup>th</sup> stay there. It is true that you don't come back from Gaza, nor from the West Bank, unscathed by the suffering of these populations. I needed to

expressed what I experienced. This book is a series of flashes, of events that have genuinely marked me. Nothing of what is told in this book is the product of my imagination. For each event, official sources are quoted.

I had wanted to write from the very beginning of the missions, because the Palestinians dearly want this witness; they feel abandoned. And yet – and this is contradictory - there are no less than 85 NGOs in Gaza, helping and assisting a population of approximately 1.8 inhabitants (in 350 km<sup>2</sup>). The world is at their bedside, but they need to have their situation known.

I joined MSF on a time-to-time basis to go and help the Gazans; I am part of AMANI (the Franco-Palestinian Association for Aid and Medical Training) which is directed by Dr. Salim Arab, who regularly finances our mission in Jenin, the ones I have been doing regularly since 2005 in this West Bank town. The profits from the book go to the association, to continue the work on the ground and to carry out the AMANI aid projects in Gaza, in the West Bank and in Lebanon.

## **- In relation to the last mission, what has changed?**

When you arrive in Gaza, many things are surprising. First of all, you go through the only check-point that is open, the Erez one, In the

north of Gaza (as the passage through Egypt has been closed). I truly had the feeling of entering a prison, and it is the same feeling on the way back out. As long as you have not gone through the Erez check-point, you can barely imagine what the humiliation is and the unpleasant feelings that invade you. The territory is under control on all sides. On one side, there are beautiful roads and fine infrastructures; on the other, the roads have been bombed and torn apart, the buildings destroyed and there is the poverty of Beit Hanoun and Jabaliya, in the north of the Gaza Strip.

The population is extremely dense in Gaza, and it keeps growing in this entirely controlled territory, because the birth rate is high. So is the unemployment rate. Due to this fact, unfortunately, Gaza is an incubator for violence.

I saw two mosques along the sea that had been razed. A whole neighbourhood was destroyed in Gaza. A photographer from MSF did a report, at the end of "the war" that was poignant, showing the destruction, the children and the families taking refuge in schools, the work being done on the ground by MSF in the "Burn Unit". I didn't go to see the destruction – that smacks of voyeurism. I think that we need to respect the inhabitants who lost their lives or who are still living in the debris. I was in Gaza to work in the Shifa hospital and that is what took up my time. While neighbourhoods have been destroyed, three-quarters of Gaza is still standing. Life goes on. During the bombings there was even a restaurant under construction! Things were being demolished and destroyed on one side and, on the other, life went on.

The Palestinians are alive, they want to live and to re-build. They are rising back up rapidly: they bury their dead quickly and take up their lives again. They start over again right away. In this book, I have told the story of an episode that happened in March 2002 where, after a night of bombing and effervescence in the Shifa hospital, with rushing around and an endless train of operations and then a short two-hour night of rest, the next morning

everything was clean and tidy, as if nothing had happened the night before. I had been impressed by the in-flow of victims (23 major operations had been done that night), but also by the striking contrast of the calm and serenity the next morning, as if it had all been a bad dream.

The Palestinians are reconstructing themselves, but they are not optimistic and they think that this can all start over again. That is what the people that I was able to speak to in November 2014 told me. It is frightening.

At the hospital, during the worst times, 20 or 30 wounded would arrive per day; once it was 100 wounded all at the same time, with the necessary sorting of most urgent cases. The staff teams worked night and day. MSF was moreover very present during the bombings, with doctors and nurses of all nationalities

For this mission I was in a burn unit. A surgeon told me that the Israeli army was using prohibited weapons that cause burns that had never been seen before (the DIME bomb, the "Dense Inert Metal Explosive"), which creates burns of a particular type. The doctors saw unusual lesions that caused wounds that were very difficult to treat, as if Gaza were an experimental ground for certain weapons.

In March 2014 I was on a mission in Jenin, with a team from the French-Brittany FR3 television station. A 26 minute film was made, directed by Mikaël Baudu. The film, called "*Battements de cœur en Palestine*" ("*Heartbeats in Palestine*") is in four languages (French, Arabic, Breton, English and subtitled in French). It is poignant and shows the mission in the context of the town of Jenin, which was martyred in 2002. It also introduces us to a Palestinian theatre troop, "The Jenin's Freedom Theatre", who are activists for peace through the use of art and not weapons. It would be interesting to show the film in Brest.

**- In the book, in the chapter "Le cheval de Jénine" ("The Jenin Horse"), you quote an**

old man standing in front of his demolished house: *“Here there was a bed where my father died when I was five years old. These are the roots of a lemon tree. Over there was a fig tree that was 52 years old. Over there was an olive tree. The disappearance of the traces of this palm tree was the first thing that touched the people... They will never uproot us, they will never undermine our identity, no matter what they do”*. This does indeed show the spirit of a population that is determined to stay on the land they were born on, simply. Another said: *“What has been destroyed can be rebuilt.”*

The more Israel occupies the territories, the more the situation of occupant/occupied becomes blatant and the situation can but deteriorate. Look at East Jerusalem. There are more and more settlements. This makes the situation in Jerusalem explosive, especially at the moment. And colonisation seems to be scripted. I am not optimistic.

**- During an encounter with three young people from Palestine, one of whom is Jewish and living in the occupied territories (see this issue of *Dialogue*), it appeared obviously that the solution of a single State on the whole of the historic territory of pre-1947 Palestine was the most fair, and even the only, solution.**

That would indeed be the solution. The Palestinian people must be able to live. Indeed, a secular and democratic state in which everyone could live, that is of course what is needed. Moreover, everyone knows that is what is needed, but any agreement is currently frozen. There has been no more substantial progress in the attempts at

resolving the Israeli-Palestinian problem. I am nostalgic for the years between 1993-1995, where a real hope for peace existed and that hope was extinguished with the assassination of Rabin.

It is sad and difficult to see what is happening there. I would like to finish, as in the book, with the statement by Nelson Mandela that gives some great hope, the great hope that is born through mankind and for mankind: *“I answered that the State was responsible for the violence and that it is always the oppressor, not the oppressed, who determines the form of the struggle. If the oppressor uses violence, the oppressed will have no other choice than to answer by violence. In our case, it was but a form of legitimate defence.”*

**- On the first page of the book, there is the photo of a child who you treated: a beautiful little girl from Gaza with big eyes and a deep look on her face.**

Yes, she is a child who we treated and I remember her well. She suffered from congenital malformation on her little hands. It is the most beautiful of the pictures that we took, in my opinion. But the children of Palestine, you know, are just like ours – neither more ugly nor more beautiful, nor better behaved nor worse. They are kids, kids of the world.

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*The profits from the sale of this book will go in their entirety to AMANI (the Association Franco-Palestinienne pour l'Aide et la Formation Médicale  
Head Offices: 7 Rue Beauchamp 22300 LANNION - email : [contact@assoamani.fr](mailto:contact@assoamani.fr)*

# “To Be Twenty Years Old in Palestine”

## A discussion with three young Palestinians at the Faculté Ségalen (the Segalen University)

A correspondent of the Dialogue Review attended a meeting held at the West Brittany University in Brest on November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014, called by the following organizations: AFPS, UNEF, LDH (1). Here is his report of the meeting.

Between 150 and 200 people came to the Arts Faculty's lecture hall to listen to three young Palestinians. O. is a young female student from Gaza living in Paris, P. comes from the West Bank and M. introduces himself as a “Palestinian Jew”. They each addressed the meeting in turn to explain what is behind the Israeli–Palestinian conflict we hear so much about.

P. is a student living in Bil'in, a Palestinian village in the West Bank, east of the Green Line, the demarcation line between Israel and the West Bank.

*“My village was split by the apartheid wall, Israel's West Bank barrier. In 2004 we saw a bulldozer attacking our land. They were taking hold of our land to build their wall. Our actions against this move are all non-violent, which highlights even more crudely the violent character of the Israeli occupation and incursion.*

*“My village has 2,000 inhabitants. More than 1,300 have been wounded on at least one occasion, and 600 have spent from 3 months to 3 years in jail. We have also had to pay fines ranging from 300 to 20,000 euros.*

*“Fortunately we enjoy widespread support.*

*We managed to have the route of the wall pushed back. We were happy, but we did not get back the whole of our land, only a quarter and at what a cost!*

*“My cousin was killed by an Israeli grenade in 2009 and his sister, my cousin, died in 2010 after inhaling the phosphorus contained in the tear-gas grenades thrown by the Israeli army during demonstrations at the site of the wall. The army has ruthlessly handled us. They use different gases in their grenades on each occasion, so that they cannot be sued for crimes against humanity. They also use cannons sending 30 small grenades at one go. In fact, it looks as if they have been testing their war material on us. We are their guinea pigs. We need to pull down the walls of silence!”*

Then P. showed a moving film he himself shot: the mother of his cousins, the ones who had been killed in front of the wall, decided to recycle the grenades that had been used there. She put flowers in them, and in the very places where they had died she laid out a garden displaying the grenades decorated with flowers. She said: *“They are shooting us down with lethal grenades, I am responding with flowers, symbols of peace. My children didn't deserve such fate.”*

O. comes from Rafah in Gaza and is a student in Paris. She has not seen her family, still in Gaza, for three years. She explained:

*“I came to France on a scholarship. Since I arrived, I have lost touch with my family and friends still in Gaza. I can't go back to Gaza because of the checkpoints on the border with Israel or Egypt in the south, though obviously*

*it is Israel that is in total control. You might wait for months at the border and be unable to cross the frontier.*

*“You probably think that I’m lucky to be living in France, far from all the atrocities, but that’s not the case. I can’t see my family or talk to them. I’m always wondering if they are all right, if they have enough to eat, or simply if they are still alive.*

*“They live in a refugee camp south of Rafah. You can hardly imagine their conditions of life... They have no electricity, no drinking water (only once a week) and no contact with the outside world. Don’t call that living! When a shell falls on a house, it destroys ten other houses nearby. The people have to rebuild everything by themselves. The Israeli state robs us of our land, of our water.*

*“In Gaza the people are in a prison but the media don’t explain what’s happening. Palestinians in the West Bank can’t get in touch with Palestinians in Gaza. Why this blockade? How long has it been going on? For months? For years? I don’t know, we’ve always been at war. We’ve always been occupied. We can’t get used to such a situation.*

*“We are really talking about an occupation. We are an occupied people! Occupier, occupied: the difference is crystal-clear. I can’t understand why the problem cannot be resolved. In South Africa, they did succeed in changing the state of things.*

*“The French government is not about to exert pressure; it’s up to you to change things.*

*“I’m tired of all this. I’m tired of waiting for the UN’s goodwill. They’re not doing anything and on top of that, we are supposed to thank them! Sweden has recognised the state of Palestine. I put my hopes in France. I know you, too, will be able to get things moving. Crimes against humanity should be punished.”*

M. is a young Jew who calls himself a “Palestinian Jew”. As a conscientious objector he refused to do his military service. He belongs to a group that advocates “a democratic state on

the whole of Palestine.”

*“I’m what you call a dissident. This is enough to get me two years’ imprisonment. In Israel the whole society is militarised. There is military control over the minds. In early childhood you are conditioned. In secondary school they take you military to bases. Teachers in uniform teach us “civic rights” and we also have to wear uniforms. In Israel, military manipulation begins at nursery school and it goes on till you die. The only history you are taught is that of Zionism and I have refused that.*

*“Before the 1948 war my village, 3 kilometres north of the Gaza Strip, had a name. It has been destroyed. Today, like many other villages, it is called a kibbutz, to show it is part of the Zionist Israeli movement. I remember, each time Gaza was bombed, lots of soldiers simply came to our kibbutz to have a rest. Through its mere existence, Israel is a crime against humanity. On my national identity card, there’s the word “Jew”; but “Jew” is not a nationality –it’s a religion!*

*“This an apartheid regime. Palestinians have to live under military law while Israelis live freely under civil law.*

*“Israel is fascist. The Palestinians of Gaza cannot marry the Palestinians of the West Bank. 95% of the Israeli population approve of the Gaza massacre and do not want Arabs to have the same rights. They support the military and terrorism. Things are not easy, but we don’t give up.*

*“I’m campaigning for the boycott of everything that comes out of Israel. Every week we demonstrate against the construction of the wall. We denounce Zionism.”*

An official of the France-Palestine Association explained that theocracy and democracy are incompatible. She said that 90% of the water in Gaza was not potable, not fit for drinking.

**We then put questions to our three guests.**

Our exchanges were very important, as they highlighted the fact that for those three young



Palestinians the solution was a single secular and democratic state on the whole of the historic pre-1948 Palestine.

**Question: It is often said that some Israelis are leaving Israel, is that true?**

M.: It is true that some are leaving. We are in a sick and a fascist society. 95% of the state funding goes to security. It is therefore getting difficult to live in Israel.

**Question: Is there unity among the Palestinians of Gaza and those of the West Bank and also with those who live in Israel?**

M.: There is no cooperation between Palestinians and Israelis; it's almost impossible, we have different opinions. We have our own campaigns. On the other hand, we have strong relationships with the Palestinians of Israel and there is a common understanding between the Palestinians of Gaza, of the West Bank and Israel. We agree on everything. We have no physical contacts, but Arabs actively support one another through social networks, etc. Our identity unites us.

**Question: In your opinion, what could be a fair way of partitioning the territory?**

O.: Historic Palestine (before 1948). What would be fair is a return to the pre-1948 map. It is the only fair solution (*greeted with warm applause*).

M.: For me, the solution is a democratic state. No matter how we achieve it. The important thing is justice, the same rights for all. One state: a return to the pre-1948 borders (*renewed applause*).

O.: Everybody knows the name Palestine. Everybody knows where it is. We must go back to that point: historic Palestine. The name Israel appeared afterwards, with the idea that for Israel, "Palestinians" are the other people, "not like us, they can therefore be treated as we wish." A return to the bases is the only solution. It was the United Nations that partitioned the country. I heard my father say: "*They knocked down our house twice, but*

*even if they knock it down ten thousand times we're going to stay here.*" In France they don't show you the proper pictures either. They want you to believe that Palestinians are born with a gun in their hands. In the end they want you to believe that it is Palestine that is occupying Israel!

M.: The United Nations is very keen on Zionism.

**Question: to achieve a one-state-solution, a secular state is needed. Do you think it is possible? And what about the relationships between Fatah and Hamas?**

O.: We were secular before you were. We all used to live together. My grandmother had Jewish neighbours. We were living on good terms together. The problem is not secularism; we have no problems with religion. The problem is political; it is the occupation of our land! There will be no justice in the world as long as Palestine is not free.

P.: Do you know the origin of Zionism? Ben Gurion came to Palestine to use the Jewish religion against the Arab majority, the people who were living there before the 1948 ethnic cleansing. Later on it was Israel that destroyed the unity that existed between Fatah and Hamas. When relations between Fatah and Hamas were resumed, they started to bomb Gaza.

**Question: What do you think of the phrase "Impunity for Israel, sanctions for Palestine"? And what do you think of the recognition of the state of Palestine by Sweden?**

M.: Israel is seeking impunity by referring to the Holocaust. And for them the Holocaust concerns the Jews only. The Israelis hide behind that historic event because for them it is a different matter. But the fact the Jews had to go through such suffering does not mean that they have the right to inflict such treatment on Palestinians.

What is the meaning of the recognition of Palestine by Sweden? It is necessary to know what they have in mind, of what state they are

talking about. Anyway, it's worthless if Israel is still in control.

P.: Our passes bear the inscription "Palestinian Authority". "Palestinian Authority" is not the same as Palestine.

*When the debate was over we distributed and called for the endorsement of the appeal launched by the Workers Party of Algeria and the UGTA (General Union of Algerian Workers) for the "unconditional, total and immedi-*

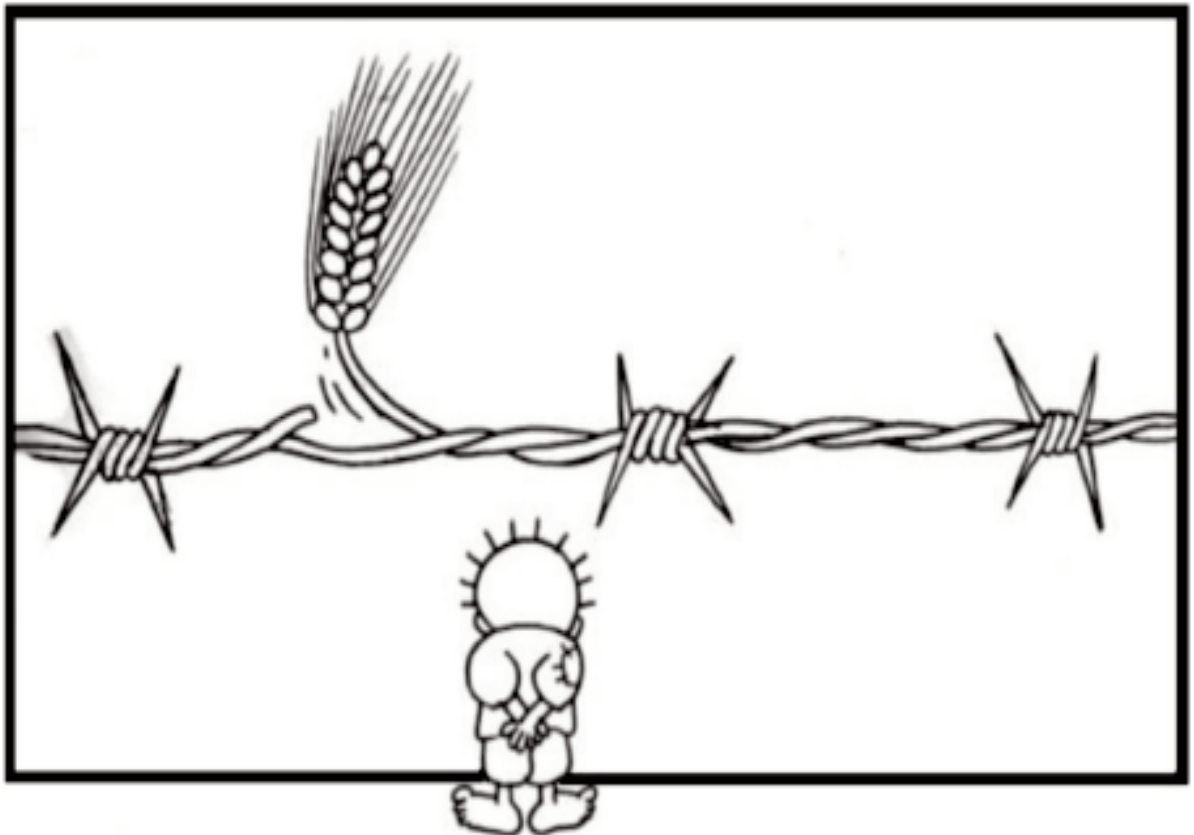
*ate lifting of the blockade of Gaza."*

#### *Endnotes*

(1) AFPS: Association France Palestine Solidarité.

UNEF: *Union Nationale des Étudiants de France* (Students' union)

LDH: *Ligue des Droits de l'Homme* (the Human Rights League)



Excerpts from a series of articles published in the  
Fatah journal in 1970

## THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION AND THE JEWS

It is almost a year since the Palestine Liberation Movement, Fatah, declared officially a political programme spelling out the ultimate objective of the liberation struggle:

*“We are fighting today to create the new Palestine of tomorrow; a progressive, democratic and non-religious Palestine in which Christian, Muslims and Jews will enjoy freedom of religion, will work and live peacefully and enjoy equal rights.”*

The statement added:

*“Our Palestinian revolution still stretches its welcoming hand to all human beings who want to fight for and live in, a democratic, tolerant Palestine, irrespective of race, colour or religion.”*

The statement was repeated, explained and amplified by Fatah representatives every time they attended an international gathering. The official spokesman of Fatah, Abu Ammar, (Yasser Arafat) was quoted by several journalists as saying that *“once we defeat the enemy and liberate Palestine we will create a home for all of us.”* Abu Iyad, one of the leaders of Fatah, stated in a long interview with the editor of Al-Talia that the Palestinian revolution condemns persecution of human beings and discrimination of any form and that Fatah would help Jews anywhere if they faced persecution from racists.

Such a statement was not just a propaganda claim: it was put into effect a few weeks later when Fatah-affiliated students protected Jewish Professor Eli Lobel in Frankfurt, Germany, from attacks and attempted murder by Zionist Germans. In the same way, Fatah protected

Jewish members of Matzpen in Germany after their lives were threatened following the same incident.

### A revolutionary idea

If this sounds difficult to believe, it is because of the bitterness created by the Palestinian tragedy since the Balfour declaration and the Zionist occupation of Palestine, which led to the expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland and their exodus in order to create “an exclusively Jewish State”: Israel.

The call for an open, new, tolerant Palestine for Jews and non-Jews represents a turning-point in the Palestinian struggle. But the idea is not new: Palestinians suggested the creation of such a state to the Peel Commission in 1937 and to Count Bernadotte in 1948. As for the idea of Jews, Muslims and Christians living together in peace and harmony, it is also a very old idea. Fatah stated: “This is no utopian dream or false promise, for we have always lived in peace, Muslims, Jews and Christians in the Holy Land. The Palestinian Arabs gave a refuge to the Jews fleeing persecution in Christian Europe and helped them just as they welcomed the Christian Armenians fleeing persecution in Muslim Turkey, or Greeks, Caucasians and Maltese among others.”

What is new is that non-Jewish Arab exiles, evicted from their homes and driven out of their homeland by Jews who settled in Palestine, can all the same – and while brandishing the gun and fighting for their liberation and very existence – campaign for a state bringing to-

gether the former victims and their aggressors and persecutors.

This idea is revolutionary and its implications serious and pervasive. In fact, it is so revolutionary that few people, apart from those who are directly affected, can believe it and support it. However the idea of a democratic and non-religious Palestine is both desirable and feasible. You only have to believe in it and fight to put it into practice, whatever sacrifices are necessary, so as to achieve lasting peace in Palestine.

### **Exiled Palestinians**

Thirty years under British mandate and domination had enabled the Palestinian people to acquire a good knowledge of its enemy. In the mind of the people, British imperialism and Zionist imperialism were closely linked. Many Palestinians already suspected the plot being hatched by the two imperialisms, namely the establishment of a “Jewish national home” and the expulsion of Palestinians.

Six bloody revolutions took place between 1919 and 1939. They were basically directed against the British occupiers. But whatever British responsibility may have been – and it was great – the Palestinians were actually driven out by Jewish terrorists. Over no more than a few months they were forced off their country through massacres, such as that of Deir Yassin, and expelled to the nearby desert. In the meantime, their oppressors’ leaders were calling for the creation of an “exclusively Jewish home” and regarded them, the exiles, as second-class citizens, only fit to be driven out of their homeland. In their misery, humiliation and despair, Palestinians learnt to hate Jews, to hate everything Jewish, everything connected with their enemy.

### **Jews and Zionists**

A few “intellectual” leaders did go to great pains to make a difference between Jews and Zionists; they kept repeating: “We are not anti-Jewish, we are anti-Zionists. We are Semites too, and the Jews are our cousins.” But it sounded a bit unreal when they said: “Some of

our best friends are Jews. We are only against the State of Israel.”

On the other hand, in their misery, the refugees no longer made a difference: the Israelis themselves kept telling them all Jews in the world were Zionists. The “Jewish” pressure on the United States, “Jewish” money, Jewish immigrants – it looked as if the enemy was gaining momentum everywhere and that the hope of a return of Palestinians was rather slim. Little wonder then that bitterness and fear prevailed. The “Protocols of the Elders of Zion” became fashionable and anti-Semitic literature, developed by European racism in a completely different context – at a time when the Jews were the victims – became quite common. This surge of bitterness, hate and confusion spread to other Arab countries, which helped Zionist propaganda, intent on prompting Arab Jews to leave their native country and relocate to the occupied land. In fact, thousands of these Jews would have stayed in their homeland – had circumstances been different – and would have continued to live in their country as they had done for hundreds of years in peace and harmony with their neighbours.

### **The revolution, a new era**

On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1965, Fatah, after six years of military preparation and political work, started the process of the Palestinian revolution. The first two years were devoted to establishing a “presence” in the Palestinian “arena”. Following the 1967 traumatic experience and the second exodus that ensued, the Palestinians became irrevocably committed to the revolution. They could at last take up arms and go back home to fight the occupiers. The Palestinian masses understood that their liberation could not result from the action of Arab armies in the form of a traditional war, but from a popular liberation war. The people were regaining confidence, a nation was being reborn. The Al Karameh victory and other victories, the sacrifices and the fighters killed on the battlefield, the escalating armed struggle, materialised and reinforced the sense of belonging to Palestine.

At the same time, the revolution brought maturity to the fighters. Paradoxical as it may seem,

those who fight become more tolerant. Violence in thoughts and words only comes with despondency and despair.

The way the enemy was looked at began to change and the difference between Jew and Zionist started to carry meaning. The desire for revenge is not enough to fight a liberation war. The fighters began to think about their final objectives. The discussions with the intellectual progressive Jews who came from all over the world to engage in a dialogue with the revolution led to an increasingly thorough analysis.

### **The new doctrine**

The leaders of the revolution undertook studies and discussions that brought about far-reaching rethinking: the Jews suffered persecution from racist criminals – the Nazis – in the same way as **we** suffer because of the Zionists.

Revealing parallels were made. The revolutionaries asked themselves: “How can we hate the Jews as Jews? How could we fall in the racist trap?”

A study of Jewish history and thought was conducted: the majority of those who came to Palestine were fleeing German concentration camps. They were told: “You are a people without a land for a land without a people.” They were told that they could be satisfied that the Palestinians had left Palestine of their own free will, thereby obeying the orders from Arab leaders, as part of a perfidious plan aimed at perpetrating a wholesale massacre of the Jews.

After that, the “Zionist machine” repeatedly told both new Jewish immigrants and old settlers that there was only one alternative: either to fight to survive and save “Israel”, or to be massacred – or at best to escape in a precarious rowing boat on the Mediterranean Sea. Even the Arab Jews – called “Oriental Jews” by the Zionists –, although the European Zionist oligarchy discriminated against them inside Israel, in the end were to accept the argument and fight for what they regarded as their survival.

The fight against Zionism was to reveal to

Palestinians the strengths and limitations of of the Jewish personality. The Jews were neither monsters nor supermen or pygmies. A new, human image of the Jew was being formed. Martin Buber, Isaac Deutscher, Elmer Berger and Moshe Menuhim, all those Jewish humanist thinkers, were read and reread.

### **A new image**

The Palestinian revolutionary freed himself from most of his old stereotypes. It surprises the foreigners who visit the commando bases and in particular the “Ashbal” camps – the fighting lion cubs. The Palestinian revolutionary is ready to die for the liberation of Palestine and will accept no substitute, whatever the price. But he has a clear idea of the enemy and of the final goal. When Jewish students from Europe came to spend part of the summer in Jordan in a Fatah camp, they were spontaneously made to feel at home. Fatah looks forward to the day when thousands of Jews will come and join its fight for the liberation of Palestine. In view of recent events, this might happen sooner than is usually thought.

### **The first step**

The first step was made by the Palestinian revolutionaries when they called for the creation of a democratic, non-religious Palestine. Attitudes are shifting: exiled and persecuted Palestinians are redefining their objectives and want to create a new Palestine encompassing all the Jews who are at the moment in Israel. To make this goal achievable, the first thing to do is to pay attention to the partner: what is the present position of the Jews on such an objective and what could change their state of mind?

This subject is now going to be dealt with. Then we shall consider the new Palestine and examine what it looks like at the present stage of the revolution. We thus hope to help initiate a dialogue on the basis of a serious study. Our revolution is young and dynamic. Its activists will continue to fight and learn until victory is achieved.

## Book Review

# “Palestine, a Jewish Question” by Richard Wagman

Reviewed by Gali Harroch

Who is Richard Wagman? He is the product of a secular Jewish family upbringing. A French-Canadian, he settled in France in 1990 where, four years later, he founded the UJFP (French Jewish Association for Peace).

In his introduction he writes: This *“is rather a book on Jews”*. And adds: *“It (the Palestinian question) is rather a Jewish question insofar as the majority of Jews are far from embracing the Palestinian cause, which is quite patent.”*

And he proposes to *“examine the ways to solve the Israel-Arab conflict once and for all”*

Richard Wagman first proceeds to develop a chronology ranging from the 1880s to 2012. The 1880s were years of pogrom in Central Europe. In 1897, the first Zionist congress with T. Hertzl was convened and Palestine was selected as the place to create the Jewish State. He quite correctly remarks that *“Zionists were a very scant minority in the Jewish community as they were rejected by everybody, from the rabbi to the secular upholders of Yiddish culture”*.

Why does he fail then to characterize nascent Zionism and make things easily understandable? Why, for instance, does he fail to cite T. Hertzl’s letter addressed to Czar Nicholas II’s Interior Minister – count Von Plehve - a major pogrom organizer: *“help us reach this land [Palestine – Ed.N] and the revolt [against the Czarist regime] will die down”*.

The Interior Minister did fund the Zionist movement, but complained to T. Hertzl that

*“Jews joined the ranks of revolutionary parties. We feel sympathy for your movement as it works towards emigration”*. Is any comment needed?

He notes the breakdown of the Ottoman empire (1915) and the transfer of Palestine (a province of the Ottoman empire) to British dominion by a promise made to the Arabs that the territory would, in time, become independent.. But Lord Balfour (Foreign Affairs Minister) reneged on the promise. In 1917, he promised the creation - in Palestine – of a *“Jewish National centre”* to the Zionist organization. But why does Richard Wagman not remark that, from the onset, Zionism was radically opposed to the existence of Palestine?

He also observes that in 1922 the Society of Nations (the ancestor of the United Nations) granted Britain a mandate over Palestine, which therefore integrated Balfour’s declaration. At the same time, the *“Communist Party of Palestine (PCP) is founded as a section of the Communist International.... exchanging Zionism for Marxism... and, from the start, promotes a Workers’ State with equal rights for Jews and Arabs in the framework of socialist revolution”*. Then Richard Wagman approaches the question of the 1936 general strike in Palestine but does not explain the root causes”

What were they?

In the 1930s, 30,000 peasant families were turned out of their homes by the Zionists.

British imperialism granted Jewish capitalists a privileged status and awarded them 90% of the land rights in Palestine, which enabled them to gain control over the economic infrastructures. A discriminatory Labour Law was adopted against the Arab labour force, resulting in massive unemployment.

The strike was fiercely crushed by the British, with the help of Zionist militias, while the Arab High Committee, headed by feudal lords, called to put the strike on hold. But R.Wagman correctly writes that the strike was “*against British domination, against exploitative land-owners and against Zionist colonisation*”.

Then came the 1930s and 1940s with mounting anti-Semitism in Europe, the rise of Hitler and the Second World War.

He notes: “... *with the final solution implemented by the Nazis, Zionists grew from a tiny minority to a majority current in the Jewish community*”. Which is true. With the extermination of Jews by the Nazis, Zionism grew. And it received much help. In particular, as early as 1944, the US government, voted a law limiting any immigration to the USA. So everything was done to channel the tides of immigration towards Palestine.

Now we come to 1947 when “*the United Nations voted for the partition of Palestine by a single vote margin*”. Then R.Wagman underlines that, in 1948, “*the Israel-Arab war not only resulted in the creation of a Jewish State. It also resulted in the ‘Nakba’ (the “catastrophe”), the expulsion of between 600,000 to 800,000 Palestinians from their homes... [they] are still waiting in refugee camps in Gaza, in the West Bank, in Lebanon, in Syria and in Jordan.*”

It is a pity R.Wagman does not analyse the international climate at that time.

At the end of the Second World War, the United Kingdom, the former colonial power in the Middle East lost its grip. Peoples were determined to end oppression. Arab feudal lords were unable to stabilise the situation in this

strategic region. Therefore, US imperialism aided by Stalin, had to find a solution.

The solution was Zionism – the creation of the State of Israel – which came up as the order keeper in the region and the negation of the Palestinian people.

It is in this framework that the UN’s decision to partition Palestine to create the State of Israel under the aegis of the USA and Moscow was taken. He notes the formation - in 1964 – of the PLO, whose “*new charter advocated the creation of a democratic, secular and socialist State over the whole historic Palestine*”.

He underlines Golda Meir’s – then active Prime Minister - well-known interjection in 1973: “*There is no such thing as a Palestinian people*”.

Then, in 1978, came the signing of the Camp David agreements and here Richard Wagman fails to underline that, for the first time, the recognition of the State of Israel by an Arab country (Egypt), became official.

But he notes the formation - in the same year - of the *Shalom Archav* (Peace Now) movement by a group of 300 Israeli veteran officers. As he writes: “*Its slogan ‘land for peace’ was the new way to express the wish for a two-state solution*”. And at the same time, the movement called for entering the government. In 1993 came the Oslo accords where the author underlines that for the first time “*The State of Israel officially recognizes the Palestinian people and its legitimate representative the PLO. At long last.*”

But did it mean recognizing and respecting the rights of the Palestinian people?

Far from it, as historian Ilan Pappé writes: “*The Oslo Accords were nothing more than a political and military scheme aiming to replace Israeli occupation by a different form of control.*”

There were further consequences: the PLO broke down and the right to return was scrapped. The writer notes the resistance of

Palestinian people and the cracks beginning to appear in the Israeli society.

In 2004, Israel bombarded Gaza: dozens of people died, hundreds were injured, dozens of houses were destroyed and Richard Wagman writes that 200,000 Israeli people marched in Tel Aviv on May 15<sup>th</sup>, while the offensive was under way, to demand the withdrawal of the army from Gaza.

2009 is the year of “Cast Lead” operation: it resulted in some 1,400 deaths and massive destructions. He notes that “no less than 250,000 Israelis - Jews and Arabs – marched in Jaffa against this military operation. One of the main slogans was: ‘Jews and Arabs, we refuse to be enemies!’ Then he comes back to the November 29<sup>th</sup> 2012 vote at the UN, admitting Palestine as a United Nations Observer State, which he considers a success.

But what State? What about the occupied territories? And the return of refugees?

He himself points out that on November 1st 1947 the UN itself adopted a partition plan for the Mandate of Palestine into two States. And since that date, there has been lasting war and uninterrupted colonization.

Then comes a chapter titled “One State. Two States?: the debate ”

Richard Wagman presents the thesis – published in 2001 – of M.Warschawski (who wrote the preface to his book). He defines him as a “writer, anti-zionist intellectual and historic leader of the Israeli far left”. The thesis is entitled “Israel-Palestine, the bi-national challenge”, and he explains what a single bi-national state would be, i.e., which would guarantee political and cultural prerogatives to both “communities”

In order better to understand this thesis which – on the face of it – opposes the two state solution, let us refer to what M.Warschawski wrote in May 2002:

*“In this sense, the question is not whether the Palestinians are entitled or not to a State ,*

*which not only Bush, but even Sharon himself recognizes, but to know whether this state boils down to a “bantustanisation” of the occupied territories or, on the contrary, means the end of Israel’s control over these territories”.*

What it actually means is that this State would comprise the territories occupied in 1967. It means in fact giving up on 78% of historic Palestine and consequently, on the equal rights of the two components Jewish and Arab over all historic Palestine.

Moreover objections were raised against this thesis in a Manifesto issued in early 2012, titled “A single State for Palestine” which R.Wagman has recorded. Among the endorsers, Israeli Arielle Azoulay, Eitan Bronstein, Ilan Pappé and Nurit Peld-Elhanan along with Palestinians Ghada Karmi, Mazin Qumsiyeh, Samir Abed-Rabbo and Susan Abulhawa.

Let us quote a few excerpts: “during the Nakba, in 1948 (...) Israel conquered 78% of Palestine and expelled the majority of the population – over 750,000 people...”

*“The 1993 Oslo Accords (...) laid the foundation of an agreement providing that 22% of historic Palestine (...) should in theory be given back to a Palestinian government... Since the beginning, it has been clear that Israel has no intention of dismantling its settlements or withdrawing its army from the West Bank or from East Jerusalem. In fact it has tripled the number of its settlers (...) since the Oslo Accords were signed, which makes the prospect of a two state solution completely unrealistic.*

To conclude: “the two state solution has never been realistic and loyal; it has negated any justice for most Palestinians.” The Manifesto continues by proposing another solution: “This solution is the single, democratic, non sectarian and secular state (religion being separated from State) over entire historic Palestine: a single State for all its citizens.”

This shows that it is urgent and necessary to help organize the dialogue between Arab and



Jewish activists and workers of Palestine to open a fair, democratic prospect based on the recognition of the rights of the Palestinian people: the right to return, for the secular, democratic Palestinian Republic over the whole territory of historic Palestine.

R. Wagman then devotes a chapter to youth in which he gives interesting indications *“After the Sabra and Shatila (South Lebanon 1982) massacres with the complicity of the Israeli army, the movement of consciousness objectors developed (...) An estimated third of the veteran army was sapped by these ‘refuzniks’”*. He cites a report published in June 2003 in an Israeli daily (*Ma’ariv*)

*“Every fortnight one soldier of Tsahal takes his life”*.

And we learn that, in order to fund the occupation of the territories, military expenditure and subsidies to the settlers since 2005 *“Israeli students will only be granted ten years and a half of tuition compared with twelve before!”*

This is what oppressing the Palestinian people leads to.

R. Wagman asks the question: *“A ‘Jewish State’ lacking Jews.”* And answers: *“the Jewish Agency settled American Indians from Peru in a West Bank settlement and an obliging rabbi immediately declared they were Jews (Israel’s lost “thirteenth tribe”). Cynicism has no limits.*

Then the writer lists with satisfaction the positions taken by Jewish organisations, public figures throughout the world which all have similarities.

They draw a thin line in the sand with the Israeli government while remaining within the framework of the United Nations which, since 1947 has stuck to the decision to partition Palestine and whose rationale is to reduce Palestinian to the smallest possible share.

R. Wagman especially notes an *“Appeal to reason”* signed among others by D. Cohn-Bendit and B.H. Levy. He underlines that this

appeal does not mention a Palestinian State but speaks of Israel, *“this State which we are unfailingly attached to”*; he explains that Palestinians are notably not mentioned in the text.... but, for the writer, this *“nonetheless opens some scope”*.

Can one reconcile fire and water?

On the same level, he mentions the declaration by the UPJB (Association of Belgian Progressive Jews) who are historically close to the Communist Party: *“..(.) expressing ourselves as Jews... to condemn the policies led by the Israeli governments against the Palestinian people disregarding the United Nations resolutions .. support to a just cause: peace founded on the recognition of a sovereign, viable Palestinian State alongside the State of Israel with Jerusalem as capital for both countries.”*

A chapter titled: *“The Israeli who resist: exceptional people”* in which the positions of some for a single state and of others for two states intersect.”

In his conclusion, R. Wagman writes a paragraph titled *“Messiah and redemption: the Russian revolution”*. He notes: *“the participation of numerous Jews in the social emancipation movements at the time”*. He writes: for those activists *“ revolution was the new Messiah ”*

With the October revolution, *“Jewish activists did embrace the Bolshevik party and the Communist parties in other European countries, including joining the leaderships of those parties. But disillusion was sharp.”* And he explains the backward movement of the revolution in Europe after the killing of Rosa Luxembourg and Karl Liebknecht in Germany. And the growth of Stalinism and the exile of Trotsky. The lesson he draws is: *“Indeed, for the European Jews, revolution was a fake Messiah.”*

Since he mentions Trotsky, he should have explained that Trotsky continued his fight for the proletarian revolution which ended only when he was assassinated on Stalin’s orders.

He should also have explained Trotsky's position on the Palestinian question. In 1934, Trotsky wrote: "Every day, facts show that Zionism cannot possibly solve the Jewish question. The conflict between Jews and Arabs in Palestine becomes increasingly tragic and threatening."

"I do not at all believe that the Jewish question can be solved in the framework of decaying capitalism and under the control of British imperialism. To work towards international socialism is also to work towards the solution of the Jewish question."

Another paragraph: "One State? Two States? Anything better?" (p. 320)

On the basis of the Olga appeal (2004), the writer develops his point of view on the two States: "(...) ending the occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, Gaza. Then it will be up to Palestinians and them only to choose the political regime they will choose to establish on those territories. The international community may be called upon to contribute

to make sure Israel does not thwart Palestinian sovereignty, especially by guaranteeing a safe zone linking Gaza to the West Bank".

Is it an independent state with a "safe zone (!)" guaranteed by the international community" i.e. by the UN! The same United Nations which, in 1947 decided to partition Mandate Palestine, thus trampling the rights of the Palestinian people under foot?

Is it a State when the right to return is not guaranteed?

Is it a State when the Palestinian people are denied the right to their land?

Should not democracy be the starting point? Does it not require finding a solution based on the recognition of the same rights for all the components living on the whole historical territory of Palestine?

Richard Wagman, *Palestine, a Jewish question*, published by Edilivre, 2014



## Book Review

# Max Blumenthal: Goliath. Life and Loathing in Greater Israel. Nation Books – 2013

Reviewed by Sam Ayache

In this book, American journalist Max Blumenthal has gathered interviews and investigations conducted while he was in Israel-Palestine from 2009 to 2013. In the Knesset, the national legislature of the Israeli State, he met members of the right-wing parties who are in the majority, such as David Rotem, Israel Hasson or Shai Hermesh, and who have been behind some of the most reactionary apartheid laws. He also met Knesset members belonging to the Arab minority, like Hanin Zoabi, who have been trying to oppose those laws.

How has this mirroring in what can rightly be called a vicious downward spiral of xenophobia and racism that seems to be inexorably sweeping through the country become possible? The author reminds us that as soon as the State of Israel was proclaimed, David Ben-Gurion defined this State – in quite a contradictory manner – as “Jewish and democratic”. Since 1948 “Hasbara”, the propaganda machine orchestrated at great expense by the Zionist State (and strongly denounced - rightly so – by our journalist), has always, when addressing the general public, presented the country as “the only democracy in the Middle-East”. However, and this is Max Blumenthal’s point of view, if the State was established as a “Jewish State”, did this not at once involve the exclusion of the non Jewish majority of the population? Did this not justify the eviction of hundreds of thousands of non-Jewish inhabitants as early as 1948? How then could such a State call itself a democracy?

The fact for example that the Knesset has Arab members is put forward as alleged evidence of this “democracy”. What are the real facts? Max Blumenthal mentions how Hanin Zoabi, a Palestinian member, is banned from addressing the Knesset from the rostrum: *“When Zoabi approached the Knesset podium on June 2, 2010, to address her colleagues, Anastasia Michaeli, the six-foot-tall ex-Russian model-turned-dominatrix of the Yisrael Beiteinu party, charged from her seat and rushed her. Screaming hysterically and waving an unidentified document, Michaeli came within inches of attacking Zoabi before the security guards assigned to Zoabi could hold her back. A melee erupted around the podium, as more members of the Knesset rushed forward to heckle Zoabi. ‘Terrorist!’ one shouted. ‘Go to Gaza!’ screamed another”* On that day Hanin Zoabi was unable to finish her speech. In July 2011 another incident occurred: Nissim Zeev, who serves as a member of Knesset for Shas, an extreme-right party, yelled at Hanin Zoabi: *“You are garbage!”*

In both cases the American journalist reports that no disciplinary action was taken against the attackers whose actions, in other countries, would have been regarded as contrary to the elementary rules of parliamentary democracy. But in the Knesset the opposite occurred. A few months later, the majority of the Knesset voted in favour of punishing the victim, Hanin Zoabi: she was banned from speaking on the parliament floor or introducing discussions in committee; she was also ban-

ned from carrying a diplomatic passport and deprived of the right to have the Knesset cover litigation fees should she be put on trial. Max Blumenthal adds that *“an Israeli grocer offered on Facebook free groceries for life for anyone who assassinated Zoabi, while a Facebook page spontaneously appeared entitled “Execute Zoabi”*. And he quotes Zoabi’s comment: *“Arabs without a parliamentary role would result in a different kind of relationship between us and the state. This would be the end of democracy. But we know this is what a Jewish state will lead to – the end of democracy is an inevitable outcome”*.

It is against this backdrop that Max Blumenthal attacks the spinelessness of those who have been referred to as “the peace camp”, whose leaders have sided with the army. Max Blumenthal mentions the communiqué issued by the Meretz Party, founded in 1992, which favours “Two States for Two peoples”, proclaims itself “Zionist Socialist”, is a member of the Socialist International and had this to say about Operation Cast Lead (the attack on Gaza in December 2008 and January 2009): *“The time has come to act without compromise and without political compromise to defend the residents of the Gaza perimeter and [the Southern Israeli city] Sderot.”* The statement was tantamount to supporting the military operation against Gaza. In the same way, Max Blumenthal, as he listened to the speeches made by what was left of the “peace camp” outside the Ministry of Defence, noted that: *“None of the speakers condemned the siege of Gaza. Occupation was a bad thing for Israel and for the Israelis – such was the main theme.”*

Max Blumenthal also notices that the support for Operation Cast Lead was championed by other distinguished characters of the “peace camp”, such as the “liberal” writer Amos Oz. After having first considered “disproportionate” the military operation against Gaza, he said two months later that the same operation was *“understandable and acceptable”*. In another chapter Max Blumenthal tells of a statement by Yosso Beilin, an architect of the Geneva Initiative (December 2003), and who is nevertheless referred to by Max Blumenthal as “a

*veteran politician from the left-wing Meretz party and a stalwart of Israel’s peace camp”*. These are Yosso Beilin’s own words as reported by Max Blumenthal: *“If this country is not the Jewish State, and has no Jewish majority, it doesn’t interest me.”* Max Blumenthal concludes that such a statement justifies the Nakba of 1948 as well as the ongoing eviction of non-Jews.

Max Blumenthal also points out the positions of the Association for Civil Rights in Israel. It successfully defended in the Israeli Supreme Court the right of the Qa’dan family to apply for housing in an estate of Galilee, which property developers exclusively reserved for Jewish citizens, in accordance with the general rules of the Zionist authorities. After years of prevarication the Supreme Court eventually gave them satisfaction. But Max Blumenthal reports the comments made by Ruth Gavison, a law professor and former president of the Association for Civil Rights in Israel. Ruth Gavison began by applauding the Supreme Court’s decision, but added: *“In the context of the ongoing conflict, Israel is justified in establishing Jewish towns with the express purpose of preventing the continuity of Arab settlement within Israel and with the Arab states across the border.”* Such apparently contradictory positions explain why the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, prior to any step aimed at arguing their case, demanded that the Qa’dans express *“loyalty to the Jewish people”*, this phrasing being a way of pledging allegiance to the State of Israel. As is shown through this example the apartheid policy pursued by successive governments since the creation of Israel is centred on two main pillars: first the “legal” expulsion of Palestinian families and secondly the fact that they should not be allowed to be relocated within the State.

However the decision in the Qa’dan case threatened to set a precedent in favour of Palestinians. Therefore a riposte was imagined by the reactionary majority in the Knesset, which Max Blumenthal studies in detail: the so-called *“Acceptance to Communities Law”* (2010) sponsored by David Rotem and Israel Hasson. In order to ban Palestinians from re-

siding in a neighbourhood exclusively reserved for Jews and to pursue a “Judaization” policy – which Max Blumenthal deals with on several occasions – the law introduces the right of a “community” to establish selection criteria for admitting potential residents. Clearly, those arbitrary rules include the obligation to acknowledge the “Jewish” character of the State and of the community concerned. This justifies the principle of “*separate development*” implemented in South Africa during the Apartheid era and which is expressed in Hebrew by the concept of *hafrada*, literally “*the physical segregation of Jews and the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza*”. The law’s sponsor, Israel Hasson, when interviewed by Blumenthal, “*denied harboring any malice toward the Palestinians of the Galilee. Instead, he claimed that by promoting separatism inside Israel, he was preventing the rise of dangerous social friction*”. Max Blumenthal infers that this law represents the continuation of the 1948 Nakba and aims at evicting an increasing number of Palestinians and forcing them to exile away from the State of Israel.

As regards Negev, Max Blumenthal denounces the plan involving the demolition of 55 “*unrecognized villages*” inhabited by half of the approximately 170,000 Bedouins living in Israel. According to the journalist, *this “Blueprint Negev”* designed by the Jewish National Fund (a government-linked organization) might well have been drawn up by the American billionaire and Republican Party donor, Ron Lauder, a supporter of Benjamin Netanyahu. Implemented by the OR movement, a Jewish National Fund subsidiary, the plan aims to “*concentrate*” the Bedouin population in a number of “*municipalities*”. On the OR movement’s website, Blumenthal found that “*Rahat [the largest of the Bedouin municipalities] is one of the seven Negev towns planned to concentrate the Bedouin population.*” And Max Blumenthal goes on to say that “*The removal and ‘concentration’ of the Bedouin tribes*” was “*a practice first employed by the fascist regime of Italy during its campaign to colonize Libya.*” This plan is not new and the author quotes a letter from Ben Gurion dated 1937: “*We can no longer tolerate that vast*

*territories capable of absorbing tens of thousands of Jews should remain vacant, and that the Jews cannot return to their homeland because the Arabs prefer that the place [the Negev] remains neither ours nor theirs. We must expel Arabs and take their place.*”

In the neighbourhoods that are still inhabited by Arabs in Haifa, Tel Aviv or East Jerusalem in the Silwan area where Max Blumenthal conducted his survey, the mayors are devising “*renovation*” projects involving the expulsion of Palestinian inhabitants from those neglected areas that are then declared unfit for habitation. Max Blumenthal even devotes a chapter to the Caterpillar-D-9 bulldozer used for pulling down Palestinian houses. He says with regard to this tractor weighing 49 tonnes that: “*in the eyes of Palestinians there are few symbols of Israel’s occupation more recognizable than the Caterpillar D-9.*”

The other aspect Max Blumenthal examines in minute detail is the grip of the army and the internal security service – Shin Bet – on the education system, on the media and finally on the whole society.

Concerning the media, Max Blumenthal remarks that the censorship imposed on newspapers by Shin Bet is rarely challenged. He gives the examples of the tragic incidents that occurred on May 31<sup>st</sup> 2010 when the Turkish ship *Mavi Marmara* was boarded by Israeli Naval Forces (9 passengers were killed and 28 wounded): the Israeli newspapers contented themselves with repeating the communiqués issued by Israeli officials and never checked whether they were true. Another example mentioned by Max Blumenthal is that of the allegedly “*liberal*” *Haaretz* newspaper having given its readers information about powerful demonstrations of Israeli Arabs. The newspaper seemed to be defying the blackout enforced by Shin Bet, but the article published on page 10 next to the obituary column did not in any way explain the reasons for those demonstrations - because the army essentially wanted to conceal the arrest and trial of the Palestinian activist Ameer Makhoulouf.

Furthermore Max Blumenthal emphasizes a

fact that is often overlooked by the western media: “Some Israeli reporters served in the army reserve, trading in their press badge for a month each year for an M-16, while many more had received their journalistic training at Army Radio. [...] In partnership with the IDF Spokespersons’ Unit, some of Israel’s most widely disseminated journalists helped form a sophisticated military-media complex fighting on the frontlines of the country’s public relation battle.” A new form of McCarthyism is also emerging, through which the authorities intend to deprive opponents of any opportunity to express their views.

Concerning the education system, Max Blumenthal shows the methods used to indoctrinate young people. He mentions the study carried out by Nurit Peled-Elhanan on Israeli textbooks. Nurit Peled-Elhanan explains: all that the children know “is they have to hate Arabs and go into the Army”. She reports a conversation with an eight-year-old Ethiopian girl who told her “how happy she was that the army had massacred activists on the Mavi Marmara. She said that Israel is only for the Israeli people. She can’t read or write, but this is what she knows.” And Nurit Peled-Elhanan adds: “Transmission of nationalist attitude through Israel textbooks, both through implicit and explicit messaging, was systematic and comprehensive.” Max Blumenthal cites another example of the sort of hatred deliberately nourished and promoted among Israeli youth. The event took place in December 2010. A group of Palestinian women from Nablus (in the West Bank) had been allowed to visit the Yad-Vashem Holocaust memorial. Max Blumenthal has this to say: “Accompanied by a group of Jewish Israeli women who planned to visit a Palestinian village destroyed in the Nakba the following week, the women from Nablus had hoped to achieve a cultural breakthrough. Despite all they and their families had suffered under Israel’s occupation, they were willing to expose themselves to the historical trauma that had impacted the psyche of their neighbours living on the other side of the wall. But instead of the hearty welcome they expected, they earned curses from a mob of pre-adolescent Jewish children. ‘Sharmouta!’ the children shouted at the women, using the Ara-

bic word for ‘whore’. ...Tamara Rabinovich, an Israeli facilitator of the trip, remarked: ‘For these children, it does not matter where they are, even at Yad Vashem. They have been taught to see the Palestinians as enemies, so that’s how they behave.’”

There is another example of the racism that the Zionist State has instilled in young people: the supporters of the Beitar Jerusalem Football club. Max Blumenthal devotes a chapter to the question. He writes: “While Beitar fans are usually content to display their hatred for Arabs in the form of chants, Beitar matches have occasionally transformed into scenes of mob violence against Arabs. In February 2012, after Beitar lost to Sakhnin - an all-Arab team from Northern Israel - bitter Beitar fans relieved their humiliation with a mass rampage against Sakhnin players.” Max Blumenthal points out that “the Jerusalem police belatedly arrived to drive away the rioters and make a few token arrests.” Similar incidents happened again a month later in the Jerusalem stadium: “[Beitar fans] attacked Arab cleaning personnel, spat on a group of Arab women workers, and chanted ‘Death to the Arabs’ ...A member of the mall’s cleaning crew, Mohammed Yusuf, offered a more appropriate description : ‘It was a mass lynching attempt’.” Max Blumenthal adds: “And when two female officers arrived on the scene, they filed no report and made no arrests. After learning of the official non-response, Arab member of the Knesset Ahmad Tibi called the incident ‘an unprecedented pogrom.’”

Max Blumenthal also devotes three chapters to the appalling fate that awaits African asylum seekers trying to settle in Israel. The reader learns about the plan to build a separation wall – another illustration of the paranoia that has taken hold of the Zionist leaders – along the Egyptian border so as to prevent the arrival of those African asylum seekers. He had previously pointed out that in children’s books the word “Nigger” is used to refer to Africans and that the way the latter are described in textbooks is reminiscent of the prejudices of the white majority in the southern states of the USA during the 1940s. There is another similarity with the American southern states: the

author says he has witnessed real lynching scenes organized by groups of ultra-nationalist Jews (such as the “student” organization Im Tirtzu, which is described in an unflattering way as a bunch of idle young people having just finished their military service) against Africans.

Thanks to his status as American journalist, Max Blumenthal was able to attend the trial of a young Palestinian named Ala Tamimi inside the Ofer military prison. He gives precise figures: *“According to the military courts’ annual 2011 report, Palestinians were convicted at a rate of 99.74 per cent, with only twenty-five full acquittals out of thousands of cases... Between 2005 and 2010, Israeli military courts convicted 835 minors for the crime of stone-throwing, coercing many into confessions through harsh interrogations and promising them more lenient sentences for pleading guilty. Among those convicted were dozens of children as young as twelve years old.”* He adds: *“In the past, I had attended trials of local Palestinian leaders placed under administrative detention, a code phrase the Israeli military administration used to denote imprisonment without charge... On this visit, I would witness the trial of a minor for the first time.”* He explains: *“Of the twenty-nine child prisoners interviewed by the Israeli human rights group B’tselem, only one was allowed to receive regular visits by family members.”* Max Blumenthal goes on to narrate the trial of Ala Tamimi: *“The prosecutor, a woman in her early thirties, stood nearby wearing a military uniform. Like the prosecutor and the witness, the judge was clad in the olive drab of the Israeli army... In Israel’s military courts, judge, prosecutors, Shin Bet interrogators, and soldiers felt united in this mission... At the end of the proceeding, the judge ordered another hearing, prolonging Tamimi’s time in prison... Like the other prisoners at Ofer, he would have to wait in detention for a long arbitrary period before finally receiving his sentence, which would almost certainly mandate more jail time.”*

Having read this account, the overriding impression emerging from the book is extremely depressing. This pessimism is reinforced in

the last chapter, entitled *“The Exodus Party”*: the author presents exile, in New York or Berlin, as a solution for those who want to escape the violence taking over the country. But exile is an alternative only for those who can afford to settle abroad. For those who are not in a capacity to do so, exile is impossible. For Palestinians, as for the former Knesset member Azmi Bishara, it is never the result of choice but always of constraint.

And yet this pessimism is, throughout the book, at odds with the detailed account of the actions of resistance the author has witnessed. Indeed, resistance does exist and persist and Max Blumenthal describes how it gets organized, most often involving Jewish activists. It was in the many places where confrontation with the army and the police arises that Max Blumenthal met those activists, like Nurit Peled-Elhanan, who founded the *“Combatants for Peace”* association, Tali Shapiro, who is fighting alongside the Bedouins to prevent the destruction of their villages, or Itamar and Yonatan Shapira, a former Israeli captain and Air Force pilot who, together with Rami Elhanan – Nurit Peled-Elhanan’s husband – have tried to bring humanitarian aid to Gaza.

For instance Max Blumenthal joined the handful of Jewish and Arab activists from Jerusalem in their attempt at preventing the destruction of an “unrecognized” Bedouin village in the Negev, Al-Araqib. The Bedouins gave them a warm welcome and together they kept watch over the road, to prevent D-9 bulldozers from razing the village. Unfortunately, at about 5 a.m. a hundred riot police started to push and shove the people of the village and their protectors. Then the bulldozers went into action and razed the village. Was it another victory for apartheid? Max Blumenthal gives an account of what happened next: *“Within days they [the Bedouins] would have their village rebuilt, or at least some semblance of it, without the trees and crops that were uprooted during the first demolition. And then, the bulldozers marked with Jewish National Fund insigna would come to destroy it all over again. The cycle of destruction and rebuilding likely cost the state more than it would have if it had allowed Al Araqib to connect to the pu-*

*blic electric and water supply, or to provide its residents with public schooling and health clinic.”*

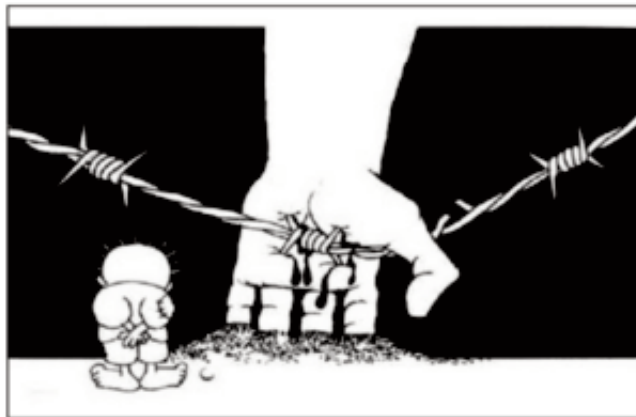
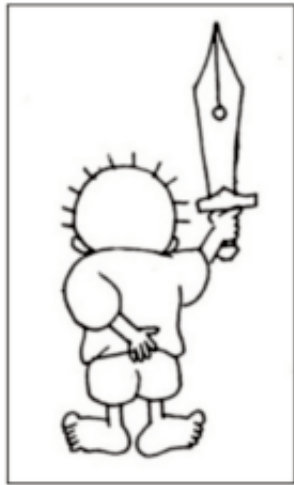
And Max Blumenthal makes the following comment: *“They were waiting for the next round of destruction, which they planned to endure as they had before, with sumud – the Bedouins of Al Araqib had adopted the Palestinian culture of steadfastness.”*

Max Blumenthal’s investigation evinces the Palestinian people’s resolve to refuse to give up their rights and also the unity that is being achieved – in a limited way, to be sure – between Arab and Jewish activists. Indeed, he gives an example of that determination to seek unity, i.e. the foundation as early as 1959 of the Al-Ard organization (“The Land”), which advocated the creation of a secular and democratic state in which Jews and Arabs would enjoy equal rights. And it is that relentless united resistance that is beginning to cause cracks in the military institution, the core of the Zionist State. The author cites the contents of the blog called *“Breaking the Silence”* in which

former military personnel, senior officers in some cases, anonymously express their distress and trauma following action in which they were engaged. He also mentions another association, *Machson Watch*, formed by women who denounce the humiliation Palestinians have to endure at the checkpoints manned by the army, which itself has proved to be unable to prevent the exposure of the scandal.

Because of the extent of its coverage (73 chapters, more than 400 pages), of the vast range of opinions expressed by the people being interviewed, of the information collected on the very places where the confrontation is taking place between the forces of repression and those who oppose them, Max Blumenthal’s book enables the reader to understand the spiral of violence that is a characteristic of Zionist policies. It was published in 2013, a few months before the murderous attack of July-August 2014 launched by the Israeli forces against Gaza. Max Blumenthal has given an analysis of the situation that in retrospect sounds premonitory.







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

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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  
END OF TERM REPORT PUBLISHED IN ENGLISH, HEBREW AND FRENCH**

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